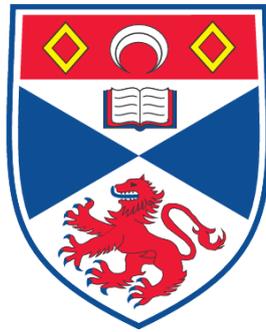


**THE SOCIAL POETICS OF PLACE MAKING : CHALLENGING THE  
CONTROL/DICHOTOMOUS PERSPECTIVE**

**Daniel Wade Clarke**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St. Andrews**



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**The social poetics of place making:  
Challenging the control/dichotomous perspective**

by

Daniel Wade Clarke

Submitted for the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Management

at

University of St Andrews

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# Table of Contents

Declarations

Abstract

Acknowledgements

<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	13
<b>1.1 Introducing the field of interest</b>	13
<b>1.2 Why the interest in place making</b>	13
<b>1.3 Focal area of research</b>	14
<b>1.4 Outline of key arguments and contribution</b>	15
<b>1.5 Summary and outline of chapters</b>	15
<b>Chapter 2 Literature review on the role of control in workplace making</b>	18
<b>2.1 Review of the literature on workplace making</b>	27
2.1.1. A brief review of the importance of spacing in the workplace	28
<b>2.2 Review of the control perspective in management</b>	30
2.2.1. Introducing the type of control under review	30
2.2.2. Outlining the control perspective in management: three principles	31
2.2.2.1. To separate thinking from doing	31
2.2.2.2. To promote specialisation	31
2.2.2.3. To create and sustain structure and control	32
2.2.2.4. Illustrating control	34
2.2.3. Outline of the implications the control perspective has for managing place making	35
<b>2.3 Critical perspectives on the role of control in workplace making</b>	36
2.3.1. We are all place makers	36
2.3.2. Place making is never done	37
2.3.3. Users expect more control	38

2.3.4.	Critical takes on the three management principles of the control perspective	39
2.3.4.1.	A missed opportunity	40
2.3.4.2.	Listening without hearing	40
2.3.4.3.	What ‘works’ today might not necessarily ‘work’ tomorrow	41
<b>2.4</b>	<b><i>An alternative approach to place making?</i></b>	41
2.4.1.	Engagement <i>versus</i> consultation	42
2.4.2.	Engagement from ‘inside’	44
2.4.3.	Example: practicing engagement in decision-making on workspace issues	47
2.4.4.	Critical perspectives on the role of engagement in decision-making	48
2.4.4.1.	Resisting engagement: organizational silence	49
2.4.4.2.	<i>Garbage</i> engagement	50
2.4.5.	On engagement (summary)	50
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Review of literature on ‘polyphonic narratives’ in organization theory</b>	51
2.5.1.	Introducing polyphony	52
2.5.2.	Key moments in dialogic engagement	53
2.5.3.	<i>With</i> -ness aspect of polyphonic events	56
2.5.4.	Tamara	57
2.5.5.	Conditions for polyphony	59
2.5.6.	Consequences of polyphony	60
2.5.7.	Example: performing the polyphonic production of space	61
2.5.7.1.	The authored (intended) <i>versus</i> constructed (interpreted) meaning of space	62
2.5.8.	Critical perspectives on the role of polyphony in place making	64
2.5.8.1.	Extreme relativism	64
2.5.8.2.	There is no level playing field	65
2.5.8.3.	Polyphony cannot be the only game in town	66
2.5.9.	Linguistic artifacts and (involvement) medium	66
2.5.9.1.	Dialogic structuring of control: <i>tell and sell</i>	69
2.5.9.2.	Dialogic structuring of engagement: <i>dialogue</i>	70

2.5.9.3. Dialogic structuring of polyphonic events: <i>Tamara-like</i> polyphony	71
<b>2.6 Review of the place-making literature</b>	<b>72</b>
2.6.1. We make place twice	73
2.6.2. Managing the existential relationship between place and time	75
2.6.2.1. Escape place	76
2.6.2.2. Freeze the dynamics of place	76
2.6.2.3. Accelerate and exacerbate the dynamics of place	76
2.6.2.4. A fourth way: escape, freeze, <i>and</i> accelerate /exacerbate the dynamics of place simultaneously	77
2.6.3. Where to now?	78
2.6.4. Lefebvrian analysis	79
<b>2.7. Synthesis and research questions</b>	<b>80</b>
2.7.1. Topic of interest	80
2.7.2. Three competing theories, and research questions	82
 <b>Chapter 3 Research Methodology and Methods</b>	 <b>85</b>
 <b>3.1 Introduction and outline of this chapter</b>	 <b>85</b>
<b>3.2 Ontology</b>	85
<b>3.3 Epistemology</b>	87
3.3.1. Narrative as a form of data and theoretical lens	87
3.3.2. The inclusivity argument	88
3.3.2.1. On multi-voicing practices	88
3.3.2.2. The argument of multiple realities	89
3.3.2.3. Confessing my sins: recounting my subjective position	90
3.3.2.4. The call to practice reflexive sociology	91
3.3.3. On constructionism	92
3.3.3.1. Research (learning) objectives	93
3.3.4. How is constructionism important to my perspective in this research?	93

<b>3.4 Methods</b>	94
3.4.1. Participant-observation	95
3.4.2. Interviews	95
3.4.3. Audio recording	95
3.4.4. Activities of artistic creation	96
3.4.4.1. Pictorial representation: Drawing on experience	96
3.4.4.2. Visualisation / Projective metaphor	97
3.4.5. Photography	99
<b>3.5 Fit between approach and research questions</b>	101
<b>3.6 Specific methods implemented</b>	101
3.6.1. Participant-observation	102
3.6.2. Interviews	103
3.6.3. Audio recording	104
3.6.4. Activities of artistic creation	104
3.6.5. Photography	104
<b>3.7 Data-related limitations</b>	105
3.7.1. Participant-observation	105
3.7.2. Interviews	105
3.7.3. Audio recording	106
3.7.4. Activities of artistic creation	106
3.7.5. Photography	107
 <b>Chapter 4 The Narratives</b>	 108
<b>4.1 Introducing the narratives</b>	108
<b>4.2 Narratives on deciding to relocate</b>	109
<b>4.3 Narratives of relocating</b>	119
<b>4.4 Narratives on workplace making</b>	121
 <b>Chapter 5 Analysis and Discussion</b>	 140
<b>5.1 Introduction and outline of chapter</b>	140

<b>5.2 A story about a wall</b>	140
5.2.1. A story about a wall from the control perspective	140
5.2.2. A story about a wall from an engagement perspective	143
5.2.3. A story about a wall from the polyphonic perspective	154
5.2.4. Concluding the wall story	161
<b>5.3 A story about chairs</b>	161
5.3.1. The story about chairs from a control perspective	161
5.3.2. The story about chairs from an engagement perspective	164
5.3.3. The story about chairs from a polyphonic perspective	167
5.3.4. Concluding the chair story	172
<b>5.4 A story about a worktop</b>	173
5.4.1. The story about a worktop from a control perspective	173
5.4.2. The story about a worktop from an engagement perspective	176
5.4.3. The story about a worktop from a polyphonic perspective	181
5.4.4. Concluding the worktop story	187
<b>5.5 Closing comments on the discussion and analysis of place making in an empirical setting</b>	189
 <b>Chapter 6 Concluding Discussion</b>	191
 <b>6.1 Introduction and outline of this chapter</b>	191
<b>6.2 Dominance of the control perspective</b>	192
<b>6.3 Explanatory failures of the control perspective</b>	195
<b>6.4 Alternative theoretical perspectives</b>	198
6.4.1. On polyphony	198
6.4.2. On Engagement	200
<b>6.5 Development of a practice-oriented theory</b>	201
6.5.1. What would the features of a better alternative look like?	203
6.5.2. Implications for managing the unfolding process of place making	205
<b>6.6 Contribution</b>	207
<b>6.7 Future research</b>	209
<b>6.8 Reflexive statements</b>	209

Appendices	212
Appendix 1 Context of unfolding situation	212
Appendix 2 Three drawings	214
Appendix 3 Working with Frazer	216
Appendix 4 Narratives on the historical context	221
Appendix 5 Narrative details on deciding to relocate	225
Appendix 6 “Getting off lightly”: Positive aspect of Frazer’s resignation	231
Appendix 7 Detailing Ken’s reasons for why his own company’s website is the worst he has ever designed: the story told in his own words	233
Appendix 8 Another example where <i>everything in Craig’s mind is very clear</i>	234
Appendix 9 The importance of Ken’s space	235
References	237

## List of Tables

Table 1 Summary of three alternative theoretical perspectives on place making	16
Table 2 Place implications of the control perspective	35
Table 3 Critique of the place implications of the control perspective	39
Table 4 Communication styles and use of language of the three theoretical perspectives	69
Table 5 Balancing the trialectic elements of place making	81
Table 6 Summary of three competing perspective of place making	83
Table 7 Examples of participant-produced drawings as a technique for drawing out emotions in <i>management inquiry</i>	98
Table 8 Examples of participant-produced drawing as a technique to draw out emotions in <i>non-management</i> fields of inquiry	101

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Conceptual bricks (literatures) used in this chapter	26
Figure 2 Continuum of degrees or range of participation in decision making	45
Figure 3 The control perspective on workplace making	142
Figure 4 The three modes of thinking illustrated as a model	205

## List of Images

Image 1 Making the kitchenette a kitchen	175
Image 2 Fitted worktop	175
Image 3 No door and an exposed fuse box	180

## Declarations

I, Daniel Wade Clarke, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 77,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of candidate \_\_\_\_\_

I was admitted as a research student in September, 2004 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2004 and 2008.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of candidate \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

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## Abstract

Grappling with the success of their business ventures and coping with the rise in number of new products FifeX was working on, operating out of their shared office in the St Andrews Technology Centre, the co-founders were feeling more ‘cramped’ than ever before. The decision was made to relocate. Although it was felt to be long overdue, much to their relief they finally moved to larger premises in Tayport in July, 2006. The activity of moving was a starting point for a number of place making activities.

Using the case of FifeX, this thesis explores the process of place making. It seeks to understand place making from ‘inside’ the activity of place making itself. The guiding research question in this thesis is, what happens -during place making- when people move into ‘new’ business premises? More specifically, this thesis asks the following questions: (i) what are the comparative advantages / disadvantages of the alternative ways of explaining place making? and (ii) which theory or combination of theories, has greater explanatory value in analysing place making / moving? The study, which uses FifeX as an empirical setting is best described as an in-depth qualitative narrative exploration, and thus narrates the unfolding processes of deciding to relocate, relocating, moving and place making.

Three different theoretical perspectives (control, engagement, polyphony) were applied, each in turn, to three separate (yet interrelated) instances of place making (a story about a wall, one about chairs, and one about a worktop) in order to cast fresh light on the constitutive talk-entwined-activities of place making. The study demonstrates that although efforts to control space may dominate the discourse and activities of place making, control only explains *some* of what happens during place making. The findings of the case suggest that place is the outcome of inhabitants’ ongoing experiences and understanding. This thesis argues that alternative theoretical perspectives (engagement and polyphony) are better at explaining what goes on. But because they do not operate ‘naturally’ within the dominant paradigm, it is noted that an alternative practice-based perspective is needed which combines the effectiveness of engagement and polyphony, with the attractiveness of control.

A model is presented to help reflect on place making which provides an alternative route for thinking about relocating, moving, and place making that is expected to create engagement and polyphony in a decent way. The proposed model is centred on thinking directed toward: (i) individual place, (ii) inside space, and (iii) what story(s) the space tell outsiders. The focus is on balancing the tensions that emerge from dialoging on these three aspects of space and place.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introducing the field of interest

I am a student of organisation and management studies, not an expert in office relocation management. Nor am I a designer, or a planner, formally trained in the practices of place making. Yet in July 2006 I became *embroiled* (Spicer & Taylor, 2007: 26) in moving FifeX, a small new business venture based in St Andrews, Scotland, into ‘new’ (to FifeX but not new to the world) business premises in Tayport, near Dundee. People come at space bent on achieving different outcomes and from all directions, and the case of FifeX proved to be no different in that respect. But how does the way we relate to space, experience ‘it’ and come to understand ‘it’ over time influence the way we shape it? What is space, anyway? How and when does space become ‘place’? Can we manage place making? If so, how might we improve managing place making?

The dominant view in management studies has sought to make the space in which work gets done, and the people within that space, amenable to control (Hoskin, 2004) with relatively little consideration for how the space looks or feels from the standpoint of its inhabitant. Similarly, the dominant view in the practitioner-based literature on relocation and management moves / office fit-outs prescribes ‘control’ as the cure-all which can ensure that projects are delivered on time and to budget. Locked-in to such control-thinking, any suggestion for further improvement to the management (or managing) of place making would simply prescribe ‘more control’. But does it have to be that way, and is more control the only option? More importantly, is it through ‘control’ that places comes into being in the first place?

### 1.2 Why the interest in place making

Since reading the (1961) classic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs during my undergraduate years of study I have been interested in what it is about places that makes them ‘tick’. We have all experienced, at some time or other, ‘good’ places. We intuitively know what they feel like and I have experienced my own share of them. This curiosity has not left me. My interest was lying dormant ‘in’ me until it was awakened through participatory experiences with Craig and Ken, the co-founder / managing directors of FifeX.

During a casual encounter with Craig one day at the Cafeteria in the Gateway, home to the School of Management at the University of St Andrews -and my place of work- I learnt that a move was on the cards for Craig and Ken. At the time I was reading about decision making and strategy, with particular emphasis on trying to understand the role of managerial intuition in decision making. So I asked Craig if he would be willing to scope the boundaries, with his business partner and me, of a possible research project using FifeX as a case study. For Craig it was a case of “There is a lot going on right now and you will be able to get a lot out of it” and for Ken it was a case of “There is a lot happening just now and you might be able to help us understand what is going on”. The latter is exactly how I came to see my role in FifeX.

Therefore, responding to subjectivity and as an emerging research agenda guided by the research participants themselves, my interest in the field (place making) gained a momentum of its own. The excitement of the move was contagious and I was moved by this contagion. The research participants’ investments in space, their efforts to create a ‘sign of the times’ and their talking of ‘things to come’ infected me. I was ‘hooked’ on trying to understand how the ways our joint experiences and understandings were influencing and shaping the unfolding activities of place making.

Therefore, before I can even begin to move toward making suggestions on how we might go about improving the practice of place making, I feel it is my responsibility, as a researcher, to first of all understand how places come into being from subjective experience and the activity of place making itself.

### **1.3 Focal area of research**

Whereas architects make plans and contractors erect buildings, “A space can only be made into a place by its occupants” (Norman, 2004 citing Harrison & Dourish, 1996). Therefore, my research rests at the fulcrum where space becomes place and place is always becoming (Creswell, 2004: 82; Thrift, 2006: 141). My research thus focuses on the stories that people tell /construct together with others as they ongoingly experience and understand space. My research is a direct response to previous calls for the need for more study on the relationship of people to space over time (Cairns, 2002: 800).

#### **1.4 Outline of key arguments and contribution**

I argue that, despite failing to being able to fully explain what happens, the control perspective still has a ‘natural’ place and is the dominant view in relocating / moving / place making. My research shows that alternative theoretical perspectives (i.e. engagement and polyphony), have the potential to be better at explaining what happens during moving / place making because they allow us to ‘see’ things that the control perspective does not even see. This invites the question then, that, if these alternatives are better at explaining what happens, why are they not practiced more broadly? In short, it is because they do not operate ‘naturally’ in the dominant perspective which seeks unitariness of understanding and meaning. My proposed contribution is the proposal of an alternative conceptualisation of practice which draws on theoretical perspectives alternative to the control view, and explores how those theoretical perspectives might inform an alternative theory of practice.

In this thesis, three modes of thinking (individual, inside and outside) are suggested which I theorise will lead to engagement and polyphony happening in a decent way. By decent I mean, engagement and polyphony will be structured but action outcomes will be unpredictable.

#### **1.5 Summary and outline of chapters**

In chapter two, I review three theoretical perspectives (control, engagement, polyphony) which compete to answer the question, what happens during place making? The following table (Table 1) provides a simple summary. The purpose of chapter two is to develop a framework with which I can use to analyse what is happening and being experienced in the empirical setting of FifeX.

Chapter three outlines an interpretivist stance and qualitative methods for gathering data. This chapter develops a research strategy that accepts Spicer & Taylor’s (2007: 26) recommendation that:

Spaces and places can only be explored by legwork, by journeying to and through them; in order to better understand space and places, we must become embroiled in them, physically and conceptually (Casey, 1993).

The purpose of chapter three is to develop a research strategy that is able to make all three theoretical perspectives visible and open to analysis. I argue that narrative enables this.

Table 1 Summary of three alternative theoretical perspectives on place making

Theory	Description	Prescription
<b>Control</b>	Physical arrangements to facilitate effective work	Make top-down rational decisions and control behaviour
<b>Engagement</b>	Physical arrangements are negotiated to improve involvement, and in turn performance	Use modes of engagement to arrive at decisions through dialogue. Engagement should be genuine, appropriate and interconnected
<b>Polyphony</b>	Physical arrangements are the outcomes of conversations fuelled by ongoing experience and understanding as occupancy occurs over time	Allow alternative perspectives on place to emerge as people co-create the sp/pl/aces they dwell in. Guard against the singularity of interpretation and meaning

As my thesis adopts narrative as a form of data and theoretical lens, in chapter four I narrate how I became *embroiled* in the participatory place making activities with Craig and Ken (the research participants) in FifeX. The purpose of chapter four is to present my general findings on what it is like to experience relocating / moving / place making viewed from ‘inside’ the experience itself.

Then in chapter five (Analysis and Discussion), I look at three stories (one about a wall, one about chairs, and one about a worktop) from the three theoretical perspectives (control, engagement, polyphony) in order to address the research aim set out at the end of my literature review (chapter two): which theory, or combination of theories best explains the process of place making in terms of what is going on in FifeX? The purpose of this chapter is to apply the framework developed in chapter two.

Chapter six (Concluding Discussion) is the chapter in which my thesis is made. The purpose of this chapter is to provide closure on the under researched area of the role of ongoing experience and understanding in the shaping of sp/pl/ace in low visibility, low rent, low maintenance buildings (Brand, 1995; Brand, 2006)<sup>1</sup>. Here, I detail the inherent shortcomings of the control perspective and

---

<sup>1</sup> Brand (2006) – this analysis was made in personal dialogue with Brand on 26.11.06 and 27.11.06.

I came across many references to Brand (1995) during my early reading on sp/pl/ace. In reading his (1995) book *How Buildings Learn* I began to see building as consisting of several layers (site, structure, skin, services, space plan and stuff). Reading Brand (1995) helped me in my thinking in that, when I applied this ‘new’ way of thinking about buildings to my

its ability to explain only *some* of what was experienced in FifeX. I also examine why, despite its failure to explain what happens in cases such as the chair story in FifeX, it is still so popular. Because alternatives (engagement and polyphony) do not work ‘naturally’ in the dominant discourse, I argue for an alternative model which combines the effectiveness of engagement and polyphony with the attractiveness of the control perspective. In chapter six, I also detail the contribution made by this thesis and suggest directions for further research.

The research question explored in this thesis is what happens during place making? The theoretical question my research asks will be elucidated at the end of the literature review (Chapter two).

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fieldnotes, I realised that my research had grown into a focused study on ‘space plan’, ‘services’, and ‘stuff’. Similarly, Brand (1995) helped me to distinguish between two types of building: High Road and Low Road buildings. For him, High Road buildings are highly visibly, very expensive and carry high maintenance costs. Low Road buildings, however, are set back from the main road (low visibility), are low cost, and low maintenance (upkeep and repairs can be done by the occupiers themselves without jeopardising the architect’s original intentions for the building). From this, I came to the realisation that FifeX was moving into a Low Road building. Brand (1995: 31) writes the following about Low Road buildings:

“The wonder is that Low Road building use has never been studied formally, either for academic or commercial interest or to tease out design principles that might be useful in other buildings. What do people do to buildings when they can do almost anything they want? I haven’t researched the question either, but I’ve lived some of it”.

Following on from this, I wanted to know if this was still the case in 2006; so on 26.11.06, I decided to write an email to Brand:

“The scope of my study is restricted to decision making on issues relating to ‘space plan’, ‘services’, and ‘stuff’. The co-founders [of FifeX] do not have the desire, nor the authority, to do anything to the ‘site’, ‘structure’, or ‘skin’”.

I then went on to explain the reason why I was writing:

“To this effect, I am writing to ask if you, or anybody else you know of, has done a formal study on the layers of the building. It is very exciting that my research might fill a gap that reading your book has helped me to identify, but this gap might have been filled by somebody else since your book was written”.

Brand replied on 27.11.06 with:

“So far as I know, no one has done the research you describe, nor any other on Low Road buildings”.

In sum, Brand (1995), helped me to define the scope of my study and supported my novelty-claims. This, in turn, encouraged me to pursue my line of inquiry and helped to sharpen the focus of my study.

## Chapter Two

### Literature review on the role of control in workplace making

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss, in the organization studies literature on organizational space (Roberts, Beech & Cairns, 2002; Kornberger & Clegg, 2004), the role of control in workplace making; and explore alternative critical views which reject the control perspective. An exposition of the control perspective marks the beginning of this chapter. However, before I reach this starting point, I want to define some terms.

#### Defining place making

The term *place making* is a conceptual borrowing from human geography. Sack (2004: 243) writes,

Place refers here to something we humans make. A place is made when we take an area of space and intentionally bound it and attempt to control what happens within it through the use of (implicit and/or explicit) rules about what may or may not take place.

Broadly speaking, the term workplace making is used to describe the human activities involved in bringing into being the place(s) in which we accomplish our work tasks. It is used here to refer to a number of processes, from identifying and deciding upon a location, from moving in, to allocating (naming) and laying out rooms. It is also used to refer to other seemingly mundane and everyday organizing micro-activities, such as choosing office furniture and re-arranging objects. Subsequently, the term has been broadened to include once-occurring or rare events, such as office out-fitting and other ongoing activities such as retrofitting, adapting, and personalising space (also referred to as marking one's territory). Place making also includes the attribution of meaning to physicality.

Offices, as workplaces, do not occur naturally. They are contained within a building, and buildings are human, material constructions. Work *places* are carved out of space (Sack, 2004: 244); making the workplace a spatial overlay (Watkins, 2005: 213). A number of human processes, including a variety

of people, are incorporated into the overall process of bringing a workplace into being. Gieryn (2000: 468) observes that place making involves *identifying, designing, building, using, interpreting, and remembering*. From this, identifying, designing, and building are important initial steps in place making. In this research, however, I am interested in the ‘using’ and ‘interpreting’ processes involved in place making.

#### On the definition of workplace and workspace

For the purposes of this thesis, I am adopting Vischer’s (2005) definition of (work)place. Vischer distinguishes between managing *workplace* and managing *workspace*. For Vischer, whereas place is imbued with meaning and carries emotional power of space symbolism, space is a resource that needs to be managed according to rational decision making criteria. When I use other theories, even though they do not necessarily apply the term ‘place’ in the same way, I will fit them to this broad definition. In many cases, other theories were either using different terms before this definition was made, or the distinction is not one that carries significance in their perspective. An important example of the former is Lefebvre (1991) who uses the word ‘space’ in the same way that Vischer uses ‘place’. His use of the term space is akin to the term place, as defined by Vischer (2005: 45)<sup>2</sup>. But for the purposes of this thesis, I will be using their concepts rather than their terms.

#### Shaping buildings already in use

An oft cited quote reported in organization studies on space is “We shape our building, then they shape us” (Churchill, 1924, cited in Gieryn, 2002: 25). Over the years, many have extended this statement to incorporate what happens to buildings over time through use; that is, what happens to buildings after they are built (Brand, 1995). Smith & Bugni (2006, my emphasis in italics) re-stated Churchill’s agency-structure idea, developing the notion of agency-structure-agency: “We shape our buildings and afterward our buildings shape us; and then *after use, we may choose to shape the buildings still again and perhaps even again*”. In the current chapter I focus on the latter part of this statement. Emphasis is placed on ‘buildings in use’, and accent is given to the processes involved in the everyday re-shaping of workplaces *after* buildings have been erected (otherwise known as

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<sup>2</sup> Lefebvre (1991) uses space to mean the triad of social, physical and mental (lived) places. His third element (spaces of representation) of the triad is “the space of lived experience [...] the space that overlays physical space as it is lived in the everyday course of life” (Watkins, 2005: 213). Without directly referring to the three elements of the triad, Vischer acknowledges the physical element of place, and the attribution of meaning to physicality (mental element of place) in her definition of workspace and workplace respectively.

retrofitting). Gieryn (2002: 38-9) observes that in such circumstances, “Once completed, buildings hide the many possibilities that did not get built, as they bury the interests, politics, and power that shaped the once design that did”. My point here is that, compared to making places from ‘scratch’, place making in buildings already in use has its own set of issues and challenges.

#### Elaboration: the spatial component of the workplace

Something is always somewhere. Offices in converted warehouses, on boats, or even in tree-houses, are contained within a human structured space, or building of some sort. Buildings are physical entities and form part of the human built environment. They communicate meaning to others. Space, place and identity, it would seem, then, are intimately connected. Kronenberg (2007: 18) writes, as human products, “they [buildings] are beginning to be perceived as extensions of our lifestyle”. This idea is not new however. It can be traced back to Goffman (1959) who examined in detail, the public presentation of self. In sum, it has been argued that places are more than mere physical entities, they are imagined, embodied, integral components of the many selves that make our self.

Buildings are human constructions which also serve as “containers” (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004: 1101) for bodies and objects, and they “always have a purpose, a function to fulfil” (Markus, 2006: 129). Inside buildings there are rooms, bodies, and objects which are surrounded by other rooms, bodies and objects. These are perhaps the two main features which characterise space: space is both containing and surrounding (Sack, 2004). The outer walls of a building form the boundary between inside and outside, enfolding and enclosing some activities and excluding others (Clegg & Kornberger, 2006: 145). In/out rules define who gets in, who is free to wander and who is not (Sack, 2004: 245). The overall space contained within buildings can be partitioned by installing dividing walls or rearranging filing cabinets for example, thereby creating internal boundaries delineating smaller spaces. Such ‘spatial practice(s)’ (Lefebvre, 1991) involving the appropriation of everyday objects might occur following a merger, for example, when two or more departments come together to work in the same space. The influx of furniture and bodies in such circumstances could see a “move from spaciousness to cramped conditions”, thereby changing “the material and sensory experience of the building” (Dale, 2005: 671). In this sense, workplaces are not naturally occurring, they are social “material” productions (Dale, 2005), the result of human manipulation of the

givenness of nature (i.e. absolute space), objects (i.e. stone, glass and wood) and meanings (i.e. naming of areas and activities).

In sum, space is all this and more; recalling what Chanlat (2006: 18) said elsewhere, organizational space is “best thought of as simultaneously divided, controlled, imposed and hierarchical, productive, personalised, symbolic, and social”. It is the ‘controlled’ aspect of organizational space that I want to challenge in my thesis. An examination of what the control perspective entails is the subject to which I now turn.

#### Defining control (and the opposite of control)

There are basically three perspectives in place making. One is based on control and uses power to bring places into being (Theory 1); one is based on participation and uses voice institutions to bring places into being (Theory 2), the other is based on the practice of equivalent voicing and uses multiple voices (interpretations) to bring places into being (Theory 3). Theory 1 & 2 are outlined below. I will introduce Theory 3 later.

Control is where power is expressed and the actions of others are determined. The way people are meant to behave is thus designed into the layout of the workspace and users have no say in how their work environment looks and feels. In this view, users may not even be allowed to personalise their workspace. Gieryn (2000: 475) observes, places are “power-vessels” where “the capacity to dominate and control people or things comes through the geographic location, built-form, and the symbolic meanings of a place”. The Tayloristic factory line, where control is typically downstream (Guillen, 1997), epitomizes the possible outcome of the control perspective. It is worth noting however, that control in the workplace often elicits resistance. Some forms of resistance are overt, whilst others are more subtle, for example, acting in compliance with control whilst withholding personal commitment and meaning (Knights & Wilmott, 1989).

An alternative approach that is opposed to the control perspective is basically a participation, or an involvement approach. From this view, the notion of voice and giving voice (Vischer, 2005) are central themes, which in turn creates a sense of togetherness. Such are the precursors of effective

voice institutions. By breaking down the us/them divide<sup>3</sup>, as togetherness emerges, managers and employees experience mutual influence on meaning making and what will happen.

By way of summary, the issue here is, does the top management decide what will happen and send out 'meaning' attributed to the physicality of workspace, or do users and managers create meaning together, thereby exercising mutual control over the attribution of meaning to physicality?

### Tell me why I don't like Mondays

Cairns (2002: 809) offers an exemplary illustration of a managerially controlled "redesign of the physical layout",

As a member of an external consultancy team on the redesign of the physical layout, with others I was charged with developing a strategy for improved flexibility of space utilization ... [...] Following development and top management sign-off of the space planning strategy, new layouts were designed for one open-plan floor accommodating about 350 people. The layouts were implemented over one weekend, with staff coming in on Monday morning to find guides to show them to their new workspace where their personal belongings and work already awaited them.

In this case, managerial control was used such that work-space was delivered, but users were denied any real sense of place. [Tuan (in Mels, 2004: 46) notes, "a period of time must elapse before one can have a sense of place"]. The control perspective in the initial case referred to by Cairns (2002) gives space but it also creates what I will follow Relph (1976) in calling a sense of "placelessness". The dispossession of place might be experienced because first, individuals have been excluded from decision making processes on work-space change -thereby denied voice; and secondly, because workspace is delivered -disallowing users to mark their own territory (Brown, Laurence & Robinson, 2007)- users might experience a lack of ownership of that work-space change. This leaves open the question, which I address later in this chapter, what qualities of participation is required for people to feel procedurally 'involved'? And what qualities of involvement are required for people to experience a sense of ownership and belonging?

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<sup>3</sup> Employee as receiver of space *versus* employer as space maker (who delivers space to employees).

In managerially controlled space change situations, opinions and suggestions of employees as “expert users” (Cairns & Beech, 1999: 8) typically go unheard because organizational leaders and senior managers take control of decision making. Users are not given voice and so place making is effectively done in a kind of silence, with very little noise coming from users in terms of opinions, concerns, preferences, rejections, knowledge-inputs, suggestions, or fantasies. Experimenting, prototyping, pilot officing, learning as you go, and from one another, is rare because internal decision makers (organizational leaders and senior managers), with perhaps the support of external consultancy teams, assume that they already know the answers to their questions regarding what ‘works’ best in terms of managing organizational space. Managerial control in place making is therefore construed as a top-down process: managers conceive of workplace arrangements and *deliver* (Vischer, 2007a: 72, not originally in italics) work-spaces to employees for them to work in.

The delivery of such workspaces casts the employee as a passive receiver of space change. From a managerial perspective, then, control over decision making processes on work-space change is complemented by the power to exclude users and take decisions forward with or without their consent.

### Drivers for managerial control

Why should managers want to exclude users? There are many assumptions underpinning the perceived need for managerial control. I will now mention four of them which seem to have led to “perverse norms” (Pfeffer & Veiga, 1999: 46)<sup>4</sup> in workplace making. First, there is an assumption that the control perspective can help avoid conflict. Because people have different ideas about space (i.e. how it should look, feel, smell, taste and sound, and how it should ‘work’), perhaps managers’ motivations to exercise their decision taking authority is, in part, the result of their fear that confrontation between employees would arise if they were allowed to participate in decision making processes (Vischer, 2005: 149). How might Cairns (2002), for example, have gone about trying to incorporate the preferences (voices) of more than three hundred employees? How might he have coped with a handful of dissenters? Managerial control creates a perverse norm whereby

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<sup>4</sup> Two norms about what constitutes good management are simultaneously growing in acceptance and are enormously perverse in their implications. The first is the idea that good managers are mean, or tough, able to make such difficult choices as laying off thousands of people and acting decisively. The second is that good management is mostly a matter of good analysis, a confusion between math and management.

users are not invited to be part of the meaning making processes; therefore, voices of dissenters remain unheard. Secondly, there is an assumption that employees are not driven by the profit motive and do not have the organizations interests at heart. Therefore, they should not be involved in decision making. The concomitant perverse norm is that managers, perhaps with the help of external experts make decisions because employees cannot be trusted to make places of their own accord for what they create could militate against organizational goals. The need for profit, then, keeps employees out of decision making processes on issues relating to workplace accommodation. The third assumption underpinning the perceived need for managerial control is the idea that managers know more about how the best decisions are made; and if they do not know, they are best suited to ushering in the experts who do. Following on from that, it is a concern that place making in the absence of expert knowledge-inputs might lead to mediocrity in terms of workplace design, which in turn might lead to mediocre performance. Fourthly, assumptions about what proper management is also underpin the need for managerial control. Although a top-down, expert-driven solution to work-space change -as opposed to an involvement approach- might not be acceptable to all employees, managers might feel that exercising absolute managerial control during space change - instead of creating conflict- is the lesser of two evils.

### Towards participation

An alternative view is, “users of buildings have a right to influence the design of their working environment” (Neumann, 2000: 314). An alternative way of making workplaces might therefore involve more participatory approaches whereby “expert users” not only provide insights and knowledge inputs (Cairns & Beech, 1999: 8) but also engage in decision taking (Neumann, 2000) on work-space change. Participation and freedom in the process of designing and laying out rooms would be done in a more playful (March, 1988), experimental and conversational (Nelson, 2004) manner. As ideas would bounce back and forth between managers and employees, place making would become a relatively noisy and “messy” (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 365) affair, and two-way learning (Argyris, 1993) would occur.

From this, what if employees as place makers were given both physical and conversational space and were encouraged to go at place making with passion and desire to create places they want to occupy? Moreover, what if organizational leaders and senior managers practiced “compassion, love and

humility” (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 373) in facilitating dialogue with users to make that engagement successful?

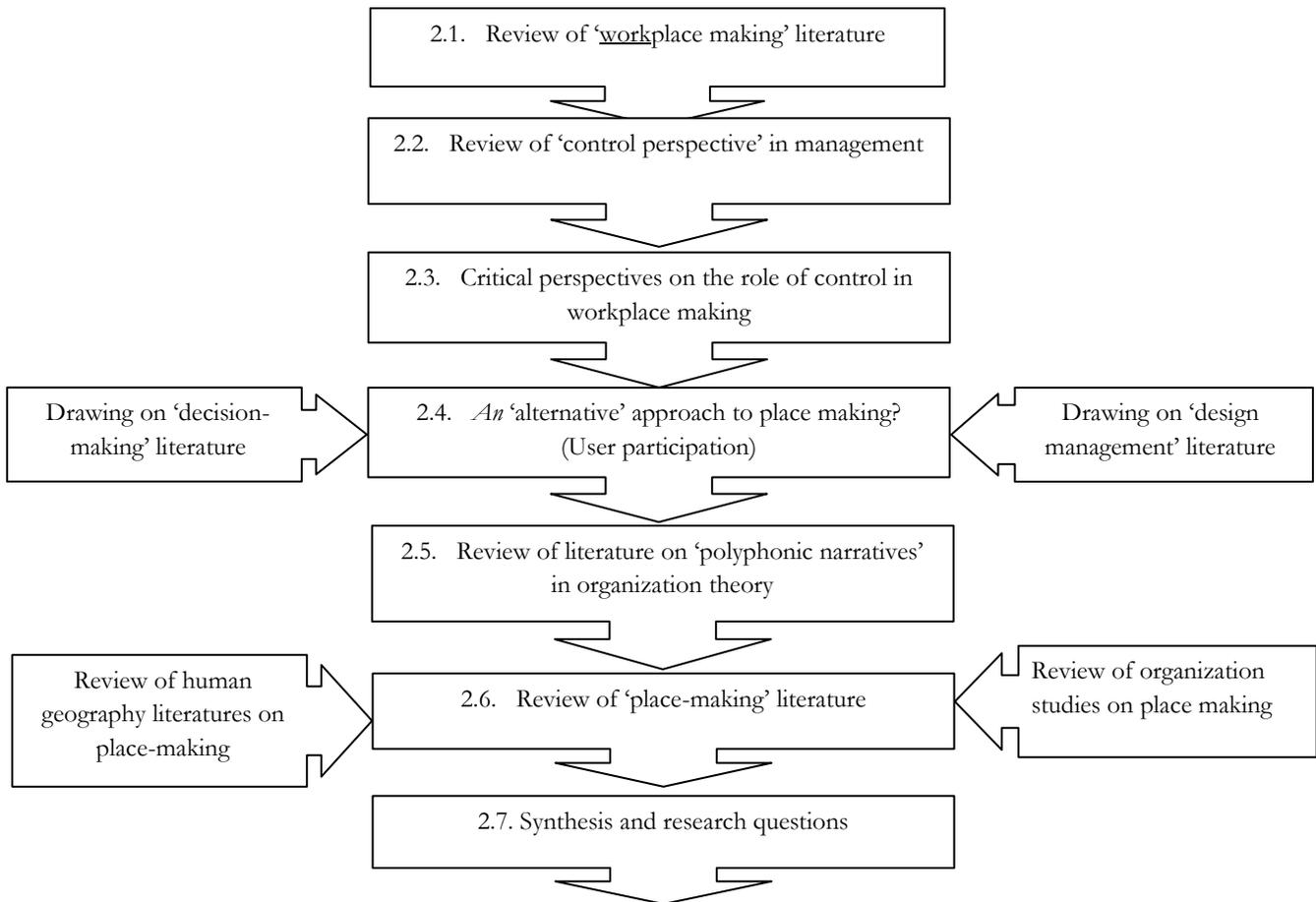
Implicit in these two (loaded) questions are criticisms on managerial control in place making. Such criticisms undergird many of the arguments for the need(?) to move toward more participatory approaches in workplace making. I review those criticisms on managerial control in place making – drawing on three different perspectives (i.e. organization studies, human geography, and decision making)- later in the chapter. However, before I head in that direction, I want to say something brief about how I have structured this chapter.

### Roadmap for the chapter

In section one I provide a brief review of the importance of spacing (in workplace making). This goes some way towards explaining why space seems to have acquired a natural place in organization studies. Since the physical environment is of importance to those (i.e. business leaders) who seek to increase organizational performance through manipulating both how it is made and how it ‘works’, in section two I examine Taylorized space to underline three principles which constitute managerial control in workplace design. Then, in the third section, I draw from three different sources - organization theory, human geography, and decision making- to critique modern forms of managerial control in place making. The critiques on control in workplace making lay the foundation for examining -in section four- alternative approaches to place making which reject the control perspective. This section incorporates views from literatures on building process and design management, and decision making theory. Section four helps clear the conceptual ground for a thorough review - in section five - on dialogics in organizations. Here, I explore the role of talk, linguistic devices, and multiple voices in engagement practices, and conceptualise (using Boje, 1995) how user participation in workplace making might unfurl in real time / real place. This exploration of organizational talk, covering polyphony, sets the stage for examining ways (using Sack, 2004) in which the potentially unsettling dynamic of the existential relationship between place and time might be played out. Regarding processes of place-making, in section six, I turn to the human / social geography literature (Tuan, 1991; Gieryn, 2000, 2002; Cresswell, 2004; Sack, 2004) to conceptualise how places come into being. I then use Sack (2004) to elaborate on his four ways of dealing with this dynamic, one of which provides what might be an empirically realistic and promising way

forward. Figure 1 (see below) is based on what has just been said. It shows the conceptual “bricks” (Styhre, 2002: 467) I have used to craft this chapter.

Figure 1: Conceptual bricks (literatures) used in this chapter



## 2.1 Review of the literature on workplace making

In section one I provide a brief review of the importance of space in the making of a workplace. The exposition of the significance of space goes some way towards explaining why it seems to have acquired a natural place in organization studies.

The experience of a workplace, or any place for that matter, is made up of people (social interactions), activities (social practices), things (objects), and the space itself. “Speaking of space as social, physical, mental, and cultural implies the introduction of relationships” (Dobers & Strannegård, 2004: 827). It is therefore through the connections of these elements, the relationships *between* (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000) them, that place comes into being and is experienced.

People tend to gather in a given place for specific reasons. Be that to receive 24-hour care (see Martin, 2002 for example), to learn something about the past (Yanow, 1998), or to be “close to the elements” (Mack, 2007: 383), we chose to move into residential nursing homes, visit museums, or go to work at sea, for a number of reasons. Sometimes those reasons might be inarticulable, or difficult to explain: we just go to those places, and through “aesthetic reflexivity” (Ewenstein & Whyte, 2007), we ‘know’ it feels right. The social interactions we are privy to at such places constitute an important element of our experience of them. The activities people engage in (social practices) and the cultural artefacts (objects) people use when they are there also constitutes an important element of our experience of that place. Similarly, “places are sensed through multi-sensorial experiences (sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch)” (Mack, 2007: 378), and so the feeling one has upon entering a place, or being immersed in it -at sea for example- is influenced by the very nature of the space itself. The way these four elements -people, activities, things, the space itself- are organized thus shapes our experience of place.

Out of the four elements, ‘things’ seem to have received considerable attention. I now turn to a discussion on how the managerial activity of spacing *things* has come to be of academic interest. This helps to explain why managerial control over organizing space might be considered such an important managerial practice (i.e. controlling space) by managers themselves and practitioners.

### 2.1.1. A brief review of the importance of spacing in the workplace

In this section I explore how space seems to have acquired its natural place in management inquiry. Early thinkers on the subject of space tended to treat it as something like that of a container. In this view, organizing space is like moving apples about inside a box, *spacing* is of prime importance (i.e. organizing the space between each object *contained* in that box). The spacing of people and things in relation to work activities has been examined in detail by Hoskin (2004). During the early to mid 1800s, space took centre stage in writings on organizations. A close look at Hoskin's (2004) announcement of the date of the "invention" of management (1830-1855) gives a powerful demonstration of the importance spacing plays in the design of the workplace. Organizing space was considered key to maximising productivity at both the musket manufacturing plant in the US Armory at Springfield, Massachusetts and then later, during the laying of railway tracks at Western Railroad in Pennsylvania (Hoskin, 2004: 746). A time-and-motion study conducted some 50 years before the work of F.W. Taylor, undertaken at the Springfield Armoury in 1831/2, marked the invention of management by "establishing a *prescribed* time required to make each musket part, and then reordering the space across which manufacture proceeded, so that the musket 'took shape' following a principle of linear flow" (Hoskin, 2004: 747). However, during the period of time between 1940-1970, the role of space (i.e. the materiality of space) in organizations took second place, emphasis switched to developing social relations (i.e. a non-material element of organizations). Finding ways to increase cooperation and trust was of cardinal importance. Hence this period in management history being labelled the 'Human Relations' movement.

The infamous Hawthorne Studies at General Electric at the end of 1920s became the hallmark of the Human Relations movement. The studies sought to establish the environmental conditions favouring productivity in human work. It was supposed that people give more if they get more in terms of salary, comfortable environment, and sustainable work rhythms. However, during the experiments, "gratuity emerged ... as an irrepressible human need: the workers did not produce more according to utilitarian calculations or perceived material benefits but to please researchers with whom they had spontaneously established relations of complicity and friendship" (Gagliardi, 2007: 334). Upon realising that feelings count, researchers began treating workers' emotions as an "extra resource" in "orienting the activities to achieve the organizational goals" (Gagliardi, 2007: 334). The Human Relations approach might thus be held, in part, responsible for de-emphasising the

importance of spacing while emphasising the non-material elements of organization (i.e. relationships).

After playing second place to non-material elements of organization since the 1940's, the use of spatial and material concepts to understand organizational life has witnessed a revival and grown in analytical importance since the 1970s. Early steps toward "bringing space back in" (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004) can be traced back to researchers interested in symbolism at the end of the 1970s (Gagliardi, 2007). Until 1970, most organization and management studies were dominated by rationalist positivist paradigms: top of the agenda were objective measurable variables, which overlooked the ideational and symbolic approach of organizational life (Gagliardi, 2007: 335). Researchers interested in symbolism stated that organizations are "primarily cultures characterized by distinct local paradigms to be analyzed using holistic and interpretive research models" (Gagliardi, 2007: 335). At its inception, every productive practice has a practical and pragmatic need, so every productive practice is simultaneously symbolic. Since the early 1990s, organizational culture researchers have added one further component of human experience to the two main factors - beliefs (logos) and values (ethos)- they research: they have added taste (pathos). Gagliardi (2007: 336) notes that emphasis on pathos -the way we perceive and feel reality- together with the idea that tastes and sensory knowledge are at least as important as beliefs, values and intellectual knowledge, is characterised by three distinct research strands: artefacts and organizational aesthetics (Strati, 1992; Gagliardi, 1996); analysis of the role played by emotions in utilitarian organizations (Fineman, 1993); and the narrative approach to organization studies (Czarniawska, 1997).

Gagliardi (2007) points out, this focus on pathos prompted radical changes in subject, object and research methods. Impulse, emotion, and sensation, for example, have become legitimate objects of management inquiry. The tacit, local, and "hardly formalizable knowledge profoundly rooted in actions which cannot be transmitted through verbal language" became worth exploring as "researcher sensuality" and "intelligence of feeling" was opened up to give richer accounts of the expressive dimensions of organizational life (Gagliardi, 2007: 336-7). Research shows that the spaces we occupy say something about us (Hanson & Altman, 1976; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Wells & Thelen, 2002; Kaya & Weber, 2003; Wells, Thelen & Ruark, 2007). Interest in the expressive dimension, twinned with such scholarly excavations of what our personal spaces (purportedly) say about us, all adds up to a growing interest in organizational space, and an

increasing realisation of the importance of place-making in organization studies. From this, space is not merely physical and carries symbolic meaning that is open to inquiry.

While there have been calls to “bring space back in” (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004) and more recently there have been reminders that it is now “time for space” (Taylor & Spicer, 2007), some (Cairns, 2002) have kept the issue of sp/pl/ace going, and in other literatures (Yanow, 1998; Hjorth, 2004) it has remained present. It is worth noting, however, that while these pockets (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004; Taylor & Spicer, 2007) have revived interest in sp/pl/ace, they are echoes of earlier works (Gagliardi, (1996), Strati (1992) and Cairns (2002). I now turn to managerial concerns regarding space, and particularly the effort to control place.

In sum, space has traditionally been the territory of those who seek to increase organizational performance through organization the space in which work gets done. But as has been argued here, space is formed through social interaction and carries symbolic meaning. It is not merely physical. For those interested in understanding the expressive (aesthetic) dimension (Strati, 1992) of organizational life, the spatial overlay of place has now become open to management inquiry.

## **2.2 Review of the control perspective in management (Theory 1)**

My overall aim in this section is to address the control perspective. Here, I introduce the notion of Taylorized space to illustrate what constitutes managerial control in workplace design. This section is organized around three principles which characterise the control perspective: (i) the separation of thinking and doing, (ii) specialisation, and (iii) the creation and maintenance of structure and control.

### 2.2.1. Introducing the type of control under review

Recalling Vischer’s (2005) work referred to earlier in this chapter, in discussions on workplace making there are two types of control: mechanical and procedural. This section puts procedural control under the microscope and looks at it from the managerial perspective. My purpose here is to explore the consequences of the control employers exercise over the type of workspace employees occupy.

### 2.2.2. Outlining the control perspective in management: three principles

The idea of managerial control is closely linked with the notion of hierarchy, super/sub/ordination and the willingness to give/follow orders. Subsequently, managerial control is based on three *principles*: (i) to separate thinking from doing; (ii) to promote specialisation, and (iii) to create and sustain structure and control. I will now address all three principles in turn. (These ‘principles’ are outlined below in Table 2 on page 35).

#### 2.2.2.1. To separate thinking from doing

Senior managers, residing at the corporate centre, or at the “strategic apex” (Mintzberg, 1979), analyse work that needs to be done. They proceed by breaking work down into its constituent components. Because work on the production line can be repetitive and therefore standardized, tasks are easily allocated to different people. On this, Guillen (1997: 693) observes that standardization of work “stressed careful selection of the most adequate worker for each task”. With certain workers being disposed to doing some jobs more effectively and efficiently than others, while employers (senior managers) conceive of work to be done, employees (workers) execute the work: employers think up the work, employees do the work. Such separation of work tasks, or the division of labour, means that the head is effectively severed from the hand, and with this separation, specialisation is needed. This is where a ‘champion’ who controls change might have their place. Pugsley & Haynes (2002: 35) note, to facilitate change, having a “champion can be an effective way of helping people learn new behavioural patterns, and move away from territorial thinking, by creating solutions tailored to the working needs of their group as a whole”. With control thinking, it is thus down to the “champion” to think about the working needs of the group not the individuals themselves.

#### 2.2.2.2. To promote specialisation

Since work is divided into a series of tasks, workers tend to focus on only one aspect of production. Based on the principle of linear flow, specialization ties workers to a machine (Guillen, 1997: 693), work is done at one fixed point before being passed onto the next. Each operator must be well trained in how to operate his/her machine, which therefore places a premium on training and educating employees in ‘the right way’. With such a heavy emphasis on training, both technical precision and accuracy become baseline employer expectations. The ultimate outcome of such a

fragmented, step-by-step process of production is an increased sense of order and control. This view can be seen in some of the literature on facilities management (Brooks, 1998: 77) which advocates the idea that the specialist “Ergonomic space-planning checklist” is a valuable resource when planning an office layout or other internal space. Similarly, the employment of specialists is also advocated by others (Ingrey-Counter & Biles, 1994) who note that external input is necessary for effective planning and preparation when relocating offices. Such input is required early in the process and can help provide a “detailed and systematic approach vital to success” (p.23). According to these authors, the client should retain control overall, but parts of the office relocation management can be covered by external input (p.22). This suggests the need for formally appointed internal project managers to liaise with external consultants and organise such inputs. For Bunning (1992), after all, planning -“the responsibility of senior line managers” (p.58) - matters to organizations because it appears to offer potential for improved organizational performance. Elsewhere in management thinking and planning, in the context of urban parking for example (see Kerley, 2007: 527), there is also a strong view that society (automobile drivers and the wider community) would benefit from specialist (i.e. government) intervention, and that “effective and rigorous control of parking is necessary, not just desirable”.

#### 2.2.2.3. To create and sustain structure and control

When all aspects of work are numbered, sequenced, and choreographed, and employees are graded, there is a sense of structure. Tannenbaum (1962: 241) observed, “Research on the authoritarian personality, for example, suggests that individuals who suffer anxiety because of a failure in their work may tend to prefer more structured authority relations”. As such, it is conceivable of situations where there is a demand for control ‘from above’ which is driven by employees themselves.

Structure can be experienced in two regards. First, with numbering and sequencing of activities, the order in which different work processes occur becomes clearer: every task has its own place and every person has his/her role to fulfil in the overall process. If it is known who is responsible for each stage in the work process, and what work happens where, production failures associated with particular stages can be attributed to specific individuals (or groups). Training, if necessary, can then be administered, stages can be added or removed (for example, to introduce a new product line), and people can be repositioned or replaced accordingly. Sequentially ordering work, which can involve

tying employees to workstations (Guillen, 1997: 693), might therefore help increase accountability, and it might eventually, help contribute to the development of organizational knowledge on specific aspects of work. Secondly, with the numbering of work tasks, people and processes, order is created in as much as it should make it easier to delegate work (work by numbers). This in turn, leads to improved organizational control, and should make initiating change easier than it would be without numbering. Structure, thus comes with imposed order, especially if there are no blockages in communication channels: managers can make decisions at the top of the organization (Hickson, 1987), and employees can then implement them at the bottom. Altogether, the upshot of the verbal caricature I have given here, is, efficiency, machine-like clarity, and above all, structure and control at the top of the organization.

The treatment of space in Millward *et al.*, (2007) provides an example of contemporary research that reflects this emphasis on the necessity for management to control sp/pl/ace in a physical manner. The authors identify organisational and team attachment as an aspect of organization life. They then examine the impact of physical arrangements (i.e. desk assignment versus nonassignment of desks) on such attachments in view to making these physical arrangements amenable to management control. Their findings suggest that:

...a decision not to assign employees to a specific desk does not have a socially marginalizing impact. However, they [i.e. findings] do point to the potential for hot desking to undermine team identity. Desk assignment appeared to advantage team identity over organizational identity, whereas having no assigned desk advantaged organizational identity over team identity. If organizations wish to distribute employees spatially and/or implement remote working, the potential to disturb team dynamics should be acknowledged, particularly in instances where *team working* is critical to performance (p.556).

For Millward *et al.*, after all, the way employees form their organizational attachments “matters to organizations because we know that attachments are pivotal to both the satisfaction and performance of employees” (p.547). Similarly, calls to create and sustain such structure and control by facilities managers can be seen in Gibson (2003). For Gibson (2003), there are numerous sources of flexibility regarding staff and property: for staff, flexibility can be found in contractual arrangements, time and location elements; for property, flexibility comes from financial contracts, physical layout, and functional opportunities. According to Gibson, it is the responsibility of the

corporate property and facilities managers to monitor these flexibility requirements which ensure locational freedom and the provision of appropriate workplaces (p.20).

In sum, creating and sustaining structure and control can be said to be the *raison d'être* of, for example, the management services we find in practitioner articles such as Lewis (2007). Here, the author advocates the idea that *access control software* can create “real financial benefits” (p.41) through creating hassle free parking solutions, time and attendance reporting, and power saving. Moreover, some authors point out that, with the rise of “funky offices” in the ‘new economy’ (van Meel & Vos, 2001), it is also clear that “managers have to get used to exercising a different kind of control” (Vos & van der Voordt, 2001: 54) to create and sustain structure.

#### 2.2.2.4. Illustrating control

The idea of tampering with process and the way work gets done is not new. There is a rich history of controlled approaches to change in management thinking. Business Process Reengineering, or BPR (Hammer, 1990) is one of them. This section identifies the presence of control in one example of thinking about organizing (process).

Hammer (1990) examined BPR in detail. According to Hammer (1990: 5), the key to reengineering business processes is to re-organize existing processes around outcomes, not tasks. The idea being that it should then be easier to spot (and remove) the *weeds* that appear between the cracks in the *pavement*. That is, organizing around tasks helps eliminate “discontinuous thinking” (Hammer 1990: 4) -the weeds- that can take hold between functional silos -the concrete slabs in the pavement. It would appear that the process of BPR, as a strategy for change, is aligned with the three principles of the control perspective, as outlined above. Let me explain.

With fewer stages in work processes and each stage clearly numerated, this in turn leads to a greater sense of control over work on the whole. From a managerial perspective, the pursuit of these three principles translates into improved territorial control: managers become more controlling as to who does what, where, and when. On this, wittingly or unwittingly, managerial interest in (i) separating thinking from doing; (ii) pursuing specialisation, and (iii) the desire to create ‘order’ provides little room for employees to exercise their own discretion (Guillen, 1997: 694) when it comes to deciding

upon the look and feel of their place of work. But does it have to be that way, i.e. that employees have no say in what their work environment feels and looks like?

There are many criticisms of the control perspective, which together, seem to suggest a need for an alternative. Before I head out into the terrain of possible alternatives, however, I would like to take a closer look at the implications the control perspective might have on place making. Only then will I be in a position to criticise the control perspective and the (potentially harmful) influence it has on place making.

### 2.2.3. Outline of the implications the control perspective has for managing place making

The three principles of the control perspective outlined above have several place implications. They are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Place implications of the control perspective

<b>Management principle</b>	<b>Implications for place making</b>
1) Separate thinking and doing	Managers conceive space requirements and do space planning. They deliver space to employees; that is, managers think-up the look and feel of spaces for employees to occupy, while employees 'do' the occupying
2) Promote specialisation	Managers solicit the help of experts (e.g. members of an in-house facilities management -FM- team, architects, space planners, interior designers, environmental psychologists, etc) to develop space strategies
3) To create and sustain structure and control	Managers (perhaps with the help of experts) make decisions on spacing and the ordering of both work tools and cultural artefacts. Managers train employees on the 'correct' use of space, and they promulgate organizational rules, and routines, on how to maintain clean and tidy workspaces in order to work efficiently. Employees, on the other hand, are 'thrown' (Weick, 2004) into workspaces and expected to passively 'respond' to the physical environments they are given

In sum, the control perspective praises the idea of *the* centralised, omnipotent decision maker / space-maker, removed from the day-to-day, moment-to-moment issues arising from sharing and occupying space with others. Being emotionally disengaged allows the decision maker to make optimizing decisions with regard to space allocation (Liedtka & Mintzberg, 2006). Since the control perspective assumes that workplace is static and permanent, and place is not significant, there is an implicit assumption that when the finishing touches have been made, and the one best way has been implemented, then decision makers can stand back and “point to a completely installed scheme and say, ‘Look, it is done;’” (Vischer, 1995: 40). The assumption here is that the control perspective improves decision making. It is important at this stage to distinguish between the difference in the content of decision making involved in managing *workspace* and the type of decisions involved in managing *workplace*. Vischer (2005: 45) writes,

Managers face a dilemma in situations of workspace transformation. On the one hand, they must respond to corporate pressures for rational decision-making, reducing costs, centralizing locations and other rational criteria. We might characterize this as managing *workspace*. On the other hand, managers must also be aware of the meaning people attribute to the space they occupy, and the emotional power of space symbolism. We characterize this as managing *workplace*.

The control perspective focuses on the rigorous management of workspace but it is mute on issues relating to managing workplace. This study is a focused research project on managing workplace making.

### **2.3 Critical perspectives on the role of control in workplace making**

I am now going to critique the control perspective and the (potential) influence it has on workplace making. In this section I will draw on different literatures to make three main criticisms of it. I draw on (i) organization studies, (ii) human geography, and (iii) decision making<sup>5</sup> literatures to make more general criticisms of ‘control’ reasoning in workplace making. As criticism against the control perspective can be found across these three literatures, I cross-fertilise them to support each criticism and expand our current awareness of the range of the concept and its organizational relevance. I have developed the structure of these criticisms, rather than adopting a structure that is pre-existent in the literature.

#### 2.3.1. We are all place makers

Liedtka & Mintzberg (2006) note that “a controlled process” resolves the spatial design tension *who designs?* by “coming down heavily in favour of the designer’s global knowledge and expertise”. While such an approach assumes the centrality of one place-maker, it might overlook the complexity of place making and hence oversimplify the process of bringing a place into being. The idea of adopting a “formulaic approach” (cited in Liedtka & Mintzberg, 2006) might seem attractive at first, because it means that the solution to workplace design issues can be found inside the mind of a single individual, often an expert. But place making does not seem to happen like that: we are all place makers (Tuan, 1991; Gieryn, 2000, 2002; Sack, 2004). Following on from this, in lived

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<sup>5</sup> Decision making is an established branch of research within the field of organization studies.

situations on the ground, place making might not be as orderly and straightforward as the control perspective seems to purport. Citing others, Gieryn (2000: 471 with my adaptation in *italics*) writes,

Places are endlessly made, not just when the powerful pursue their ambition through brick and mortar, not just when design professional give form to function, but also when *ordinary people* extract from continuous and abstract space a bounded, identified, meaningful, named, and significant place.

### 2.3.2. Place making is never done

The control perspective assumes that once the place maker adds his / her finishing touches, place is done once and for all (Vischer, 1995). But the construal of place making as a one-off activity is questionable because place making is an ongoing, living process (Gieryn, 2000), and “[R]etrofitting begins almost immediately after the Dedication Ceremony” (Gieryn, 2002: 65), i.e. the move-in date. Sack (2004) observes, place making is best construed as a process similar to weaving. Place is the loom and we, the place makers, are the weavers: we weave elements of nature, social relations and meanings together to construct the social fabric of place. Given that there “are many weavers [i.e. place makers] with different views about what ought to be” (Sack, 2004: 250), continuous participation in place making on a day-to-day basis leads to “an existential relationship between place and time” (Sack, 2004: 251). In human geography this existential relationship is referred to as the geographical problematic. Sack (2004: 251) writes,

the problematic itself creates a continuous dynamic: if we cannot accept reality as it is and create places to make it into what we think it ought to be, then we will soon change these and so on.

In short, this means that place making is not a one-off activity, rather, it is an ongoing activity we constantly engage in.

Gieryn (2002) studied the design, construction and operation of a single new biotechnology research centre (the Cornell Biotechnology Building- CBB) in Ithaca, New York, to explore issues of structuration and reproduction. Using concepts borrowed from constructivist studies of technology to develop a better understanding of design, he examined how the stabilization of biotechnology was accomplished. Gieryn (2002) argued that new games, new players, and new rules turn something ephemeral into social structure. His analysis was organized around three moments in the

CBB's lifecycle, as it moves from agency, to structure, to agency. Social relations end up getting "... "built-in" and stabilised – but impermanently so" (p.36). As the first moment for negotiation and choice expires, the interests of designers get "etched" into the walls, floors, ceilings, and doors (p.60). "Human agency is most obvious during the design of a place [i.e. moment one]" (p.53). Then, in "moment two", the designers are in the hands of the building, it is they who are "bent and shaped to meet its requirements" (p. 60). Here, the building gradually becomes "impervious to alternation [...] making it difficult to conceive of other arrangements of architectural spaces -which are, at the same time, social relations" (p.60-61). In this second 'moment', then, people are shaped by the choices that have been solidified in floor plans, ceilings, walls and doors. Such choices conceal the possibilities that never happened (and why), (adapted from p.65). Then, in "moment three" (p.62) "every once in a while, somebody is forced to reconsider (and justify) how the building came to be this way" (p.65): "agency returns to people when the building is narrated and reinterpreted – discursively made anew" (p.53). As buildings are reinterpreted anew, they are "transformed by mere words and images" (p.65), meaning is pried open to display the only permanence a building has: interpretive flexibility (p.65). In short, "we mold buildings, they mold us, we mold them anew...." (p.65).

### 2.3.3. Users expect more control

The control perspective assumes that even if users have their own ideas for how their workplace should look and feel, those at the top of the organization know what is best for the business. In this view, it does not matter if the employee (user) likes what employers have to offer in terms of accommodation, employees get what they are getting because employers think it is right for them. The control perspective, thus, denies people (users / employees) the right to influence the design of their working environment during both moment one, and moment three.

Based on professional judgements of others, some argue, however, that this view is questionable because users *should* (Neumann, 2000) have the right to influence the shape of the environment in which they do their work. In consumer societies where users see themselves as choice makers because choice and freedom is expected (Gabriel, 2006), controlling where people work (how it feels and how it looks) as if this is not the case means 'control' reasoning will fail. Support is found for this argument in the facilities management (practitioner) literature. Based on his own observations from having worked in the building industry for many years, McGregor (1994: 23-24) notes, whereas

yesteryear business leaders might have been willing to accept whatever the landlord had to offer, and users got whatever their employer gave them; nowadays, users increasingly “expect far greater control over their work environment”.

If users are to expect greater control over their work environment, then they need to be involved in place making. In order to engage people properly in ongoing decision making processes, there is a need for an appropriate and effective voice institution to be put in place, one which moves and grows through time. The subject of engagement, as an alternative to the control perspective in place making, is the issue to which I turn in section 2.4.

#### 2.3.4. Critical takes on the three management principles of the control perspective

The purpose of this section is to highlight the shortcomings of the control perspective. I have reproduced Table 2 from page 35 by way of a reminder of the three management principles which undergird the control perspective. To this table I have also added, by way of summary, a third column (Table 3) in which I have outlined critiques that can be levelled at these three principles. These critiques are then explained thereafter.

Table 3: Critique of the place implications of the control perspective

<b>Management principle</b>	<b>Implications for place making</b>	<b>Critique</b>
1) Separate thinking and doing	Managers conceive space requirements and do space planning. They deliver space to employees; that is, managers think-up the look and feel of spaces for employees to occupy, while employees ‘do’ the occupying	Separation of thinking and doing is problematic because it removes the possibility and potency of learning from experience and shaping space on the basis of experiential task understanding
2) Promote specialisation	Managers solicit the help of experts (e.g. members of an in-house facilities management -FM- team, architects, space planners, interior designers, environmental psychologists, etc) to develop space strategies	The specialist approach incorporates a view of task-space function, and may incorporate user-views, but will tend to do so in a vicarious way -i.e. the views of users are projected, interpreted and mediated by experts. More often than not, however, user views are not incorporated at all
3) To create and sustain both structure and control	Managers (perhaps with the help of experts) make decisions on spacing and the ordering of both work tools and cultural artefacts. Managers train employees on the ‘correct’ use of space, and they promulgate organizational rules, and routines, on how to maintain clean and tidy workspaces in order to work efficiently. Employees, on the other hand, are ‘thrown’ (Weick, 2004) into workspaces and expected to passively ‘respond’ to the physical environments they are given	Although both physical and social structures may have the appearance of stability, they are both subject to entropy, atrophy, and change. Hence, to ‘hold things the same’ will require considerable effort. The circumstances / environment are likely to be changed, and hence it should not be assumed that a stable space / social arrangement will always be effective

#### 2.3.4.1. A missed opportunity

Shaping places according to a set of pre-existing principles, rather than emerging from a more open-ended process of experimentation consciously resists attempts at adaptation (Liedtka & Mintzberg, 2006). For Liedtka & Mintzberg (2006), because users possess local tacit understanding, they should drive the design (build) process. In this view, inhabitants are cast as experienced users of (work)space. From a practical point of view, in terms of task-space requirements, employees intuitively know, from ongoing experience, what ‘works’ and what does not ‘work’, -i.e. they know what hinders their ability to do work (Yanow, 2004). But when space is conceived by managers (perhaps with the help of experts) and delivered to employees, it overlooks this kind of learning. “Total planning” therefore, can “alienate us”, and such detachment from the users -the people who live with the design- can thus be a “potentially fatal flaw” (Liedtka & Mintzberg, 2006). As users, the authors write, “most of us crave familiarity, not novelty”. There might, therefore, be organizational advantages to be accrued from relaxing managerial control and transferring (some of the responsibility for) the shaping of the workplace to users on the ground where experiential task understanding (learning) occurs. Moreover, in the context of an office relocation, when managers assume that they know what is needed in terms of the look and feel of a workspace, it removes the opportunity for new work patterns and practices to emerge through experiencing a place in community, over time (Orlikowski, 2004).

#### 2.3.4.2. Listening without hearing

From an expert systems approach, primacy is given to specialist knowledge over user knowledge (Cairns & Beech, 1999). Experts speak in terms of rules and principles showing that they are well versed in delivering ‘scientific’ knowledge as evidence that such and such is the case. The irony is however, that “some wise but honest experts are ignored” for they lack the appropriate theory, or language, to explain the rules underpinning their rationality (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005: 790). The authors continue, “Form becomes more important than content” (p.790). But listening while not hearing *and* incorporating user knowledge acquired from being involved in the activities of everyday living might prove to be detrimental to organizational performance. It is conceivable of instances where efficient, effective, *and* expressive workplaces are brought into being without the involvement of design experts in the conception and fit-out of workspace. This is not to say that specialists are not the right people to be making workplaces, rather, specialists do not necessarily have the monopoly over knowledge inputs. The expertise embedded in local knowledge on what it takes to

make efficient/effective/expressive workplaces “resides in intimate familiarity with and understanding of the particulars of the local situation” (Yanow, 2004: 12). It does not take only specialists to make good workplaces.

#### 2.3.4.3. What ‘works’ today might not necessarily ‘work’ tomorrow

Organizations operating in turbulent or dynamic environments are pulled in two directions (Sine *et al.*, 2006, citing Burns & Stalker, 1961 and Stinchcombe, 1965). On the one hand, they must maintain a lack of formally defined tasks (structure) in order to respond quickly to changes in the environment. On the other, one of the key reasons why new organizations in new economic sectors are at a disadvantage, compared to older organizations, is their lack of structure. “Formalised organizational roles [structure]”, Sine *et al.*, (2006: 122) write, “reduce work ambiguity, enable individual focus, learning, and decision making, decrease the cost of coordination, and increase efficiency”. Work environments, then, need to be stable, but not too stable; for frozen monolithic structures might lead to organizational inertia: when the organization needs to move, it may be laden with burdensome artefacts and rigid social relations.

Where does all this lead us? If criticisms of the control perspective invoke the need to engage users, we now need to acquire a full appreciation for what it would be like to experience multiple voices, all speaking at the same time during place making. How might we conceptualise place making together? Thus, it is to the subject of engagement in the context of place making that I turn in the next section.

## **2.4 An alternative approach to place making? (Theory 2)**

In this section I review decision-making and design management literatures and call upon insights gleaned from the literature on the construction industry to explore how theorists and practitioners have dealt with issues regarding engagement in decision-making processes. Organizational leaders, for example, might not allow employees to exercise control over what work gets done, but they may allow employees to exercise control over *how* and *where* it gets done. If so, employees are said to be engaged in the design of the physical environment.

Despite appearing to be an advocate of engagement / participation / involvement in decision making on work-space issues, in some of Vischer’s earlier (1995: 36) and more recent (2007: 72)

work, it is not easy to see exactly how much control and decision taking (degree A) users experience during the place-making process. In all likelihood it is the expert who acts as the main provider of knowledge-inputs and at best, the user only reaches degree B in terms in Neumann's (2000) range of participation in decision making (see Figure 2, page 45). A close look at the control issue in Vischer (2007) through the lens of Cairns & Beech (1999) thus gives a powerful illustration of the need to both "make overt, and equalise, the relationships" in place-making, and to recognize "participants as [each] having expertise in their own area, whether that be as a user, a manager, or a consultant" (Cairns & Beech, 1999: 21).

#### 2.4.1. Engagement *versus* consultation

Vischer (1996, 2007) is an advocate of user involvement. However, there appears to be a fundamental flaw in her theoretical formulation. Writing from a "user involvement" perspective, Cairns & Beech (1999: 15) observe, although Vischer (1996) does not explicitly state it, it is implied in her writing that there is no room for users to provide knowledge inputs, or expertise, in the generation of work-space solutions. This absence of user involvement is also present in her 2007 work on workplace design. Cairns & Beech (1999: 15, my emphasis) note, users provide only *feedback* and *data* on design ideas that have been developed by others. For Vischer, this *feedback* is vital for expert "delivery" of new work-spaces. Vischer writes (2007: 72, my emphasis in bold/italics),

The key to designing a performing workspace is ongoing and reliable feedback from users on their levels of physical, functional, and psychological comfort, and ***applying*** this feedback systematically to workspace planning and design.

This invites the question, who is doing the "applying"? In Vischer (2007) there is no indication that it is the users themselves. Although supposedly "involved", the image of the occupier we are left with here is an expert-servant. In light of Cairns & Beech (1999), it would appear then, that, their very same critique of Vischer (1996) is equally applicable to Vischer (2007). The authors write,

There is no indication that the users will provide expertise in generation of solutions, only that they will provide data and information input to the experts' creative process, and be invited to comment on the expert-generated solutions (Cairns & Beech, 1999: 15).

Is providing feedback really participating (engaging) in workplace making? Engagement involves ‘doing’ and ‘making’ and ‘shaping’ material arrangements, and changing things through time. Engagement provides opportunities for learning over time, and it means placing the entire responsibility for the look, feel and ‘workings’ of the surroundings on peoples’ shoulders. Engagement, then would involve all the actions a person might take in order to create and fashion a work-space as s/he wills it to be and believes it ought to be, only to change thereafter, again and perhaps again. The image of involvement one is left with here is one of genuine engagement (Neumann, 2000), whereby the user is present during idea generation, and generally involved in the ‘thick’ of place making activities; in the place among the people who create meaningful connections between objects, people, activities and space.

From a design perspective, providing only feedback is not designing. Inviting conversations between all who might be affected by a new design, and engaging (not merely consulting) ‘users as experts’, on a level footing with ‘designers as experts’ makes users active shapers of the physical environment: users become fully engaged in the design process. Liedtka & Mintzberg (2006) note that “Being a part of the conversation broadens, educates, and involves people, so they are more likely to embrace the envisioned future”. Although “The inclusion of nonexperts brings valuable ownerships and local knowledge”, Liedtka & Mintzberg (2006) observe that it “may also bring chaos and mediocre solutions”. They go on to note that “Getting more-innovative thinking from users themselves” (i.e. How designing happens) is part of the “Who designs?” tension. If users of workspaces (nonexperts) are all designers, how users design becomes a major challenge.

There are some indications in the design literature as to how designing *with* users might be improved. Building “rapid” prototypes (Brown, 2005: 4; Coughlan & Prokopoff, 2004: 191), “experience prototyping” (Suri, 2003: 47), “learning from enactment” (Orlikowski, 2004: 94), that is, learning from doing, are fundamental features of designing. Relinquishing (managerial) control builds on notions of “social design” (Sommer, 1983), “inclusion” (McGregor, 1994; Cairns & Beech, 1999; Liedtka & Mintzberg, 2006), and “participatory design” (Muller, Wildman & White, 1993). It also implies conversation (Nelson, 2004).

But Vischer’s (1996) model seems to fly in the face of what those have said with inclusivity concerns (McGregor, 1994; Cairns & Beech, 1999; Muller *et al.*, 1993; Liedtka & Mintzberg, 2006). Vischer

(1999) also ignores Nelson's (2004: 266) invitation to what he calls "shared vision leadership". In short, Nelson's (2004: 267) shared vision is taken as the outcome of social interaction, and not the outcome of a single "heroic" leader. Nelson's view is thus aligned with the view that internally-generated ideas derived from "sensible knowing" (Strati, 2007) produce "actionable discourses" (Gergen, 2003: 454). Rather than expert (external) Knowledge on workplace design being implemented, only to be interpreted in ways not originally intended by the design creator(s), ideas generated from the *inside* of social interactions are immediately actionable because they (design ideas) are couched in the frame(s) of reference of the users themselves; hence sensible knowing. This invites the question; does being in the place among people -where meaningful connections are made from the *inside*, within the action of place making itself- constitute engagement?

#### 2.4.2. Engagement from 'inside'

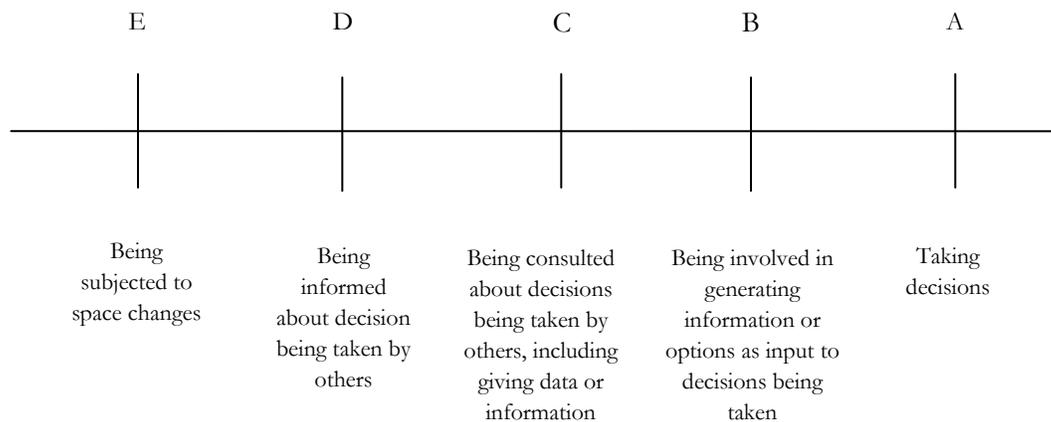
Participation (or engagement) was a major concern for Neumann (2000). Driven by performativity concerns, in Neumann (2000) he set out to examine how "involvement can help the construction industry to make a positive contribution to workplace productivity" (p.322). He (2000: 316) observes that "mechanisms for effective participation have been tested for decades in other industries – notably manufacturing – and can readily be introduced into construction". I would add that these "mechanisms for effective participation" might be readily introduced into workplace making. Neumann (2000: 317) continues, "Many lessons have been learned by those in other industries who have worked extensively with involvement and consultations processes". Based on 29 years of consultancy experience, working as an applied social scientist (Neumann, 2000: 310), he draws on his earlier work (Neumann, 1989, 1995) and Miller (1990) to detail three of those lessons which he feels are of particular importance to the construction industry. The three lessons, he writes (2000: 317, my emphasis in italics), can be summarised in a general principle: *involvement in design and construction processes should be genuine, appropriate and interconnected*. These lessons might also apply to workplace making. I will now summarise each lesson accordingly, and explain how it might relate to workplace making.

*Lesson one:* Genuine involvement, Neumann (2000: 317) writes, requires participation "only to the degree that their (user) participation will really make a difference". Genuine involvement is "a process of matching participation with actual authority available to groups or managers and employees by virtue of their hierarchical or occupational position, or by powers invested in them by

others whose hierarchical positions makes it possible” (p.317-318). Following on from that, Neumann (1989: 318) writes, “One of the main reasons why people do not participate when given the chance is that the participation on offer is not real. That is, managers or employees feel that they are being asked their opinion but no one will take notice”. Deconstructing the power dynamics underlying the invitation to genuine involvement would reveal that the person(s) who decides who has the potential to “make a difference” is imbued with power. Bacharach & Baratz (1962) call this the “second face” of power.

Participation in decision-making is best construed in terms of varying degrees of involvement. For this I call upon, and reproduce (Figure 2), Neumann’s (2000: 318) “Continuum of degrees or range of participation in decision making”:

Figure 2: Continuum of degrees or range of participation in decision making



It is of note that at degree A, “there is no difference between participation and taking decisions” (Neumann 2000: 317), and taking decisions implies action. Furthermore, I have extended, and therefore revised this continuum by adding a fifth degree (Degree E) of participation. This extension is required in order to include such approaches to space change as those we have already seen (see page 22 of this thesis) in Cairns (2002: 809) for example. The difference between Degree D and Degree E participation is, that, whereas occupiers are informed about decisions that have been taken by others in Degree D; in Degree E, occupiers are “subjected” to space change whereby they are not even given the opportunity to understand what decisions have been made for them.

Occupiers begin to understand what is happening when they arrive at work and they are escorted to their *new* work space by a guide.

*Lesson two:* “Appropriate involvement refers to some degree of participation that makes sense in the light of the content of the decision and its actual relevance to the individuals or groups being invited to participate” (p.318). Neumann presents a circle of concentric rings as a way to think about this, with the individual and his/her work at the centre; the individual or group and those s/he interacts with (for belonging) in the second ring, and the individual or group as related to other groups in the larger organizational picture in the outermost, third ring.

Regarding the first (inner ring), Neumann writes (2000: 318), “Design and construction issues, for example, that are going to affect the individual and his or her work directly are those in which the individual will most probably want to have a say”. Regarding the second ring, the individual has a concern for the group s/he belongs to. Lastly, the third ring, “symbols of relatedness” (p.319) like size of office, differentials in furniture and view give people an indication as to where they fit in the larger organizational picture. “Relatedness means the fantasies and projections that groups have about each other in a complex social system; those perceptions, feelings and opinions that are not necessarily based on face-to-face interaction but have to do with symbols and stories” (p.319).

*Lesson three:* Important interconnections between construction decisions and organizational concerns are called out when genuine and appropriate involvement occurs in decision making processes on workplace design. “The sort of issues indicated certainly will relate to the larger organization as a social system [...] there may well be implications for job and organizational design in terms of flow of communication and tasks. These may have knock-on effects in terms of training and development for implicated groups” (p.319).

From all this, it can be seen then, that, the words ‘consultation’ (degree D and degree C), ‘engagement’ and ‘involvement’ (degree B) and ‘decision taking’ (degree A) are labels for describing the various degrees, or range, of participation in decision-making. They are useful for helping us to think about user participation in workplace making issues. The varying degrees of participation (A, B, C, D) might also serve as a starting point to help conceptualise what circumstances might be like when people come together to do things in organizational settings through talk (Boden, 1994;

Samra-Fredericks, 2003). The idea of degrees (A, B, C, D) of participation might help us to think about the type of conversations that need to be had in order to involve everybody in shaping communal workspace, and the kinds of real, tangible places that need to be created in order to support those conversations about space. In the paragraphs which follow, by calling upon an example found in the literature (Syrett & Lammiman, 2002), I seek to provide an indicative outline of the types conversations, and the type of physical space that is conducive to engagement. How is engagement done?

#### 2.4.3. Example: practicing engagement in decision-making on workspace issues

Syrett & Lammiman (2002) provide an example of employee involvement based on “intellectual engagement” (p.93) in workplace design. The case illustrates the centrality of a “facilitating style” (p.94) in dealing with dissensus which can arise during polyphony. Syrett & Lammiman (2002: 92) observe, “Chris Byron was the manager chosen by BA to lead the team constructing its new Waterside headquarters” for delivery of the £200m project (p.45) in October 1998 (p.95). For the authors, it was Byron’s choice of team members that, in part, led to the success of the project (delivery on time and high scoring in self-reported employee satisfaction surveys). Instead of opting for “high-flyers”, Byron invited “people whose enthusiasm for the project was based on intellectual engagement rather than corporate ladder climbing” (p.93). The kind of people Byron was looking for enjoy the challenge of solving “wicked” problems (Rittel & Webber, 1984). Their motivation for being included in the workplace change project is autotelic.

Regarding Byron’s facilitating style, the authors note, “Where disagreement between team members raised issues of long-term significance, Byron would organize an away-day [...] to thrash it out. This emphasis on consensus”, they write, “paid off” (p.94). Obtaining such consensus takes time and patience, and Byron’s leadership style reflected this: “It was on site [...] and highly inclusive” (p.93). In Byron’s own words (cited on p.95),

We did not work to a rigid time scale. I did not try to drive things through like a professional chairman because railroading of this kind leaves a lack of real consensus that has a habit of jumping back at you further down the line.

Byron’s commissioning of specialists is also worth noting. It challenged the received wisdom of “appointing technical experts as project leaders, on the grounds that they will command greater

respect among their peers” (p.94). As argued by Syrett & Lammiman (2004), this way of thinking is “often flawed” (p.94). The broad vision of the project was to enable people “to work more collaboratively” (p.95). Byron used this vision as “the final arbiter in settling disputes between specialists on the team”. Again in his own words (p.96),

Whenever someone proposed something that pushed the boat out too far for other people’s comfort, I would place the vision in front of them and ask how or whether their proposal would further its aims. If they make the link, it was actively considered. If they couldn’t, it was thrown out.

The authors go on to note, in this way, specialist perspectives were not allowed to distort the overall aims of the project, but focused on how to implement them (adapted, p.96).

#### 2.4.4. Critical perspectives on the role of engagement in decision-making

As I have argued above, inclusivity in place-making calls forward “conversational space” (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000; Cunliffe, 2001; Shotter & Cunliffe, 2002). While Vischer’s (2007) model of strategic work-space planning seems to point in the right direction, it does not create adequate conversational space to support ‘degree A’ (Neumann, 2000) participation in decision making on workplace issues. In Vischer’s (2007) model there is no room for organizational leaders (decision takers) to speak *with* and act alongside sophisticated users who expect greater control (McGregor, 1994: 24) over their work environment. Without “seeing the face and hearing the voice” (Shotter, 2001), that is, being in conversation “...in a place among people” (Nelson, 2004: 261), there is no possibility of arriving at a workplace solution *together* (Shotter, 2006: 600).

Externally-generated (by expert consultants) workplace solutions deny the user any real “sense of place” (Mack, 2007). Some writers on work sp/pl/ace design go so far as to say that “A company should never outsource workplace making to external experts, as to do so is to outsource the knowledge and the ability to use space as a production resource over time” (Granath, 1999: 152). In implementing expert-led workplace solutions, organizational leaders might ‘deliver’ spaces for work to users, *à la* Vischer (2007: 72), whereby the user becomes a *recipient* of space. But such strategies of work-space planning belong to the “heroic” (Cairns & Beech, 1999: 14) category of leadership models which can give way to loneliness (Verney, 1969: 17) and isolation (Brown, Lawrence & Robinson, 2005: 587) because the user feels that s/he does not belong, and that nobody cares about

his/her wellbeing. What might be lacking in engagement is a ‘strategic void’, or an “absence of building” (Kornberger & Clegg, 2004: 1106)<sup>6</sup> which opens up possibilities for users to personalise, territorialise, and generally carve out a place (from space) for themselves. Findings reported in Gieryn (2002), Taylor (2002), HSE (2004), Kersley *et al.* (2004), DEGW (2004), and Coats & Max (2005), suggest that giving ‘voice’ and increased involvement in decision-making processes in workplace making processes can not only contribute toward improving wellbeing, health and job satisfaction; but all this can add up to better productivity and performance of economies on a wider scale<sup>7</sup>. On the individual, organizational and national scale, everybody stands to gain if we can successfully move our dreams for better places toward reality. Following on from this, here are some criticisms of the engagement approach supported in the literature.

#### 2.4.4.1. Resisting engagement: organizational silence

Given the right to influence the shape of their work environment, there would inevitably be some people who still prefer to be “done for” (Martin, 2002: 877). Some people are “hesitant to act” and display a socialised “passive” disposition because they have *learnt* to have others do things for them and have *them* take responsibility for *their* surroundings (Martin, 2002: 877). That is, to have others design and shape the spaces they dwell in. For some, life is much simpler, and easy that way; they prefer to be passengers, or passive participants in the hurly-burly of everyday life. Such people would blend into the background, they would employ background “knowing-how-to-cope” skills (Chia, 2004) to ensure that their voice remained unheard. Such behaviour has been described elsewhere in the literature as socialised / learned helplessness (Langer, 1989). Trompenaars & Hampden Turner (1997) found that people from different cultural backgrounds tend to experience varying degrees of a sense of control over the physical environment. It could be that those with an external locus of control, believing that they exercise little, if any control over their external environment, see no point in speaking up because they feel that they will have no influence on the production of space. Socialised helplessness and an external locus of control, might then, contribute to the choice to withhold voice.

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<sup>6</sup> Kornberger & Clegg (2004: 1106) suggest a need for an architecture which does not occupy an entire space and does not determine rooms for function. Calling upon Koolhaas, the authors suggest that buildings consisting of an “absence of building” open up new possibilities. Following Koolhaas, they write, we could call this a “strategy of the void”.

<sup>7</sup> This conjures up the notion of “spatial scales”, which were a concern for Spicer (see Spicer, 2006 for example).

While employees themselves might purposefully withhold their voice, organizational leaders and managers might wittingly or non-wittingly create a climate of organizational silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2000) by (a) centralising decision making, and (b) failing to provide formal feedback mechanisms. The need for centralised decision making is based on the belief that employees are not trustworthy and lack knowledge about what is best for the organization. Excluding employees from decision making is also a way to avoid dissent and negative feedback on decisions that have already been made (Rodriguez, 2004: 6).

#### 2.4.4.2. Garbage engagement

It has been argued that some people fight for the right to participate in organisational decision-making processes, but then they do not exercise it. People also choose to ignore information that is available, request more information, and then ignore that too (Hickson, 1987: 184). For Cohen *et al.*, (1972) organisational decisions are made the way they are: in chaos and disorganised order (i.e. an ‘adhocracy’), because internal organisational processes are sometimes not even understood by the organisations’ employees. From this, engagement mechanisms and the necessary voice institutions can be put in place, but there is no guarantee that employees will step forward, speak up, and make themselves heard.

Also, if and when employees appear engaged, it may only be an act to dupe others. Employees may create a “facade of conformity” (Hewlin, 2003) to give the impression that they embrace organizational values and are fully *engaged* in decision making on issues of organizational concern, but in fact, they might be experiencing internal conflict. When individuals experience conflict between organizational values and their own, they may create such facades by way of “masking one’s true self” (Hewlin, 2003: 634). This in turn will contribute to organizational silence. It can be argued, then, that, such “organizational silence can hinder decision quality because multiple perspectives and alternatives are not voiced” (Rodriguez, 2004: 6).

#### 2.4.5. On engagement (summary)

*The problem is the solution* (Drummond, 2001 : 153 original emphasis).

From Vischer (1996, 2007) to Syrett & Lammiman (2002), even if structures’ stability and coherence is short lived, the literature (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991; Collins & Poras, 1996; Nelson, 2004) makes

references to the notion that everything will come together if and when consensus is achieved. Conversation is often served up as a way of achieving such consensus. Somewhat ironically, however, the conversational approach is simultaneously the solution *and* the problem. An argument can be made that as a way of establishing lock-in, creating a sense of belonging, or promoting a way of dealing with loneliness and stress in the workplace -caused by a lack of control over other's access to oneself, conversation (that is, engagement, or degree A involvement) creates a whole host of attendant problems. The idea that engagement can create 'workable' workplace design solutions thus throws up problems of its own: how to manage different voices when everybody speaks out during engagement. When does the conversation end? Thus, it is to the subject of polyphony and the issue of managing multiple voices that I now turn.

## **2.5 Review of literature on 'polyphonic narratives' in organization theory (Theory 3)**

My overall aim in this section is to say something about a condition, namely polyphony, that arises when Neumann's (2000) "degree A" participation in decision making -otherwise known as the "knowledge-focused" (Cairns & Beech, 1999) model of decision making- is pursued as a discursive approach to workplace making. In the exposition that follows, I draw on ideas relating to polyphony, difference and multiplicity in order to elucidate the dialogical aspect of engagement. The polyphonic view of place making is critical of the control perspective because it acknowledges more than one voice. Unlike the control perspective which gives primacy to one omnipotent, all-knowing voice that produces space once and for all, polyphony acknowledges the role of others in interpreting and re-interpreting space.

An argument can be made that buildings are expressive and each tells a story of its own (Yanow, 1995, 1998). On this, buildings can be read like texts, interpreted and re-interpreted anew to create multiple, fragmented realities. But buildings never retain the original meaning their designers intended for them (Gieryn, 2002). Although workplace actors can be seen to adopt the same unitary rhetoric, the structures of meaning that emerge might not necessarily adopt the same unitary interpretation (Cairns & Beech, 1999). It is conceivable, then, of situations in which the "simultaneous validity of seemingly contradictory viewpoints is seen as normal, acceptable and productive" (Roberts, Beech & Cairns, 2001: 10). From this, it can be argued that buildings are for interpreting and as such, in this section, I aim to present the activity of managing workplace making as a discursive practice.

### 2.5.1. Introducing polyphony

In short, *poly* means ‘many’, and *phonic* means ‘voices’ (Kornberger *et al.*, 2006: 8). The theory of polyphony is not new. Developed by the Russian philosopher Bakhtin (1895-1975) “to analyze the multiplicity of voices in Dostoyevsky’s oeuvres”, it has been incorporated into organizational analysis for it “represents a rich concept with which to theorize language and organizations” (Kornberger *et al.*, 2006: 4). Polyphony was mainly introduced into the field of organization studies in the early 1990s, through the work of *Gestalt* therapist Mary Ann Hazen (1993). As noted by Belova *et al.*, (2008: 495-496), polyphony has since been incorporated into studies of strategy (Barry & Elmes, 1997) and globalization (Bouwen & Stayeart, 1999). More recently, polyphony has been incorporated into accountability theory (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007). Bebbington *et al.*, develop a critical dialogic approach that is a new (to accounting) theoretical perspective (p.356). Bebbington *et al.*, (2007: 361) draw on the dialogic education literature (namely Friere, 1970, 1994, 1998) to think about principles that could be applied to inform “on the ground” engagement processes in social and environmental accounting. Elsewhere in the management literature, Kornberger *et al.*, (2006) extend the idea of the polyphonic organization. Rather than describing or prescribing the importance of polyphony they “seek to address how polyphony might actually be managed” and they do this by “using linguistic concepts of deconstruction and translation, conceptualising management as a discursive practice” (Kornberger *et al.*, 2006: 5-6).

Cairns (2002) has written about polyphony in the context of the redesign of the physical layout in what seemed to be a “high road building” (Brand, 1995). Cairns focused mainly on “differences of reality(ies) of perception of workplace aesthetic” (p.812) that emerged as a result of enforced change / hierarchical control. Although Cairns did not use the word ‘polyphony’ himself, in his writing he portrayed the polyphonic organisational reality that emerged in response to *enforced* change, as in the control perspective outlined above. Apart from Baldry *et al.*, (1998) -who studied how employees experienced moving to a new building in three different cases- and Cairns (2002), there has been little work done on polyphony, in the context of engagement in decision making on design issues in workplace making. I will say more on this later.

Writing about organizational change, Hazen (1994: 72) highlighted the importance of recognizing that “...a multitude of persons and voices exists not only in every organization (Hazen, 1993), but

also in every one of us”. For Hazen, we need to get to know the multiple persons within each of us and learn from them, to recognize the “many eyes that see through ours” (Hazen 1994: 72, citing Hillman, 1983: 77). From this, Hazen’s thesis is simple: “We are able to be more effective organizational change agents as we become aware of, converse with and learn from the differences within us, various facets of ourselves” (p.72). In an attempt to get to know the many different “selves” within the “self” (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 366), Hazen (1994: 72) writes “from a number of different aspects of myself, a variety of voices and perspectives”: she uses five voices in total. They are, Voice One: Theory and Practice of Gestalt Therapy; Voice Two: Archetypal Psychology; Voice Three: Experience; Voice Four: Feminist, and Voice Five: Organizational Change Agent. As an organizational change agent, cherishing our multiple selves and becoming “more aware of various aspects of ourselves” is the first step to helping “facilitate clients to do the same”, which in turn helps “embrace diversity” (Hazen, 1994: 81). Drawing on Hazen (1993: 16), Clegg *et al.*, (2006: 15) report that, “if we conceive organization as many dialogues occurring simultaneously and sequentially, as polyphony, we begin to hear differences and possibilities”. They continue, “Polyphony does not deny power, but it does not assume domination either – it proposes that questions can be raised from the auspices of different rationalities” (p.15). Key to polyphony, then, is incorporating many voices from different people to become “co-authors in their collective actions” (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 364). Bebbington *et al.* continue, of cardinal importance is “the notion that it is possible to resolve the contradictions in different worldviews, not by denying their differences but by denying the invasion of one worldview by the other and identifying the support and commonality each worldview offers to the other” (p.364). For Bebbington *et al.*, (p.365) dialogic thinking accepts this “messiness” because it is an “essential way of engaging with lived reality”. Where does all this lead us?

### 2.5.2 Key moments in dialogic engagement

Polyphony draws on dialogic theory (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007) to affirm the importance of calling out multiple voices. Writers on polyphony accept, and even “cherish” (Hazen, 1994) difference. They accept that people have different histories, opinions, and preferences, and that these keep on changing as our identities change and change again. In their synthesis of a large literature on dialogic engagement, Bebbington *et al.*, (2007: 366-368) offer “seven key motifs for dialogic engagement” which offer an outline of some key moments in polyphonic events. They are: the possibility for human agency; the way language “works” in society; the formation of identity; the wider material

context in which discourses exist; institutional frameworks; epistemology; and the role of “experts”. I will now describe each dialogic moment in turn.

- (1) Starting from a constructionist perspective, dialogic theorists view reality as constructed by individuals, with possibilities for human agency. Places of work are humanly constructed physical structures, as are the social relationships contained within them; individuals tend to forget this and feel that places/relationships are unchangeable: “fixed, given and eternal” (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 366, citing Watson, 1987: 7). Dialogic theorists attempt to deconstruct this sense of powerlessness to reinstate a sense of agency.
- (2) On the way language works, Bebbington *et al.*, (2007: 366, citing Malloy, 2003: 96-7) note that “heterogeneous discourses are the norm [...] with schools, families, churches, clubs, the media, work groups, professional associations and social movements functioning as primary mediators for interpretive understanding”. Some groups are seemingly more powerful than others, and this leads to the privileging and silencing of particular discourses in different arenas. Dialogic theorists then seek to “focus on providing platforms for normally unheard voices to be heard” (p.366).
- (3) On community and identity. “We exist in a world of plural identities as a result of our ‘thrownness’ into social collectivities” (p.366). As Bakhtin (1981) points out, we have different “selves” within the “self” or group (p.366), so our identity is not singular. The dialogic character of individual and group identity means that we discover ourselves during communicative action, addressing ourselves to others.
- (4) On material context and power dynamics. Critical dialogic theorists insert the term “critical” to highlight power considerations: noting that “individuals are constrained by the interpretive frames they bring to a situation and these, in turn, depend on historical and structural circumstances”. Some people or groups are in a better position to influence what is regarded as “legitimate”, “normal”, or “reasonable” ways of viewing the world (p.367, citing Popkewitz, 1987: 5). Bebbington *et al.*, go on to note that “the privileging of particular discourses is also context dependent: a dominant perspective developed in one setting may be difficult to sustain in another” (p.367).

- (5) On institutional frameworks and democracy. Dialogic theory is based on the democratic traditions of Western society, and a central aim is to foster a critically reflective political process as the basis for ongoing transformative dialogue between citizens (p.367, citing others).
- (6) On epistemology. Monologic or univocal epistemologies seek to “blanket over” social diversity. A “closed sense of the world” is favoured over an ongoing, open-ended, “non-finalizable” view of meaning and understanding. A unitary view thus seeks closure, but in “polyvocal settings”, even “*agreement* [...] never leads to a *merging* of voices and truths in a single *impersonal* truth” (p.367 original emphasis, citing Bakhtin, 1984: 95).
- (7) On the role of experts. Dialogic participation increases the need to “open up issues for public discussion” (p.368). Dialogic experts require a more expansive understanding of rationality than the formulaic decision making associated with positivism (p.368, citing Giroux, 1983). “Dialogics seeks to demonopolize expertise and secure ease of access to information and understanding by non-experts” (p.368). In sum, experts need to recognize different types of expertise, and by taking a “not-knowing” approach, accept that they are also learners, and sometimes it might be fruitful to become a silent learner alongside non-experts (p.368).

Polyphony has come to “refer to the many voices that constitute organizations” and the idea of the polyphonic organization has come to “represent the variety of different discourses that constitute organizational reality” (Kornberger *et al.*, 2006: 4). Similarly, for Belova *et al.*, (2008: 493)<sup>8</sup> polyphony is defined as a “multiplicity of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses [...], each with equal rights and its own world [that] combine, but do not merge, into the unity of an event”. The notion of non-mergent, side-by-side voices cohabitating a conversational space is thus central to the Bakhtinian take on polyphony. With so many conversations, the polyphonic exchange makes for a situation with no central voice around which order -so desired by the control perspective- is established (Rodriguez, 2004: 4, citing Gergen & Whitney, 1996). With polyphony then, there is a

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<sup>8</sup> Citing her own translation of Bakhtin (1984/1994: 208/6)

non-finalizable view of meaning and understanding, which means that reality is shot through with multiple realities. When such realities are recounted in narrative form, reality becomes plurivocal.

Polyphony is a relevant and interesting theory with possible connections to workplace making in the following way. Whenever decision makers interfere with workplace design, they also interfere with psychological needs (Vischer, 2007a). As an unintended consequence of workplace change schemes that interfere with psycho-social needs, social bonds might need repairing. Rodriguez (2004: 22) notes, polyphony is desirable when there is a “strong need to build relations between employees”. In light of Vischer (2007), workplace making is one of those situations where there might be a strong need to maintain and / or build relations between employees. This is where polyphony comes in. Polyphony draws our attention to the *with-ness* (Shotter, 2006) aspect of organizational life, I want to thus review the idea of organizing from *within* the activity of organizing itself.

### 2.5.3. *With-ness* aspect of polyphonic events

There is a line of thought that one of the best ways to create and sustain polyphonic moments in organizing is by involving a researcher(s) in the processes being studied (Smith & Bugni, 2006; Bebbington *et al.*, 2007). If and when researchers are included, yet more voices will be present in dialogic exchange(s), more voices will exist side-by-side. Following on from that, having been actively included in the research (not just a passive, detached, distant observer), if the researcher then includes his/her voice in the research text, s/he effectively writes him / herself into the research process as well (I will return to this point in the methodology section -see pages 88-91). For Cunliffe (2002: 134), “The practice of social poetics repositions the researcher as someone who experiences the play of language and is therefore not separate from the process of meaning making”. On an analytical level, the researcher is thus on an equal playing field with his/her research participants.

Being included in the process of activity allows the researcher to affect the flow of processes through living involvement with them. This kind of responsive understanding only becomes available through relations with living forms when we enter into dialogically structured exchanges with them (Shotter, 2006). Participating in dialogue means to “ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds” (Shotter, 2006: 593, citing Bakhtin,

1984: 293). Following on from this, Shotterian (2006) thinking is shot through with a sense of space (p.595) and the idea that anything could happen (p.600).

“Already ongoing actions”, “living movements”, “unfolding bodily activity”, “living changes”, “dynamic interaction”, and “expressive-responsive relation[s] with others and otherness in our surrounding” are Shotterian (2006) ways of expressing witness. They all take place in a landscape of some sort. But what does this landscape resemble? One way to construe the landscape in which the many voices come together -with *non-vergenecce* (Belova *et al.*, 2008)- is through the *Tamara-Land* metaphor (Boje, 1995).

#### 2.5.4. Tamara

Kornberger *et al.*, (2006: 5) report that “The idea of polyphony is linked to other central currents in recent theory development, including the [...] metaphors drawn from avant-garde theatre”. This resource can thus be used to further conceptualise what it must be like to experience polyphonic events when people exercise “dialogic entitlements” (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 369) during workplace-making.

David Boje imported the word Tamara into organization studies in 1995 as a metaphor to describe a process whereby one story (or, event) unfolds in a given locale, but within that one space there are several smaller stories unfolding at the same time. In his 1995 article, Boje used the Tamara metaphor to draw our attention to the “contrary stories about Walt Disney and the so-called Magical Kingdom that do not fit the universal tale of happiness” (p.997). The Tamara, then, stands for giving voice to the unheard. Similarly, polyphony could be used to draw our attention to the contrary stories about workplace making that do not fit the “unitariness” of the control perspective.

Tamara is actually a play which takes place in a house with a number of rooms. The play is comprised of a specific number of acts and the number of rooms in the house is equal to the number of acts. Boje (1995: 999) writes, “If there are a dozen stages, and a dozen storytellers, the number of story lines an audience could trace as it chases the wandering discourses of *Tamara* is factorial (479,001,600)”. The somewhat unconventional aspect of the *Tamara-Land* play is that, “No audience member gets to follow all the stories since the action is simultaneous, involving different characters in difference rooms and on different floors” (p.999). Therefore, what members of the

audience hear and see is entirely determined by the route they take through the house, and how long they spend in each room. The story audience members construct, then, “depends upon the characters we follow from one episode to the next” (Boje, 1995: 1011). The author (designer / architect) therefore has no control over how the audience interprets ‘his/her’ artefact. The concept of “interpretive flexibility” captures the idea that the meaning of an extant artifact is contingent and variable, never fully determined by the intent of designers or by the technical requirement or capabilities of the machine itself. The idea that artifacts “represented different things to different people” is found consistently... (Gieryn, 2002: 44). From this, when two individuals follow similar - but different- paths, parallel stories (Boje, 1995: 1009) come into being. Could the experience of workplace making be described as a *Tamara*-like process?

What Boje’s use of *Tamara* helps bring to life is the notion of possibility<sup>9</sup> and the importance of time. The *Tamara*-Land metaphor also helps to illustrate the difficulty in constructing a universal (finalizing) account of the story(s) being told. It is impossible to be physically in many different places at the same time. Therefore, the reality (story) we experience at any one time is place/time-dependent. “A universal”, Boje (1995: 1024) notes, “is a grand principle, a sweeping statement designed to gloss over differences in other accounts”. If life is really like the *Tamara*, then ‘universals’ tell at best only partial truths about what really happens.

Does this mean that some accounts (of reality) are less true than others? *Tamara* shows it is not that certain versions are untrue, rather, that certain (finalizing) versions marginalize and eliminate “many characters with stories worth telling” (p.1022). In terms of workplace design, during occupancy (after ‘move in’ date) when retrofitting takes place, trying to make sense of all the changes going on would be analogous to making sense of a *Tamara* play. All this begs the question, where to now?

The *Tamara* approach seems to be an important path toward understanding the conversational / participatory / expressive-responsive arena in which decisions on place change unfurl. Acknowledging some of the place-sensitive issues highlighted by the *Tamara* metaphor might, therefore, produce more sp/pl/ace-aware inquiries in the study of the making of physical work

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<sup>9</sup> Things always could have been otherwise, if only a different path through the *Tamara* house had been taken.

environment. The Tamara metaphor might help us, as researchers, better understand how speakers / listeners / utterances / body / experience relate and interact with each other to create meaning.

My aim in this sort section has been to analyse Tamara's usefulness for understanding the conversational landscape in which workplace change takes place. I have shown the importance of relating to others during ongoing circumstances, and pointed to the participatory nature of place (meaning) making. Although the Tamara metaphor says a lot about the social dimension (relationships) of polyphony, it seems to say less on the physicality issue (materiality) of how audiences (people / users) on-the-ground contribute to the making of place.

I now want to address two questions in relation to polyphony: (i) what are the conditions of polyphony? and (ii) what are the consequences of polyphony. To answer these questions, in the next section I draw heavily on Rodriguez (2004).

#### 2.5.5. Conditions for polyphony

Polyphony arises whenever a dominant voice tries to enact a particular world-view, either within organizations in general or when the voice is projected organizationally on to a wider world, and that voice is resisted (Kornberger *et al.*, 2006: 9).

This section explores the conceptual building blocks for creating platforms for unheard voices to be heard. Seeking out other voices requires courage, openness, trust, and willingness to learn. Possibly, one of the best ways to solicit other voices is to ask questions. After seeking other voices, these voices then need to be valued. Valuing other voices thus, requires respect, and most importantly, that the other person be treated as a human being. Having sought and valued other voices, "one needs to be able to truly listen in order to benefit from the experience" (Rodriguez, 2004: 16). Without listening, one cannot accurately hear the other's voice. Willingness to listen is a central issue in polyphony (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 368). Bebbington *et al.*, (2007: 369) write, "dialogic social structures (for example, relating to education, corporate governance, public policy, political institutions) can support change by encouraging critical reflection". An important condition of polyphony is thus listening to others "even if what is said conflicts with the ideas of those who are in power" (p.17). Rather than blanketing over difference, polyphony draws it out, which can often give rise to dissent.

The polyphonic moment therefore calls upon participant's abilities to suspend judgement and not to point out flaws or criticise the ideas of others. Judgement can incite defensiveness and make the speaker reluctant to share his/her ideas with others. It is important then to celebrate difference, and conflicting points of view. Without difference, polyphony will not flourish (citing Hazen, 1993). Amidst difference, self-confidence is therefore crucial to sustain the polyphonic moment.

Conversely, an aggressive stance toward difference erodes the possibility of learning, can destroy friendships and remove the likelihood of developing a sense of community (Rodriguez, 2004: 20). As divergent views enter the conversation, it is central to the concept of polyphony that different voices are equally valued, remain independent and non-mergent (Belova *et al.*, 2008). "Without equivalence in voice, the voices of those in power limit the contribution of marginal voices" (Rodriguez, 2004: 21). In sum, polyphony, then, is all about defending against a totalising, unifying meaning of the world. Difference is to be welcomed and treated as a resource, rather than something to be overcome (Rodriguez, 2004: 4).

#### 2.5.6. Consequences of polyphony

Because of the existence of multiple and sometimes conflicting viewpoints, polyphony can enhance group decision quality (Rodriguez, 2004: 22). Conflicting viewpoints make it more likely that there is critical analysis and engagement with, what at first glance, are seemingly irreconcilable ideas. When people confront such challenges they generate new meanings. In the literature on organizational creativity, this is often referred to as 'creative abrasion'.

Perhaps most pertinent to my current study, Rodriguez (2004: 23, citing Lind & Tyler, 1988) observes that work on polyphony "further indicates that employees' need for control is unmet when they are denied the opportunity to voice". This in turn, as noted earlier in this chapter can lead to "lower internal motivation and satisfaction, psychological withdrawal, and even turnover" (Rodriguez, 2004: 23). Giving voice is thus an important way to give employees a sense of control over their work environment; it also goes some way toward ensuring, through involvement and participation, that people "feel wanted and have a sense of self-worth" (Rodriguez, p.24). Moreover, involvement and participation can help affirm that one's voice and identity matter, and build camaraderie. When people's concerns and fears are ignored or inadequately addressed during

significant workplace change (during a merger for example), “people undergo a form of psychological withdrawal, where their ability to make creative contributions in their daily work is undermined” (Syrett & Lammiman, 2002: 84).

By way of concluding this section on polyphony, it would seem that organizing is synonymous with managing multiple voices. Managing polyphony then, becomes a central challenge for managers. Clegg *et al.*, (2006: 14) put this challenge somewhat more eruditely; they write, “From a polyphonic perspective, organizations and the arena in which they are constituted can be considered as discourses that manifest themselves in particular instances of voice”.

The notion of voice (e.g. engagement / “degree A” decision taking) implies dialogue. And there are only small steps from both Clegg *et al.*’s., (2006) writing on polyphony, and Bebbington *et al.*’s., (2007) writing on engagement, to writings on dialogically structured events. Cunliffe (2001) examined in depth the dialogic approach, thus it is to the subject of Cunliffe’s contribution that I turn in a later section. The issue of how organizational space is polyphonically brought into being is the subject to which I now turn.

#### 2.5.7. Example: performing the polyphonic production of space

Here I want to bring out the polyphonic dimension of the production of space by calling upon an example reported in the literature (Gieryn, 2002). In Gieryn’s example, as I have already mentioned, many voices come together -without merging- to bring a place into being. There are indeed other examples of place making reported in the literature (i.e. Dobers & Strannegård, 2004; Watkins, 2005)<sup>10</sup> which could have equally been used to illustrate the point that, from the polyphonic perspective, *space* (a building) *is for interpreting*. However, I have chosen to use Gieryn (2002) to

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<sup>10</sup> Dobers & Strannegård (2004), for example, write about a graduate project at a design school in Stockholm in which a piece of furniture was designed to create a private space for an individual to retreat to in public places. The authors explain, using Lefebvrian (1991) dialectics, how the piece of furniture was transformed, translated, and transported.

Watkins (2005) could have also been used to illustrate the view that space is for interpreting. He turns to a theatre performance as a particular event to explore how the “interpenetrations” of mental, physical and social spaces “get superimposed upon one another to create a *present space*” (adapted from Watkins, 2005: 211 who cites Merrifield, 2000: 171 with original emphasis in italics). The cast use, relate to, and make sense of space in different ways. Watkins argues that the (i) interpenetration of the blueprint from which the performance is built (planned space), (ii) the spatial practices and everyday routines (practiced space) and (iii) the lived experience of the space in which the play unfurls should be in balance in order to achieve an “effective performance” (Watkins, 2005: 216).

illustrate the point because his example focuses on a building (as opposed to a mobile piece of furniture, or a theatrical stage), which seems more closely aligned, in terms of content, to my current concerns regarding workplace making.

In the context of workplace making, Bebbington *et al's.*, first motif of dialogic encounters seems analogous to Gieryn's (2002: 35) idea that buildings lie somewhere between agency and structure: "a building as the object of human agency *and* as an agent of its own". During the first moment, there is possibility for human agency because humans determine the design of the building before it comes into being. The essence of a building is also determined during its making. For Gieryn (2002), analytically speaking, agency then shifts from humans to the building itself: buildings structure and stabilize spaces. The doubling of roles thus means that "buildings are made and are capable of making" (Gieryn, 2002: 37). But, although a building can influence certain types of behaviour, it cannot however, guarantee those behaviours. The idea associated with prescribed (controllable and predictable) behaviour is known as architectural determinism. But due to human creativity people are always coming up with novel ways of occupying and using built space, therefore, this determinism might be described as *soft determinism*. As building use is not entirely predictable (Kronenberg, 2007), this goes somewhat towards supporting the need for organizational decision makers to adopt a "not-knowing approach" (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 368) when it comes to designing and fitting out workspace. Decision makers do not know how a building will be interpreted until it is built and occupied and discursively interpreted and re-interpreted by users during occupancy (Yanow, 1998).

In sum, whereas the control perspective argues that buildings are for containing workers (space is for controlling / space is physical), and the engagement perspective would argue that buildings are for negotiating (or, claiming) territory, the polyphonic perspective would argue that buildings are for interpreting; they exist and are 'there' in order to be read like texts and made sense of (Yanow, 1995, 1998).

#### 2.5.7.1. The authored (intended) versus constructed (interpreted) meaning of space

In terms of the agency-structure-agency model, it is easy to relate the notion of the polyphonic organization to the idea of the 'third moment'. The author (designer, architect) cannot control the meaning of his/her text (design) in that s/he has no control over how audiences construct meanings

when they encounter it (i.e. the text) (Yanow, 1998: 233). The meaning readers construct of built space-as-text (Yanow, 1998: 217 developed this idea) may be at odds with those the author(s) had originally intended. Gieryn (2002: 44) refers to this as “interpretive flexibility”, whereby subjective readings of built spaces can make it difficult to realise intended (managerial) programmatic objectives. When Gieryn (2002) spoke about the third moment, perhaps it was such a ‘meaning’ gap<sup>11</sup> that he was referring to: “agency returns to people when the building is narrated and reinterpreted - discursively made anew” (Gieryn, 2002: 53). For my purposes here, an important element in Gieryn’s (2002) construal of agency-structure-agency model is that it accounts for learning, and buildings do (allegedly) learn (Brand, 1995). In the third moment, the possibility for agency returns after structure has been initially established. This ties in with Bebbington *et al’s.*, sixth motif -on epistemology- in that a “non-finalizable” sense of the world (of meaning and understanding) is favoured over a univocal view of reality and what it ought to be. During the third moment then, the building -not only being made and capable of making- is discursively (re)made and made anew through ongoing social interaction.

In Gieryn (2002), the bright, gleaming new Cornell’s Biotechnology Building represented a unitary rhetoric of the CBB as a “lynchpin” that authenticates and gives credibility to this “new *industry*” (p.49) through tying the “emerging social structure together” (p.49). At the same time, the CBB took on contradictory meanings for the people who came to occupy it (pp.61-62). Gieryn (2002: 61-62) notes that three idioms emerged during the post-occupancy interviews with scientists which highlights the “simultaneous validity of seemingly contradictory viewpoints” as being “normal, acceptable and productive” (Roberts, Beech & Cairns, 2001: 10). These idioms were:

Idiom one: “A lab is a lab is a lab ... no matter how deigned, buildings are merely settings for assemblages of the people, ideas, and equipment that are the consequential stuff of science”.

Idiom two: “If scientists did admit that the building mattered at all, they emphasized a personal functionality: it works fine for me and what I do. Not surprising. Judgments of efficiency are typically how we talk about a machine: it works, or it doesn't”.

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<sup>11</sup> By ‘meaning gap’, here it is mean the gap between the architects intended meaning of the building and the users interpreted meaning that emerges through his / her relationships with the building. Cooper (2005: 1692) writes, “Relationship is commonly understood as connection or association *between* individual terms and thus implies the presence of gaps and intervals which invite us to bridge them in some way”.

Idiom three: “Scientists said that the beauty of the building made them feel good, mentioning its taut and fresh modernism or the abundance of windows”

Recalling Belova *et al.*, (2008), the lack of convergence, or *non-vergence*, in the voices of the scientists during post occupancy interviews serves to highlight the polyphonic organizational reality that is the CBB. As has been argued here, polyphony thus allows a diverse expression of value and meaning. But what are the shortcomings of polyphony?

#### 2.5.8. Critical perspectives on the role of polyphony in place making

A question that can be asked of the polyphonic perspective is, if there is no single unifying voice and no consensus, does that mean anything goes? A potential problem with polyphony is that people will mistake it just for that. Does polyphony, as a theory, provide us with analytical purchase on the ongoing activities of workplace making in everyday life? It seems that there are three main drawbacks to polyphony.

##### 2.5.8.1. Extreme relativism

If there is no sense of unity or guiding voice, then it is easy to conceive of a situation in which nothing gets done because people are afraid of being seen as domineering. On this, an argument could be made that polyphony is far too relativistic, and might lead to stasis.

If the Tamara metaphor is accurate, a problem with the polyphonic perspective is that it is not possible to be in more than one place at the same time. Therefore, it is not going to be possible to hear all the voices all the time, and so some people are inevitably going to be dissatisfied with other people’s place making activities. Decisions are ontological acts. By virtue of doing one thing, you can not do another. Decisions create presences which depend upon an absence of a presence, so there is always going to be something (or, some viewpoint) left out.

This could be what Kornberger & Clegg (2004) had in mind when they spoke about the idea of the “strategic void”. For them, organizations need to maintain a strategic (unoccupied) space within the walls of their organization in order to make use of the “void” when an opportunity is perceived. As

soon as that “void” is being put to good use, the organization needs to empty another place in order to create another strategic void, to be able to do the same all over again.

#### 2.5.8.2. There is no level playing field

Rodriguez (2004: 24) writes:

“When organizations are capable of creating a level playing field where no expression is suppressed or is coerced, then polyphony will be sustained”.

An argument could be made, however, that there is no such thing as a “level playing field”, or indeed, it is virtually impossible to achieve one. Social relations are always infused with power so claiming there is a presence of *level footing* is a way of attempting to hoodwink others into believing that their voice is just as valuable and as equal as others. In keeping with the metaphor of football, Hickson (1987: 166) explains why a “level playing field” may never exist:

“Just as the ball moves across a football field toward a goal, so the matter under consideration moves toward a decision. [...] The process ... moves a strategic matter from A to B through an organization through time. The difficulty is in defining A and B. Where is the start and where is the finish?”

When we consider that in this unusual football game, the pitch is round instead of oblong, and rather than one goal at either end -with two teams- there are many goals “scattered around haphazardly, and people can come on and off as they please and aim at any goals they like. The field is sloping” (Hickson, 1987: 165) and “The ball itself can be changed” (Hickson, 1987: 166); it quickly becomes clear that place making in social settings is complex and multifaceted. Viewed in this way -treating place making as a strange kind of football game, the political perspective on place making brings into focus the consideration of power. The personal interests and political leverage of decision makers (re)surface. Recognition of power considerations makes our reflections on place making “critical” (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 367). We will see (on page 67 of this thesis) with Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges (1990), that, through language, certain people are better placed than others to say what reality is (labels), what it is like (metaphors) and what is normal (platitudes) “and thereby to impose their realities on others” (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 367).

### 2.5.8.3. Polyphony cannot be the only game in town

If place makers adhere to principles of the polyphonic perspective, then such an adherence will be flawed on its own grounds. Place makers would need to realize that “our own perception is also just another language game, and that an infinite number of language games are possible” (Kornberger *et al.*, 2006: 25). Privileging polyphony marginalises both control and engagement perspectives.

I have now examined the three theoretical perspectives (control, engagement, polyphony) and with examples from the literature, I have detailed how they are practiced. I have also offered critical perspectives on each of these three theories. I now want to examine how these three perspectives are brought into practice through language.

### 2.5.9. Linguistic artifacts and (involvement) medium

A turn to language in the context of workplace making is relevant because each perspective (control, engagement, polyphonic) uses language in different ways. In this view, examining language use offers analytical purchase on how social reality gets constituted. We can then develop our understanding on how expert (managerial) knowledge gains precedence over user (occupier) knowledge coming from different perspectives, namely, the linguistic perspective. We can then ask, how might the experts in Vischer’s (2007) model of work-space planning ‘package’ their knowledge? And how do experts use language to convince others they know what is best for them and the organization? Alternatively, how do individuals (occupiers) use language themselves to create contradictory stories of space which deny the unity of meaning and understanding (Boje, 1995) advocated by the control perspective (space as physical). Hill (1998) examines how architects’ knowledge gains primacy over the knowledge of “illegal” architects, and he explores this occurrence from an institutional perspective. Hill’s (1998) argument is not important for my purpose here, suffice is to say that he could have examined this happening and how the status quo is maintained from a linguistic perspective. This would have led him to the use of labels, metaphors and platitudes (Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges, 1990).

Expert knowledge gains precedence over user knowledge during intralinguistic activities, and the deployment of linguistic artifacts is a crucial part of this process. Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges (1990) have examined in depth, the use of linguistic artifacts -by consultants- in modern organizations in terms of labels, metaphors and platitudes. Labels, they note, tell us *what* things are;

metaphors tell us *how* things are, and platitudes conventionalise and standardise, they tell us what is *normal* (Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges, 1990: 339). The authors observe,

Labels, metaphors and platitudes are important tools for power forging. Power in organizations belongs to those who can define reality for others, and who can convince others that things are what they think they are, and like they think they are, and are normal when they think they are normal. Linguistic artifacts enable leadership to manage meaning by interpreting, coloring, and familiarizing, as opposed to traditional control methods: commanding, fighting, and punishing (Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges, 1990: 348).

Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges (1990) then attribute the supply of linguistic artifacts to outsiders: these artifacts “found their way into organizations” from the outside. For Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges (1990: 351), consultants are master users of these verbal tools; they are the “most prolific producers” of linguistic artifacts. Agreeing that “linguistic artifacts are used for management of meaning”, they continue, “leaves open [...] the issue of who manages what and for whom” (p.349). In short, the management of meaning can be interpreted in two ways: as managing the meaning *for* other people, and managing the meaning *of* others (p.349).

If the process of managing labels, metaphors and platitudes runs “smoothly”, then “those who are managed must abdicate their ambitions to arrive at their own interpretations of the situations” (p.349). The managed then, become followers. “An *abdication of meaning* is an act of trust on the part of the followers, or alternatively, a gesture of despair and frustration” (p.349). In the absence of an *abdication of meaning*, there might be an *imposition of meaning*, “accomplished by persuasion or by force, with the aid of linguistic artifacts or material ones” (p.349). No matter what the mix of labels, metaphors and platitudes it is that gets used, “it is clear that control -and power- involves the imposition of one’s own definition of reality upon others” (p.349, citing Brown, 1978). This is where the management *of* meaning comes in, where managers try to manage their subordinates meaning by convincing them that their own sense of reality, what it is like, and what is normal “...is more valid” and serves as “...a better basis for collective action” (p.349).

If meaning, however, is neither abdicated nor imposed, it is likely to be *negotiated*. Which is “the most common situation” (p.349). Such a situation “calls out” the individuals’ presence, which constitutes the individuals’ “being-in-the-situation” (Witkin, 1990: 329). That is, “at a sensuous

level”, the way an individual dresses and holds him/herself in relating to others goes some way towards making the “aesthetic structuring” of his/her actions (Witkin, 1990: 329). In the course of organizational talk, “different attempts at imposition of meaning (coming not only from the formal leaders) lead inevitably to compromises, exchanges, and bargains” (Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges, 1990: 349). This “way-of-being-in-relation-to-others/self/surrounding” evokes the notion of “leaders without followers” (Shotter & Cunliffe, 2002: 19), and supports the inclusion of users in workplace making. It also requires conversation, which in itself requires “being in the same place together” (Nelson, 2004: 267).

Conversation implies dialogue. If this is true, then the conversational approach to managing place making is a discursive practice (Kornberger, *et al.*, 2006). In organizational settings, “where many and different attempts at imposition of meaning” (Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges, 1990: 349) stem from different views regarding “what should become real” (Nelson, 2004: 262), a common situation occurs where “simultaneously valid and contradictory interpretations” (Cairns, 2002) acquire airspace. In organization studies, where different people from different social realities come together, and each person’s voice is actively solicited, heard and valued (Rodriguez, 2004), as argued earlier, this constitutes the polyphonic moment.

Dealing with an endless cacophony of voices can be seen as problematic by both organizational leaders, and decision makers on space. It is rarely possible to satisfy everybody concerned by workplace change. A request for a change in design in one can spark requests for changes elsewhere. The subsequent mentality emerges, *if s/he can have this and that, then why can't I?* Perhaps this is exactly what Drummond (1998) had in mind when she described the failure of Taurus, in part, which was due to a process, she called “stack-up”. Drummond (1998: 144, citing Perrow, 1984) writes, “It was their cumulative impact [of requests] that was destructive. What occurred was a form of “stack-up” whereby a change in one part of the system, created an unpredictable effect elsewhere in the system and so on”. Following on from this, it might be the ability to effectively ‘manage’ different requests (or voices) that leads to successful workplace design.

This invites the question, how are the three perspectives put into action? These perspectives are enacted through language, behaviour and power (decision making), but each perspective uses these media (labels, metaphors, and platitudes) in different ways. It is possible, then, to view the three

perspectives on place making (control, engagement, polyphony) in terms of three different styles of communication and use of language. These styles of communication are outlined in the table below (Table 4) and explained thereafter.

Table 4: Communication styles and use of language of the three theoretical perspectives

<b>Perspective</b>	<b>What does it say?</b>	<b>How to do it?</b>
<b>Control</b>	Language use: meaning is imposed. It is a neutral transporter of meaning from manager to employee Language is unidirectional Totally hierarchical One voice heard -one opinion driven through to implementation Space is for controlling Space as physical; space is dead, inert Place is unimportant	Cairns (2002): come in on Monday morning to be escorted to your 'new' workspace  Measuring is one way of spacing out the world
<b>Engagement</b>	Language use: meaning is co-created with managers Language is bidirectional Less hierarchical, more inclusive More (chosen) voices heard -collaborative decision taking Workspace solution mediated by experts / managers Space is for negotiating When user knowledge is fed back to experts and constantly incorporated into new workplace designs, place is improved Space as control: space becomes a concrete manifestation of relations of power. Power relations get <i>built-in</i> to the buildings materiality Place is more important than space	Neumann (2002): engagement must be genuine, appropriate, and interconnected  B.A. riverside HQ (in Syrett & Lammiman, 2002)  Space is for negotiating
<b>Polyphonic</b>	Language use: spaces tell different (parallel) stories Language is expressive Occupier driven Multiple voices heard / multiple identities -its not possible to know absolutely what is going on; you cant be in more than one place at the same time; there is no single unifying voice Language is multidirectional Multiple (alternative) realities Space is for interpreting, to be made sense of Space as meaning Place comes into being with the casting of a linguistic net, place is warm and comes alive with people (Tuan, 1991)	CBB (Gieryn, 2002): building (place) happens in three moments (agency-structure-agency)  When blueprints for space (as boundary objects) are translated into cultural artifacts (space is planned), cultural practices are carried over into practice (space is practiced), people bring place to life with blood and flesh and words, and make it warm (place is lived)  Space is for living, is a palatial overlay, is to be lived

2.5.9.1. Dialogic structuring of control: *tell and sell*

The control perspective adopts a realist, unidirectional approach to language. Language is used to transmit information to others. Language is unproblematic as it neutrally transports a unitary understanding and meaning from managers to employees. The purpose of language is to tell

employees what new behaviours are expected in the workplace as a direct result of decisions made by senior managers, decisions that employees have not been involved in and their voices unheard. Language is like a bullet. Language gets straight to the point and employees are expected to respond to changes with equal speed. Managers typically *tell* their subordinates how their workplace will be changed and what benefits will be accrued from such changes. If employees are not convinced, then the managers will have to try harder to *sell* these decisions that have already been made. Such selling is required in order to convince employees that 'management' knows about what is best for both employees and the organization. Managers give equal emphasis to labels, metaphors and platitudes, as it is their 'job' to convince employees that they know what things *are*, *how* reality is, and what is *normal*.

#### 2.5.9.2. Dialogic structuring of engagement: *dialogue*

Compared to the control perspective, language is more open and flowing between managers and occupiers in the engagement perspective. Managers typically enter into a dialogue with employees - the occupiers of space- to learn what they already know, and to find out what they believe the workplace should look/feel/work like. Here, language plays a much more shaping role. Every space and cultural artefact (furniture and art) is up for grabs and human agency is most visible in the design stage (Gieryn, 2002) as people struggle (Spicer, 2007) to claim, or bargain for the spaces that reflect how they feel space ought to be. The engagement perspectives, thus, adopts a constructionist view of language, but language is still utilitarian. Although there is more than one voice with engagement processes, expert designers, or managers, are there to mediate and take collaborative decisions forward. And although engagement implies dialogue, it is possible to conceive of situations in which dialogue slips into debate and there are both winners and losers. Space is for negotiating, and the space which looks/works/feels the best goes to the one's who are tactical, political, and drive a hard deal: loudness and voiceness, thus play an important part in engagement. Language is more a river than a bullet, but managers ultimately control the flow. Managers with perhaps the help of experts control what eventually happens by deciding what issues make it onto the decision agenda in the first place (Bacharach & Baratz, 1962). On this, managers tend to be apt at using platitudes (what is real) and this helps to delimit the boundaries in which there is room for manoeuvre. It is worth noting that platitudes are not the only way of expressing what is real. They are one way, and some managers might not even make extensive use of them. There is however,

less managerial emphasis on the use of labels and metaphors, as the idea underpinning engagement is to co-create labels and metaphors with occupiers.

### 2.5.9.3. Dialogic structuring of polyphonic events: *Tamara-like* polyphony

Although occupiers do not physically change space by merely speaking, words are more pliable than bricks and so spaces can easily take on unintended meanings as people narrate and re-narrate them. Here, language connects us to other objects and others, thus constituting social reality. Language therefore implies relationality.

Whereas the control perspective uses language retrospectively to transport decisions made in the past to the present, and engagement uses language to transport collaborative decisions made in the present to the future; polyphony uses language in the present to enact placial overlays lived in the moment and directly in the flesh. Present space is thus lived in the expressive *responsive* moment. A sense of place is experienced then, by everybody who makes sense of space through the stories they tell about it. On this, there are multiple labels and metaphors operating side-by-side. Thus, in polyphonic perspective, there might be as many platitudes as there are voices, and as such, finalizing platitudes might be downplayed because, to state what is ‘normal’ would be to marginalise other voices, and this goes against the teachings of polyphony.

For researchers wishing to adopt a relational, dialogic stance in studying meaning in everyday practice, Cunliffe (2002: 135) provides a set of “reminders” on how to relationally engage in living moments. These five reminders (resources) -see below- help to draw our attention to the “taken-for-granted relationships between speakers / listeners / utterances / body / experience as each interacts to create meaning” (Cunliffe, 2002: 135). Cunliffe notes that this is where the difference between social poetics and linguistics lies: whereas social poetics focuses on these taken-for-granted relationships, linguistics studies the relationship of various elements of language. For Cunliffe (2002: 129), social poetics is a research “practice” that “attempts to embrace and enact a dialogical approach”. The five reminders are:

the use of metaphors, images, and analogies that allow or provoke us into seeing connections

the use of instructive forms of talk to move others, such as “do this,” “look at that,” “listen,” and “finish this by tomorrow”

forms of talk that reveal possibilities or new ways of connecting: “imagine,” “suppose we look at it like this,” and “think what would happen if . . . ?”

the use of gestures: pointing, shrugging, and thumping the desk as we speak

the use of comparisons, different language games, or juxtaposing words or phrases in unusual ways, so that we are struck or moved to see new connections

To these reminders, Cunliffe (2002: 135, citing Höpfl, 1994: 470) adds the use of rhythm and emotion to express “something of the human condition in touching the shared experience of grief, joy, weariness, wonder and so on”. Essentially, these resources “allow us to understand how we might connect, make sense, act in, create, and negotiate our way through our organizational lives—not by applying theoretical concepts but by grasping a sense of how talk itself may move us. Social poetics can therefore help us become more reflexively aware of the constitutive nature of our ordinary, everyday interactions” (Cunliffe, 2002: 135). In the context of engagement in (work)place making, social poetics might therefore help us to understand the constitutive nature of talking *with* others during place making. As noted by Rodriguez (2004: 3), Bakhtin (1981) argues that no meaning can be derived outside of relationships. Meaning emerges with others, together, through social interactions (relationships), as people shape their understanding(s) of each other, their multiple “selves” of the “self”, and the wider social reality.

## 2.6 Review of the place-making literature

Place has always been central to human geography (Creswell, 2004: 15).

Place is of similar importance to both organization scholars (students of organization) and human geographers (students of place). My aim in this section is to review the human geography literature on sp/pl/ace in view to increasing our place-sensitivity on decision making issues in workplace design. I want to underline the idea that it does not take specialists / experts to make place. It is not even necessarily the private realm of architects as agents of place making. This idea, however, is not new. Hill (1998: 20) writes, “Architects draw buildings. They do not make them”. In light of this, people (occupiers / users) make buildings (places) what they are. Interior designers, architects

and space planners have their place in the process of workplace making, but in view of Martin's (2002) work on the spirit of a place, and following on from Vischer's (2005) work on territoriality, places come into being through dwelling in them, and occupying them.

### 2.6.1. We make place twice

Like time and space, place is socially constructed. Building on his seminal (1977) book called *Space and Place*, Yi-Fu Tuan (1991, my emphasis in italics) writes:

Friends may help each other build a house and, later, help to improve it with the offer of a fine landscape painting that would fit nicely on a bare wall... [...]. Friends can also help each other build place by verbal means (p.689). [...] Homes are 'cold' without people, and come alive *with* them (p.690). [...] Words do not materially transform space because they name it, it is one's place -one's world- that is transformed through "the casting of a linguistic net" (p.686).

[Yet] people still find it difficult to accept the seemingly magical idea that mere words can call places into being (p.691).

The idea -espoused by social / human geography- that homes, to which we could add *workplaces*, come alive WITH people is one that students of organizations (exploring workplace design from a narrative perspective) might be interested in. The dialogical structuring of events in which places are called into being might, then, offer analytical purchase on the *with*-ness aspect of place making.

Two things stand out about the social construction of place: meaning and materiality (Creswell, 2004: 30). First, by talking of place we construct meaning, thereby calling place into being (Tuan, 1991: 691). Conversational space is therefore a prerequisite for the production of place in this way. Second, by using our bodies we construct the material structure of places: footpaths and roads are laid, foundations are set in stone, weight bearing (structural) walls are erected, and internal dividers are fixed in place. The very materiality of place may be touched and sensed, *and* made sense of. Therefore, when we make place, we make it twice: once with our body (hands and eyes), and once with words.

Despite having been made twice already, place, the product of a 'pause' (Creswell, 2004: 20), does not stop there. Place is not like shoes or automobiles (Creswell, 2004: 82), made once and for all. Although "place-making has a built-in tendency to provide some degree of stability and coherence" (Sack, 2004: 248), making place appear like a fixed, stable and rigid entity; it is very much "in process [...]". Places are never finished but produced through the reiteration of practices – the repetition of seemingly mundane activities on a daily basis" (Creswell, 2004: 82). Thrift (2006: 140) also argues that spaces are shot through with other spaces. Therefore, there are many different spaces.

We can look at place both ontologically and epistemologically. Looking at the world as a set of many different places, separated one from the other, is an ontological act of defining what exists (Creswell, 2004: 15). Similarly, seeing space as being "shot through with other spaces" (Thrift, 2006: 140) where each space acts as a carrier of meaning, with its own story(s) to tell, is an epistemological way of looking at, and understanding sp/pl/ace (Yanow, 1998). This research project is focused on place as epistemology. Let me explain.

The experience of place is an outcome of the interplay between people, objects, activities, and space itself. Given the infinite variety of possible configurations of these four elements, place is always in a process of becoming (Thrift, 2006: 141). Through occupancy, everyday social practices, such as talking, meeting, walking, eating and horseplay, continuously re-produce place. Seemingly stable placial outcomes are thus bundles of temporary configurations (of people -relationships, objects, activities, and space) that are subject to human intervention and revision. This goes somewhat towards showing that place is a spatial overlay. It is carved out of space (Sack, in Mels 2004: 244).

Lindahl (2004: 257) writes, "...space is needed as a prerequisite for all actions; a process where innovation of the workplace [does not lie] in its design but in the process of continuously redesigning it". To return to my starting point, i.e. that place is socially constructed, means that place is created by human forces, and in saying that; it is also implied that human forces can un/re-/do place. This invites the question, how are these forces played out during organizational place making?

An alternative view of place is put forward by phenomenologists. Creswell (2004: 32, with original emphasis) notes that, for phenomenologist's, "humans cannot construct anything without being first

in place – that *place is primary to the construction of meaning and society*". For students of place, a problem with this 'primary' view (of place) is that "it is rather short on empirical detail ... [as] ... it clearly would not tell us much about the processes that went into making the place what it is" (Creswell, 2004: 32). Researchers interested in understanding how social interaction is constitutive of place making, then, require an alternative construal of place. Following on from that, if it is not the ontological aspect of place that I am interested in here, then what is it on the epistemological aspect of place that I, as a researcher, might be able to shed some new light on?

### 2.6.2. Managing the existential relationship between place and time

As mentioned earlier, place is always in process. This, in part, is due to the fact that individuals are never content with the space in which they find themselves, and so, they are constantly changing place to how they think it should be. Place is never good enough, and so, people keep on changing it. Earlier, I said that this is known as the existential relationship between place and time. Sack (2004) notes that the potentially unsettling dynamic of this existential relationship between place and time has led to several important reactions. Some extended passages from Sack (2004: 251-3) serve to outline and convey four of these reactions.

1. Escape place-making by entering the pure, immutable, and eternal rhythms and cycles of the world of nature
2. Freeze the dynamics of place in order to create places that are permanent and perfect ('heaven on earth')
3. Neither escape place nor ossify its dynamic. Instead, accelerate and exacerbate the dynamic tendencies in order to destabilize the power behind places and thus make them more open and transparent. This position suggests that such destabilization will liberate us from oppressive power relations
4. Navigate among all three, particularly the absolutism of the second and the relativism of the third by advocating that our inescapable place-making be guided by the joint application of two criteria: that *we should create places that at the same time increase our awareness of reality, and increase the variety and complexity of reality*

"The first two advocate escaping the dynamic, the second two are attempts to use it. Of the four", Sack writes, "only the last one is a realistic and morally responsible one".

### 2.6.2.1. Escape place

The first option would entail a complete retreat to the wilderness. Anything made by humans would be frowned upon. Buildings would not exist because they are not natural; buildings are the result of human (agency) forces. Human intervention would be anathematized and we would be expected to follow the way of the world, to take it as we find it. The irony is that “we cannot live without making places, and even the simplest ones would introduce their own dynamics” (p.251). Moreover, escaping to the wilderness is still “an escape to place – one that is set aside to conform to our conception of nature” (p.252).

### 2.6.2.2. Freeze the dynamics of place

The extreme opposite of the anti-design approach (i.e. 2.6.2.1. Escape Place) is the ‘great man’ approach (the second option), which in some ways, is related to the ‘man on the moon’ syndrome; if we can put people on the moon, then we can do almost anything. So why don’t we make ‘good’ places, then freeze the dynamics of place? But as has been argued here, place is becoming. In this view, it is not possible to “freeze” place.

Buildings decay. They require restoration and renovation. [Are buildings ever the same place after restoration? Physically speaking, they might be, but the stories people tell about them (Yanow, 1998), and the sense they make of them -after restoration- is hardly ever the same as before]. Following Tuan (1991) and others (Hill, 1998: 20), the pursuit of “permanent and perfect” (Sack, 2004) places might be more of an aim than a realistic and attainable achievement for architects / expert designers, because the degree of ‘perfection’ seems to lie in the eyes of occupiers -the people who use the building, and not the experts themselves. From this view, permanent and perfect (time proofed) places might be unrealistic, beyond practical reach.

### 2.6.2.3. Accelerate and exacerbate the dynamics of place

The third option might entail the application of the deconstruction method to challenge dialogues of dominant discourse “to show the ambiguity embedded in them, and to show the storytelling practices used to discipline particular meanings” (Boje, 1995: 1007). This option is all about using post modern techniques to make unheard voices heard. Sack (2004: 252) queries, “once places are sufficiently destabilized, are they all supposed to remain that way?” But rather than confronting this

issue, advocates of the third option, Sack notes, tend to hold on to “a naive hope that something better will emerge once things are sufficiently shaken up”.

The third option involves listening to people from the periphery -“newcomers or outsiders”- who will think more creatively because they are not blinkered; as they have not been socialized into the company’s way of doing things, they do not “conform to the company’s orthodoxies” (Kornberger *et al.*, 2006: 10, citing Hamel, 1996: 77). From this, “rather than provide strong leadership that silences dissent, organizations should use the polyphony they possess” (Kornberger *et al.*, 2006: 10). The wandering discourses of the third option, thus make for an overly relativistic Tamara-like process, where the number of possible workplace configurations is factorial. All this invites the question, with so many voices, to what extent would such a high degree of relativism be bearable in situations requiring action?

#### 2.6.2.4. A fourth way: escape, freeze, and accelerate /exacerbate the dynamics of place simultaneously

To recapitulate, the first advocates a form of escapism that amounts to a “romantic fantasy” (Sack, 2004: 252). The second, based on utopian arguments from the Greeks onward, produces dystopia - instead of producing utopia- through “the imposition of inflexible rules, rigid landscapes, and colossal monumental architecture” (p.252). The third seeks moral emancipation, but carries a “strong streak of relativism and anti-foundationalism” which in turn prevents anything positive from being said for “fear of then closing and bounding the conversations” (p.252). The important ethical implication of accepting that polyphony is normal is that other voices need to be listened to and mediated between. The point is, there is never a perfect translation (Clegg *et al.*, 2006: 20) so we are always coming to terms with difference and the otherness of language. This means we have to cope with all three ways of dealing with the existential relationship between place and time: we have to accept them, and both live and work with them. The fourth option therefore, seeks balance that is grounded in the geographic conditions of the problematic.

Each approach to managing place making illustrates certain dynamics. Instead of seeking an approach *above* all, they can all be integrated. The fourth is the most “realistic alternative”. It recognizes that “it is better to be more than less aware of reality, and to live in a world that is varied and complex. [...] We cannot increase our awareness of reality unless we have different places with

different projects from which to view it, and we cannot know if our knowledge is real unless it is open, public, and subject to other views that arise from variety and complexity. If a place that we create contributes to the variety of reality, but diminishes awareness of it, then it can do more harm than good. The joint application promotes a public and free access to knowledge. Increasing awareness and variety and complexity is not something that can be done from only one viewpoint and for only one interest” (p.252-3). This joint application encourages us to “make places that are more democratic, transparent, and open” (p.253). Can all this help us move toward a better world? Is the fourth way how we ought to go about place making if we want to create better workplaces?

### 2.6.3. Where to now?

I want to take up Sack’s idea of mobilising ways to increase the variety and complexity of reality. But I need a conceptual framework to help achieve this goal. Thus far I have explored the practicality of using Cunliffe’s (2002) social poetics to get a handle on the dynamics of place making. I then explored the viability of using Sack (2004) to cast fresh light on what it is -in placial terms- that relationships achieve through language / talk during everyday intercourse. But now it is time to delve deeper to understand furthermore how place is produced. Looking at only talk might overstate the role of power dynamics and underplay the role of everyday practices in the making of place. Similarly, looking at only these two influences might underplay the role of spatial imaginings.

Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) account of the social production of space might be useful in helping draw together the different interrelated aspects of space, and develop an understanding of the variety and complexity of social reality experienced during the ongoing activity of place making. Watkins (2005) examined Lefebvre (1991) in detail, he introduced Lefebvre into managerial analysis in order to illustrate that Lefebvre’s “considerations of space have the potential to provide a rich and insightful exploration of organizations” (p.209). Watkins conducted a Lefebvrian analysis of a theatrical performance to highlight the value of space as a resource to investigate the social world (p.219). He argued that all three aspects of the spatial triad are essential components (p.219), and he showed “how it is from their interaction that the totality of the event emerges. All three aspects of the triad are continually and mutually informed and informing, and as such are essential in the successful negotiation of the social world” (p.220). Thus, it is to the subject of Lefebvrian trialectics and how it might be applied to the study of place making that I now turn.

#### 2.6.4. Lefebvrian analysis

My aim in this section is to draw attention to the interrelated aspects of place making. If we want to fully appreciate place making then we need to give equal attention to the trialectic nature of the social production of space. Privileging any one gives partial understanding and therefore a less coherent analysis of polyphonically produced place.

Rejecting the idea that space is a neutral container, Lefebvre argues that space is a social product, produced by three processes: social practices, planning, and imagining. For Taylor & Spicer (2007), each corresponds broadly to the three different conceptions of space noticeable within the literature on organizational space. They are: space as distance, space as the realisation of power relations, and space as experience. To give priority to any one dimension would be to ignore Lefebvre's teaching (Watkins, 2005: 214), and if any one aspect of the spatial triad dominates any other, there is a "deleterious effect" on the potential contribution of a Lefebvrian analysis (Watkins, 2005: 215). Adequate consideration of organizational space would therefore investigate how space is practiced, planned and imagined.

Watkins (2005: 218) observes, prevailing considerations of space are "dominated by mental abstractions that have become divorced from the realities they are attempting to depict". Human experience is partitioned, separated, reduced and then reified (citing Knights, 1992) using mental constructs (i.e. representations of space). Such representations "often start out as attempts to codify an understanding of a particular lived experience" but they "rapidly become the criteria against which the truth of a particular event is judged" (Watkins, 2005: 218). This seems to be what Chia (2004: 30) had in mind when he wrote that the menu is often mistaken for the dish. Such representations are problematic because the world we retreat to in our mental abstractions is not the world we dwell in and attend to in the place that overlays physical space (lived / experienced space: *spaces of representation*), (Watkins, 2005: 219).

We are in place (physicality) and part of it (materiality), (Mels, 2004: 6, citing others). This is anomalous to Follett's (1924) realisation that when we enter a situation, the situation becomes what it is, plus you. So thanks to our living body, rather than treating place as if it were an immutable and isolated thing, place is a transitory state of affairs (Creswell, 2004: 82; Thrift, 2006: 141). Because place is living and always moving, it is difficult to 'fix' place down, or 'freeze' it according to a *dead*

blueprint, or script on what/how a place should be and look. From this, rigid adherence to scripts often produces stilted and impoverished places (Watkins, 2005). It would appear, then, that, the performance of workplace making (as an ongoing event) is persuasive and effective if the interaction between the trialectic elements is appropriate and in balance. Some extended quotes from Watkins (2005) in the following table (Table 5) convey what it means for these elements to be appropriate and in balance. Although Watkins (2005) is heavily used to create Table 5, others have also been used, such as Suri (2005) and Spicer & Taylor (2007).

## **2.7. Synthesis and research questions**

### 2.7.1. Topic of interest

The current research project on space is interested in how people come to associate meaning with place and what the consequences are of this meaning making activity. As has been argued, place fulfils a physical and instrumental role in organizational life, but it is not merely the physicality of space that I am interested in. As “researcher sensuality” and “intelligence of feeling” was opened up to give richer accounts of the expressive dimensions of organizational life (Gagliardi, 2007: 336-7), the attribution of meaning to the physicality of space has become a legitimate object of management inquiry. From that, it is the following situations that I am looking for in my research: where buildings have already been built, occupiers take up space on the move-in date, and they begin shaping it to reflect how they *feel* it should be.

The literature reviewed here suggests three competing theories that seek to (a) explain what happens during place making (Brand, 1995; Gieryn, 2002; Hoskin, 2004), and (b) prescribe what should be done to improve the activities place making entails (Cairns & Beech, 1999; Neumann, 2000; Cairns, 2002; Syrett & Lammiman, 2002; Vischer, 1995, 2005). These three theories are outlined in Table 6 below.

Table 5: Balancing the trialectic elements of place making

	Description	Prescription
Spatial triad	<p>Sp/pl/ace is socially produced, it is something to be understood as simultaneously planned, practiced, and experienced (lived) (Spicer &amp; Taylor, 2007). Thus, space intertwines elements of historicity, sociality and spatiality which need to be understood as an integrated whole. The triad needs to be embodied with flesh / blood / culture / relationships and events if it is to have any significance for our understanding. Space is ...</p> <p>-Practiced (spatial practices): “It is the learnt, but often eventually intuitive, <i>spatial practices</i> that enable individuals to participate effectively in a spatial event” (Watkins, 2005: 213).</p> <p>-Planned (representations of space): Blueprints serve as ‘boundary objects’ retreated to in simple abstractions to represent a desired state of affairs.</p> <p>-Experienced (spaces of representation): lived space is where the script, or blueprint is monitored. It is the actual physical space where action is to occur (Watkins, 2005: 213).</p> <p>Sp/pl/ace is both objectively defined and mentally defined. The interaction of both creates lived space. “[T]he ongoing process of mutually informed development, where for example the <i>spaces of representation</i>, the lived experience, continually refers to the <i>representations of space</i> and <i>spatial practices</i>, in the form of the performance framework, to ensure the coherence and competence of the spatial event is maintained” (Watkins, 2005: 215).</p> <p>This process of creating and being makes for a richer understanding of the world.</p>	<p><u>Carrying old practices over</u> Everyday practices, routines, and evolved social conventions of work practices within the milieu are drawn upon to shape and develop a framework for the new workplace<sup>12</sup>.</p> <p><u>You need something to work from</u> The outline of what needs to be done should be created early on. A text, or script (i.e. design brief) comprising everybody’s space requirements should be compiled.</p> <p><u>Living in space:</u> To create an effective and persuasive workplace, workplace making has to be done in the actual place where the work will be done. Workplace ‘overlays’ of physical space need to be created in the space that is lived in the everyday course of life.</p> <p>“An event should involve all three aspects of the spatial triad being in balance, and as such achieving the correct balance between triadic elements is perceived as vital to an effective performance” (Watkins, 2005: 216).</p>

<sup>12</sup> This might be what Jane Fulton Suri (2005) had in mind when she spoke about the role of thoughtless acts for intuitive design.

### 2.7.2. Three competing theories, and research questions

If we examined place making in an empirical setting and looked at the activities first of all, from a ‘control’ perspective, we would expect to find subordinates, or less powerful ones being “done for” (Martin, 2002). The powerful would be the ones ‘doing for’, that is, ‘doing’ workplace making ‘for’ others: they would be the ones planning change (making all the decisions), structuring and controlling (overseeing) all the place making activities. From this view, we would see inhabitants as relatively passive occupants of space. A lot of the conversations would also be unidirectional, as managers, perhaps with the help of experts, would deliver workspace to employees. The director would be seen as the commissioning ‘client’. The process would be relatively straightforward. By that it is meant, with project managers and the people who championed the workspace change at hand, the transition to a ‘new’ workplace would run smoothly, be delivered on time and to budget. Conflict would be kept to a minimum because the manager and/or designers’ global knowledge and expertise would ensure that the *best* solution was implemented. The control perspective, however, would not allow us to view the possible engagement processes that we can see in some workplace making projects (for example, Syrett & Lammiman, 2002). It would not even see that inhabitants, as expert users of space, are sometimes given voice and they are permitted to take decisions on how the workplace will look / work / feel.

The engagement perspective, therefore, would allow us to view such voice institutions and examine the linguistic artifacts that constitute the activity of place making. Approaching place making from an engagement perspective would therefore cast light on the role of relationships in the negotiation of place, and allow us to examine how place makers expressively respond to one another in ‘live’ situations. Because the inhabitants of space (not only the director / manager) are likely to be seen as the client of workspace change, they are also likely to be participants in the change process itself. Therefore, participatively experiencing workspace change and approaching such change from an engagement perspective would also open up for examination the meanings that inhabitants associate with place. Because ‘engagement’ assumes that place shaping practices occur through open dialogue and consensus-seeking behaviour, this perspective, however, would not provide views on how inhabitants’ ongoing experiences and understanding of space shape place through time. Engagement would be unable to account for the ways in which inhabitants actively seek to resist other’s attempts to control space.

If we looked at place making from the polyphonic perspective, however, we would expect to see many place makers all making sense of events and the situation, and acting (at the same time) in light of their understandings. With such simultaneity, what we see and hear would be determined by our own vantage points. After all, we can not be in more than one place at the same time. Following this thread of analysis, then, we would expect to find (see and hear) a lot of simultaneously contradictory and valid arguments / actions. And because, from this view, place making does not happen once and for all, we could gather views on how the ongoing experience and understanding of the people who occupy the space shapes place through time.

Table 6: Summary of three competing perspective of place making

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Prescription</b>
Control	Sp/pl/ace is objectively defined. As a physical entity, sp/pl/ace is just like any other resource in that it is capable of being manipulated in view to maximising profit. Space is delivered to employees in a top-down manner. Employees have no say in the matter. Once it is created, facilities managers and space professionals can stand back and say, “Look, it is done” (Vischer, 1995: 40).	Managers, perhaps with the help of experts, make decisions and communicate them to employees. Employees are passive recipients of space and they have no say in the look, touch, or desired feel of a place. Success is defined in terms of getting the right design in order to minimise occupancy costs, and maximise productivity and profit.
Engagement	Sp/pl/ace is something to be made sense of: people conversationally engage with one another to negotiate their place. Sp/pl/ace is constructed through social interaction (it is not merely thought up, space cannot be thought into existence). Engagement is not controlled by a central decision maker, but entails potential relationships and a degree of dispersed control.	Users are actively engaged, acting as solution-providers rather than mere information providers. Engagement must be genuine, appropriate and interconnected. The engagement processes requires time as well as patience, and the willingness to hear other voices. Success is defined in terms of setting up the right voice institutions so that everybody’s voice(s) is heard.
Polyphony	Sp/pl/ace is lived. The one space, at different times means different things to different people. Therefore, the stories spaces tell keep on changing. Place is called into being when inhabitants tell one of these stories. On this, space is for interpreting. But because places (buildings) are often ‘read’ in ways that they were not intended to be read, the constructed meanings do not always align with the author’s intended meanings.	Space will always be read subjectively. Inhabitants need to be acknowledged as place makers, the active creators of space, not only in the physical sense, but linguistically too, through the casting of a linguistic net (Tuan, 1991). Place makers need to celebrate such difference in interpretations and nurture multiple realities in order to guard against the domination of a single interpretation.

It is possible to conceive of situations in which some of the different tenets of the alternative theories have contributed, at different times, to the overall process of place making at the one site. Which would suggest that no single theory can explain place making entirely. One of the three theories might fruitfully shine light on one aspect of place making, but it might also cast shadows on other aspects. This is where the power of applying multiple perspectives comes in. The application of three theories might therefore be able to shine light on the shadows left by either of the other theories. In sum, these three perspectives together make for a richer understanding of what is happening during place making. Hence, the research path that I have carved seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the comparative advantages / disadvantages of the alternative ways of explaining place making?
2. Which theory or combination of theories, has greater explanatory value in analysing place making / moving?

My purpose is to show the implications of the theoretical approach for the nature and efficacy of decision making in place making / moving.

## Chapter Three

### Research Methodology and Methods

...we dream in narrative, day-dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, revise, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative (Barnett & Storey, 2001: 83, citing Hardy, 1986).

...language is constitutive of reality - there is no privileged position from which reality might objectively be viewed (Tsoukas, 1996: 19).

#### 3.1 Introduction and outline of this chapter

My research is an in-depth qualitative narrative exploration of an empirical setting. In this chapter I detail both the methodology and research methods of this thesis and consider how they inter-relate. My research methodology adopts an interpretivist (Schwandt, 2000) stance and my methods for gathering data include participant-observation, interviews, audio recording, activities of artistic creation and photography. My aim in this chapter is to consider how the research questions can be answered and to explain why I have adopted this approach. In order to do this I will consider why constructionism is important to my perspective and how it differs from other possible theoretical positions. On this, research practices perhaps more familiar to design researchers have been incorporated into the current research design. The case of FifeX offers an outstanding example for the study of such social interaction practices, and the rhetoric of decision-making on space in use, by focusing sharply on the organising processes and activities of the cofounders of this small new business venture. In sum, I will explore the ontology and epistemology used in addressing the research questions.

#### 3.2 Ontology

Drummond (2001: 6-7) writes, “reality exists as we define it [...and...] we can *change* reality by viewing the world from a different viewpoint”. Here, the researcher is cast as an engaged participant because the researcher experiences the phenomena being researched and attempts to

“illuminate it from within” (Chia, 2002: 11). In this plurivocal view of reality, research fuses observer and observee time/space, thereby putting the observer (researcher) in a “position of understanding dynamics” and “responsibility” (Calori, 2002: 879). Because of “difference-lenses” (Boje & Rosile, 1994: 8), different people “can experience the same reality in different ways” (Stiles, 2004: 128). Also, it is worth remembering that “an individual will interpret events differently at different times and in different contexts” (Cope, 2005: 170). In good research, then, multiple realities are expressed and contrary stories that do not fit universal tales are heard (Boje, 1995). The researcher (as an observer) *and* the observee expressively-responsively (Shotter, 2006: 599), mutually co-create their lived experience, or social reality. Interpretive research then, is capable of causally describing co-habited reality, as experienced by *both* observer and observee.

From this view, the interpretivist would argue that the research text “can never be a record of what happened only ever an expression, interpretation and reinterpretation” (Mann, 1992: 273). Because the researcher is co-present in the production of that reality, in the place and in-relations with others where that reality is lived, the researcher assumes the role of an active agent and participant in co-authoring it. On this, the researcher understands<sup>13</sup> the relationship dynamics between objects and people that are constituent of that reality, and assumes responsibility for the role s/he has played in bringing that social reality into being. Good research therefore fully engages the researcher in cooperative inquiry and implicates the researcher in the research.

Following on from this, language is constitutive of social reality (Tsoukas, 1996: 19). It is with, and through language, or speech acts that we engage in processes of world-making. Although speech cannot materially transform nature, it can direct our attention to make things formerly overlooked visible and real (Tuan, 1991: 685). From a narrative-discursive approach, then, people create reality, “not because they have materially transformed it but because they have named it. It is their place - their world- through the casting of a linguistic net” (Tuan, 1991: 686). Since language is used in social contexts, social reality therefore comes into being through the stories we tell, and the new stories we co-create, together with others in conversation. By casting linguistic nets, then, life is storied.

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<sup>13</sup> “Understanding is lived or existential” (Schwandt, 2002: 196).

### 3.3 Epistemology

I therefore cannot separate life from narrative and narrative from life (Mann, 1992: 275).

Life is storied. Story is knowledge (Mann, 1992; Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Therefore, the part of (social) reality that is storied is the part that we can know. Storytelling helps “infuse” our life with meaning (Rhodes & Brown, 2005: 171). When a decision is “told” (O’Connor, 1999), the process of narrating “imposes temporal sequencing of events” (Rhodes & Brown, 2005: 172): actions and events become located in space and time. Such decision storytelling infuses our actions and circumstances with meaning, and the utterance of a decision suggests the passage of time from one state of affairs to another. Moreover, far from being static, story illustrates how knowledge is alive, morphing, moving, and forever growing into what it is becoming (Drummond, 2001: 62). When stories are told in public, knowing is served up situated, interactive, relational, and dialogic (Schwandt, 2000: 199). As March once noted in an interview, “...stories are important parts of history [...] they are major aspects of our existence” (in Augier & Kreiner, 2000: 293). In sum, the part of reality we can know is the part which is socially (discursively) constructed through the stories we tell. This means, as an ethnographer (storyteller), I am much more than a reporter, I am an active agent in meaning making, hence involved in constructing reality.

#### 3.3.1. Narrative as a form of data and theoretical lens

Narrative research advocates the idea that there is no real world outside our thoughts and talk (Rhodes & Brown, 2005: 181, citing Searl, 1995). Therefore, the idea that narrative does not say anything about a presumed independent reality out-there does not worry me because the aim of this thesis is to understand the reality of individual *lived* experience independent of whether or not there is such a thing as a “disembodied abstract realm ...[...]... with some timeless entity” (Rhodes & Brown, 2005: 180, citing Zald, 1996: 256). I seek understanding of *lived* reality of people at work in everyday life, not ‘truth’ about a presumed neutral *real* reality, or world (Rhodes & Brown 2005: 180), nor ‘truth’ about reality that constitutes “a knowledge that aspires to certainty and control” (Rhodes & Brown, 2005: 182). Rather, I seek the truth that “emerges from a reflection on the messy realities of organizational practice” (Rhodes & Brown, 2005: 182, citing Czarniawska 2003). From this, it is my claim that the stories told during the conducting of this research have been intertwined to form the overall narrative of the thesis and constitute “valid empirical materials for research” (Rhodes & Brown, 2005: 169).

### 3.3.2. The inclusivity argument

In conducting the current research I have adopted multiple identities. From a *student* of organisation studies, to a *researcher*, *researcher-as-subject*, *actor*, *interviewer*, *observer*, *interpreter*, *consultant*, and *factotum* (during my time in the field I acted as both a *painter* and a *decorator*). Since withdrawing from the field I have become an *artist*, *creator*, *author*, and *narrator* of the current research text. As such, I subscribe to the view that there are multiple selves within our self; and along with Arnaud (2002: 13), I also subscribe to the view that there is,

... a need to respect the fundamental system of thought of the individuals under study, [and] that researchers should fully assume a role of “bringing to light”.

In becoming a full participant in the research study, I believe that as a researcher, I should include my voice. But this will not be done at the expense of other voices. The main aim in my research is to uphold the principle of “equivalent voices” (Boje & Rosile, 1994: 9) and therefore, give privilege to the participants’ voice while writing my own experiences into the text. On this, efforts have been made to ensure that my voice is not given priority over any other voice, “for this would contravene the principle of equivalent voices and equivalent participation” (Boje & Rosile, 1994: 9).

#### 3.3.2.1. On multi-voicing practices

To ethnographically represent equivalent voices, the researcher is required to be “more creative and experimental in writing” (Alvesson *et al.*, 2004: 10) when authoring a text. Writing about personal experiences as consultants, Boje & Rosile (1994) discuss how to present multiple voices in a case study format. The sub-headings they use, such as ‘David’s Consultation Story’ (p10); ‘Nora’s Story Told in Author’s Voice’ (p11); ‘David’s Side of the Story’ (p.11); ‘Nora King’s Side of the Story in Her Voice’ (p.12); ‘Author’s Story Reflections’ (p.13), serve as templates for researchers to use for writing a case study. Such a “schizophrenic” attitude to writing requires researchers to adopt a sort of “***controlled immersion***” and develop a “distinct familiarity” (Arnaud, 2002: 111, citing Mainsonneuve, 1972 and Matheu, 1986 respectively, with my emphasis added in bold italics), the researcher-as-subject treads a fine line between “abusive self-referencing” or “narcissism” and “an objectivist attitude that excludes the researcher from his or her own system and renders all personal implication taboo” (Arnaud, 2002: 111). This begs the question, given the extent of emotional involvement in the current study on place making, is it an overly “idealistic illusion” (Boje & Rosile,

1994: 13) to believe that everybody can be given equal voice? Is there such thing as fair play, alluded to above. What measures will I have to take to guard against “abolishing the observee and installing [myself] in the latter’s place”, (Arnaud, 2002: 111, citing Barel, 1984)? I will now detail the steps I have taken and the methodological devices employed to guard against this.

#### 3.3.2.2. The argument of multiple realities

I have decided to adopt “multi-voicing practices” (Alvesson *et al.*, 2004: 9) to avoid removing the voices of the individuals under study. I, “researcher-as-subject” recognize that I am “part of the research project, a subject just like any other” (Alvesson *et al.*, 2004: 10). By adopting practices of multi-voicing, “the privileged power position of the researcher in relation to the research subject is reduced” and in doing so “the reader is given a more active role in interpreting meaning”, (Alvesson *et al.*, 2004: 10). This practice resonates with Putnam’s (1996) observations which also call into question the nature of authorship. She calls for the need to open up research texts to multiple readings. Central to Putnam’s (1996: 384) view, is the belief that “language is fluid and multifaceted”.

All this brings me back to one of Mann’s (1992: 279) conclusions that,

As a researcher, I can only ever have access to another’s life experiences through the stories they tell me. There is no objective truth to be found – only a glimpse of subjective experience through the structures, conventions and webs of language.

Following this thread of analysis, in describing what my research project on place making sets out to achieve, and how my story about FifeX fits in, my aim in using narrative is best expressed using the words of Rhodes & Brown (2005: 168). “[...]Assumptions that favour pluralism, relativism, and subjectivity” underpin this research. [...] To author a story is always a creative act”, and my story is “just one of many that could be told” about FifeX. There are many research / writing strategies I could employ to produce such stories, of which the highly qualitative “life story” (Mann, 1992) is just one of them. To reiterate, mine is not a quest for scientific truth, but a quest for meaning (adapted from Rhodes & Brown, 2005: 167). Following on from that, there are multiple truths and multiple realities. On this, the question as to whose reality is being presented in my research text becomes redundant. There are multiple realities. I, as a researcher, cannot adopt “observer’s neutrality”, act as a “disinterested scientist”, and try to remove my “theoretical roots”, “social

reference points”, and “automatic reaction patterns that are transmitted to us from birth via the family and tradition” in order to search for *the true* understanding of ontological reality (Arnaud, 2002: 104).

To summarise, authors with a bent for constructionism (Boje & Rosile, 1994; Putnam, 1996; Hardy, 2002, and Alvesson *et al.*, 2004) believe that the author must put his / her *imprints* on the final text, but not too much. After all, “...ethically, isn’t part of scholarly work about giving the silenced a voice?” (Hardy, 2002: 17). But what constitutes too much? At what point does imprinting one’s voice on the final text start to silence another voice? Alvesson *et al.*, (2004) note one important caveat when putting one’s imprint on the final text. In order to give greater space to the research participants, as part of a reflexive researcher’s efforts to ‘downplay’ his or her voice, s/he must guard against drawing considerable attention towards him or herself (adapted from Alvesson *et al.*, 2004: 11). It is, therefore, to the consequence of authors leaving too big an imprint on the final text that I now turn.

### 3.3.2.3. Confessing my sins: recounting my subjective position

Making full use my own subjectivity while attempting to “step outside of my skin” (Schwandt, 2000: 195) -so as to climb into the skin of an observee in order to pursue an “objective” interpretation of his or her subjectively experienced reality- brings me up against several pitfalls. Many researchers have worried about these pitfalls for a long time. Here I want to review those which seem most relevant to my study on place making.

First, by accepting subjectivity I might privilege my own voice over those of the actors. Putnam (1996: 385) notes that, “The way we produce knowledge in organizational studies is a form of representation- one that is rooted in assumptions about who is privileged and who is underrepresented”. As such, I run the risk of unconsciously imputing my prejudices upon the observee, which would reveal more about me (researcher as observer) than about the object of observation (Arnaud, 2002: 105). Secondly, if I were to ask research participants questions such as: “According to you, how many social classes are there?” then I run the risk of putting “a scholar inside the machine” (Bourdieu, 1996: 133). In other words, utterance of the words “social classes” unwittingly places a system of social functioning, and a model, in the mind of the individual under study. Such a model, or construct, might not have been there had the question been framed

differently. On this, research questions risk producing self-fulfilling answers because when researchers fail to resist implanting themselves in the place of participants, they (researchers) end up putting words into others' mouths.

Many authors (such as Cunliffe, 2002) have turned to reflexivity to explore possible ways of avoiding these three pitfalls (i.e. abolishing the observee; imputing researcher prejudice upon the observee; putting a scholar inside the research participant). Practising reflexive sociology is now widespread in management inquiry, and especially in narrative research. Rhodes & Brown (2005: 178) note one important caveat in narrative research:

When research is re-cast as a process of telling stories about stories, the means by which those stories are created is an important area for analysis and methodological reflection. This draws attention to the reflexivity inherent in the research enterprise...

This research is not a treatise on reflexivity but it acknowledges the need to be sensitive to the possible ways in which I as a researcher might infect the research setting and the research text itself, and in turn, the knowledge I produce. This section calls out the main reflexive points that are pertinent to my study on place making, and so my examination of reflexivity is confined to these few paragraphs here. I will however, in a reflexive manner, include a personal account of my research experience at the very end of this text.

#### 3.3.2.4. The call to practice reflexive sociology

The reflexivist is an “adventurer-explorer” who is aware of the “social forces that shape the knowledge production process” (Alvesson *et al.*, 2004: 12). It has already been outlined that practices related to multi-voicing are most relevant to this project. Since there is a range of reflexive practices and numerous “combinations” (p.12) of ways in which these can be performed, Alvesson *et al.*, (2004) argue that “there is a need to recognise this diversity of approaches to reflexivity”, hence “*reflexivities*” (p.3, original emphasis). The authors distinguish between *D-reflexivity* which stands for deconstruction and declaiming, and *R-reflexivity* which stands for reconstruction, reclaiming and re-presentation. Drawing on my earlier discussion on situating the author (Putman, 1996; Boje & Rosile, 1994) and pluralism (Hazen, 1994), it is clear that *R-reflexive* practices have been employed in my study to “illuminate [...and...] open new paths, avenues, and lines of interpretation” (Alvesson *et al.*, 2004: 16) to unsilence the marginalised creative productions of place that are

unheard in everyday work interactions and decision-making practices. Alvesson *et al.*, (2004: 16-17) remind us that “multi-voicing practices are related to *R-reflexivity* in that they encourage consideration of alternative views” and because *R-reflexivity* is about “developing and adding something”, engaging in this line of inquiry and becoming an *R-reflexivist* means that I am in “the ***construction*** industry rather than demolition industry” (p.16, my emphasis added in bold italics). It is therefore, to the issue of being in the “construction industry” (Alvesson *et al.*, 2004: 16), or constructionism, that I now turn.

### 3.3.3. On constructionism

Direct observational understanding (*aktuelles verstehen*) allows me, as a researcher, to understand what is happening when I observe somebody winking. Knowing that another person is winking through direct observational understanding, however, has its limitations. Knowing is not the same as understanding (Drummond, 2001). Knowing that somebody is winking does not allow the observer to recognise motivations and meanings of their action. A deeper understanding calls for explanatory understanding (*erklärendes verstehen*). Explanatory understanding requires that we interpret the motivations and purposes of the winking action by imputing what we, as researchers, have previously recognised in the direct observational understanding (Bonet *et al.*, 2003: 11). Successful interpretation depends upon *getting to know* the individual research participant so his/her social actions can be interpreted “...according to a typified form, which is usually shared” (Bonet *et al.*, 2003: 20). The interpretation of observations (texts, stories, buildings) thus involves *filling in the gaps*. Interpreting a wink as meaning “hello” as opposed to “I have dust in my eye” thus requires dramatizing what one is learning as a researcher-observer, without distorting it (Ryle, 1979: 51).

The researcher’s ability to fill in the gaps depends on his or her ability “to draw out [...] some material that is interesting or meaningful” (Piore, 2006: 18). For Piore (2006: 18), “interpreting [...] has always been at least as much a matter of intuition and instinct as it has been of systematic methodology”.

Constructionism argues that “[W]hen you build in the world, you build in your mind” (Rasmussen, 2006: 60). Rather than building using passive imprints of sense data on the mind, the mind is ***active*** in doing something with these imprints (Schwandt, 2000: 197): forming abstractions and concepts using images, symbols and words. On this, constructionism means we create, or make knowledge.

“We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience” (Schwandt, 2000: 197). As researchers, we often create / construct meaning using concepts handed down from our thesis supervisors (Piore, 2006: 18) and so there is an “...inevitable historical and sociocultural dimension to this construction. We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, languages and so forth” (Schwandt, 2000: 197). As such, “there is no way of experiencing the ‘real relations’ or a particular society outside of its cultural and ideological categories” (Schwandt, 2000: 198).

#### 3.3.3.1. Research (learning) objectives

To explore the concept and practice of place making, the objective was to obtain reflexive accounts of how the actors felt that they had arrived at their place making decisions, thus, encouraging them to see their action from their own perspective (Fearfull, 2005: 139). My intention was to learn something about this, which would be useful to others in thinking about how they understand their actions. This learning is not a matter of claiming facts or true descriptions of what actually goes on, but rather an analytical reorganisation of the beliefs of the various actors involved, which might serve as an aid (handrail), or a way of understanding a situation which can be applied to other situations (Sims, in Reason & Rowan, 1981: 382).

#### 3.3.4. How is constructionism important to my perspective in this research?

When Frankl (1959 [2004]) states that his goal is to help others to see, not to paint a picture for them, he is acting in a social constructionist manner. When Gehry (2004) uses multi-modelling techniques, using different materials to create large and small scale prototypes to suspend his “haste in wanting to know” (Chia & Morgan, 1996: 55) what the final outcome will look like, he is “expanding the ways in which he constitutes his sense of reality” (Collopy, 2002: 3). He too is acting in a social constructionist manner. Social construction conceived as such is thus reminiscent of Chia’s feeling ones’ “...way *through* a world that is itself in motion...” (Chia, 2004: 31, citing Ingold, 2000: 155). If things are in motion, a mapped route can not be prescribed; a route has to be created.

I am less concerned with how FifeX gains an increase in speed to market by 1, 5 or 10%, and more concerned with gaining a sense of meaning. As a constructionist, I am concerned with creating representations that resonate with the research participants personal perspectives (Collopy, 2002: 5;

Fearfull, 2005: 139) so they, and we -as readers, can understand their actions in their own terms. As such, as a researcher I am not claiming to present ultimate truth. I do not have a monopoly on truth. Rather, constrained by language in this research text, I re-construct meaning for myself using as many of the categories handed to me from the research actors and those found in the literature, to re-present for readers, possible interpretations of the meanings contained in the actions of others. These meanings are constructed interactively through language. As such, rather than the organization, the move, retrofitting or office design, my unit of analysis is *meaning* constructed through social interaction.

I have been part of that process of constructing meaning. Had somebody else been in my stead the meanings arrived at would have been somewhat different to what is represented herein. What I present here is a true account of events and the meanings of situations for me. My text is not the ‘move’, it should not be mistaken for ‘the move’”, neither is my text the place making process within FifeX: my text is not a mirror of these happenings, my text is a production, just like an other product of mass consumption, for example, that we buy from supermarkets. The text is made up of raw materials (the concepts, language, words and pictures) and production techniques for manipulating those materials (research protocol and traditions of research writing); it is one voice and one reality among many others.

### **3.4 Methods**

...when one’s concern is the experience of people, the way they think, feel and act, the most truthful, reliable, complete and simple way of getting that information is to share their experience (Waddington, 2004: 154, citing Jack Douglas, 1976).

This thesis is based on an attempt to address place making issues using a constructionist perspective. The constructionist perspective constitutes an approach to place making that advocates the role of intuition, imagery, imagination, inspiration, creativity, play and experimentation with the creation and invention of new possibilities. Here I present the research methods consistent with my views and those methods which I feel will lead to the realisation of my research objective.

To understand what happens during place making, and how decisions on workplace issues come in to being, data were gathered using several methods: (1) participant-observation; (2) interviews, (3)

audio recording, (4) activities of artistic creation (including pictorial representation, and visualisation / projective metaphor), and (5) photographing.

#### 3.4.1. Participant-observation

Practicing participant-observation entails forming relationships with the research participants and requires full participation in activities while making no “secret of an intention to observe events” (Waddington, 2004: 154). Participant-observation thus implies proximity to the research participants and direct involvement with the subject matter. Following on from this, Waddington (2004: 155) notes, “a key distinguishing feature of the method [i.e. participant-observation] is that the observer’s own experience is considered an important and legitimate source of data”. Participant-observation is thus chosen as a method for gathering data when the research aim is to develop understanding from within the activity itself.

#### 3.4.2. Interviews

Generally speaking, there are three main types of interviews: open, semi-structured, and structured. In short, there is a continuum between open and structured interviews. The type of interview chosen by a researcher is, in part, determined by how much s/he wants to influence the words used by the research participant in his/her own sense making of the phenomenon that is being studied. Compared to the structured end of this continuum, interviews at the open end afford much more freedom and therefore provide richer data than interviews typically conducted at the structured end of the continuum. Following on from this, semi-structured interviews represent a half-way-house between a solipsistic anything goes approach and a positivistic reductionist approach to gathering data.

#### 3.4.3. Audio recording

Recordings of naturally occurring conversations can be useful because they allow researchers to re-visit social action in the moment of its happening and pick up on the interpretive categories that participants use themselves to make sense of place and justify their decisions on space. People use their relations to mobilise physical and linguistic resources, and it is through these relations that people bring places into being; audio recordings can help capture some of these lived relationships.

#### 3.4.4. Activities of artistic creation

This section explains two different yet related activities of artistic creation. The first is pictorial representation; the second is projective metaphor (visualisation). They are different in that one (i.e. pictorial representation) produces a cultural (physical) artefact, namely a drawing *and* a story about that drawing; and the other (i.e. projective metaphor) has no direct material outcome. These activities are related in that both activities engage the research participants' imagination.

##### 3.4.4.1. Pictorial representation: Drawing on experience

The whole idea behind the use of drawing in research on place making is that it might help the research participants to think about actions and events and how they felt about those actions and events, in ways that would not have normally surfaced when thinking in words and using only verbal language to communicate. After all, it has been argued that “the fundamental thing that a drawing communicates therefore, through its visual language, is feeling” (Saorsa, 2001) and research suggests that drawings / images can “reveal what words alone cannot” (Stiles, 2004: 138).

Learning about processes of organising from drawing is not new in management research. Perhaps the earliest use of drawing in management studies can be found in Maddox *et al.*, (1987) and Zuboff (1988), -see summary below in Table 7. As a research practice, drawing has also been used in non management / organization studies (see Table 8): media audience research, for example (Gauntlett, 2006). Drawing mainly from art therapy literature (Edwards, 2004 for example), Gauntlett (2006: 1) observes, visual creative methods offer a “positive challenge to the taken-for-granted idea that you can explore the social world just by asking people questions, in language”. From him (2006: 2), drawing is “an *enabling* methodology – it assumes that people have something interesting to communicate, and that they can do so creatively”. How drawing can help people think was also a major concern for Buzan & Buzan (1993 [2000]). In their work on Mind Mapping, they argued that the use of verbal language only engages a fraction of our brain's capacity to process and recall information. For Buzan & Buzan (1993 [2000]: 67), “[I]mages are therefore often more evocative than words, more precise and potent in triggering a wide range of associations, thereby enhancing creative thinking and memory”. Elsewhere, it has also been noted that “visualisation inspired by artistic activity requires us to use all areas of our brain, and therefore contributes to more holistic and creative research results” (Moussi, 2003). An argument can be made that pictures are more

ambiguous than words, but they draw out more emotion, laughter, and energy and so they are more involving. Moreover, pictures “invite interpretation” (Mintzberg & Westly, 2001: 92) and it is exactly this interpretive element (by drawers) that I was interested in accessing through their own drawings. Buzan & Buzan (1993 [2000]) point to the benefits of using more colour and images because despite being perceived as childlike, their research shows that colour and image activate and engage all the parts of our brain. This, they argue, improves learning.

But drawing can also be disempowering (Stiles, 2004). Therefore, it important to go to some effort to make participants feel relaxed about their drawing abilities. From my reading on drawing as a qualitative research technique, three main pieces of advice stand out. The first is warm-up exercises are crucial in helping research participants to feel comfortable about their ability to create drawings (Stiles, 2004). The second is “to minimize anxiety and interviewer effect”, the researcher might leave the room while drawing takes place (Stiles, 2004: 131). The third is interpretation has to come from the person who made the artefact (Kearney & Hyle, 2003: 25; Gauntlett, 2006: 6). The following table summarises some of the research which supported my decision to encourage participants to produce drawings. It was also these readings which helped inform my approach and ready the research participants to create visual artefacts.

#### 3.4.4.2. Visualisation / Projective metaphor

As with pictorial representation, a key question is what is being surfaced? It is generally accepted that whereas, pictorial representations are fabrications for an audience, visual images (inner pictures), or imagery is a “subjective, projected record of a sense-experience mainly created for someone’s own sake” (Stiles, 2004: 128). An argument could be made, then, that, pictorial representation uses imagination in the same way that projective metaphor does, but projective metaphor stops at the inner picture. Stiles (2004: 137) warns that some researchers might fail to get past the inner picture stage because some research participants demonstrate “a reluctance to make creations public”.

Table 7: Examples of participant-produced drawings as a technique for drawing out emotions in management inquiry

<b>Author</b>	<b>Research topic</b>	<b>Research focus</b>	<b>Main finding</b>
Maddox <i>et al.</i> , (1987)	Creative thinking and problem solving in strategy formulation	The use of imagery in strategic planning. Senior managers were invited to draw using pen and paper, and describe the image they have of their organization (p.123).	“Guided imagery can help strategic planning to become a more holistic endeavour drawing on both the rational and intuitive talents of senior managers” (p. 124).
Zuboff (1988)	Information technology	The impact of information technology on the future of work and power in organizations  Research participants were invited to draw how they feel before and after conversation to a new computer system	Drawings “functioned as a catalyst, helping them to articulate feelings that had been implicit and were hard to define” (p.141).
Kearney & Hyle (2003)	Organizational change	Authors examine emotional impact of change on individuals in an educational institution	Drawing is “a way to tap quickly into the emotional lives of participants” and “afforded participants every opportunity to frame their own experiences, unencumbered by our biases about people and organizational change” (p. 4)
Stiles (2004)	Organizational characteristics (culture)	Using the personality metaphor, the “aim was to generate organizational strategies for the schools by examining images of the organization held by stakeholders” (p. 131, citing others).	“Pictorial representation can provide researchers with a powerful and overlooked tool with which to develop more creative organizational strategies” (p.127). “Pictorial exercises revealed organizational elements not identified using verbal research instruments” (p.136).

Table 8: Examples of participant-produced drawing as a technique to draw out emotions in *non-management* fields of inquiry

Author	Research topic	Research focus	Main finding
Gauntlett (2006)	Media audience research	Exploring how ‘TV Living’ and the role of media in everyday life shapes identity	“This is a process which takes time, and which uses the hands and body as well as the mind. The approach is optimistic about people’s ability to generate interesting theories themselves”
McKillop (2006)	Educational research	Exploring students’ experiences of the assessment process	<p>“The visual representations were particularly effective at conveying the more affective responses to assessment and in capturing students’ visceral understandings of assessment” (McKillop 2006: 11).</p> <p>“Pictures and stories can be far more effective than feed-back questionnaires in determining students’ experiences” (McKillop, in Stothart, 2006: 6)</p>
Bryans & Mavin (2006)	Educational research	Exploring how new and experienced researchers see research and researchers	“Drawing and discussing pictures allows emotional and unconscious aspects of engaging in research to surface, helping drawers put into words what may be difficult to voice” (p.113)

### 3.4.5. Photography

Photographing emerged as a research practice when I was invited by the research participants to take snap-shots of the ‘new’ premises. The invitation came the day the keys were handed over and we began moving belongings into the ‘new’ premises. I initially took my voice recorder into FifeX to record naturally occurring conversations, but as soon as the research participants realised that my voice recorder was also a digital camera (Sony Ex-slim 2 megapixel), they *coercively* invited me to “take photos of the rooms as they are now”, and “why don’t you take some later so you can compare *before* and *after*”. As such, I was taking photos in a “documentary sense” (Warren, 2002). At the time I could not see any relevance of such photographs for my thesis, but I continued ‘snapping’, capturing “visual fieldnotes” about the material things that were of “such importance (both positively and negatively) to the participants” (adapted from Warren, 2002: 231).

The use of photography in qualitative management research is a relatively innovative method of gathering data. It has been a mainstay in visual sociology / anthropology and has been used since the 1940s (Warren, 2002: 236, citing Bateson & Mead, 1942). In the hands of such anthropologists, the photographic image becomes a document that provides *realist proof* (Warren, 2002: 236) of what life was like in other cultures. The role of the photograph is to confirm the authors interpretation and “continue the project of authority by claiming to show a reality ‘untainted’ by the researchers interpretation” (Warren, 2002: 236). However, photographs tell a very different story in the hands of management researchers. An alternative post-structuralist construal of photographs, one that is espoused by Warren (2002: 236, my emphasis) is, “photographs are only a *partial, fragmented and contextually bound* version of reality”.

Warren (2005: 862) observes that photography has been used in advertising research (Goffman, 1987) and consumer / marketing research (Belova, 2003) for example, and “what unites these approaches is the assumption that image is the data”. Warren (2005: 862, my adaptation) continues, with the exception of Buchanan’s (2001) use of photographs to document a re-engineering process in a hospital, and Harper’s (1984) study of meaning and work, organization, management and accounting studies that employ photography as a research practice are “harder to find”. Perhaps one of the biggest advantages of using photography as opposed to drawing in management research is that, drawing can be (unwittingly) disempowering, whereas photographs are instant and give people confidence about their ability to create an image.

What do the photographs I have taken tell us (epistemologically) about what happens during place making? Whereas the anthropologist’s ‘realist tale’ photographs are assumed to have greater authority than the words of the anthropologist in the text (Warren, 2002: 238), recalling Boje & Rosile (1994), an argument could be made that by including my photographs, I have adhered to the principle of equivalent voicing by leaving my imprint on the research text. Rather than treating photography as having a pride of place in a hierarchy of representations, photographs and text can be construed as being “beyond comparison -each offering a valuable contribution to the creation and communication of meaning, which is different from, but no better or worse, than the other” (Warren, 2002: 238, citing Mitchell, 1994).

### 3.5 Fit between approach and research questions

The literature reviewed herein reveals three possible ways -there are others- of approaching the activity of place making. Each approach is associated with a view of organizational space. It is indeed possible, and likely that people in everyday life engage in place making by appropriating the strong, or convenient elements, from each approach. It is also conceivable of instances where place makers adhere to one view of organizational space but on the outside, demonstrate actions that might normally be associated with a different approach to place making. The narrative research methodology I have chosen is amenable to all three forms of analysis (control, engagement, polyphonic): narrative exploration can work for these three different types of theoretical approach. Stories of place making reveal moments of control, they also show relationship dynamics of engagement, and if you, as a researcher are present, in a place when place making is happening in front of your very own eyes, and you are part of 'it', different people's stories of place making will reveal different versions of the same decision making events. Narrative research methodology is thus important because it could say that engagement, (i.e. Theory 2 in my literature review), for example, is still feasible, while control (i.e. Theory 1) dominates place making activities.

Since the idea that place comes into being *with* people is a notion that undergirds my thesis, and it is my starting point when thinking about methodology and methods, it is therefore important for me, as a researcher, to be there, in a place with people, when they are place making. Being there myself is necessary to experience what it is like to create place with others if I am to later recount my own experiences, as data, of place making. Personal experience methods are therefore essential if I want to say something about place making from *inside* the activity of place making itself. And bearing in mind that social interaction (the *meanings* constructed in the conversational -social- interactional encounter) is my unit of analysis (not workspace layouts, or organizations as entities), being involved, or immersed, in the conversations (action) myself that bring place into being is integral to my research practice.

### 3.6 Specific methods implemented

In this section I detail specific interactions with the research participants (i.e. I identify the length of my stay) and further delineate my relationship with them (i.e. I identify my role and the context of my fieldwork). I also describe my pursuit and analysis of data, and qualify my personal biases (i.e. I identify the types of data I collected, detail the process of data collection and explain the iterative

process of moving between data collection and data analysis). I do this in order to convince my readers of having “been there” (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993: 599), and convey my “closeness” with the research participants (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993: 603). This goes some way toward creating authenticity. That is, that I, as a researcher, have been genuine to the field experience, and grasped and understood the participants’ world as much as possible. In all, informal social interactions were had with the research participants -Craig and / or Ken- on 60 days, between 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2006, and 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2007. Entry to FifeX was granted on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2006, and I entered the field on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2006. Added to this are six formal semi-structured interviews which took place between 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2006, and 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2006, when I formally withdrew from the field. I remain in touch with both research participants.

### 3.6.1. Participant-observation

My research identity is classed *participant-as-observer* because I formed relationships with the research participants and participated in activities. Waddington (2004: 158) notes that, in order to effectively recount one’s own experience as a participant-as-observer, it is first necessary to provide a brief overview of the context of the unfolding situation (see Appendix 1). I was a full participant. By this it is meant I was an actor as well as a researcher. Since I acknowledge that my presence has had an impact on relationship dynamics and has helped shape, in part, how events unfurled, and how people made sense of situations through having their thought processes influenced by me -during conversation, I am included in the research. I acted with those involved in this study and I inevitably influenced the contours of both their thinking and their social actions in some way or other.

Note-taking began as soon as I entered into negotiations with the Managing Directors (MDs) of FifeX. There was a hiatus of approximately two to three weeks between the date on which access was agreed and my date of entry into the field. As soon as I entered FifeX I was given a desk and a computer in the corner of an office both MDs shared. From then on, I could listen, observe and take notes in real time. So as not to reinforce my ‘outsider’ status and undermine rapport (Waddington, 2004: 156), I researched client organisations of FifeX, read the promotional literature that was given to me. This allowed me to keep track of conversations. As well as note-taking in Microsoft Word documents, I also used my small, A6-sized Moleskine note-book that was

particularly convenient for note-taking when we were out of the office, which happened quite frequently.

Note-taking was a very open process and the actors were comfortable knowing why I was there, what I was doing, and why note-taking was necessary. My Moleskine turned into a real talking point, because some days when I returned to the office having been away for a day or two, I was told that “You missed some important decisions yesterday... I am sure you would have taken notes on them had you been here”. This often served as a good starting point for me to ask questions regarding what was important to them. It helped me to develop my understanding on how they perceive decisions, and understand what a decision is to them. Then, using their own language, I could begin to see their world from within their frames of reference, that is, from their perspectives.

Every evening I would review my notes and add details about events, circumstances, and the physical locality that I had initially overlooked. I often found that I could recall details that were left out of my initial notes, and so nightly review became integral to the process of recording my own experience as data.

All in, transcribed text equates to some 85 pages. In addition to the 60 days of ethnography, I had 80 hours of informal contact including lunches, evenings and leisure activities with Craig and Ken.

### 3.6.2. Interviews

Interviews tended to be conducted spontaneously, whenever the research participants could fit me in during the days that I was present. I conducted open interviews (King, 2004) which followed the direction set by the respondents themselves. I used prompt questions to stimulate conversation but not to direct participants in their meaning making. This style of interview was used so as not to put “a scholar inside the machine” (Bourdieu, 1996: 133) and to encourage them to see their action from their own perspective (Fearfull, 2005: 139). As such, the methods fits with the ontology and epistemology described above. In addition to these open interviews, I conducted six semi-structured formal interviews: two with Craig, two with Ken, and two were with both Craig and Ken, together.

### 3.6.3. Audio recording

Since my aim was to understand how people relate to place while relating to others relate to place, and to understand how this meaning influences their decision making with regard to space, it was necessary to record naturally occurring everyday conversations in order to reflect on at a later date. Therefore, a digital voice recorder was used. I asked for approval whenever I switched the recorder on. I also informed Craig and Ken when I had switched it off.

The semi-structured interviews were recorded and this amounted to approximately 5 hours of recorded material, in addition to 33 pages of field notes. Added to this are almost five hours of recordings of naturally occurring conversations.

### 3.6.4. Activities of artistic creation

In all, three drawings were created (Appendix 2). Following Stiles (2004), warm-up exercises were done in order to allow the research participants to familiarise themselves with the materials and re-acquaint themselves with the activity of drawing. This was found to be useful in helping to anxieties associated with drawing and making those drawings public. Following Kearney & Hyle (2003) and Gauntlett (2006), all three drawings were later interpreted by the research participants themselves. Their story was then represented in the research in their own words to remain as close to the participants' meanings as possible.

### 3.6.5. Photography

I took about one hundred and ten photographs to document the move. Roughly, only one quarter of them was of FifeX's St Andrews premises. Since I had my camera with me, on show, at all times and I only tended to take photographs when either Craig or Ken suggested "I might like to capture the progress that has been made", although I framed the shot, I ended up depicting -albeit in my own voice- elements of the physical environment (place) that were important to the research participants.

### **3.7 Data-related limitations**

#### 3.7.1. Participant-observation

Readers will learn -in the following chapter where I have narrated my shared experiences of relocating and place making- that I was not invited to participate in organizing belongings and packing the day before the move took place because the research participants were thoughtful that given the smallness of their (old) St Andrews office, “I might get in the way”. This is one of the obvious shortcomings of personal experience methods: you have to be there, and experience what the participants are experiencing to gather data.

Recording naturally occurring conversations by arriving in the morning and returning at the end of the day to stop the recorder might have remedied this limitation. Retrieving data in such a way might have given me the opportunity to cast fresh light on the narratives I have created and participated in. To gather data in this way would have required two things: one, the research participant’s permission to record conversations during my absence; and two, considerably more sophisticated recording equipment than what was used in the study.

#### 3.7.2. Interviews

When I entered the field, Craig and Ken were having important (in their eyes) conversations (detailed in Appendix 3) about what it was like to work with Frazer, their Technical Director, and the impact that his recent resignation might have on the business. I was politely dissuaded (or, lightly coerced) -by both research participants- from establishing contact with Frazer, one of the Directors in question. I was told that any information I wanted regarding him or his role in the company, “You can ask us” and “...we can tell you about everything you want to know”. I sensed tension between the trio, and respecting their wishes, I did not attempt to contact him. Because I did not have the opportunity to speak (extensively) with this potential main protagonist, or interview him regarding the move and what he thought about the way the ‘old’ workspace looked / felt / worked, and what he thought the ‘new’ place should look / feel / work like; an unintended consequence of respecting Craig and Ken’s wish not to approach Frazer for an interview is that his contrary stories will remain unheard (Boje, 1995). We will never know what meanings he attributed to the sp/pl/ace that Frazer shared -from time to time- with Craig and Ken. In this respect, a weakness of my study can be seen in that none of my narratives or fragments thereof, recounts the

‘darker’ side of, and the ‘negative’ stories associated with sp/pl/ace. All the reader is presented with is second hand accounts (mainly from Ken) of what Frazer thought about the decision to move and how he believed the ‘new’ place should look / feel / work.

### 3.7.3. Audio recording

Following on from limitation 3.7.1. on the subject of recording naturally occurring conversation; it might have been worthwhile negotiating the kind of access which would have allowed me to gather data on those days during which I could not make myself available to be in the office, or when I was not invited, but both Craig and Ken were present. The conversations about relocating / place making that took place in my absence might have produced nuanced details about the decision to move, and about place making that were not recorded during my time with the research participants. With this ‘insight’, I could have then asked follow-up questions based on issues we did not talk about in the ‘natural’ settings. My reasoning is that important conversations about sp/pl/ace inevitably unfolded the day before the move took place (in the St Andrews Technology Centre) but such conversations did not show up in the data I gathered.

### 3.7.4. Activities of artistic creation

Shortly after the move took place, both research participants produced drawings of what it felt like to experience the decision to relocate. Only Craig produced a drawing of what it felt like to decide to relocate before the move physically took place. After I informally withdrew from the field (in December 2006) to plan my write-up I came across the work of Kearney & Hyle (2003). The authors returned to the research site -three to six weeks after the participants completed their initial drawings- to conduct follow up interviews, giving research participants the opportunity to review their earlier artistic creations. “After reviewing his or her drawing, each participant was asked what assumptions might be made about the artist’s experiences based solely on the drawing itself” (Kearney & Hyle, 2003: 8). For these authors, conducting follow-up interviews offered the creators an “attempt to view their drawings through unbiased eyes” (p.8). Recalling Cope (2005: 170), “an individual will interpret events differently at different times and in different contexts”. Therefore, had I returned to ask the participants to produce newer drawings at a later date, I might have been able to add more resolution to our understanding of the meanings the participants associated with sp/pl/ace.

While artistic creations help to draw out emotions in research participants (Kearney & Hyle, 2003), it can be argued that the activity of drawing limits participant thinking; encouraging participants to focus on “the single most salient feature or perception” (Kearney & Hyle, 2003: 21, citing Nossiter & Biberman, 1990: 13). In doing so, people end up leaving out important peripheral details. Getting to the heart of the matter through drawing means that happenings which occur on the periphery might therefore be left out.

### 3.7.5. Photography

A concern when taking photographs as visual field-notes is that, if they are included in the research text, the researcher might be perceived by the reader as instilling him/herself in place of the participant. In my use of photography, this was not my intention. Perhaps a weakness in my research can be seen in that, as compared to photo-voicing practices -as mentioned above, where participants photograph objects of importance to themselves, and the author’s aim is to augment participant voice, what I have produced, in photographic terms, can be construed as contributing to a diminishment of the participants voice, because they did not take the photographs themselves. As such, in future studies on sp/pl/ace I would seek to align my research practice more closely with Warren (2005).

Moreover, my photographs frame the Tayport premises as I perceive them. My use of photography failed, therefore, to reintroduce -according to the principle of equal voicing- the voice of the participant as occupier, which is traditionally kept silent, or drowned out (by expert voices) in place making activities. My photography started out as a documentary exercise, an unsolicited favour of sorts. My intention was to compile a photograph album with which I would present the research participants a diary of events. My idea was that the participants could then show friends and family, investors, customers, etc, before and after images. Regarding data collection, it might have been more fruitful to hand a disposable camera(s) to each of the research participants at both the St Andrews and the Tayport premises and encourage the participants to *autodrive* (Warren, 2005: 867) the research agenda. Handing over the camera, as opposed to me taking the shots upon their invitation, would be akin to me, as a researcher, abandoning my role as *driver* (the participant as co-pilot) and the participant(s) becoming both co-pilot *and* driver. In light of Warren’s (2005) lessons learnt, it would be more practical, however, to use digital cameras instead of 35mm; but this of course, would have involved yet another financial outlay.

## Chapter Four

### The Narratives

#### 4.1 Introducing the narratives

The narratives are comprised of extracts taken from digitally recorded interactions or extensive fieldwork notes and are included in the thesis in the participants' words. These extracts are taken from longer stories of the overall life experience of the actors involved, stories which I have both participated in and discussed with the actors. By presenting whole sections of narrative in this chapter, I am adhering to the principal of equivalent voicing: the research participants speak for themselves. Space limitation, however, has meant that not all the stories told by the research participants can be represented. A key analytical element of organising data from the field was thus the decision to include certain narratives and not others.

On this, along with Barnett & Storey (2001: 87), I acknowledge that, “influenced by academic discussion and review, in which there is necessarily a drive towards the perception of patterns and clusters”, the “final authorship” is mine. But through listening closely to the perceived meaningful connections between relations, situations, events and actions of individual decision-makers and organising my insights according to the themes emerging from the literature review, I was able to cut out key moments and incidents from the original transcripts to paint the following overall narrative which, I claim, casts new light on our understanding of how meaning is constructed during place producing processes. I participatively observed natural conversations, conducted guided drawing exercises and discussed *with* the research participants their representations of how, in their eyes, decisions happened and place came into being. To guard against contaminating the data, I have tried to leave the participants' voice “in its original authentic state as far as possible” (Barnett & Storey, 2001: 87). This, I argue, adds resolution to our understanding on how decisions happen in action, and it shines much needed light on how meaning is constructed through social interaction.

### Chapter structure

In the first part, the narratives *on deciding to relocate* are presented (with the narratives chosen to represent the *historical context* in Appendix 4). Other details on the activity of deciding to relocate can be found in Appendix 5. In the second part, narratives are chosen to represent the *labour of relocating*. Then, in the third part, the narratives on *place making* present a *possible* answer to the question: when people relocate to new business premises and they can do almost anything they want on the inside of the building, what is the best way to understand the sense that people make of (work)space, and how does that meaning influence the activity of place making? This chapter thus encompasses the research participants' perceived connections between the decision to relocate, workplace design issues, and place and decision-producing processes in workplace making.

The narratives are grouped according to themes emerging from the literature review in the previous chapter. In all, the narratives and fragments of everyday conversations tell a story which follows a simple plot: a small new business venture, called FifeX, is created. Having moved business premises once before, struggling with the success and growth of their business, the co-founders decide to relocate to considerably larger premises. The story tells how the decision to relocate came about, and how it felt making that decision. The story then recounts how the move took place, presenting details on the labour of relocating, and what happened afterwards. That is, how the 'look' and 'feel' of the newly acquired business premises came into being.

## **4.2 Narratives on deciding to relocate**

### Moving places: Ken's side of the story told in his voice

"The good thing about Tayport is, it was *move-in-able*. Frazer was a catalyst for moving, he was all for Tayport because its very close to where he lives. But then he left FifeX, so his view was no longer as relevant. We had decided against Letham before he left, anyway, so the move to Tayport was more or less on from the start. I wouldn't say the move went ahead because of Frazer, but he certainly did influence it and get the ball rolling." ... "He never said anything that Craig or I hadn't already felt before. We both knew that we were going to have to move some time soon, and I had

the feeling we needed to move long before Frazer even started talking about it, but Craig and I had never seriously talked about it.”

“This makes me think, you know, why do people accept crap? I think its because its easy to cope with what you have got and coast along without thinking about what you really need. But Frazer put the lid on that. And Frazer is good at pointing things out like that.”

“We couldn’t have stayed in St Andrews forever, as much as we would have liked to. We had stuff all over the place. Having said that, in hindsight, Craig and I could have got by for a bit longer, but sooner or later we would have had to move, anyway. We *unofficially* had stuff parked everywhere [in the St Andrews Technology Centre]: in a room that was meant to be a common room; a room just facing that -a room that we were using and nobody really knew about- and we still had stuff in the Physics Department. These are some of the important factors why we had to move.”

Frazer resigns: Craig’s side of the story told in his voice

“The ironic thing is, after our meeting last week when we had lunch together, remember we were talking about the problems we have been having with Frazer, the Technical Director? Well, he resigned the very next day. He has probably just thrown the towel in because the shit’s hit the fan and everybody has been working crazy hours, he can’t stand the pressure and so he has given up.”

“We have been having problems with him ever since he started to work with us, last year. In hindsight, we are lucky. We got off lightly (Appendix 6 details a positive outcome of Frazer’s resignation). We were in the process of making him a partner. We were nearing the end of drawing up the legal details and contracts and what not, to make him a shareholder. Now we would have been fucked if he decided to leave and keep hold of the shares. We would have no money now.”

Deciding to relocate: Craig's side of the story told in his voice

“Why are you asking me all these questions?<sup>14</sup> I couldn't draw what you are asking me to do. I think you are looking for something that isn't there. It's simpler than you think. To draw the experience of what FifeX has gone through over the past few months is impossible. But here goes...”

[Craig produced the following time line in linear format, using words.]

1. Dec 2005 FifeX employ new staff – staff to work at home
2. Feb 2006 FifeX wins new tenders – staff look for larger premises
3. Mar 2006 More contracts – current premises too small
4. Mar 2006 FifeX start negotiations of Face Morph manufacture with China  
- we buy more stock
5. Mar 2006 Manage to complete projects with inadequate space
6. Mar 2006 Decide to go for new property after approx. 2 month search
7. May 2006 New employee leaves
8. May 2006 Still decide to go ahead with move
9. July 2006 Lease confirmed – move going ahead

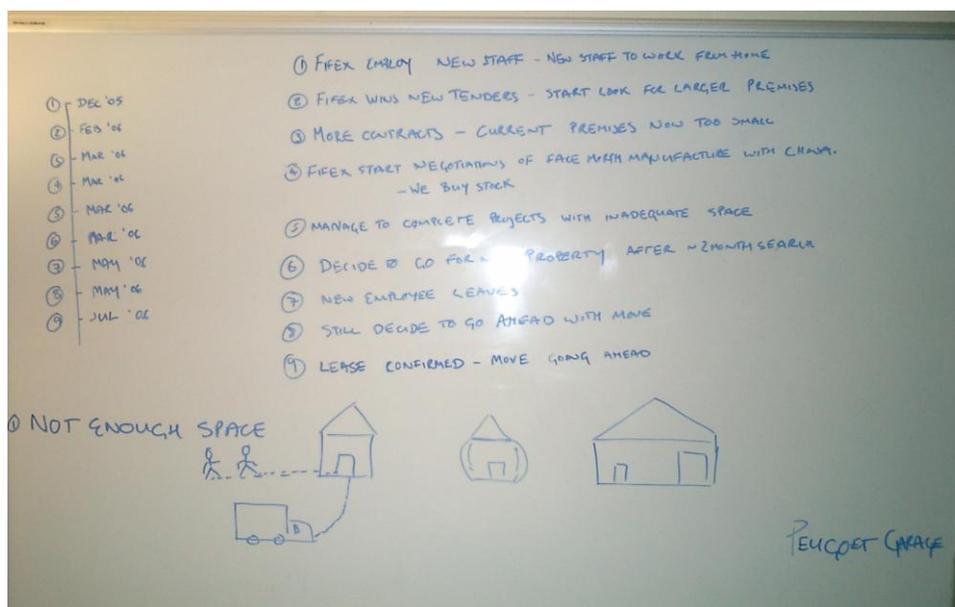
*Researcher as himself*

“There you have used words and a time scale. Can you depict that experience using images only?”

[Then, on the marker-board at which we were standing, directly under his timeline, Craig produced the following storyboard consisting of three drawings...]

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<sup>14</sup> I asked Craig to “draw how it feels to have gone through what you have recently experienced in FifeX”, to which he replied: ...



### Craig's interpretation of his first drawing in his voice

“I have got Ken and I arriving. And that’s a van making a delivery of parts [to use in our exhibits]. The middle drawing is not of a pumpkin, it is this office bulging with far too much stuff coming and going; and with Frazer on board..., that’s FifeX not having enough space. The last picture is us moving into a new property with enough space. Huh! And when it happens, we are going to be sooo busy you wouldn’t believe it.”

### Craig's reflection on drawing in his voice<sup>15</sup>

“If I were to draw it again I would do it completely different. Because you did not say that it could be as abstract as you like, I thought it was a real-life drawing you were after. You did not describe what you wanted very well. It’s not that it’s a challenge..... the reason why Ken is taking his time and not getting back to you on his drawing<sup>16</sup>, is some people don’t necessarily find it easy to draw.”

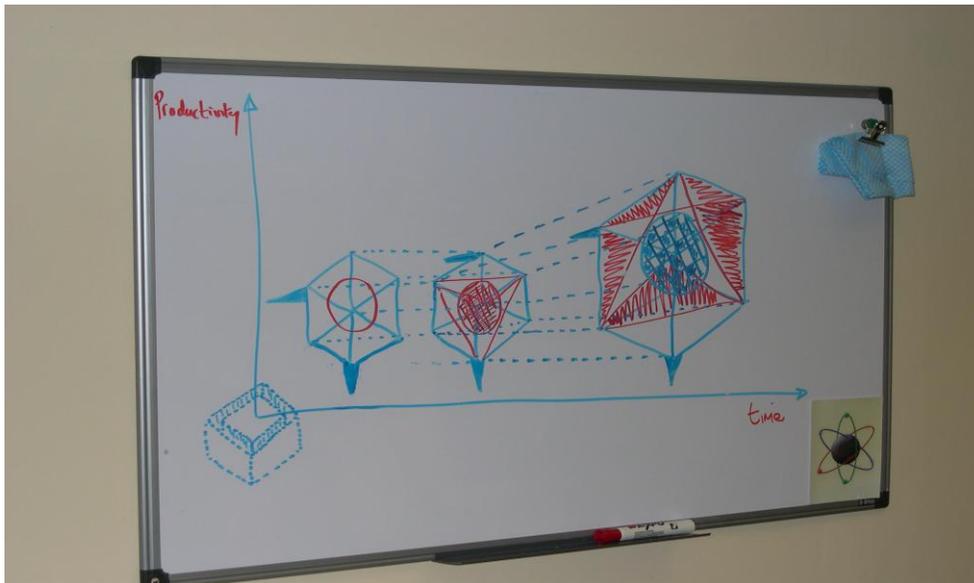
<sup>15</sup> Reporting on a telephone conversation I had with Craig on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> I asked both Craig and Ken -individually- to produce drawings on the same day. Since I insisted on giving Craig and Ken creative licence in terms of media and presentation, I did not expect an immediate response. Ken was too busy to produce a drawing at my time of asking and because he insisted on doing it ‘properly’, he had difficulty fitting it in to his busy schedule. After three or four gentle prods over a couple of weeks, Ken finally let me know that he was ready to share his drawing (feelings) with me.

### Researcher as himself

“I understand. Apologies. Perhaps I expected too much. And to be honest, perhaps we did not go through enough ‘warm-up’ exercises before you did the drawing..., and perhaps I did not give a good description of what I wanted you to do in the first place. In the meantime I will reflect on what we have done and I will make sure that I am in a better position to facilitate drawing next time, if we get another chance. I will read-up on it to see how drawing might be able to help us learn more about what we have experienced.” [During my next visit to FifeX, in Tayport, Craig invited me into his office to show me his second attempt at drawing. The drawing remained on marker-board for some weeks thereafter.]

### Filling in the conceptual spaces -Frazer’s role in FifeX: Craig’s side of the story expressed visually in his own drawing



During this telephone conversation, Craig also shared his observations on me. He used it as an opportunity to tell me how he thought I, as a researcher, dealt with the situation. It also provided an opportunity for him to excuse Ken’s perceived tardiness in getting back to me with his drawing.

Space as container and space as lived: Using creative methods (drawing) to communicate the feeling of working in FifeX, and being in the St Andrews Technology Centre: describing visual representations in Craig's voice

*Craig's interpretation of his second drawing in his own voice*

“When we first started... it's almost like you have got an empty box. Nothing really in it that we have, we don't have anything to offer. So it's not that its structureless..., it is structureless but I don't think it's like... it was an empty feeling like we had nothing to offer. As time presses on, this structure starts to change, and kind of morphs itself into what I see here [pointing to middle structure], as being when Frazer came on board. And you have a core within there: then what we have is a core skill [exhibit design and manufacture]. Which just happens to be Frazer's technical skills and our kind of, erm, well Ken's got different skills than I have, I suppose..., and we are both different in many ways in that he is good behind the scenes. He can do all the internet, the software, he can do all that, you know? And I do the face kind of thing [sales, contracts, and administration]. So there are different types of a core skill, and a different structure holding the walls of the company together of where we are going at this point [see middle drawing].”

Strategic workspace planning: Establishing FifeX's Workplace Needs Without Frazer: Ken's side of the story told in his voice

“I think that's a really good question... . What *are* FifeX's workplace needs without Frazer? 90% of our time we are using office space. I mean, there is no point in bullshitting about that. I mean, we are! That is what we use. I think its pretty accurate to say that my workplace is my office. We occasionally use workshop space. My view is, when Frazer was on board that changed obviously [Ken did a lot of work on-site with Frazer]. Obviously, when Frazer left we had to make some pretty big decisions about what we were going to do: what we are going to be involved in, and where we were going to... you know, be involved in screwing things together. At those times, my workspace was probably not my office. So it was a big move to have a workshop.”

“Both our views are probably similar, but my view is, Tayport is an investment... Let's have the space, because we are eventually going to have to bring somebody in to use it. When that time comes, that will *become* our workplace. In the meantime, it's a good place for storage, its safe and its dry..., which will save us money instead of storing elsewhere. We can do odd things there, but in all honesty, it's going to be getting used in the same way it would have been if Frazer would have been here. That lab there, again. Because Frazer isn't here, we have converted it to office space. Instead

of having it as a clean workshop..., as it was originally going to be when Frazer was here, the plan was to have....., essentially a dirty workshop and a clean ‘electronics’ workshop. Now, as you can see, it has predominantly become office space with one electronics bench, which will get used very infrequently. But because the way the company is going now that Frazer has gone, I would say, our efforts have been focused towards the school products. Both of these things require, again, storage space, meeting space, and office space. But not necessarily workshop space.”

“I think that the advantage with this type of building is that it does give you the flexibility. I think somewhere like Letham, looking back, I think we made the right decision, because we would have had that building geared toward the workshop. It would have been *workshop* with offices next to it. The workshop here [in Tayport] is one third of the space with a lot of activity going on elsewhere. I think Letham would have just been disproportionate. I think it would have been 70% workshop space. With the high ceilings, they would have been wasted. Having high ceilings can be good, you could do a lot in there in terms of manufacturing, but the space [in Letham] would have been a waste given where FifeX’s efforts are now concentrated.”

(Part of the) meaning of the move for Ken: told in his own voice

*Privacy and control of others’ access to oneself*

“Its funny how Craig talks about my decision-making. He thinks that he is a good decision-maker but I think he is a terrible decision-maker. I was close to throttling him when I was designing our website [which was launched to coincide with ‘the move’ to Tayport]. I have designed dozens of websites. I designed the websites for some of the busiest B&Bs in St Andrews. See how good they are, how easy it is to navigate them. I designed them in a way that appeals to the customer. I have designed some great websites, but the one I hate the most is my own. Out of all the websites I have designed, the worst is the one for my own company. That’s a shame. Our website is the result of poor design (see Appendix 7 for Ken’s explanation why this is so). But it doesn’t, or..., it shouldn’t have to be that way.”

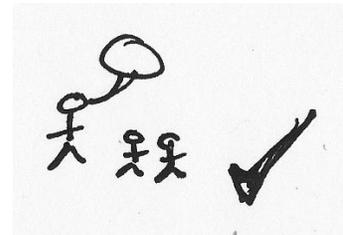
Pictorial representation of (part of) the meaning of the move for Craig: told in his own voice

*Consolidation*

“I don’t have an image of how the move came about, but if I did, it would be like an attic of a house, packed with things, and you are scared to open it because if you do, everything will fall out. All our stuff is spread out. If I were to put it all in this room [in FifeX’s office in the St Andrews Technology Centre], you wouldn’t be able to open the door. It would be stacked to the ceiling, from the back to the front of the room. You wouldn’t be able to get out, the door wouldn’t open. You know, some people like to complicate things. I don’t understand. Why? A decision is that simple. We don’t have enough space. We need to move. There’s not that much more to it than that. It’s a no brainer!”

Imposing realities: The catalyst behind the relocation: the story told in Ken’s voice

“Frazer was a catalyst for moving. It wasn’t because of him, but he certainly started the ball rolling. He never said anything that Craig or I hadn’t already felt before. We both knew that we were going to have to move, and I had the feeling long before he started talking about it, you know? But I wonder if Craig and I would have kept on working away in difficult circumstances, ignoring the fact



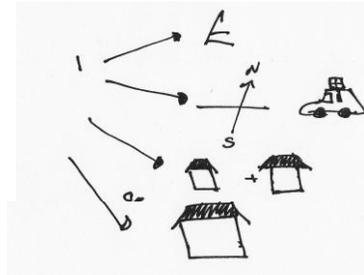
that we really did need something bigger. We [Craig and Ken] always had these thoughts [about relocating]. But this is what I was trying to think about after our discussion last time..., what would, what would have made us go [if Frazer had not said anything]? Would it have been like..., would a project have come in, and we would have said, “right, we cannot do this project unless we move, we simply do not have enough room to work in,” or would it have been, you know, a time thing, we would have said, “by June next year we need to get out”. I don’t know. I actually really don’t know. So for me, this is actually an important time. Although it is just a wee part of the drawing, it’s Frazer saying you know, “ok guys, you actually...[need to move], now we need to do it”, and being that kind of catalyst for that.”

“I have got here, you know, at this point, there was lots of discussion about what was going to happen. Frazer, like I think I said to you last week, we had ideas [of moving] before [Frazer mentioned it], but I think Frazer like .... you know, I think he really brought it to light, like erm, what the issues were. And erm, you know, Frazer started to say we need to move. I think, we [Craig and

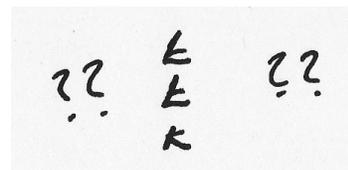
Ken] agreed. I think the funny thing was, I think before [Frazer brought up the need to move], I don't..., I don't know what would have sparked us to actually do it. I don't know. I was trying to think about this, you know? Would there have come a point were we said, right, "we have to do it!" Erm..., the first move out of the Uni[versity], erm, one of our directors said to us, "that room is available" [in the New Technology Centre]. That was like the catalyst [for the first move]."

The story of the limited search told in Ken's voice

"I have got here a few options we were considering at the time and a few factors. One was money, obviously. Two was a change in location, and three was, I don't know if we talked about this before, but we did at one point consider keeping the office in St Andrews and getting another space as well. Basically like a garage. It was something [an alternative] we came up with and I will tell you the reason we came up with it,



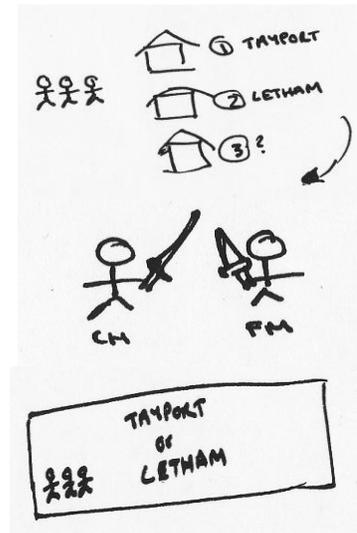
it was because, erm, we thought that having a location in St Andrews was important. And we wanted..., well, Craig and I just basically wanted to stay there [in the St Andrews Technology Centre] and I thought well, why don't we just get a garage? Or, I don't know, it could have been anything, or a small warehouse or something; somewhere we could work off-site. But erm, I don't think that ever would have worked because erm... [we would have still been working in two separate sites], and I think part of the reason it works now [after the move to Tayport] is because everything is on-site and we realise that now. But at one point, that [hiring storage space /workshop facility] *was* an option. But doing it this way would have been difficult [costly] because we would have still been paying essentially a premium rate for the St Andrews office. I think the only reason we can afford three units in Tayport..., -later on I have done a drawing, which is like Craig and I in a, a... [scanning the page to find the sketch but failing to do so], I don't know where it is, but it is essentially Craig and I in a space that is basically far too big for us, which is what I feel... . Well, too big is the wrong word, but its [Tayport business premises are] bigger than is absolutely necessary; perhaps slightly excessive. However, its affordable because



erm..., because the office rate is not at a premium. If the office rate was at a premium, then to have..., to have this much office space would be unaffordable, so maybe that was one of the..., erm... [factors]."

Negotiated order: Ken's side of the story told in his voice

“So at the outset, right, -I have kind of run a couple of weeks into one drawing here- but essentially we had three options: Tayport, Letham, and then considering other places like Kirkaldy, Glenrothes, and... . I mean, to cut this long story reasonably short, like I have said to you before [laughing] there was a bit of an argument here. I have got Craig and Frazer having a bit of fisty-cuffs here. But it was a wee bit of discussion. Craig liked the Letham idea, and I think Frazer had decided that Tayport would suit better. You know, there was a lot of mucking about. Frazer came on board, I wouldn't say any of that was a no-brainer!”



“When Frazer came on board there was a lot of discussion. There were a lot of contradicting opinions about things. I don't agree with Craig when he says that the decision to move was a no-brainer. I think..., I think..., do you know what I think he means? Looking back on it now [the decision to relocate], I think its retrospect that is allowing him to say that [the decision to move was a no-brainer]. He is looking back and he is going, “why are we here?” Like justifying. You know when you come home and you have just spent a load of money on a jacket and your girlfriend is going, “why did you just spend £200 on that?” and you are going “...because I don't have a good jacket” kind of thing. It's never actually like that when you are making the decision to buy it, is it? You know? And I think looking back, if it was a no-brainer, right, then [pointing to the start of the story board], right back here [at the start of Ken's drawing], we would have done it [made the move]. Craig and I would have just... [moved to Tayport, and Ken's drawing would fit on to one page, not three].”

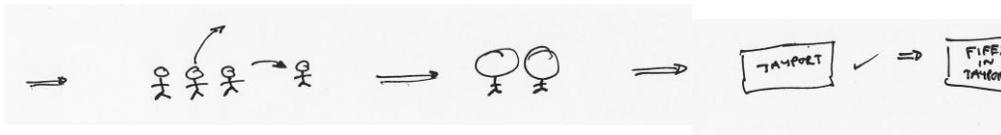
“There was a lot of conversation. A lot of thought went in to it [the choice of place]. As I say, maybe its just that, maybe he [Craig] is looking back and just trying to find a quick business decision that made the move. But I am looking back on it and saying, “what actually happened?” And I know for a fact, you know..., that I could copy you email after email after email on the subject that was sent back and forth, so it wasn't a quick move. A quick decision in my eyes would be, “We need to move within the next month!. Then we move. When I bought my house it was a quick

decision. I went right, “Shit! I need somewhere to live”. You know, look at this place [a potential house to buy], get it! That wasn’t how this [move with FifeX] went, at all. There was a lot of things as well, you know, like going back to here [pointing to an earlier picture in the storyboard], I mean, this was a discussion: were we going to go for two places, or one? Were we going to move? How much are we going to pay? We didn’t know at that point how many people we were going to have on board. Craig and I were talking about having the two of us and Frazer, and possibility, right..., of having a secretary by the end of this year, by the end of 2006, you know? So there were a lot of things to consider. I think, you know, obviously, you can see from the storyline that it wasn’t an easy [decision], you know? You know, there were a lot of discussions.”

### 4.3 Narratives of relocating

#### Relocating through enactment: Ken’s side of the story in his voice

“I think all of us quite liked Letham, but there was a time issue. Erm, I think that was one of the biggest issues. And the other issue was, erm, I just think we honestly didn’t trust the Council to get it organised in time, you know? And that’s really -this one should come here [referring to the sketch depicting *fisty cuffs* between Craig and Frazer]- that’s when Craig and Frazer had different views about it. So then, Letham was bombed out [pointing to the bomb].”



“And then Tayport became the major thing. I have got here, Frazer left. I don’t think it’s in the right order. But anyway, Frazer left. Back to two of us. And I have drawn here the two of us with bigger heads because I think that..., erm like I said to you before, once Frazer had gone, we were wiser about it [the business of FifeX and what FifeX needed in terms of accommodation]. And erm, and then we went for, we decided to go for Tayport, and then FifeX became in Tayport.”



Participating in the move with Craig: the authors' side of the story told in his own voice

*The labour of relocating*

“On the day of the handover of the keys for the Tayport premises, Craig and I moved FifeX into its new home. It took us four trips<sup>17</sup> to move in all their belongings and it was my first time acting as a business removal-man. The day before the move took place Craig and Ken asked me not to come in to the office so they could pack. It would be no use me helping them to pack because I did not know how they were going to organise their belongings once they arrived in their new premises. It made sense for them to pack their own objects in boxes that they would recognise when it was time to un-pack. Moreover, the office in St Andrews was a small space, and a third body would have only got in their way.”

“The building in Tayport was previously occupied by a company that manufactured chemical solutions. There were signs that the building had been used for a variety of purposes. There was a large workshop area, which I later learnt from Craig and Ken, once housed a walk-in refrigerator. There were two offices (referred to as office 1 and office 2 from now on, which later became Ken’s and Craig’s office respectively); a small box-room (approximately 5m X 5m, which later became a break-out area / meeting room) next to a kitchen; two bathrooms (one became a shower), and a large workspace with a linoleum floor, sink and a family-sized refrigerator (which later became office 3). All these rooms are accessible from an entrance hall area which leads on to a single corridor.”

“Craig bought second hand office furniture off a company that was moving from the St Andrews Technology Centre into offices that were already furnished. He paid £300, which he thought was a “good deal”, for three desks and three chairs, two filing cabinets, and five cushioned chairs. We moved this furniture into Tayport first. Upon arriving in Tayport (which was also my first encounter with the new premises), we unloaded the van. Craig began by *asking* me to put objects in specific places; soon thereafter he began *telling* me where to put things. However, with some of the boxes, he had forgotten what was inside them, or he simply did not know. When I asked him where he wanted me to put them, he would instruct “in the second office”, or the “office with the glass front” (office 1), or “...just in the hall for the time being”. But even for boxes where it was clear that

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<sup>17</sup> Using a long-wheel-based Ford, Transit van.

he knew what was inside (i.e. his own belongings), he still was uncertain as to where was best to put them and he would say, “just put them anywhere”.”

“There was a distinct lack of planning. But there was one well-timed strategic move however. That was, to coincide the relocation with the launch of FifeX’s new website. This afforded Craig the opportunity to draft a formal letter to send to all their business contacts, informing them of the new address and to encourage them to visit the new website.”

#### Seeing first

“Craig and I managed to move everything in to the Tayport premises in one day. By late afternoon Ken had arrived back from Aberdeen where he had been attending a design meeting with potential customers. The conversation that ensued is transcribed on pages 147-154 and analysed in detail thereafter.”

### **4.4 Narratives on workplace making**

#### Unfolding bodily activity: Using the body to make decisions on office layout: the story told in the author’s voice

During the days following move in date (Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2006), Craig and Ken mustered support from friends and family to help with cleaning and painting<sup>18</sup>. During this time, Craig and Ken took time out to return to the St Andrews Technology Centre to pick up mail and check their e-mail accounts. As they did not have access to the Internet in Tayport but still had Internet access in St Andrews until the end of that week, this allowed them to keep on top of the e-mails and attend to the general requirements of running a small new business venture. Toward the end of that week Craig telephoned to ask me if I wanted to participate in some more decorating. During this conversation I learnt that in my absence of less than three days, more new office furniture<sup>19</sup> had been bought and both Craig and Ken had formally allocated themselves an office.

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<sup>18</sup> The following two people were involved to varying degrees: Dave, a personal friend of both Craig and Ken, and free-lance science communicator who sometimes does work for FifeX; Katie, who was Ken’s Girlfriend at the time.

<sup>19</sup> Including book shelves, numerous (matching) picture frames and cupboards, a comfortable chair to go in Ken’s office, a round table and four chairs to go in Craig’s office. Craig and Ken decided on these items together in Ikea (Edinburgh).

I contributed by helping Craig to frame pictures of FifeX's products. Together, we then hung them in the corridor leading Craig's office (office 2) and the workshop. The corridor was dark with no natural light, mainly due to the fact that there was an absence of translucent tiles in the lowered ceiling. First, I introduced translucent ceiling tiles -taken from office 3- to let in more natural light. I spaced them out at regular intervals to help disperse what little natural light there was coming in from the Velux-type skylights above. This immediately made the corridor feel more roomy and less claustrophobic. Secondly, I then placed the framed photographs of FifeX's products along the floor -standing them against the wall, so that the incoming light acted as a natural spotlight of sorts. Thirdly, I sought Craig's approval of their positioning, and then together we hammered picture hooks into the walls for hanging the frames. I later repositioned the translucent ceiling tiles -in the entrance area, Ken's office -office 3, and the box room in order to bring natural light into areas that were darkened. None of the offices were operational at this point.



The photographs above were taken to represent to me the impact of experiencing and talking about a space can have on place producing activities.

Craig assembled the flat-pack furniture in his room, and then he asked me my opinion regarding the layout of his office. We discussed alternatives, however, when we tried to put in place what we had just decided upon, we found that the furniture and the layout simply would not fit, or 'work' well together in the space. I quickly grew impatient because none of our frustrated efforts seemed to satisfy Craig.

Moreover, from what Craig told me regarding the image he had in his mind of the look and feel of the type of office he wanted to create for himself, it became apparent to me that his image was not completely finished. On this, because Craig and I had worked so well together in moving all of FifeX's belongings into the new premises, I suggested that it might be helpful to put our newly acquired and refined "removal skills" to the test by treating Craig's office space as a prototype.

Expressive-responsive relation with others and otherness in our surrounding

I then set about explaining my proposal as a playful, mini-removal exercise. I suggested that we could try out several different spatial layouts, treating each arrangement as a potential floor plan. "Why don't we try out several different layouts, run through them, and see what you think? If you don't like what you see or how it feels, we can change what you don't like and keep what you do. Lets treat it as a physical exercise. But let's do it swiftly so you get a feel for loads of different layouts, and then you pick the best one. When you see it you will know which one works best for you". Craig earnestly took me up on this offer and it reaped rewards, especially if you consider that the layout was still the same when I formally withdrew from the field in December 2006 (5 months after move in). We must have got something right.



The photographs above were taken to represent to me the impact of experience prototyping.

### Creating place in the space that is lived in the everyday course of life

We considered several different permutations by quickly moving the furniture around without serious forethought. In each layout, one person would leave the room and re-enter, greeting the other, just like a visitor would who had just visited FifeX's new business premises for the first time. Each arrangement created a unique space which evoked different feelings. Such role playing helped provoke reactions, which created mini-discussions and helped to question Craig's taken-for-granted, pre-conceived ideas regarding arrangements and what is possible. Quick prototyping helped us to imagine newer possibilities and show alternative ways of how the space could be used. When Craig was happy and seemed settled with his "new" layout, upon Ken's invitation to help him organise his office, Craig and I did exactly the same involving Ken himself.

It only took three or four alternatives before Ken settled on a layout. The physical effort required to allow Ken to see / feel for himself which layout would work best for him was considerably less compared with Craig. This is not due to the fact that Ken is more decisive, or I was more imposing with Ken than I was with Craig; rather, it seemed that due to the shape of the room, the size of the furniture, and given where the door was located [in office 1], there were considerably fewer 'workable' alternatives in Ken's room than there was in Craig's. For example, in one of the permutations -with the desk horizontal to you as you enter the room- Ken would have had to practically climb over his desk in order to get to his chair, because there was not enough space between the desk and the wall. Similarly, the photographs below were taken to represent to me the impact of experience prototyping



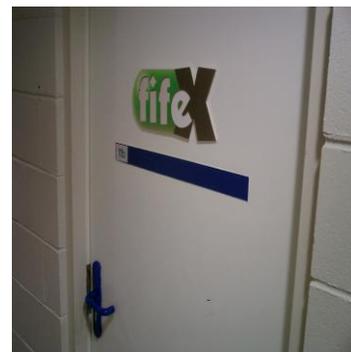
Visions of the past: What the St Andrews Technology Centre said about FifeX: Craig's side of the story told in his voice



“One thing that surprises me most about our office space [at St Andrews Technology Centre] is, when clients visit us, they often ask if they can see where we manufacture our products. They mistake the whole of the St Andrews Technology Centre for our business premises.”



“They always seem disheartened and let down when we bring them into the building and take them to the door leading to our small office. While Tayport doesn't have the same appeal as St Andrews, people can instantly see just how big we are when they visit us here [in Tayport]. And if we still want the nice restaurants and bars to entertain our clients, St Andrews is only fifteen minutes down the road.”



Visions of the present: what Tayport says about FifeX: Ken's side of the story told in his voice

“There are two things that this new place [in Tayport] says about FifeX. [First], it says something to the people who already know us. [Second], it says something to our new clients. The first is a relative thing. Most of our clients know us since our days in the Physics Department [at the University of St Andrews]. People look at us now and see that we are serious. This new place says to those who know us from the start -those who have seen where we came from- we are going somewhere. They can see it. The other is, to our new clients; when they come here, it's tidy, there is a park across the way, it's green, quiet, a tidy forecourt, and it's comfortable. They come inside, it's warm, clean, and they feel comfortable. This room for example [the meeting room], its clear what it's for. It's for talking. There are four chairs and a table. All the chairs are identical to one another. You are no better off if you sit in this chair, that one, or that one. They are all the same, one is as comfortable as the other. It's simple. When people come in here, they know what to do. This room is for sitting down and talking.”



“In the workshop, I suggested we put the table in the middle. It's a big table, nothing on it. That will prove to be good. We can take clients in there. And you can stand ten people around it if you want. We can put drawings on the table, and talk about them: “Okay, what stage [of the design process] are we at? What do we need to think about now?” Another thing, it looks like we have put thought and care in to it [workplace]. You can see we are serious, like we are also serious about the work we do.”



Learning through management inquiry: Ken's story told in his voice

“In the old place we would greet and welcome visitors, bring them into our office, sit them down, and then leave them alone. We had to go out of the room to bring back a cup of tea, or coffee. In order to welcome them with a hot drink, you have to *leave* them, which is not very welcoming. Here [in Tayport], the kitchen is right next door, so if Craig or I are meeting people, we can carry on our conversations. From here [sitting in the box room] you can hear the kettle boiling next door [in the kitchen]..., that creates a good atmosphere. Come to think of it, I never thought about that before today. Doing this drawing has helped me to recognise that. I tell you something, if we move again, I will definitely make sure that if there is a meeting room, it's going to go right next door to the kitchen.”

“When we came in [moved in] there was a lot of discussion about what was going to go where, and who..., and what we were going to do with each room. I have put the paint, because obviously we were talking about the colour in each room, you know, lots of other things as well, like how are we going to move the office forward.”



Learning through enactment: Ken's side of the story told in his voice

“When we first arrived here, I think we didn't really know [how things would work and how the inside would look], and I think now I would say to anyone doing the move we have done now: I would say, move in, and work there for a month, two months, and *then*, I mean..., do the things that need..., I mean do the things that need doing, but don't decide, you know I think in retrospect Craig and I have made the right decisions. But you know..., how we were talking about knocking that [wall] down, and all these other changes, it would have taken a lot more time and cost a lot more. So my advice to other people would be, use the space and work out what you actually want, then decide.”

“I think basically right, the first thing is, just to say is, we didn't... There are lots of things, comfort issues, this thing about having my own space, what would I do with it? I don't think we thought about that at all until we got here. And the reason is, I think, erm..., we were so, erm... blinkered

about what we could [do in terms of renovation work, etc]...., what the potential was, that we didn't realise, you know? I didn't realise that, actually, I would be able to do these things like this, or whatever, you know? Whatever it is, you know? Say it is listen to music [while working in the privacy of my own office], it wasn't something that occurred to me [before the move took place]."

... "Like I say..., I used to listen to music when Craig went [i.e. when he left the St Andrews office], but it wasn't something that I thought..., consciously thought, I'd really like to erm... do all the time. Now I have got that opportunity, I can do that. But, I think erm, I don't think that was an issue [at the time]. I think that there are..., there are other things. I think..., I think the main issues that drove the move, I think probably were, erm, related to work, and I think that there are some things here that are personal. I mean, having the shower, erm. I certainly think that having a shower and the kitchen and things, that was definitely erm..., that definitely came in [to consideration]. That would have come in right at the beginning when we were thinking about the move, thinking about..., I mean take the meeting room, that was an other thing that came in, I mean like, I don't know if I said to you before..., it was a big problem to us before because erm, Craig couldn't have a meeting without me being there. It was like we both had to be there, or, erm, one of us had to leave the room. That is a big issue, and that was something that definitely came in, I think, right at the beginning. Erm. I think as time went on with the move, and we started looking at erm, when we started actually looking at the building, and looking at the rooms, that's probably when we first started thinking about what was actually possible. So that would be once we'd..., you know, probably around about here [pointing on his story board to an image representing a period after the move-in date], you know we'd actually started looking at the building and started thinking, you know, what are we going to do with this room? But even then I would say our views were pretty naive, you know?" ... "I am glad, you know, the whole Fraser thing, I am glad that it panned it [the move] out over a few months, because it gave us quite a lot of time to think [about the need to move]. You know, originally, we were going to have an official meeting room. This would have been a meeting room [the discussion took place in the meeting room]. You can imagine what a waste of space that would have been if we had done that you know."

“The other thing is the financial constraint, like for example, we didn’t want to rent, overlap the rent. Now in future, you would just perhaps have to do that, you would have to have rent overlap for a month or so<sup>20</sup>.”

“Right, well, I think, I think, just to clarify, I think it depends what [type of building] I am moving from and what I moving to, right. We were moving from a place that was really small and where we had really limited..., everything was limited. To a place that was much, much bigger. And the reason erm, that I said that, is because anybody in our position, with a company like ours, you don’t know how you are working. Erm, I mean I ..., put it this way, we got advice to that effect from a guy across the road [the neighbouring owner-manager in Tayport]. And I think the reason he said it to us as well..., it’s similar. Because you don’t know how you are going to work: if you have never had a workshop before, right, you don’t know how you are going to use it. Erm, if you have never had a meeting room before, you don’t know how you are going to use it. Now, originally, right, we were thinking well, erm, we are going to use the meeting room, twice, three times a week. Well, I can tell you in all honesty, since we have been here, there has been nothing where this room has not been adequate<sup>21</sup>. But if we had decked this out as a meeting room, it would have been a total waste. If we were moving from this place to somewhere equivalent now, *then* I would say ok, you could do it all [i.e. the planning] upfront because you know how you are using the space. But, I think it is just where you are moving to somewhere you don’t know.... [because you are limited as to what extent you can plan]. The thing is with something like a workshop, you just don’t know how you are going to use it if you have never had one. Things like a meeting room, if you have never had one, you don’t know how you are going to use it. Is it appropriate to have a meeting in your own office? Erm, and other things as well, like the lab bench, how much are you going to use it? I think that’s

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<sup>20</sup> At this point I said:

“Right, ok. So you would spend a month doing it up in the evenings, plan it all out, move in bit by bit, and then physically make the move. Ok. So just to come back to that point, because I think it was interesting what you said. If someone else was to make the move..., what is it you said? You would recommend them to move in -and this is contrary to Craig’s approach- live in the place for two months, erm..., and then make the necessary changes. So why do you think that it is good to make decisions on what you want your workplace to be, *after* that two month period?”

<sup>21</sup> The breakout / coffee room doubles up as a meeting room. But the finish of the meeting room is not done to the specification that Craig had in mind when he spoke of a meeting room. Ken’s point here is, although the room is not ‘officially’ a meeting room as Craig would have liked it, it has proven to be ‘fit for the purpose’.

why I stand by it, because I think the best thing for you to do is, Craig and I..., I mean, we have basically left it the way it is, as you know, and then, if someone comes on board, then we find out ok, we are actually using the workshop, quite a lot or whatever, then we might need to think about moving things around. Or, that room [Ken pointing to the room next door, office 3] is not getting used for office space, then divide it. But I think to divide it originally before you know... [how and who will be going to use it], I think it's this idea of having *new* facilities you just don't know and you don't really understand. The difference between, you know, somebody moving into new accommodation, and having new things and not knowing how to deal with them, or, if you were moving to somewhere equivalent, you would know how to handle it. If you moved to somewhere equivalent, you could predict much more, much better how you were going to use it."

"I still think looking back, it would have been a big mistake and I advised Craig, and I think we had a discussion about it, and you were there, and we discussed it at the time..., you know about knocking that wall down [to make the entrance area larger and the breakout area smaller], it wasn't that I..., and I remember saying it at the time, it wasn't that I didn't want to do it, I just felt that was the wrong time to do it, until we knew [how the space would be used]."

The story of workplace making without forethought and considerable formal pre-planning<sup>22</sup>  
told in Ken's voice

"Yeah. Ok. I know, [exhales] it's kind of..., I think, I think, right, how it is, we started thinking about it but the way Craig and I operate maybe ..., erm. My way of doing it is, let's get in and deal with it when we get there. So, I think we were kind of thinking about it, but I wasn't prepared to speak in detail, partly because I can't remember anything, you know?<sup>23</sup>"

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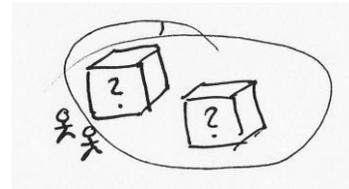
<sup>22</sup> At this point I asked Ken the following question

"...you just mentioned earlier on, it was only when you arrived you had all these issues with paint, and colour schemes and things, so you started thinking about these things, after you moved in?"

<sup>23</sup> Prior to relocating to Tayport, Ken and Craig visited the Tayport premises once or twice. During the time it took FifeX to organise the lease and the date for the handover of the keys, Ken did not think about, or visualise possibilities for how the new workplace 'work' and 'look' because he admits that neither could he remember the layout of the rooms and the rooms within the building, not did he take photographs to help him to. Therefore, Ken could not visualise possibilities for how the new work environment could look and consider which constraints FifeX would be working under.

The story of how function reforms form told in Ken's voice<sup>24</sup>

“Well, this one kind of, this comes into what we were just talking about there [pointing to an earlier drawing]. It was rooms with questions marks in erm..., and I guess it comes down to the fact that there was so much space [in Tayport] it was about Craig and I not knowing what to do. It was this thing of erm..., och, it's basically the same thing: how do..., how do you decide what to do when you have actually got so much space, how do you decide what to do with places and what you are going to do in them? Errr.... And it's totally influenced by what the business is going to be doing, you know? Erm, and I think, like..., I just, you know, I think it's funny coming right back to my original drawing up here where there was just a deck [in the St Andrews Technology Centre]. I think its funny coming back to that. Since the move, we have actually moved away from manufacturing<sup>25</sup>.”



“In a way, I think we are always going to have use for the workshop, and I don't think it will be wasted but, I mean, the other thing the workshop is great for, I know it's called a workshop but it's great for storage and these kinds of things. And of course, if you go back to one minute ago what I was saying just there [pointing to an image], if it turns out that the workshop is not needed, we can just extend the wall [in office 3 and turn the workshop] into another office. So it's not really a massive issue. But I think that erm, I just think it's kind of funny how we have gone full circle you know? And the original problem when we moved in, and perhaps where we are going..., backtracking<sup>26</sup> now, you know? Craig has just organised that deal for those Colour Mixers [school products], we are not going to have anything to do with them, they are going to go straight from the factory to the distributor. We are not even going to touch them.”

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<sup>24</sup> This is what Ken said in response to my invitation to present the meanings contained in the last two thought bubbles of his drawing.

<sup>25</sup> Ken made sounds of ironic laughter because although FifeX now has “facilities” to manufacture, neither were they being used during the period of time my research was conducted, nor were there plans in the immediate future to use such facilities. As such, although not being used, Craig and Ken viewed the leasing of premises with manufacturing facilities as an investment, and preparation for future unintended directions the company might take.

<sup>26</sup> By ‘backtracking’, here, Ken is referring to FifeX's old revenue streams, i.e. school products. When Frazer ‘came on board’ (Ken and Craig's words), FifeX moved into the custom-build sector of the market for interactive exhibitions, and thus, FifeX needed manufacturing facilities to build these one-offs. But since Frazer's departure and moving into the Tayport premises, the business has turned back on itself and is now concentrating on school (educational) products where mass manufacturing is outsourced; thus removing FifeX's need for manufacturing facilities.

Lessons learnt for next time: more control: Ken's story told in his voice

“You maybe would have to be more specific. I think, erm..., there is no doubt that our doing the place up slowed down work during that time. So you could argue that, I mean, certainly I think next time we move., see, it's going to be a much bigger move, we are going to want it to go much quicker. So again, yes. Actually, yeah! Your question is really relevant<sup>27</sup>. If you go again [ask the question], how would you do it? Well, the answer would be, we would have to go [visit the premises before the move], spec the place out [consider the design constraints], really know what we are doing so that when we actually came to make the move, we would have the measurements and know what we are doing. So I think, yeah, in short, yeah..., that's right. This time I think we had the luxury of a bit more time. But in future we would have to be more organised, especially if we had more employees. Because we would be expecting them to keep working.”

Visualising how the office will look: Craig's side of the story told in his voice

“I have a different feeling to Ken that you know, some people [referring to himself] have the ability to see how this whole thing is going to be from day one. Other people ... [referring to Ken], other people like to work at it. Like for instance Ken's..., well, my office and Ken's office have evolved as we have gone on. That's partly because errrr, exactly that, we did not know if we would like it... but we generally knew that the layout had to be that way because of the way we [FifeX] took on the way the office was [i.e. the floor plan was designed to suit the previous occupiers]. If you had just a bare shell, then it would look nothing like that I don't think [i.e. like the way it does now]. But that doesn't mean to say that we would not have ended up like that in the beginning because you can't move the toilet. In an ideal world, we would not have this much working space, we would have our own layout [without the acquired constraints of the building designed to suit the previous occupiers].”

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<sup>27</sup> I asked Ken about the next time FifeX moves. I wanted to know whether or not he thought it would go as smoothly as the move to Tayport went?

Visualising how the office will look and nurturing openness as to future possibilities: Ken's side of the story told in his voice

“While Craig has got a great memory, you know, he will say, you know that room on the right when you come in...? And I would be thinking well, ok, potentially we could do this or that, but I can't remember actually what size it is, so... . I will have to wait till we get there. So we were thinking about it, thinking about ideas..., am, I don't really talk in any detail until I have decided I am going to... then, you know decided there are decisions going to be made<sup>28</sup>.”

“Yeah. That's it. Exactly. I think Craig does that with everything because I think that's just how he operates. Definitely. I mean, I think in all honesty, this is something that happens to us all the time Dan. Because I think Craig is, yeah, so he is... erm. All I was going to say is, a quick thing. Craig visualises things, he is the kind of guy I can imagine reading a novel and erm, and coming up with really vivid ideas in his mind of what it [the scene] looks like. He is not the kind of guy who would read it and think, oh, I wonder if it would look like that. He is the kind of guy who would go, right, that is a house, sitting here, with that type of car outside, and that....., you know everything in Craig's mind is very, very clear. Erm, which in a lot of senses is a good thing compared to me. Because I tend to be much more vague. (See Appendix 8 for another example where *everything in Craig's mind is very clear...*)”

Chair as text: The story of the chair and the difference between make-do and make-better

*Researcher as narrator*

In the meantime, other decisions on space allocation and furnishings also occurred through informal, casual conversation. Decisions on the look / feel / working of the box-room (since labelled “the meeting room” or “the coffee room” and turned into a break-out area for eating lunch, drinking coffee and having impromptu meetings) were memorable for their drama. The decisive, and memorable conversation about how the room will look and what furniture will go in the meeting room is represented and analysed in detail in section 5.3.2.

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<sup>28</sup> At this point I interjected with my observation that Craig tends to “think forward. He will think more because he has got a vivid memory of where things are”. And then Ken continued....

Who are we doing this for? Ken's side of the story told in his voice

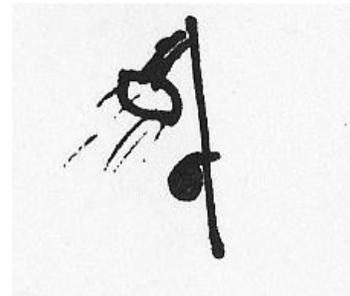
“A big question we asked ourselves was, who are we doing the place for? Is it for guests / visitors, or us? It always comes back to the same point..., if we were receiving ten to fifteen visitors a day, I would do things differently. But most of the people who come here are the likes of you, Dave and the odd friend. The main question is, what makes us work best? We must distinguish between employees and employers. We don't have people [bosses] shouting down our necks, so the long and short is, if things are comfortable and it [socio-material arrangements] makes us work better, then that works.”

“I eat my breakfast while looking at emails. I can eat and read at the same time. Now, it might only save me ten minutes. And people laugh at me, but I don't care. It's fine. I am not embarrassed at all. There are other important things about accommodation. The proximity of the Co-op [grocery store]. We walked there and back in only ten minutes, and got a bit of fresh air. If we had to walk fifteen minutes, or get in the car, then it would make a difference. [We probably would not go out for a walk because it would take up too much of our time].”

Bringing home comforts to work: Ken's side of the story told in his voice

“Another thing. We have a good sized fridge. I have fresh orange [juice], yoghurts and other stuff in there. If it was a place with fifty employees or so, then we could not have it like that. If we did have fifty employees, then no, I would not have them bring in whatever they like. It's discipline. We need to trust each other. If Craig says “Look Ken, I need to eat twenty packets of crisps a day to work properly, then ok, go ahead”. But where do you draw the line. I would say it all depends on trust.”

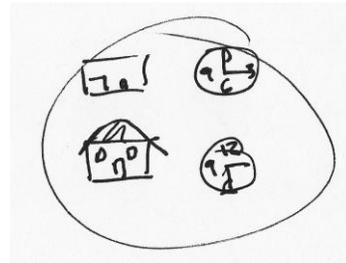
“One interesting thing is, we now have a shower. What is the point of that? I am still trying to find a reason.... It's a spare room..., it was a second toilet. There are only two of us, we don't need two toilets. It is a comfort factor: if you are cycling to work you can have a shower when you arrive. Or, if we get dirty in the workshop, we can clean up. Next week I am doing



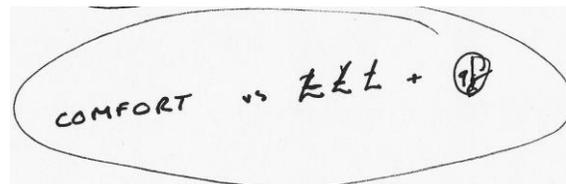
an opera<sup>29</sup>. It's something I do every year..., I will leave work to go to Dundee at 7pm every night. It doesn't mean that we are going to be walking around wearing just towels...., but I no longer have to leave work early to go home [travelling in one direction] to get a shower [to travel in another direction]. I think it's a nice thing, the idea of getting into a dinner suit and go... . And if you can build in those little factors that make life easier, you can work better!"

Ken's presentation of the importance of "home comforts" in work told in his voice

"So we have got this one [drawing] here. That's just a timing thing [the time it takes getting to /from work] and that [drawing] goes back to the personal issues I have got, you know... . Time to go to work, time to go home, and everything that comes with that, you know [referring to his music commitments]. Erm. And I have got another bubble here with erm, a cooker and this little table, the shower..., and I have got the laid back seat, you know. Like the comfort issues."



"And, I have got this one [drawing] here, which is like..., comfort, against..., against the money..., costs, and against the time it takes [to adapt the building when you move in]. I mean, one of the issues that Dave raised, you know...,



Dave asked us, how we valued erm..., doing the work in the office, you know? Doing all the décor..., how would we justify that [financially and time wise]? And, I think that's what this comes down to, you know..., how do [you] balance off the comfort of a place against erm... . And I feel pretty happy that..., you know, we have done that [i.e. modified the interior]. We have probably spent longer on it than we wanted, but I think the place works pretty well for us now. Which I think is quite good."

<sup>29</sup> Ken is an accomplished musician and devotes a lot of his free time to practicing and performing. He has played with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and also tutors brass players.

“So we have got comfort, ease of working, tools and all the things we need to work. Erm..., and we have got, errr..., I guess our enhancements might suggest a slightly above average errrr... . In fairness, I think that we do have above average comfort. I know we discussed this last time, but that is the difference between when you are motivating yourself and not others<sup>30</sup>.”

The importance of workplace: Ken’s side of the story told in his voice

“My workspace is more importance to me than the space in my own house. I have to be comfortable in work. We have to be on peak in what we do. It’s not the kind of job where we can be tired and get by. It’s all about creation, and you can’t do that if you are not feeling comfortable. That’s why I have spent more time on my office than I have on my own house. If it’s where you spend most of your time, then why not? In my bedroom for example, my pictures are blue-tacked onto the wall, whereas here, I have spent £30 or so just on frames for the pictures in my office. I do things where I work that I simply don’t bother with at home.”

“This place [Tayport] is further away from home than St Andrews was. Going to work is a big thing now. When I leave the house in the morning, it’s a big decision, because I can’t just pop home and be there in a couple of minutes. It has made the organisation of my time much more formalised. And one other thing, I like the drive in to work in the morning. It’s a way to get focused for the day ahead. In the past, I did not have that. [See Appendix 9 for further details on the importance Ken attributes to his new workspace].”

Expressive organization: the story of the ‘clean-automobile-garage-feel’ shop told in Ken’s voice

“It takes me back to a garage I was at last week. My gearbox collapsed and the place I normally go to couldn’t fit me in, so I ended up going to another garage that somebody recommended to me. I tell you what, I am never going back to that old place, ever again!”

“I was thinking about this the other day. There are three things which get me about your conventional garage, -like the old one I used to go to. Why does a car garage have to be cold, dirty,

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<sup>30</sup> When Ken was alluding to here, I think, in a rather modest fashion, was the fact that when you work for yourself and you do not have to concern yourself with what other people might think about your work environment, you can bring as many of your home routines to work with you as you like, and it is none of their business.

and dark? [In this new garage I went to] I noticed that everything had its place. In a three minute spiel, the owner-mechanic explained everything to me. He said “This is what we do..., this is how do it..., look at the work shop, you can see for yourself that everything is ordered, all the spare components are lined up by model and size. You ask me for a part, and I can get it to you in less than one minute. There is a clean entrance for you over there, separate to the entrance for your car. You leave your car there, walk in the office there, we take your car, we fix it, and we leave it there for you to collect it. You walk from here to there, and you take your car out the other end. No need to get oil on the soles of your shoes”.”

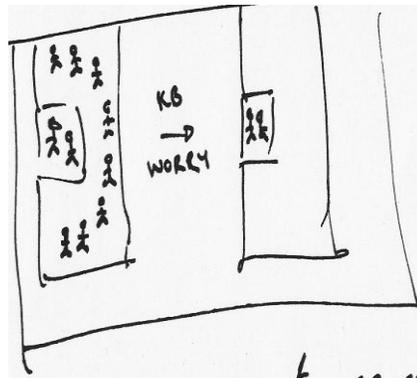
“I was very impressed..., intrigued even, at how he explained everything to me..., without me even asking. I found it most interesting *what* he drew my attention to. If you did not have a clue about cars, you would certainly feel comfortable with getting your car fixed here. I have always thought why do garages have to be a dump? It does not have to be that way. He also showed me the part he took out. I thought it was interesting that he showed me without me asking to see it. The way he spoke about it told me that he knew what the problem was. It gave me confidence that he knew exactly what he was doing. I thought yes, you are right, it’s much tidier than any other garage I have ever seen, or been in, and I do think it makes a difference.” ... “There are two issues here, one practical, and one on aesthetics. Practical issue: he could put his hands on a 5cm long, 8mm diameter piece of rubber piping and have it on the table in less than one minute. Two: the quality of his work, and the importance., the sense of pride he had in his place of work was reflected in the state of his garage. I remember Dave rattled on for ages, asking me if I really thought it was worthwhile spending hours on fitting new light switches with dimmers, and connecting a wall switch for the up-lighters. Although it took me two hours to do that, and he probably saw me do it, and he was clocking me do it; but when I arrive in the morning, if I sit down and think to myself that my workplace is better thanks to that switch, even though it’s a tiny detail, it makes a difference for me. And that’s what counts.”

“Why do garages always have to be dirty, dark and cold? I give you my money, and you give me back my car with a dirty car seat. That’s not acceptable. In this new place [garage], I mean, it’s fair to say it might be a little more expensive than the old one [garage], but I can see where my money goes [on up-keep] and I am happy with that, - I don’t begrudge paying it. I want people to feel the same when they visit FifeX.”

## Post-occupancy ‘evaluation’: the story of social detachment told in Ken’s voice

### *Places are cold without people*

“I have got here a wee drawing I added to my story when I finished drawing it. I have got Craig and I here, in an office [in St Andrews] but with lots of people and other offices around us on the North Haugh, on the campus: lots of people, and one thing that bothered me was not having anyone around [in Tayport]. I don’t mean actually in the office, but just around.., about. Erm, so, which I think..., I mean..., it’s fair to say that it is pretty quiet down here [in Tayport].”



### Ken’s story about improved communication in his own words

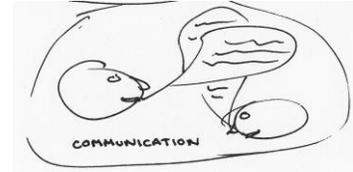
“There’s not a lot more we could do to [improve] this place. We have a good balance. I don’t feel tied here. It’s comfortable. I like the peace and quiet. I like that we can come in here<sup>31</sup>, away from the office. We did not have that in St Andrews. Having meetings in the old place was nigh impossible. We can fix a time for a mini-meeting with one another now, and this way its much more productive. When we first moved in, there was chat about the jobs we do. You know, you have to be much more focused when you are working on separate projects. In the olden days there was a long list of things to do, things would merge. We could depend upon the other if we did not do something that had to be done. We have to discuss things now more formally. Monday morning we are going to do this, Tuesday afternoon we are going to get that done. And we do it. Because there is a physical move involved.., like I have to get up form my chair, leave my office, and go into Craig’s room if I want to do something. I can’t keep playing musical chairs all day. In the old office we could lean over the table and pass things to one another. This [new arrangement with separate offices] makes us more productive. You say to yourself, I am going through to the next room to do this, this and this, and you don’t come back until its done. I honestly do think this space is perfect. Obviously there are little touches here and there that need doing. Importantly, I have a room I can meet people in without Craig distracting me, he has a room in which he can work as he pleases, and

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<sup>31</sup> Ken is referring to the break-out area where most of our interactions took place.

we have a meeting room [break-out area] in which we can keep each other updated [and receive visitors].”

“Communication was not great [in the St Andrews Technology Centre] and that was something which I felt, err..., I guess there are a number of reasons why it wasn’t the best. But I think the main reason, in retrospect, was that erm, we didn’t have formal meetings for discussion. Everything was informal which meant



that we never..., you know what it’s like if you are concentrating on something and somebody comes and asks you a question regarding something else..., you quickly lose track of your thoughts.” ... “So communication [in Tayport] has definitely improved because of that [separation of workspaces and formalised meetings]. Do you know what the funny thing is though? You know, looking back on it, I would say that it [communication] *was* an issue [but I was not aware of how poor our communication was]. But I can see now how much it has improved.”

### Summary

This chapter has sought to describe contextual factors surrounding place making activities that were participatively experienced. It provides background and details on events leading up to the three specific transitional areas of experience that I analyse in the next chapter. This background / detail is necessary because it constitutes the backdrop against which I perform my analysis: it provides the raw material with, or ‘setting’ in which, I will be able to compare and contrast alternative theories to ‘see’ which one, or which combination of these theories, has the best explanatory power.

## Chapter Five

### Analysis and Discussion

#### 5.1 Introduction and outline of chapter

The aim in this chapter is to answer the question, which theory, or combination of theories best describes the process of place making in terms of what was experienced in FifeX? The three theories (control, engagement, polyphony) are used to structure an individual telling, and an analysis of three stories (a story about a wall, one about chairs, and one about a worktop). Therefore, there are three tellings of three stories which are presented as ways of exhibiting the detail of what data each theory pays attention to, and its strengths and limitations in providing analytical insight. Analysis is provided and then lessons for practice (or prescriptions) are developed for each theory.

#### 5.2 A story about a wall

Stories told in the control perspective are plot summaries which provide the “essence” of the story, characterising actors, sequences of events and causal connections.

##### 5.2.1. A story about a wall from the control perspective

1. Craig decides before the move takes place that FifeX will create an open-plan entrance / reception area. This translates into a need to remove a wall (i.e. the glass fronting for office 1 and part of the side-wall).
2. But the move takes place and Ken resists. The decision to knock the wall down is blocked. Ken insists that no wall should be knocked down unless they are absolutely sure that an open-plan entrance / reception area is needed.
3. The decision is made to remove the question -of whether or not FifeX needs an open-plan / entrance area- from the decision making agenda.
4. The entrance area is left as it was when they moved in. Craig and Ken *make-do* with the floor plan they have acquired.

### *Analysis*

To be decisive is comparatively easy. The real problem, today, is to decide what to be decisive about (Anon, in Heirs, 1986: 13).

Craig had already decided to create an open-plan entrance / reception area before the move took place. As such, there was no need to involve anyone else in the decision making process; others would only be involved with the 'doing'. Therefore, the plan for workspace change was contained inside his head: it was a "controlled process" (Liedtka & Mintzberg, 2006) whereby the decision (thinking) was separated from 'doing'. Following on from that, communication of the workspace change was 'just-in-time' on move-in day because Craig's plan was only transmitted when it was time for 'doing'. But the decision was overturned by Ken's objections. Ken reasoned that there was not a clear end-goal ("Mmm. I just don't...[know], I'm just not totally sure what you gain by doing that [i.e. knocking the wall down]. It's the only thing. I am not sure what we actually gain [from having an open-plan entrance / reception area]"). Craig's communication thus failed because Ken's challenge could not be answered. On these grounds, the decision was overturned.

Moreover, for Ken, the decision to knock down the wall was not a decision on which he thought Craig and he had to be decisive (Heirs, 1986). Ken drew our attention to the simple matter: when they moved in to Tayport they did not know what their future workspace requirements would be. How could they possibly know their future workspace requirements when they did not know which direction their business was going to move in? On this, because Ken envisaged making potentially costly changes today, only to make furthermore costly changes to make the place 'work' tomorrow (when they hire new employees), he deferred taking a decision until he sees "...the situation for what it has or will become" (Drummond, 2001: 242). In sum, because occupiers expect more control over the space they occupy (McGregor, 1994) and managers of "funky offices" in the 'new economy' (van Meel & Vos, 2001) "have to get used to exercising a different kind of control" (Vos & van der Voordt, 2001) the original decision -to remove the wall- was poorly made and executed because all planning / communication should have happened long before the move-in date (Gibson, 2003).

*Prescription - the dominant view in workplace making*

The main argument in the control-based literature on workplace design advocates the idea that:

- (i) a successful move is one where the planned aspects and what actually happens “are complementary and not contradictory” (Ingrey-Counter & Biles, 1994: 21);
- (ii) a “..well-planned move is one that is planned in advance” (Eley & Marmot, 1995: 190-191);
- (iii) “whether the issue is layout, the right mix of work and breakout space or the capacity to keep up with technology, it all comes down to getting the type and amount of space right from the outset. And that means talking to the professionals first” (Henderson, 2005: 1), and
- (iv) creating an appealing workspace might require one to “...set aside serious planning time and resources” (Golding, 2006: 1).

Thus, to boost productivity and well-being as an outcome of an office fit-out, and to create a successful move, FifeX should have committed serious planning time and resources before the move took place. Recalling the first motif of the control perspective outlined in the literature review (i.e. separation of thinking and doing), shown schematically, this is what *should* have happened:

Figure 3: The control perspective on workplace making



Extensive planning before the move happened was called for, and such plans should have been implemented before we moved all of FifeX’s belongings through to Tayport. This would have created a much smoother transition from St Andrews to Tayport, and FifeX could have been “up and running” much sooner.

Such planning and resources were obviously absent in the case of FifeX. Because what we have here, essentially, is a case where no serious planning and resources were set aside, and yet FifeX effectuated a successful move (self confessed “success” by the research participants themselves); theoretically speaking, this means that something is missing and therefore needs to be addressed.

How can a successful move take place in the absence of serious planning and forethought when all expert advice seems to suggest that occupiers should move in and occupy workspace after the ‘new’ place has been designed and fitted-out by the experts? The decision to knock down the wall and the changes should have been made *right from the outset* (Henderson, 2005: 1), before move-in date.

### 5.2.2. A story about a wall from an engagement perspective

The version of the stories presented in the engagement perspective is written in the form of dialogue. There is not a ‘singular essence’ of the story (as in the control version) but an engagement in dialogue between actors.

Craig often volunteered his visions for what he wanted the inside of the new premises to look like. Ken, on the other hand, was less forthcoming. This, I soon learnt, was not because Ken did not trust me, or that he did not want to share his thoughts with me, or with Craig during my presence; Ken did not speak about his visions for the new workspace because he did not allow himself to create any to begin with. Ken openly admits to having a poor memory for sizes, dimensions, room space / layout, and other such detail:

...we started thinking about it [office out-fitting] but the way Craig and I operate maybe errr..., erm.... My way of doing it is, lets get in and deal with it when we get there. So, I think we were kind of thinking about it, but I wasn’t prepared to speak in detail, partly because I cant remember anything, you know. While Craig has got a great memory, you know, he will say, ‘you know that room on the right when you come in...’, and I would be thinking well, ok, potentially we could do this or that, but I can’t remember actually what size it is, so... . I will have to wait till we get there. So we were thinking about it, thinking about ideas, and..., -I don’t really talk in any detail until I have decided what I am going to do-, then, you know..., decided there are decisions going to be made.

Also, we might recall Ken’s words in response to Craig’s ‘plan’ to do away with office 1:

This, to me, looks like a good size office. It’s a lot bigger than I remembered it being. I thought it was only a couple of metres deep. It’s a lot bigger than I thought. I think..., personally I think this would be a waste., to just a waste this space... .

Subsequently, he has learnt not to emotionally invest too heavily in visualising what he would like to do when he arrives somewhere, because he is often disappointed when he gets there: the spaces he imagined are either much bigger, or much smaller than he remembered, and so his creations are easily frustrated. Unlike Craig, who sees everything in advance and tends to make decisions before he gets there, Ken tends to think in more “general terms” (his words) and prefers to make decisions on what goes where *after* he has scoped a space out. The same applies when they are making products (new exhibition or educational kits). During a conversation in the field, Ken explained, Craig can describe his idea for something he wants to create, “...because he has already got a picture of it in his head...”, he can stand back and say “Its going to look like that ... [ ... ] ... whereas my brain just doesn’t work like that”. Ken continued: “I look at it [the decision issue]..., ok, we could do this, we could do that..., and then [I] re-look at it [the decision issue], and oh! We could do it like that”.

Both Craig and Ken spoke, to varying degrees, about their individual ways (styles) of making things happen. It is through looking at, and vocalising their differences that they come to understand and create stories about why events unfurl and things happen the way they do. Ken said:

It’s just a difference in how we work, but I think Craig and I both kind of..., it..., like..., I think I..., I..., erm..., allow him to have his breadth for a bit, and he kind of does the same to me. And you know, we work around it pretty well. But one of the hardest things is when Craig gets something in his head that he likes, and sometimes, it’s hard for me to then say if I don’t like it, it’s hard to get him out of that. Not because..., it’s not because he likes it [i.e. a solution] because it’s his idea, it’s that he likes it because he has already pictured it. He has already seen it. It’s like when we are designing a product, he had already seen the product [in his mind’s eye] before we have even got to the design meeting. Sometimes I find it difficult to say to him: ‘right Craig, I don’t think we should do it like that’, because it’s like as if he has already..., ...it’s like he has ...<sup>32</sup>, ... yeah... . He has already got a picture of it. He has got an imaginary picture of it [in his head].

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<sup>32</sup> At this point I interjected saying, “...so he hasn’t made a decision, but it’s like he has made a decision in some ways because it’s already there in his mind ...”

Below is a transcript of a participatory conversational event in which Ken experienced such difficulty in saying to Craig “I don’t think we should do it like that”. Craig wanted to knock a wall down, but Ken did not know how to curtail his enthusiasm for what, from Ken’s point of view, could easily turn out to be a mistake.

Craig My plan here..., I don’t really know what to do, but I think there is a lot of wasted space<sup>33</sup>. Personally, I don’t like the idea of this [the glass front of office 1] being here. I would much prefer to see it an open thing, even if you bring the glass front back to here [signalling with his hand 2 metres or so] to make a smaller office for somebody, partly because I think it’s..., it’s too dark [in the entrance / lobby] and two, it’s kind of enclosed. But that’s just a personal opinion. I was thinking earlier on, like if you cut the wall away to here, ok? And you had all your filing cabinets and printers and stuff, all around that wall, like in a U, and you put a desk where you are [where Ken was standing], the desk would set out a reception area..., quite nicely..., and a bit more open-plan<sup>34</sup>. But I am not, I am not that fussed either way.

Ken Right, right, ok. Let’s have a look at the next room [i.e. the 5m X 5m box-room next door to the kitchen].

Craig This I think should be the meeting room.

Ken Yes, I’m..., I’m not actually sure that we need a meeting room. I have been thinking about it, and I think it’s a waste of space. Unless it’s a...

Craig The only [negative] thing with this room, it’s a through-way to the kitchen. So it kind of spoils it a bit. It’s pretty badly designed. The other option is, you bring the wall back to there [signalling with his hand], and it can be an office.

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<sup>33</sup> Standing in the entrance / hall / lobby area.

<sup>34</sup> Ken is visibly deep in thought and shows a willingness to hear out Craig’s suggestions. He says “hmmm” as he pays attention to what Craig is proposing.

Ken The thing is, erm, [exhale], you know..., I know we are going to have to move some walls, but every wall we move, that's a cost. Moving that one is a piece of piss because it's just plaster board.

Walking into office 3, the conversation covered concerns over where the telephone sockets would go and how many radiators there are in each room. We pick up the conversation where the subject turns to the possibility of splitting up office 3 into three smaller, separate offices and what can be done with the industrial sink that was left by the previous occupiers:

Ken Just..., well..., I was just wondering if this room would be better kept as a [clean] workshop..., but, you know, I am just wondering about the sink, whether or not they [the previous occupiers] are leaving that? I don't know. It's not a problem taking the plumbing out, I am just you know..., I just wonder if it would be useful to just keep that [sink], and divide the room right along the middle. It's a fucking mess [scratching his head with an inquisitive expression on his face], but errr... . Then that means the sink is right next door to the workshop. It's alright, we can't really do much.

Craig You see, what you could do... . Instead of knocking out that hole in the wall, there [pointing], if you take out a wall here -a solid wall, take that wall out, and put a new wall there with a door, and then in to here, you could have it..., like, into here. Like, a sink in here, and an electronics work room in there, and people could come in and wash their hands in there and go back into the workshop. Or you., be clean before you come back through. But you see, we have got a sink in the toilet [for washing hands], so do we need one in here?

Ken All I am concerned with, you see, I am aware that..., you are talking about putting two walls up. Moving all this plumbing, we are going to be talking about £2,000 and I just don't know if we... . I just don't know if we can afford it. That's my problem.

Craig But the way I was looking at it, basically, all the money that is coming back from Frazer<sup>35</sup>, is the money that we did not expect to get.

Ken Now, I don't know when we are going to get that. I know we are going to get it, but I don't know *when*.

Craig Look, do you want to stay here and have a think about it?<sup>36</sup> I think it would be good to get..., I did not get a tape measure to take measurements, but..., you just have a bit more of a think about it. Because like..., there is an office in here... [office 2], you have got to remember, where are you going to put new employees [if we decide to recruit]?

Ken Yeah...,

Craig That's the problem, if you don't divide that [office 3] up, and we don't use that room in there [office 1], we could put them in the kitchen-room [referring to the 5m X 5M box-room], but then, like you said, to move that [brick] wall is fucking difficult compared to the others [in plaster board]. But I don't think they should go in here [office 2, which later became Craig's office], because I think it's a pretty big room for one person..., or for them.

Ken There's no phone lines [in office 3]... Can we just get phone lines put through from in there?

Craig Well we don't know. You can come in with me tomorrow, because we are going to have to tidy up in here anyway.

Daniel Are you recruiting?

Craig Remember the guy with the long hair you met the other day? He might be renting some space from us...

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<sup>35</sup> When Frazer joined FifeX, some £10,000 worth of tools and machinery was bought so he could work from home. FifeX came to a financial agreement with Frazer for him to keep the equipment as he would need it to launch his own company, and he would repay FifeX for he tools.

<sup>36</sup> Craig was about to drive me to an appointment I had to get to.

Daniel So he is going to rent just one room off you?

Craig But nobody knows about it, so you can't tell anybody. That's the problem.

[Walking into the workshop]

I think this is a great space in here.

Daniel If you were going to spend two grand you could even, stick another office in here [workshop] couldn't you? That's a lot of money.

Ken I think we should keep this space as big as possible. I don't think we should reduce it. I think it's a good space at the moment.

Daniel Is this where the walk in fridge was?

Ken Yeah. It's just really, I don't know.... I think this [workshop] should stay the same, it's all about what we do with this one [walking back into office 3]. I mean, I don't have a problem with this room. Again, I don't know if it is a big enough problem to do something about it right now. You know? I would say that could be used as an office now. And when we have got more money, that [pointing to entrance and box room] could be converted into a reception area, or whatever..., you know what I mean?

[Pause]

Otherwise, I could see us just spending a lot of money right now., which we don't really have. So it bothers me. Yeah!

Craig But the thing is, now is the time to do it really. You know, coz once you move in..., well... . We either put up with it, and say right, we are just not going to do it, and put up with it as it

is. Because once everything is in place, you are not going to start ripping out walls. Because that's just going to cause havoc.

[Pause]

My feeling is, in here [entrance / lobby], if you had a little more open space, you wouldn't necessarily need to have..., you could then use that [outlining with his finger where office 1 is] as an office, so to speak. I just don't know how you would put a wall up there... [the inner wall of office 1], you could just have boards up, you know like Georgina<sup>37</sup> blocks her desks off. And give Paul that space in there [box room] because he is never going to be here. He can rent that just so he can work here if he needs to. I just think, if you knocked that open [the glass front of office 1], this place would look like a total different unit.

Ken Mmm. I just don't..., I'm just not totally sure what you gain by doing that. It's the only thing. I am not sure what we actually gain.

Craig Well, it's just like an open-plan, kind of... roomy feeling so to speak.

Daniel Is it purely aesthetic?

Ken Yeah but, I am not sure that it benefits us in any..., like, at the moment, it's a room that could be an office that someone could shut the door and do their own thing. But if you knock it out I am not actually sure how we..., or what that's actually given us. I mean ok, it maybe feels open...,

Craig Well it's still an office though isn't it? It's just the office becomes that [outlining a large open-space with his hand], and the corridor.

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<sup>37</sup> Georgina is somebody who works in the St Andrews Technology Centre. Name has been changed to ensure anonymity.

Ken Yeah, I just don't, well..., ok. I just don't particularly want an office *in* a corridor. Erm, if you see what I mean? I don't know what.... If you wanted an office in a corridor, that would be fine, but I mean, it's not something I would be keen on.

Craig Well I am not thinking of anyone in particular..., we are going to have to have a computer that's going to be a server / [saying and gesticulating "slash" with his hand] ..., to hold all the printers and stuff, which is going to be here, isn't it? It's going to be on all the time. With a desk..., and everything else. You know, nobody..., we are not going to be working from there, at the moment, there is no plan..., I am not saying one of us comes out here in the open to work...

Ken Okay, But what I was trying to... I..., I'm not sure that this isn't just a big, good office. Is it not a waste? It's a big space just to put a filing cabinet in. We could put filing cabinets anywhere, I mean. This, to me, looks like a good size office. It's a lot bigger than I remembered it being. I thought it was only a couple of metres deep. It's a lot bigger than I thought. I think..., personally I think this would be a waste., to just waste this space... . I would be inclined to put the filing cabinets and all that somewhere else, you know? Do you not think this [office 1] is quite a good office? Right on the way in. It would be in good visibility of people coming in and out.

Daniel And with all this mahogany, it seems to be a good place where you could welcome people. So like a meeting... [room, and a...], sort of, office. It's a bit more plush than the others.

Craig It's more a meeting room.

Ken Yeah..., well. I mean. The difficulty with a meeting room is -I was thinking about this- for the amount of time we are going to spend using it actually in meetings [not a lot], it could well be just a big waste of space. Do you know what I mean?

Craig Do you want to stay here and have a look. I will come back here [after I have dropped Daniel off in Dundee].

Ken How long will you be?

Craig I will drop him off and come back... the DCA<sup>38</sup>.

But I would just have a good think. We need to clean up, obviously tomorrow. Bring a good Hoover and stuff in. The B.T. guy is coming in anyway. And we should get joiners in tomorrow if we are going to do anything. Even if we just ask them their advice.

Ken Is this [opening the door] where we are going to put the shower? Is there any water in it [turning the tap on the sink]?

Craig Don't know. Just rip that out [toilet]. We are going to put a shower in there. To be honest, I think it used to be a shower... tiles [on the floor]. Coat hangers [on hooks]... could have been a cloak room or something. You see, in the other units<sup>39</sup> this room is actually an office, not a toilet.

Ken Do you think that it could be a good place to just put filing cabinets in?

Craig And have no bog [laughing]?

Ken In there [pointing to the second toilet next door]

Craig And where are we gonna put the shower, not have one?

Ken I don't know... it's... . The whole place is bigger than I can remember you see. I have not been here since that morning, back in January whenever it was. And the whole place is ...

Craig Well, why don't you stay here, and I'll come back in a minute.

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<sup>38</sup> Dundee Contemporary Arts centre.

<sup>39</sup> FifeX's three units are in a gated, small industrial area with three other buildings comprising a various number of units. One building has two units, another has three units, and there is a single-unit building.

Ken Ok. I don't want to be [here] too long though, because I am fucking knackered; been in Aberdeen all day and I really need something to eat. But that's fine if you are just going to Dundee and back.

### *Analysis*

From an engaged or dialogical perspective, the wall story can be viewed in three phases:

Phase 1 – Before they moved into their new business premises in Tayport, Craig made the decision to knock down a wall in order to create an open-plan entrance / reception area. They moved in and then Craig announced his decision. The decision was part of his “plan” for a modification to the internal layout of the building.

From an engagement perspective, the decision to knock the wall down was a failure at the outset because it illustrates non-engagement. Craig made the decision without making any attempt to engage Ken in the decision making process. Rather, Craig sought to impose the decision that he made himself before they moved into Tayport. This equates to degree D participation on Neumann's (2000) continuum of participation in decision making. The language Craig used goes some way towards showing that he sought to impose his decision (“My plan here...”). If Craig and Ken had decided together on the floor layout prior to moving into Tayport, then he would have said words to the effect: “According to *our* plan, here we are going to ...”.

Phase 2 – Ken resisted and the decision to knock the wall down was overturned. Ken decided that the issue was not important enough to be decisive about.

Steps were made toward engagement when Ken questioned the need for an open-plan entrance / reception area. Ken listened to, and heard what Craig was saying, but he was not convinced of the “need”.

Mmm. I just don't...[know], I'm just not totally sure what you gain by doing that [i.e. knocking the wall down]. It's the only thing. I am not sure what we actually gain [from having an open-plan entrance / reception area].

On those grounds it was implicitly understood by Craig and I that rather than knocking down the wall to simply make the Tayport premises “look like a total different unit” (Craig), implementing the decision based on mere fancy could end up being costly to the business. From Ken’s point of view, it made more economic sense to wait and see if the entrance area is ‘workable’ as it is: if it does not ‘work’, *then* change it. Ken was also driven by cost because he was not sure that they had the money available in their account to make the changes that Craig was proposing.

For Ken, however, a more important issue was what to do with office 3. Through deciding not to be decisive on knocking the wall down, Ken effectively closed down any further possibility of dialogue. Instead, he paved the way for entry into a new dialogue.

Phase 3 – The wall in question was not knocked down. So Craig and Ken adopted and adapted (through time) the building and it’s layout that they acquired.

From this perspective, as a socially interactive event (i.e. fitting out workspace) that started out an example of failed engagement on one subject, the ongoing event morphed into successful engagement on another. Craig’s invitation for Ken to “just have a good think” while I drop Daniel off in Dundee signalled a clear entry into this new phase of engagement. Involving Ken in generating information or options as input to the decision being taken, the range of participation inched toward degree B participation (Neumann, 2000).

By the same token, the entering into a new phase of engagement underlines one of the main weaknesses of personal experience methods of data-gathering. As a researcher, what I was looking for in terms of data typically happened off-data. That is, engagement inevitably happened when Craig returned to Tayport after dropping me off in Dundee but I was not there to experience such engagement for myself. My data did not capture this engagement.

### *Prescription*

There were several opportunities for both Craig and Ken to further develop their engagement in the issues that were raised. However, each wanted to fulfil their own agenda. This meant that they approached the respective issues with an eye to opening or closing down the possibilities of engagement according to the focus of their concern. From the engagement perspective, what

should have happened first, is, they both engage in a dialogue on the issue of the open-plan entrance / reception area; secondly, they both engage in a dialogue on what to do with office 3.

Ken should have allowed Craig to voice his opinion without interjecting and Craig should have presented his 'plan' as a preliminary, or tentative conclusion for what might work, and then seek Ken's reflections on the 'plan'. Similarly, Ken should have allowed further exploration of the possibility of an open-plan entrance / reception area and pushed for a clearer, mutually satisfactory resolution to the decision event. Instead, the decision on what to do with office 3 gained precedence over the wall issue in phase 2. From an engagement perspective, dialogue and full participation would have afforded both concerns to be addressed (consecutively or simultaneously) and closure would have been arrived at in a more participatory manner. In the end of this analysis, engagement finally worked (and happened off data) -albeit on a different issue (i.e. what to do with office 3) than what was initially intended (i.e. to remove a wall to have an open entrance)- because Craig created a pressure release valve by which they could fully engage with one another upon his return to Tayport, after dropping me off in Dundee. In effect, Craig prescribed Ken more time to *remember* dimensions and re-familiarise himself with the surroundings.

### 5.2.3. A story about a wall from the polyphonic perspective

Stories written in the polyphonic mode are presented in columns that represent different readings of the same event. Different voices are present if not fully expressed, and some are more dominant than others. The different 'takes' are presented side-by-side, demonstrating that different voices occupy the same space. There is not an engagement in dialogue (as in the engagement perspective) but a co-presence of multiple realities.

Craig did not use the word "plan" to imply the conventional sense of the meaning of the word that is typically ascribed to it by management scholars. The word is usually used to refer to a linear, step-by-step processes involving considerable forethought. But here, Craig did not mean that sense of the word. Rather, Craig used the word casually, in passing, to provoke a reaction and then use this reaction as a point of entry into a dialogue.

The conversational event that unfurled following Craig's announcement is re-told below. Viewed from the polyphonic perspective, this is how the (wall) story might read:

### Announcing the plan

Craig decides by himself that the Tayport premises require an open-plan entrance / reception facility

### Walk(and talk)through

Craig and I move all of Ken's and his belongings into the Tayport premises

Ken arrives in Tayport (having spent the day with potential clients in Aberdeen)

Craig announces that he has a plan. In order to create an open-plan entrance / reception area, Craig proposes to remove the front of office 1 and its side-wall

Ken does not directly respond to Craig's plan. [This was perhaps a missed opportunity to fully engage with the wall issue while the decision was "live"]

Rather, walking in to the box-room Ken says: "Right, right, ok. Let's have a look at the next room", thereby soliciting Craig's views on what needs to be done to that room

Craig says: "This I think should be the meeting room"

Ken questions the need for a meeting room and a discussion ensues on the subject of whether or not they need a meeting room.

Ken reluctantly acknowledges that some walls will inevitably need to be removed. It is clear that he believes they should avoid knocking down walls, if, indeed, that is possible

Continuing on his tour of their new workplace, moving into office 3, the conversation drifts into how many walls (or internal dividers) will need to be erected in order to create more offices (two or three). For Ken, it is best to leave office 3 as it is, albeit

### My interpretation of events

During the time it took to unload the van it became obvious that the rooms had not been allocated: There was a distinct lack of a blueprint stipulating what each room would be used for, what goes in each room, and where

Although Craig mentioned his 'plan' during a naturally occurring conversation (on a 'one-to-one') before the move took place, I thought that it would always remain a pipedream because he never communicated it with great zeal, or made any defining actions toward realising the vision. On this, Craig's announcement was made with sceptical authority; it was the first time that Ken and I had heard of Craig's plan whilst in the same company. Craig may have spoken to Ken about it before this moment, but that happened off-data

Ken is adding up the cost, disruption, and delay it will add to proceedings with every announcement of detail to Craig's plan. The main aspect of the move that attracted Ken to Tayport was that, in his eyes, Tayport is "move-in-able". Every change to the inside of the building that Craig mentions negates the advantage of their serendipitous find

very large, office 3 could be used as a workshop with very few, or hardly any modifications. “All I am concerned about with”, Ken pronounces, “...we are talking about £2000 [...] and I am not sure if we can afford it”

“...we do have the money” is Craig’s retort

“But we don’t know *when* we will get it”

It would appear that Ken uses the “economic viability” argument as a pretext for his distaste for the prospect of having to create two or three offices out of office 3

“Look, do you want to stay here and have a think about it?”

Sensing mounting stress and anxiety, and conscious of the fact that I have an appointment with my Girlfriend in Dundee -to which Craig promised he would get me there in time for, Craig somewhat wisely dissipates the tension by pausing the decision making process and providing inroads to furthermore dialogue upon his return. After all, Ken has not spent as much time in the new premises as Craig, and so Ken has not had as much time to scope things out

Making our way to the front door, the conversation changes to office 2. But still, there is no decision regarding it’s allocation

Ken then cuts to, what is for him, the crux of the matter “...its all about what we do with this one” (office 3)... “but its not a big enough problem to do something about it now”. Ken then closes the decision event by intimating they should move in first, then over time, see what they need. Then, depending on how much they want (or have) to spend, then decide on what walls need knocking down

Craig rightly points out (from the control perspective at least), “now is the time to do it really”. For Craig, the decision on what they are going to do to the inside of the building need to be made there and then “Because once everything is in place, you are not going to start ripping out walls. Because that’s just going to cause havoc”. Once again, Craig states his desire to create a more open space so “this place would look like a total different unit” upon entering

Ken is not sure what you “gain” from having an open space

Craig serves up the idea that you also gain a “roomy feeling”

But Ken is not convinced that Tayport needs to “look like a total different unit” or it is lacking a “roomy feeling”

For Ken, Craig suffers from a delusion of grandeur. He likes to think of FifeX as a much larger company than what it actually is. This spaciousness he wants to create goes hand-in-hand with his delusion and will help to maintain this vision that he is very successful at implanting in other people’s minds

Ken likes the fact that with office 1, you can lock the door and achieve privacy. Because it has a glass front, although visual privacy is not entirely

Craig insists that an open-plan entrance / reception area would still be an office of sorts...

Realising that something is amiss and perhaps his reasoning is flawed, or simply changing his mind because his plans were liquid, or half-baked to begin with, Craig backpedals slightly by saying “there is no plan”

Ken reasons, they have few visitors so a reception area is not necessary, and because there is more space than Ken could remember from his sole previous visit before moving in, there is no need to store filing cabinets in an open-plan entrance / reception /office area. Therefore, there is no need to create a space for multi-purposes. For Ken, there is enough room (i.e. office 3) to store filing cabinets, which in turn, frees up both office 1 and 2 for allocation to Ken and Craig respectively

achievable, at least acoustic privacy is a likely possibility.

Ken thinks that to make office 1 part of an open-plan entrance would be a waste of a good office: for Ken, removing the enclosure that office 1 affords will mean that somebody will have to work in the corridor -and Ken does not want that to be him. For Ken, office 1 is move-in-able, and that is what attracted him to Tayport - as a place to relocate to- in the first place

That “there is no plan” is reinterpreted by Ken and I as meaning there is still a lot more discussion to be had and that there are no concrete solutions as yet

As I temporarily withdrew from the field so as to allow Craig and Ken the time and space to settle down and create their new workplace as they thought it should look, work, and feel; and to consider what I had experienced together with Craig and Ken and how my experiences would bear on my research questions, when I returned to Tayport several days after the move-in date, the glass fronting was still there, the box-room had become a meeting room without knocking any walls down, and office 3 was still only one office

## *Analysis*

In the polyphonic perspective on the wall story there are multiple realities unfolding simultaneously:

Ken wants his own office (privacy). He wants to avoid finding himself in a position -like he was in the St Andrews Technology Centre- where Craig can see (monitor) his every move	Craig wants to create a space that helps support and maintain his own vision for what FifeX is in the now, and what it will be in the future	Ken does not want to spend both time and money creating (i) an open-plan entrance / reception area, and (ii) a meeting room because he believes that it is not possible to know in advance how the rooms should look / feel / work. Ken said:	Craig knows what he wants (to create / make / do) before he gets there
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“If you have never had a workshop [meeting room / open-plan entrance area] before, right, you don’t know how you are going to use it”

Craig voiced his thoughts -albeit in the guise of a potentially ambiguous ‘plan’- as a way of opening dialogue. Communicating his plan was his way of putting his thoughts ‘out-there’ for others to connect and engage with, and to make sense of in their own way. In Shotter’s (2007: 599) words, Craig was making an *action guiding call* for others to expressively-responsively engage with in the moment. Rather than presenting a concrete ‘plan’ and rigidly adhering to it, that is, railroading all activity to ensure that it gets implemented, the (verbal) blueprint was reinterpreted by Ken and myself to mean something quite different: it was Craig’s way of eliciting a response in the only way he knows how.

Ken and I related to Craig’s plan as a suggestion for what *could* happen; it was not read as a blueprint for what *will* happen. When Ken followed Craig’s plan to its logical conclusion, stating that removing the wall and glass fronting to create an open-plan entrance would mean that somebody might end up having to work in the corridor, Craig stated that “there is no plan..., I am not saying one of us comes out here in the open to work...”. From this moment on, it was immediately apparent that Craig’s thoughts were not fully crystallised, and that furthermore engagement might be necessary to close the situation.

From other naturally occurring conversations and probing other issues, Ken revealed that working with Craig can sometimes be like working with “the annoying client you can get from time to time” [see page 233]. Craig’s idea of open-plan working spelled, for Ken, “annoying client”. So in Ken’s thinking, it is a case of, ‘well, if I want to get any decent work done, and indeed, feel good while doing it, I must have my own office or space to work in’. For Ken, the important issue is, and this is consistent with previous research (Vischer, 2007b: 180), he must have the ability to exercise control over his accessibility to Craig.

Reading into the wall story from the polyphonic perspective also allows us to view different takes on how people believe it is possible to connect with, and develop knowledge on space. Unlike Ken, who thinks it is not possible to get to know how space will look / feel / work without experiencing it, Craig thinks it is possible to know practically everything about how space will look / feel / work before he experiences it, because for him, in his mind he has already planned it out before he gets there and so, he has visualised how it will look / feel / work. Whereas Ken’s style involves physically connecting with space to develop experiential (*absolute*) knowledge, Craig’s style differs in that it involves abstract connections to space using mental models (objects / symbols) to develop *relative* knowledge (Bergson, 1912[1999]).

The underlying structure of the wall story is in fact centred round a question that can be put thus: should Craig and Ken have made changes to the internal layout of the building before, or as soon as they moved in (Craig’s approach); or should Craig and Ken wait until two, three or four months after they have moved in (Ken’s approach) before they commit to making any significant changes to the layout?

Put differently, should Craig and Ken put themselves “in the hands of the building, bent and shaped to meet its requirements” (Gieryn, 2002: 60), which in turn implies that they will need to be bent and shaped to the requirements of the previous owners; or should Craig and Ken exercise their agency at the outset? This is a “wicked” problem (Rittel & Webber: 1984) because there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer; or rather, there is no single ‘correct’ way of going about creating a workplace and there is no clear end to place making. My data reveals that Craig wanted to put the building in his hands, to shape it how he felt it should be, whereas Ken wanted to wait and see if the shape they

were bent into was serendipitously beneficial and workable. By allowing the building to ‘speak to them’, to bend and shape them, Ken wanted to learn.

### *Prescription*

When a decision needs to be taken on how to proceed, the idea of taking two simultaneously contradictory but valid arguments forward together might seem absurd and possibly unrealistic (after all, you can not have an open-plan entrance *and* an office if the former involves removing the latter). The challenge, then, to treat polyphony as a resource -rather than something that needs to be protected against, or overcome- is all the more demanding. The default solution often tends to be to choose one (“superior”) way forward at the expense of any other. But what should have happened here, from a polyphonic perspective is, by adopting a “not-knowing” approach (Bebbington, *et al.*, 2007: 368), Craig should not have given primacy to received wisdom regarding open-plan working. Similarly, Ken should not have sought to blanket over the differences between Craig’s and his way of thinking about how to make decisions on the layout of their new workplace. The fact remains, however, that Craig could not have created an open-plan entrance and Ken could not have kept the office (that he later came to occupy) as it was.

In practical terms, a decision informed by polyphony would translate into a diversity of space. Therefore, by extending the polyphonic encounter a little longer, the decision to create a mixture of spaces (both open-plan *and* enclosed) would have been arrived at, thereby inching toward satisfying the diversity of voices. That said, polyphony is not about satisfying all voices that are different just because they are different. The point is, the disruptive power of dialogics helps people to see themselves as active constructors of reality and encourages them to move beyond their current standpoints (Bebbington, *et al.*, 2007: 368). Put simply, the polyphony-based prescription appropriate in this circumstance would have been to create something informed by previously excluded, unheard voices. These voices would have come from one of the many “selves” within the “self”, or dyad (i.e. Craig / Ken) (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 366). On this, the ‘solution’ need not be entirely new, and previously never thought of by any body, but the solution should be from in-between and beyond, from the ‘tip of your tongue’ and accompanied by an ‘aha’ experience within both participants.

#### 5.2.4. Concluding the wall story

In sum, three different perspectives have been used to construct and view the same event. Viewed from the control perspective, when Craig delivered his “plan”, it looked as if he was imposing decisions he had already made. Viewed from the engagement perspective, when Craig made his announcement, it looked as if any possibility of human engagement on the issue of what to do to the layout of the new premises was already closed down. However, through *getting to know* both Craig and Ken, their actions could be interpreted “...according to a typified form...” (Bonet *et al.*, 2003: 20). On this, I knew that when Craig announced his “plan” for the entrance / reception area, it was still very malleable. As it was still in its embryonic stages of development, the plan that was communicated (i.e. seemingly intended) was unlikely to be the plan that was implemented (i.e. interpreted).

The three perspectives lay the basis for ‘seeing’ the events in different ways: as essential series of actual events; a dialogue incorporating differences of opinion; a set of multiple meanings being created in dynamic tension. The analyses revealed different theoretical explanations of not only what was happening but of why it was occurring. In the aim to develop practice-oriented theory, the different perspectives can also be used to generate conceptualisations of what the problem(s) were, and what lessons (prescriptions) can be drawn out for future management practice. In the concluding chapter, a comparison of the efficacy of these theoretical descriptions, explanations and prescriptions will be made. However, before that, and in order to illustrate the usefulness of this approach, two other stories will be analysed in the same way.

### **5.3 A story about chairs**

In this section I look at one story through the three lenses (control, engagement, polyphony) identified earlier in my literature review chapter.

#### 5.3.1. The story about chairs from a control perspective

1. Craig and Ken decide to relocate, so they move into ‘new’ (to the co-founders but not ‘brand’ new) business premises which are larger than their existing premises. This creates a business need for more office furniture.

2. Both Craig and Ken are uncertain at this point as to which direction they to take the business (education or 'one-off' exhibition products). Moreover, they do not know how many people they will need to employ in order to help them get there. Therefore, both perceive the need to control costs (for recruiting can be costly). The co-founders are being pulled in two directions: there is a need to fit-out the rooms, to get them 'up and running'; but there is a need to maintain flexibility and not to overspend. If the co-founders create a space that later requires *refitting* this could lead to costs spiralling out of control.
3. From Craig's point of view, a cost effective decision was made (by him) to purchase furniture from a small business that occupied a neighbouring office in the St Andrews Technology Centre. The company was moving into purpose built, fully furnished offices and therefore had no need to take their current furniture with them. This presented FifeX's co-founders with an opportunity to buy what they had left behind. £300 was given in exchange for three desks, secretary chairs, filing cabinets, stainless steel storage cupboards and several reception / waiting room chairs. The furniture was not matching but Craig was very pleased with his purchase and he often spoke about it being a "good deal".
4. The newly acquired (second hand furniture) was moved into the Tayport premises on the day the keys were handed over. The furniture was spaced throughout the building.
5. Dave, Ken and I complained about the furniture, especially the use of reception / waiting room chairs in the coffee / meeting room.
6. The decision to put the reception / waiting room chairs in the meeting room was reviewed and altered, i.e. there was a change in mind, perhaps in view of the possible (negative) impact that these chairs could have on potential clients / visitors to FifeX's new premises.
7. A decision was implemented to remove the reception / waiting room chairs from the meeting room and replace them with new furniture that was purchased from Ikea (including four chairs, up lighters, and a coffee table).

### *Analysis*

The initial decision to buy the second-hand furniture was made on a cost basis. From a rational point of view, the decision was maximising (Edwards & Tversky, 1967) in that it sought to yield the largest return from the smallest financial outlay. Because the furniture helped to fill-in empty space, if the sole decision criteria was based on mere *in-filling*, then the decision to buy the second-hand

furniture was *the* right one. But making decisions in such a manner fails to recognise the aesthetic dimension and its potential impact on social interaction.

After the initial decision to buy the furniture, new information was introduced by Dave, Ken and myself into the decision making arena. The initial decision was then turned over after consideration of this further decision criteria: for example, to what extent will existing clients, future clients, and visitors -in general- find these chairs appealing. Either the original decision was re-evaluated on these grounds, or newer decision criteria entered the equation, such that Craig realised the significance of the criticism. Therefore, the decision was changed on new (rational) grounds.

In light of the fact that Craig and Ken changed their mind (i.e. they decided to purchase brand new furniture after already buying office furniture which they thought “will do the job”), viewed from the control perspective, the original decision was poorly made (Simon, 1979). It was a mistake because all options and all likely consequences were not fully computed. By comparing all consequences, a rational decision is capable of maximising something by choosing which alternative course of action is the *best* (Edwards & Tversky, 1967: 14). According to decision making models of Classical Economics, rational man acts with (i) *complete information*; (ii) *infinite sensitivity*, and (iii) *rationality*. Therefore, it is deemed possible to compute *all* consequences. From this, if all consequences had been fully computed, then such a purchasing error would not have been made. The likely consequence that visitors might not find the furniture appealing was overlooked or discounted, and this goes some way towards suggesting that the original decision was non-rational to begin with.

#### *Prescription*

According to the control perspective, the decision makers should have evaluated all the options by comparing possible courses of action against pre-determined decision criteria (such as cost, life expectancy, likelihood that visitors will find the furniture appealing, etc). The imperative being to make better (rational) decisions.

We can see this belief, i.e. that better rational decision making can guard against project over runs, replicated in the current culture of space. For example, the £100m budget overrun on Scotland's Holyrood parliamentary building, and the example cited earlier in Drummond (1998) regarding project Taurus, the London Stock Exchange's £500m IT venture. Pre-project evaluation and

thorough analysis is expected to prevent such project overruns and there are continually renewed calls for increased rationality in decision making ahead of large scale implementations. There is an assumed unproblematic connection, or a direct line, between rational decision making, implementation, and desired outcomes. But decision makers often leave very little room for the consideration of emergent, unintended consequences and unforeseen circumstances. The view that undergirds rationality is that there should be no surprises; rational decision making should eradicate unintended consequences. This rational discourse is strong and difficult to escape from because we see it all around us, and it is lived out in everyday life.

### 5.3.2. The story about chairs from an engagement perspective

On Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July, it was all hands on deck. Cleaning, wiping, vacuuming, dusting, and painting were the order of the day. Both Craig and Ken were present, Dave, Ally (Ken's brother), Katie (Ken's partner at that time), and I were also present to lend a helping hand. The newly acquired furniture (new to FifeX but not 'brand' new) had been put in various places throughout the building. Ken and Katie were painting the walls in the kitchen while Dave and I were painting the walls in office 1 (which later became Ken's office). At the same time, Ally was making himself useful, wiping down the dusty, translucent ceiling tiles outside (having removed them from the ceiling panelling), and Craig was organizing space in the workshop and sorting through his belongings in office 2 (now clearly allocated as his own office). Toward the end of the day, our paths crossed in the 'meeting' (box) room next door to the kitchen and a conversation on *where to from here?* unfurled in which Craig and Ken sought to establish to what extent Dave, Ally and I would be willing to offer further help with the remainder of the work that needed doing in order to "get things up and running". To help understand what was required -in their eyes- to "get things up and running" in the meeting room and gauge how much more work we needed to do, I threw open the question, "How is this room coming along?" The following conversation ensued:

Craig It's okay, we have got this room [box-room] sorted. We are going to buy some material and Ken's Mum is going to make some throws to put over the chairs we got as part of that £300-lot.

Dave Oh fucking hell! Come on! It's not a bloody youth club, or a Grandmother's Sewing Club. You can't be putting throws over shitty chairs in a fucking workplace when you are

expecting customers to come in here and think something of you! Get some proper comfortable chairs!

Daniel If customers come to visit you and you sit them down on these chairs, whether you like it or not, you are telling them something about FifeX. Why don't you use this opportunity to make sure you make them go away thinking FifeX is a nice looking, comfortable place to be. You don't want them to dread coming here all because of dodgy chairs, which the cushions slide off. I don't know where these chairs come from, perhaps you got them at a good price, but you might like to reconsider where they belong... Like on a bonfire<sup>40</sup>

Ken Don't worry Dan, I am on to it. My Mother is not going to be doing any sewing! I am prepared to sacrifice next months pay packet to buy some good looking chairs because if this room is where our customers are going to be talking with us, we need to give a good impression.

Daniel Most importantly, if this is going to be a multi-purpose room, for eating, receiving customers, discussing things together, or simply to get out of your office for a change of scenery, then you might want to consider putting a door in the frame that leads into the kitchen. Two things: it might prevent food odours from preparation and cooking, and if it opens into the kitchen, it will hide the fuse boxes because they are visible from where I am standing.

Ken You have a point there Daniel.<sup>41</sup>

### *Analysis*

The chair episode can be viewed in three phases.

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<sup>40</sup> At this point Craig left the room to make a telephone call. Ken lowered his voice, almost whispering, to tell Dave and I that his Mother would not do any sewing because in any case, he did not like the sound of throws; and then Craig returned after his telephone call and Ken directed his next statement at him.

<sup>41</sup> Within the next two days, a second trip to Ikea was made: a new coffee table and four stylish, steady, comfortable, modern chairs had been bought (the cushions do not fall off as they did on the old chairs) and a new door had been fitted.

Phase 1 – Craig initiated the purchase, sought Ken’s approval, and implemented the decision to buy.

From an engagement perspective, this is an example of non-engagement because Craig defined the problem and came up with the solution himself (i.e. implying degree D participation for Ken). He presented the ready-made solution to Ken and merely sought his opinions on a decision that -in his eyes- had already been made.

Phase 2 – Daniel and Dave voice their disapproval with regards to putting the reception / meeting room chairs in the coffee / meeting room. Craig announces a solution and a way of dealing with the problem highlighted by Daniel and Dave. He states that Ken’s Mother is going to make some throws to go over them (thus concealing their ugliness). Craig then leaves the room. Ken both verbally and non-verbally makes it known that he will not allow his Mother to make such throws.

From an engagement perspective, Craig walked out the room, effectively turning his back on the voices, which makes for failed engagement (Nelson, 2004). Because Craig leaves the room, thereby making himself unavailable for further comment and in the process, making it difficult to hear other voices, he essentially closes down the dialogue.

Phase 3 – (Off data: Craig and Ken had further conversations. The decision was made to go to Ikea, and purchase new furniture).

From an engagement perspective, what started out as an example of non-engagement (i.e. Phase 1), ended morphing into a more participatory style, or engagement mode, of decision making. On this, it is notable that Phase 1 was a failure because there was no engagement. Phase 2 is also notable in that the conversation entered into by Daniel and Dave presented Craig and Ken with an opportunity to move things forward participatively (Shotter, 2001), but no solution -based on engagement principles- was arrived at. The likelihood that any solution would be arrived at was all but removed when Craig exited the room. What started off horribly wrong (i.e. degree D) from an engagement perspective turned out as acceptable (i.e. degree A) in Phase 3. It is notable that in Phase 3 there is

evidence of engagement because both Craig and Ken went to Ikea and chose the furniture together. Engagement at Phase 3 goes some way towards explaining why things worked out successfully because the situation moved from non-engagement to engagement.

### *Prescription*

It would have been better for Craig to listen to other voices, and to review the original decision “live” during Phase 2. This would have gone some way toward rectifying the earlier failure which occurred during Phase 1.

#### 5.3.3. The story about chairs from a polyphonic perspective

Below is a photograph I took of the chairs that I thought were ghastly and dreaded sitting on. I took the photograph because I wanted to capture a visual field-note of this unfolding episode about the chairs. The photograph was taken shortly after the above conversation had taken place. Dave (left) is slouched on one of the chairs (because that is all they are good for) and Ally (right) is leaning against the wall (because that is what they afford; moreover, walls can be more appealing than chairs, especially when the chairs on offer are as ugly as those in the photograph). As the conversation unfolded, I knew that we were in the process of making history. I could sense that the words we spoke would mark an important turning point, or milestone, in the history of FifeXs’ material culture. The box room (come “meeting room”) and its contents would no longer carry the same meaning after we had spoken about them as we did.



Symbolically, the chairs evoked several versions of reality co-present (Belova *et al.*, 2008): for me, they evoked memories of a hospital waiting room and unsatisfactory customer presentation; for Dave they resembled the chairs you would expect to find in a social club, in the film-set of a movie based in the 1980s; for Ken, the chairs represented an absence of a client-friendly atmosphere and inappropriate imposition on his Mother, and for Craig, the chairs represented a cost-effective business decision. These realities were voiced (and sometimes silent) alongside each other, but some were more dominant than others. The silencing of certain voices will be elucidated below.

When I voiced my version of what was happening, Craig and Ken listened, and heard my voice (Shotter, 2001). Craig responded non-verbally (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000), which led us to an impasse. But Ken reinterpreted this as meaning “...this is how Craig is, it’s a coping mechanism he employs, it’s what he does when he needs to think things over; everything is going to be alright. We will soon have closure on the situation”. This is the meaning I created from Ken’s few words (i.e. “Don’t worry Daniel, I am on it”).

Ken felt so strongly about getting the meeting room “right” that he announced he would be willing to “give up” one month’s worth of salary to create something that makes a positive impact on visitors. Craig’s eventual willingness to hear Ken’s voice, his realisation of the importance to Ken of getting it right, and Craig’s not wanting to upset him, led him to shed his cost cutting drive to put throws over the reception / meeting room chairs. The chair story is re-narrated below from the polyphonic perspective:

### Controlling in-filling of space

FifeX procures furniture to fill space in the new business premises

Craig decides that the reception / waiting room chairs will go in the coffee room

Craig has a solution and announces it: we will buy some throws and Ken's Mother will make them into covers

Craig leaves the room. When he returns he announces he left to make a call

Craig believed it was a reasonable course of action to make-do with the furniture they had already purchased, but during a visit to Ikea, or in discussion prior to that journey, he must have changed his mind

### Expressing repulsion

Daniel expresses his distaste for the chairs. Dave agrees

Daniel openly expresses his repulsion at the sight and thought of sitting on the reception / waiting room chairs

[I am concerned that clients will slide off them when they are seated, or that when they do sit down, they will not be able to get up (especially if they are suffering from rheumatoid arthritis or the onset of myotonic dystrophy, for example)]

During a visit to Ikea, Craig and Ken purchase new furniture for the meeting room. When I return to FifeX several days later, the face-lift is proudly revealed

### When a chair is more than just a chair

[Outside of data: Craig and Ken discuss the need for more furniture to fill Tayport, and the decision is made to spend £300 on a job-lot.]

[Outside of data: Craig and Ken discuss how the newly acquired furniture will be spaced out in the new premises]

Ken makes a clear statement: that he would rather take a cut in next month's salary -to buy new furniture- than keep the chairs in the meeting room

Ken makes a decision (through some kind of internal dialogue) and he directs -by speaking out the side of his mouth- his voice toward Dave, Ally, and Daniel, broadcasting with resolve that, "My Mother is not going to be doing any sewing"

Visitors speak highly of the room and often compliment Craig and Ken for what they have done to create a really comfortable working environment. Ken is especially pleased with the "success" of the room because it is clear what it is for. There are four chairs and a table. It is warm, the chairs are comfortable, there is a nice table and it is not cluttered. "People come in and they know what to do". The room is for talking

### *Analysis*

From other episodes (including one exercise with Craig involving the use of projective metaphors) I have learned that Craig has a tendency to treat space as a container. It is worth remembering that the container view is analogous to the view of space as distance (Taylor & Spicer, 2007). For Craig, then, buying the furniture represented an initial step toward ensuring that they did not have to endure any empty spaces in the new Tayport business premises. Driven by pressures to keep costs down, and also by the desire to get along with Ken and not to upset him (because you can not afford to upset your business partner too often in a small new business venture like FifeX), Craig was forced to quickly develop a strategy to legitimise his original decision to buy the second-hand furniture. Hence his idea of getting Ken's Mother to make throws for the reception / meeting room chairs.

The 'throw' announcement is significant for it's drama in several ways. First, it demonstrates Craig's closeness, that is, his strong interpersonal connection with Ken. His resolute decision suggests (i) that Ken is already in accordance with Craig on the idea that throws will do the job, that the throws will 'save' the ugly chairs from the bonfire; and (ii) that Ken is comfortable with Craig speaking on his behalf. Secondly, it is also implicit in Craig's mutterings that *he* knows that Ken's Mother will deliver on this request. Craig's announcement suggests that he knows something -that Dave and I do not- of what Ken's Mother can, and can not do, and more importantly, is willing to do on FifeX's behalf.

There are a multiplicity of realities within this single episode, as such, there is a parallel set of texts in which.

... Craig changes his mind to keep Ken happy

... Dave sees Craig as being too suggestible (i.e. easily coerced into buying furniture FifeX did not need in the first place)

... I see Craig as being ignorant to overlook, then foolhardy to slight (by suggesting throw-use) the impact that the physical environment can have on the image people will create in their own minds of FifeX

... Ken does not want to *make-do* with what they have acquired, he would rather *make-better*. Recalling the garage story (i.e. why do garages always have to be dirty?), Ken saw Dave and I as contributing to the creation of a context in which new meaning could be developed. Dave and I helped create a safer environment in which to challenge and question what was taken for granted

Crucially, the co-creation of these meanings between Ken, Dave and myself offered Craig the necessary time to go away (i.e. to take time-out), and to reconsider Ken’s point of view (i.e. that he is even prepared to sacrifice one of his month’s salary on fitting-out the room properly); allowing him to return with a fresh view of what kind of a “mess” they are in, and how things might progress from there. There are a multiplicity of realities from which to view this mess, for whom:

(Craig) ... the original business need was, we need to fill-in space in a cost sensitive manner. Then it was, we need to keep Ken happy

(Daniel) ... there was a need for Craig and Ken to consider the image they want others to create in their own mind when they visit FifeX’s premises

(Dave) ... Craig is too easily swayed by others. He is too suggestible. Somebody wanted to sell office furniture, and they managed to persuade Craig to buy it. He has a problem of doing what other people say, getting himself into trouble, and then back-peddling to cover up his mistakes

(Ken) ... is willing to reflexively engage with others who are also reflexively engaged in the living moment

Looking at this event from a control perspective, when a leader experiences resistance, s/he does not falter, but ploughs straight on with his/ her intended plans for the chosen course of action. But in this situation, Craig does not dig his heels in, and neither is Ken bowled over by Craig’s commands. Similarly, from an engagement perspective, Craig’s leaving the room would seem to signal an end to dialogue. But through Ken’s, Dave’s and my getting used to how Craig acts in social situations, we were able to reinterpret Craig’s act of leaving the room to mean something quite the opposite: i.e. that Craig has gone to tend to some other important business, and using this as a pressure escape valve, of sorts, he re-enters the room with renewed enthusiasm for making better, rather than making-do with, what they have acquired (or, in this case, *will* procure when they visit Ikea). People who are well acquainted with Craig are therefore less likely to treat his walking out the room (and other similar actions) as symbolising a closing down of dialogue, but more a stepping back (to re-evaluate), and a stepping stone to further dialogue at some later date. What would have been a failure from the engagement perspective (Craig walking out) is reinterpreted (from the polyphonic perspective) to mean “...things will be ok...”.

### *Prescription*

Polyphony goes beyond engagement. As well as welcoming and valuing many voices, polyphony involves bringing into play alternative meanings. Polyphony calls for suspending judgement and soliciting other voices by creating an environment in which people feel free and comfortable with voicing their thoughts and feelings (Rodriguez, 2004). It is conceivable then, of a situation in which chairs are worth salvaging and embellishing with throws in one person's view, yet more suitable for fire wood, or simply worth replacing all together from another person's point of view. Embracing the polyphonic perspective means not just dialoging the words that are spoken, but dialoging the meanings behind the words. Such polyphonic encounters as these therefore call out meanings that are hidden; thereby making overt what was theretofore covert. This makes for a situation of becoming whereby meaning is put 'out there' so it can be referenced and shared between all participants concerned. Following on from that, polyphony goes beyond suspending judgement and involves taking a stance and acting.

#### 5.3.4. Concluding the chair story

The story about chairs told from three different perspectives shows that we can make three different readings of the same event. In Craig's reading of the situation, control worked and when it looked that it might not work out as well as he intended it to, slight modifications to the physical material arrangements (throws for the ugly chairs) meant that the original purchase decision could still be railroaded through to realisation.

Rather than abdicating his ambitions to arrive at his own interpretation of the situation and following Craig's out of trust (Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges, 1990: 349), because it was not immediately apparent to Craig what Ken was *really* thinking (i.e. "...my Mother won't be doing any sewing"), Craig then thought of Ken as a "follower" (p.349). However, through meaning making with Dave and myself, Ken did not abdicate his ambitions to create meaning for himself, rather, his lack of response (when Craig left the room) was read by Dave and I as a "gesture of despair and frustration" (p.349). Viewed from the polyphonic perspective, different readings of the same situation show that alternative meaning was arrived at, i.e. "Don't worry, my Mother won't be doing any sewing". For Ken, if sewing throws is the solution, he will make sure that it does not happen.

From a control perspective, the original decision to buy second-hand furniture failed due to a lack of control and adequate planning (Ingrey-Counter & Biles, 1994; Eley & Marmot, 1995; Golding, 2006). Viewed from an engagement perspective, the original decision failed because Ken's participation in the decision making process was limited to degree D. Engagement was finally successful when degree A participation occurred in Ikea. From a polyphonic perspective, the decision to purchase 'brand new' furniture occurred because new meanings were created and used to view the unfolding situation for what it was becoming (Drummond, 2001: 242), i.e. the manner in which the acquired chairs would be used.

It would appear then, that, from Craig's point of view control worked, but viewed from the polyphonic perspective, control worked for entirely different reasons. Control worked because Ken reinterpreted meaning *live*, and in a dialogic fashion to create new meanings in which Dave and I participated. From an engagement perspective, control has no place and decision making is more participatory; engagement in decision making is what happened in Ikea when Craig and Ken made decisions together. Subsequently, all three lenses are needed to fully appreciate and add texture to what happened.

#### **5.4 A story about a worktop**

In this section I look at one story through the three lenses (control, engagement, polyphony) that were identified earlier in my literature review chapter.

##### 5.4.1. The story about a worktop from a control perspective

1. Ken decides that the kitchen is too cramped, and Craig observes that there is not enough space to prepare lunch. For Craig, there is a need, then, for more counter space, or worktop, in the kitchen.
2. Ken identifies a need and decides to remove an internal dividing wall, but Craig resists because he thinks it will be too much "hassle".
3. Craig backs down and he eventually removes the wall by himself. Thus, enabling a worktop to be joined to the side of the sink, which in turn creates a larger work surface.
4. With work completed, the kitchen is done. The available counter area is more than doubled in length.

### *Analysis*

The kitchen-room felt cramped because there was an internal dividing wall which separated the kitchenette (a small, functional area with a sink and room for a small fridge, a microwave oven, a kettle, and a toaster) from the rest of the room. The area was conveniently sectioned off, thanks to this wall which helped create *a room within a room*. But the kitchenette was too small for two or more people to prepare food in at the same time, and the rest of the room was too small to do anything else with. As such, rather than looking / feeling / working like a kitchen, squeezed into the corner of what otherwise, would make a reasonably sized staff room, or ‘mess’, the kitchenette looked / felt / worked like a *botched*, makeshift area for preparing food that was created as an afterthought by the previous occupiers.

The decision to add a large counter, or worktop, was a success because the decision was finally implemented. From a control perspective, however, the decision was a failure because what happened after the decision was firmed up does not fall in line with control thinking (see *prescription* below). To begin with, like in the open-plan entrance / reception area story, there were no papers: there were no plans, and as such, there was nothing to work from. In short, there was an absence of separation of thinking from doing.

Viewed from the control perspective, when a leader champions change, there is normally a smooth transition from the decision to implementation (Henderson, 2001). In the case of FifeX, however, there was resistance from Craig: by way of introducing the notion that ripping out the wall would only create “havoc” and cause “hassle”, Craig attempted to block the decision. On this, motivated to keep costs low, and being time sensitive to the fact that removing walls might damage other soft furnishings, which in turn would delay getting the room “up and running” (i.e. time for unintended repairs), Craig considered the room more or less “done”, or finished, as it was (save a coat of paint and wiping down the surfaces).

Control-based thinking conceives of “space as distance” (Taylor & Spicer: 2007: 327) where “certainly the most commonly explored, focus [is] on the question of workplace layout”. A key concept is the physical distance between objects and people. On this, when Ken says the kitchen feels “cramped” and the solution is to remove the internal dividing wall, he is clearly seeking solutions through control-based thinking. Similarly, Craig is operating from within the control

perspective when he expresses his concern for there being a lack of space for two to occupy the kitchen at the same time and the solution would be to add another work surface counter.

Image 1: Making the kitchenette a kitchen

[The internal divider (which came out to the end of the sink) removed]



Image 2: Fitted worktop



### *Prescription*

In the control perspective, space is not negotiated, space is singular, and it is both measured and prescribed, for delivery to its users. The best course of action is arrived at through analytical deliberation. Decision making is deliberate and emotional preferences are not expected to taint the outcome. In sum, once the need (problem) for greater work surface area had been identified, a thorough examination of all possible alternative ways of increasing the work surface area (solution) should have been undertaken. There then should have been a comparison of options -with clear decision criteria- to help arrive at the *right* course of action. When the decision is made and the plan is written up, emotions (feelings and aesthetic considerations) should not get in the way of implementation.

#### 5.4.2. The story about a worktop from an engagement perspective

The following story describes what happens when one person has “...it all designed in my head” before they move in, and another prefers to “get in and deal with it when we get there”. In this story, Craig had mentioned the possibility of removing an internally dividing wall in the kitchen, but when he mentioned it, consistent with Ken’s approach to decision making, he *was not there* yet so Ken was not very receptive to Craig’s idea. In the meantime, Craig must have resigned to the idea that removing the wall was not going to happen. But then, having moved in, Ken brought up the issue again, which for Craig, was covering old ground. Craig snapped: “I said we should do this last week”. That Craig had imagined these modifications to the layout of the kitchen already once before, but then had to change his mind and get used to the idea that his vision was not going to be realised because Ken was not reading from the same page as he, only to change his mind yet again at a later date -when it was ‘convenient’ for Ken- because he had caught up to Craig in his thinking; goes some way toward justifying Craig’s frustration and his outburst. Here is the conversational event (transcript) that led to that outburst:

Daniel           What are you guys going to do with this room? It looks like something used to go there, the [linoleum] floor only goes up to there [signalling with hand], and now all those pipes are exposed, so there was obviously something there at one point, hiding them... I imagine you can't just leave them like that...

Ken               Yeah.... . I have been thinking about this. Its good that we have the beginning of a kitchen..., kind of ..., half way there...

Craig             And that fridge they [the previous occupiers] left behind [in office 3] will fit nicely in there.

Daniel           What do you reckon about this wall?

Craig             That's alright... . It sections off that part of the kitchen quite nicely in fact. If we put a work surface ..., matching the other side of the sink..., we'll have enough space to make lunch and prepare food and stuff. By the time you put the toaster and kettle there, there is not a lot of space left so I reckon we buy another worktop from B&Q -the same colour, we can fit it ourselves; so you gain all that worktop..., to about here [signalling about 1.5m from the sink with his hand].

Ken               If we are going to do that then we need to remove the wall. It'll look fucking strange having a wall in the middle of the worktop.

Craig             Its not worth it..., because if we do that we are going to cause havoc..., it'll leave a big hole in the floor, we'll have to buy new floor tiles, and we'll fuck up the cupboard, sink unit..., everything. Its just not worth it., it'd be too much hassle.

Dave             Mate, you have to move that [wall] if you are extending the worktop. It'll look weird!

Craig             I am not taking advice off somebody who hasn't done work on their own house..., who can't even design a kitchen for their own place... . You've been on it for ages, and still, nothing's been done about it...

Somewhat taken aback by this statement -that *came out of nowhere*- Dave said nothing and abruptly removed himself from the situation. Others looked on in equal surprise. I continued:

Daniel        If you guys are concerned about things looking a bit strange, I just noticed you are missing a door leading to the kitchen...; you can see the fuse box, 'lecky meter and all those cables everywhere... [Image 3]. You might as well do something with that while you are at it. And I agree, if you stick a worktop there, that wall in the middle of it *would* look odd...! Its not staying is it...?

Craig         I said we should do that last week.

Daniel        Look. It does not really matter who said what and when. Last week or two months ago..., what matters is its importance for what we do now..., whether or not we are going to act upon it...

Before I could finish explaining the idea that people often make decisions but then don't act on them, and people sometimes act without having made a decision; and before I could say that it is not important as to who owns the decision, that decisions of this nature are difficult to locate and attribute to any one person, Craig silently began to apply pressure to the internal wall -made of plasterboard; yanking the structure back and forth he managed to loosen it. Without damaging the sink unit or the lowered ceiling and it's tiles, the internal dividing wall was seamlessly torn away. With what seemed to resemble a smug look on Craig's face I continued: "Well I guess that's that then!"

### *Analysis*

The worktop episode can be viewed in three phases.

Phase 1 – There is a unanimous agreement on the need to increase worktop surface area, and the controversial issue about removing the obscurely placed internal dividing wall is raised.

Engagement (degree B participation in decision making) was successful to begin with, in that everybody provided feedback on their ‘gut’ feeling about the worktop issue. Although the “weird” (Dave) wall sectioned-off the kitchenette “nicely” (Craig), thus creating a room within a room, there was unanimity (between Ken, Dave and Daniel) on the view that having a wall in the middle of a worktop *does* look strange. Engagement on this occasion did not slant in Craig’s favour. Following on from that, Craig made it clear as to whose voice was more equal than others: his own. This was the beginning of a temporary closure, or an attempt to break-down engagement.

Phase 2 – Craig initially resists the decision to remove the wall and a heated discussion is had in which Craig jibes Dave for *sticking his nose in* where it was not wanted / appreciated.

In an overt display of power, Craig’s jibe (i.e. “I am not taking advice off somebody who [...] can’t even design a kitchen for their own place”) at Dave showed that he was not willing to allow Dave’s views to get *built-into* the building’s materiality. Openly ignoring Dave’s view, Craig did not offer (give) voice which showed that Dave was not welcome to contribute to the conversation: Dave was “cut off” from the conversation (Nelson, 2004). Recalling Neumann’s (2000) second lesson on what makes for ‘good’ engagement, Dave’s point of view was not welcomed by Craig because in lights of Dave’s inability to ‘sort out’ the kitchen in his house, Craig did not deem his involvement “appropriate”.

Before Craig’s ‘go’ at Dave, however, he had already made one small step toward closing down engagement by proffering that if they started ripping out walls in the kitchen, it would be too much “hassle” and reek “havoc” because they would end up accidentally ripping out other things (i.e. the linoleum floor) and this in turn, would mean that they have to spend more time and money on laying down another floor. It would be fair to say then, that, Craig’s initial attempt to close down engagement (the second being his attack on Dave) was driven by cost. He was conscious of the cost and time it would take to re-floor the kitchen and did not want to incur that “hassle”.

Phase 3 – I suggest if Craig and Ken take Dave’s point of view seriously, and they are concerned with things looking a little odd, if they want to *go all out*, I suggest it might be a good idea to cover the fuse box on the wall (that is on show), cover up the visible pipes

(running parallel to the skirting board, approximately 30cm above the ground), and put a door on (to keep noise and cooking odours in the kitchen).

Here, I tried to extend dialogue by drawing attention to other things (Cunliffe, 2002) that visitors might find strange, i.e. no door and an exposed fuse box for example (Image 3). However, this was met with another *I told you so* kind of retort, effectively working toward closing down engagement. Again, drawing on Czarniawska-Jeorges & Jeorges (1990: 348), Craig put forward the idea (implicitly) that it was normal to have a dividing wall between a sink and a worktop (platitude) but others were not prepared to abdicate their ambitions to arrive at their own interpretations. Instead, we managed to convince Craig that our understanding of what would ‘work’ better was more accurate than his.

Image 3: No door and an exposed fuse box



The significance of this retort (“I said we should do that last week”) can be seen inasmuch as it marks a turning point in the conversation. The focus of the conversation thereafter shifted from the content of the decision (i.e. worktop or no worktop, with or without internal dividing wall) to *ownership* of the decision. As I then began to share my thoughts on decision making, presenting the idea that we all own the decision, that no one, single person owns it; and that a decision is not a

thing, anyway. That rather *deciding* ought to be the focus of our conversation because decision making is an activity we must all take responsibility for (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005: 791), Craig silently enacted decision making, suggesting that if he did not own the decision to start off with, he does now because he has been the only person to move to action. The conversation dissipated, we left the room and Craig continued to both carefully and efficaciously dismantle the internal dividing wall without damaging any of the other soft furnishings.

Dave and I returned to visit Craig and Ken in the new premises in Tayport a few days later: a door leading into the kitchen had been fitted, the large fridge from office 3 was installed, and a new worktop had been fitted. It looked / felt / worked more like a kitchen.

#### *Prescription*

From an engagement perspective, here is what should have happened when Dave voiced his opinion: his voice should have been heard more willingly. Rather than being ‘shot-down’, Dave’s voice should have been openly acknowledged and allowed to influence the flow of the conversation more directly. Here, language was used to show where the power lies and to cut, or break the flow of conversation. Craig achieved in doing that, to some extent, because Dave then withdrew from the conversation. More successful engagement, however, is had when language is used to sustain the flow of the conversation. “Conversations lose their value when ‘cut off...’” (Nelson, 2004: 261). Like a flowing river (conversation) therefore, Dave should have been viewed as another ‘river-bank’ and been *permitted* (invited to give voice) to influence the course of it’s (i.e. the conversation) flow.

#### 5.4.3. The story about a worktop from a polyphonic perspective

A day of cleaning, organising, and generally getting things “up and running” followed move-in day. Dave, Ally and Katie were about the building attending to their tasks they had been appointed by Craig and Ken. Standing in the kitchen, next door to the box-room, which by this time had been allocated as the coffee / meeting room, as entry into a natural conversation, without directing my question at Craig or Ken, I asked, “What do you think you Guys are going to do with this room?” The drama which was the worktop story unfurled as follows:

Mentioning possible improvements

Ken acknowledges the fortuitous acquisition of a the beginning of what might turn out to be a good kitchen.

Ken immediately senses that “the wall in the middle of a worktop” will not ‘work’. For Ken, there is an issue with the internal dividing wall, and it has to go.

I am temporarily silenced too, but jumping to Dave’s support, I then add salt to one of Craig’s exposed wounds by saying: “If you guys are concerned about things looking a bit strange, I just noticed you are missing a door leading to the kitchen there (see Image 3), and if you sit here

Disagreeing on the need to remove the internal dividing wall and attacking another

Accordingly, Craig elaborates by carving out a place for the large fridge that the previous occupiers left in office 3.

Craig also acknowledges the convenience of having a kitchenette and feels that the wall helps make the kitchenette a successful, workable solution.

However, because there is not enough space for two people to occupy the kitchen at the same time, for Craig, the addition of a worktop is the only modification they need to worry about.

Craig resists the need to remove the wall under the pretext that it will cause too much “hassle” and reek “havoc”.

Taking things personally, Craig has a go at Dave: “I am not taking advice off somebody who hasn’t done work on their own house..., who can’t even design a kitchen for their own place... You’ve been on it for ages, and still, nothings been done about it...”

Agreeing on the need to add another work surface and wanting to own the decision

Daniel inquires about what they are going to do about the wall that seems to make the kitchen area feel claustrophobic.

There is unanimity over the need for a larger work surface, and all but Craig are for the idea of removing the internal dividing wall because it feels too “cramped”. We know when Ken is serious because he can be very expressive and he seldom swears. When he does swear, it helps to punctuate his passion for something. Because he only tends to swear with passion, perhaps this is why such vulgarity actually comes across as non-confrontational and non-threatening, almost comedy like.

We all sense discomfort at this outburst / attack on Dave’s way of going about doing his own kitchen, which has little perceived import / relevance to the case at hand.

Sharing opinions and being ‘shot down’

Dave points out that the wall needs to go because, otherwise it will look “weird”.

Conscious and respectful of the fact that although Craig has brought personal matters in to a conversation about work issues, Dave remains silent because

[standing with my back to the wall, looking at the entrance to the box-room], you can see the fuse box, 'lecky meter and all those cables everywhere; it looks a bit dangerous and wrong if you ask me... you might as well cover all that up as well while you are at it. And I agree, if you stick a worktop there, that wall in the middle of it *would* look odd; its not staying is it...?"

It then becomes clear that the idea of removing the wall is in fact, going over old ground for Craig because he suggested that "we should do that [i.e. remove the wall] last week".

We then start to hear creaking as Craig successfully manages to rip the internal divider from the wall without damaging the linoleum flooring or the sink unit. Craig seems to find comfort that they are now one step closer to getting the place "up and running".

When Craig had mentioned removing the wall however, nobody must have been receptive to his suggestion. De-motivated, disheartened, perhaps frustrated, or even comfortable with changing his mind, Craig must have got used to the idea of not removing the wall. So when the issue was raised once again, he wanted to maintain the status quo, one which he had gotten used to living with.

I then break into a diatribe, sharing with others what I understand about the difficulties and challenges faced by us all, as decision-makers in everyday life. I realise that Craig might be putting his desire to "own" the decision [to remove or not to remove the internal dividing wall] before the interests of Ken and those who might use the kitchen in the future.

"Well I guess that's that then!"

for him, at the end of this analysis, it is still a place of work that demands a certain level of professionalism and decorum.

There is a multiplicity of realities within the single episode:

Craig has already made the decision not to remove the internal dividing wall so as to create as little “hassle” as possible: to do so would lead to incurring further costs (removing the wall will damage the floor and sink unit, which in turn will create more work). Moreover, he likes that the kitchen is sectioned off “nicely”, and visitors are not going to see / experience the kitchen, anyway, so why bother wasting time and money on it...?

Ken does not like the internal dividing wall and wants to explore ways of making the kitchen feel less “cramped”. Ken posits that they are making the place better for themselves, not only for visitors, so it is worth the time and effort it takes to make such changes

As a friend, Dave makes himself available to help get things up and running. Having come under attack, from Craig, about his approach to re-fitting his own kitchen, perhaps Dave wants to use this opportunity to prove to himself, and others, that he does have ‘good’ ideas about how a kitchen should work

Daniel wants to understand what is happening. Both Ken and Craig perceive the need for a larger worktop, but Ken also perceives the need -independently of Craig- to create a *kitchen feel*. Craig provides a solution that does not satisfy Ken’s need. There are also things (such as fitting a door, and covering the electricity/fuse box) that I would do to make the kitchen feel more like a kitchen. I say these things in order to create, in my eyes, positive change

### *Analysis*

Dave withheld (Morrison & Milliken, 2000) his voice after he was scolded. From a polyphonic perspective, the practice of equal voicing (Boje & Rosile, 1994) was therefore a failure as soon as Craig pronounced those words. The dominance of Craig’s voice thus served to limit the multiplicity of ways to interpret (Boje, 1995) the layout as a text (Yanow, 1998). In doing so, the advantage in elevating Craig’s interpretation over Dave’s competing construction is that, with Craig’s, there is a straightforward recipe (Boje, 1995: 1030) for place making. For Ken and I, this created an uneasy atmosphere. Unbeknown to us (Ken, Craig, and I) at that time, (for Dave told me after the event had happened), Dave was “livid” (in his own words). But Dave managed to contain his frustration, and maintain a detached, professional manner. During conversations which followed this event, Dave told me that his ability to “keep his cool” goes some way in showing his professionalism: at that time, Dave said nothing, and held a neutral, indifferent facial expression.

For Dave, by not retaliating, or coming back at Craig (with some retort like “At least I have my own house to begin with, Mate”) shows that he thinks hard about avoiding bringing personal matters, from outside work, into conversations at work. Moreover, out of respect for others, especially for Craig and Ken (“after all, it is their place of work [and I am their visitor]”), retaliating would have undermined Dave’s own view that there is no room for personal matters in the workplace. From

this, then, Dave might have presented yet another one of his “selves” within his “self” (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 366) if Craig’s jibe had been made outside the workplace: perhaps Dave would have rejected Craig’s comments and entered into an argument if this happened off-site.

According to Dave, this event provides a case in point, that where others offer help and support, and create opportunities to broaden his horizons, Craig can sometimes “take things personally”. Likewise, for Ken, this event serves to illustrate where it can sometimes be challenging for Craig to separate “personal matters / emotions from what is good for the business”.

Whereas Craig stayed squarely within the control perspective to view place making in the kitchen, Ken stepped ‘outside’ to view the kitchen as “personal (lived) space”. Craig perceived the kitchen as ‘any old space’, just another space to wander in and out of in the morning to make tea / coffee and toast, and at lunch time to make a sandwich. For Craig, then, the kitchen falls outside the realm of workspace needing ‘controlling’ (except to add a work surface at a minimal cost) therefore, it is an area of experience where costs can be minimised. Moreover, because people do not go ‘backstage’, so to speak, visitors / (potential) clients do not see what it is like or how it works in there. Therefore, ‘we do not care what others think’ is what Craig seems to be saying to himself; and so, it is not worth the “hassle” removing the internal dividing wall. For Ken, on the other hand, there is less of a concern for distance, and instead the focus is on how he wants to experience and create / add meaning. Removing the wall is symbolic in that it represents Ken’s attempt to make the kitchen less of a kitchenette, and more homey. As Ken mentioned in conversations we entered into based on his drawings of what it felt like to experience the move:

My workspace is more importance to me than the space in my own house. I have to be comfortable in work. [...] That’s why I have spent more time on my office than I have on my own house. If it’s where you spend most of your time, then why not?

Because Craig already had an image (in his mind’s eye) of what the room would look like *without* the internal dividing wall (but had changed his mind, and perhaps got used to the idea of coping with it as it was; after all, it made a nice ‘kitchenette’ in his eyes), when I reminded Craig that deciding entails acting, he was compelled to tear the internal wall down, that is, to enact the decision during conversation. Here, Craig seemed to be more concerned with owning the decision rather than negotiating further the *content* of the decision.

Craig's ability to take a stance through acting goes some way toward showing how flexible and comfortable he is with changing his mind. By tearing down the wall *live*, his acting helped to reinforce his perception of himself as a "good decision maker" and also capable of *undoing* decisions he has already made. It also supports his view that others (Ken, Dave and I) are relatively 'poor' decision makers / visionaries because he could foresee that problem "last week" and he had already made that decision but nobody took it forward, or acted upon it. Ken, you will recall from section 4.2 (page 115), said, "He [Craig] thinks that he is a good decision-maker but I think he is a terrible decision-maker".

Afraid of giving up his identity, or simply not wanting to drop his power, Craig appeared to shy away from critical reflection (in conversation he did at least, anyway). By the end of this analysis however, his actions go some way toward showing that the "disruptive" power of polyphony (Bebbington, *et al.*, 2007: 368) was successful. On this, having removed the "weird" wall, Ken, Dave and I later agreed that the kitchenette became a kitchen, and it also became a much more inviting, and pleasant place to be. I do not recall Craig being as passionate as Ken about the kitchen being "up and running".

#### *Prescription*

Since polyphony is about soliciting, inviting, welcoming and both listening / hearing alternative voices, it is commonplace to experience conflicting and contradictory voices living side-by-side. From a polyphonic perspective, Craig should have adopted a "not-knowing" approach (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 368) and become a willing listener. In recognition of power structures, through socialisation processes, Dave (after all, it is I who is *their* guest) has learnt to respect "the place of work". This prevented Dave from entering into "oppositional forms of talk" with the "powerful" before such forms could develop (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 370). The closing down of conversational space meant that we collaboratively stepped back from confronting Craig's hidden commitments and challenging him (us) to move beyond his (our) own standpoint (Bebbington *et al.*, 2007: 368).

I now want to break with my writing tradition. So far, I have not included my own reflections or mentioned what I would do next time. I will say more on this later, but here I just want to say a few short words.

### *Reflection*

As a researcher, being included in the relational process of moving and sp/pl/ace making, there was an inevitable opening up of dialogue. Sometimes, like in the worktop incident for example, I was shocked by the voices I solicited, and I had to depend upon all my life experience in coping and dealing with events sprouting live conflict. Such events brought it home to me that, when polyphonic moments are being sought, I would like to adopt a more facilitating role. By facilitating I mean, in the context of the worktop, if I could re-live the situation again, I would have:

- encouraged Craig to openly explore other potentially hidden commitments toward keeping the internal dividing wall, and for him to listen to Dave's voice without necessarily allowing 'it' to dominate; thereby treating him as an equal, and recognising his expertise as a user of kitchen space, and visitor to FifeX,
- supported Dave to develop his voice, and explore potentially hidden commitment as to why he must remain 'silent' on personal matters in the workplace

In light of Cunliffe's (2002) set of reminders on how to relationally engage in living moments (see page 71-72 of my literature review in this thesis), to be a more facilitating researcher I could have used more comparative, and other forms of talk that reveal possibilities; such as "compare that to how kitchens have been in other places you have visited" (comparison), and "think how people might feel if the wall was not there, or the wall went all the way across to create a tiny kitchen.... . What would happen if you removed this wall and made the kitchen / meeting room into one large room?" This way of being-in-a-situation should be enacted in a manner that is true to the polyphonic perspective, that is, allowing for a meeting of minds, but even in 'agreement' there is still non-vergence of views, which in turn rejects a "unitary and closed sense of the world" (Bebbington, *et al.*, 2007: 367).

#### 5.4.4. Concluding the worktop story

There was a struggle over what the kitchen would look / feel / work like. At first glance, the decision to add more work surface area was a success. The decision to remove the internal dividing wall was also a success, because what was said actually happened. But viewed from the control perspective, both the decision to add a worktop and the decision to remove the internal dividing wall were failures because there was no formal dimension to them: there were no papers, and hence

nothing to work from. Moreover, in these decisions, there was little separation of thinking from doing (Tannenbaum, 1962; Guillen, 1997). Both thinking and doing happened simultaneously, or the research participants acted first in order to think, -and acting before thinking is incongruent with the control perspective. In short, work surface area was enlarged, and the wall was removed, but not for the reasons the control perspective says that they were. To explain what happened, we need to apply alternative perspectives.

From the engagement perspective, it would appear that Craig's original decision to keep the internal dividing wall (because otherwise it would be too much "hassle" to remove it) was overturned with no thanks to engagement processes. Viewed from the engagement perspective, the decision was overturned for entirely different reasons that 'engagement' suggest (Neumann, 2000). As opposed to merely being informed about decisions undertaken by somebody else, the engagement perspective suggests that those with relevant knowledge should be included in the decision making process, and be allowed to actually *take* decisions (i.e. degree A involvement). Here, there were several opportunities for engagement but they were denied / overlooked by both Craig and Ken.

The benefit of looking at the same event from three different perspectives can be seen when we apply the third perspective: polyphony. It seems to lend the most explanatory purchase on what was happening as the worktop story unfurled. That is, there were several conflicting and contradictory voices occupying the same conversational space (Boje, 1995). There were even many voices within Craig himself (Hazen, 1994; Bebbington *et al.*, 2007), i.e. first he did not want to keep the internal dividing wall, then he did. Also, viewing the same event from three different perspectives highlights the silencing of certain voices.

In sum, Craig found an argument to justify leaving the wall in its place (i.e. removing it will create too much "hassle"). When it was clear that everybody else thought it would be good to remove the wall, and when the polyphonic moment could be held, or sustained for no longer, Craig wanted to make it clear that it was *his* decision to remove the wall to start off with. At the end of this analysis it was ultimately his decision because he ripped the wall out without receiving a definitive, loud and clear "YES" from his business partner, Ken, and / or either myself or Dave. If decision is action, Craig made the decision because he acted it out. Craig's enactment also goes some way towards showing the limits of polyphony: voices can only occupy the same conversational space for a certain

period of time before somebody needs to go beyond suspending judgement to taking a stance and acting.

## **5.5 Closing comments on the discussion and analysis of place making in an empirical setting**

There are two major areas of concern with the dominant ‘plan → move → occupy’ model of place making (office fit-out). First, most of the literature on workplace design and facilities management focuses on large organisations and this is because large organisations, occupying large buildings, are the main customers of professional office out-fitters and workplace / space consultants. As a consequence, due to the self-interest of practitioners and consultants, the voices and experiences of owner-managers in small new business ventures occupying smaller premises remains largely unheard. Their stories are unheard as an unintended consequence of the way architects, office out-fitters and space consultants both work and behave. As a result, nothing has been written until now on how the decision to relocate happens in small new business ventures, nor on *what* decisions happen in workplace making and *how* they should be made (Brand, 1995).

Second, planning, the activity between visioning and implementing seems to ignore “learning from enactment” (Orlikowski, 2004: 94). Researchers have argued that it is not possible to know everything in advance (Pfeffer, 2003: 14; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006: 14) and calls have been made to nurture openness and positive abilities to function in a “liquid state” (Gehry, 2004: 20). In this view, because ambiguity always lurks (Drummond, 2001), contrary to mistaking plans for knowledge on what *will* happen in the future, plans are more fruitfully viewed as pointing towards possibilities of what *might* happen. To deploy Drummond’s (2001) vernacular, the significance of events only reveals itself with time, and so plans merely serve as a hand-rail to give a flavour of what *could* happen. Coping with liquidity without reaching for predictable, simple, hard and quick-fix solutions is key to nurturing the practice of learning from enactment. Resisting conceptual closure for as long as possible therefore helps to keep open the possibility of being “guided by the work as it proceeds rather than staying with a pre-established plan” (Papert & Harel, 1991). As Ken stated during an exercise in guided drawing:

If you have never had a workshop before, right, you don’t know how you are going to use it. Erm, if you have never had a meeting room before, you don’t know how you are going to use it.

He then went on to explain that:

...if I was to do it all over again, or if I was recommending somebody else who was about to go through it all [i.e. relocating], I would recommend: move in, work there, give it two or three months to find out how you use the building, then, after a month or so, you would have a better idea of how you really want your new place to be [i.e. to 'look' and 'work']. You can't really make those decisions [i.e. on office layout] before you move in because you don't know how you are going to work.

In essence, Ken was acknowledging that the way one works can evolve, or change, as new ways of working which were previously un-thought of come into being. In short, until now, while some have called for such an approach (Orlikowski, 2004), little effort has been made by empirical researchers to explore how people experience learning from enactment in small new business ventures. Moreover, very few practical steps have been made by organization scholars to provide practitioners on the ground, such as Craig and Ken, with a framework or model to help them literally, get to grips with, and to think about mobility, movement, and change in the process of moving places / place making.

While the empirical material for my research is based on fieldwork conducted in FifeX, I would argue that the case of FifeX is not an isolated one; that other companies of a similar size and maturity in different parts of the world would experience the same decision making issues and design tensions. If they were to move without considerable forethought, they would inevitably come up against a similar sequence of events. To this effect, my research has a practical and pragmatic import for other small new business ventures who are moving / thinking about moving into part-furnished, low road (Brand, 1995) business premises, and where they can do almost anything they want to the inside of the building. The model developed in the next chapter goes some way toward helping structure and facilitate thinking about the decisions people could face in their own localised set of circumstances, and (I hope) it inches that little bit closer toward facilitating the co-creation of greater places to be in.

## Chapter Six

### Concluding Discussion

#### 6.1 Introduction and outline of this chapter

This chapter concludes on the ability of the three different perspectives to explain my data. The aim of this thesis was to examine which theory, or combination of theories has the greatest explanatory power in analysing place making. The experience of relocating and the ongoing activity of sp/pl/ace making was studied by narrative exploration of an empirical setting. In particular, this research used three theories (control, engagement, and polyphony) to examine the office relocation / place making activities of a small new business venture based in Scotland, called FifeX. Each theory was applied in order to examine what happened when people can do almost anything they want to the inside of a building. The thesis used an ethnographic approach to develop greater understanding of what happens when people relocate and proceed to make sp/pl/ace according to how they feel 'it' should look / feel / work.

I begin, in section 6.2, by asking why does the control perspective have a 'natural' place in relocating / moving, why is it taken as 'natural'? In section 6.3, I then underline why it is that the control perspective fails to explain what happens when I apply it to 'live' moments of sp/pl/ace making in the case of FifeX. Here, I also address an important question raised by control's *failure*: why is the control perspective so popular if it is such a failure at explaining what happens? In section 6.4 I go on to argue that alternative theories are more adept at explaining the depth of what is going on. Because the control perspective simplifies the complexity that is present, these alternative theories add more resolution, allowing us to 'see' different things that the control perspective does not, such as symbolism (Hatch, 1990) and efforts to redefine the feeling of spaces (Yanow, 1998). Following on from that, in section 6.5, I address a second important question raised by control's failure to explain what is happening: what can we put in its place; how might we contribute to an effective theory of practice?

The rest of the chapter points the way, suggesting features of a possible model which would best be described as an example of *emergent theorising* based on, and informed by, both theory and practice. Not only do I offer some suggested features of such a model, but in section 6.5.1 I also speculate as to how this model can be used in other projects than the one it is based on. Does the model better support the role of experiencing and understanding in the ongoingly discursive production of space? From here I outline the contributions (in section 6.6) of this thesis. Then, in section 6.7 I make some suggestions for future research. I close my thesis with reflexive statements on the research process, and provide further reflections on the participatory journey I have undertaken (section 6.8).

## **6.2 Dominance of the control perspective**

Here I address the question, why does the control perspective have a ‘natural’ place in relocating / moving?

Control has a ‘natural’ place in relocating / moving and is taken-for-granted (or, at least it is by practitioners such as Craig, for example) because it is praised for its ability to deliver projects on time and to budget. As such, over the recent past, a vocabulary of control (planning, goal / deadline, time-horizon, delivery, project overrun / overspend, steering committee, checklist, evaluation) has emerged alongside evolutions in project management, and this vocabulary can be found in some of the literature on relocating (Ingrey-Counter & Biles, 1994: 21; Eley & Marmot, 1995: 190-191) and the management of work sp/pl/ace (Vischer, 2007a: 72). The dominant view associated with such control-based thinking is to define the problem, establish the brief, set goals / deadlines and budgets, then, manage progress by regularly measuring key performance indicators and deliver the finished product to the client. On this, it is notable that even though it is the oldest, the control perspective still has dominance in many managerial / leadership / professional discourses. The main benefits (among others) associated with being in control are:

- i. increased predictability of decision outcomes,
- ii. improved time-keeping (i.e. delivery on due-date), and
- iii. prevention of spiralling costs

Together, these benefits translate into ‘success’ on the demand side; so, in a self-fulfilling manner, control is not only guaranteed (supply), but it is also sought after (demand). Following on from this,

received wisdom suggests, if checks are not done at specific points where projects pass through certain 'gates', and if the right procedures are not in place to keep the project on track and to continually revise planning (i.e. if control is weak), then projects will veer off course and will not be delivered on time and to budget. Without necessarily mentioning the word 'control', this is the type of language and these are the kinds of words we often hear in practice. The extracts below, taken from the business literature, illustrate this point.

When asked how he managed to increase like-for-like sales by 1.7%, "something Sainsbury's had not seen for a while", Justin King, Sainsbury's CEO, said:

By re-engaging and re-motivating our 150,000 staff. They are the difference between our success and our failure. There's a noticeable spring in the step of our colleagues in-store. I've brought a sense of leadership, direction and communication (Blackhurst, 2005: 40-45).

Similarly, in Purvis (2005: 41-45), we learn that "cask ale brewing was in the last chance-saloon". In response to the question "So how did Greene King win through" we are given five key features of how "...smart operators can turn what looks like terminal decline to their advantage. Here's how... Don't follow the herd. Cut costs without sacrificing value. Play a game you can win. Lead from the front. Avoid siege mentality". We are also told that,

An initiative was launched to make Greene King's beer quality exemplary, with a range of staff -not just analysts- judging the beers in weekly tasting. Quality control measures were put in place that bore comparison with the more fastidious food industry. 'We were the first brewer in the UK to receive ISO [quality management] accreditation across the whole business,' says Anand<sup>42</sup>, 'and if you get the quality right, it's a win-win. Not only do your products improve, but you save money because you don't have to go back and do things again.' (p.43/45).

In Mann (2005: 20-22), the Chartered Management Institute's first Chartered Manager in Gibraltar spoke about what he would prefer to do in a situation where it is his job to carry out organizational change. When asked "Would you reluctantly endorse the internal changes or perhaps voice your doubts about them with your team, to let the team know you're 'on their side'?" He replied,

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<sup>42</sup> Chief Executive of Greene King, Rooney Anand.

A decision is made which for better or worse needs to be given effect. Having a manager question the decision or not agreeing to carry it out will cause the organisation to become ineffective.

He cited Sun-Tzu as saying, “To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting”, and he later went on to say, “My advice to managers grappling with change management decisions would be to decide on what side of the fence they want to be. The side where there is a lot of shouting and gesticulation but very little is achieved or the quiet one where the little victories are won without having to fight a single battle”.

Likewise, hailing “Samsung: Korean Sony Killer”, in Saunders (2007: 28-33) the author writes,

The person responsible for the past decade of this remarkable transformation is the vice-chairman and co-chief executive of Samsung Electronics, Jong Yong Yun. Softly spoken, extremely courteous and thoughtful of mien, Yun, 61, is nonetheless a wily old bird who pilots his ship with a firm hand on the tiller.

In the extracts above, although the word ‘control’ is not mentioned explicitly (with the exception of the Greene King extract), control is implicit and implied in their thinking. All thinking is control-based and there is a view that professional practice entails being in control all of the time. Control, therefore, is so embedded in the discourses leaders manage projects by, that all solutions would simply be to *control it more*. The purpose of using these quotes is to show that control is deeply engrained. Even in small new business ventures, such as FifeX, this is still the dominant approach that people tend to fall back on.

The discourses that people operate in when relocating / moving / place making, thus use (i) discursive resources, and (ii) the discursive structure of practice / management / accounting systems. Together, these factors militate towards the control perspective. Therefore, we should not at all be surprised when Craig falls into the control perspective. Craig’s announcement of (1) *his* “plan” to create an open-plan entrance / reception area, and (2) the decision to buy £300 worth of office furniture provide two examples where Craig defaulted to the control perspective and it was taken-for-granted. But control should not be taken-for-granted (as Craig does). That projects

should be delivered on time and to budget, however, should be obvious and expected. From this, it is my argument then, that, increasing control will not achieve actionable discourses (Gergen, 2005: 545) because it does not see the complexity that is present. What we need, then, is a processual model that provides a framework for thinking about sp/pl/ace making issues and helps us to look for solutions from beyond our current standpoint.

### **6.3 Explanatory failures of the control perspective**

Why it is that the control perspective fails to explain what happens when I apply it to ‘live’ moments of sp/pl/ace making in the case of FifeX?

There are many alternatives to operating from entirely within the control perspective, two of which have already been identified in my literature review (engagement and polyphonic). These two alternative approaches are important because even though control has dominance, it is not the best explanatory theory of what happened in the case of FifeX. It is not that the control perspective does not explain anything, because even after the new business premises were deemed satisfactorily “up and running”, Craig would still be convinced that the control perspective works best. The control perspective, however, only explains *some* of what happened.

There is a clear explanation from the literature (although not explicitly) saying that if you exercise complete control during an office relocation / fit-out, the project will not fail (Ingrey-Counter & Biles, 1994: 21; Eley & Marmot, 1995: 190-191; Vischer, 2007a: 72). Nonetheless, as the case of FifeX shows, this is not applicable in all practice because there was little control in the relocation and still, the project did not fail. The control perspective only explains some of what happened when FifeX relocated; thus reflecting the inherent limitations of the dominant view. Hence, there is a need to apply a broader framework which will include outliers (such as FifeX), for when I tested those (control) explanations using ethnography, as I have done here, two main problems were encountered:

1. Control can offer, at best, only a partial explanation of what happened during sp/pl/ace making
2. Control’s prescriptions, when they work, don’t work straight forwardly for the reasons that are presumed within the control perspective

Using examples from my data I will now illustrate where problems were encountered. In the wall story for example, when Craig announced his 'plan' to knock down the wall and remove the glass fronting in order to create an open-plan entrance / reception area and office, which in turn, for Ken, would have been a "waste" of a "good office" (see page 150); viewed from alternative perspectives and particularly, with the *witbness* aspect of dialogically structured events in mind, this was a *preparatory stage* of an expected response (Shotter, 2006). This was Craig's way of putting his ideas out there -for others to engage with- but they were put out there using the only discursive structures of managing that he knew of and that were available to him. I would argue, then, that, Craig does not necessarily want to duplicate his own idea of ordering / spacing in someone else's mind, rather he says such things expecting a "response, agreement, sympathy, objection, execution, and so forth" (Shotter, 2006: 590, citing Bakhtin 1986: 69). Craig was inviting Ken to exercise his power as an equal, to engage in the issue with him, as his business partner. Viewed from the control perspective, however, surface observations only allow us to glean the understanding that Craig is controlling, or making an attempt to control place making processes. On this, the control perspective thus limits our understanding of the deeper underlying causes of place making. Along with Taylor & Spicer (2007: 329) I would argue that 'control' draws our attention to plans for layouts and the spacing between objects and people, but "disregards how patterns of power and resistance may shape manifestations of distance and proximity". This is where the engagement perspective comes in as a useful analytical tool because it allows us to comment on these patterns of power and resistance. That is why we have to adopt multiple perspective because otherwise, we would miss this relationally-responsive form of understanding (Shotter, 2006) and Ken's resistance would not be opened up for analysis.

Similarly, in the chair story for example, viewed from the control perspective, when Craig said Ken's Mother was going to sew some throws together to go over the chairs I dreaded sitting on, we would be led to believe that he was still in control because his retort seemed to be his way of maintaining order, and control over the budget. Viewed from the polyphonic perspective however, by (i) openly and frankly expressing my experience of the chairs in the space, and (ii) Ken expressively-responsively engaging with myself and Dave (after Craig left the room), Ken illustrated his power to resist the decision by stressing the fact that he would not allow his Mother to sew such throws. The fact that Craig and Ken then bought replacement furniture during a visit to Ikea goes some way toward showing that space may actually be the product of our "ongoing experience and

understanding” (Taylor & Spicer, 2007: 333) of space (i.e. the stories we told about the spaces) *and* engagement; thus place is the product of ongoing action calling guides (Shotter, 2006) that originate in the conversations where polyphony and engagement are intertwined.

Moreover, the analysis found that relocating / moving / out-fitting in the case of FifeX did not correspond with the major tenets of the control perspective. For example, FifeX did not employ space consultants or expert designers to help with office relocation management. Nor did they formally allocate time and resources to establish a brief and develop specific / attainable objectives for the move. Although they did compare alternatives (for example, option 1: staying in St Andrews and hiring a garage / storage space; option 2: moving to Letham; option 3: moving to Glenrothes, or option 4: moving to Tayport), their search was limited. This is to be expected and therefore consistent with previous findings on decision making and bounded rationality (March, 1978). In sum, the behaviour I observed can not be fully described by the control perspective.

The point, however, is not merely that this data does not conform to the control perspective. Rather, the issue is that adopting a control perspective means allowing notable weaknesses in terms of a theoretical explanation of what occurs in the data. The control perspective disregards the symbolism and aesthetics of artifacts. For example, when buying a chair, removing a wall, or adding a worktop, the symbolism of those artifacts is actually hugely important to the participants involved; and it is not until you see those symbols in action and experience the passion with which people speak about objects that you can begin to understand the significance of the meaning structures of whichever stakeholders you are interested in. In keeping with the chair story, along with Strati (1996: 213) and consistent with his previous writing on chairs, I would agree that:

A chair is not already given, already explained, and its definition is articulated in different ways. [...] outside the dominant paradigm [‘an artifact on which one sits’ (p. 210)] the artifact ‘chair’ assumes other meanings. Hence, on seeing a chair, one cannot simply say ‘All right, look, it’s a chair’ without doing injustice to the artefact, given that it is a ‘specific’ chair...

On this, ushering in alternative theories, such as polyphony, to show that contradictory meanings coexist serves to shine fresh light where the control perspective fails to explain what is happening. Without polyphony, such contradictory meanings would have remained unheard because they would not have been detected by the control perspective. Here, I am reminded of Boje’s (1995) claim that

in good research, multiple realities are expressed and contrary stories that do not fit universal tales are heard. In my research, contrary stories of Ken, Dave and myself -as a researcher and participant- that do not fit the dominant view (and Craig's story) were told. The very fact that Ken was prepared to give up a months salary to fit-out the meeting room "properly", to buy "nice comfy chairs", and to stress that his Mother would not be getting 'roped' into making throws for the chairs that Craig bought, goes some way toward showing that a chair is not just a chair. At best, the multiple (meanings) realities which unfolded simultaneously in the one event (see section 5.3.2 beginning on page 164) would have been recorded under the control perspective as 'a number of dissidents objected to the installation of the furniture, which was installed anyway'. The sole application of the control perspective would have disregarded the engagement processes and the ongoingly discursive structure of place making would not have been opened up for analysis. This would not have shed any new light or depth on our understanding of place making in FifeX. What is needed, then, is an alternative approach which explains something totally different that the control perspective does not even see (and nor does Craig). I argue that the control / engagement / polyphonic framework applied herein goes someway toward meeting that need.

#### **6.4 Alternative theoretical perspectives**

Do alternative theoretical perspectives offer better explanations and prescriptions?

In this study the term alternative theoretical perspectives is used to refer to the theories of engagement and polyphony.

##### 6.4.1. On polyphony

Alternative theoretical perspectives offer better explanations of what is actually going on because they do not simplify a process that is multi-vocal, multi-faceted and multi-layered. Relocating / moving / place making typically involves several people being in the same space at the same time. As such, there are several voices present. In this case, the main voices heard were Craig, Ken, Dave, Ally and my own. This is what I mean by multi-vocal. The unfolding process is multi-faceted in that decisions are made on issues impacting on (i) the look / feel of *individual* space, (ii) shared / interaction space *inside* the building, and (iii) the impression inhabitants-as-participants want to make in the minds of *outsiders*. In sum, these decisions address issues which touch on (i) personal identity, (ii) the general work environment, and (iii) corporate identity. Lastly, the process is multi-layered,

not in the hierarchical / departmental sense of the meaning of the word that is normally associated with large organisational structures, but in the way that decisions are ongoingly made on issues relating to the presentation of self, representation, and preservation both wittingly and unwittingly *at different times*. The meaning of ‘layered’ is particularly related to the idea that one’s decisions can unleash a host of unintended consequences requiring furthermore decisions to be made.

These alternative theoretical perspectives also yield to the realisation that, places (as artifacts) are not only interpreted by different people to mean different things (Gieryn, 2002: 44), but places (as artifacts), and place making events are interpreted by the same person to mean different things at different times (Cope, 2005: 170). They are sympathetic to the unfolding nature in which places come into being. For example, before the move took place, Ken saw the new premises in Tayport as an opportunity to escape the watchful gaze of Craig (who can be like an “annoying client” sometimes –Ken’s words), and micro-managing of one another (see page 233 and page 229/5/6 in this thesis). In naturally occurring conversations that were had during the initial stages of the ongoing place making activities, Ken realised that having separate rooms meant that he could not only control the temperature in his own office, but that he could also listen to whatever music he wanted to. Ken did not think about these “little things” -like temperature control and music- before the move, because as he explained (see page 236), “we were [...] blinkered about what we could [do]”.

Then, in the same post-occupancy evaluation exercise which used participant-produced drawing (Kearney & Hyle, 2004) as an entry into conversation, Ken said,

Separate rooms are a definite positive. It’s not because I don’t like being around Craig. But I like my own space. That’s because we are doing separate work now.

From this we can see that the meaning Ken arrived at sitting on his chair, at his desk, in his own room -at his place- passed through three phases: from representing a form of escapism (privacy from Craig and vice versa), to the opportunity to improve his subjective experience of well-being (temperature control / listening to music), to finally representing a new chapter in the history of FifeX: where clearer delineations between job roles were emerging (departmentalisation / task design). As Craig said latterly, standing in his office shortly before I withdrew from the field:

Here [pointing to the floor in his office] is sales and admin, there [pointing to the other side of the wall: Ken's office] is procurement and production.

Such lived experience of space over time, symbolism and attachment to place would not have shone through had the polyphonic perspective not been applied.

Similarly, if the engagement perspective had not been applied in viewing the worktop story, then we would not have seen how the inclusion of non-expert designers / space planners (i.e. Dave and myself) can contribute to the making and shaping of sp/pl/ace. Although Craig deemed Dave's involvement in the conversation (decision) on what to do in the kitchen *inappropriate* (in Neumann's sense of the meaning of the word) because Dave's degree of involvement did not make sense in light of his neglect of his own kitchen, Dave's own experience and understanding while being present in the space over time inevitably added to the conversational dynamic which influenced the flow of events. Despite saying he would not listen to advice from Dave, at the end of the analysis, Craig did actually end up doing what Dave (and others) suggested.

#### 6.4.2. On Engagement

The engagement perspective, however, only explains some of what we see in practice also. These alternative perspectives are not panaceas. For example, the engagement perspective prescribes patience, inclusivity, and dialogue (Syrett & Lammiman, 2002: 93). For dialogue to work, you have to be in a place to be able to "see the face and hear the voice" (Shotter, 2001). When we apply these prescriptions to the chair story, for example, we saw that they worked for a bit, then broke down (when Craig left the room). Similarly, in the worktop story, dialoging worked for a short period of time until Dave removed himself from the situation (after Craig levelled an attack at him); therefore, patience (Syrett & Lammiman, 2002: 93) and "seeing the face and hearing the voice" (Shotter, 2001) did not always happen. We did see dialoging (as one of engagement's prescriptions) later, however, in the chair story (i.e. in Ikea) and the wall story (i.e. when Ken asked Craig, what do you "gain" by knocking the wall down).

As was the case with the control perspective, engagement alone and / or polyphony fail to explain everything. Despite that, applied individually, each theory clearly casts fresher light on the shadows left by the control perspective. But this is where the explanatory power of applying three

perspectives comes in: all three need to be applied simultaneously so as not to diminish the potency of the framework for looking at live, expressive-relationally-responsive place making events. I argue, then, that, these alternative theories 'see' different things and are thus more adept at explaining the depth of what is going on.

This invites the question, if these alternative theoretical perspectives are better at explaining what happens during sp/pl/ace making, why are they not practiced more broadly? I argue that discursive resources in these alternative viewpoints do not offer the same degree of certainty, or operate naturally in the dominant (control) discourse. If we accept that as being the case, what can be done about it?

## **6.5 Development of a practice-oriented theory**

What can we put in control's place? How might we contribute to an effective theory of practice?

The control perspective appears to be practitioner oriented because it is present in the management practitioner / professional magazines, but it is actually impractical for the two reasons outlined above (see section 6.3). The alternatives that exist are preferable theories because they are better at explaining the data; as we have seen through the chair / wall / worktop stories, the alternatives are better in that they are more holistic. By holistic I mean the engagement processes, the stories that people tell and the ongoingly discursive structure of experiences that shape sp/pl/ace are included. Any theory, which disregards these wider aspects of place making, then, I would argue, does not give true colour to the lived experience of place making when a small new business venture moves into a low road (i.e. low visibility, low cost, low maintenance) building (Brand, 1995).

As the alternative perspectives currently stand however, they are also relatively impractical; not necessarily because they fail when they are applied, but because there is a set of barriers to them ever being applied in the first place. Those barriers are the inverse of the reasons given above for the dominance of the control perspective:

- lack of certainty
- lack of appeal to managerialist discourse
- image of an emotional / holistic view of people and their role in the workplace, and
- image of complexity, time needed, and risk associated with alternative approaches.

In this thesis, therefore, my argument is that a process is needed which has the explanatory power and effectiveness of engagement and polyphony, and the attractiveness of the control perspective. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a full design of this process, but in what follows I will lay out the beginnings of such a model and some suggested features. But before I head in that direction, there are three things worth pointing out.

First, the model developed here is practice-oriented. That is, oriented toward facilitating *practice* in lived situations on the ground.

Secondly, the model of place making proposed here is an example of emergent theorising that has its founding in an empirical setting. Based on my analysis, I offer a summary of place making containing the three modes of thinking I observed in this particular case of place making. This part of my thesis represents a synthesis of several large literatures, and the features of the model emerged from those literatures. In line with Weick's (1995: 385) plea, I use the word theory to label my "interim struggle" in producing this model. It is intended as a movement towards better explanation (Weick, 1995: 385) rather than a universalising or simplifying theory, it serves as a means to further *development*.

Thirdly, the fact that I offer descriptions of what place making in other companies might look like if the model was applied, makes (I hope) this study "...a good story with the *theory* as plot" (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991: 617 with original emphasis). In sum, to use Weick's (1995) vocabulary again, here I apply treatments (prescriptions) to see which concepts might make a difference to symptoms (data).

The model has the attractiveness of control in that it posits issues normally considered under the control perspective will be covered. Not only that, but the model should help raise heretofore invisible or unnoticed aspects of sp/pl/ace making, which therefore serves to broaden the number of issues covered. This, in turn, will serve to decrease uncertainty and create a 'gloss' of increased control. Rather than increasing 'control' however, I prefer to think of the model as increasing awareness of place making that is true to the ongoing experience of place making, and allows place making participants to view the process from within the experience itself. I would argue that the model provides a truer understanding of how space is not only the product of efforts to control 'it',

but space is also the product of engagement and the “inhabitants’ ongoing experience and understanding” (Taylor & Spicer, 2007: 333).

#### 6.5.1. What would the features of a better alternative look like?

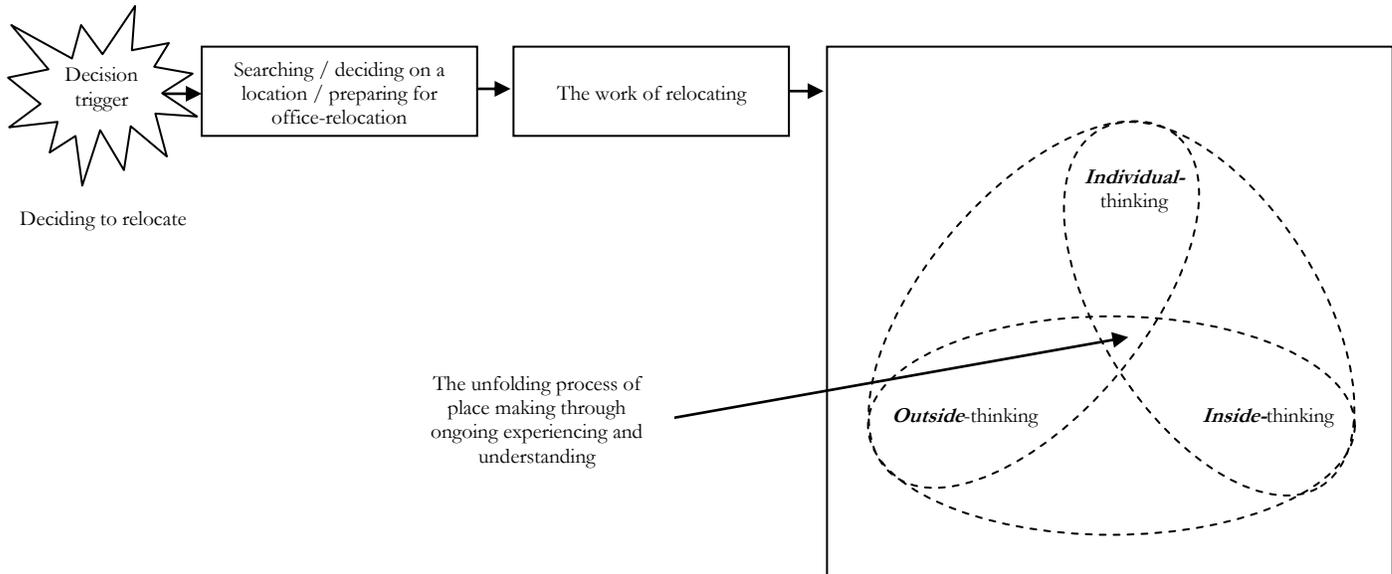
Under an alternative approach there would be an attempt to have enough control of the process in order to give participants the confidence that there will be an action outcome. But it would also be important to give people sufficient freedom and space within the process so the researcher-practitioner is not controlling experiences and thinking. However, it is not that there is no structure at all, because my research (in the findings above) shows that it is necessary to have engagement and polyphony. Because moving / place making in the case of FifeX was ‘effective’, the proposed model (Figure 4) has ‘provocations’, or tensions, designed-in to ensure that there is a good chance that engagement and polyphony will happen in a decent way.

The application of control / engagement / polyphony theories to the data identified the following three modes of thinking that ongoingly structure the process of place making:

1. Thinking about business requirements and their impact on layout *inside* the building (passions about redefining *shared* ‘work’ space but also keeping to budget)
2. Thinking about corporate image in the eyes of *outsiders* (passions about creating positive impressions in the mind of the outsider through re-defining the feeling of space according to the view you want to create)
3. Thinking about *individual* workspace (passions about creating individual space)

These modes of thinking and their relationship to each other are illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The three modes of thinking illustrated as a model



Through looking back over my data I will illustrate how inhabitants’ experiences and understandings about individual / inside / outside concerns relating to space ongoingly shape the unfolding of place.

When Ken resisted the destruction of office 1 to make room for the creation of an open-plan entrance / reception area (in the wall story) Ken was thinking about his *individual* (but not yet allocated) workspace. While Ken was thinking that he did not want to end up working in the hallway, or under the watchful eyes of Craig (again!), Craig was thinking about *outsiders* and the impression they might have if it looked /felt like a “total different unit”. It would certainly remove the industrial / manufacturing ‘unit’ feel so visitors know they are in an office space, but if Craig wanted to create that ‘dirty’ manufacturing feel, he could show the visitors to the workshop. So while Ken was thinking about the presentation of (him)self, Craig was thinking about representations (of the FifeX brand) to those *outside*.

When Dave, Ken and I talked about the need for ‘proper’ chairs in the meeting / coffee room, we were thinking about *outsiders* too. When Craig bought the second hand furniture however, he was thinking about *inside* (business) issues. He was thinking about the business in two respects: one,

generally in-filling the abundance of *shared* space in the new premises; two, controlling the budget. On this, Craig was thinking about preservation. By not spending too much money, he was keeping an eye on cash-flow.

Craig was thinking about *outsiders* and *individual* workspace earlier though, when he talked about visitors to the St Andrews Technology Centre who used to ask if they could see where they manufacture their products: they often thought that FifeX operated out of the whole of the building (not just the one office) and thought that all the manufacturing was done on-site. You will recall that Craig felt embarrassed when he had to tell them ‘no, we only have one office’ (see page 125). Now, in the Tayport premises however, he can show people around the premises and the story the building serves to say is ‘look how big we are!’, ‘aren’t we doing well?!’ and ‘this is where *your* products are made’. This illustrates how *individual* and *outside* thinking are intertwined, and from that, how difficult it might be to untangle one mode of thinking from the other.

Similarly, Ken was also passionate about how *outsiders* perceive the FifeX brand when he was talking about wanting to create a clean automobile-garage-feel (see page 136). But he was not only concerned about *outsiders* and passionate about creating a feel similar to one he had experienced elsewhere, he also wanted to create such a feel so as to say something about himself (*individual* concerns). On this, *individual* (who I am) and *outside* (who I want to be perceived as) concerns are easy bedfellows. Following on from that, it is easy to see how *individual* / *outside* concerns are connected with *inside* concerns. I would argue then, that, in talking about *individual* / *outside* concerns, you inevitably side up against *inside* concerns, which in turn influence and shape both the physical work environment and the way the *shared* (interaction) space in-between come to look / feel / work. Therefore, it is important to note that the relationships between these modes of thinking are in movement with one another, and as such, there is no such place connected to only one mode of thinking.

#### 6.5.2. Implications for managing the unfolding process of place making

Although the modes of thinking have dynamic relationships to one another, because of the discursive structuring of engagement / polyphony, place issues relating to each mode of thinking are never engaged with simultaneously. It is not possible to solve all place making issues related to each mode of thinking at the same time: the process involves a lot of ‘to-ing and fro-ing’. Thus, when

business-partners in small new business ventures engage with artifacts to shape their *individual* workspace (to author / tell a story about ‘who I am’), they also engage with the (physical environment *inside*) the company as well (to author / tell a story about ‘who we are’). While engaged in this relationship, there are also inevitable implications for how people *outside* the business read the workspace they are authoring. In sum, individual / outside / inside concerns have implications for place making and these concerns need to be addressed through talk and through action, in both a recursive and iterative manner.

When Craig and Ken were dialoging on what to do in office 3 (what to do with the sink and whether or not to create two or three smaller offices out of the space), they were thinking about future business needs and how this would impact what the *inside* of the building might look / feel / work like. Although not explicitly, they were also thinking about the impression of *outsiders* such as Paul (see page 149) who they were expecting would one day occupy space in their ‘new’ premises.

By putting these three modes of thinking alongside each other and relating one to the other, it is anticipated that similar conversations to those experienced in FifeX would emerge in the day-to-day activities and naturally occurring conversations involved in getting a workplace ‘up and running’. These activities and conversations would typically happen in the days immediately following move-in date. The implication is, rather than planning -before the move takes place- exactly what goes where, and redefining the whole layout of the building by removing internal walls, it is important to do what is necessary (in terms of securing help with the physical work of relocating, organising transport, packing valuables and belongings carefully, buying new furniture and organising the transfer of telephone numbers and access to the internet, etc) in order to ensure a smooth move, but specific decisions on the distance between walls which will have far reaching consequences should not be made until it’s inhabitants / participants have had the opportunity to experience space and develop their own understanding of that space over time. In effect, place needs to be created through discursively structured social interactions *in* space before decisions about (distance / proximity in) that space is made. Like in the wall story for example, meaning needs to be created about the (space) entrance -thus making place a spatial overlay- before a decision can be made on its dimensions. Therefore, the proposed model sees each participant dialoging about their experience and understanding of space before space is treated.

## 6.6 Contribution

This thesis has made a contribution to the growing body of ‘space-sensitive’ literature. In particular, it adds to the literature on the ‘stories that spaces tell’ (Yanow, 1998; Gieryn, 2002). The thesis unfolds the place making activities involved in bringing FifeX’s new work premises into being and re-tells the story FifeX’s new premises tell: accounts of control, engagement, and polyphony in place making serve as the plot in this story.

Through the identification and elicitation of three alternative ways of thinking in sp/pl/ace moves, I was able to test out those three conceptualisations (control, engagement, polyphony) in terms of their explanatory power using the vehicle of an ethnographic study. This allowed me to identify the dominance of the control conceptualisation that offers at best a partial explanation in which the explanations themselves are questionable. Following on from that, the contribution I have sought to make in this thesis is to propose an alternative route which draws on theoretical perspectives and explores how those theoretical perspectives might inform an alternative theory of practice.

This alternative route (Figure 4) provides a way of thinking about relocation / moving / place making that is developed from my analysis. Although it is not possible (nor is it my aim) to generalise from one single case study to the wider population, when I apply this model to some work I recently carried out in a UK-based architecture firm that involved developing a strategic space plan for a law company of some 200 employees, I found that the model, as an analytical tool, helped me to understand the unfolding processes that happened there. The architect had originally planned to carry out six workshops in which he envisaged engaging in a dialogue with inhabitants about their current work styles, what they (dis)liked about their current workplace, and what aspirations they had for their new workplace. He then wanted me to help him make sense of this data to develop a design brief for the layout / fit-out of the ‘new’ (not yet built) workplace. However, the board of directors, who originally said to the architect, “we are not your client, our employees are” decided to cut the number of workshops from six to four in order to reduce costs. Despite him saying that this militates against their intention to have him treat employees as his client and to fully engage with them on the design of their new workspace, they decided four workshops would be enough. Although the architect and I tried our best to engage as many voices as possible during the workshops which ensued, because some of the groups were so heterogeneous in terms of their workspace requirements, when we sat down the following day to make sense of what we had

heard, because little shared sense of place had emerged during our conversations, the architect had to fall back on the control approach to produce a compromise. In effect, we had to gloss over some of the difference that emerged in one of the groups because it was made up of people from two separate departments. Despite adopting the engagement approach, the architect had to fall back on previous experience of working with law firms to ‘fill in the gaps’ so that he could create a blueprint for the new space that they may not recognise as being theirs. Therefore, despite efforts by architects (design experts) themselves to engage inhabitants-as-participants in the place making process, key stakeholders (in this case, the board of directors) still unwittingly operate from within the control perspective because they are not as willing to acknowledge difference between departments, and people within those departments, as they think they are. Thus, there was still need to be more collaborative and more experimental (Orlikowski, 2004: 94). Clearly, this provides an opportunity for future research, as discussed in the following section (Section 6.7).

It is also worth noting that the conversations had and the themes emerging from the workshops also corresponded to the modes of thinking in my model. Different people spoke about the importance of the impression the building gives to *outsiders* stating that the new building “should be understated class, but not as understated like our current offices”. While some spoke about the way they wanted the new building to look and feel *inside* by stating that the new building should “gee people up” and there should be “places to eat food away from our desks so the office doesn’t smell”, others also mentioned the importance of *individual* workspace, idealising that “it would make me happy if I had a switch I could flick when I wanted quiet”.

The research presented in this thesis raises some practical implications for those embarking on participatory place making projects. A particularly important issue to consider is learning what ‘works’ best for you. But what is the best way to learn what ‘works’ for you? I argue then, that, the straightest possible answer to the question of how you learn what ‘works’ best for you is what I understand Orlikowski (2004) to have meant by learning from enactment. This thesis provides an empirical case in support of Orlikowski’s (2004) theory of learning from enactment. With Orlikowski, I suggest that nurturing an openness to learning from ongoing experience and understanding (in the early phases just after a move-in) is the first step in developing a “willingness to be open to and be changed by that understanding” (p.94). An implication of this is to proceed by not having “a purpose predetermined, but one that emerges from the process” (Jacobs & Statler,

2006: 86). On this, place makers (inhabitants) need to be more “open to learning from a multiplicity of perspectives, as well as being willing to be less certain, less assertive, less directive, more provisional, more collaborative, and more experimental”, as suggested by Orlikowski (2004: 94).

My thesis has also made an attempt to redress the issue of extreme relativism which has occurred due to high-emphasis on multiple realities in the polyphonic approach. This was done by incorporating suggestions made by Shotter (2006) to take into consideration the expressive-responsive “action guiding feelings” of participants that are always already present in ‘living’ “transitional areas of experience” (Jacobs & Statler, 2006: 85). The use of this approach has led to new insights on how action outcomes can be expected, even when there is not necessarily a script for what will happen next. Consequently, this study was able to shed new light on the underlying discursive and ongoing Tamara-like structure (Boje, 1995) of place making.

## **6.7 Future research**

There is a need to explore whether or not the modes of thinking and the relationships they imply lead to the co-creation of satisfactory workplaces in other situations than the one the model is based on. Then using the proposed model of three modes of thinking (individual, outside, inside), further research could explore the possibility of importing creative research methods (such as participant-produced drawing, photo-elicitation, and serious play for example) to use as a starting point for the fostering of engagement and polyphony. Additional research may be able to examine the effectiveness of these creative research methods in nurturing engagement and polyphony, and the quality of this engagement / polyphony.

## **6.8 Reflexive statements**

Here, I think about my thinking. How did my own subjectivity impact on the research study?

When I realised that I was ongoingly and participatively influencing the unfolding process of place making in FifeX I started to feel an overwhelming sense of guilt because I realised that Craig and Ken were starting to act responsively to my comments and suggestions. I was harbouring guilt for a short period because I started asking myself, who am I to be telling them what they should be doing in their new workplace (I am not a designer, process engineer, or strategic workplace consultant). This got me thinking about my thinking. My thinking was based on the assumption that good

workplace design is the territory of architects, interior designers and workspace consultants and therefore, I already got them off to a bad start. But I quickly found solace when I began receiving compliments and *thank yous* for what I had done.

As my reading around design, workplace and the notion of place gathered momentum, I started to realise that we are all designers and place makers. We design and make places all day, everyday. This filled me with confidence in our generative power to achieve a good workplace.

I remember around the same time I started coming to grips with this guilt (getting over thinking that I might be wrong-doing Craig and Ken), that I began thinking about what makes a good (workplace) design. It was about the same time in my self-questioning and searching that Ken started exploring the question “who are we doing this for?” which I now understand to be his way of asking the similar question “what is good design and in whose eyes is it good?” Since I am not a designer, I think I must have been thinking that, as a research-participant, the best I can do here is to act as designerly as possible, in the only ways I know how, and try to help Craig and Ken to be the best designers of their own work sp/pl/ace. This put me squarely in a learning paradigm. As I had only been involved in office out-fitting once before that involved creating a workspace for myself in a single occupancy office in Paris, I knew that I did not have a foolproof approach to office / place making.

Having experienced relocation / moving / place making ongoingly with Craig and Ken, I can not claim that the model I have proposed is failsafe. Rather, the practice of place making I am proposing is based on the idea of ‘safe fails’, many of them. Like in the chair story, if sometimes pays being open to opportunities that present themselves. Craig was not to know at the time of purchasing the chairs that they would not ‘work’ in the new premises. But the fact they did not is not such a big loss because they got much needed desks, filing cabinets, and desk chairs (to fill office 3) for that £300. Therefore, by not planning too big, we can guard against being “cut off from the everyday contingencies, opportunities, break-downs, errors, improvisations, and learnings through which human actors accomplish good design-in-action” (Orlikowski, 2004: 95). Losing £300, or part thereof, is a ‘safe fail’.

More importantly, however, we have to take responsibility for our break-downs as well as our successful improvisations. “Since learning depends on taking responsibility for the mistakes of the team and especially for one’s role in whatever went wrong, it is important to establish an ethos of accepting and even dwelling upon one’s responsibility for failures as well as one’s successes” (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005: 791). On this, when things go wrong (no matter how small), it is important to bounce back with a “sensible deviation” (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005: 788). With Orlikowski (2004: 93) I would argue that “Good design [... i.e. workplaces that work / look / feel well...] is not an intrinsic feature, or static quality of the representation (the designed artefact, building, program, organization), but a recurrently enacted accomplishment provisionally and ongoingly achieved by human actors trying to use the design to get something useful done. [...] ‘Good design’ is enacted”. On this, I hope that the model I have proposed moves toward helping others make good workplaces.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Context of unfolding situation

I entered the field several weeks before FifeX had formalised the decision to relocate to new (to them, but not ‘brand’ new) business premises. Craig and Ken (the MDs of FifeX) had visited the ‘new’ premises in Tayport some months prior and explored in some detail the possibility of moving there, but before my entry into the field, no decision had been made or action taken toward finalising a date for the move. The signing of the lease for the ‘new’ premises -on Tayport- took place during a period when I had decided to temporarily withdraw from the field for a few days to consider the direction in which I wanted to take my study. During this time, notice was also issued to the landlord of FifeX’s ‘current’ business premises that the company would not be renewing its contract.

I was then invited to help with the move on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2006. Painting (re-decoration) and furniture layout in the ‘new’ premises took place over the five days following that date. Utilities were reinstated and by Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2006, despite the fact that “many little jobs still need to be done” it seemed to be “business as usual” for FifeX. A lot of work was done piecemeal, over time, and by mid-October 2006, work (renovation, retrofitting) was still being done: showers were fitted in a room that was once a bathroom, and an internal partition was knocked down and rebuilt as part of the process of turning a chemical lab into an auxiliary office.

Between Wednesday 18-26 July 2006, I assisted with cleaning, dusting, wiping, and painting in the new premises, participating in decisions on room layout and moving furniture about. During this period, long days of physical work were ‘rewarded’ with dinners at Craig’s house, and / or drinks in the pub at the weekend. At the end of the move when things began taking shape, a ceremonial ‘thank you’ dinner-buffet was held at an Indian restaurant in Dundee to mark the end of the major works; of course, FifeX ‘footed’ the bill.

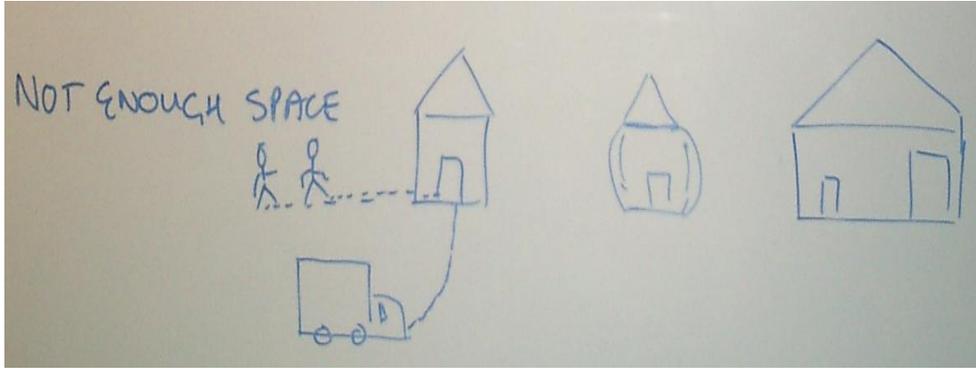
My research strategy for during the move was to document how the offices and workspace took shape. My aim was to lend a hand -by helping in any way I could- with a view to developing my acquaintance with their world. I also took notes on participants' day-dreams, visions and aspirations regarding the future for FifeX that were expressed during my stay.

By linking the everyday throw-away statements I heard before, during and after 'the move' took place and then observing the minor, trivial modifications that occurred during the 'settling in' period which followed, the highly personalised and idiosyncratic efforts to organise material objects started to demonstrate beliefs, values and attitudes and cognitive requirements reflected in material arrangements. I observed the manner in which the furniture and space was organised (designed) to wittingly or unwittingly say something about their values and individual preferences. It was at this point, when I started getting involved with the hanging of picture frames, voicing my opinions on which furniture to buy, and making suggestions as to the layout of the rooms, that I realised I was unintentionally getting involved and actively participating in the ongoing place making activities.

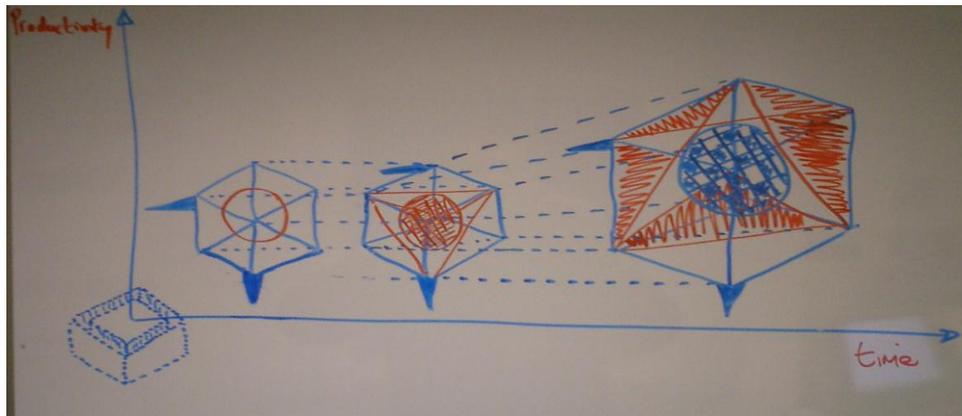
I formally withdrew from the field on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2006, to begin thinking about my experience and start planning my write-up.

## Appendix 2 Three drawings

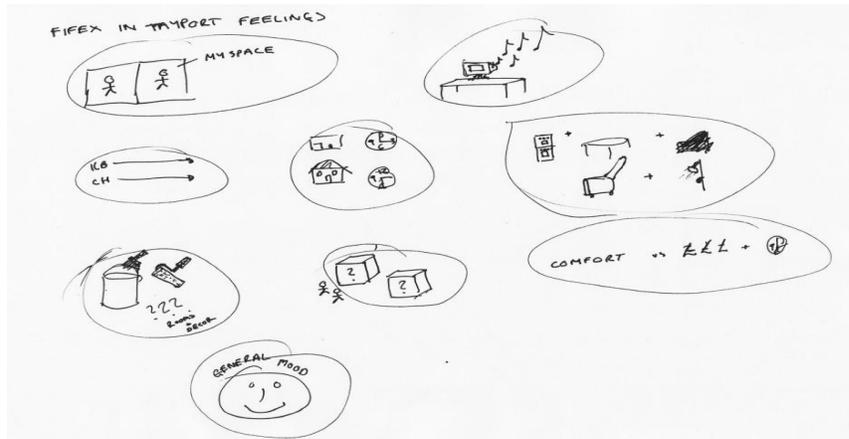
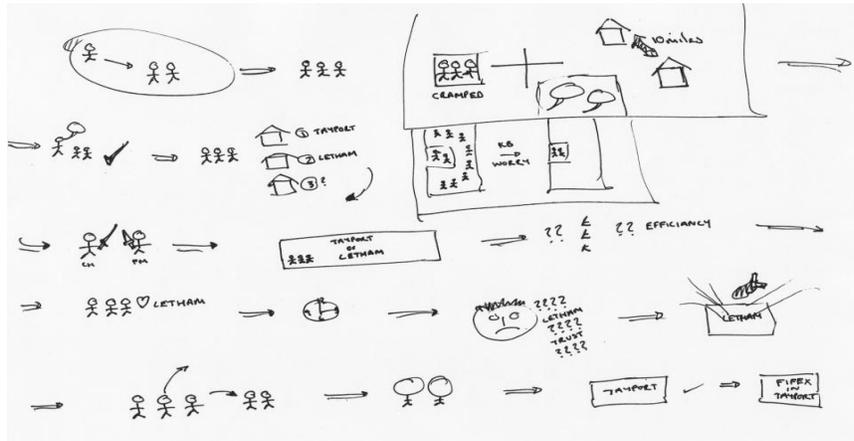
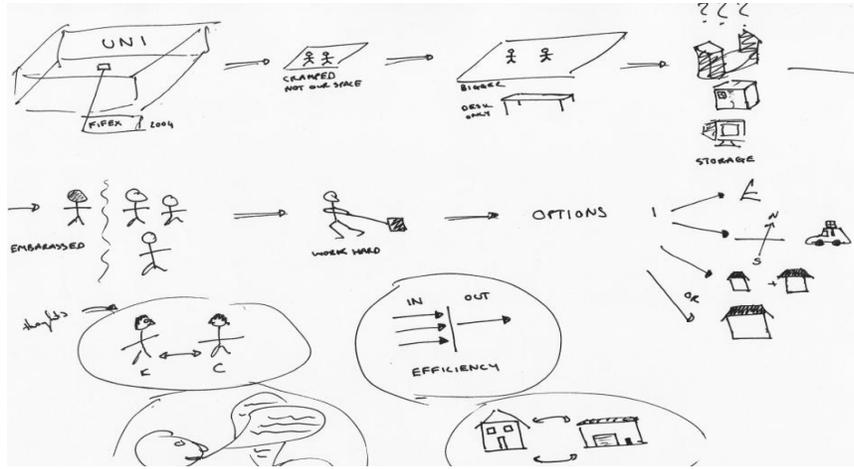
Craig's first drawing:



Craig's second drawing:



Ken's drawing:



### Appendix 3 Working with Frazer

#### Working with Frazer: Ken's side of the story told in his voice

“When it came to dealing with customers face-to-face, Frazer was a liability whenever we met important customers for the first time. I remember this one time when Frazer and I were doing an install[ation]. Frazer had never met this customer before because Craig and I had done all the dealings. When we were setting up the exhibit, this new customer approached and I introduced Frazer to him for the first time. Frazer barely looked up from what he was doing, and without even gaining eye-contact, to you know, return the greeting, he just continued with what he was doing. He is so focused on what he is doing, he zones out and blanks out everybody else. This is not good for FifeX's reputation because future contracts depend upon whether or not others find it easy to work with us, and whether or not it's a pleasure. Getting things right is one thing, but it is also important to have rapport with our customers.”

“The problem Craig has with Frazer, right, it all relates to how Frazer often neglects things that are important to us. We [Craig and Ken] have worked together for a long time and have no problem sharing our minds with one another. Whereas I would let that situation between the customer and Frazer be, and perhaps bring it up in the van on the journey home, Craig would say something as soon as the customer turns his back and Frazer would take it personally. Because I understand how Frazer works and I go along with that, I have learnt to say things in passing, to plant the seed in his mind that allows him to come to a realisation in his own time. Craig's way of getting him to see how important it is for us to treat our customers right is not the best way of getting through to Frazer. I would eventually get through to Frazer. His way of thinking sits okay with me. But Craig takes Frazer's lack of respect for others personally and would like to tell him how *he* thinks Frazer should behave. All this, of course, influences how Craig acts when he is around Frazer.”

“When it comes to installing exhibits with Frazer, I melt into the background and let him do his work. In the meantime I behave like I am incompetent and get on with trying to make myself useful. I do menial tasks such as dusting off dirt that has settled on the exhibit during transit, while Frazer sees to the fine-detailed stuff, like doing a test run, or touching-up, here and there. I get along with Frazer because I have learned how he operates. In certain situations where I feel obliged to say something because he is going about things in completely the wrong manner, I will say

something. But he is good at what he does and it is very rare that I have to say something, so I let him get on with it.”

Individual roles within FifeX: Ken’s side of the story told in his voice

“We did not have titles until Frazer came along. He wanted to call himself Technical Director, and Craig and I had no problem with that. It’s clear that that was his role. But it makes no sense for him to have a title if we don’t. I personally don’t like titles, I would prefer not to have one. Frazer suggested it would be a good idea, though. Personally I sign off a lot of emails just “Director”, I am not fussed. I think Production Director is probably the best description of what I do. Craig and I did talk about it a lot; we don’t have a formal written document of “this is what we do”. But what annoys me about it is, the problem we have, and Craig will admit this as well, our jobs [roles] cross all the time.” ... “There are some areas only Craig will do, like for example, admin[instration]. He basically deals with admin[instration]. He deals with paying bills, the finance, and if somebody phones up about a problem with the electricity or the phones, he deals with that. Frazer always described Craig as the guy who keeps the business moving along. Now if you want to call that Managing Director, then so be it. I personally don’t think [like] that. I don’t think that title suggests what he does. That title suggests he is essentially controlling the company, which he is not, which he wasn’t in any way [at the time the titles were decided upon], and never has been. I mean, we both control it. I am not so upset about it that I am bothered. I just don’t personally; think that it’s a good thing. I think people like to feel that they know who they are speaking to, but there are negatives that arise from that. People get the wrong ideas from that, you know? People won’t speak to me. They will phone up and say something like, “No, I need to speak to Craig”. And that annoys me. “No you don’t!” I tell them. I mean, “....I can handle anything he is talking to you about”. Unless it’s just a simple fact that Craig has spoken to them before, in which case, obviously, there is a history and it is easier if he deals with the call. I will be honest with you, I think he likes saying that he is the Managing Director. If he likes that, I don’t give a shit. I don’t want to take it away from him. I think out of all the descriptions we looked at, Production Director tends to describe best what I do, and I say ‘tends’ because 70% of the time it tends to be me putting things together, procuring items for projects, overseeing projects, it does tend to be me. But, Craig does do it [production] too, on some occasions.”

Working in FifeX and with Frazer: Craig's side of the story told in his voice

“Ken and I worked quite well for about two and a half years, and I knew the dynamic between he and I would inevitably change as the company grew and we took on a technical person [Frazer]. But after only five or six months of having Frazer on board, I realized that a rift in the company had occurred. The warning signs were there though, all along. I should have recognized our incompatibility earlier on and done something about it. If somebody is awkward to work with, they are taking something *away* from your company, not contributing. If that person takes offence whenever you suggest something because he feels that you are treading on his toes and you are forced to keep silent because you are afraid you will upset him, then that person is hardly key to the success of your company. We might have even been better off without him.”

“Since he resigned under the pressure of working long hours, Kenneth and I have grown closer. I now recognize just how well we work together. We would make decisions on product specifications and how much the budget was for a [exhibit] build, and then Frazer would go off and start ordering things that, ok, were not on our [raw materials] list to start off with, and we may have needed to buy them to make the project work. But instead of buying one that *would do* the job, Frazer would buy the most expensive, top of the range model [component]. How can you trust somebody who does not even communicate with you and regularly bring you up to speed? And when he does keep you updated on developments, anything you suggest by way of an alternative gets ignored, anyway.”

“It soon dawned on me that, as soon as somebody else starts overriding decisions that Ken and I have been involved in from the start, and I can't even have some say in the decisions being made in my own company -because Frazer, for example, starts ordering whatever he wants, there's something seriously wrong. Perhaps we don't need him, or anyone else to that matter. There is no doubt about whether or not he is good at what he does, and he has really helped us, because on both accounts it's true. He is *good* and he has *helped*. I don't question the quality of his work. But when somebody is difficult to work with, when he resigns, you lose nothing.”

“The more I work with him, the more I don't like his attitude. I will tell you where the problem started. It's when I said something and he felt that I was trying to arrange everything. When we do

things, you [Craig pointing to Ken] almost always agree with him. You go along with it and shut up because *we* don't want to cause conflict. I don't let him dominate me.”

“Ken can put up with Frazer because he lets him have his own way, whereas I won't. I will not let him speak to me the way he speaks to Ken. Frazer dismisses everything you say and everything is “no....no.....no” when you speak with him. Ken is very different to me, perhaps that is why Frazer and he got along.”

“Whereas Ken will let Frazer do everything, I want to be involved in the work we do because that's the way I learn. Ken can read up on something if he wants to learn how to do something, but I don't like reading that much, and so I like to ask loads questions. Let's say we are wanting to drill a hole, Frazer will mmm and ahh for ages and come out with loads of what ifs, buts and maybes, because he worries about the drill bit snapping. I will just go away and try it while he is thinking about it, worried to try anything out. I come back with what's needed and the job's done. Frazer will then take offence because he sees me as stepping on his toes, trying to tell him what to do and attempting to take over the creative process when all is what I am trying to do is learn and work as a team. Don't get me wrong, Frazer is a great worker and I would work with him again. If I could do it all over again I would still choose to work with him because I have learnt a lot. But at this point [before the relocation has taken place], we might be better off without him. We just don't know, we have to wait and see how things turn out. If you are too pessimistic you will never get anything done. If you worry about the drill bit snapping you wont get the job done. I am really optimistic and I like experimenting. But I can't work with people who are completely the opposite, its not healthy for the company.”

#### On Craig and Frazer working together: Ken's side of the story told in his voice

“You [Craig] deal with him the same way you deal with me. You say what you think. That's fine with me but he does exactly the same thing with you. He speaks his mind. When his head's on something else, he does not listen, and I think you do that to some extent. You clash not because you question him, I think it's the *way* you do it. This may not be true. But I think all this [conflict] has clouded your judgment on him. Don't get me wrong, I have hesitations too... We were testing cables one day, this guy came along and said, you know, trying to be helpful, “I have a cable tester, do you want a hand?” Frazer just said “no”, not even “no thanks”. I saw the guy the very next day

and I wanted to apologise to him. There are two things here: one, he [Frazer] ignores what people say and zones out; two, the other problem, he does not listen to us.”

## Appendix 4 Narratives on the historical context

### *Researcher as narrator*

In 2002 Craig Harvey and Kenneth Boyd graduated from the University of St Andrews with degrees in Physics and Mathematics. Pursuing their interest in science further, they spun out a company from the University called FifeX (<http://www.fifex.co.uk/>). Since then, the company has designed and manufactured high impact, interactive, hands-on, scientific exhibits that are used in markets including technology businesses, schools, education, museums and visitor attractions. FifeX has created many exhibits and re-introduced some demonstration classics to clients such as Cambridgeshire County Council, Oxford University Paediatrics Department, University of St Andrews Perception Lab, University of St Andrews Sea Mammal Research Unit, and the Royal College of Art, London. Examples of such exhibitions are the FifeX Colour Mixer, which gives educators an exciting new way to conduct colour-mixing experiments in the classroom; and the FifeX LED Array, which is a novel piece of kit used by educators to demonstrate the wavelength of light. FifeX also re-introduced the Bernoulli Blower, which can be used to explain how airplane wings use air pressure to stay up.

In 2004 FifeX won an award for the ‘Best Business Demonstrating Sustainability’ at the national finals of the Shell Livewire Young Entrepreneur of the Year Awards. Later that year, FifeX added to their successes, by walking away with the regional and national award in the PSYBT<sup>43</sup> / Royal Bank of Scotland Business Awards. At the time of researching / writing (i.e. 2006 / 2007), FifeX was, and still is, a thriving business with a growing client base. Craig and Kenneth have a track record which clearly demonstrates their ability to create something from nothing (namely a business venture). Their plan for the future is to continue doing what they are good at, that is, designing and manufacturing educational kits.

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<sup>43</sup> Prince’s Scottish Youth Business Trust.

### How FifeX came into being: Craig's side of the story told in his voice

“It all goes back to a course we did in our 3rd year Undergraduate in 2001 called Transferable Skills. It is a course designed to give students of scientific backgrounds the kinds of skills they need - but are lacking- to be successful in the business world. You learn to give presentations, elevate a pitch, sell a piece of science equipment. Hence the name really. As part of the course, I entered a business plan competition with Kenneth. We did really well in that. Fortunate in that, because, it was the only course I was good at. We won £7,500. It sat in the bank account until we finished our degrees and then we decided to set up the company and give it a go. One of our tutors reckoned that we could run a successful company. Out of all the people who took the course, the Professors picked us. They thought we could bridge the gap between the Uni[versity] and the outside world; work on a new business that involved spinning out products that the University has developed.”

“The market opportunities were kind of identified by the Professors, but we spent the first year doing most of it ourselves. With the £7500 we had in the bank, we spent that on doing research, and some went on travel expenses, stationary, computers, etc. We had tutorials on how to write letters and stuff like that. It might sound stupid because we learn how to write letters at school as a kid, but I don't mean letters, letters. I mean, we learnt how to ask the right questions without being too obvious, direct or demanding. It's a skill, knowing what questions to ask, and how to ask them. Yeah, don't get me wrong, I don't mean learning to write a letter, but the correct structure of a letter.”

### The Interactive Exhibition Industry: Craig's side of the story told in his voice

“Basically, we supply science centres like Sensation in Dundee -for 7 to 11 year olds- with exhibition kits. The interactive exhibition industry is mainly made up of two kinds of manufacturers. One is the sophisticated design company that employs artistic designers, a bit like Frazer, our Technical Director. These companies design things to the highest spec[ification], top notch design. Expensive and well designed, but too expensive. Great looking on paper and from a design point of view, but impossible to use, too complex, or too expensive to make. These are the companies who primarily employ artistic designers, and they are very much an artistic-generated company. These guys are sophisticated, sort of university, architecturally trained, artistic designers. They will come in to a museum or science centre, do design briefs, and they will design a whole floor for you, but they have no real idea how to put an exhibit together.”

“The second one is Fred-in-his-shed who is a one-man band. Literally, one man -and his shed at the bottom of his garden- who is a complete genius when it comes to knowing absolutely everything about how people interact with technology, how to put things together, how to build things etc, etc, etc. Whereas Fred cares and is passionate about his work, and he actually cares about the experience the visitor gets, he loves his design, has designed exhibits for years, knows how people interact with technology, and he wants others to learn from coming into contact with his exhibit...; sophisticated designers don’t care how their exhibits work as long as their designs look good and they are the most expensive exhibit of its kind. With Fred-in-his-shed you are guaranteed that every exhibit he does, somebody will get something out of it. But Fred will perhaps only do one exhibit to go in a new exhibition. It will be so high-tech, it takes all his time to make just one, and he has no time to make any others. Unfortunately, this is where the designers who don’t care very much get the contracts that are worth a quarter of a million, or half a million pounds. This is where Frazer has been helping us occupy the middle ground.”

“If you take the bigger companies in our market, they very much don’t take a contract under a million pounds. Whereas Fred-in-his-shed is stuck on any project that’s bigger than, lets say £100,000, because he’s not big enough to deal with it, we actually saw ourselves becoming involved in a niche originally between £100,000 and £200,000 per contract that we were able to fit into. And that’s where Frazer was brought on board, and where we *were* going. I wouldn’t exactly class Frazer as an artistic designer. He wouldn’t do an artist’s sketch, or an artistic impression; he would actually do an engineering rendition of the design idea. So, in other words, he would take an artistic impression, an artist’s sketch, and he could make it work.”

#### Working in FifeX: Ken’s side of the story told in his voice

“Craig and I manage each other. But in terms of a project, we manage the design process, and at each stage of the process, we involve other people. We are different to Frazer, because he is the process. He does it [work] all himself. For us [Craig and I], we would say right -we would be honest- we don’t have all the ideas, we have some, but let’s bring somebody in, like a Frazer, to provide us with those ideas. Then we would go away and work on that. Then we would come to the design stage and we would say, we want a rendered drawing. And then we would so on and so on. Often, we don’t get involved with *actually* doing the design. But we oversee the process. For

example, Aberdeen Council approached us. They said we have got a bus, we want you to kit it out for us. Fine. We got some incredibly rough and initial ideas from them of what they wanted. The original thing [document / design brief] they gave us was just pathetic. It gave us no idea what they were doing. So like with all these things, we go up, see the bus, speak to the people [to ask questions]. What drives them? What do they want to do? What's the topic? And this is where someone like Frazer is invaluable. He immediately identifies, okay, *that's* what they want to do. In his *brain*, he has already got ten ideas for exhibits based on others he has seen on this topic. He puts them [ideas] together, he starts thinking about it. "Right, we could do this!", he says. And she [the Aberdeen Council representative] is bowled over because Frazer's idea is exactly what she wants made. You know, we [Craig and Ken] could probably come up with that idea, *eventually*. It would require us doing a bit of research, but Frazer has already got it in his head. Most of this Aberdeen project, Frazer is going to take himself, but we still maintain control of it."

"FifeX has a lot of responsibilities and does a lot. But there are only two people. So I think it's difficult this concept of managing. It's not like Craig is the boss, and I work in the company, or, vice versa. In which case, it would not be easy. He does not tell me what to do and I don't tell him what to do. It does not work like that. It's a constant to and fro. It's constant. I will feel that we need to do something and I will push Craig along, and vice versa."

## **Appendix 5 Narrative details on deciding to relocate**

### *Researcher as narrator*

FifeX received its first order for a museum exhibition piece in 2001. Craig and Ken, invoiced their clients for £250. For them, the day they received their first cheque sticks out vividly in their mind; they even took a photograph of the cheque to mark the momentous occasion. During one of my visits to their new business premises in Tayport, in October 2006, Craig showed me how he made two entries in FifeX's blue 'Order Book'. Entries for two separate orders to the tune of £50,000+ each. This goes some way towards showing how far FifeX has come since those humble beginnings. And if we consider the moves FifeX has made during that time period, from a small office in the Physics Department at the University of St Andrews, to a slightly larger office in the St Andrews Technology Centre, to their newly occupied business premises in Tayport, which comprises three whole units --containing three offices, a meeting room and a workshop, toilet and separate shower room, with storage space to boot-- that too illustrates how well FifeX seems to be doing. The growth in the value of orders, and the size of their new work premises is testament to both Craig and Ken's unrelenting pursuit of business opportunities.

Aware of their lack of experience, knowledge and expertise in dealing with complex electrical and mechanical engineering projects for science centres, in pursuit of new opportunities (that is, larger contracts), FifeX took on a Technical Director, Frazer, in November 2005. Craig and Ken worked at the St Andrews Technology Centre in St Andrews, while Frazer worked in his garage at home. Frazer's arrival meant that FifeX could undertake larger projects than ever before. As Managing Director, Craig dealt with all the business administration and played a central role in maintaining FifeX's momentum: managing existing products, building new relationships, and taking old products to more and more people; but Craig did not see Frazer on a daily basis. It was mainly Ken, the Production Director, who met and worked with Frazer. Most of the time, Craig only spoke fleetingly with Frazer whenever he dropped by their office in St Andrews. By February 2006, FifeX was clearly short of space. Just three or four months after Frazer's arrival, with Craig and Ken based in St Andrews, Frazer working at home (that is, his garage) in Tayport, half of FifeX's stock / raw materials being stored in a common room (which they did not have permission to use) in the St Andrews Technology Centre, and the other half taking up part of a storage room in the Physics Department at the University of St Andrews, Frazer started telling Craig and Ken, "We need

somewhere now. We need to move in on Monday. Its no use waiting until two, three, four or five months down the line. We need somewhere now!” Ken admits, “I was won over” by his call.

#### Deciding to relocate: the story told in Ken’s voice

“The problem in the New Technology Centre was we had too many things, too much stuff. So we started looking for a new place. All three of us visited a place in Letham, Fife. Fife Council promised us the world. They said they would refurbish the building. It was ideal. It was a little further away from *home* [St Andrews], and not as nice a location as St Andrews, but it would have been perfect for our type of business. It had high ceilings, loads of potential. We started designing mezzanine flooring for offices upstairs, but the main feature would have been the workshop on the ground floor. During meetings and negotiations with the Council, we were told it would not cost us much more to stay there than what we are now paying in rent: about £400 a month. But after hours and hours of meetings and we started getting down to what we really wanted, like double glazed windows for example, they got their pens and papers out and started costing everything. It got ridiculous. I was practically an empty shell, and what we were asking for were not luxuries, it was stuff to make the building habitable. It then started looking like £700 a month instead of £400 and they wanted us to sign up to a 5 year lease agreement. They were basically having us on. They wanted to cover all their money for their spend within five years, and [have us] sign up for five years, which is unfair. The problem is, the building has been sat with no one in it for a long time and Fife Council knows that. They know it’s not a desirable location and because the type of unit it is, there is a type of business they think is going to go there. They don’t think that, location-wise, the actual unit and the space go well together. So they are thinking, if we lost FifeX’s interest and they don’t rent it, then who in the world is going to want to?”

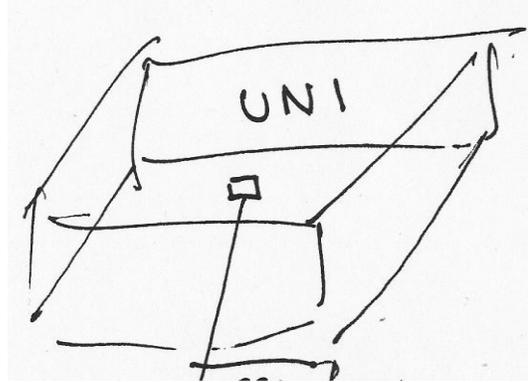
“FifeX could quadruple in that period [5 years] and we could end up needing a place much larger than Letham: where would that leave us? Can you imagine signing up to a five year lease at our stage, its ridiculous. They [Fife Council] are saying to themselves, we need to cover all our costs from FifeX, which is not fair. Fife Council saw us as a way of taking one of their properties off their hands which had been unoccupied for quite a while and needed kitting out. And they saw us as a way of absorbing the money it would cost to do that. It got to the point where we had to sign up for five years or we couldn’t take it.”

“Although Craig was doing a really good job at bashing them down in price and we were getting more things -he really was doing a great job of negotiating- and we were certainly winning that one; there were some fundamental issues they were not prepared to budge on. I think Fife Council was just chancing their luck. In addition to all this, they could not give us a guaranteed [move in] date: I think now [speaking some three months after the move to Tayport] we still wouldn’t have moved in. Despite all that, it soon became obvious after the third or fourth meeting that they would not be able to do what they had promised. So things weren’t looking that good at the outset. They never came back to us with their costing, time schedules, and they kept on telling us that the amount of rent we end up paying, and the length of the lease, will all depend on what we want doing. Since it was an empty shell, it needed a lot doing to it. We couldn’t just move in. They were dragging their heels and for what we wanted doing -as it was practically a run-down, empty shell- we would still be waiting for them to finish their costing now. We wouldn’t have moved in by now, and we would be tied down for far too many years. It wasn’t right for us.”

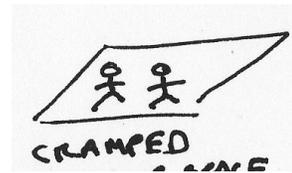
“It was a difficult conversation after all this because we then had to go back to them and say look, we don’t want to go ahead with Letham, after all this discussion, we want to go back to Tayport. I think that was difficult, but of course they wanted to rent this place as well because this was sitting empty [speaking in Tayport]. It went slowly from this point forward because work got in the way. Frazer left. And then there was a massive decision for us. Right, now Frazer’s gone, he was the catalyst for the move, I would say that he was 50% of the reason for the move because of the physical space he needs to work, so now that he has gone, do we still want to go to Tayport? It was a big decisions because the long and short of it, Craig and I could have got by, and we could still be getting by in St Andrews. But I don’t think that would be the best move for the business [staying in St Andrews].”

Using creative methods (drawing) to communicate the feeling of working in FifeX, and being in the St Andrews Technology Centre: describing visual representations in Ken's voice

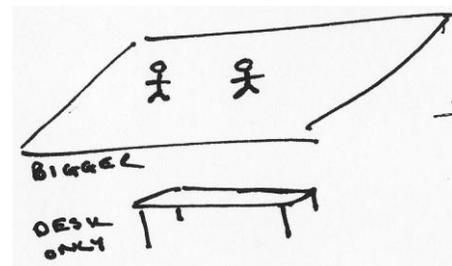
"I have got a picture of the University and FifeX is part of it. Erm, I think that was..., my thinking here was, we weren't like a separate entity. And that bothered the both of us [Craig and Ken] at the time. And it was actually really difficult from a business point of view to separate ourselves from the University. We both didn't like that. I don't know if Craig mentioned that, but we both didn't like that and thought it was a problem."



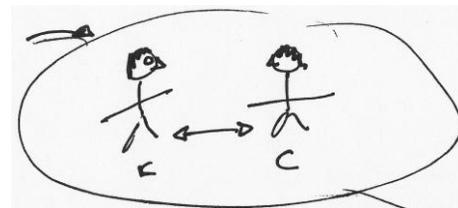
"Also, we were far too cramped. I have got these two bodies here representing Craig and I in this small space. So that was just the very beginning."



"Then, when we moved to the 'New Technology Centre, I have got a picture here with Craig and I in a much bigger space for the two bodies. But I have got only a desk in addition to that because although the space was bigger, it wasn't really ideally suited to what we were doing [manufacturing]. It was only suited to office work. And erm, really, right from the beginning, that was something that bothered me."

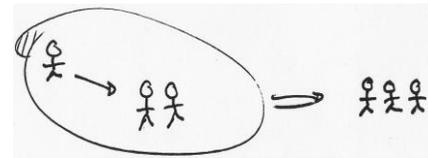


"So, a couple of thoughts I had here. One -that's me and Craig too close together [pointing to his drawing]- I have got us kind of looking at each other there because, I mean, that's what it felt like in the old office."



“We were just too close. Erm. Err, we were, to use a word that Frazer used, was errr, micro-managing each other. Erm. Which I actually think was unproductive on basically everything. And it [the workspace] didn’t work, you know? He was saying to me “Do this!” and then he was watching over my shoulder while I did it, and you know, vice versa. It didn’t work. And erm.... right, our efficiency -I didn’t know how to..., I couldn’t quite work out how to communicate efficiency. But, I mean, essentially, I think efficiency was not as good as it could have been.”

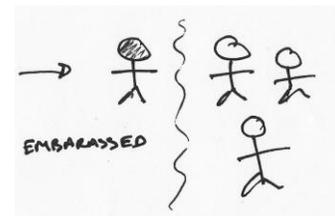
“An image I have got here is Frazer -that’s Frazer [pointing to his drawing]- the third person joining two, becoming three. Erm, so, [exhale] this is a bit of a mess, sorry<sup>44</sup>. So, a few things surrounding this. One, once Frazer came on board, we were definitely too cramped, so if there was any



decision about us being too cramped before, it was now certain. In addition to that, erm, we had the problem of the distance between us [Frazer worked from home, about 10 miles outside of St Andrews]. So although the office was cramped, Frazer was also working most of the time away from us, which was too far away. So that didn’t work. So there were two major issues: one, more space required, and secondly, to be [all three of us working] at the same venue.”

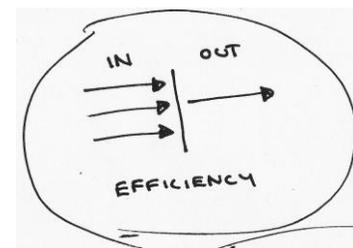


“This is [pointing to match-stick-man with a red face], this is errr, what I felt like because I was embarrassed. Because what we were actually doing was using other peoples’ space that did not belong to us. It was a feeling of embarrassment. I don’t think anybody kind of wanted to kick us out [of the St Andrews Technology Centre], or tell us that we had to stop using the space. But it was a wee bit embarrassing at the time.”



<sup>44</sup> This demonstrates the ability of drawings to communicate several feelings at the same time. However, when one is asked to describe them, it is difficult to separate them out, one from the other, because they are intertwined, and non-linear.

“I have got here [pointing to a match-stick-man with a ball and chain], this is kind of meant to be ... the idea I think is, that we were working harder than we should have been. Things were taking longer, like erm. Just, just, actually..., this encompasses a whole number of things. Things like, for example, like when we were working on projects, it was a lot more laborious than it should have been, purely because of the facilities around us, you know? We didn't have..., if we needed to do any assembly, we were having to go to erm..., you know? To lengths to kind of get out [find a warehouse], do the thing outside, then bring it back in [to St Andrews Technology Centre]. Everything was taking longer than it should have. And also, erm, the other thing was, the [St Andrews] unit was not best suited to doing deliveries and things so, I mean, you remember yourself, loading the van for the move was a nightmare. Here [in Tayport], you just back the van up, open the doors and it's straight forward [there is a designated door /shutter for loading which leads straight into the storage / workshop area]. Remember we were having to put door stops, holding loads of doors open and all this...? So that's what that one [drawing] is about.”



## Appendix 6 “Getting off lightly”: Positive aspect of Frazer’s resignation

### Reorienting the business since Frazer’s departure: Ken’s side of the story told in his voice

“Frazer coming on board highlighted to us where our weaknesses were. With him leaving, what it highlighted to us is, it essentially brought us back to where we were before but in a much more educated way. Do you know what it was like? It was almost like we have been taken out of our situation, look at it from afar, and then come back in. With him in the company, Craig and I could easily see [i] where are our weaknesses?, [ii] what is Frazer doing, and [iii] how is he filling in the gaps?”

“Then *he* is taken out. Because we have already identified that [i.e. the gaps he fills in], we can see where we are [in terms of our strengths and weaknesses] and I think it’s [Frazer’s coming and going has] helped us focus better. So I think in that sense, you could view it as a positive experience. And I think that’s how we are seeing it: as a positive experience.”

“The original idea behind FifeX was to be employed, as a company, to do custom design. To be the designer of brand new exhibits, things that have not been done before, and to design these, and then subsequently.... Well, how I have come to describe the company over the past couple of weeks when I have been speaking to people is: somebody comes to us and asks us to think up a concept for a product. We think up the concept. If they are happy with it, we then go to manufacture. Manufacture means, we fire off requests for product parts, like Ikea does, the manufacturers come up with the parts [they send them to us], and we assemble. We then take the finished product to our clients. That’s what the original idea of the company was.”

“But with Frazer on board, we realised one thing. And it’s one thing that -in fairness- had been bothering me since we started; I think it bothered Craig as well, but maybe we did not talk about it - and that’s probably a negative thing, but- it identified one thing and that was: we did not have the *experience* to come up with concepts because in order to come up with concepts, you need to know a lot. You need to have seen lots of things before. I mean, to be a designer of houses, you need to have seen lots of houses; you can’t just, you know... [build a house with no idea of what a house looks like]. That was one problem. The second problem was, we don’t have the technological ability to do it in the same way Frazer does, both in terms of the software design and the actual

manufacturing. I think thirdly, and perhaps, I think this is one of the most important things, I am not sure it [custom build exhibit-making] interests us in the same way it interests Frazer. You can see after spending five minutes with Frazer, you can see just how much of a buzz he gets from coming up with a new idea for a machine [interactive exhibit]. It's not to say that we are not interested in what we do, I just... I don't think we have passion in the same way that Frazer does for designing exhibits. That's not what grabs us. And I think that we realised this when he left."

"Wait a minute<sup>45</sup>, we don't have these [exhibit building] skills; there is no point in bullshitting now! We need to realise that he is the guy who is able to do this, and I think we need to work with him. But it's [Frazer resigning] kind of brought home to us what we can *actually* do on our own. Things like the educational products are where I think we can really do well because to do well, it requires a lot of the skills we *do* have. We have good connections with the Uni[versity] if we need them, Craig has built up a good relationship with the guys at Phillip Harris<sup>46</sup>, and with all these things added together, we do have a lot."

"We have learnt a lot from Frazer. I would not say that we are fully fledged designers as such. But, there are certain things you learn, little tips and techniques, and I think we have learnt that probably to a good enough level to come up with good ideas for the school products. I do think Frazer going has made us look at the situation differently. Up to the point he was here, I think we [Craig and I] could have bullshitted it and said yes, that's what we do [design exhibits], but I have just realised that we are not even close to [being exhibit designers]."

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<sup>45</sup> Recounting self-talk.

<sup>46</sup> Phillip Harris is one of FifeX's largest distributors.

## **Appendix 7 Detailing Ken’s reasons for why his own company’s website is the worst he has ever designed: the story told in his own words**

“Craig wanted a lot of grey because it looks professional and a lot of companies go for that. But this overlooks the fact that our products are interactive and are largely targeted towards children. So if anything, we should have a snazzier, more colourful website to appeal to our customers<sup>47</sup>: children, the people who use our exhibits. We have to *live* what we say we do. If the people who buy our exhibits think our website appeals to kids, then they will trust that our exhibits do too.”

“The design process is an enormous thing. Because I did most of the work here, in our office [in the St Andrews Technology Centre], Craig could see all my working [Craig sits behind Ken in the office and can see everything he does]. He was constantly looking over my shoulder and telling me what to do. “Change this. Do that. Why are you doing it like that? Why don’t we have it like this……?” In design work, you do a little to get the thing up and running before you show the client. Craig was like the annoying client you get from time to time. Despite thinking he is a good decision-maker, he is actually poor. He jumps in too quickly. Sometimes he makes poor decisions, then uses poor arguments to back up and justify his ideas. But because his ideas often come from others, and he does not fully understand why those ideas are ‘good’, he gets stuck and has to ask somebody else when things go wrong.” ... “The manner he went about buying our Blackberries is also typical of his approach to decision-making. Craig will often decide what to do following a conversation with others. He will ask people who use them which one they feel is the best to buy, then he will act upon their recommendations. I on the other hand, like to take my time to read up on things and ask others, just as Craig would, then I use some more time to think things over before deciding what to do. This way I arrive at an understanding of what I am getting myself into before I do anything. Craig, on the other hand, often finds himself in shit street because he has acted upon the advice of others without fully understanding how and why they made such and such a decision, or recommendation, in the first place. Then I need to get involved and try to unravel what’s been happening. If we were to take our time in the beginning then we could avoid all the messing that comes with some of Craig’s decisions.”

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<sup>47</sup> I think Ken meant consumers here because museums or schools are the customers. Decision makers in museums or schools purchase FifeX products, and the children consumer the experience those FifeX products afford.

## Appendix 8 Another example where *everything in Craig's mind is very clear (Ken's words)*

“I mean, when we were working out the [new] clothing this morning<sup>48</sup>, Craig said what colour is it going to be? Now I am still thinking in general terms, what actually are we getting this [new clothing] for? Erm, so you know, this is why he will come here [into Ken's office], he will walk around, and his brain is doing like a 3D picture, putting all the wallpaper on... [the walls before we have even moved in]. That's what it looks like [Craig will say to Ken]. Whereas I, you know, my brain just doesn't work like that. I look at it [the decision issue], ok, we could do this, we could do that, and then re-look at it, and oh! We could do it like that<sup>49</sup>. It's just a difference in how we work, but I think Craig and I both kind of..., it, like, I think i..., I erm..., allow him to have his breadth for a bit, and he kind of does the same to me. And you know, we work around it pretty well. But one of the hardest things is when Craig gets something in his head that he likes, and sometimes, it's hard for me to then say if I don't like it, it's hard to get him out of that. Not because..., it's not because he likes it because it's his idea, it's that he likes it because he has already pictured it. He has already seen it. It's like when we are designing a product, he had already seen the product [in his mind's eye] before we have even got to the design meeting. Sometimes I find it difficult to say to him, right Craig, I don't think we should do it like that, because it's like as if he has already..., it's like he has ...,<sup>50</sup> yeah. He has already got a picture of it. He has got an imaginary picture of it [in his head].”

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<sup>48</sup> FifeX was developing a new visual communication strategy during the time this research was conducted. Craig and Ken were working on coming up with a new “strap-line”, or keynote to describe to it's target audiences what FifeX does. This was all necessary since Frazer's exit and the new direction FifeX was taking. Part of that communication strategy was developing new logos for the clothing that Craig and Ken will wear when they have face-time with potential and existing clients.

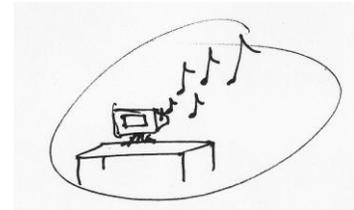
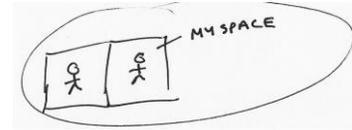
<sup>49</sup> During my ethnographic observations Ken was always coming up with alternative ideas for ways of making things happen and getting people to do what both Craig and he want them to do. Craig on the other hand, was much more confident to proceed with the first idea that entered his head, often times, acting instinctively and based on emotions.

<sup>50</sup> At this point I interjected saying, “...so he hasn't made a decision, but it's like he has made a decision in some ways because it's already there in his mind ...”

## Appendix 9 The importance of Ken's space

Pictorial representation of what it feels like to work in Tayport: Ken's side of the story told in his own voice

Ken Now that we are here [in Tayport], I have actually got my own space which is a big thing for me..., having the privacy. It takes out the issue of micro-managing each other<sup>51</sup>. Erm..., I had, erm..., this drawing is essentially..., I have, have got music coming out of the computer. It is really about having the ability to customise my own space, to have things that I want that make me feel comfortable. And of course, Craig being able to do the same in his office without disturbing me.



Daniel Now you have the freedom to do the things that make you comfortable, but in the past you couldn't do that?

Ken Couldn't do that, no. I mean, erm..., you know what..., I like listening to music while I work, that's not something, you know..., it's not really a sociable thing for me to do, particularly for Craig [i.e. if they are sharing an office]. And I don't like the same music as Craig.

Daniel And you didn't want to impose that on Craig. So I imagine you would do most of your listening and working to music when Craig left the office.

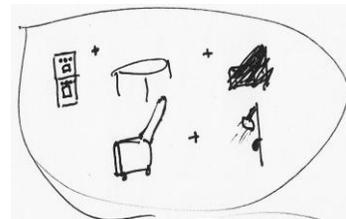
Ken That's right.

Daniel But now you can do that in your own office.

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<sup>51</sup> Ken informed me that this was a term introduced by Frazer. Frazer observed that Craig and Ken waste a lot of time micro-managing one another. And in Ken's opinion, he was right. Through talking with Ken, in hindsight, he now realises that an unintended benefit of the move is that working in separate offices, there is less scope for micro-managing one another..

Ken I can do other things. Like [control the] temperature, you know?<sup>52</sup> Just other things, other things..., I have things on my desk, books, you know? Erm..., so that [drawing] kind of covers quite a few things.

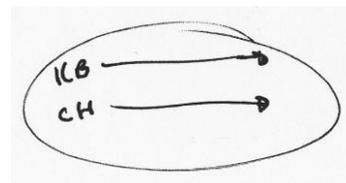


Daniel So there is quite a lot of freedom and happiness here?

Ken Yeah. Definitely.

Daniel You have got privacy and freedom to do what you will in your own space...

Ken I think these two are definitely linked [i.e. privacy and freedom]. This one [pointing to a drawing] is about Craig and I going in the same direction which I think erm..., although we are not actually in the same office, I think we are going in the same direction on a lot of things. I was thinking about this as well, the other day..., I think the fact that -taking the micro-managing out of it- the fact that erm..., I do something and then Craig comes in at the end and can review it, or Craig can do something, then I can review it..., I think that process -rather than reviewing it as we go- cuts out niggles and little moans. I mean, for example, Craig is writing a letter, or, say I am writing a letter, erm..., I am going to write it in my style and then Craig can come and have a look at it and he is going to make general points. Whatever happens, Craig is always going to write in his style, and I can look at *his* letter and make general points. But if you try and write something together [from the start], you are compromising everything..., the whole style of the letter is like..., compromised. And it takes a lot longer too. So that's what that [drawing] was about<sup>53</sup>. I think just generally, its easier now for us to be going in the right way.



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<sup>52</sup> When I wore a vest under my shirt because temperatures dropped, I noticed Ken would wear two vests and a fleece, and he would still complain that he felt cold. Ken often spoke about his inability to get warm, and stay warm. To combat this he adopts a layering system which seems to work most of the time.

<sup>53</sup> The drawing with the arrows pointing in the same direction.

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