ELECTIONS CANADA: TOWARD A PRELIMINARY TYPOLOPGY OF TEMPORARY ORGANIZATIONS

by

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Abstract

Temporary organizational forms exist in every economic and social environment. They are prevalent in the business community as well as in the public and non-profit sector. Their common defining characteristic is a temporal life span, although their scope, size, purpose, and organizational structure varies. The literature on temporary organizations has surged over the past decade, yet there have been few empirical studies. The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it provides a case study on temporary organizations: Elections Canada' returning office. It relates the case to a wider body of literature to examine where, on the wider spectrum of temporary organizations, it is positioned. The second part of the paper widens the focus on temporary structures and reviews a broader set of literature. The aim is to compare the EC case to other forms of temporary organizations and construct a preliminary typology that might be useful for future research.

Keywords: Temporary organizations; organization theory, resource dependence theory, Elections Canada, returning office.

Dedication

It doesn't matter how new an idea is: what matters is how new it becomes.

Elias Canetti

To Aidan Vining for insisting I would appreciate the EMBA and put it to good use. You were right.

To Rhiannon, Rory and Eirian Vining for forever learning along.

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1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Over the past 15 years, I have worked as a manager for Elections Canada (EC) and Elections BC, running federal and provincial elections in my home ridings. This position requires the creation of a temporary organization, the returning office, whose primary task is to administer and deliver the vote to the local electorate. After the electoral event, the office is dismantled; the organization ceases to exist. All relevant documents and equipment are returned to EC and Elections BC. My full-time position as the returning officer reverts to a stand-by mode until the next election is called. The entire electoral process, and therefore the temporary organization, generally lasts about two and a half months.

I work as an anthropologist in my "permanent" life and thus have a great interest in human behaviour, how people organize, and how organizational structures perform. For example, I have always been amazed at how quickly people create social hierarchies and internal office cultures, even in instances where the organization will only last for a few weeks. Furthermore, I have been interested in the kind of managerial strategies best employed in temporary structures, such as the returning office, that would differ from those used in permanent organizations.

Over the past two years, I have been enrolled in the EMBA program at Simon Fraser's Beedie School of Business. To my surprise, there was little mention of temporary organizations (TOs), especially those existing outside the range of project-management or project-centred organizations. When I looked into the topic, I discovered that the literature on TOs is recent and still quite narrow. The kinds of TOs under investigation resemble each other in structure and purpose. They do not address some components characteristic of the EC's returning office. Therefore, for my final project, it

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seemed appropriate to build a case study of a TO I have close experience with, relate concepts found in TO literature to it, and develop more generalized statements that would contribute to future TO research. During the research process, I discovered that there are many different kinds of TOs; however, the literature offered few attempts at describing any differentiating characteristics or developing any kinds of TO classification.

The purpose of this paper then is twofold. First, it provides a case study on temporary organizations: EC's returning office. Second, the study relates the EC case to a wider body of literature in organization theory to contrast it with other kinds of organizational structures and examine where, on the wider spectrum of TOs, it is positioned.

In the first part of the paper, the case presentation is framed within concepts developed in TO literature and tacitly explores the following questions: (a) Why study temporary organizations like EC's returning office; (b) how do TOs differ from permanent organizations, particularly from the TOs' managers' point of view; and (c) what can managers of permanent organizations like EC learn from an analysis of TOs? The present chapter introduces theoretical issues relevant to the EC case as they are discussed in the body of TO literature. Chapter 2 describes the case study and relates specific observations to general TO research concepts. In the process, the discussion revisits the questions explored in Chapter 1 to relate specific characteristics of a TO to its permanent parent organization.

The second part of the paper, Chapters 3 and 4, widens the focus on TOs and reviews a broader set of organization literature. The aim here is to compare the EC case to other forms of temporary structures and construct a preliminary typology that might be useful for future research.

1.2 Theoretical approach

The case presentation draws on material published by EC on its website (Elections Canada, 2012a) and in the Canada Elections Act (Elections Canada, 2012b). The author's personal notes augment the discussion. The case is positioned within themes and concepts developed in the literature on temporary organizations. These concepts are

outlined, preceding the case description, to give the presentation a theoretical and analytical grounding.

Although temporary structures have always existed (Janowicz et al., 2009), a review of TO studies reveals that this form of collaborative engagement has become more prevalent over the past decade or so in the public, non-profit and commercial sectors alike (Bakker, 2010). Examples of TOs can be found in specific industries, such as construction (Gann and Salter. 2000), engineering (Engwall, 2003), advertising (Grabher, 2002), event management (Howle, 1996), and the creative industry (Daskalaki, 2010; Bechky, 2006; Goodman and Goodman, 1976).

There are several definitions of TO in the literature. For each, the notion of time is the central defining characteristic. In general, non-temporary organizations work under the assumption that they are permanent and will exist in eternity (although realistically, of course they cannot). In contrast, temporary organizations have a known beginning and a planned end. They operate within an anticipated time limit. Thus, all factors that characterize a specific TO function within the framework of certain temporality: organizational structure, type of leadership, management style, workforce and team formation, as well as the way access to external resources is set up. Holding constant the notion of temporality, there are numerous ways to define a TO. Janowicz et al. (2009, p. 58) attempt to summarize the extant definitions as follows:

> Some often-quoted examples of these definitions include Goodman and Goodman (1976, p.494), who held that TO's involve a 'set of diversely skilled people working together on a complex task over a limited period of time', and Morley and Silver (1977, p.59), who defined temporary systems as systems 'limited in duration and membership, in which people come together, interact, create something, and then disband'. Similarly, Keith (1978, p.195) proposed that 'temporary systems are structures of limited duration that operate within and between interdisciplinary institutions', while Grabher (2004) viewed TOs as transient, interdisciplinary institutions focusing on achievement of a single task.

As we will see, EC's returning office fits most of the above definitions to some extent, except the notion of "interdisciplinary". The returning office is not an interdisciplinary institution, but a place where people come together to complete a specific task, organizing the election in a defined territory. While people may come from

different disciplines, that is not a defining prerequisite for their employment. Rather, the skill set demanded by EC to organize an election is quite homogenous. In a most general sense then, the returning office is defined by its limited duration and membership and by people working together towards a common goal, which, once achieved, places the organization in a position of dormancy. The following literature review will highlight further concepts that will help refine the characterization of EC's returning office.

1.3 Temporary organization literature review

Since the early nineties, the literature on temporary systems has multiplied at an accelerated pace, partially resulting from an increase in the ubiquity of these organizational forms. The literature on TOs can trace its beginnings to studies focused on project-based work, such as in construction (Gann & Salter, 2000), or engineering (Engwall, 2003). There are some early attempts to broaden the research focus by including temporary work environments, such as theatre productions (Goodman & Goodman, 1976). The research is predominantly based on normative, functional analysis – namely, on how several organizations supply and pool resources to accomplish the task at hand, for example the construction of a bridge by different short-lived organizations. The literature that focuses on empirical observations and advances more integrated theories about TOs is more recent. The following pages present an overview of several articles published in organizational management and organizational theory journals, conference papers (Lundin, 1995; Kujala, J. et al., 20l2), and selected books, such as a recent publication entirely dedicated to temporary organizations, (Kenis, et al., 2009).

Goodman and Goodman (1976) provide an early attempt at breaking away from an engineering project management perspective on TOs. They recognize that temporary systems are becoming more common in post-industrial societies. They emerge, so Goodman and Goodman speculate, to cope with new complexities and relationships between intra-organizational divisions, such as engineering, marketing and finance. They also have to navigate inter-organizational connections, such as two or more specialized firms working together on short-term projects, such as architecture and construction (Goodman & Goodman, 1976, p. 495).

Lundin (1995) states in the *Scandinavian Journal of Management* special issue on temporary organizations that "in certain respects the study of temporary organizations has to break away from established project management and organizational literature" (p. 316). He argues, in concordance with Packendorff (1995), that temporary systems are: becoming more and more widespread; extending beyond the boundaries of strictly project-based work; embedded in diverse kinds of organizations; and are created for a variety of changeable purposes. Therefore, research investigating their specific nature, organizational structure, and strategic value would not only widen an understanding of this particular type of organization, but would contribute new insight to the body of organizational theory in general.

In this vein, Packendorff (1995) proposes a new paradigm for placing project management research in a wider context, rather than studying it from a general systems theory approach, and suggests that projects

> "… should be researched in terms of culture, conceptions, relations to the environment, longitudinal processes, etc, rather than simply as goal-fulfilling subsystems whose *raison d'être* is provided by a decisive and strategically aware super-system. In short: the project is a temporary organization" (Packendorff, 1995, p. 326).

He continues to define a temporary organization from a project perspective: it is action oriented, temporarily predetermined, contains an evaluation criteria, and, due to its complexity, it is in need of conscious organizational design (Packendorff, 1995, p. 327). However, the project is seen more as a one-dimensional tool that follows certain formal, sequential processes. The TO, on the other hand, operates within different "metaphorical systems": it "is incessantly enacted by individuals continuously learning by experience and expecting further learning" (Packendorff, 1995, p. 328). The TO is a form of experiment. The question for Packendorff becomes, how to preserve new learning after the TO is dissolved, both at an individual and organizational level.

This question is central to Lundin and Söderholm's (1995) article as well. In fact, they state learning is one of the major reasons for creating TOs. Organizations may create or appoint TOs to kick-start a lagging firm or find ways to change existing business operations (see also Howle, 1996). These TOs take on the form of special task forces or

action groups in order to "handle a felt need for action, by addressing particular problems in order to 'make things happen' within or among organizations" (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995, p. 437). The authors develop a theoretical framework based on the notion of 'action' as its basic motivator because the "traditional literature on projects and project management emphasizes relevant action as being fundamental to the success of a project" (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995, p. 438). The focus on action as an elementary characteristic for TOs distinguishes this theoretical framework from those of permanent organizations, which predominantly centre on decision-making processes.

The examination of EC's returning office will pick up on this idea. Even though EC's returning office is not created as a 'special task force' necessitating action, the notion of action, rather than decision-making, as a driving motivator for its *raison d'être* is very much applicable to the analysis of the returning office. The grand overall strategic decisions are made by EC, whereas the TO has to act and get the job done. Therefore, it is instructive to examine Lundin & Söderholm's (1995) propositions in more detail.

The authors identify four basic concepts that are unique to TOs and set them apart from other organizational forms: time, task, team, and transition. Each concept will be used in the examination of EC's returning office. The concept of time is obviously fundamental to a TO as its lifetime is limited and often pre-determined. This sets it apart from permanent organizations that often view time as a scarce resource, but, nonetheless, operate on an existential notion of eternity. It is precisely the knowledge of finality that makes the TO's managers and workers more efficient, focused, action centred, and highly organized. The limited duration of the organization means that management is constantly under pressure to get things done on time. As time is limited so too is the availability of resources.

Lundin and Söderholm's second concept, task, contributes further to a TO's focus on action. They suggest that TOs centre around completing a set of tasks, in contrast to permanent organizations that subordinate tasks to overall goal setting (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). Task completion here is based on action, while goal achievement entails decision-making processes.

The third concept, team, involves people. The relevant issues for temporary teams are the relationships between its individual members, e.g., motivation and commitment building, as well as the interactions between teams and their environment. Temporary teams must get to know each other swiftly in order to meet the time and resource deadlines. To get things done, the temporary teams often need to relate to outside contexts, such as the sponsoring permanent organizations (POs), possible competing teams, or other competing organizational structures. As the focus is on action in short time periods, action is tied to deadlines. Efficiency is understood as finishing on time and on budget.

The fourth concept, transition, addresses the TO's need for timely task completion on the one hand, and its role of activating change on the other. The latter rises from the assumption that POs often create TOs to investigate and initiate change. Therefore, "actions will differ depending on the main focus of the transition" (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995, p. 443).

Lundin and Söderholm (1995) maintain that the above framework sets their study apart from other organizational theories that relegate temporal organizational components to the area of planning projects. In those studies, the project itself is the focus of building rational, normative theories, rather than analysing the interplay of components and concepts essential in a project's process.

Bakker (2010) adapts Lundin and Söderholm's framework and presents a very comprehensive and systematic review of TO studies. In an attempt to develop an integrated examination of the current state of TO literature and its contributions to organizational theory in general, he coalesces the major research questions from over 95 articles and positions them amongst the four TO themes developed by Lundin and Söderholm (1995). Since this study regards the Lundin and Söderholm framework, as well as Bakker's research questions and evaluation themes as useful analytical tools to present the EC case study, Bakker's article is examined in more detail.

Bakker (2010) draws attention to articles published in special journal issues dedicated to the analysis of the project and its relationship to temporary systems. He highlights the work of Lundin and Söderholm (1995) and Sydow et al. (2004) as

especially poignant, because "the former successfully re-positioned projects as temporary organizational forms, … and the latter emphasized the importance of linkages between the temporary organizational form and its permanent environment" (Bakker, 2010, p. 68). As we will see in Chapter 4, the notion of an organization embedded in its wider socio-cultural, historical, and economic environment extends the field of organization theory as it had became part of the broad post-industrial epistemology. Bakker emphasizes and strengthens this view by immersing the wider context into the unit of analysis of the "temporary organizational form itself" (Bakker, 2010, p. 468).

> Generally speaking, this context consists of two levels, the firm level (i.e. the organization(s) in which the temporary system is to a more or lesser extent embedded) and the wider social context (including industry, epistemic community, and enduring personal networks) …. For the purpose of this study, where the temporary organizational form stands central, the most important feature of context regards the interaction between a temporary organizational system and its environment (Sydow et al., 2004). This focuses attention on the cross-level linkages between the temporary organizational form and its firm-level and wider context (Bakker, 2010, p. 469).

The underlying assumptions are that, although temporary organizations are finite and often tied to a parent organization, they are not self-contained and static entities. Instead, just like non-temporary organizations, they are embedded in a context that may entail social, economic, political, historical, and financial factors.

To categorize the reviewed literature, Bakker (2010) develops a set of four themes, adopted from Lundin and Söderholm's (1995) four thematic concepts: 'time', 'task', 'team', and 'transition'. Bakker expands the fourth theme to include the TO's dialectic relationship with its wider environment, and consequently labels it 'context'. "Thus, the themes adopted to structure and analyse the literature were time, team, task and context" (Bakker, 2010, p. 471). In this way, he not only provides an integrated overview of TO literature but also actually contributes to an understanding of the diversity of temporary structures as each theme can be used as a dimension for variation. Bakker extrapolates a set of key research questions that have been examined throughout TO related literature over the past forty years.

Bakker's (2010) research questions have proven to be very useful for the present study, as they provide a starting point for applying the most commonly investigated themes in TO literature to the specific findings in the EC case study, and steering the discussion from the specific EC case to more general issues. Thus, the case presentation is based on Bakker (2010) and Lundin and Söderholm's (1995) four themes, 'time', 'task', team', and 'context', in order to capture the general and specific dimensions of EC's returning office, as well as work out the specific relationships between the returning office's organizational structure and its embeddedness within the wider economic and organizational environment.

2: Elections Canada's Returning Office

2.1   Overview

The following case study presents a temporary organization, the returning office (RO) and its wider environment. The case is presented in five sections. The first section outlines an overview of the wider socio-cultural, historical, geographic, and economic context. It describes the RO's parent organization, Elections Canada (EC and its relationship to the RO, its organizational structure, and the cognitive relations between the people involved. The subsequent sections then describe the returning office's structural and operational components within the framework of the four conceptual themes established by Bakker (2010) and Lundin and Söderholm (1995): time, task, team, and context. The final section explores what we have learned from the EC case study.

The returning office is formed each time a Canadian federal election is held. It is created and funded by EC. In total, EC initiates 308 returning offices nation wide. All returning offices are charged with the same task: administer and deliver the vote within a fixed amount of time. Although EC strives for homogeneity in its service approach, there are vast geographic and demographic variations influencing the operational processes each office has to fulfil. For example, the Electoral District (ED) of Nunavut contains 30,000 electors in 777,000 square miles while the densely populated urban riding of Vancouver Centre has 120,000 eligible voters, making some standardized procedures a poor fit for one and adequate for the other. However, the basic operational guidelines EC distributes to the returning offices are all the same. This paper focuses on one returning office situated in an urban, metropolitan setting, the Vancouver Quadra ED. It describes the structure and context of this particular returning office only and does not attempt to analyze EC's organizational structure. I acted as the manager, or returning officer, during the 2011 federal election, in this electoral district and all observations are based on my experiences.

2.2 Parent organization and temporary organization

In Canada, temporary non-governmental workers run the provincial and federal elections at the regional level. These workers are hired and administered through local returning offices (ROs). Each RO is managed by a returning officer, who is hired and retained by EC. The returning officer puts together a team of office workers who all work towards the completion of the task: administering the vote.

EC is an independent, impartial agency, funded by the government. It provides the budget, training and overall infrastructure to the electoral process. The actual delivery and administration of the vote is conducted through the returning office. A returning officer heads each ED and represents EC during and in between elections. The returning officer has to be a Canadian citizen and permanent resident of the riding.

At the 'drop of the writ' for a federal election, the RO is created from scratch, operates throughout the electoral process and is subsequently dismantled. The electoral calendar lasts 36 days, the timeline for the returning office is anywhere between two and three months. EC provides the financial resources to run the event, but the returning officer has to find all additional necessary resources in situ, such as staff, office space, polling places, ballots, and other human resource requirements.

2.2.1 Elections Canada

EC's mission is to ensure "that Canadians can exercise their democratic rights to vote and be a candidate." Its mandate is to be independent and non-partisan, to facilitate the electoral process, and enforce electoral legislation. The values guiding EC's activities cover "a knowledgeable and professional workforce", "transparency", "responsiveness" to the needs of Canadians, "cohesiveness and consistency in administering the Canada Elections Act", "earning and maintaining the public's trust", and "stewardship and accountability" in its resource management (Elections Canada, 2012a)

EC is responsible for conducting federal elections, by-elections, and referenda. It is an independent, non-partisan office reporting directly to Parliament. The organization was created in 1920 through the Dominion Elections Act. The Act centralized electoral financial and logistical operations and established the post of Chief Electoral Officer. All

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procedures relating to election operations and the administration of the vote are written in law and have to adhere to the Canada Elections Act. EC's main duties are the administering of federal electoral legislation, registering political parties, maintaining the National Register of Electors, appointing returning officers, ensuring access to the system for all eligible citizens, and providing support to the independent commissions responsible for readjusting federal electoral boundaries. EC's website gives an overview of its responsibilities when an election is called (Elections Canada, 2012a, Ch.1):

- Preparing, managing, and delivering field operations for electoral events are central to the mandate of EC. Among a multitude of operational tasks, the main ones are:
- manage the supply of goods and services for an election, from ballot boxes to phone connections for returning offices
- print, assemble, and ship all election materials to every riding at the appropriate time
- develop the policies, procedures, manuals, forms, and tools that facilitate registering voters, voting, and managing the election
- administer the Special Voting Rules and accessibility programs that make it possible for all those who have the right to vote to exercise that right
- oversee the appointment and training of returning officers, assistant returning officers and automation coordinators, who administer the election in each electoral district
- hire and train field liaison officers, who support returning officers in their work and provide guidance and advice during and between elections
- oversee and coordinate the administration of electoral events at the riding level
- manage the registration of electors during an electoral event
- manage the voting process itself

The Chief Electoral Officer is appointed by a resolution of the House of Commons and serves until retirement or resignation. Only the Governor General can remove the CEO for cause. EC's permanent offices are in Ottawa where it employs around 500 workers between elections. During a general election, more than 235,000 positions are filled with election workers across the country. An election could be called at any time, especially when a minority government is in place. Furthermore, opportunities for a by-election or referendum can present themselves quickly and unexpectedly. Therefore, EC, its permanent staff, and the returning officers in the EDs have to be in a constant state of readiness. This requires a precise operational and strategic plan:

Elections Canada has developed numerous customized planning tools to prepare for upcoming electoral events and manage the timely deployment of services at the issue of the writs. A typical electoral event readiness plan charts more than 800 high-level, interrelated activities that must all be completed before an election. Advanced management information systems help to monitor the progress of an electoral event, at both national and local levels, against pre-set targets and benchmarks.

Strategic planning is also important to coordinate the development of longer-term organizational strategies that address emerging national trends and improve election management (Elections Canada, 2012a, Ch. 5).

In between elections, EC prepares necessary election supplies, training materials, and trains new Returning Officers. Due to EC's status as an independent agency, EC is

… funded by an annual appropriation that covers the salaries of permanent full-time employees, and by the statutory authority to draw on the Consolidated Revenue Fund contained in the Canada Elections Act, the Referendum Act and the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. The statutory authority covers all other expenditures, including the cost of preparing and conducting electoral events, maintenance of the National Register of Electors, quarterly allowances to qualifying political parties, redistribution of electoral boundaries and continuing public information and education programs. The salary of the Chief Electoral Officer and contributions to employee benefit plans are also statutory items (Elections Canada, 2012a, Ch. 13).

This statutory authority is designed to guarantee EC's independence from political and partisan influences and maintain the integrity of the democratic process.

2.2.2 Returning Office

EC's statements on mission, mandate, and values have to be followed by the ROs as well. There are 308 ROs in Canada. Many have secondary or even tertiary offices, especially in rural areas and the vast northern electoral ridings. Although EC provides the same election materials to all ROs, each office faces its very own challenges. These challenges most often are due to the geographic location and the specific demographics. For example, the urban ridings have large, dense populations and often face difficulties recruiting sufficient numbers of electoral workers. Rural ridings on the other hand have to

overcome huge distances between the various polling places and topographical challenges.

The Vancouver Quadra returning office serves the people living within the geographic boundaries of Kitsilano, Point Grey, Dunbar, Kerrisdale, South Granville, and parts of Shaughnessy. About 110,000 eligible voters reside in the area. The returning office administers the delivery and administration of the vote, provides services for candidates and their parties, offers residents the opportunity to work in the office and in the polling stations on Election Day, and conducts community outreach to promote voting. A prerequisite for the majority of the positions in the returning office and in the polling locations is proof of ED residency and Canadian citizenship. The returning officer is considered the key election officer in each ED:

> Appointed on merit by the Chief Electoral Officer through an open and competitive process, federal returning officers work under the general supervision of the Chief Electoral Officer. They receive support from the 30 field liaison officers who provide functional leadership under the direction of the Chief Electoral Officer.

> Legally, a returning officer need only be a Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, and living in the electoral district where he or she is appointed. In practice, however, the returning officer must be much more. The job is demanding and the duties varied. Along with serious commitment, detailed knowledge of the federal electoral process and a wide range of management skills are essential.

> Returning officers must abide by a code of professional conduct and must abstain from all politically partisan activities, both during and between election and referendum periods. They are appointed for a 10-year term and remain in the position for that time (unless the electoral district changes as a result of redistribution) unless they move out of the electoral district, resign or are removed for cause by the Chief Electoral Officer (Elections Canada, 2012a, Ch. 15).

After performing an oath of office and signing a contract, the returning officer needs to appoint an assistant; both are on call to start work at all times should there be an election. The EC job description touches on one of EC's dilemmas: The requirements for the returning officer's job include skills and experience, but the work opportunities are temporary and the start-up is uncertain. In other words, the dilemma is how to retain

knowledge and experience when there are no guarantees for employment. Many returning officers are self-employed or retired, and thus are able to serve repeatedly. However, many more find non-temporary employment after a successful electoral run and leave EC. Thus, after each election, EC loses part of one of its most valuable resources, the knowledge carriers in the field.

Since EC's head offices are in Ottawa, the permanent staff is physically far removed from the activities in most ROs. In order to lessen the distance, EC has implemented a Field Liaison program. During an election, the field liaison officer (FLO) is responsible for supporting a number of ROs within a geographical area, e.g., the Lower Mainland. The FLO usually is an experienced former returning officer and thus has a wealth of on-site knowledge that can be utilized when an RO is struggling. The paper will re-visit the dilemma of knowledge transfer and retention throughout the following sections.

2.3 Time Concept

The most obvious concept defining a TO is time (Bakker, 2010; Lundin & Söderholm; 1995; Jones & Lichtenstein, 2006). Bakker's analysis of themes in TO literature lists the most frequently investigated issues. For this case study, the two relevant research questions are: (a) "How should time itself be envisioned in a temporary setting?" and (b) "What is the effect of time limits on processes, functioning, behaviour and performance?". The latter relates to "issues such as time used by the participants, communication, norms, role definition, leadership, decision-making, organization structure, coordination techniques and focus" (Bakker, 2010, p. 473).

Studies concerned with research question (a) conclude that time in a temporary organization is predominantly conceived as linear and limited "to lead the way from a starting point to termination" (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995, p.440). This is different from non-temporal organizations' conceptualization of time as cyclical and spiral. Thus, TOs often regard time as a scarce and valuable resource (Bakker, 2010, p. 473). In the EC case, the entire electoral process unfolds through strict adherence to time. The timeline is linear and pressing because the timeframe and deadline for every activity and event is

prescribed by the electoral calendar. The Election Act determines this calendar. Therefore, the consequences for not meeting deadlines can be detrimental to the outcome of the election. For example, there would be legal consequences if the ballots were not printed on time. Although the prescribed amount of time allotted for each task seems reasonable and manageable, time is still scarce, because there is not much wiggle room for mistakes.

The whole team in the returning office therefore is under constant pressure to complete each task on time. Thus, in reference to key question (b), time is the foremost determinant for action, focus, local decision-making, and coordination techniques. The entire electoral process has to be completed within 36 days. The office is open twelve hours on weekdays, nine hours on Saturdays, and six on Sundays. Sometimes to complete certain tasks on time work continues beyond office hours, for example, producing the updated list of electors.

The RO teams need to check the calendar, focus on the task at hand, and complete it. The returning officer and the assistant returning officer coordinate the teams, oversee individual employees and outside contractors, and ensure that the tasks are completed on time. Each evening, they need to fill out an electronic checklist and report back to EC. The software-reporting program is designed to highlight pending or passed deadlines. If the returning officer misses a task or makes a mistake, EC will call. With the help of IT and phones, EC continuously monitors timely task completion to ensure that there are no violations of the Act. Team members do not have much decision-making power, because the tasks are clearly defined and prescribed. The returning officer is responsible for decisions that have to be made in the office. However, decisions concerning time sensitive activities need to be cleared with EC in Ottawa.

A further dimension in the discussion of what effects time has on internal and external process concerns the acquisition of resources. EC supplies all financial resources to the RO, albeit under tight control. However, the RO needs to acquire local external resources such as office space, paper for voters lists, and ballots. The most difficult resources to acquire are the electoral workers. To run an election in Vancouver Quadra, about 800 electoral workers have to be hired and trained within 30 days. It is a constant

struggle to reach that number and to maintain it. Hired workers cancel and new ones have to be found. On the other hand, care has to be taken not to hire too many and waste precious funds. EC aids in the hiring process by supplying support through advertisements and on-line application processes.

In a situation like the above, the FLO can be very effective. The FLO is an experienced former returning officer who has extensive local knowledge, and thus can support a more inexperienced RO. Also, a FLO can monitor the ROs, spot brewing trouble on the ground, and assist before the situation escalates. In addition, the FLO is able to evaluate local returning offices and report back to EC.

The office needs to balance the resources supplied by EC with those it needs to acquire. However, this balancing act is mostly nominal. It is part of the process of interaction between EC and the RO. EC is trying to keep a tight control over how the RO spends the financial resources, and has structured its resource dispersion accordingly. If time becomes scarce and a task cannot be completed with the available financial resources at hand, EC will supply more money. In effect then, EC tightly monitors the RO, and the office has very little discretion over its financial resources. On the other hand, the RO knows that the financial resource supply is stable and will cover any emergencies.

In summary, time is seen as linear and limited. Time limits are determined by the Elections Act through the electoral calendar. Time is experienced as scarce and fleeting. The pressure to complete all tasks within the pre-set time is high and has to be managed accordingly by the returning officer and the assistant returning officer. The parent organization, EC, supports the RO with finances and knowledge to ensure a successful task completion.

2.4 Team Concept

The second concept, team, addresses the interdependence between the temporary nature of employment and the formation and functioning of teams. Studies that investigate this relationship usually focus on "a collective of individual people rather than organizational entities" (Bakker, 2010, p. 475). The majority of literature reviewed

focuses on project-based work within an intra-organizational or inter-organizational setting. The basic assumption is that project-based TOs "depend on interdependent sets of diverse skills and knowledge sets" (Bakker, 2010, p. 475). The team is the unit of analysis and the major topics of investigation concern human resources, skill sets, and the interdependence of working in a temporary and thus relatively uncertain environment. The key questions investigate: (a) how people develop confidence in their own skills and those of the team members in an uncertain environment; (b) how people communicate their specific knowledge to the team members; and (c) how these teams are managed.

The first research question has only limited relevance for this paper. Three issues are pertinent here. First, there are no distinct teams with special skill sets. Second, individuals work at different times of day, on different dates, and within different time frames. Third, the environment is not uncertain.

First, one could regard all employees in the returning office as members of one large team working on separate tasks towards a shared goal. The majority of workers in the RO are interchangeable. The organizational structure of the RO is quite flat. Although there are different departments, such as IT, Special Voting, Payroll, Training, and Recruiting (see Table 1), the skill sets required for each department are not diverse, and few employees have specialized knowledge. Some jobs, such as the IT officer and financial officer, are hired because of their special skill set. However, with appropriate training, most of the tasks can be performed by most people. Thus, one of the elements in Bakker's definition of temporary teams, namely the coming together of people with diverse and specialized sets of knowledge and skills, applies to the teams in the RO only in a limited way. In the returning office, people develop confidence in their skills on the job, and if they cannot do so, they leave or are let go.

The second pertinent issue related to team confidence is that the employees in the returning office are not working together as a homogeneous team. As Table 1 shows, different people work for different lengths of time. Therefore, knowledge is tied to specific tasks. A balance has to be struck between the time requirements of a task and the availability of the workers. Some individuals or groups only work in the office for a couple of days (i.e., labelling the voters cards). Others do not work together, but perform

the same job at sequential times (i.e., the special voting officers). Furthermore, some people perform a number of jobs and try to earn as many hours as possible. This varies from teams in project-based TOs that work together collaboratively within the same time periods.

Organizational Area	Position	Responsibilities	Time Employed
Executive	RO	Manages and oversees entire electoral process	90 days
	ARO	Assistant and Deputy to the RO	75 days
	Financial Officer	Balances budget, handles all accounts, payroll	60 days
IT	Automation coordinator + assistant	Oversees IT infrastructure of RO office, manages IT side of revision, voters list and ballots, ensures that votes are correctly reported in the system and that technology communications with headquarters are clear	55 days
Revision	Revision supervisor and 6-12 staff	Organizes the enumeration prior to the election, supervises up to 14 staff	21 days
Recruitment	Up to three full-time positions	Selects, interviews and hires over 800 election workers for Advance Poll and Polling Day	33 days
Special Voting	2 full-time positions	Administers and organizes the vote at the office for individuals who cannot vote on polling day. Also responsible for hospital voting	36 days
Trainer	1 full-time position	Trains election workers for Advance Voting Day and Polling Day	20-25 days
Community Relations	Part-time positions: seniors, youth. First Nations, the homeless	Outreach work to promote and help facilitate voting for marginal electors.	33 hours each
Inventory & Shipping/Receiving	1 full-time position		35 days
Office manager and general office staff	Up to 7 positions	General office work, reception, telephones,	As needed

Table 1. Returning office organizational structure

The third issue relating to team confidence is that there is no inherent uncertainty or risk in the EC jobs. All employees know the electoral calendar and the exact timeframe of their employment. Therefore, teams do not experience stress regarding future employment. Many employees regard the work in the returning office as a time-filler, an opportunity to do something different, or fulfilling the desire to participate in the democratic process; it is not an overt part of their career. This situation corresponds with

the topics in Bakker's review summaries (Bakker, 2010, p. 475). Although there are people who repeatedly work in election related jobs, there is no industry based job market, such as in the film industry (Blechky, 2006; Daskali, 2010). Election office workers cannot rely on the connections forged in the returning office to guarantee future employment. Thus, networking relationships are less important than forging good relations in order to simply get along while working together.

Teamwork in the returning office consists of individual tasks that sometimes are performed within a group. Thus, the second research question, 'how people communicate their specific knowledge to the team members', is more an issue of whether the returning officer creates a culture based on collaboration or prefers to assign individuals to special tasks. There is little need for team building or strategies for good team design. Instead, the "face-to-face interaction … is structured by role-related behaviour, the specifics of which are only negotiated *in situ*" (Bakker, 2010, p.475). In addition, there is not much time for interpersonal issues, and therefore, communication between individuals, groups, and management revolves around the tasks at hand. In some offices, the returning officer forms a personal bond with the assistant. They share their responsibilities and approach their duties as a team. However, observational data also show that in, many offices, the opposite occurs and interpersonal relations between the management team are not desirable.

This observation leads to the third research question 'how these teams are managed' in the returning office. The role of the returning officer is to communicate with the employees and coordinate their activities. However, the question of how this is accomplished depends on the personality, style, and views of the returning officer. EC does not provide any explicit training in "soft" management techniques or strategies. Rather, it provides a series of job descriptions and objectives that need to be accomplished. Thus, it is up to the manager to decide whether to pursue a "hard" line, that is task-based with little to no inter-personal interactions, or a choose a "soft" approach that is more relationship oriented and renders the assignments more transparent for all. Observational data shows that both approaches are employed in returning offices. It is beyond the scope of this paper to perform a comparative analysis of management styles in all 308 offices.

To summarize, the workforce in the returning office only partially complies with Bakker's classification of teams in TOs. The organizational structure of the returning office is rather flat, the work is more individually task based rather than team based, and the required skills are interchangeable. The entire workforce can be regarded as a team, but it depends on the returning officer's preference whether the office operates on an interpersonal and collaborative basis or whether the work is accomplished in an individualistic, task-based manner.

2.5 Task Concept

Task, as the third conceptual dimension for a TO, is often seen as the *raison d'être* for creating a TO, because "a temporary organization is motivated by a task that must be accomplished" (Lundin & Söderholm 1995, p.441). As Bakker (2010) shows, research on task completion in temporary organizations most frequently addresses (a) the diversity and complexity of tasks performed; (b) the effects of tasks on knowledge creation and dispersion after the TO ends; and (c) the degrees of effectiveness on task completion within a finite setting (Bakker, 2010, p. 478).

Bakker's research questions are drawn from studies that focus on project based temporary organizations. Generally, these TOs are formed by two or more permanent organizations to collaborate on projects that are not part of the firms' main focus, try out new ideas, or bring about some kind of change. The returning office is similar to a project-based TO in that it is created to accomplish a task; however, it differs on two major dimensions. First, the returning office is created to run a specific event, not to perform experimental tasks, bring about change for its parent organization, or complete special inter-organizational projects (Kenis, 2009). Second, the task, running an election, is repeated each time an election is called. Each time a new TO is created, the same task has to be fulfilled. EC, due to the sequential creation of returning offices, has gained a vast amount knowledge and experience over the years. It uses this experience to plan future events and not as a change element for EC as an organization. Therefore, only research questions (b) 'knowledge dispersion' and (c) 'degrees of effectiveness' are of interest in this case analysis, the EC returning office as a TO.

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The most obvious response to research question (b), 'how can knowledge be retained for the returning office?', is to evaluate EC's role as the primary agent to collect and disperse knowledge. However, EC is geographically removed from the TO and has no, or very little, local knowledge. Thus, EC is only able to gather aggregate knowledge. For example, during an election period, EC makes efforts to capture new knowledge via electronic questionnaires and post mortem feedback sessions. Subsequently, the results are included in new training manuals and operational procedures. Results are also discussed with returning officers during regional information sessions. However, there are no formal methods to disperse local knowledge and individual experience from one returning officer to the next. Therefore, local knowledge either is lost or is dispersed in an informal way. The latter can become quite problematic, because local informal knowledge can veer into gossip and quickly become unprofessional.

Informal knowledge dispersion in the office also happens via returning staff. While experienced workers are valued for their knowledge, they sometimes can turn into an obstacle when they rely on their past knowledge too much and become unwillingness to learn new ideas and procedures. As a result, mistakes can be made that may cost time and money. This behaviour relates to Sorenson and Waguespack's (2006) study on film projects, which found that projects with close ties to prior relationships ultimately perform less well.

The latter observation leads to Bakker's second research question (b) concerning the degrees of effectiveness within a finite setting. In order to be effective, meaning successful, TOs need to run efficient internal processes (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Mistakes can cost time and money and therefore hinder efficiency. Low efficiency is a threat to successful task completion because the time line in the returning office is very tight and does not allow for errors. Therefore, to be efficient means to reduce mistakes and the best way to reduce mistakes is to train the electoral workers well. At present, EC trains new returning officers, assistant returning officers, and automation officers in Ottawa and offers regional tune-up sessions for existing returning officers. The returning officer is responsible for transmitting new procedures to the assistant and for training all key office personnel. Since time is in scarce supply and management styles differ, the delivery of new knowledge depends on the training and time management capabilities of

the returning officer. This then contributes to varying degrees of efficiency and effectiveness in the various returning offices. It is beyond the scope of this paper to delve further into the issues of knowledge dispersion. A long-term and more intense study into the relationship between EC and its returning offices with regard to task completion, learning, and knowledge dispersion could add new dimensions to the current discussions on this perspective.

2.6   Context concept

The fourth theme in Bakker's (2010) literature review on temporary organizations is context. By context refers to an organization's wider social and organizational environment. Bakker reiterates that the context theme is a relatively recent phenomenon in organization theory. As has been pointed out, Bakker's review focuses predominantly on literature covering two types of temporary organizational structures: project based organizations (PBOs) created by two or more parent organizations with the purpose of collaborating on a common task or industry based TOs that bring together experts with diverse skills to collaborate on a finite project. Given this paradigm, Bakker states that, in organization theory, the analysis of context related issues occur on two levels: "the level of the firm (mostly a PBO) and the level of the wider social context (mostly a project-based industry or community of practice)" (Bakker, 2010, p. 479). In the literature, the dominant theme in the PBO analysis is a focus on the sustainability of knowledge for the benefit of the enduring firm. "Indeed, how enduring benefits are achieved from temporary organizational forms through learning seems to be currently one of the hot issues in the body of literature" (Bakker, 2010, p. 480). As outlined in previous sections, this topic is not applicable to the relationship between EC and the returning office.

However, research questions dealing with an organization's wider environment do have applicable value for the analysis of the returning office. According to Bakker, the key questions asked in the majority of context studies relate to the "impact of embeddedness in a wider exterior context on interior processes in temporary organizational systems" (Bakker, 2010, p. 480). The wider environment is defined as a TO's embeddedness in its non-temporary organizational context, wider social and interpersonal context, as well as its epistemic and industrial context. Thus, relationships

between structural, social and institutional contexts and processes, such as specified project practices, coordination of project networks, and work pacing are investigated.

Again, these relationships are investigated within the paradigm of non-temporary firms that are using projects to realize new ideas or industry based TOs that draw from the same resources in order to complete new projects. This is contrary to the paradigm within which EC's RO operates, because the office's organizational structure and the task it needs to perform is always the same. The RO is always embedded in the same permanent organizational structure and socio-cultural environment, namely EC. However, the wider local environment is always different. Not only is it is different for each returning office during the same electoral event, but it also differs from one electoral event to the next.

While the pacing of the electoral process remains largely the same because it is tied to the electoral calendar, changes in the wider environment have consequences for coordination processes and administrative practices in the ROs. There are two basic types of externalities (see Table 2): those that can be influenced by people, such as agencies, suppliers, and voters, and those that cannot, such as time and geographical place. For example, an important contextual variable that affects processes is the location and size of the office. In an urban area, it is very difficult to find an office large enough to house all departments, employees, and activities. Sometimes, the office has to be split into two or three physical spaces, resulting in more complex processes for coordinating between the different departments, e.g., training and recruiting. In large rural EDs, geographical distance is a huge variable that has a significant impact on processes. Many rural EDs have secondary returning offices to overcome the vast distances between the polling places and serve the voters in outlying communities. The day-to-day activities in rural offices vary greatly from those in a densely populated, urban setting. Another contextual variable is the time and date of the election. For example, the 2011 election was held in May, just shortly after the universities had closed. For EDs close to universities, this reduced the number of student available to work and required extra efforts to fill all required positions.

External Variables	Impact on internal processes and coordination
Outside agencies	The RO has to work with hospitals and residential care facilities in order to administer the vote to as many people as possible. Appropriate practices depend on the facilities' willingness to cooperate.
Voting places	In between elections, the RO has to update the list of facilities and secure as many places as possible. However, outside forces can cause major upheaval in the availability of voting places, e.g. such as a strike by city workers that shuts down community centres, or a holiday celebration closing churches to any electoral activities. Changes in voting places have impact on allocation of resources, such as Election Day workers, rents, supplies and time.
Outside suppliers	These include office equipment stores, furniture rentals, printing companies, realtors, janitorial services, and mechanical services to help with building deficiencies. All business activities have to be approved by head office, and therefore, changes have consequences on coordination processes
Candidates and political parties	They deal directly with EC for day-to-day business. However, the RO should make extra efforts in building congenial relationships with all candidates and parties and communicate the work of the returning office. This way, should there be any incidents out of the ordinary, the issues might be resolved amicably, with as little impact on resources and processes as possible.
Voters and the general public	The public can come to the office during office hours and vote there. The majority of voters however only come into contact with Election Day workers at the Advance polls or on Election Day. EC's services are geared to deliver the vote to as many people as possible. Therefore, the essential practices as well as alternatives to accomplish this task are already in place, but of course, there is always room for more

Table 2. External Variables on the returning office and their impact on internal processes

Other changing variables within the wider external environment include various agencies, facilities that host voting places, suppliers, candidates and their political parties, as well as the voters. Table 2 gives a brief overview of those external variables that can be influenced by people and the effects these actions have on procedures.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to perform a more extensive analysis of coordination practices across different settings. Future research could focus on a comparative analysis between urban and rural returning offices to develop a more thorough understanding of how temporary organizations coordinate similar types of activities under very different conditions. Let us now turn to the next section and explore what we can learn from the case study of EC.

2.7   Learning from Elections Canada

In the following section, the EC case study is briefly examined further to ascertain understandings that might be new for managers and researchers of temporary and permanent organizations alike. The discussion also introduces the limitations of EC as a case study for the full spectrum of TOs. The assumption is that specific case studies can highlight organizational relationships that are useful for those who work within this environment as well as those who approach the topic from a general and academic point of view. Bakker (2010) points out that most TO studies are conceptual rather than empirical. He concludes that there is a need for more controlled studies as well as field research.

In Bakker's view, the most pressing research gaps concern questions of group dynamics and leadership in TOs. For example, how do TOs deal with the notion of time and temporariness and what effect do temporary work parameters have on interpersonal relationships? Bakker also asks how these considerations "…relate to performance (i.e. is it necessary for temporary teams to develop … phenomena such as team identity and a positive group climate, when all they need to do is a accomplish as short-term task?)?" Further, when does TO leadership prefer a task-related approach and when does it lean to cooperation and social relations (Bakker, 2010, p.474)?

The EC case can provide some insight, because RO management has to grapple with these questions as well. There is a dichotomy between the wish to create a positive group climate on the one hand and the necessity to have tasks accomplished on time. The overarching issue is the relentlessness with which time marches on. Therefore, leadership has to focus on tasks first and on social relations second. However, observations show that EC staff in the returning office position themselves socially very quickly by creating personal boundaries, forming friendships and animosities, as well as establishing small hierarchies within teams. Furthermore, observations of ROs who elevate a task-related approach to their primary *modus operandi* reveal that this can result in a dysfunctional office. The work may still be completed but the overall well-being and satisfaction of the workers is at risk. Moreover, a strictly task-related approach may have consequences on the quality of work, resulting in a possible compromise of legal and ethical correctness.

Therefore, it might be a mistake to dismiss interpersonal relations within the TO, however short the timeframe for task completion is.

Another issue discussed in organization literature is the relationship between external resources and task completion (Bakker, et al., 2009). One of the questions is, if TOs are entirely dependent on their POs for their financial resources, what are the power relationships between the two, and how much influence do power relations have on the TO's day-to-day operation? For example, EC supplies all financial resources to the RO and exercises full control over its dispersion. However, the RO is responsible for acquiring local resources, such as office space, voting locations, suppliers, and election workers. Some of these resources are unstable and outside EC's control. Thus, it is up to the manager's ability and discretion to ensure all external resources are properly aligned and dispersed. Although EC will support the RO in every way in order to accomplish the task, the degrees of efficiency and effectiveness for completing the tasks depend on the returning officer's management ability and leadership style.

The question for EC then is how to control the manager in order to guarantee a successful task completion? In response, as introduced in Section 2.3, EC has implemented the FLO position to acts as an in-between mediator and mentor. The FLO is familiar with the geographic area and supports several regional ROs. Therefore, the FLO can spot problem areas on the ground, is able to advise the RO, and can provide feedback to EC. In this way, the one sided flow of power is somewhat mitigated and the relationships are more flexible. Furthermore, local knowledge aids in the creation of problem solutions and ensures a more transparent workflow.

Resource reliance and power relationships between TOs and POs are not only of interest when discussing intra-organizational issues, but should be included when examining the context theme. This will facilitate the examination of ties TOs have to their POs and extend the unit of analysis to include the wider socio-cultural, economic, and geographical environment. In this context, questions of dependence raise questions of autonomy. For example, if the TO itself needs to acquire a large portion of external resources, how much autonomy can it demand and how much discretionary decision-making power does the manager have?

At this point in the case analysis, it becomes apparent that Bakker's (2010) context theme needs to be expanded to include issues of resource access. In fact, the theoretical approach should move beyond a literature focusing on how temporary structures operate and how they are managed because issues such as control, dependencies, and power relationships extend these functional parameters.

Thus, research drawn from the field of resource dependence theory (RDT) can assist in applying general concepts of autonomy and dependence to the EC case. At the heart of RDT is the notion that organizational behaviour is influenced by external factors, especially by an organization's access to external resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). External resources are most often controlled by others; thus "organizations attempt to reduce other's power over them, often attempting to increase their own power over others" (Hill, et al., 2009, p.1404). The EC case study shows that TOs can function successfully even though the power relationship remains one-sided throughout the TO's lifetime in favour of the PO. In turn, the TO does not make any attempt to gain more autonomy, but in fact strives to be as close as possible to EC in order to take advantage of as much support as needed.

Here it becomes clear that the power and control relationships in the EC case study are pretty straightforward. In fact, the EC case does not provide sufficient information to generalize themes of dependence and autonomy. These themes should be investigated in a comparative analysis of other temporary structures.

Given the literature, it is evident that the returning office is but one small part of a continuum of different kinds of temporary organizations. However, there is no literature containing an analysis of TO differentiation, nor could I find a typology or taxonomy of TOs. It is beyond the scope of this paper to conduct more case studies in order to perform comparative analysis. Instead, I decided to search the literature for classification dimensions that would allow a useful typology of TOs. In this way, I hope to provide a first step toward future research on TO variation. Therefore, Chapter 4 presents a more extensive review of organization literature relevant for the development of a TO typology and provides a first attempt at a typology model that can be useful for the classification of different forms of temporary structures.

3: Extending the case - A typology of temporary organizations

This chapter moves away from the case study, EC's returning office. In the course of analysis, it has emerged that the RO in the EC structure is but one kind of temporary organization and that there are numerous variations of temporary structures. While a focus on one kind of TO is helpful to examine themes from the literature, it is too narrow to develop any kind of comparison or generalization. I have to concur with Bakker who also concluded that there is a heightened need for new studies concerning the systematic identification of "different types of temporary organizational forms", as well as "future research to go in-depth into … particular areas …" (Bakker, 2010, p. 482). Therefore, , I would like to extend my research to other forms of temporary structures and try to develop a more comprehensive characterization, or typology, that might be useful to guide future research on TOs.

This chapter is divided into two major parts. The first part will extend the literature review from TO specific studies (Chapter 1) to other areas of organization theory in order to find a range of temporary organizations. The typology itself is based on differentiating dimensions found in RDT. The second part examines this literature and subsequently applies it to model developments of TOs. It is hoped that this approach will contribute not only to the management of EC's returning office but also to the understanding of TOs in general.

3.1 Placing temporary organizations

The topic of TOs as a separate unit of research in organization structure is relatively new. TO literature emerged in the sixties and seventies from general organization theory, primarily originating in the biomedical and technological sectors (Janowicz-Panjaitan, et al., 2009), with a particular focus on project management, networking, and organization formation. These areas of research inform each other, and there are no clear boundaries between them. This chapter does not provide a

comprehensive overview of organization theory, but expands on the review in Chapter 1 to draw attention to the empirical and theoretical foundation of TO research.

Organization theory, in most general terms, is concerned with the functioning of an organization. Over the years, many paradigms have developed within this body of literature, ranging from functional, operational analyses to much broader approaches that place organizations into varied socio-political and economic contexts (Aldrich & Ruef 2006).

Project management studies place the project at the centre of investigation, examining how it is developed and managed from inception to completion. These studies tend to focus on projects executed in-house, projects that are subcontracted out, or projects that are completed through collaboration of two or more organizations (Whitley, 2006; Shenhar & Dvir, 1996; Kreiner, 1995).

Network studies expand this approach and look at the firm and its essential relationships to the wider environment, such as its suppliers, providers, customers, other unrelated companies, and competitors (Ebers, 1997). Studies on organization formation apply networking theories and models to investigate how the relationships between entrepreneurs, resource providers, as well as the legal and political establishment, interact in the evolution of an emerging firm (Larson & Starr, 1993). Furthermore, they investigate the necessary boundaries that set organizations apart from their surroundings (Katz & Gartner, 1988; Ruef, 2010). Additionally, there is a large body of literature, which focuses on organization formation through networking, that derives theories from sociology and anthropology (McPhail, 2006, 2012; Tuckman, 1965; Goffman, 1963).

The majority of current research still uses the project as its analytical focal point, rather than the organizational structure that has developed around it. These TOs are created by one or more parent organizations in order to complete a project (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2007; see also Chapter 1). However, some recent publications conclude that an analysis focusing on the project is too narrow as it neglects broader components entering the process. For example, Turner & Müller (2003), concede that Turner's earlier definitions of projects and project management are static and incomplete for two reasons. First, they neglect to analyse the project's position as vehicle of change and uncertainty,

and second, they do not define the operational and structural relationships between TOs and POs, e.g., the role of the project manager as one side of the principal-agent relationship.

Another body of literature focuses on organizations whose existential *raison d'être* is to work on projects. The unit of analysis here is not the project itself but the project-based organization (PBO) (Sydow, 2004; Whitley, 2006). The firms are often industry based and forgo the organizational boundaries of a traditional permanent enterprise by creating a financial and legal body that can be dissolved at any time. They structure their work around temporary projects, bring individual experts together, and rely on a network of collaborations. These TOs predominantly produce highly innovative products and find niche markets that can exist alongside larger companies, e.g., small entrepreneurial firms in the biotechnology industry or in Silicon Valley's technology sector (Whiteley, 2006).

This organizational form is akin to Mintzberg's (1979) model of Adhocracy. It is characterized by elements such as a dynamic and complex environment enabling sophisticated innovation and unique outputs, multidisciplinary and temporary teams, semiformal structural coordination, and decentralized organization (Mintzberg & McHugh, 2007, p. 72).

Temporary projects initiated by only one PO are viewed as intra-organizational structures and thus fall under the intra-organizational, project management type of analysis. However, there are TOs that are not simply intra-organizational projects even though they are created by one PO only. Instead, these TOs, although rooted within the PO, are often geographically distant and administratively separate organizations. They are created to fulfil a task, or run an event, such as the subject of this paper's case study, EC's returning office.

Formation	Purpose	Example
TOs created by 2 or more POs Inter-organizational	• Project focused • Projects are often initiated to enable innovation and change	Engineering Architecture & construction Film making
TO's created by one PO Intra-organizational	• Project focused • Project falls outside regular PO activity, but is administered from within the PO • Projects are often initiated to enable innovation and change	Bio-chemistry industry Engineering Construction
TO's created by one PO PO's purpose is to manage TO	• Project focused • Project often consist of a linear task such as organizing a conference	Election Canada returning office Event management
Project based Organization (PBO) PO provides legal and financial body only	• Project focused • Industry based experts • Strong network of actors	Construction Information technology Film Making
Self-starting TOs	• Project focused	Pop-up shops

(left margin: endogenous ↑ ↓ exogenous)

Table 3. Formation and Purpose of Temporary Organizations

Table 3 shows the variety of TOs based on how they were formed and what their foremost purpose is. However, it becomes apparent that the boundaries are not clear at all. For example, TOs completing construction projects can be formed as inter-organizational collaborations, as intra-organizational projects, or by industry based PBOs who assemble a range of experts with different skills. Thus, to classify TOs by the kind of work they do is pointless.

It is also futile to classify TOs by their purpose, because all TOs assemble to pursue a project or task within a finite timeframe. As Bakker (2010) notes, the emphasis for a TO is on action; getting the job done (see definition in Chapter 1). This leaves column one, formation, as a distinguishing dimension. The way in which TOs are formed is a differentiating variable between the TOs and how they operate. For example, TOs created by two or more POs need to have management strategies in place that further the collaboration between the POs on the one hand and the TOs on the other. TOs created by

one PO, e.g., the returning office, are firmly embedded within that organization and most likely share all or some of their infrastructure with the PO.

The last row in Table 4 characterizes TOs that have not been created by an outside organization, but have self-started. They have formed endogenously, or emerged from an assembly of people, such as independent film makers, small charities, or most recently, pop-up restaurants. Phenomena such as flash-mobs could also be included here, although it might seem that this organizational type would better examined within the field of crowd sociology (Blumer, 1969; McPhail, 1991, 2012). A more detailed discussion of this organizational form will follow in the next section. I simply want to emphasize here that it is impossible to classify different kinds of TOs by their purpose and type of work.

However, it seems reasonable to differentiate among TOs by the way they have been formed. TO formation seems to happen on a continuum, from self-starters, or endogenous organizations, to those created externally by one or more permanent organizations. There are no clear boundaries among the different kinds, instead they exist on a spectrum stretching between the two extremes: endogenous and exogenous formations.

The above classification is one-dimensional and lacking in distinguishing features. In order to devise a typology, there need to be some additional differentiating dimensions. TOs' internal structures do not differ fundamentally, a characteristic described in Chapter 1. However, as the literature review shows, there are differences in the way TOs interact with their external environment.

During the past five years or so, studies on temporary systems have moved beyond a project-centred view and embraced factors such as history and the wider physical and organizational environment (Engwall, 2003). These studies develop a more general approach to the effects of time and temporality on organizational systems in order to contribute new insights to the body of organizational theory in general (Goodman et al., 2001). For example, Patrick Kenis and his research group from Tilburg University in the Netherlands state that there is a void of studies that regard temporary organizations as

"unique form of organizing, a uniqueness, … that is strongly linked to the very fact that they are temporary" (Kenis, Janowic-Panjaitan & Cambré, 2009, p.xiv).

Bakker (2010) echoes this sentiment and portrays research on a TO's lasting environment as an underrepresented area, especially research on organizational links between TOs and POs, management hierarchies in the TO versus the PO, as well as human resource issues arising from the special circumstances surrounding temporary employment. In an earlier paper (Bakker et al., 2009), the authors point to a lack of studies focusing on the role of resources in the creation and operation of temporary organizations. One reason for this omission could be that most studies are biased towards project-based temporary structures. These TOs are securely funded by their non-temporary POs and thus have a stable external resource base that simply has not been worth investigating.

It is argued in this paper that all TOs have to interact with the wider environment, especially when accessing and dispersing resources. The analysis of the EC case study shows that questions around resources also involve questions about power and control between PO and TO (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, the case shows that there are varying degrees of resource stability, e.g., the returning office itself has to find part of the resources it needs. It is argued that the degree of resource dependence and stability can be regarded as a characteristic aspect distinguishing one TO from another. Thus, the degree of resource stability can be used as a differentiating dimension in the construction of a typology. The following chapter expands on this proposition, grounds it in the literature, and develops a model for the positioning of different types of temporary forms.

3.2   Positioning the temporary organization

This section presents a brief literature review on the resource relationships in TOs. It describes two branches of analysis, the resource based view (RBV) and the RDT, and subsequently chooses RDT is a more appropriate analytical approach.

In general, resources are important to any organization, be they permanent or temporary. They are critical to building the internal structure and ensuring on-going operations. Resources are defined as "…anything which could be thought of as a strength

or weakness of a given firm. More formally, a firm's resources at a given time could be defined as those (tangible and intangible) assets which are tied semi permanently to the firm" (Wernerfelt, 1984, p. 172). A generally accepted resource taxonomy includes physical, human, financial, information technology, marketing, organizational, and legal resources (Shapiro, 2009, p. 310).

Much like start-ups, TOs require a combination of tangible and non-tangible resources when they begin. These resources have to be acquired externally and are often supplied by one or more non-temporary organizations or sponsors. TOs may be able to generate additional resources during their operation and build up assets and reserves, but most TOs remain dependent in one way or another on external funds. Moreover, TOs have to negotiate these resources afresh each time a new TO is started. However, there are differences in the types, sources, and ways a TO can access resources. Given the basic premise that organizations and TOs depend on external resources, then, in order to develop differentiating characteristics, it is necessary to analyze the kind and scope of a TOs resources, the sources from which a TO can draw, and whether the available resources are stable and secure throughout its existence.

There are two major theoretical approaches, the RBV and the RDT. Broadly speaking, both approaches see resources as the key to survival of the organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), and therefore make it their primary point of analysis. The RBV focuses on the role of resources within the competitive advantage paradigm. Wernerfelt (1984) developed this approach by applying Porter's five competitive forces to the study of resources. The basic premise holds that firms, who manage their internal resources in such a way that others cannot copy them, can achieve sustainable competitive advantage. As Barney (1991) argued, these resources are "… valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and not substitutable. These resources and capabilities can be viewed as tangible and intangible assets, including a firm's management skills, its organizational processes and routines, and the information and knowledge it controls" (Barney, et al. 2001, p. 625). Resource based competitive advantage allows firms to create barriers. This of course would create issues with TOs, because they are entirely or partially dependent on external resources. Furthermore, TOs do not tend to focus on a sustainable competitive strategy, but need to get certain tasks done at which point they

are terminated. In conclusion, the RBV view proves not to be an ideal vantage for TO analysis.

RDT, on the other hand, focuses on how external resources can influence an organization's performance, and thus, it is a more suitable concept for TO analysis. Much like contemporary organization theory (see Chapter 1 and Section 4.1), RDT theory is grounded in the notion that organizations are not independent entities unto themselves, but that they are embedded in their social, political, and economic context. Pfeffer and Salancik (2003, 1978), in their classic RDT treatise, show that organizational performance concerning decision-making, selection of boards, choice of alliances, and mergers is dependent on the context and social environment of the organization. Rather than focus on the way an organization manages its resources or "…on internal dynamics and the values and beliefs of leaders", RDT analyses "situations in which organizations were located and the pressures and constraints that emanated from those situations" (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. xi).

The basic premise is that organizations depend on external resources and their survival is determined by their effectiveness in acquiring and managing these resources:

> … effectiveness derives from the management of demands, particularly the demands of interest groups upon which the organizations depend for resources and demands…. The key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources. This problem would be simplified if organizations were in complete control of all the components necessary for their operation. However, no organization is completely self-contained. Organizations are embedded in an environment comprised of other organizations. They depend on those other organizations for the many resources they themselves require. Organizations are linked to environments by federations, associations, customer-supplier relationships, competitive relationships, and a social-legal apparatus defining and controlling the nature and limits of these relationships. Organizations must transact with other elements in their environment to acquire needed resources, and this is true whether we are talking about public organizations, private organizations, small or large organizations, or organizations which are bureaucratic (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 2).

The central notion is that external resources are not reliable. Even if stable financial resources are assured, such as in the EC case study, the contextual environment continuously changes. Therefore, the supply of external resources, such as labour and

services, changes. This has consequences on both the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. Efficiency is an internal measure to assess an organization's performance, such as evaluating the ratio of resources used to the productivity of the firm. Effectiveness on the other hand is an organization's

> … ability to create acceptable outcomes and actions…. The difference between the two concepts is at the heart of the external versus the internal perspective on organizations. Organizational effectiveness is an *external* standard of how well an organization is meeting the demands of the various groups and organizations that are concerned with its activities. …The organization can and does manipulate, influence, and create acceptability for itself and its activities (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 11).

Effectiveness as external performance standard is not only relevant to permanent organizations, but can be applied to temporary organizations as well. How, when, and where a TO acquires its necessary resources, and how well it meets the demands of those it serves, is at the heart of its existence. Even though the TO's lifespan is pre-determined and short, it still has to meet external challenges similar to a permanent organization. If it fails to meet them, it will not exercise its full potential, nor will it serve its employees. Therefore, TO managers and team members cannot act in a space unto themselves but need to operate within the realities of the TO's external environment.

According to the RDT concept, organizations are not autonomous, independent units, but are in an interdependent relationship with other organizations. These organizations vie for the same resources, are themselves the resource suppliers, or want to control available resources. They may be competing firms, suppliers of raw material, regulatory bodies such as social service agencies, special interest groups, or financial institutions. According to Pfeffer and Salancik, "interdependence is important to an organization because of the impact it has on the ability of the organization to achieve its desired outcomes" (2003, p.41). For example, degree of interdependence between firms vying for the same resources fluctuates with the amount of available resources. The higher the amount of resources available, the lower the interdependence. The degree of interdependence also fluctuates with the level of self-containment of an organization. The less self-contained it is, the more interdependent it has to be to survive. For example, the returning office at EC is a physically independent office with its own management and

organizational structure, but it has little independent decision-making power, and therefore relies on the PO for its operational directives and resources.

Interdependence creates uncertainty because organizations can never be certain that the external environment will meet their needs. Therefore, organizations strive to control and influence the external environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 43). Since external resources are most often controlled by others, "organizations attempt to reduce other's power over them, often attempting to increase their own power over others" (Hill, et al., 2009, p.1404). As well, firms will comply with control attempts by others. For example, a firm will comply when it needs a resource critical to its operation, but which it does not have access to or control over. It will also comply if it desires to survive (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 44). In general, "attempts are made to obtain more control over important resources, to obtain better access to information in order to assess the organizations actions and outcomes, and to increase the importance of what the organization supplies" (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 45). The question of who is in control of the external environment often depends on who has discretion over the allocation of resources.

Such discretion is a major source of power and becomes more important when the resource is scarce. In an environment dense with organizations and interest groups immersed in a variety of laws and norms, discretion is rarely absolute. More commonly, there are degrees of shared discretion (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 48).

The degree of an organization's control over external resources consequently determines its degree of dependence on other organizations. "Dependence can then be defined as the product of importance of a given input or output to the organization and the extent to which it is controlled by a relatively few organizations" (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 51). The less an organization owns or controls access to the resources it needs to survive, the more dependent it is on external sources to supply these. As a result, the exchange relationship between these organizations is asymmetrical; one is more powerful than the other. Asymmetry, of course, is the basis for a power structure where one organization has significantly more influence over the other (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003, p. 56). To gain more independence and autonomy, and to be an effective organization then

is to intimately know the external environment, identify where and with whom to build alliances, and meet the demands of those who are willing to provide support.

Bakker et al. (2009) apply Pfeffer and Salancik's concepts of resource dependence, organizational interdependence, and effectiveness to the analysis of resource dependence in temporary organizations, in order to develop classifications, or degrees of variation between temporary organizations. The kinds of TOs discussed are those created by at least two permanent organizations and do not address one-parent or self-starting organizations. However, it is still worthwhile to pursue this line of argument here because it represents a starting point for a more comprehensive attempt at a typology for TOs.

Bakker et al. (2009) observe that, at least initially, the TO is completely dependent on the POs that provide all resources and therefore hold power and control. To be effective, a TO needs autonomy, much like a permanent organization. The predominant distinguisher between TOs then is the level of autonomy a TO is able to obtain from its PO. Bakker suggests that temporary organizations have the same problem as permanent organizations: they are embedded in a wider social context and have to rely on other organizations to meet their needs. At the same time, they strive for greater control and autonomy in order to increase their effectiveness. "The underlying dilemma is well known as the autonomy dependency dilemma: organizations want to maximize discretion to modify (future) actions (autonomy), yet, at the same time, organizations need resources owned by other organizational entities (dependence)" (Bakker et al., 2009, p. 205). The TO then has to be "able to simultaneously address the resource dependence on its PO, while functioning autonomously, making decisions that will lead to the success of the temporary project" (Bakker et al., 2009, p. 205).

This striving for autonomy is correlated to the TO's level of temporal embeddedness with its parent organization. Bakker et al. (2009) argue that "TOs may be able to moderate their dependence based on a factor that is unique to temporary forms of organizing, namely, a TO's level of temporal embeddedness" (Bakker et al., 2009, p. 205). In other words, he extends the notion of social embeddedness (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978) to the concept of temporal contexts. TOs are not just embedded in their present-day social context, but also have strong relationships with past and future activities. Although

TOs are "bracketed" by boundaries marking their beginning and end (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995), the internal processes are influenced by the TO's history and future that extend these boundaries.

Here, Bakker et al. (2009) draw on Mats Engwall's (2003) work on project analysis. Engwall argues that an organizational project's embeddedness should include a spatial dimension, as well as extend to its historical and future context. Structures and procedures employed in a project have to be analyzed in relation to previous and simultaneous courses of activity, future plans, traditions, and standard operating procedures. Since a project inherits such qualities from its surrounding organizations, Engwall insists that a project needs to be conceptualized as a history-dependent and organizationally-embedded unit of analysis. Thus, "…projects have to be conceptualized as contextually-embedded open systems, open in time as well as in 'space'"(Engwall, 2003, p. 790).

In Bakker and his colleagues conclude that TOs are embedded in "prior and future collaboration among the POs" (Bakker et al., 2009, p. 206). The degree of embeddedness depends on the intensity of future and past collaborations and the level of temporal embeddedness determines the degree of autonomy.

Bakker et al. (2009) present four propositions. First, they suggest that a TO exhibiting strong temporal embeddedness with its POs will have built a certain level of trust that allows the POs to take a step back and bestow more autonomy on the TO. In fact, they propose that "the stronger the TO's level of temporal embeddedness in past and future sequences of activities, the higher the TO's level of discretion over allocated resources" (Bakker et al., p. 208). Second, they theorize that trust attained through a high level of embeddedness becomes less important the longer the TO operates. In its stead, trust acquired throughout a TO's existence takes over, and becomes a determining factor in the TO's ability to increase its discretion over resources. A third proposition follows research findings on performance measurements of self-managing teams and project groups. They show an association between a higher level of autonomy and enhanced performance. Therefore, a "TO's performance is directly related to the discretion it has over its allocated resources: the more discretion, the better able it is to attain its goals and

meet a predefined deadline" (Bakker et al., 2009, p. 210). The fourth proposition adds the element of temporality. They observe that a TO can increasingly gain trust from its POs through consistently high performance over time. A higher level of performance results in a higher level of trust, which in turn will increase the TOs level of autonomy, or level of discretion over allocated resources (Bakker et al., 2009, p. 211).

In summary, Bakker argues that TOs who are more 'open' to past and future activities have been able to gain more trust and therefore are able to gain a higher level of autonomy. On the other hand, TOs that are more embedded within their POs and are temporarily 'closed', e.g., TOs who are charged with a single task and are deliberately isolated from potential distractions, are more dependent (Lundin & Söderholm 1995, p. 447). However, some TOs might undergo a lifecycle that embodies both an open and a closed phase, depending on the task at hand. To capture these varied positions in a TO classification, Bakker proposes a fluent rather than a static approach.

Although Bakker's arguments are based on the analysis of two-parent TOs, they can be measured against the EC's returning offices. The RO is organizationally embedded within EC. EC supplies all financial and technological resources and prescribes how they are to be used. The RO's embeddedness extends beyond its own beginning and end; in fact, its activities are grounded in previous elections and will influence future ones. EC is in the business of sequentially creating temporary organizations. Thus, EC adds an overall wealth of experience to its long-term knowledge bank. Knowledge accrues over time and is an essential part of planning and decision-making processes for subsequent events. In this way, EC does develop a certain trust in its TOs. However, the trust is not so much based on successful task completion but on the organizational knowledge and experience EC has acquired over time. EC can gauge the amount of necessary resources each returning office needs and can create a secure embedded environment based on a stable resource supply. Contrary to Bakker's proposition, this high level of embeddedness does not result in a higher degree of autonomy for the TO, neither conceptually nor functionally. It is quite the reverse. The returning office does not have to angle for more autonomy in order to be successful. It operates well within the parameters set by EC, and, importantly, it trusts that these parameters will lead to a successful task completion.

Industry based TOs, such as in film-making or bridge construction, (see Table 4) would probably display different relationships of autonomy and dependence. For example, in bridge construction, several permanent organizations partner and supply workers with different skill sets to work on the project. Funding is supplied by another group of permanent organizations, such as municipal, provincial, and national governmental agencies. These groups each have to secure their own interests and negotiate questions of resource acquisition and dispersion among each other. The TO depends not only on the kind of resources, but also on the way these resources arrive from the PO. The stability of resource supply, and the degree of autonomy, relies on the type of relationship the permanent organizations have among each other and with the TO.

As discussed in the previous section, at the most extreme end of the TO spectrum are temporary organizations who emerge completely exogenously. They are self-starters and do not have ties to any non-temporary organization. An example would be a charity formed by a group of people to raise funds for a cause, e.g., the local *Porridge for Parkinson's* not-for profit society. This group was started by a husband/wife team whose family experienced the disease first hand (Meikle, 2010). Together with a few friends, they formed an organization to raise funds for Parkinson's. They relied on their own resources when organizing the first porridge breakfast for their friends. However, they were so successful that subsequent breakfasts needed more external resources in the form of help from family and friends. The resource dependencies, such as locations, manpower, and consumable goods, are re-negotiated among the charity's founders and friends each year. The group is highly autonomous and all decision-making power rests with the founders. The organizational structure is very loose and the resource relationships are highly unstable because each year the couple has to rely on the good will of others and never really knows who is going to show up.

		Resources	
		Stable ⟷ **Unstable**	
Formation	**Exogenous**	Inter-organizational TOs. Two or more parent organizations. Collaboration is project-based. Often TO addresses issues of innovation or change Intra-organizational, project-based TOs. One parent organization needing extraordinary tasks done internally. Often addresses issues of innovation or change TOs created by one parent organization. Managing TOs is main operational mandate for PO *Example:* EC's returning office	Industry based TOs. Reliant on networks of organizations and actors. Need to acquire own resources *Example:* Event management, film-making, Olympic Games, construction, soft ware development
	Endogenous	Emerging TOs with instant access to resources that allow operation *Example:* Libya's revolutionary army took control of oilfields	TOs emerging from random, sudden, or sporadic gathering of people *Example:* Independent filmmaking, pop-up shops, fundraising charities

Table 4. Origin and resource stability of temporary organizations

In the Porridge for Parkinson's case, the degree of autonomy (Bakker 2010) is really not a factor in the operation of the charity. However, the degree of resource stability is a factor in the TO's continuation. Each year, friends have to be mobilized and sourced for contributions in order to run the event. All activities operate on good will and are not guaranteed. This places the annual event in a very unstable situation and positions the organization, conceptually, on the opposite side of the parent-supported TOs whose resources are highly stable.

Following the rationales of TO formation (Section 4.1) and resource interdependence and stability, all TOs display two dimensions that differentiate them from other kinds: degree of resource stability and TO formation. We can then construct a two by two matrix within which to position the different kinds of TOs. One axis displays the dimension of formation spanning a continuum from the endogenous to the exogenous category. The other axis represents the continuum of the TOs' degrees of resource stability (see Table 4).

We have already discussed exogenously created two-parent and one-parent TOs with a highly stable environment. On the other side of the spectrum are exogenous TOs with an unstable external resource environment, for example, event management teams or film sets. These TOs are often based within an industry and rely on acquiring their external resources through complex networks of organizations and individual actors. In these instances, the decision to form a TO, is made by external agencies that come together with a common interest and goal. For example, the TO in charge of organizing the Olympic Games is created by the International Olympic Committee, national and local government agencies, and commercial firms (see Table 4). Other examples are TOs created by film studios to produce films; the TOs are dispersed once the film is made and the workers need to spread out to join the next film project. These TOs are reliant on extensive networks of individual actors and organizations. The networks have to be maintained between the time one task finishes and another begins. This process brings with it degrees of risk and uncertainty that has consequences for the behaviour of management and temporary workers alike.

Endogenously formed TOs, such as the *Porridge for Parkinson's* charity, have to acquire all necessary resources themselves once they have formed. They consequently experience a higher risk and uncertainty for their continued existence. Their wider resource environment generally is too unstable to guarantee long-term success, unless they find a way to access an external stable pool of resources instantly.

The latter circumstance represents the scenario for the fourth structural type: an endogenously formed organization achieving instant autonomy through secure access to stable external resources. Such an organization would be the most autonomous

organization, and, as such, is a rare phenomenon. An example would be revolutionary movements that take over large resource bases, such as shown in recent events by the Libyan army.

While some TOs are quite easy to plot, there are others whose position is not so certain. An independent filmmaking TO for example could be either endogenously or exogenously created, and funding would fluctuate accordingly. The preceding chapter uses the case of the returning office to draw attention to the dynamic relationship between the office's dependence on the PO and its wider external environment. The way these relationships are constructed has consequences for resource distribution, management style, and issues of effectiveness and efficiency for a successful task completion. The final chapter discusses some of these implications,, especially those for management and future research.

4: Conclusion

The previous chapters present the EC returning office as a case study to examine specific characteristics that differentiate temporary organizations from non-temporary organizations. As well, the case is examined within the wider body of organization theory in order to compare it to other kinds of TOs. The purpose is two-fold: (a) to develop new understandings that can be useful for those who work in TOs as well as for managers of parent organizations who have to create and administer TOs and (b) to extrapolate specific observations that can contribute new perspectives to future research on TOs. The following sections expand on these objectives.

As became apparent in the research process, the EC case represents only a small sample of temporary structures. It is argued in Chapter 4 that TOs can be placed within a framework of two differentiating dimensions: the degree of a TO's resource stability, and whether a TO emerges endogenously or exogenously. The two basic underlying assumptions are that the notion of temporariness influences organizational behaviour and that a TO's wider external environment, including degrees of resource stability, are essential factors in the process of a TO's development, operation, management, and successful task completion.

4.1   Implications for management

This paper argues that an analysis of temporary structures can contribute new insights for the field of organization theory in general. By focusing on themes that create specific scenarios for TOs, such as the notion of time, tasks, team, and context, and by analyzing a TO's resource dependence on external resource providers, conclusions can be drawn that would not become apparent from studies relying on permanent organizations only. For example, this section examines the PO – TO relationship in terms of control. The question is how control much should a PO exercise over a TO, and should degrees of control be linked to degrees of resource dependence?

As discussed in Chapter 4, degrees of resource stability have consequences on organizational structure, management and successful task completion. In the returning office for example, there is a dynamic relationship between the office's dependence on the parent organization and its wider external environment. The way these relationships are constructed has consequences for resource distribution, management style, and issues of effectiveness and efficiency for a successful task completion.

To briefly reiterate this interdependence: EC creates the returning office and tasks it to run federal elections. EC opens 308 returning offices, and creates them sequentially each time an election is called. EC's main mandate therefore is to create TOs and ensure they are successful in their task completion. Consequently, it is in EC's interest to provide a stable financial resource environment to the returning office. However, even though the resource base is stable and all needs in the financial, IT, and knowledge areas are being met, the returning office still has to acquire the necessary local external resources. These resources are tangible, e.g., office space and election workers, and intangible, e.g., local knowledge and experience. Local external resources are not all stable, which produces risk and uncertainty. This has consequences for the ways RO management deals with specific circumstances. EC needs to ensure, by law, that the election is run successfully and will therefore expend as many resources as necessary, e.g., additional financial support, human resources, or creating by-laws to allow new practices (for example, EC created a by-law that allowed the hiring of 16 year old students). Thus, EC is ultimately in control and the returning officer is well advised to stay as close as possible to EC.

RDT suggests that organizations are more successful if they achieve higher degrees of autonomy from external resources. This conclusion is drawn from studies dealing with permanent organizations. However, this does not hold true for TOs, specifically the RO. RO management will be most successful if it stays close to EC. Conversely, EC management will be most effective if it monitors the RO closely. However, as outlined in Chapter 2, local contexts and time pressure require that EC's management cannot be rigid. Instead, management needs to be flexible and accommodate factors, such as local circumstances and the returning officer's individual management

style. It is therefore advisable for both managers of the PO and TO to harness local knowledge and keep it separate from aggregate knowledge.

This control seeking behaviour distinguishes the EC and RO managers from managers of project-based TOs that have been created either intra-organizationally or inter-organizationally. As Bakker (2009) shows, these TOs are often mandated to work on projects designed to be experimental and bring about change for the parent organizations. However, even though these TOs are dependent on resources from their POs, they tend to strive for more autonomy. TO managers have to find a balance between accepting certain forms of PO control on the one hand, and organizational distance on the other in order to facilitate innovation and change. Meanwhile, PO managers need to show flexibility and detachment combined with trust (Bakker 2009, Chapter 4.2) in order to foster the TOs drive for change.

Exogenously created TOs without stable resources, such as event management or in the film industry, are reliant on extensive networks of individual participants and other organizations. These networks have to be maintained between the time one task is finished and another begins. This process brings with it degrees of risk and uncertainty that have consequences for the behaviour of management and temporary workers alike. However, as Daskalaki (2010) shows in her film industry case, uncertainty can be minimized by forging networks that exist beyond an operational TO. Actors and managers alike can fashion strong relationships that carry over from one project to the next.

Endogenous TOs without stable resources, such as pop-up home restaurants, have to spend considerable energy acquiring external resources. These efforts, combined with the pressure of finding enough customers in a short time, can create many challenges for the manager or owner of such establishments. Success requires great flexibility and adaptability, including high levels of formal and informal networking skills.

On a superficial level, the pop-up restaurant example shows some similarities to the EC returning office: both need to navigate risks and uncertainties concerning temporary locations and external resources, e.g., temporary workers. Similar shallow

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comparisons could be drawn between the EC case and the other models in the resource dependence/ origin matrix (see Table 5 in Chapter 4).

However, as demonstrated in Chapter 4, the analysis of the interdependent relationships between a TO and its wider environment, combined with a focus on degrees of resource dependence, illuminates their differentiating characteristics. Thus, for managers in TOs and POs alike, it may be worthwhile to use the EC case study as an example for their own organizations. The four themes' analysis, time, task, team, and context, could be used to ascertain the TO's internal structures and its interplay with the wider external contexts. The study could then be followed by an examination of the TO's external resource dependence relationships. In this way, specific management strategies could be devised that would inform issues, such as knowledge transfer, resource management, and external networking.

4.2 Implications for future research

The previous section suggested managers of POs and TOs alike could extract new information from the study of temporary systems that might be useful for their practical working life. I think the same holds true for researchers interested in the study of organizational theory. Research on TOs can provide insights that a focus on permanent organizations might miss. This section summarizes some examples discussed previously in the paper in order to suggest how TO research might add new dimensions to organization theories in general.

The most obvious observation is that there are numerous kinds of temporary organizations. Many TOs exist in, and cater to, the wider external environment of permanent organizations. Therefore, knowledge of how the different kinds of TOs function internally and how they interact with their external environment can expand the overall understanding of organizational performance. For example, the EC case study not only shows that tasks can be completed under huge time pressure by an unstable temporary workforce if the PO maintains a regime of tight, yet flexible, control but also reveals what kinds of discretionary decision-making it should allow the TO manager. It

also emphasizes that local knowledge is important and has to be incorporated into the PO's overall strategic planning processes.

These observations might have been missed had the study centred on the permanent organization, EC itself, and how it manages the returning offices. Such an analysis would have examined processes occurring from the top down rather than the bottom up.

In a similar vein, the EC case explores "on the ground" how temporal work parameters can affect leadership styles and group dynamics (see Chapter 3). The discussion concludes that a "soft" relationship oriented and transparent management approach is more effective than a "hard", task-based management style. However, this conclusion is based on one single case and further field research is needed to corroborate this finding.

Further empirical research would also address one of Bakker's (2010) perceived gaps in current research directions: the lack of studies that address the role of teams and management as a dimension of variation in organizational systems. EC's returning offices provide an interesting subject for studies on organizational variation because the same PO creates them and they all have to follow the same rules. A comparative study of ROs could address the following dichotomy: Do different management styles within relatively homogenous, temporary organizational structures make a difference in the outcome? Further, what consequences, if any, do external contexts, such as geographic location and demographics, have on management style, performance, and success rates? Are the team and management roles really a differentiator in the classification of temporary organizations?

Chapter 3 discusses issues we can learn from the EC case analysis. In the process, it emerged that comparative studies between different kinds of TOs could contribute immensely to an overall understanding of this form of organization. Furthermore, it emerged that issues of control and dependence relationships between organizations could also add value. Two things became apparent at this stage: (a) the literature on TOs is too narrow and does not comprehensively capture relationships that go beyond functional and managerial issues, e.g., control and dependence analyses and (b) there are many different

kinds of temporary structures and the EC case represents but a small sample. It also became obvious that the literature does not capture this large variety appropriately. There are no clear delineations or systematic attempts for comprehensive models designed to explore the nature of TOs further.

This paper attempts a step towards a typology of TOs by investigating the dynamic relationships between an organization's formation and its need for external resources. The EC case is used to explore concepts pertinent to TOs. However, the case only enlightens a small section within the wide spectrum of temporary structures. The statements concerning other forms of TOs are taken from the literature or are of a speculative nature. Therefore, future research on other kinds of TOs is needed to build case studies 'from the bottom up' to establish firm propositions that could be used in a more complex and stronger typology. While I find concepts developed in resource dependence theory very helpful in devising a way to find a TO typology, the model could certainly be expanded or even revised. For example, the conceptual association between endogenous organizations and their unstable resource base is problematic; either these organizations become quickly exogenous, such as pop-up shops that are taken over by larger clothing chains, or they quickly falter. Again, more research is needed into the formation processes and resource acquisitions of these kinds of TOs. This paper can only touch on some current TO research questions and explore some guidelines that may be helpful in future attempts at developing a typology.

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