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TESIS DOCTORAL/ DOCTORAL
DISSERTATION

POLÍTICA EN LA IMPLEMENTACIÓN DE
ESTRATEGIA TECNOLÓGICA / POLITICS IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

MARC-ELLIOTT FINKELSTEIN

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ADVISOR:
DR. OSWALDO LORENZO OCHOA, PHD

ABSTRACT

A significant managerial issue, organizations exhibit large variance in the implementation of their technology strategies. There is an extant theory gap at the intersection of politics and technology strategy implementation. Inductive, exploratory case study research was conducted at three different Canadian organizations to explore the linkage between politics and technology strategy implementation failure.

It was found that six factors contributed to this variance: manner of performance recognition, organizational alignment of activities, mission/vision statement achievability, process transparency, governance complexion and sophistication in technology strategy development.

While the factors were expressed differently among the organizations, the political activity enabled by these six factors influenced the implementation variance significantly, ranging from nearly no implementation variance to more than 100% implementation variance. Therefore, in the relationship between these variables and technology strategy implementation, there is an identifiable intermediate, dependent variable, *political behaviour*, which expresses a strong, linear, monotonic, positive relationship with the six independent variables. The variable *political behaviour* has a strong, linear, monotonic, negative relationship with the second dependent variable, *technology strategy implementation achievement*.

Departing from extant studies, the most ostensibly significant factors were mission statement achievability, representative governance structure, and process

transparency, which collectively set out the existential direction of the organization, empowered individuals to act for the organization and not in self-interest, and shone a light on all areas of the organization so that political actions were subject to the Spotlight Effect to the extent possible. In the reduction of political behaviour, technology strategy achievement was increased.

RESUMEN

Las organizaciones muestran una gran variabilidad en la implementación de sus estrategias tecnológicas, lo que supone un reto de gestión considerable. Existe un vacío teórico en la intersección entre la política y la implementación de la estrategia tecnológica. Se ha llevado a cabo un estudio de caso inductivo y exploratorio en tres organizaciones canadienses diferentes para explorar la relación entre la política y el fracaso en la implementación de la estrategia tecnológica.

Se ha descubierto que había seis factores que contribuían a esta variabilidad: la forma de reconocimiento del rendimiento, la alineación organizativa de las actividades, la viabilidad de la declaración de misión/visión, la transparencia del proceso, la complejidad de la gobernanza y la sofisticación en el desarrollo de la estrategia tecnológica.

Aunque los factores se expresaron de forma diferente entre las organizaciones, la actividad política posibilitada por estos seis factores influyó significativamente en la variabilidad de la implantación, que osciló entre una variación de implantación casi nula y una variación de implantación superior al 100%. Por tanto, en la relación entre estas variables y la implementación de la estrategia tecnológica, existe una variable intermedia y dependiente identificable, el *comportamiento político*, que expresa una relación fuerte, lineal, monótona y positiva con las seis variables independientes. La variable *comportamiento político* tiene una relación fuerte, lineal, monótona y negativa con la segunda variable dependiente, el *logro de la implementación de la estrategia tecnológica*.

A diferencia de los estudios existentes, los factores más ostensiblemente significativos fueron la viabilidad de la declaración de misión, la estructura de gobierno representativa y la transparencia de los procesos, que en conjunto establecen la dirección

existencial de la organización, facultaron a los individuos para actuar en favor de la organización y no en interés propio, y arrojaron luz sobre todas las áreas de la organización para que las acciones políticas estuvieran sujetas al Efecto Foco en la medida de lo posible. Al reducirse el comportamiento político, aumentó la consecución de la estrategia tecnológica.

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The organizations who graciously volunteered to participate in this study have my great thanks, especially to the individuals who offered their candidness and sincerity in exploring an uncomfortable topic recursively within their organizations. I hope this research sheds some light on the circumstances you encounter and the remarkable impact it has, as well as illuminating opportunities for advancement.

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NOTATION / ACRONYMS

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CFO – Chief Financial Officer

CIO – Chief Information Officer

CLO – Chief Legal Officer

COO – Chief Operating Officer

EA – enterprise architect

IS – information systems

ISD – information systems development

IT – information technology

PM – project manager

PMO – project management office

PVL – Project Value Lifecycle

RACI – A governance table that reflects who is responsible, accountable, consulted and informed

SISP – strategic information systems plan

TAM – technology acceptance model

VP – Vice President

INTRODUCTION

Personal Interest in the Research

A technology strategy is often viewed as the single most important artifact created by an organization; it is the manifestation of how an organization will leverage technology to achieve its competitive aspirations, which in modern times is becoming more pervasive as an engine not just for productivity improvement, as it was in the past, but in offering novel and rapidly evolving opportunities for collaboration, customer loyalty and profit, operational digitization and business model innovation, to name a few. While some overlap exists, technology strategy is distinct from digital strategy; the former being more about investment in technology assets to facilitate business operations and the latter being more the broader “ability to digitally reimagine the business” (Kane et al, 2015). I have been a management consultant in the field of information technology strategy for more than twenty years. In my career I have assisted countless organizations around the world to develop their technology strategies, which is a process that requires significant investments of time and money, and for which they often contract with numerous external resources to gain expertise in the technology strategy development process as well as to acquire insight into competitive practices and operational benchmarks within their industry and among leading organizations.

As an experienced consultant, I am well versed in technology strategy development methodologies published by several prominent international organizations, such as KPMG (“KPMG can help”, 2017), Deloitte (“Technology Strategy & Transformation”, 2018), Capgemini (“Rebooting IT Infrastructure”, 2017) and Gartner

(“City of Cambridge”, 2013). Their respective methodologies are quite similar, by design, and span the same chronological macro processes, which are in summary: envision an ideal future state; take stock of the current state; and design a roadmap from the current state to the future state. An inexperienced consultant might regard all the visioning shared by clients to be magnanimous and intending to optimize the utility or value for the organization. Over time, experience makes clear that organizational politics play a large role, and that in fact contributors to the process promote their own interests, or those of their groups or business units, often to the detriment of others. Consequently, one of the most important tasks of consultants is to manage the impact of the politicking so that the organization can create a technology strategy that sustains or advances their effectiveness, competitive positioning or any other desirable outcome in spite of the political behaviours.

If an organization manages to create a technology strategy, logically it is subsequently incumbent for them to put the strategy into action by methodically executing the roadmap. Efforts to circumvent or politic the strategy henceforth would be visible and therefore deleterious to the careers of the individuals engaging in noncompliance. Yet this is the opposite of the outcome in a majority of situations.

Organizations execute a minority of the initiatives specified in their technology strategy, if any at all, and typically manage to inject previously unknown projects into the roster of strategic projects in an unstructured and often mysterious manner. This is stupefying given the cost and strategic importance of creating an excellent technology strategy, but more importantly, the primacy of completing the initiatives set out in that

strategy to achieve broader organizational aims. Initiatives in the technology strategy have interdependencies with each other, and also have interdependencies with the strategies of the other business units such that in many instances an uncompleted technology project will certainly disallow achievement of the strategies of those business units. The implications can be very extensive and significantly weaken the competitive strength of organizations (Henderson and Venkatraman, 1999).

I have observed and participated in the planning and execution of many technology strategies and thus am supremely interested to better understand why organizations fail so badly at technology strategy design and implementation. The rational factors, such as lacking the money, skill or time have a linear and thus clear relationship to implementation failure. I am interested in broadly understanding how politics impacts technology strategy design and implementation, to what extent, and whether organizations can enact measures to reverse the undesirable outcomes and enhance the desirable outcomes. Organizational politics are often viewed as an amorphous and insidious creature spreading itself into all organizational areas, yet “politics” is too abstract and overly broad and likely consists of more contoured components or identifiable factors that can make this creature better understood.

Academics and practitioners alike are now just beginning to understand what is at stake for participants in technology implementations given that it is clear how technology deeply and longitudinally shapes the power and decision structures within organizations. Technology is potentially a great gift for or a great weapon against members of any

organization and exploring how the political machination of organizations approaches this dichotomy is a fascinating and highly relevant journey for me to take.

INTRODUCCIÓN

Interés personal en la investigación

La estrategia tecnológica se considera a menudo el artefacto más importante creado por una organización; es la manifestación de cómo una organización aprovechará la tecnología para lograr sus aspiraciones competitivas, que en los tiempos modernos se está convirtiendo en un motor no sólo para la mejora de la productividad, como lo fue en el pasado, sino en la generación de oportunidades novedosas y de rápida evolución para la colaboración, la fidelidad del cliente y el beneficio, la digitalización operativa y la innovación del modelo de negocio, por nombrar algunos. Si bien existe cierto solapamiento, la estrategia tecnológica es distinta de la estrategia digital; la primera se refiere más a la inversión en activos tecnológicos para facilitar las operaciones empresariales y la segunda es más la “capacidad de reimaginar digitalmente el negocio” (Kane et al, 2015). He trabajado como consultor de gestión en el ámbito de la estrategia de las tecnologías de la información desde hace más de veinte años. A lo largo de mi carrera he ayudado a innumerables organizaciones de todo el mundo a desarrollar sus estrategias tecnológicas, lo cual es un proceso que requiere importantes inversiones de tiempo y dinero, y para el que suelen contratar numerosos recursos externos para adquirir experiencia en el proceso de desarrollo de estrategias tecnológicas, así como para adquirir conocimientos sobre las prácticas competitivas y los referentes operativos dentro de su sector y entre las organizaciones líderes.

Como consultor experimentado, conozco bien las metodologías de desarrollo de estrategias tecnológicas publicadas por varias organizaciones internacionales destacadas, como KPMG (“KPMG can help”, 2017), Deloitte (“Technology Strategy & Transformation”, 2018), Capgemini (“Rebooting IT Infrastructure”, 2017) y Gartner (“City of Cambridge”, 2013). Sus respectivas metodologías son bastante similares, por diseño, y abarcan los mismos macroprocesos cronológicos, que son, en resumen: imaginar un estado futuro ideal; hacer un balance del estado actual; y diseñar una hoja de ruta desde el estado actual hasta el estado futuro. Un consultor inexperto podría considerar que toda la visión compartida por los clientes es magnánima y pretende optimizar la utilidad o el valor para la organización. Con el tiempo, la experiencia deja de manifiesto que la política organizativa desempeña un papel importante y que, de hecho, los participantes en el proceso promueven sus propios intereses, o los de sus grupos o unidades de negocio, a menudo en detrimento de los demás. En consecuencia, una de las tareas más importantes de los consultores es gestionar el impacto de la política para que la organización pueda crear una estrategia tecnológica que mantenga o mejore su eficacia, su posicionamiento competitivo o cualquier otro resultado deseable a pesar de los comportamientos políticos.

Si una organización consigue crear una estrategia tecnológica, lógicamente le corresponde ponerla en marcha ejecutando metódicamente la hoja de ruta. Los esfuerzos por eludir o politizar la estrategia serían visibles y, por tanto, perjudiciales para las carreras de las personas que se dedican a incumplirla. Sin embargo, este es el resultado opuesto en la mayoría de las situaciones.

Las organizaciones ejecutan una minoría de las iniciativas especificadas en su estrategia tecnológica, si es que lo hacen, y normalmente se las arreglan para inyectar proyectos previamente desconocidos en la lista de proyectos estratégicos de forma desestructurada y a menudo misteriosa. Esto es sorprendente, dado el coste y la importancia estratégica de crear una excelente estrategia tecnológica, pero, sobre todo, la primacía de completar las iniciativas establecidas en esa estrategia para lograr objetivos organizativos más amplios. Las iniciativas de la estrategia tecnológica tienen interdependencias entre sí, y también tienen interdependencias con las estrategias de las demás unidades de negocio, de manera que en muchos casos un proyecto tecnológico sin completar impedirá a todas luces la consecución de las estrategias de esas unidades de negocio. Las implicaciones pueden ser muy amplias y debilitar considerablemente la fuerza competitiva de las organizaciones (Henderson y Venkatraman, 1999).

He observado y participado en la planificación y ejecución de muchas estrategias tecnológicas y, por tanto, estoy sumamente interesado en comprender mejor por qué las organizaciones fracasan tanto en el diseño y la aplicación de estrategias tecnológicas. Los factores racionales, como la falta de dinero, habilidad o tiempo, tienen una relación lineal y, por tanto, clara con el fracaso de la implementación. Me interesa comprender en general cómo influye la política en el diseño y la aplicación de la estrategia tecnológica, en qué medida, y si las organizaciones pueden adoptar medidas para invertir los resultados indeseables y mejorar los deseables. A menudo se considera que la política organizativa es una criatura amorfa e insidiosa que se extiende por todos los ámbitos de la

organización, pero la “política” es demasiado abstracta y excesivamente amplia, y probablemente consta de componentes más definidos o factores identificables que pueden mejorar la comprensión de esta criatura.

Tanto los académicos como los profesionales están empezando a comprender lo que está en juego para los participantes en las implantaciones tecnológicas, dado que está claro cómo la tecnología moldea profunda y longitudinalmente las estructuras de poder y decisión dentro de las organizaciones. La tecnología es potencialmente un gran regalo para los miembros de cualquier organización o un gran arma contra ellos, y explorar cómo las maquinaciones políticas de las organizaciones abordan esta dicotomía me resulta un viaje fascinante y de gran relevancia.

CONTRIBUTION

As aforementioned, organizations make significant investments in their technology strategies and thus require them to be both excellent and executed with discipline to realize the anticipated value. The body of extant research has consistently shown very significant divergence from this, and consequently there can be an imputation of lost quantitative value represented in the difference between the sum of the values anticipated from each initiative within the roadmap and the sum of the actual values generated by the strategic project portfolio that was executed.

$$\text{Quantitative Value Lost (QVL)} = \sum_{i=1}^n v_i + \dots + v_n - \sum_{j=1}^m v_j + \dots + v_m$$

n = number of strategic projects completed in the technology strategy roadmap

m = number of strategic projects completed over the same time horizon as the roadmap

v = value achieved from project execution

From a managerial standpoint, the QVL expressed in the equation above is merely the direct quantitative loss from project performance. There may likely be myriad indirect quantitative losses, such as those experienced from unrealized and/or synergistic opportunities in the business units that were relying on the foundational technology component to be put in place as a prerequisite, or the realization of a penalty for noncompliance due to a technological standard being absent, as examples. These would likely be significant in value and are highly problematic for organizations as becomes

clear when evaluating the lower feedback scores the technology department receives in customer service surveys. What may be of greater importance is that by neglecting to achieve the technology strategy, by extension the organization is neglecting to achieve its corporate strategy, and in consideration of the heightened competition and consequent low profit margin environments that exist in many industries and geographies, failure to achieve the corporate strategy can create problems as extreme as whether the organization can continue to exist.

Other significant qualitative impacts can be realized in the failure to achieve the technology strategy, such as loss of key personnel, loss of opportunities to collaborate with other organizations (e.g. buying groups, sharing of customer data, participating in partnerships and joint ventures, such as airline alliances), competitive disparity in competitive intelligence, technology obsolescence, which is very impactful for organizations like investment firms that rely on technology for split-second arbitrage trading, et cetera. Technology has become integral to the basic and advanced operations of many organizations globally and a failure to implement the technology strategy can be hugely impactful.

Is it prudent to mention that there may be value in the injection of new initiatives (m) that were not contemplated in the technology strategy (n) although the net value may be less than face value given sacrifices to planned initiatives, or greater than face value in light of new opportunities. Quantitative evaluation may provide an interesting perspective, but it is the qualitative perspective that will be the focus of this research.

From an academic standpoint, a contribution is made to two disparate research areas: technology strategy and organizational politics. Extant research on technology strategy attempts to address implementation failures in large part by considering the “rational” (apolitical) factors such as whether adequate business requirements were elicited; whether appropriate stakeholders were involved; or whether the end users were trained adequately to adopt the new system, for example. Extant research on organizational politics is substantial in quantity but in large part unspecific to technology implementation, which is elaborated below. The intersection between these two research areas should yield significant findings for both bodies of knowledge as directly researching the “irrational” (political) factors substantively unexplored today should clarify the impact of organizational politics in a descriptive manner, which when paired with the more elaborated rational factors should provide a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship. And as aforementioned, the managerial implications can be significant when existential risks exist in the status quo. Understanding politics more comprehensively in technology strategy implementation can lead to greater success in this business investment.

GAPS IN THE EXTANT LITERATURE

Numerous authors have cited a gap in the study of power and politics in information systems, suggesting that this area of research has generally been neglected, in part, because political activity is equated with evil or corrupt activity that diverges from comprehensible and rational ideals versus being a set of activities that intend to obtain commitment or create support for worthwhile ideas (Keen 1981; Silva, 2007) and

moreover that power and politics are nebulous concepts inherently difficult to study and are otherwise “contextual” or “external” variables (Cordoba, 2007, p. 2; Grover et al., 2014). This trend has changed in the past 20 years, where more research has included dimensions of politics and power (Jaspersen et al., 2002), but findings are questionable as research studies themselves can be used as battlefields for political skirmishes with the associated deception and concealment taken as data points.

Addressing the managerial gap, Gottschalk noted, “The need for improved implementation of information technology (IT) strategy has been emphasized in both empirical and prescriptive studies” (1999, p. 362). Gottschalk went on further to elaborate the state of research in 1999 for this topic, citing numerous authors:

“Though there exists an extensive range of literature on strategic information technology planning (e.g. 2) and on information technology implementation (e.g. 19), specific literature on plan implementation has been relatively sparse. While the literature on strategic information technology planning treats implementation only as one of many phases, the literature on IT implementation lacks the gestalt perspective needed when plan implementation is to be studied” (p. 363).

Sambamurthy & Kirsch voiced a similar sentiment addressing knowledge gaps in how research findings coalesce into a whole, “...we lack a systemic understanding of how and why these, and other, specific elements interact with each other in shaping the process and outcomes of the ISD [information systems development] processes” (2000, p. 392).

Wainwright & Waring (2004, p. 330) state, “there is very little research that...delves deeply into the organisational theory domain to provide effective strategies to deal with the complex people centred issues involved”. They add, “Relatively little cumulative effort is placed on developing organisational theories and practice related to the implementation of integrated IS and developing usable analytic methods and tools to predict the social and cultural impact of adopting new information technologies.” (p. 330) And with respect to the “levels” of analysis, they state:

“It is apparent that there is a need to develop further relevant work in the field of organisation theory at the macro-level of the organisational domain and synthesise new methods and techniques for organisational analysis that can provide insight into the high-level issues that impact upon the implementation of new integrated systems. However, we believe that even more work needs to be done at the micro-level of the individuals and departments within organisations where there is evidence from the literature that it is here that the main difficulties occur.” (p. 340)

Rathnam (2005) proposes that the gap should be addressed through additional case studies that span various industries, organizational structures, and organization sizes, the latter emphasized as a research dearth by McGovern & Hicks (2004).

Specific to the concept of power within information systems, Cordoba (2007) cites, “a dearth of approaches to deal with the complexities of power...and its impacts in practice” (p. 2).

Kim & Kankanhalli (2009) state, “Despite the importance of understanding and managing user resistance for the success of an IS implementation, few studies have proposed theoretical explanations of user resistance. Further, with a dominance of case studies in this area, there is a lack of theoretically grounded approaches with quantitative empirical validation (e.g., through surveys).” (p. 568)

In a published study on new technology implementation, Karlsson, Taylor & Taylor (2010) state, “there remains insufficient consensus or unequivocal understanding of the mechanisms by which technology can most effectively be integrated into organizations. In particular, there is a lack of clarity over what factors influence the integration process, and how these are related. Moreover, there is a need to understand the applicability of such integration mechanisms in different contexts and circumstances.” (p. 673) Interestingly, initially they identified 13 “contextual dimensions” (p. 678) that influence the success of new technology implementation and organizational politics was not considered a factor from the outset, yet during the research they found that “cultural” (p. 684) factors played a very strong role particularly as the, “technology advancement” (p. 695) objective in question was high and when extant technological maturity was high. They elaborated that cultural factors, “manifest as obstacles to integration” (p. 678), given differences in “norms, attitudes, time orientations, technical languages, patterns of interaction, work traditions, and practices” (p. 678), which coincides with the operating definitions of power and politics found below.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Studying politics in technology strategy implementation requires breadth and depth in some extant theoretical lenses. Power and Politics Organization Theory is the broad encompassing lens, since both power and politics are the focal factors being studied.

These factors are being examined within a specific but broad organizational context,



Figure 1-Contextualizing IT strategy implementation

where

political structures are created uniquely and hence must be understood as offering their own lens for the purpose of this research. Within those organizational structures exist all the conditions under which an IT strategy is developed which, again, requires comprehension specific to the organization's context. Elements of the IT strategy document, often enumerated as initiatives or projects, are scheduled for implementation, and great depth is required to understand these initiatives/projects and the circumstances by which they were or were not implemented in accordance with the plan.

Outcomes are visible by means of this concentric view of phenomena, and other moderating factors can interject laterally, which are governance and architecture, and user adoption.

The following chapter provides a literature review of the aforementioned lenses to acquaint readers with the extant body of knowledge for each as it befits the usage of that particular lens in the research.

Power & Politics Definition

Definitions for both power and politics have been provided many times in prior literature. Jaspersen et al. (2002) offered a detailed review on the definitions of power whereas Drory & Romm (1990) did likewise on the definitions of politics, therefore these will not be repeated in this dissertation. For the purposes of this research, we will use the definition of *power* offered by Sabherwal & Grover (2009, po. 421): “...power [is] the ability of individuals to affect the behaviour of other individuals and the ways things are done”. This suggests that power relates to influence potential of an actor A over another actor B to achieve an outcome that otherwise would not have taken place without the use of power (Dahl, 1957; Bloomfield & Coombs, 1992). Many authors use the terms power and politics interchangeably (Williams & Wilson, 1997; Sabherwal & Grover, 2010). For the purposes of this proposal, we will use the definition of *politics* offered by Tushman (1977), which is that politics is the process of using power to influence outcomes in the organization. Collectively these definitions suggest simply that power is ‘what you have’, and politics is ‘how you use it’.

Organizational Politics

In the early to mid-twentieth century, numerous scholars were questioning economic theory and its foundational assumptions of behavioural rationality in actors within economic systems. Herbert Simon (1955) refuted the notion of ‘economic man’ or ‘homo economicus’ due to its inability to explain the actual behaviour of individuals within organizations, which was deemed to be irrational because it ostensibly failed to coincide with economic principles. Simon (1979) went further to explain how the same behavioural irrationality is observable at the organizational level as well through the decisions of the individuals as the behaviour and decision making failed to optimize the utility function of the organization as it was understood in economic terms. Other scholars explored the roots of the behavioural irrationality observed and formed the power and politics area of organizational theory. French & Raven (1959) looked at how power manifested in relationships and organizational structures and concluded that power is not simply about how individuals behave, but rather also how the environment facilitates the use of power. French and Raven also added that power, as an asset, is not merely what the holder is able to do with it, but also derives from the perception of others about what an individual’s power could influence.

Similar to Herbert, March (1962) supplemented economic theory by extending the concept of organizational politics in claiming an organization could better be viewed as a, “political system” (p. 663), containing systems that are, “conflict systems of conflict systems” (p. 664). He points out that within organizations, there are conflicting goals and

inconsistencies that are tolerated because this is how political coalitions must cooperate within this environment, where goals are not given but rather are bargained. From his research March claimed that the more opportunity there was for conflict, the more there would be. March's theory gave rise to the re-conception and potentially reverse causality of how events transpired within organizations, such that, for example, resource constraints did not stimulate political behaviour but rather political behaviour invented resource constraints. Project X did not fail because the organization lacked technological sophistication, Project X failed because a political coalition necessary to overcome obstacles did not form. This shift helped to elevate politics to independent variable, where it was better understood the potential magnitude of impact.

Leveraging earlier research from the pioneers in the field, Pfeffer and Salancik (1974) worked from assumptions of organizational irrationality to examine how power influenced the development of IT strategy specifically. They elaborated and criticized an extant model that enumerated the characteristics of a rational, "bureaucratic model" (p. 136) of IT strategy development, which according to economic theory was assumed to occur with due interpretation of and subordinate alignment with an organizational strategy and the related objectives in accordance with universalistic criteria. The bureaucratic model is typified by formalized rules and procedures, hierarchical authority, defined communication channels, and defined metrics and measurements (p. 136). They contrasted this with a more prevalent, "political model" (p. 136) of IT strategy development, where actors use their power individually and collectively to resolve conflicts in the decision-making requisite in IT strategy development. Ironically, they deduce that a logic does pervade the political machinations in the political model insofar

that there is predictability that strategic decisions will be aligned proportionately to the relative power possessed by the actors involved. By definition, in the political model, power, not organizationally evaluated optimums, comprise the strategy.

In the same paper, Pfeffer and Salancik explored the roots of organizational power, and concluded that power accrues to business units based on relative financial and personnel heft. In addition, they found that what is measured is more predictably attended to in a positive manner, which was deemed significant in shaping behaviour in many prior studies. They conclude by proposing that most organizations demonstrate elements of both models.

Hickson et al. (1971) developed the strategic-contingencies theory of power, which posited that structural power shifts within an organization are based on contemporary needs for coping with uncertainty. More specifically, power shifts to business units that: (a) cope with uncertainty, and (b) address the most immediate organizational concerns, without being substitutable. This creates interdependence among business units, and therefore reliance on the ability of a business unit to obviate problems.

In 1974, Hinings et al. empirically tested and validated the strategic-contingencies model, confirming that “coping with uncertainty is the variable most critical to power, and is the best single predictor of it, but it is far from being the only factor contributing to power” (p. 40). Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) further tested the strategic-contingencies model and reiterated that power accrues to those groups that solve contemporary

problems, to which they also added the groups that earn the most revenue. They claimed that groups with power aimed to institutionalize structures to solidify and make permanent their organizational power, yet through institutionalization firms tended to become less adaptable and in sync with realities. This, they claimed, meant that the organization needed competent and active management and not the dominance of power to achieve more competitive organizational outcomes.

Lucas (1984) further explored strategic-contingencies theory and determined the four conditions that led to departments achieving high levels of power, which are strengthened through combination: coping with uncertainty; substitutability; workflow pervasiveness and immediacy, and; interdependence. Yet he found that the IT department had low power despite coping with uncertainty, having low substitutability, having high workflow pervasiveness and immediacy, and moderate interdependence with other business units. Saunders and Scamell (1986) had similar findings about the low level of power for the IT department and offered additional suggestions to explain the apparent contradiction, such as that IT departments at the time were seldom involved in key decisions. More beneficially, they linked March's political power model of the organization to strategic-contingencies theory and hypothesized that information systems executives lacked the political clout and/or negotiation skills necessary to earn power for their business unit and consequently failed to achieve the status expected of the organizational unit per strategic-contingencies theory (Hickson et al., 1971; Hinings et al., 1974; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1977, and; Lucas, 1984).

Scholars continued to explore new perspectives on organizations and their IT strategic planning efforts. With their strategic alignment model, Henderson and Venkatraman (1999) brought new focus on the concept of alignment by examining the interplay among the domains of business strategy, IT strategy, organizational infrastructure and processes, and IT infrastructure. They emphasized the need for IT to be viewed as inseparable from corporate strategy because firms approach the market through their capabilities, and the presence of IT enables or disables certain capabilities.

This perspective gave rise to several research approaches, such as those examining organizational fitness and the approach taken to strategic planning. Other related theoretical concepts were married to research efforts, such as sense-making (Weick, 1993), institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), principal-agent theory (Bhattacharjee, 1998), structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), and several other organizational theories, all with mixed success.

Contemporary research converges on the notion that information systems are a modern channel for actors and entities to express political maneuvering. Information is an asset from which advantage can be gained or lost, and systems codify and facilitate power structures given their enduring nature and all-encompassing transparency and hence are a potent battleground for the idiosyncratic interests of varying entities (McLoughlin et al., 2000; Jasperson et al 2002; Doolin, 2004; Rathnam et al., 2005; Lin & Silva, 2005; Hussain & Cornelius, 2009; Grover et al., 2014). The notion is so pervasive, it was expressed by McLoughlin et al. (2000) that, “it is now widely accepted by students of organization that the effects of new technologies...are best understood, not

in terms of the capabilities and characteristics of the technology/techniques themselves, but rather as an outcome of political processes concerning their selection, development, deployment and use.” (p. 17)

Technology Strategy

A technology strategy is a document that outlines the specific information technology (IT) initiatives an organization will perform, time-sequenced over the planning horizon (Gottschalk, 1999). It should align to a corporate strategy insofar as interpreting organizational goals, and translate how and when IT can be supportive, by means of the creation, removal or change of IT resources and capabilities.

The need for an IT strategy has been recognized in academia for more than 50 years, and similarly, so has awareness of the poor implementation performance of strategic IT initiatives. As aforementioned, Pfeffer (1974) diverged from economic theory, which predicted that an IT strategy would be developed through a bureaucratic model, rather Pfeffer suggested that March’s political model is more accurate since an IT strategy represents a series of discrete decisions, and conflict over the decisions ultimately made took place through the exercise of political power. He further elaborated that these decisions were not optimal in achieving the organization’s priorities and interests; rather they prioritized the political agendas of the individuals involved in the process who had the power to influence that outcome.

Simon (1979) offered complementary perspectives on the political, irrational nature of decision makers, explaining how strategic IT planning formulation must be political based on the “bounded rationality” (p. 502) stemming from the lack of omniscience of decision makers, and how even well-intentioned decision makers must somehow interpret abstract notions and agree on the means by which these notions form part of the strategic plan. He referred to this as “subgoal identification” (p. 500), where these abstract notions must be judged against subordinate goals, and only through their completion can there be a connection to the more precise strategic objective.

In 1977, Salancik and Pfeffer explored power in IT strategy development by means of institutional theory. They concluded that there is great institutional power in the ability to structure information systems since information systems are a formalization and codification of individual and group power. Institutional theory, as espoused by its early proponents, creates enduring social structures and ideals that are promoted and enforced by institutions and their members and adherents (Weerakkody et al., 2009). Organizations with significant investment in their information systems will be hesitant to make significant changes to their existing systems without a compelling business reason, therefore the configuration of any large information system is more likely to endure and become a lasting and highly influential, institution within an organization.

Understanding computer systems as resilient social structures aids in conceiving their role in corporate culture formation and sustainment, as well as how their configuration may give rise to future resistance to change. For example, if computer systems have high degrees of transparency, users will perceive their culture as one of

openness and visibility. If computer systems contain numerous checkpoints or approval gates, users will perceive their culture as one of diligence and oversight and potentially distrust. If computer systems conceal information to limit use within individual business units or subunits, users will perceive their culture as siloed and secretive. These configuration differences are more strongly noticed by users who come from other organizations and are acclimated to their previous configuration and thus will notice the substantive differences between the two systems and deduce the meaning from a cultural standpoint. Users belonging to organizationally-exogenous institutions, such as the accounting profession, will attempt to internally promote the structural and procedural isomorphizing pressures (Scott, 1995) into their own organizations and computer systems so as not to diverge from the ‘leading practices’ espoused by those institutions.

Recognizing the time span that an information system may be in active operation, savvy individuals involved in the IT strategy development process will predict the impact of any contemplated system or configuration, at the organizational, group and individual levels (Lapointe & Rivard, 2007), and behave in accordance with their adjudication of these impacts. Grover et al. (2014) identified the quantification of these impacts as the “equity-implementation model” (p. 7), where users consider incremental changes to their equity and that of others to ascertain whether, how and how strongly they will resist the initiative. Significantly, they support or resist the initiative as individuals, group members, unit members and organization members. They may resist an initiative to respond directly to an actual proposed change, or they may resist directly to build equity for their future political desires, for example, by siding with the resistance of another group that can assist them in future battles (Levine & Rossmore, 1994). An individual

or group may also resist indirectly through forms of passive resistance, such as not attending requirements specifications sessions, not attending training, feigning confusion about complexity, not using the systems, not referencing manuals, not using the system as intended, et cetera. All of these forms of political behaviours are additive to the a priori politicking that took place during the contemplation, budgeting, selection, design and now implementation of a system, and can take place throughout the typically multi-month or multi-year time period that a system is introduced, installed, configured, learned and used.

In 1988, Lederer and Sethi describe the strategic information systems planning (SISP) methodology, which is a prescriptive approach for constructing an IT strategy. The theory espoused in this methodology is that if built exhaustively from leading practices, the process steps should result in an optimal IT strategy. What was found in their research was that the IT strategy failed not because of an inadequate process or misuse of leading practices, but that these organizations were lacking the management commitment and control mechanisms to ensure that the plans were followed by the individuals within the organization (p. 445).

Lee and Bai (2003) furthered the notion that robust IT strategy development cannot simply occur through a rational process by which goals are translated into subgoals for IT. They claim that planning failures occur because, “numerous strategic IS/IT planning frameworks fail to realize that the roots of IS-related problems are not merely technological but are also caused by the inadequate attention to the interrelationship between information systems and organizational contexts” (p. 32). They advocate for an

IT strategy development process that is customized in integrating these ‘soft’ factors by addressing the “psychological, social and political behavioural processes” (p. 32), and that which, “fit the organization’s culture, style, sophistication and IS capabilities” (p. 40). Their advocated broad brushstrokes for the IT strategy process, while abstracted, illuminate several dimensions that fuel political behaviour, such as psychology of the individual, social dynamics between and among groups, and the structures that allow and disallow political behaviours. This seemingly small insight highlights a previously unaddressed dimension of political behaviour, which refers more to the political arena in which actors can operate. Organizations, by means of their culture’s norms and values, create both formal and informal mechanisms in which an actor or group can act politically. There is significant opportunity for politicking within organizational processes, for example in planning and budgeting dollars and headcount, new product development, product promotion, investment, expansion, mergers & acquisitions, divestitures and strategy, to name a few. Organizations can limit or prevent political behaviours through intentional and unintentional rules, boundaries, metrics and limits, among others. The phenomenon known as the “spotlight effect” (Epley et al, 2002, p. 300) in psychology or the “Hawthorne effect” (Sedgewick & Greenwood, 2015, p. 351) in research have been shown to significantly alter the behaviour of the individuals believed to be under observation, therefore people, processes and technologies that can observe actions by means of transparency, recording, metric calculation, reporting, etc., will alter the political actions of individuals and groups who through awareness of the transparency their actions will have, intentionally alter their actions for this reason alone. Presence or absence of these observational mechanisms significantly shapes the political

arena for the actors and strongly governs what they don't do, what they do, and how and when they do it.

Salazar Alvarez (2003) proposes an, "interpretative integrative framework" (p. 233) to better conceptualize and understand the interactions between the social context and human behaviours. His was a fine-grained approach, essentially aligned with actor-network theory, to acknowledge that actors "interpret, appropriate and establish a social construction of reality; including the social construction of technology". (p. 239) Salazar Alvarez highlights that social construction within technology will need to mimic the dominant class structure that exists within the organization otherwise it will meet with predictable resistance. Dhillon (2004) adds power relationships to the social construction; Schwarz and Watson (2005) add group membership; Constantinides and Barrett (2006) add power networks, and; Lapointe and Rivard (2007) add organizational lenses. Silva (2007), using an interpretivist view, restated that information systems are mechanisms of control, and because of this, a user's identity can be defined and redefined through system changes.

The output from the IT strategy development process results from the bargaining that took place among those with power (Butler, 2007). It is a document that through collaboration and cooperation builds institutional legitimacy for IT in their subsequent efforts and builds power for IT through its alignment to more powerful and relevant business units. Yet, as aforementioned, the IT strategy is often not used and it becomes expensive and time consuming, 'shelfware' (Gottschalk, 1999).

Technology Strategy Implementation

As a subject, technology implementation is of great significance to practitioners and managers alike since implementation failures are so common and so costly, hence this topic has been high on the researcher's agenda for some time. In fact, it has often been considered as the "most critical issue facing information systems executives today" (Lederer & Sethi, 1988, p. 445). A more contemporary reiteration by Amrollahi et al. (2013) confirms from meta-analysis that the priority and issue remain: "an important concern for top business and information systems (IS) managers" (p. 39), which has been the case for nearly forty years: "Since 1980, strategic planning has been one of the top ten management concerns (p. 40).

It is prudent to explore various definitions for the term, "implementation" as it will comprise the research question. Gottschalk (1999) provided a comprehensive literature review on the usage and meaning of the term "implementation" from previous literature, citing definitions that span the installation to completed initiatives where the benefits have all been realized, which is provided below (p. 367, table 3):

Stages of Implementation Completion	
Stage	Implementation Completed When:
1	System is installed
2	System is put to use
3	Programs are adopted
4	Organization acts on new priorities
5	Changes are installed
6	Not abandoned or expensively overhauled
7	Adoption has occurred
8	Innovation is adopted and used
9	Systems are installed and used
10	Change is accepted

Stages of Implementation Completion	
Stage	Implementation Completed When:
11	Systems are accepted
12	Innovation is accepted and used
13	Systems are accepted and used
14	Control rests with users
15	Change process completed
16	Committed use occurs
17	Post-application phase is consolidated
18	Satisfaction with system is achieved
19	Intended benefits are realized

Figure 2-Definition of "Implementation" by Outcome, Gottschalk (1999a, p. 367)

For the purpose of this research, we will operationalize the term “implementation” to correspond with a stage even prior to those enumerated by Gottschalk since we are not concerned with implementation completion but rather implementation attempted, therefore we will operationalize implementation to be where the initiative commences with intention, and should correspond with formalized movement of the initiative from the list of ‘to-dos’ to the list of projects underway, which explores the machinations of real organizations. This may precede the assignment of resources and funding to the initiative. A movement backwards from the active project list, halt or deferral will retain implementation status for the purpose of the research since status change is often the target of the conflicting powers within the organization and is therefore useful for analytic purposes.

Early management research has highlighted the relationship between measurement and behaviour in carrying out tasks. Salancik and Pfeffer (1974) claim that this same relationship is maintained in carrying out the initiatives within an IT strategy, citing earlier work from Argyris (1952), for example. Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) also stressed the importance of institutions influencing individuals and groups to act in

accordance with the norms of the organization, borrowing from the concept of institutional isomorphism from DiMaggio and Powell (1983) which imposes coercive, mimetic and normative forms of isomorphism (p. 150).

In 1983, Markus introduced interaction theory to explain the dynamic, dyadic nature of actors and information systems within an implementation scenario:

“...‘the most important implication of the interaction theory is that the best prescriptions for an implementation strategy and for the specific design content of a system will follow from a thorough diagnosis of the organisational setting in which the system will be used...technical systems analysis must be augmented with a social or political analysis...and self examination of interests, motives, payoffs, and power bases will lend much to the implementer’s ability to understand other people’s reactions to the systems, the implementer is designing and installing” (p. 441)

Research on the SISP continued, and it was found by Lederer and Sethi (1988) that among 80 firms with IT strategies, 38% of projects initiated were not previously identified in the IT strategy, and that two years after the completion of the IT strategy, only 24% of the planned initiatives had been commenced (p. 455). Their study queried to establish what were the common problems in their SISP, both the extreme and the minor problems. Out the nearly 50 problems identified, the study showed that most were extreme problems at least 10% of the time. The two problems rated most severe were: securing top management commitment (52%) and the requirement for further analysis

(46%) (p. 454). This was interpreted by the authors to indicate that top management commitment is difficult to obtain, and that even when the SISP is complete and ready for implementation, another round of analysis is often required before the IT strategy is executed for implementation. Both factors suggest political motivation and maneuvering yet were not suggested at the time by the authors. It would be a very rudimentary political action for a leader to fail to support an initiative on the technology strategy, and similarly it would be a relatively simple stall tactic to declare an initiative misunderstood or ambiguous and demand that additional analysis be performed. Researchers ostensibly reversed causality by failing to evaluate the context in richer detail.

In a similar vein, Wilson (1991) attempted to discover the top barriers to IT strategy implementation success by surveying 550 organizations. Like other 'rational' research at the time which focused on measurable factors, he found the following top five barriers: "difficulty in recruiting; nature of business; measuring benefits; lack of resources for user education, and; existing IT investments." (p. 42).

Lederer and Sethi published on the SISP again in 1996, this time writing prescriptively and at length about specific practices to make SISP successful. Compiling results from previous research, they outline a comprehensive list (p. 38-39; 41-44). They further contrast this prescription with the actions actually conducted by planners and find that planners generally adhere to the most important practices. Yet these practices are not the same found by earlier research efforts, including their own. They conclude by prophetically identifying a "planner's paradox", where efforts in planning must be fast enough to avoid obsolescence yet slow enough to be thorough and comprehensive (p. 60).

Greater depth was explored into the political side of IT implementation failures around the same time as the more measurable concepts were explored. Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992) found strong empirical evidence that “power wins battles of choice” (p. 17), and that these influences “may result in suboptimal and inefficient allocation of organizational resources. Power and influence thus represent an “irrational” but nonetheless very real component of organizational decision making and need to be considered when evaluating the effects of group support technologies.” (Williams & Wilson, 1997, p. 915).

Gottschalk (1999) in an often-cited article attempted to predict the success of IT strategy implementation based on content characteristics. From his survey of 190 firms he synthesized and reduced thirty-five predictor variables to ten and determined statistically that two proved most significant in predicting implementing success: description of responsibility for the implementation, and; description of user involvement during the implementation (p. 362). He illuminates some gaps in previous research, which focuses on strategic IT planning and IT implementation as separate streams; there is a scarcity, he claimed, of research that links IT strategic planning and implementation of the plan (p. 363). He also mentions the dearth of gestalt perspective that is necessary when plan implementations are to be studied. Finally, Gottschalk indicates the need for empirical evidence, since the literature consists primarily of theory.

The concept of alignment was elaborated by Henderson and Venkatraman (1999) in their strategic alignment model, which emphasized the interconnectivity among four

domains: business strategy; information technology strategy; organizational infrastructure and processes, and; information technology infrastructure and processes (p. 476). Alignment, as a concept, links formulation and implementation as inseparable in strategy. It posits that strategy cannot be designed without consideration of context; an organization needs to understand and exploit its capabilities to expect any strategy to be successful. This applies to the formulation of corporate strategy and IT strategy, since many business capabilities require enabling information technology to be sustained. This led Henderson and Venkatraman to conclude that the inability of organizations to realize value from IT investments is due, in part, from either a lack of alignment between business and IT strategies, or a lack of understanding and/or accommodation of the capabilities of the organization.

Sabherwal (1999) looked at the relationship between IT planning sophistication and IT implementation success. He found an inverse relationship to what was intuitive; he found that for the IT planning process to be highly sophisticated, either the previous IT strategy planning efforts were successful, or the organization will have in place advanced information technology capabilities. This suggests that organizations learn by doing, and if during that learning process some implementation successes are achieved, they encourage future success and/or sophistication. The study did not mention how previous implementation successes were achieved, but in earlier literature (Lederer & Sethi, 1988) one of the success factors identified was utilization of external consultants for the purpose of knowledge injection. Conceivably, it is also possible that the success achieved when external consultants were present was a function of the Pspotlight effect

and/or resulted from having more actors to observe, measure, manage and govern the implementation away from subversive political actions.

In 2000, Sambamurthy and Kirsch published a literature review of the prior twenty-five years of, “fragmented” research (p. 392) and offered an integrative meta-framework of the information systems development processes from forty articles from top journals. They defined the scope of information systems development (ISD) to include, “the conceptualization, feasibility assessment, design, construction, and implementation of computer-based information systems in organizations” (p. 392), and citing many previous papers outline the factors influencing the successful execution of ISD processes: “user participation and involvement, top management support, adequacy of organizational resources, IS developers' competence, and the quality of the project management approaches... and social interactions among different stakeholders” (p. 392). In the meta review, it was clear that researchers failed to inquire why these factors were present and rather focused on the presence of these factors and their correlation to implementation outcomes.

Sambamurthy and Kirsch’s review broadly categorized research on ISD as being either “factors or process oriented” (p.393), which respectively refer to approaches that are contextually focused on measurable, project-specific variables, and approaches that examine stakeholder interactions and the events surrounding them (p. 394), which leads them to the following definition of the process of ISD:

“Information systems development processes in organizations are the tasks undertaken to construct a computer-based information system, and the management of this effort, by a group of stakeholders with agendas, who engage in transactions over time within an institutional context by applying structure to their work with a set of tools and methodologies, and who judge outcomes of their efforts and act accordingly” (p. 400).

They provide operating definitions for the operative terms within the above definition, and elaborate on the role of “stakeholders” (p. 401), who they say can be either individuals or groups, and propose that each possesses an “agenda” (p. 401), which they define as, “a set of goals, objectives, or expectations relative to the development effort” (p. 401). Agendas, as they defined, pertain to task-related goals, in accordance with organizational standards, or they may be more political in nature, a differentiation that essentially contrasts the rational, measurable project factors with the irrational, immeasurable human factors that occur meaningfully inside and outside a project. This differentiation carries forward into the definition of tasks, which they describe as being formal, which are those scheduled and planned, and informally, which are those unplanned or unplanned (p. 401). Those factors that occur outside a project, yet are impactful, are what are defined as, “context” (p. 402). This is to be distinguished from structures, which are the, “informal or formal mechanisms that are invoked to justify transactions”. (p. 402). The formal components of structures are the policies, methodologies and tools that limit or facilitate activities. Finally, “outcomes” (p. 402) are results realized at any point during the process as a result of evaluation and includes decisions.

Shaw, Gupta and Delery (2001) elaborated on the topic of context, noting that systems are not isolated but rather work together and therefore need cooperative design to be integrated in sufficient a manner to intercommunicate. System integration is where disparate systems, and their historical and contemporary configuration decisions, mash together to form a cohesive system. Achieving this degree of compatibility and synchronization requires negotiation during the IT strategy and planning processes, otherwise outcomes will be suboptimal and not achieve the benefits contemplated in the business case of the systems.

Basu, Hartono, Lederer and Sethi (2002) found that senior management involvement predicted the achievement of objectives in a positive manner in IT implementations, whereas organizational commitment predicted objective achievement in an inverted-U relationship. Similar to the Planner's Paradox, which expresses that insufficient planning will yield poor outcomes, and that excessive planning will have the same outcome, it was found that organizational commitment had a similar effect. The explanation provided for this inverted-U relationship is that organizations need some commitment to initiatives to make them successful but excess commitment tends to provoke the political, and when political agendas are prioritized over corporate strategy, implementation achievement turns negative.

Jasperson et al. (2002) published a literature review of the relationships between power and information technology from eighty-two articles in the preceding twenty years. This paper is quite comprehensive and therefore will not be reproduced here; readers should read this meta-review directly if desired. Some of the most salient points follow.

The authors offer three lenses through which technology can be viewed with respect to its relationship with its userbase: technological, which “views technology as an exogenous force which determines or strongly constrains the behaviour of individuals and organizations” (p. 406); organizational, which, “assumes almost unlimited choice over technological options and almost unlimited control over the consequences” (p. 406), and; emergent, which propounds that, “the uses and consequences of information technology emerge unpredictably from complex social interactions” (p. 406). Each of these lenses, they match with one of four power lenses, which are: rational, which is, “structural power that focuses on authority, information, and expertise as bases of power” (p. 400); pluralist, which is, “power that assumes objective definitions of power and that conflict is the norm” (and that pursuit of goals is an inherently political process involving bargaining) (p. 401); interpretive, which claims that, “power is based on the ability to control access to and direct the construction of organizational realities.” (p. 401), and; radical, which says that, “power and politics are outgrowths of social structures, such as class, racial, gender or institutional structures, that exist outside any particular organization.” (p. 407). They marry these lenses (p. 415) to explain this framework and their interpretation of the articles reviewed.

Jaspersen et al. (2002) conclude their review with reflections, within which they introduce the notion that power is best understood from, “different levels or layers” (p. 423) because power is something that exists at numerous levels, and these levels may be artifacts from the past as well as from the task at hand, brought about by something relevant or irrelevant to the task at hand, so collectively, manifestations of power alter an

ever-changing power context which, like an amorphous blob, can impact anything within its broad path, and by extension, nothing outside of its path, and furthermore, in a manner determined by the unpredictable movement of the blob and not by any foreseeable trajectory.

They state that, “the deep power structures gradually shape and are shaped by IT and organizational context” (p. 425), suggesting a bidirectionality to shaping between organizations and IT. This bridging concept is contrasted with IT being the primary driver or organizational politics being the primary driver. Irrespective, from the meta-analysis, the authors have emphasized that they found value not in synthesizing articles into a smaller taxonomy but in embracing the apparent richness in the concept of power and how there is breadth, depth, timeliness and other dimensions if the concept of power is to truly be understood.

By questionnaire to 105 planners, Hartono et al. (2003) sought to, “identify a comprehensive and parsimonious set of factors of practices that predict implementation [success]” (p. 42). They found five factors associated with the successful implementation of IT strategic planning: deliberate implementation planning; management control; planning robustness; team member selection, and; alignment to current organizational needs (p. 47). Analysis of these empirical findings suggests that by pre-emptively preventing opportunities for potential political wrangling, implementation success will increase, since, “users politick to raise the priorities of their projects and bypass the prioritization scheme established in the plan” (p. 43). This coincides with previous

research that emphasizes the importance of having detailed implementation plans with role assignment built into the IT strategy.

Salazar Alvarez (2003) claims that an analytical interpretivist framework can be used to adequately understand the complexity inherent in social aspects of IT implementations, because IT implementations present a potential clash in culture and challenge to the extant class structure that is resolved only when the dominant social class structures are reproduced within the technology. Using actor-network theory, Salazar Alvarez notes the motivation of subjects is to establish or preserve their social construction of reality within the technology. He offers that the coarse-grained nature of projects in their earlier stages gives rise to necessary individual and group level political behaviour as granularity increases over the course of the lifespan of the initiative.

This is contrasted by Dhillon (2004), who argues that due to a confluence of factors we are unable to understand power relationships during ISD processes. Further, because the IT department is so organizationally weak relative to other business units, and invisible and exogenous events so powerful, decision making often takes place elsewhere and therefore IT departments are merely the recipients of these implementation decisions. He argues that for implementations to be successful, structure, systems, people and culture must be aligned, and furthermore, that investment decisions be traceable directly to the end customer and not to other, more political, objectives. And similar to others, Dhillon concludes that power seems to exist in “multiple layers” (p. 642), calling for subsequent research to explore these layers.

The idea of layers took hold, and researchers explored topics in greater granularity: “Although the macro-level of the organisation is interesting and needs more research we believe that it is at the micro-level that the major problems of organisational integration occur” (Wainwright & Waring, 2004, p. 337), where organizational analysis broadened yet stratified research areas into more finer-grained domains, such as structural, social, historical, cultural, chronological, individual, where some were stratified even further.

Schwarz and Watson (2005) use a social identity framework to investigate group membership perception and its impact on IT implementation success and conclude that employees will embrace technology changes if they preserve or improve their group memberships and resist any change that lessens their self-image.

Self-image, from one perspective can be interpreted as perceived usefulness in another study. It is around this time that the rational, measurable implementation success factors blended in to the less rational and immeasurable factors in the research. Davidson (2006); Sabherwal, Jeyaraj and Chowa (2006); Constantinides and Barrett (2006); Howcroft and Light (2006), and; Córdoba (2007), each contributed in similar ways to the body of knowledge by introducing other blended concepts such as boundary formation, networks of power, user satisfaction, system use, and use intentions, to name a few. All stress that individuals need to feel good about the change in the classic, ‘what’s in it for me’ challenge, before they are prepared to adopt any technology, and that groups have their own selfish questions regarding any technology, which seek to preserve or elevate their standing and power, lest they resist openly or subversively. These papers also

emphasize that power is used in many ways, and its expression is complex and often does not follow formal lines of authority.

In 2007, Lapointe and Rivard published a strong response to calls for multilayer analysis to power in systems implementation by examining organizations at the levels of individual, group and organization. They established that implementations should be viewed exclusively using alternate yet complementary models for a richer understanding since organizational politics manifest at multiple levels simultaneously, and any analysis that fails to study all three levels will lack necessary insight. This view has also been advanced by Milani et al. (2008) and Singh & Hardaker (2013).

Silva (2007) offered epistemological and theoretical perspectives for studying power and politics in information systems, concluding that the meta-theories of phenomenology, critical theory and structuration theory, “fail to unravel the hidden and strategic nature of power” (p. 165). He rather proposed a threefold perspective called circuits of power, implying that power is analogous to electricity invisibly traversing circuitry. He stated that, “IS are key instruments of control and that they can radically change work tasks which will impact workers’ identity” (p. 169), and that through an interpretive lens, one can understand how technological artifacts are the result of political struggles, and are imprinted with specific interests. Silva claims that “authority will always be contested as formal rules are open to interpretation, that is, the source of politics.” (p. 169) and that, “any actions outside the scope of formality that seek the fulfilling of personal agendas would be considered to be politics.” (p. 169).

In 2007, Butler reiterated that development of an information system is a political process by which actors will engage in conflict-related activities such as domination, sabotage or compromise (p. 58) to shape the sociotechnical features of the system through the exercise of power. In his case study he concluded that, “the majority of these [implementation] problems occurred because of the high levels of autonomy and budgetary independence of the IT-literate engineering-oriented business communities of practice” (p. 56). Noteworthy is that these problems took place under ad-hoc strategies and governance policies, again suggesting that in the absence of formal strategic planning and governance in systems, political behaviours will effectively occupy the space as though it were an amorphous blob in an empty space oozing to fill that space. Butler seemed to add that technocratic actors amplify their power by obscuring details about this esoteric pursuit simply because they cannot be challenged by those functionally and epistemologically unable to mount a credible challenge.

Reiterating the earlier finding that implementation support varies as the system details become better understood, Alvarez (2008) segmented behaviours prior to and during an implementation noting how support changed once a notional system became a planned system, which became a system under development. Users expressed feelings of loss of control, and consequently attempted to reshape the functionality of the technology, directly and indirectly, to avoid the deskilling and redundancy creation they anticipated. He argued that systems are complex social phenomena that are linked to structure and identity, and that changes that occur to any linkage will impact the other linkages in a co-constitutive relationship. They can produce a loss of autonomy, isolation and fragmentation, which gets institutionalized as an outcome of system implementation,

therefore a successful implementation requires also changing existing structures as well as professional identities.

Sutheerawatthana and Minato (2009) highlight the presence of technocrats within the implementation process and discuss how this often-external group creates another layer of political behaviour. The process by which the system is built shifts power within the implementation process from the technologically elite (the ‘who’) to the system (the ‘what’) when it is ready for use. This emphasizes the importance of timeliness in influencing the system design; once the system ‘goes live’ there is little, if any, opportunity to change how the system operates or governs. Akin to inhouse counsel designing their corporate policies and contracts, few are in a position to pose a challenge to the experts’ outputs in their respective domains.

Hussain and Cornelius (2009) used structuration theory to examine the recursive dualistic relationship between IT management’s use of domination and legitimation and the structure, as defined by Giddens (1984). In demonstrating that IT managers are effective at being influenced and influencing the organizational structure, the authors also discovered that the nature of power was highly distributed and, “even those at the lower end of the organizational hierarchy were able to influence the success or failure of IS implementation” (p. 197). The notion that power is wielded by all individuals within an organization is also expressed by Jaspersen et al. (2002) and Lapointe and Rivard (2007). Structuration theory would espouse that a technology strategy is an artifact that provides an organizational norm and hence provides legitimation structuration of domination by means of sanction, and that this signification is a sense-making communication

demonstrating power (Hussain & Cornelius, 2009). Interestingly, the overwhelming failure of organizations to mobilize the power contained in the artifact by means of coercive power or sanctions suggests either that structuration theory may not be an appropriate theoretical lens for this research or that something is exceptional in this failure that requires refinement of Giddens' theory.

Lorenzo, Kawalek & Ramdani (2009) elaborate that the adoption of enterprise systems has a steep and protracted learning curve that requires learning and mastery. From longitudinal case studies they found evidence that, "as the complexity of the project unfolded...project plans were modified or discarded" (p. 142). Moreover, they found that organizations can have varying aims in the maturity sought from their enterprise systems, and that these require varying levels of learning and mastery among the implementation team.

On the topic of adaptation in response to system implementation, Lorenzo, Kawalek & Ramdani (2009) talk about coping strategies and distinguish between strategic adaptations and managerial adaptations, which links to Jasperson et al's (2002) and Lapointe and Rivard's (2007) examinations of power being stratified in hierarchical levels.

Given the pluralist and dialectical nature of political study in organizations, Sabherwal and Grover (2010) looked at eighty-nine systems development projects throughout the entire lifecycle and after conducting a thorough literature review, developed an emergent taxonomy of three categories of political processes employed to

gain control of IS projects (p. 436) that ultimately hinder technology strategy implementation, often to advance career prospects or build reputation in spite of or in tandem with what is rational or beneficial for the organization:

Process	Characteristics
Tug of War	Struggle for control, offensive and defensive tactics to overcome resistance, negotiation and trade-offs, influence without authority, zero-sum
Obstacle Race	Hurdle jumping and dodging, deception and manipulation, hierarchy and formal authority invocation, pairs with rational goals for increased legitimacy
Empire Building	Intentional hijacking of projects to advance reputation and control and achieve organizational changes using conflict

Table 1-Political Processes (pp. 435-439)

Tug of War (TW) – Tug of War commences with project initiation followed by personnel assignment, whereupon politics ensues to control the project, resist control, compete against project efforts, and extend influence (p. 435). These project efforts are followed by the same process to commence another project, and now include bargaining and use of authority in addition to efforts to gain control and present competition (p. 435). TW tends to skip crucial project phases such as analysis and design (77% of the time) and development and implementation (81% of the time), which is attributed to organizational politics and the ‘tug of war’ for control that takes place within and among projects (pp. 435-438). TW regards IS as a prize (p. 441).

Obstacle Race (OR) – Obstacle Races are most often triggered by an external event that gives rise to a new project. In response to project initiation, parties exhibit the spectrum of political behaviours that include resistance, deception,

invocation of authority, and control (p. 438). Unlike TW, OR projects traverse typical project phases, but with the greater span the complete project lifecycle, far more political activity is exhibited throughout except in the analysis and design phase (p. 438). In OR, attempts are made to control, resist, and ultimately to derail the project, which may in opposition to the project itself, or to the individuals and groups attached to it and its success (pp. 438). OR regards IS as a threat (p. 441).

Empire Building (EB) – Empire Building commences with an individual exerting power and authority to commence an initiative to expand the reputation, control, or authority of that individual, his/her organizational group, and potentially one or more allies (p. 439). This is regarded as a challenge and results in unhealthy competition among individuals and groups who have similar ambitions (p. 439). Personnel assigned to the project attempt to wield authority, which is countered politically, and ultimately results in organizational change (averaging 2 per project versus 0.5 in other projects) (p. 439). EB regards IS as an instrument (p. 441).

Sabherwal and Grover (2010) also taxonomized “events”, both political and rational, which they define as, “instances of social action relating to the project” (p. 425-428):

Event	Event Type	Characteristics
Deception	Political	Concealment of motives, information, progress. Distortion, deceit, surprise, censorship. Ingratiation. Hidden agenda.
Competition	Political	Opposition, creation of alternatives, sabotage, hijacking, tattling.

Event	Event Type	Characteristics
Bargaining	Political	Negotiation, exchange, compromise, consultation.
Coalition	Political	Cooption, alliance, influence by association, power building, invocation of others.
Resistance	Political	Disagreement, rebellion, hostility.
Hierarchical Authority	Political	Exercise of power to create obedience and disobedience, participation and nonparticipation.
Influence	Political	Invocation of expertise to create doubt and delegitimize. Offering favours and status to informally sway outcomes.
Control	Political	Negative power, absence, feigned forgetting, feigned confusion, delaying or withholding resources and capabilities.
Organizational Events	Rational	Acquisition and assignment of personnel to project and steering committees. Reassignment of roles of temporary and permanent nature.
Success	Rational	Successful achievement of standard, user acceptance, functional acceptance, etc.
Problems	Rational	Performance issues reported and actual.
External Events	Rational	Events outside of the project that are impactful to the project such as those that impact regulations or sales.
Technical ISD Events – Project Initiation	Rational	Proposal for project, approval or authorization, acquisition of capabilities and resources (not personnel).
Technical ISD Events – Analysis and Design	Rational	Project definition, system design, system/vendor selection (where appropriate).
Technical ISD Events – Development and Implementation	Rational	Development, installation, implementation, training, testing.

Table 2-Project Events, pp. 425 & 428

Within each political process a variable presence and sequence of the events can be observed with notable differences, for example, the influence event is not observable

in obstacle race processes because the nature of obstacle races obviate influence. The event sequences of the three political processes are illustrated as follows (p. 436)

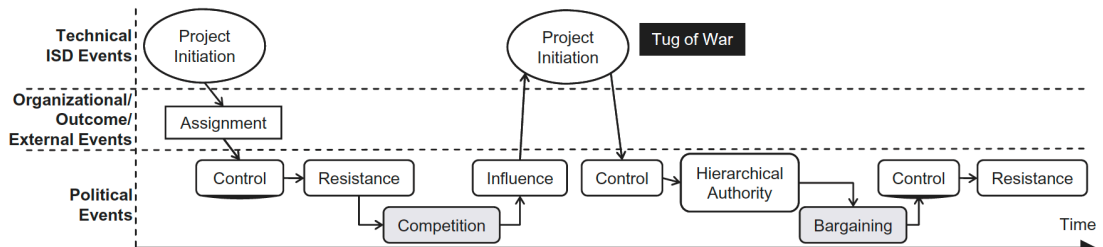


Figure 3-Tug of War Event Sequence, p. 436

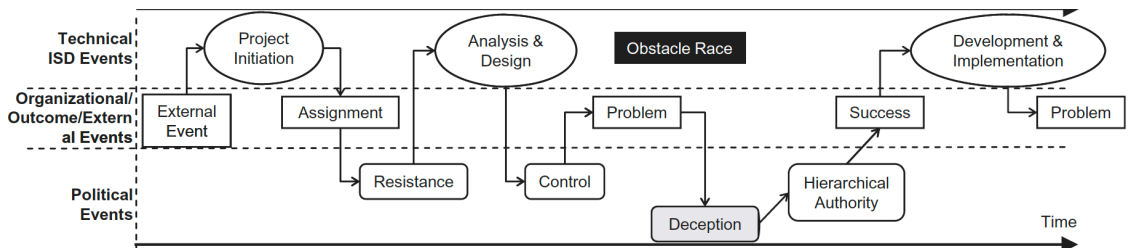


Figure 4-Obstacle Race Event Sequence, p. 436

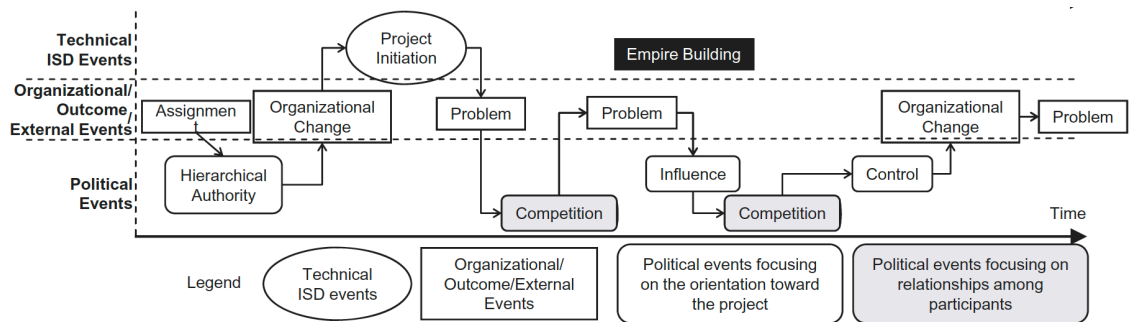


Figure 5-Empire Building Event Sequence, p. 436

The taxonomic coding system developed by Sabherwal & Grover (2010) has been included as APPENDIX A – TAXONOMY OF POLITICAL PROCESSES IN SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT, and will be the coding system used in data interpretation to categorize the political nature and attributes of activities.

Furthering the earlier work of Lapointe and Rivard, the authors state, “while the individual behaviour and the broader perspectives can offer useful insights into the politics of ISD, each perspective is incomplete” (2007, p. 423), implying that an understanding can only be achieved when examining politics at multiple levels beyond just the individual.

Sabherwal and Grover (2010) conclude with prescriptions for practitioners, which are that: IT personnel should be trained in political savvy; IT management should have knowledge of the three aforementioned processes so that they can respond appropriately; and project team members should have political awareness and be accommodating when they experience political tactics, and rather than use these as a provocation for retaliatory political actions, they would be better advised to use these as inputs positively as indication that better communication, design, leadership or something else is required to be successful in implementation (p. 444).

Selander and Henfridsson (2012) extend Lapointe and Rivard’s (2007) model by exploring the role of cynicism in user resistance in IT implementations, which they claim has the following dimensions: cognitive distance, negative effect, and seeing through espoused claims (p. 293). Interestingly, cynicism is roughly defined the same way as user perceptions of usefulness (Schwarz & Watson, 2005) and several other related concepts that were introduced decades earlier in slightly different terminology.

Grover et al. (2014) conducted exploratory research across 141 IS projects to identify the covert political strategies used to resist information system projects and to conceive counterstrategies to combat the politics in motivation and action. Taking a strong stance, they claim regarding the failure of IT strategy implementation, “user resistance and the political environment are prominent culprits contributing to the ultimate failure of these projects” (p. 5). They devised five dominant behavioural archetypes that represent the varying strategies individuals may pursue to end, modify or delay IS projects to advance their personal agendas, which are: pretending, toddling, hostage taking, masterminding and stickling (p. 14). The counterstrategies they developed are: slash and burn; get it on the table; executive sponsorship; bypass/shift locus of control; rational counter argument; document/reporting; backup resources; and cuddle (p. 14). The dominant counterstrategy for each dominant archetype is illustrated in the table below (p. 23).

<i>Behavioural profile (archetype)</i>	<i>Slash and burn</i>	<i>Get it on the table</i>	<i>Executive sponsorship</i>	<i>Bypass/shift locus of control</i>	<i>Rational counter argument</i>	<i>Document/reporting</i>	<i>Backup resources</i>	<i>Cuddle</i>
Pretending	†	◆	◆	◆		◆D	◆	◆
Toddling	†	◆D	◆	◆	◆	◆		◆
Hostage Taking			◆	◆D	◆		◆	
Stickling					◆			◆D
Masterminding			◆	◆	◆D			◆

Notes: †Indicates that players were at lower power levels.
 This table lists the set of counterstrategies that are used to tackle each of the political behaviour archetypes, identifying the dominant counterstrategy that is used against each of the five political archetypes.

Figure 6-Dominant Counterstrategies for Dominant Archetypes, Grover et al. (2014, p. 23)

Grover et al. (2014) enumerated several motivations for political behaviour in IS projects: Machiavellian intentions for personal gain; lack of skills, cooperation or understanding; distrust in management; cultural norms favouring political behaviour; incentives that are misaligned to desired outcomes, and; prudent resistance to ill-

conceived management and project decisions (p. 31). To encourage project success they prescribe knowing the organizational culture, fostering open and collaborative environments, offering incentives for behaviour aligned to the strategy, exploring redundancies to sidestep resistant entities, and utilizing change management techniques that anticipate, quantify and obviate political behaviour through anticipatory and ad hoc planning and management (often referred to as a ‘stakeholder assessment’ and ‘stakeholder management’) (p. 32-33).

Summary of Technology Strategy Implementation

In an apparent acknowledgement that the body of knowledge has not advanced significantly over the preceding few decades, the field has come full circle, yet converging on some accepted notions regarding IT implementations:

- They are impacted by rational, measurable factors as well as irrational, immeasurable factors;
- The impactful rational, measurable factors are inconsistent across research studies. The most consistent factors include management support, measurement of task performance, description of responsibility for the implementation, user resistance and description of user involvement during the implementation (Markus, 1983; Lederer and Sethi, 1988 & 1996; Wilson 1991; Sambamurthy and Kirsch, 2000; Hartono et al., 2003), but the directionality of causation is unclear from past studies;
- The impactful irrational, immeasurable factors are many, and are likely more dominant than rational factors in determining implementation success. In fact,

many seemingly rational factors are political when more closely examined. Irrational factors tend to be grouped into the heading of politics, but also include strategic alignment, and cultural and technological fit (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1974 & 1977; Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992);

- Political behaviour takes places at many levels in an organizational hierarchy and is expressed in many ways. Political power is present at all levels both formally and informally;
- The quantity of political behaviour observed will be proportionate to the opportunities available, and the opportunities available can be moderated with management mechanisms such as transparency, leading practices, metrics, etc. (Lederer and Sethi, 1996; Dhillon, 2004);
- System changes motivate political behaviour because systems reify organizational power and help to define user identities, which groups, individuals and institutions intrinsically want to maintain and grow (Lapointe and Rivard, 2007), and;
- System changes are another prize available in the ongoing organizational political wars in which powerful individuals jockey for power, hence they are used as bargaining tools for the related and unrelated outcomes sought where playing politics is the norm.

A summary of this section of the literature review can be found in the table below where it is summarized why IT implementation failures take place.

	Inadequate management commitment	Inadequate control mechanisms	Rejection by intended users	Resource gap	Knowhow gap	Legacy infrastructure	Role clarity
Salancik & Pfeffer (1974)		✓					
Salancik & Pfeffer (1977)			✓				
Markus (1983)			✓				
Lederer & Sethi (1988)	✓	✓					
Wilson (1991)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lederer & Sethi (1996)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Gottschalk (1999)							✓
Henderson & Venkatraman (1999)		✓		✓	✓		
Sabherwal (1999)					✓		
Sambamurthy & Kirsch (2000)	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Shaw, Gupta & Delery (2001)						✓	
Basu, Hartono, Lederer & Sethi (2002)	✓						
Lee and Bai (2003)			✓				
Salazar Alvarez (2003)			✓				
Hartono et al (2003)		✓			✓		✓
Dhillon (2004)			✓				
Schwarz and Watson (2005)			✓				
Constantinides and Barrett (2006)			✓				
Davidson (2006)			✓				
Sabherwal et al. (2006)			✓				
Howcroft & Light (2006)			✓				
Córdoba (2007)			✓				
Lapointe and Rivard (2007)			✓				
Silva (2007)			✓				

	Inadequate management commitment	Inadequate control mechanisms	Rejection by intended users	Resource gap	Knowhow gap	Legacy infrastructure	Role clarity
Butler (2007)		✓	✓				
Alvarez (2008)			✓				
Sutheerawatthana & Minato (2009)							✓
Hussain & Cornelius (2009)	✓		✓				
Lorenzo et al. (2009)			✓		✓		
Sabherwal & Grover (2010)	✓	✓			✓		
Selander & Henfridsson (2012)			✓				
Grover et al. (2014)	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓

Figure 7-Why IT Strategy Fails to be Executed (Summary)

User Acceptance / Adoption

User acceptance/adoption is a separate stream of research and as such will not receive much attention in this research. Collectively these concepts seek to understand and define user acceptance/resistance within the latter stages of an information technology change or addition, particularly when users are expected to be trained for, test, or commence use of the system.

Early adoption studies, like those in implementation, started by seeking linear cause-and-effect explanations as to why users may resist the adoption of technology. The factors of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness were empirically established to correlate to resistance among users, particularly the latter (Davis, 1989; Bhattacharjee, 1998). When users were interviewed, it was quickly understood that resistance was expressed based on user savvy, and that their intentions and behaviours were far more complex with respect to motivation and imputation of value.

Users expressed their perceptions that technology was one of the “determinants of power and influence” (Williams & Wilson, 1997, p. 912), particularly in that systems provide and deny access to information and knowledge and increase and decrease participation in decision making processes (Grover et al., 2014). They further provide opportunities to influence others, thereby reducing the “power distance” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 45) to powerful people (Lee & Bai, 2003). Systems also provide transparency into the activities of users in a manner that allows the system owner to evaluate the efficiency,

effectiveness and compliance of individuals throughout their transactions, and compare their relative performance to that of peers and relevant standards (Doolin, 2004).

There is a dominant academic model for technology acceptance, known as the technology acceptance model (TAM), which, “has been shown to be highly predictive of IT adoption and use” (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008, p. 274). Papers, such as the one by Venkatesh and Bala (2008), attempt to theoretically extend the TAM to offer a more robust understanding of the phenomenon, but the foundation remains the same. This model has evolved to TAM2 and TAM3 through the efforts of Venkatesh and others in subsequent years.

Evaluating the cognitive lens of the actor is informative to understanding the motivation and resultant behaviours within the system. Often associated with TAM, numerous researchers have referenced, “technological frames”, as formulated by Orlikowski & Gash (1993, pp. 2-4), which were an extension of Daft & Weick’s (1984) notion of sense-making yet cognized through the technological lens. Technological frames are summarized as, “people’s assumptions, expectations and knowledge about the purpose, context, importance and role of technology” (Orlikowski & Gash, 1993, p. ii), where incongruence among technological frames is highly impactful in the values of the actors and their responding political actions to support or resist the technology as a planned initiative, or throughout its constituent parts whilst being executed.

Technological frames are constructed heuristically through perceived analogous characteristics, and interpretatively from political and social scenarios that give rise to

assumptions, experiences and movements. Within organizational units, there is typically frame congruence relating to core assumptions, knowledge and expectations (Orlikowski & Gash, 1993). Among different organizational units there is typically frame incongruence, since each group maintains respective dissimilarity in cognition (Lin & Silva, 2005). Incongruence in technological frames requires what McGovern & Hicks (2004) call, “configurational intrapreneur” (p. 246) to proactively predict and exert referential power to address the incongruence that catalyzes resistance and the resultant political behaviours. Frames are theorized to be dynamic and readily changed (Lin & Silva, 2005).

Building from the TAM and its successors, Kim and Kankanhalli (2009) offered, “status quo bias” (p. 567) as another factor to explain user resistance, which is the propensity to remain inert with the existing technology footprint. They relate status quo bias in individuals to, “rational decision making, cognitive misperception and psychological commitment” (p. 569). Rational decision making assesses relative costs and benefits of the proposed change yet, while the quantitative net value of benefits against costs is a rational approach to evaluating the initiative, users can concoct unsupported values for transition costs or uncertainty costs, for example. Cognitive misperception references Tversky and Kahneman’s (1991) concept of loss aversion, where users favour perceptions that losses exceed gains despite equivalent outcomes. Psychological commitment moderates among the psychological anchors of sunk cost, social norms and expressions of control. Switching costs were found to be most impactful in determining user resistance and tendency to maintain status quo.

Singh and Hardaker (2013) conducted a large-scale literature review of over 300 articles related to user adoption and technology diffusion. Interestingly, after their review they were highly critical of the approach taken by many researchers and rather strongly advocated for research approaches that pursued an, “interactive approach to examine the complexity and multiple levels and dimensions of social reality” (p. 105). They emphasized the need for strategists to be cognizant of the “cultural configuration” (p. 116) of the organization, which illuminates both top-down and bottom-up opportunities and perils from the levels within the corporate hierarchy, suggesting that all individuals have and execute their power in a manner that suits their interests. They attempt to dispel the notion of the solitary influential individual as the sole base of power, elaborating that groups of various sizes and configurations, representing both formal organizational structures and informal cultural, interest and other groupings, emerge and coalesce at various stages in the adoption process to support or resist the initiative underway.

Singh and Hardaker (2013), in reviewing the findings of the extensive literature review, highlight the need for strategy to consider individuals’ psychological and pragmatic motivations (p. 116) rather than assume that they will obediently adopt the strategic scripts irrespective of their interests, claiming this is a better reflection of reality. It seems this guidance was offered to the researchers who still, in spite of 60 years of contrary evidence, continue to assume people will act rationally and in line with the goals and subgoals defined to maximize organizational value.

	Ease and Value of Technology	Technology Limitations	Psychological Factors	Technology as Identify and Rights
Hofstede (1980)				✓

	Ease and Value of Technology	Technology Limitations	Psychological Factors	Technology as Identify and Rights
Davis (1989)	✓			
Bhattacharjee (1989)	✓			
Orlikowski & Gash (1993)				✓
Williams & Wilson (1997)		✓		
Lee & Bai (2003)				✓
McGivern & Hicks (2004)				✓
Lin & Silva (2005)			✓	
Kim & Kankanhalli (2009)			✓	
Grover et al. (2014)		✓		
Singh & Hardaker (2013)			✓	

Table 3-User Adoption Literature Review (Summary)

Governance & Architecture

Based on 300 enterprises in 23 countries, Weill & Ross (2004) established an IT governance framework to describe the various configurations that organizations undertake to govern IT decision-making. Specifically, they outline five decision domains (principle, architecture, infrastructure, business application needs and IT investment and prioritization) (Weill & Ross, 2005, p. 30). They enumerated six decision-making archetypes (business monarchy, IT monarchy, feudal, federal, duopoly, anarchy) from which decisions are made (Weill & Ross, 2005, p. 31). The characteristics of each archetype are summarized as follows (Weill & Ross, 2005, p. 27):

1. Business Monarchy: Grouping of business executives that may or may not include the CIO.
2. IT Monarchy: Individuals or groups of IT executives
3. Feudal: Business unit leaders from throughout the organization, or their delegates.
4. Federal: Executive and business units working together, often equated to union of nation and state.
5. IT Duopoly: IT executives and one other business group working together.
6. Anarchy: Individuals working alone.

Decision / Archetype	IT Principles	IT Architecture	IT Infrastructure Strategies	Business Application Needs	IT Investment
Business Monarchy					
IT Monarchy					
Feudal					
Federal					
Duopoly					
Anarchy					

Figure 8-Archetypes and decision domains, Weill & Ross (2005, p. 31)

The archetype for decision making is assistive in understanding the power and perspective used in decision making, the priorities expressed and the activities of actors and groups in their attempts to influence decisions. For example, if an IT Monarchy is in place, it is far more likely that disagreements in IT architecture will be met by finding alternate (external) IT delivery options, versus in a Business Monarchy structure where parties exogenous to IT are bestowed an ability to overrule IT resistance. Anarchies would demonstrate higher degrees of conflict generally while rogue decision-making was being combatted in various forms, and this would be observable in the culture of the entire organization. Archetypes are therefore substantively predictive ostensibly insofar in determining how decisions are made, but also in determining how decisions can be influenced, combatted, and undermined given the formal governance structure in place. The particular domain / archetype combination will be described as the governance complexion.

Ross, Weill & Robertson (2006) defined a foundation for IT execution as being a function of three organizational variables: operating model, enterprise architecture and IT engagement model (pp. 8-9).

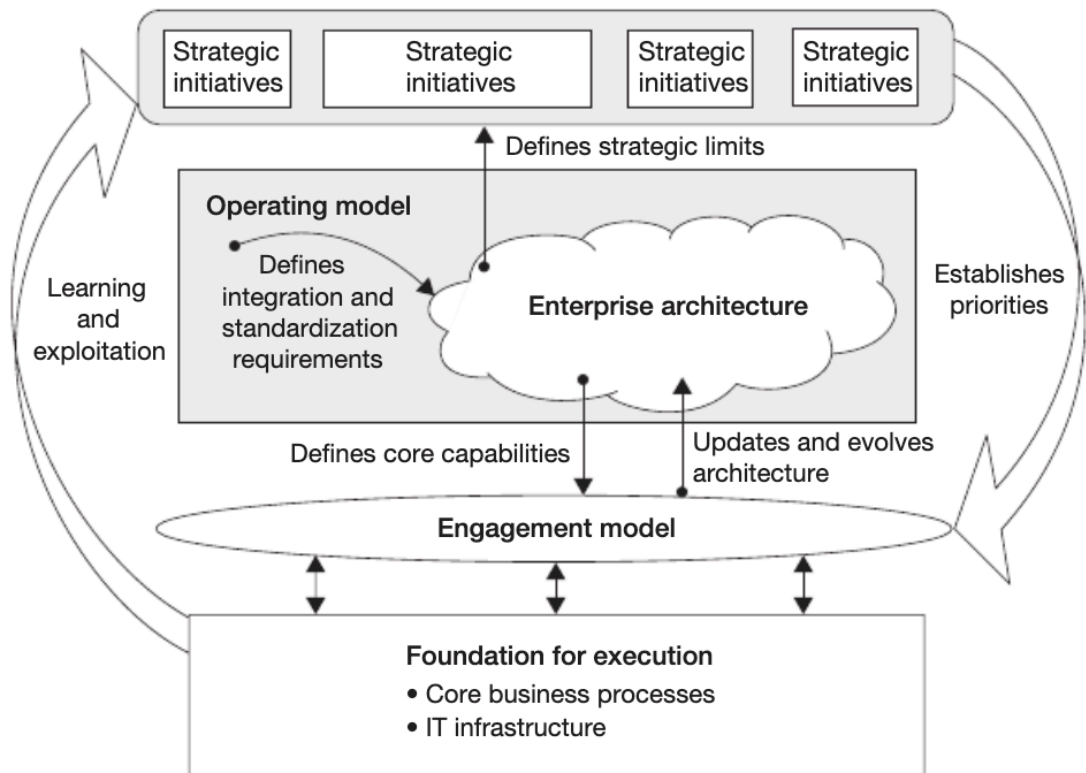


Figure 9-Execution model. Ross, Weill & Robertson (2006), p. 10

The aforementioned variables are chosen deliberately by organizations, each with a subset of configurations that establish and influence behaviours of the individuals within the chosen structures, like the operating models illustrated below.

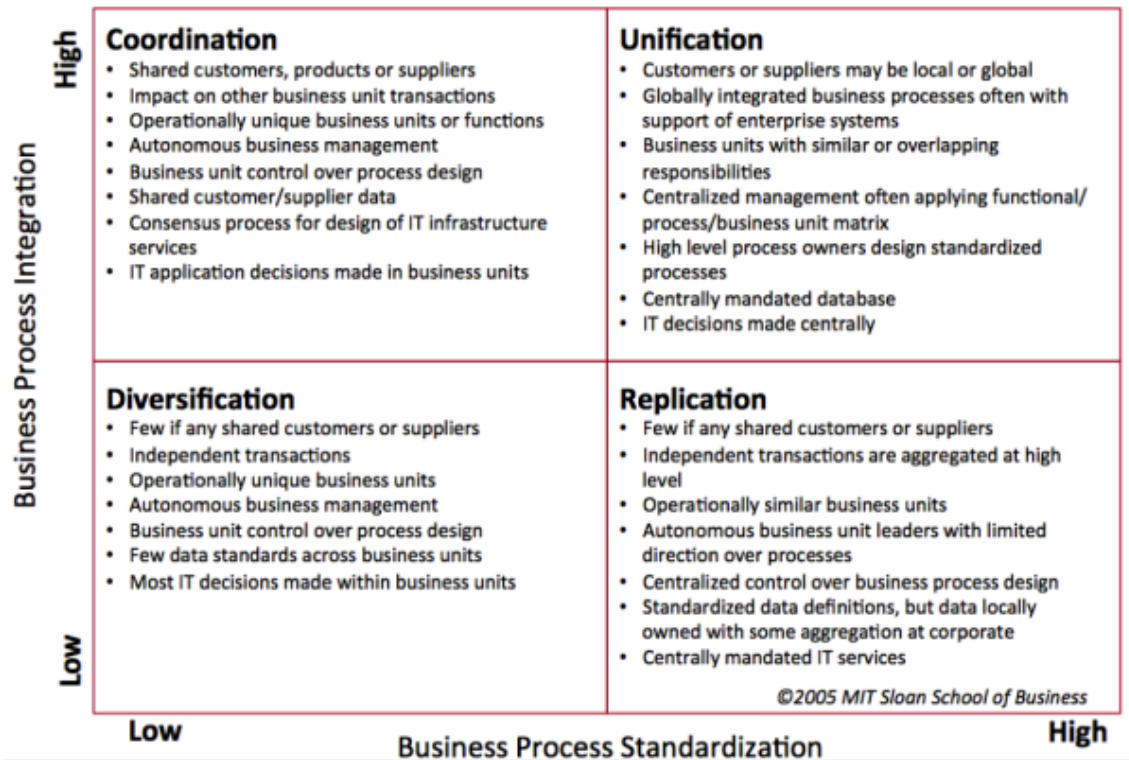


Figure 10-Operating Models. Ross, Weill & Robertson (2006, p. 29)

It stands to reason that in organizations where process integration and standardization are high, individuals and departments will ‘speak the same language’ and work more collaboratively within their processes; the converse will also be true. Diversified operating models deliberately encourage retaining uniqueness and purposely avoid collaboration. Like archetypes, these structural differences and the derivative implications will predictably determine how decisions are made, and how decisions can be influenced, combatted and undermined given the structures in place.

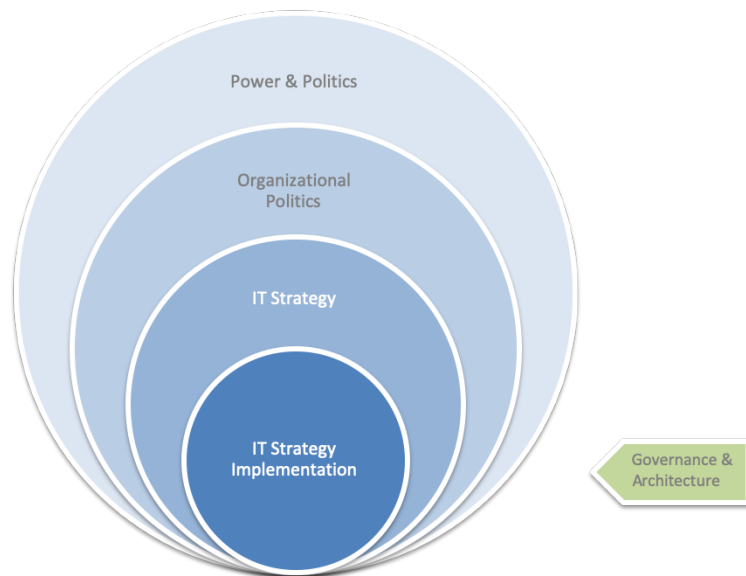
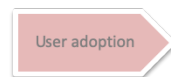
	Decision Domains	Archetypes	Operating Models
Weill & Ross (2004)	✓	✓	
Weill & Ross (2005)	✓	✓	
Ross, Weill & Robertson (2006)			✓

Table 4-Governance & Architecture Literature Review (Summary)

Literature Review Summary

From the preceding chapter we have established the scope of research by means of the concentric model of theoretical lenses which provides the up-to-date body of knowledge for each in a manner commensurate with the usage of that lens.

The primary encompassing



theoretical pillar of research is Power & Politics Theory, represented by the outermost circle, where the precepts are more vigorously applied to challenge inconsistent and incomplete findings in prior research in the variables under consideration, such as the reconceptualization of rational factors, such as inadequate headcount, as potentially political.

The next circle of Organizational Politics narrows from grand theory to middle range applications that are particular to organizations, which include structuration, institutionalism, influence and other organization-level generalizations. As found recursively in the literature review, a strong variation of political behaviours and outcomes took place at layers within the organization, and these therefore require due consideration.

	Organizational irrationality	System of conflict	Individuals as actors	Coalitions as actors	Political response to contingency	IT as political prize
Simon (1955; 1979)	✓					
French & Raven (1959)	✓					
March (1962)	✓	✓		✓		
Hickson et al. (1971)					✓	
Hinings et al. (1974)					✓	
Pfeffer & Salancik (1974; 1977)	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Lucas (1984)					✓	
McLaughlin et al. (2000)						✓
Jaspersen et al. (2002)						✓
Doolin (2004)						✓
Rathnam et al. (2005)						✓
Lin & Silva (2005)						✓
Hussein & Cornelius (2009)						✓
Grover et al. (2014)						✓

Table 5-Organizational Politics Literature Review (Summary)

The next circle, IT Strategy, narrows further in its consideration of the application of power and politics to an applied domain of research that itself comprises a broad body of knowledge. As aforementioned, organizations spend considerable time and money developing their ideal technology strategy and consequently a great deal of research aims to support this objective. It is clear based on extant literature that technology strategies are challenged, and a significant proportion is attributable to irrational factors that present in various contexts.

	Rational translation of corporate strategy	Technology creates institutions	IT Strategy as Battleground	External Influence	Inclusive of "soft" factors
Salancik & Pfeffer (1977)		✓			
Simon (1979)	✓				
Gottschalk (1999)	✓				
French & Raven (1959)	✓				
Lederer & Sethi (1988)	✓				
Levine & Rossmore (1994)			✓		
Scott (1995)				✓	
Lee & Bai (2003)			✓		✓
Salazar Alvarez (2003)					✓
Lapointe & Rivard (2007)			✓		
Weerakkody et al. (2009)		✓			
Grover et al. (2014)			✓		

Table 6-IT Strategy Literature Review (Summary)

The innermost circle of IT Strategy Implementation is the focus of this research as it resides within the surrounding circles. A strategy that cannot be implemented successfully could be considered an ineffective strategy, and strictly rational factors have proven incomplete as an explanation for implementation failures so irrational or political factors will be explored within this context.

	Institutional impediments	Importance of Context	Management Failures	"Analysis Paralysis" Delays	Absent capabilities	Inadequate Management / Measurement	Inadequate Role Assignment
Salancik & Pfeffer (1977)	✓						
Markus (1983)		✓					
Lederer & Sethi (1988)			✓	✓			
Wilson (1991)	✓	✓			✓	✓	

	Institutional impediments	Importance of Context	Management Failures	"Analysis Paralysis" Delays	Absent capabilities	Inadequate Management / Measurement	Inadequate Role Assignment
Eisenhardt & Zbaracki (1992)			✓				
Gottschalk (1999)							✓
Henderson & Venkatraman (1999)		✓			✓		
Sabherwal (1999)					✓		
Shaw, Gupta & Delery (2001)		✓					
Basu et al. (2002)			✓				
Jasperson et al. (2002)		✓					
Hartono et al. (2003)			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dhillon (2004)		✓					
Schwarz & Wilson							✓
Butler (2007)			✓				✓
Alvarez (2008)		✓					
Sutheerawatthana & Minato (2009)	✓						
Hussain & Cornelius (2009)			✓				
Lorenzo, Kawalek & Ramdani (2009)						✓	
Grover et al. (2014)			✓				✓

Table 7-IT Strategy Implementation Literature Review (Summary)

As is apparent in the literature review, comprehensive research must not be overly narrow or predisposed in its interpretation of phenomena and rather approached inductively with awareness of each disparate yet intersecting lens, discipline and perspective.

As aforementioned, this dissertation will focus on exploring the intersection of politics and IT strategy implementation due to its criticality as a managerial issue (Lederer & Sethi, 1998; Amrollahi et al., 2013) and flabbergasting divergence exhibited in the IT

strategy plan and IT strategy implementation, where only 24% of initiatives had been *commenced* (Lederer and Sethi, 1988). The academy dedicated a great deal of time and effort to build an understanding in this space, but seem to have lost momentum more recently and hence would benefit from an inductive approach to reinvigorate and refresh the effort, and add substantively to the body of knowledge.

RESEARCH MODEL AND METHODOLOGY

Methodology Formulation

Given the incompleteness of existing theory at the intersection of politics and technology strategy implementation, exploratory research by means of qualitative case study was chosen as the research approach for the purposes of building new theory through induction. “Building theory from case studies is a research strategy that involves using one or more cases to create theoretical constructs, propositions and/or midrange theory from case-based, empirical evidence” (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 25). Yin (1981) elaborates, “the distinguishing characteristic of the case study is that it attempts to examine: (a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” (p. 59).

Eisenhardt (1989), Eisenhardt & Graebner (2007), Siggelkow (2007), Yin (1981, 1994) and many other esteemed researchers have for decades expounded on the merits of the case study approach as being a sturdy and often superior approach for studying phenomena in which researching a rich version of reality is necessary to develop theory emergently by means of pattern identification within- and cross-case. “...it is the intimate connection with empirical reality that permits the development of a testable, relevant, and valid theory” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 532). This qualitative approach is bolstered by the, “recursive cycling among case study data, emerging theory, and later extant literature” (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 25). The resultant theory is often “novel, testable and empirically valid” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 532).

Nandhakumar & Jones (1997) describe a “paucity of engaged studies” (p. 128) in information technology research and elaborate the importance for interpretative researchers to interact with phenomena to better understand the context and dynamics, as well as the technological frames (Orlikowski & Gash, 1994) that are present amongst the actors. They propound that an engaged (action research) case study approach is, “ideally suited to the study of technology in its human context” (p. 235).

Grover et al. in their 2014 research on organizational politics in IS took a similarly qualitative, inductive, case study approach because, as they explained: structured approaches precluded the richness of description necessary in studying politics; having upfront research questions is unsuitable for exploratory, inductive research, and; limiting respondents to scripted questions is not suitable to uncover the covert nature of politics, and even where used, the responses to the questions are susceptible to social desirability bias (p. 10), where respondents answer questions in a way that would be more socially accepted versus what was accurate and complete. They further elaborate and support their observational methodology as appropriate to observe firsthand events of interest as they unfold, but not invasively so as to avoid the predictable defensiveness associated with being directly observed and consequently withholding information. When researching complex phenomena with visible and invisible components, Grover et al. claim that interacting ad hoc with respondents in a disarming manner, such that they can describe phenomena in their own words and flow, the data will be far richer (pp. 10-11). To this end they asked for written narratives from respondents that anonymously described political stories within their organizations (p. 11).

Methodology Roadmap

Eisenhardt (1989) prescribed a roadmap for building theory from case study research, which is a synthesis of several qualitative approaches, grounded theory building (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 2017) and other case study designs. The steps are sequential as follows, yet iterate backward and forward between steps as prudent to revisit and refine findings and emergent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 533):

1. Where helpful, define tentative research questions and any potential associated constructs;
2. Select cases for theoretical, not statistical, purposes, particularly where the phenomenon of interest is more easily observable and triangulated;
3. Create instruments and protocols, particularly for the triangulation of evidence;
4. Collect data using various instruments;
5. Analyze within-case data to gain familiarity with environmental variables and relationships; analyze cross-case data for generalized patterns, hypothesis development and construct elaboration;
6. Shape hypotheses iteratively to sharpen construct definition, validity and measurability, as well as emergent theory;
7. Evaluate emergent theory against extant literature for confirmatory and disconfirmatory instances;
8. Sharpen theory and constructs to the extent possible, to develop 'good' theory

This roadmap will be followed in the research to be conducted and is elaborated in the following numbered points.

Methodology

1. Research Question and Construct Definition

According to Eisenhardt (1989) it is unnecessary to have a distinct research question or logical constructs for inductive research, and where they are developed, researchers must ensure that they are tentative in nature (p. 536). She further elaborates that the ideal for inductive research is to commence without theory and without hypothesis, and that preconceived theoretical perspectives potentially bias and limit the findings therefore she prescribed avoidance of thinking about specific relationships between variables and theories to the extent possible until later in the roadmap when specificity of variables and relationships is desirable (p. 536).

To this end, formulations of inquiry pertain broadly to the relationship between political actions and technology strategy execution within organizations. More specifically, the following tentative and generalized research questions will be explored and narrowed through the course of the research:

- 1. What factors impact political behaviour in organizations surrounding technology strategy implementation, and;*
- 2. How does political behaviour impact technology strategy implementation.*

For research question 1, specific factors will be identified inductively specific to the case studies under review and not modelled from prior research. Political behaviours, per the operating definition given in the literature review, will be affirmed as present in the presence of power being used to influence outcomes in the organization that diverge from the technology strategy. To reiterate, a technology strategy is the manifestation of how an organization will leverage technology to achieve its competitive aspirations.

For research question 2., specific factors or variables will be sought that link political behaviours to implementation divergence, and where possible, the strength of the variables will be noted.

Inductive reasoning begins with lofty research questions that need to be tempered and narrowed as research progresses, as will be done here. According to Eisenhardt (1989), it is, “important to recognize that [research questions] are tentative in this kind of research” (p. 536).

To comprehend the politics of technology strategy implementation it is prudent to understand the planning process by which the technology strategy was created since, for example, some political tactics exhibited within the strategy implementation may be a continuation of political tactics that were expressed during the planning process. Or, the emergence of political interests and coalitions coalesced during the planning stage, and without knowledge of this, research will lack some context to understand the implementation-related behaviours. Collectively, understanding both planning and implementation of technology strategy will create a more robust theoretical construct, yet

the focus in the research will be limited to implementation to the extent prudent and comprehension of planning will be used in the research inconspicuously to elaborate emergent theory.

Anecdotal findings prior to the commencement of the research, and hence what motivates the inquiry, is the pervasive organizational notion that political actions negatively impact the execution of the technology strategy. More specifically, in the process by which the technology strategy, and its component initiatives, are executed, political actions (and reactions) shift achievement negatively of the technology strategy from an optimum, where the optimum can tentatively be described as rote execution of the technology strategy in accordance with the roadmap timelines (Gottschalk, 1999). Yet the preconception of negativity may taint the research as political actions may also achieve positive results, or lessen the impact of negative actions, as prior research has suggested. There may be a dynamic balance beam in which the weight of political behaviours determines the outcome associated with any element of a technology strategy, or with the technology strategy as a whole. Awareness of this potential political equation is required on an ongoing basis to make observations without eliciting confirmation bias, and hence requires recognition of both “competitive and cooperative actions”, which can be expanded to, “deception, competition, bargaining and coalition” (Sabherwal & Grover, 2010, p. 426).

Politics, as an area of study, is particularly difficult to research due to the inherently secretive and obscure nature of the actions (Jasperson et al., 2002; Grover et al., 2014). Actors within a political system exploit their environment in elusive and

ambiguous ways and can channel their intentions through any number of potential avenues, making battlegrounds out of anything within and even outside an organizational context. To add to that complexity, the study of politics is understood to benefit from adopting a dialectical view, meaning that the dynamics between actors and groups require conceptualization and contextualization on an ongoing basis to understand the oppositional bidirectionality and consequently dynamic dyadic evolution of both the actors and their arena fluidly.

Politics can be concealed skillfully among rational variables in seemingly bureaucratic models (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974). For example, a manager can claim to have exhausted her budget and consequently withdraw her support for a particular initiative for financial reason alone, yet to her peers they recognize the political nature of the behaviour by understanding that she has the choice to allocate her budget dynamically and by withdrawing from this initiative she is more likely achieving another political aim, as is evident in an overwhelming percentage of corporate projects (Sabherwal & Grover, 2010). There are myriad other ways politics can manifest in technology strategy implementation, and these can relate to even less obvious variables, such as attempts to protect the underlying power structures or social constructs or statuses that are conferred by the technology or information, the importance and esteem of symbols that the technology represents, and a variety of other ways that individuals and groups extract value from seemingly homogenous information processing equipment (Bloomfield & Coombs, 1992; Dhillon, 2004; Howcroft & Light, 2006).

To be able to observe such richness in both phenomena and context, it was determined that case study was the most appropriate approach (Yin, 1984) and that a very small number of cases would be satisfactory due to the large amount of detailed data available from each subject organization (Siggelkow, 2007). Within each case, multiple levels of analysis (individual, group, organization) were considered where prudent to evaluate the intuition that politics were intended to achieve benefits for individuals, micro entities and macro entities, and a complicated calculus was carried out to determine the extent of the political behaviours exhibited since organizations need give and take to succeed and therefore actors cannot tenaciously insist that they are the recipient of all benefits at all times (Bloomfield & Coombs, 1992).

Political actions, as aforementioned, can be ambiguous in nature and therefore difficult to observe. For the purpose of this research, we time-boxed a particular window of observation (one fiscal year) over which time we discussed the specific initiatives that were planned to take place during that window. Respondents shared their interpretations of actions as political or apolitical and elaborated on outcomes. We also evaluated the project roster as defined in the technology strategy and probed the performance of each to ascertain the reasons for the divergence in outcome as elaborated in the QVL, which were matched both to the Sabherwal & Grover taxonomy of political event types (2010) and the Grover et al. (2014) conception of political behaviours and motivations.

2. Case Selection

Given prior results from empirical research, it was expected that most organizations would exhibit political behaviours in technology strategy implementation. A clear distinction was necessary to establish *what* is political, *how* it is political within the context, and *why* the politicking was exhibited, as it is expressed in prior literature that organizations adopt their own culture, norms and values (Salazar Alvarez, 2003), therefore the *what* and *how* tend to be far more unique than the *why*, as motives are more consistent for actors throughout the population.

In this research, the *what* is represented in elements (i.e. initiatives, projects) in the technology strategy roadmap. When placed into a roadmap, each element is appended with details on budget, timing, resources, and other pertinent details. Divergence from the roadmap will be considered as a political outcome given the assumption that the roadmap, and preceding technology strategy were built to achieve the rational aim to support the corporate strategy (Sabherwal & Grover, 2010). Obviously, this assumption will be challenged if the organization claims that the divergence is necessary for rational reasons. In the absence of a formal roadmap, respondents were questioned about details of the projects such that delays, overages and other pertinent information would be understood from established plans.

The *how*, as aforementioned, is unique to each organization as each organization has different levers that can be pulled to exercise political behaviour. And to further elaborate the idea of levers, there are the notions of transparency and timing that will influence *when* the levers can be pulled based on the resultant visibility, which is typically not a desirable characteristic for political actions.

Because of the elusive nature of organizational politics, and the large number of potential independent variables, it was determined that some boundaries would need to be applied to prevent ‘analysis paralysis’ in the cases selected:

- a) Variation correlated to geographic location is limited to that found amongst organizations in Central Canada. This intentional selection bias is potentially a limitation toward the generalizability of the findings, but as specified, sampling needs to be narrowed to make the inquiry tractable. This same limitation permits the research to be conducted more expeditiously since having both researcher and subjects in relatively close proximity is logistically more advantageous. Canadian organizations are not assumed to be significantly different than other ‘Western’ organizations and so findings should remain relevant and generalizable for these countries, if not others. Conversely, the selection effect may be advantageous in this instance as it provides an ‘apples to apples’ comparison if there is geographic variation in the larger population and further helps to control for cultural differences since, anecdotally, Central Canada is considered to be ethnoculturally similar in its heterogeneity across the prairie provinces.
- b) Because the focus is on the impact of politics on technology strategy implementation, the engagement model for contacting potential subjects is primarily focused on senior staff within Information Technology departments since their role in the implementation of the technology strategy is highly dominant, often through both legitimate power as well as other forms of power. Different viewpoints and observations from the vantage of other departments was pursued to triangulate the political perspective both broadly and specifically

within the implementation phase; to limit the sheer quantity of observations, only senior staff from other departments will be observed and interviewed.

c) Studying divergence from a technology strategy document requires the organization to have a formal technology strategy in place that is a collaborative effort and traces to the organizational strategy to rationally support the corporate initiatives and intentions by means of subgoal. Only larger organizations have sufficient technology complexity to warrant formalization of a technology strategy, therefore only larger organizations (>1000 employees) (Gartner, 2020) were approached, and to them the qualifying question was posed to ensure that they indeed had a technology strategy defined that met these criteria and also somehow roadmapped the initiatives in a manner such that time sequencing and resourcing was clear in some way. More specifically, the following criteria were established for potential subjects:

- i. Only larger organizations with significant IT departments; (>20 individuals), the justification of which is that IT represents at least 2% of the total headcount, which would then not exclude industries and organizations with relatively lower IT requirements, such as retail and mining;
- ii. Completion of a technology strategy through a collaborative process;
- iii. The technology strategy is the translation of the information technology components to support a corporate strategy;
- iv. Defined project portfolio management of a roadmap, with some governance to maintain or enforce it;
- v. Project tracking and metrics, particularly against the technology strategy;

- vi. Willingness to participate, with access to key individuals who are committed to remaining involved until the case details are clear;
 - vii. A member organization of a broader industry and therefore exhibits typical characteristics that exemplify the industry.
- d) The number of organizations to be researched was restricted to three. One organization was chosen for “theoretical...reasons” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and studied in great detail to be exemplified as a typical company. Two more organizations were examined more briefly to determine whether there was any significant difference between the organizations, and by this, establish that the first company is representative as a sample of the population (Siggelkow, 2007) or whether it extends emergent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 533). Because the second company varied from the first, challenging the representativeness of the first company, a third case was added to evaluate what may be a sample that is representative of the population or whether the first company was the anomaly.

3. Instruments and Protocols

A preliminary information request was created for potential subject organizations that prompted for both qualitative and quantitative data, and a rich variety of data types over a longitudinal period. A copy of this request can be found in Appendix B. A more detailed explanation of the data sought was provided in a subsequent section called Field Data Collection. “...triangulation made possible by multiple data collection methods

provides stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses. Of special note is the combining of qualitative with quantitative evidence” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 538).

As a grounding tether, within organizations there are populations of individuals seemingly immune to political behaviour and interviews with these stewards can provide a benchmark against which political findings will be compared (Davis, Schoorman & Donaldson, 1997). Stewards will be apparent from their more objective recollection of events and activities that coincide with actual project performance and other fact-based detail.

In addition to the information gathered from the aforementioned request, research was conducted into the extant literature, albeit in a non-exhaustive manner as an early step. This intended to balance the bias or taint described by Eisenhardt (1989) with reviewing extant literature with Sigglekow’s sentiment that, “an open mind is good; an empty mind is not” (2007, p. 21). Conducting exploratory research into the influence of politics in the implementation of technology strategy necessitates a strong base in the broader research on power and politics, which is one of the dominant organizational theories. A detailed literature search was designed and conducted to provide a satisficing review of the literature from which to view the findings of any subsequent research efforts. The most salient findings were extracted from the general body of knowledge, and those articles specific to technology strategy were scrutinized in greater detail. This included reviewing substantive literature reviews from by Jasperson et al. (2002), Sabherwal et al. (2010) and Grover et al. (2014).

The literature review has been completed and provided in a prior section. Articles used as references were searched through the Instituto de Empresa (IE) online library, located at URL <http://library.ie.edu/>. The IE library includes books as well as academic articles, including from ScienceDirect, JSTOR, Proquest, SAGE, IEEE, WorldCat, ABI/INFORM, Wiley, and Emerald libraries. A list of references can be found in the References section. Materials used can be found in the Bibliography section. Search terms included, and used blends of the following:

- “Technology strategy”
- “Information technology”
- “Strategy development”
- “Politics”
- “Power”
- “IT adoption”

Results from library searches were filtered to English articles that were peer reviewed. The earliest article selected was from 1962, which is March’s seminal article on the workplace as a political coalition, which arguably initiated the power and politics stream of research in business studies. Articles selected were targeted to originate mostly from top academic journals. Additionally, luminaries focused in this topic area were included, such as Gottschalk, Pfeffer, French, Raven, Weill, Ross, and Sabherwal. Earlier papers were added from Herbert Simon given his Nobel prize-winning contributions and relevance on the topic, and Kahneman and Tversky were included for decision science relevance.

Articles from all dates were searched, and references were made from papers as recent as 2018. Anecdotally, it is apparent that the theoretical relevance and contribution of articles diminished in quantity over time, perhaps reflecting both a diminished interest in the topic and reflection in the pursuit of more fine grained research that narrowed the scope and precision of inquiry, such as toward IT services or information politics, for example. This may also reflect research saturation or fatigue.

Potential respondent organizations were targeted through LinkedIn, a social media source that identifies users by occupation, organization and location. Approximately 100 Chief Information Officers (CIOs) (or similar role) of Canadian organizations with over 1000 employees were contacted as potential subjects for the study. Messages were sent via LinkedIn to inquire whether individuals would like to participate in the research.

In the initial outreach communication, to evoke participation interest, CIOs were told about the structure of the interview process, confidentiality of the results, and commitment required. Despite the enticement of receiving relative secrecy of the results and a copy of the research, a very low response rate was experienced, which was anticipated given the discomfort organizations would experience revealing their concealed tactics and project failures. Only one to three subject organizations were sought to complete the research, and three organizations were found that met all the qualifying criteria.

To participant organizations, the research commenced with an information request for documentation for one complete fiscal year of their choosing. Per Appendix B, a large set of documentation was sought to build the broadest possible context of the project planning and execution landscape. After the data was reviewed, a select number of senior technology (and related) professionals were scheduled to be interviewed by phone or in person by the researcher. Interviewees were chosen to best represent a cross-section within IT and outside IT, mostly favouring senior management and executive roles. Interview questions were not sent ahead of or during the call to elicit more candid responses. A copy of the interview questions can be found in Appendix C. Questions were both open- and closed-ended and permitted freeform follow-up questioning to ensure that the richness of the context was understood. Calls were recorded, where permitted, and later reviewed to ensure that responses were fully understood. Responses were also noted on the question sheet, but not shared with subjects. During face-to-face interviews, notes were taken in real time during the interviews and post hoc. From these interviews, new questions were formulated to be posed to other respondents.

Subjects were told that subsequent rounds of questioning were possible given the initial findings, where some topics needed to be probed more deeply. They were also advised that a site visit is possible where it may aid in the understanding of the phenomena. Participant organizations were not averse to these obtrusive and unobtrusive measures on the understanding that politics requires great investigative rigour and more thorough approach.

4. Field Data Collection

Data was gathered from the aforementioned sources and throughout the aforementioned processes. Responses were noted both in terms of the paraphrase, as well as in any impressions gained, patterns noticed, or other relevant thoughts and ideas. Due to the flexibility of both format and instruments, hunches were pursued flexibly with relative ease, which coincides with Eisenhardt's notion that, "a key feature of theory-building case research is the freedom to make adjustments during the data collection process" (1989, p. 439). This same flexibility can be applied to emergent theory, which lends the possibility of adding more respondents, more data gathering methods, and even new cases.

Additional data sources included publicly available information. Where available, annual reports, websites, articles about the organizations, and other public sources were sought as these sources provide more details on both what is rational and planned for these organizations (past and present) as well providing ethos and examples of the political nature of the organization, technology implementation stories, staff biographies, and other relevant details.

5. Data Analysis

Due to the intentionally limited number of cases, within-case analysis was the dominant form of data analysis. Synthesis was performed on notes from documentation, interviews, and all other sources, and was used for the purpose of theory building.

Within-case data proved to be quite significant as narratives were provided from each respondent to expose the richness of their contribution and perspective (Yin, 1981). Each contribution was compared and contrasted with others' in a number of ways (Pettigrew, 1990), and therefore based on the number of respondents in each case, had an exponential number of within-case analysis permutations. Narratives were organized flexibly into topics, as Yin (1981) suggests, so that themes could emerge, and so that the topic's narratives were not constructed redundantly and are rather built upon previous narratives, which balanced rigour and relevance.

What was relevant and substantive to the topic was the comparison of the respondent feedback and narratives to what a rational response may be and how this evidence diverged from that response. Primed with the corporate strategy, technology strategy, roadmap, and a variety of other organizational artifacts, analysis was thoroughly performed on the adherence to the plans, and what, how, when and why divergence occurred. What is unique about the study of politics is that there is more than one side to each story, and therefore the same story was retold from a vastly different perspectives based on different interests, depending on who recounted the details. It was incumbent on the researcher to ensure that he had a firm understanding of the documented intentions for the initiative in question so that he could confirm the target inquiry is identical for respondents, and that only perspectives are different. Using Pettigrew's (1990) approach, phenomenological focus was placed on items with high experience, drama, polarity and information.

As aforementioned, because of the elusive and often deceptive nature of politics, it is highly probable that some respondents intentionally omit information or provide partially or totally false or misleading information, perhaps even seeing the research efforts as another opportunity to politic and gain value. For this reason, it was prudent to attempt to read between the lines and look past what is said to rather reverse engineer the motivation based on the outcome. Most respondents are likely to publicly adjudicate their actions as representing the best interest of the organization, so they were asked the probing questions related to the non-achievement of the documented plans and how they view the failure in their role therein. Responses will be interpreted through triangulation of documents, metrics, other responses to help evaluate the presence of politics in the responses in addition to the aforementioned qualitative directions offered by Pettigrew (1990).

In analyzing the data, some extent frameworks and operating definitions will be also used to identify and categorize political behaviours. Per the literature review in the previous section, researchers have identified several independent variables that are associated with technology strategy implementation failure, such as inadequate management commitment, inadequate control mechanisms, rejection by intended users, resource gap, knowhow gap, legacy infrastructure and role clarity. As a refinement and augmentation to this list, the following independent variables are evaluated as potentially emergent constructions in the inductive process:

1. **Recognition** – Recognition is defined as the way the organization recognizes and rewards the efforts of individuals in the organization, particularly as it relates to

actions that support and advance identifiable entities or structures to which an individual can represent (Cicekli & Kabasakal, 2017). The organizational visibility and/or scope of recognition is highly impactful to actors as it directly influences actions, as such the spectrum of this variable ranges from local to global. Local recognition would be an atomic subset of the organization that can provide recognition, typically one in which the actor resides, like a region, city or business unit. Global recognition refers to the superset of enterprise-wide recognition, which may be geographical, logical or structural in complexion. Values contained within the spectrum would include multiple regions or geographies, for example, being recognized by both the North American and European entities, but not by others, and this scale would be specific to each organization and how specifically they are organized. Considering the motivational theory of psychology, in addition to extant political theory, actors will seek recognition from the entity that best aligns to their goals. Members of business units will seek recognition only from their business unit if that is an option, and this can create conflict from other business units from which value is extracted. If recognition spans multiple entities as its most atomic unit, then performance tends to align more to benefits that accrue to that entire assemblage. Where recognition is global, actors are rewarded only if the performance benefits the organization as a whole, and this naturally better aligns to a technology strategy since they are global in nature. Hence, recognition that is not global leads to performance that is not global, which creates an opportunity for implementation performance that diverges from the technology strategy formed from these suboptimal political behaviours;

2. **Alignment** – Alignment is defined as the concurrence of the organization in working toward the strategic goals of the organization in a coincident manner (Gottschalk, 1999; Rathnam et al., 2005). Goals within organizations are translated in strategic and tactical documentation to subgoals that are cascaded to the appropriate business units and executed in concert. The spectrum of measurement ranges from misaligned, which signifies no concurrence in goal achievement to high alignment, which is where concurrence is comprehensive throughout the organization to the strategic goals. Values in between the extremes would indicate the degree of concurrence in achieving strategic goals. Instances of imperfect alignment can be viewed as political behaviour;
3. **Mission / Vision statement achievability** – This is defined as the degree to which the organization can achieve the statements described in strategic documents and disseminated as the mission and/or vision statements of the organization. Mission and/or vision statements are evaluated against their achievability, where the lowest value of unachievable would signify that the organization is aspiring to a target that cannot be achieved and sustained, such as the best, greatest or anything superlative in description. The reason for this takes into consideration the concurrent effort needed to enumerate all competitors, which is not a static or transparent pool; the effort needed to gauge the status of all competitors, which is constantly in flux and is opaque or often intentionally conceals the actual values; the real-time nature of these comparisons and the workforce and systems required to sustain the flow of information; the insight needed to continue evolving the measurement variables so that they accurately reflect whatever superlative the organization aims to achieve, and so on. When evaluated cohesively, a

superlative vision or mission is unachievable unless it is bound within measurable constructs. An achievable mission/vision is a goal that is understandable and can be accomplished with the extant resources and capabilities possessed by the organization and perhaps is something already achieved. Values in the spectrum between the poles would be aspirational and would require change to achieve, where the magnitude of change would scale with the value. The greater the organization needs to stretch to achieve the mission and vision statements, the greater political behaviour is observable;

4. **Transparency** – Transparency is defined as the robustness, accuracy and timeliness to which the organization reveals the status of activities to its stakeholders, which is known as a form of information politics (Grover et al., 2014). The value low was labelled as one pole, since there are no instances of a complete absence of information in an organization. There are three dimensions to transparency, each of which contributes to the value given to the apparent transparency within each organization. Transparency in information can be political in nature as can be responses to not receiving full transparency;
5. **Governance structure** – The governance structure is defined coincident with the Weill & Ross taxonomy (2004), which elaborates the complexion of the governance committee where business-centric is contrasted with IT-centric. This is a binary variable. Based on the governance complexion, actors respond with political behaviours to achieve their goals when the governance structure does not support their achievement;
6. **Technology strategy development sophistication** – This is defined as the relative experience, tools, and effort invested in developing the technology

strategy to generate a strategy that is relevant and rigorous and reflective of the needs of the organization (Sabherwal, 1999). A low rating in this variable would be justified by the scarcity of any one of the inputs required to create a strategy or the scarcity of the discipline to follow the steps. Political behaviour is utilized to achieve goals and subgoals, and as was observable, ‘grey areas’ and ‘dark areas’ within processes offer opportunities for political behaviour, which are exploited by actors and entities proportionally to the sophistication.

In addition to the defined variables, observations of political activity will be aligned to the taxonomy of political processes in systems development by Sabherwal & Grover (2010, p. 436), as represented in Appendix A. The three processes categories are as follows:

Process	Characteristics
Tug of War (“TW”)	Struggle for control, offensive and defensive tactics to overcome resistance, negotiation and trade-offs, influence without authority, zero-sum
Obstacle Race (“OR”)	Hurdle jumping and dodging, deception and manipulation, hierarchy and formal authority invocation, pairs with rational goals for increased legitimacy
Empire Building (“EB”)	Intentional hijacking of projects to advance reputation and control and achieve organizational changes using conflict

Table 8 - Politics process per taxonomy, p. 435-439

This taxonomy will be used to classify the political nature of the behaviours exhibited during the data gathering process, where by triangulating data sources it will be identifiable whether the political tactics used intended, respectfully, to engage in open project conflict, bypass open conflict with advanced tactics, or extend power to achieve greater reputational and organizational heft. This taxonomy will be appended inline to

interview results (in square brackets) where the political activities and contribution of each individual are summarized from the synthesis from all data sources. Mapping the relationship will consist of interpretation by the researcher as to the “process” Sabherwal & Grover (2010, p. 435) the interviewee undertakes to achieve their political aims by means of emergent variables. Given this, the variables can be coded with one or more “process” (p. 435), although coding will attempt to delineate the process or processes most dominant. The purpose of the coding is to identify the presence and type(s) of political behaviour, which coincidentally also links the findings to a prominent extant academic political model that classifies the nature of the political expression. By noting the political undertone, we can appreciate that the irrational factors are active and potentially influential in the technology strategy outcomes.

With respect to using multiple case studies, because the first subject organization was assumed to be typical in its political behaviour, between-case analysis is simply to affirm the assumption of homogeneity as accurate. Therefore between-case analysis will be limited in scope to evaluation of similarities and differences, and where sufficient differences are noted, and it is prudent to add additional cases, it will be done. Otherwise, the first case will be the primary case for analytical purposes as representative as a valid sample of the population. As noted by Yin (1981) cross-case comparison is problematic because, “extraction of single factors from a case study unduly simplifies the phenomenon being studied...the approach treats case studies as if they were data points, with each case yielding an observation to the tabulated” (pp. 62-63). Therefore, the cross-case comparison will simply affirm that the first case is not anomalous or idiosyncratic

and consequently that subsequent efforts to craft theory will be representative and valid for the same population.

6. Creating Hypotheses

Hypothesis creation involves recursive comparison and contrast between data and emergent theory until fitness is established in shaping one or more hypotheses and constructs (Eisenhardt, 1989). Because the research approach used in these case studies was inductive, both theory and constructs were built incrementally as results were interpreted emergently, as Eisenhardt proposed. Specific approaches to hypothesis development have been proposed by numerous authors, including Lundberg (1976), who offered several highly applicable approaches, which include: exploratory, intentional (analogy, hypothetico-deductive, contextual twist, additional interpretations, exceptions to general findings, simplification of observed relationships, manipulating scientific statements), and extending-coupling (p. 9-10).

“...[A] strong theory-building study yields good theory (that is, parsimonious, testable, and logically coherent theory) which emerges at the end, not beginning, of the study” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 548). Consistent with Eisenhardt’s guidance, the process of theory building is a journey that yields theory toward the end, and any attempts to extract it prematurely may taint the research.

7. Evaluate Emerging Theory Against Extant Literature

Eisenhardt (1989) elaborates the value of evaluating emergent concepts against extant literature both in instances that conflict and agree. Findings that agree strengthen the, “internal validity, generalizability, and theoretical level of theory building from case study research” (p. 545). Even in agreement, novel theory can be created as a refinement, unique instance, or form of description, to cite some examples. It may unify existing research by providing the linkage needed to better understand phenomena, or aid in a descriptive model that lacked detail. Conflicting literature poses a different set of opportunities to ideate novel theory in a manner that perceives the context in a fresh way, evaluates the generalizability of both current and historical research, and illuminates a path to assure internal validity.

At present, research into this topic is contradictory and sparse and thus findings provide some insights that both agree and contradict with this body of research, as well as to provide some detail where none exists. This is another benefit of conducting inductive, case study research; ties to previous quantitative and qualitative research assist in ascertaining the variables that influence certain outcomes, and the strength of those relationships.

8. Sharpen Theory and Constructs

Regarding sharpening theory and constructs, Eisenhardt (1989) identified two issues to achieve closure: “when to stop adding cases [“theoretical saturation”], and when to stop iterating between theory and data” (p. 545). She elaborated that there is a diminishing return on effort in both issues where the incremental value gained lessens to a point where it is no longer material to the learning process. This, respectively, prevents the aforementioned addition of cases and ‘analysis paralysis’ within- and between-cases.

The research conducted illuminated some distinct themes and relationships within and among the cases studied; the quantity and quality of the findings achieved theoretical saturation in both dimensions as will be elaborated in a subsequent section.

FINDINGS

Case Study 1

Case study 1 (Organization X) is an international engineering firm headquartered in a major city in the Canadian prairies with more than 165 global offices from which its over 6,500 staff provide consulting, design and construction services in earth, environment and related areas of energy. X was founded in Toronto, Canada in 1960 and through organic growth and mergers now has presence in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North American and South America. X is legally formed of seven operating companies, each with its own Board of Directors. X earns over \$1B in annual revenue. X's vision statement is, "A client-centric, global leader in our chosen markets, differentiated through a strong culture of ownership, professional excellence, and investment in our people." (About, 2015, Organization X website) X lacks a mission statement; it expresses its values as integrity, excellence, teamwork, caring and ownership ([Organization X] Vision and Values, 2010, pp. 1-2)

X's leadership includes global roles, including Global President & CEO; Global CIO; CFO; CLO; COO; Global Director of Human Resources; Director, Global Communications; and President, Mining (Global Leadership Team, 2021, Organization X website). X also has regional leadership roles, such as President, Canada; President, Asia Pacific; President, Europe Middle East; VP, Latin America, etc. ([Organization X], Org Chart, 2009, pp. 1-2).

X's Global Board of Directors consists of the CEO, Lead Director, six shareholder selected members, and three external members (About, 2015, Organization X website).

X is 100% employee owned. 65% of full-time employees have an ownership stake, and 79% of the total shares are owned by Principals and Associates, who are the employees that perform the engineering work (About, 2015, Organization X website).

Within X there is a huge array of committees that direct, consult and advise on IT and IS within X. Working groups, such as the Business Information Services (BIS), are intentionally compromised of a cross-section of IT leaders who represent proportionately the greatest heft in revenue. At the time of research, the BIS was formally comprised of two regional CIOs, the Global CIO and the Global CTO. It was advised by the Global Leader of Enterprise Applications, Chief Application Architect, other regional CIOs, and other parties with an interest in IT ([Organization X], Canadian IS Strategy, 2010).

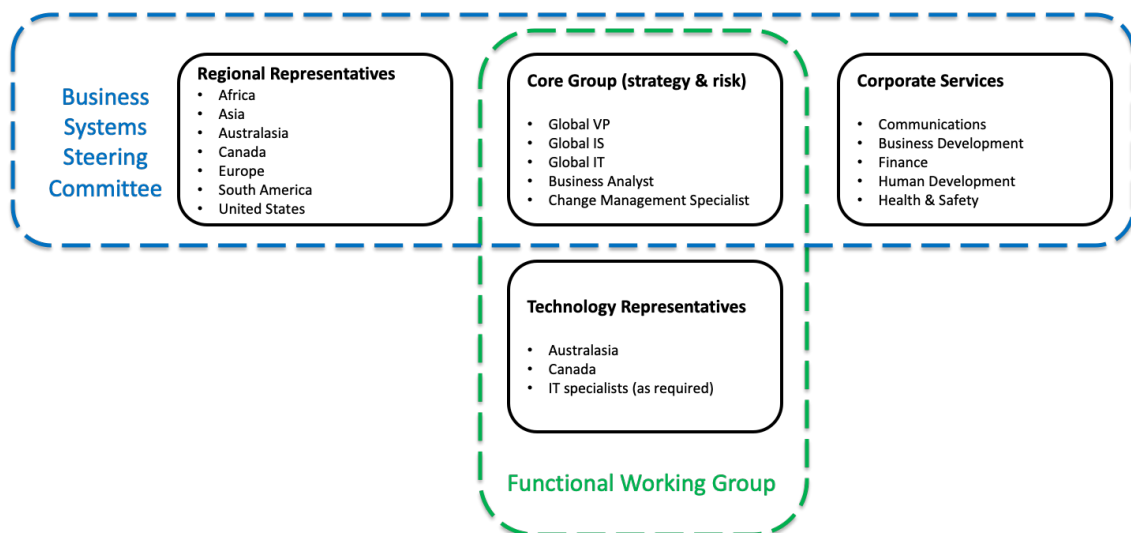


Figure 11-IT Steering Groups at X

X's governance archetype employed has IT executives, in the absence of 'business' representatives, who proceed to make IT decisions on behalf of the organization. Within X, the BIS and its collaborators devise IT strategy initiatives and then 'shop them' with business leaders to gain their buy-in on which initiatives to include and when. BIS developed their strategy with the Business System Steering Committee (BSSC), which was comprised of business representatives from all geographies.

X's technological footprint spans geographic offices in varying configurations, with some shared infrastructure, applications and policies ([Organization X], Canadian IS Strategy, 2010). For example, only Canada and US have access to [X]base, which is a reporting system for projects. Yet [X]Net is a global extranet and portal for team and project collaboration, as well as providing services such as employee onboarding, client relationship management, learning management, etc.

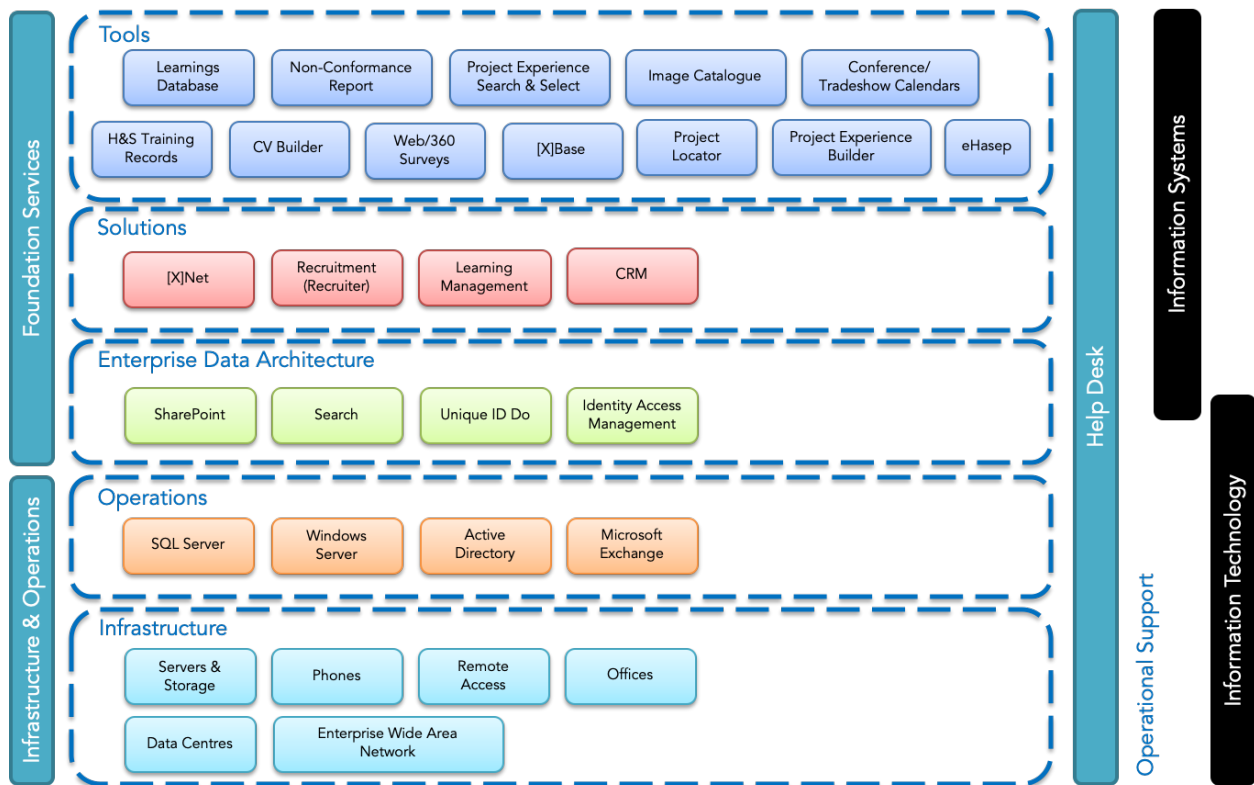


Figure 12-Technology and system architecture of X, ([Organization X], Business Systems Desired State, 2010, p. 7)

X presented an updated organizational strategy in 2010 for the years 2010-2015 that called out for a systems strategy to support “operational excellence, efficiency and streamlined processes” ([Organization X], Business Plan, 2010, p. 6). It was elaborated that this entails deduplication and streamlining and sharing services. Staff satisfaction in systems in 2009 was 69% and this was deemed unacceptable (p. 6). The strategy further elaborated specific IT outcomes for the coming period that included an Intranet for seamless collaboration and decision making and Corporate Services. Success would be measured as 50% of staff routinely using the Intranet as their primary work environment, and 80% satisfaction with systems (p. 9). In the strategic plan document, the direction for IT was stated as, “Provide our people with applications and systems that meet their business needs” ([Organization X], Strategy Implementation Plan, 2010-2015, 2010, p.

21), and “Leverage our current systems when looking for technology-based systems” ([Organization X], Strategy Implementation Plan, 2010-2015, 2010, p. 21). In the balanced scorecard, the same measures were reiterated and the metric to evaluate success was traced to a specific question within the customer satisfaction survey (“I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right”) ([Organization X], Balanced Scorecard, 2010, p. 1).

Since 2005, X had a SharePoint intranet/extranet ([X]Net) for the purposes of shared repository and collaboration.

In 2010, X IT, IS, IM and its various committees (to be called “IT” going forward for simplicity) set about creating an IT strategy for the 2011-2015 period based on what it deemed a, “comprehensive list of system needs” ([Organization X], Business Systems Desired State, 2010, p. 15), originating from the 2010 organizational strategy. The red highlighted text in the figure below indicated the strategic imperatives that IT translated as their responsibility to meet in the IT strategy.

	Strategic Objectives	Specific Responsibilities
Health & Safety	We have an environment where our employees and contractors are mutually empowered to protect and thrive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that no-one’s health and safety is compromised at work • Provide the leadership and resources necessary to achieve our Health and Safety objectives
Human Development	We are engaged and connected to each other, our clients and society to share, learn, participate, deliver and excel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders and Managers create the environment for our people to excel • Recognition is authentic, inspires and motivates people • Provide multiple opportunities for a challenging career
Technical Excellence	We have reinforced our technical expertise and capacity in our core service areas. We actively share knowledge and experience through technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in technical development in our traditional service areas • Increase capacity and core skills in all Operating Companies

	Strategic Objectives	Specific Responsibilities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in building centres of excellence and technical communities Develop tools to share and advance our collective technical knowledge
Business Development	We have achieved growth by using the full potential of emerging regions in Africa, Asia and South America, increasing the revenues per client, and responding to their demand for project management, construction services and energy management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make strategic investments in emerging economies (Acquisitions & Senior staff) in Asia, Africa and South America. Achieve 5% of our global net revenue from Energy Services Mining and Oil & Gas revenue to approach 50% of our global business Grow our Design & Construction services 100 clients each generating at least \$5m annually and 10 clients each generating at least \$10m annually.
Client Service Excellence	Our client service culture and business intelligence processes allow us to win more complex, diversified projects, increase revenues per client, and be recognised for our client service excellence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create attitude for servicing our clients Combine our services for integrated projects Continue to develop and recognise skills in Project Management Redefine the P&A roles to leverage Technical and Client Service excellence Implement globally uniform client relationship and business development structures
Risk Management	Risk Management is an integral part of our culture. All risk management operations align to a common framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an Enterprise Risk Management framework Incorporate risk management into all significant decision making, including governance, strategy, planning, operations, management and project execution.
Internal Structures	Our internal structures and processes accommodate growth and enable us to deliver on our strategic objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review organisational design Extend our Integrated Management System to cover all business processes Achieve Service diversification and critical mass in all Operating Companies
Finance & Accounting	We are an employee-owned organisation with gross revenue of \$2 billion, delivering 15% annual return to shareholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the speed and accuracy of global financial reporting (quality, consistency, accuracy and timing) Create a robust financial information infrastructure to support local and global business

	Strategic Objectives	Specific Responsibilities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure appropriate financing options to support the evolving business platform Proactively manage financial assets on a global basis Achieve global DSO < 75 days

Figure 13-X's corporate strategy and IT's identified responsibilities (red text), ([Organization X], Business Systems Desired State, 2010, p. 15)

The process used to create the technology strategy is illustrated as follows, noting the enumerated inputs include external parties and information:

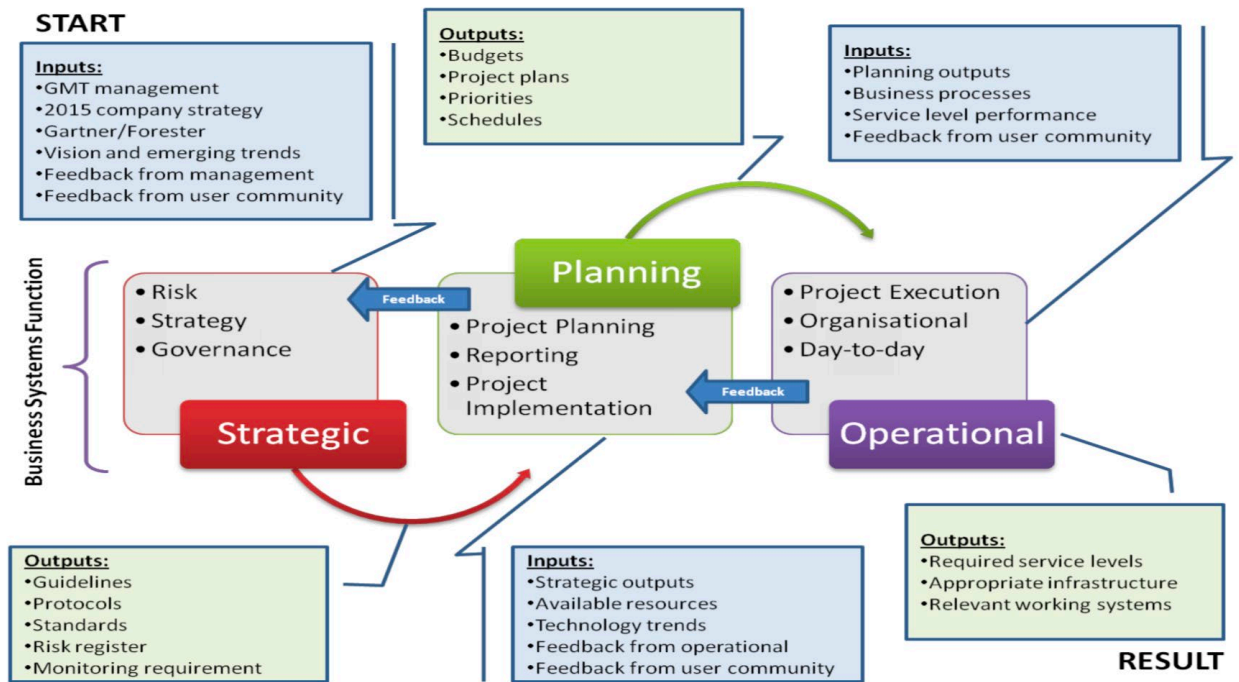


Figure 14-Technology strategy development process at X, ([Organization X], Business Systems Desired State, 2010, p. 25)

In the IT strategy that ensued, the vision of Business Systems was defined, “to provide effective and reliable technology solutions” ([Organization X], Business Systems Desired State, 2010, p. 13). They then defined their focus, “to deliver effective and efficient technology solutions to support our people in delivering the corporate strategy,

driven by the corporate vision, our global values and business goals.” (p. 13) They then offered a “destination statement” (p. 13), which was, “Our technology-based systems enable our people to collaborate and work efficiently anytime, anywhere to meet the needs of our clients. We use a global framework that is flexible for future technologies” (p. 13).

In the IT strategy, IT described their capabilities and resources as mature at the global level by citing adoption of IT service management, an “industry standard best practice to align the delivery of IT services with needs of the enterprise, emphasizing benefits to the end-user” ([Organization X], Business Systems Desired State, 2010, p. 6). It went on to describe using a lifecycle approach, uniform standards, centralized core infrastructure, global policy, procedure and strategy, central software procurement and global help desk (pp. 6-13).

In the IT strategy, the Business Systems group attempts to define or clarify governance. It includes oversight of systems projects at minimum, potentially including anything incremental from planning to hands-on project management. IT then adds that they control systems governance related to risk, research, system requirements, planning, principles, policy and compliance ([Organization X], Canadian IS Strategy, 2010).

With respect to “supporting efficiency for the consultant” ([Organization X], Business Systems Desired State, 2010, p. 26), the IT strategy describes system overlap and duplication, same as identified in the organizational strategy, and offers process automation and streamlined workflows to result in greater efficiency. It advocates for

system rationalization and better tools to empower consultants (assumedly to improve the satisfaction metrics to desired levels).

When identifying gaps, the IT strategy indicates a lack of global architecture, transparency, control, operations, security, financial management, governance and project methodology. The IT strategy also emphasizes that X has a culture of independence (being unique is part of the corporate identity), obtaining global buy-in is difficult (any party can opt out), and that X has a corporate culture not amenable to change ([Organization X] Information Needs Delivery Strategic Roadmap, 2008).

The technology strategy is summarized in the table below:

Objective	Scope	Size (global budget only)
Workflow standardization for proposals/projects	Global, phased in by Region	\$500,000
Project management tools	Global, phased in by Region	\$4,000,000
[X]Net improvement for projects	Global, phased in by Region	\$500,000
Data rationalization	Global	\$2,230,000
Search enhancement	Global	\$860,000
[X]Net performance improvement	Global	\$600,000
Outage monitoring and helpdesk	Global	\$560,000
IT cost reduction	Global	TBD
Communication tools	High volume users	\$500,000
Infrastructure update	Asia	\$500,000
Advisory maturity	Global	\$1,205,000

Independent of the IT strategy are significant quantities of documents, from assessments to needs statements to regional strategies, to methodologies, to individual contemplations, and on and on. Each document seems to identify a new group or committee with an interest not necessarily unique, but often just expressed in more detail or perspective than others. The existence of these documents, with the requisite time and cost associated producing them strongly implies a technocratic IT environment with a mix of individuals and groups with legitimate needs and wants, as well as those with more political aims such as to grow or obstruct power. From the type and content of the documentation there also seems to be a great deal of learning among the individuals, which may or may not be political in nature.

In a representative Canadian document, X enumerates several global “weaknesses” with respect to IT. These are quoted as:

- “Ownership model giving rise to a sluggish decision-making process
- Missing some of the skills needed for integrated solutions
- Culture of “my project, my clients” (internal vs external)
- Project delivery weak for target size of projects
- Structure promotes regional silos
- Systems ill aligned with business needs
- Quality of systems inadequate
- Project focus instead of client focus
- Questionable ability to listen to our clients’ needs

- Some weak corporate services (accounting, BD support, communications, IS)
 - Lack of understanding of the breadth of needs of users (consultants)
 - Operationalization of systems (poor change management practices)”
- ([Organization X] IS Strategy Scoping – Operating Environment, 2010, p. 15).

The weaknesses shared in this regional document contradict prior committee attestation that their adoption of IT service management achieves best practice outcomes throughout the lifecycle of IT services and that they are capable and focused to achieve the objectives set out in the organizational strategy. As the largest presence in the X organization (40%), this subversive document is suggestive to reinforce the need for protectionism for the largest regional silo, and as a by-product calling into question the competence and hence desirability of maintaining the current leadership. The Canadian IT group fueled by their lack of confidence in the global efforts (of which they are a major contributor [many individuals on the Canadian IT teams are also present on the global teams]) hired an external consultant to develop a regional IT strategy and roadmap.

Meeting minutes of IT strategy building efforts indicated the belief system held by the Canadian team about their culture and what is needed to be successful: “[our culture is] one of the things that make us successful, we aren’t a controlled culture, our challenge is to create a system that is better than doing it by yourself, for people to want to come to it, we are prepared to do a little more telling than we used to, but we won’t be regimented and regulated” ([Organization X] IS Meeting Minutes, 2010, p. 1). This statement by a key committee member (both regional and global) directly opposes the technology initiatives he/she is responsible for developing from the approval global

technology strategy and he/she rather promotes open resistance for fear of having controls in place.

The Canadian committee evaluated potential political impacts that were endogenous and exogenous to the organization; endogenous impacts were rated as high and exogenous impacts were rated as medium to high. A stakeholder assessment was completed previously that included many ‘foot draggers’ and ‘blockers’, which included the VP South Africa, 50 Principals, 60 Associates, Global IS Leader, VP South America and Global President. According to the stakeholder assessment, the top IT position does not support the approved global IT strategy, as well as numerous other senior positionally authorities. Because the resistance was documented from prior assessment, a representative cross-section of these individuals was selected for interview. These individuals were selected for interview as they represent various committees and geographies at the highest seniority levels within the organization.

Alias	Position	Local Representative	Global Representative	Total
I1	Senior Executive, IT	✓	✓	1
I2	Senior Executive, IT	✓	✓	1
I3	Senior Executive, IT	✓	✓	1
				3

Figure 16-Interview Details At X

Interview 1

The following citations with Interviewee 1 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 2, 2015.

A senior executive of the Canadian team, global IT leader and BSSC member, Interviewee 1 (I1) was asked about the process to build the IT strategy (per Appendix C) and I1 responded that the leadership team called the Business Information Services (BIS), comprised of the 2 regional CIOs, global CIO and CTO, come together to build a 2.5 year plan. The plan consists of inflight projects, and new projects that are selected based on their ‘colours’ of importance. In this particular IT strategy, the BIS determined that their aim was to support a “most productive consultant by 2020” objective, and then determined amongst themselves which initiatives best supported this vision [*∴ mission/vision achievability = TW*]. The BIS determined that access to information and collaboration were key to achieving consultant productivity, and consequently created initiatives for this goal. This was done in tandem with the implementation of the “strategic implementation plans” (SIP), which included global rollouts of client relationship management (CRM), finance, projects and talent management, all of which were agreed globally. The fifth SIP was deferred due to “financial reasons” by the CIO, and because there was not one consolidated HR entity, there was no global voice to resist exclusion.

All these technology strategy building steps are performed with the guidance and leadership of external consultants, who bring methodology and process discipline, and

who are hired by the local representatives of the BIS so that their local/regional needs are expressed as global needs [\therefore *technology strategy development sophistication = EB*].

Projects are generally ROI positive (“self-funded”) over the subsequent 3-5 years, which is important to the new CIO who is more “budget-driven”. Within X, a positive business case is presumed to be sufficient impetus to participate in a change initiative, yet regional differences, such as language, currency and taxation, are often used as justification for nonparticipation from regions (“regional differentiation”). There is a global mandate toward shared objectives and performance, yet regions have strength or weakness to resist depending on their financial contribution to the organization, and this is fortified by how the organization recognizes and rewards the relative performance of each region [\therefore *recognition = TW*].

Based on the relative newness of the central IT function and confused governance, there is an identified need to establish credibility and build the reputation of BIS as a strategic partner to the business. Historically, engineers would have delivered projects but now IT has assumed all responsibility and must demonstrate a higher rate of success given their expertise.

Accountability for achievement of the IT strategy was deemed allocated to the CIO. Responsibility was deemed shared between BIS and Operations. The formation of numerous global committees was an attempt at openness and inclusiveness, but these formal global committees lacked power and ultimately were not factors in how decisions were made or enforced [\therefore *organizational alignment = TW,OR*].

With respect to metrics for monitoring IT strategy implementation, it was indicated that the global CIO recently introduced some key performance indicators (KPIs) but they were not known. Post-implementation metrics would include measuring ROI, and in this instance, consultant productivity, which is measured by both utilization and chargeability. X uses some dashboarding as well, but nothing measures the IT strategy implementation directly.

When describing divergence from the IT strategy, I1 indicated that some large projects had diverged significantly. The reasoning provided for the failures were regional resistance from those who preferred their own tools, who would overuse the claim of regional variance (“artificial barriers”) as the reason for their withdrawal. There was keen awareness of the political nature of resistance, which was viewed with caution because, “we don’t want to stifle innovation, we want to support variance where they are truly needed”. The efforts of the regions were not documented or shared but rather discovered midflight into initiatives [\therefore *transparency = OR,EB*]

Interview 2

The following citations with Interviewee 2 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 4, 2015.

A CIO of one of the regions, Interviewee 2 (I2) was asked about the process to build the IT strategy (per Appendix C) and I2 responded that under the leadership team comprised of 2 regional CIOs, global CIO and global CTO (BIS), the IT strategy

development process is relatively new. “[We are] in a state of flux right now...We’ve changed from being very regional and very autonomously managed, I think at the regional level, to becoming more of a global organization. The way we develop the IT strategy has changed each year...has become much more centralized.” [*∴ technology strategy development sophistication = TW*]. “[We are] still in a state of somewhat global and somewhat regional...Our role has changed from [our region] developing strategy to implementing strategy and providing the support at the regional level.”

A global IT strategy process started in 2013, and regional strategies started in early 2014 that “was very IT-driven”. In how IT would generate and put forward ideas, “Sometimes I wonder myself...I know it’ll go to the Global Management Team (GMT) as a business case, but it’s not a very rigorous business case.” The efforts were more tactical than strategic, and the initiatives were mostly generic in nature and put forward only if an NPV-positive business case was made. The CIO was deemed to like initiatives that are “self-funded” where technology would be retired consequently. The GMT would approve all initiatives due to the attractive business case due to a newly established “budgetary focus”. “I’ll be frank: GMT didn’t seem to have a CAPEX management process in the past”.

Asked about the genesis of one particular global initiative (MS Dynamics CRM), I2 responded, “That’s a very good question. I don’t actually know. I don’t know if there was an evaluation or comparison with the other products out there.” [*∴ transparency = TW,OR,EB*]

Regions may reject global initiatives because they reject the business case valuation (“[the figures stated in the business case] might not be the case...we’re not convinced so we’re not going to do it”) or otherwise believe the initiative would not benefit them. “That’s the way it still is. As I said, we’ve changed from being quite regionally run to being more globally run...[regions have] the discretion to opt in.” Regions would also question the competence of the management, timing or the outcomes of the projects. Often it took conversations to clarify the intent and persuade the regions to join in; the financial merit of the business case often depended on global rollout, so participation of all regions was required yet it was not forced by a global authority. Due to the endogenously perceived cultural strength and uniqueness of each region, using formal authority to achieve global participation was taboo despite the presence of governance that did permit this kind of mandate. [*∴ organizational alignment = TW,OR*]

Nonparticipation was one reason that IT failures took place from the IT strategy. Other reasons included excessive project load (“saying yes to everything”), immature capabilities, poor delivery partners, ill-planned initiatives, resistance and rejection from end users, and various other political actions, like impeding suspected attempts to assume control. With respect to resisting the IT strategy, I2 stated, “some of our regions are very immature when it comes to knowing technology as well as their management [prowess] and it might just be that they don’t have the confidence to do it.”

Asked about IT strategic planning, “There has been that in the past, everything was a yes, and everyone did the best that they can.” “I think now this year we’re starting to work toward some more prioritization because we don’t have capital available and so

have to say more ‘we can only do this’. This is being forced upon us.’. The undercurrent to this rationale is that the global mission/vision mandate is subordinate to regional priorities [\therefore *mission/vision achievability = TW*]

Initiatives commenced were handed off to a project manager who was expected to achieve success without the benefit of active support from a senior coalition of supporters.

Both accountability and responsibility for achievement of the IT strategy was deemed allocated to the business leadership group comprised the regional CIOs, global CIO, CTO and Chief Application Officer. It was noted that previously responsibility was allocated regionally to regional CIOs. As a point of interest, accountable and responsible parties must formally have the authority to achieve the outcomes for which they are accountable and responsible for it to be feasible, and at X this was not the case per their governance structure. [\therefore *governance complexion = EB*]

With respect to metrics for monitoring IT strategy implementation, it was indicated that the global CIO recently introduced some key performance indicators (KPIs) but they were not known. Reporting to the General Management Team was performed for inflight initiatives, and it was understood that regions report on their own initiatives and sometimes include details of global initiatives to which they are participating.

When describing divergence from the IT strategy, I2 indicated that some large projects had diverged significantly, including a global finance system and a customer

relationship management system (CRM). The reasoning provided for the failures were regional resistance from those who preferred their own tools, as well as a failure to win the “hearts and minds” of the change targets.

With respect to formal authority, after taking time to consider whether anyone or any group had the formal authority to impose a centralized IT initiative I2 responded, “The Board has given [the global CIO] that authority.”

Interview 3

The following citations with Interviewee 3 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 15, 2015.

A senior global IT executive, Interviewee 3 (I3) was asked about the process to build the IT strategy (per Appendix C) and I3 indicated that the IT strategy was developed in early 2013 by consultants and is refreshed yearly as a five-year rolling plan that has a strong focus on implementation. The current strategy goes to the year 2020. The 5 SIPs were determined by business case and approved by the Global Management Team due to compelling ROI. The 2015 IT strategy refresh was centred around building foundations. 2016 was forecast to be slower due to budget constraints. I3 indicated that the “most productive consultant” strategy was developed by the BIS, who also created a “workspace of the future” strategy . I3 devised a strategy to provide “foundation platforms...having 80% of our processes and system being global and 20% specific to the regions...” [∴ *mission/vision achievability = TW*]

I3 indicated that since I3's employment, regions cannot opt out of initiatives, and challenged that that fact can be verified independently. "This used to be the old world in [X]. You create this global solution and people can decide to come in now I mean it's not opt in or opt out it's opt out temporarily so people can decide to come later. In terms of the global network and every new initiative that we are putting forward there is no such thing, there is no such thing anymore. So, build our network, for example, there is nothing to be argued or be discussed about, this is just being implemented, full point. The global network is going to be completed...there is no such thing as opting out. I don't know who told you that, but you might want to contact them again." [*∴ organizational alignment = TW,OR,EB*]

I3 claimed that "[the] political environment is constructive politics and not destructive politics as you see in other organizations. Obviously there is some politics here and I call it gentle or family-type politics....you'll always have a bit of tension here and there...but at the end of the day when the shit hits the fan, and people are in trouble, the family is all united...People are absolutely willing to help."

I3 challenged the BIS in the first meeting on how decisions were made and then subsequently challenged specific decisions. I3 indicated that it demonstrates political savvy to "not take no for an answer", and for initiatives wherein a leader is assured of their vision, the most prudent strategy is to slow down an initiative. "Flying under the radar" or "going around" obstacles to deliver a project will "prove you're right" [*∴ transparency = OR.EB*]. Conversely, I3 also said, "It's all about governance here

[interviewer's name] and making sure you're following due process." [∴ *governance complexion = EB*]

Accountability for achievement of the IT strategy was deemed allocated to the CIO. A RACI (responsible, accountable, consulted, informed) matrix was said to identify responsibility for IT strategy implementation. I3 created the RACI not from leading practice model but from "the [I3's last name] model". "You know what the RACI is for [interviewer's name]? The RACI is for having a healthy discussion." I3 claimed that sponsorship and leadership often come from outside BIS, which is necessary to be successful. "It's important for me that everyone understands their role...and knows exactly where they fit." I3 also said, "The RACI is not something that you have hung on your wall and every morning you walk into your room and say oh ok I have stuff to do what is my role here, oh I'm only "informed" let me sit down and relax." I3 added that one's "head on the block" is a disincentive for non-achievement of that for which one is accountable.

With respect to metrics for monitoring IT strategy implementation, I3 indicated that there were "about 50 measures to come up with productivity benchmarks" that, when asked, included "net revenue per head, policies tied to spot proposals, benchmark compared to previous people used to be able to turn around proposals in a week let them do it in less time, there is all those tools when they go and engineer a task at a site and they need to collect data and turn around some analyticals [sic] so those are the tools that they can get stuff loaded and they can basically come back with analyticals [sic] much faster and in a very consistent way and share information around the world. This is about

being able to work remotely with on similar cuts pull to work on global clients with this first team and i.e. not having to wait for 3-4 hours' time coverage but be able to work organized while others are sleeping for example so all these kinds of things are measures about financial, time, revenue all these kinds of things, what we call chargeable time and how much people can be productive by being more chargeable to the clients and ultimately also obviously some measures of satisfaction which customer surveys and things there are about 15 of them.”

When asked about metrics for IT strategy achievement, I3 responded, “Simple: budget, timeline and user satisfaction surveys...That’s it. Keep it simple.”

Implementation success was deemed to be closely tied to maintaining Project Sponsor happiness. “Important to note that one of the big key criteria success factors for any project is the sponsorship and the leadership, and the sponsorship and leadership often comes outside of IT...It’s a matter of keeping your Sponsor excited about the journey, you are going to, keeping your sponsor aware of any risks associated with this implementation. It’s very important that you, you know, keep all the players all the key stakeholders involved, it’s like juggling with few balls in the air and make sure you don’t drop any or you might drop one or two because it’s not on purpose or whatever, but I mean it’s important that you keep your key stakeholders, your team delivering and everything working and I think this is the Program Manager role although when it comes to strategy this Architect and this guy puts oil in the machine and making sure that all the pieces all at some point in army are the CIO role.”

Discussing project failures and divergence from the IT strategy, I3 said, “How did we proceed with the implementation of the strategy and roadmap? We did pretty well in view of the circumstances.” I3 claimed that the CRM initiative was too big for X and there was an overreliance on external contractors who lacked incentives to keep them honest (agency problem).

“We got a year-and-a-half delay to the program and we got very upset per sets of users that are actually still bruises today and they are moving on because lucky that we rolled out to many, many regions thereafter and they are moving on now. And this was a big cock-up in [X] which actually tarnished the image of BIS and this is something that we are still gradually coming out of the woods.” “I was trying to use the same course that was taken in the past haggling with this contractor trying to recover the situation and this was, you know, touchy and working for two weeks and back another risky problem, etc. we had another flaw, etc. etc. so I decided to go heavy artillery and I got rid of everyone. Everyone. I cleaned the vick [sic]. Completely from internal people to this contracting company. Everyone out and I brought in my own people.”

Case Study 1: Within-Case Analysis

There is a great deal of repetition and confirmatory conformance in the planning and management efforts around IT strategy planning and implementation. Pervasive themes, like those expressed in the organizational strategy, are repeated as implementation intentions. Meeting minutes indicate a propensity toward alignment and agreement typical of the satisficing generated from groupthink, which conforms exactly with the sentiments expressed in the organizational strategy and attempts to elaborate IT's responsibility (the *how*) to achieve the objectives in a manner that results in agreement among the committee and is pragmatic for their circumstances.

Actors in X ostensibly traverse all prudent steps to appear apolitical and adhere to the global governance structure to achieve rational goals as evidenced by the formation of countless committees, working groups, centres of excellences, centres of competence, consultation with external experts, diagnostics, maturity assessments, enterprise architecture, change management, methodology, best practice, new hires, and numerous other measures, many of which are indeed prudent and productive, yet when those same senior members return to their regional shields, subversive and seditious behaviour (creating and inciting rebellion) becomes the norm and the global goals are undermined despite the ongoing lament of the political games played by the regions. The same individuals are both creating and fighting resistance depending on the interest to which they are aligning in that moment., oscillating between local and global recognition, for example the senior IT individual who sits on both global and regional committees who works to develop and publish strategic global initiatives and then openly promotes local

divergence in the document he sponsors. Transparency of these intentional misalignments is low-to-medium given the awareness that it ‘takes place’ however strategic divergence is not advanced visibly in any global committee. *The variable ‘transparency’ appears impactful in actors’ ability to act politically*, with coding as follows per the interview data. Here the value of the variable is *low*:

	I1	I2	I3
Transparency	Highly transparent committees, no transparency in regions	“I don’t actually know [about initiatives]”	“Flying under the radar”
	OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	OR, EB

Table 9-Case 1 Interviews Transparency Coding

IT leadership laments the political behaviours of the regions (“Need an executive champion to drive it in the vertical (IT is the base)” (Interview with I3), “Adopting a business system is a management issue – not an IS issue”) (Interview with I2). Interestingly, IT management has been granted the decision rights to set and enforce global decisions. The regions are vastly represented in the global management team and so decisions made would reflect the overwhelming majority of the organization, yet this majority undermines their own power by not setting an initiative as mandatory and then not enforcing adherence because they want to ‘preserve regional variance’ in identity when in fact they want to preserve regional autonomy and their respective statuses quo, as evidenced by the divergence from the technology strategy. For example, I2 would indicate for strategic initiatives like CRM (Communication tools, in the technology strategy), “we’re not convinced so we’re not going to do it...[and]...[regions have] the discretion to opt in” (Interview with I2), and this occurs despite I2 being a member of the global IT group as well. This divergence demonstrates misalignment to strategic goals

that favour local recognition, carried out in a low transparency manner by technocrats who, now operating outside of the committees, act verily in an IT monarchy governance decision structure. Actors cite technological knowledge and resource gaps as some of the reasons for misalignment, diverging from another strategic initiative (Advisory maturity) by not attempting to build sophistication by undertaking this initiative, even with the available support of external consultants. *The variables ‘organizational alignment’ and ‘recognition’ appear impactful respectively in actors’ duty to achieve the technology strategy and in a manner that prioritizes the group to which they are incentivized to support, with coding as follows per the interview data. Here the value of the variables respectively are misaligned and local:*

	I1	I2	I3
Organizational alignment	Countless committees	1 leadership team v. regions	GMT has sole authority
	TW, OR	TW, OR	TW, OR, EB
Recognition	Global mandate, regional priority	State of flux between regional to global	Top-down global
	TW	TW	TW, EB

Table 10-Case 1 Interviews Organizational Alignment and Recognition Coding

Culturally, employee-owned organizations demonstrate higher levels of commitment from their employees (Oliver, 1990), which X propounds in its values and this was attributed by I3 to the need for heightened cooperative and inclusive technology planning and execution. The need for buy-in is high in IT initiatives since a mixed global/regional, centralized/decentralized model of IT management was in place and this enabled regional offices to diverge at times from an initiative originating from the global IT strategy, which is hailed as both as credit and discredit, depending on the context. Compensation and recognition at X were strongly tied to regional performance, so while

employees were encouraged to think and act globally, their strongest incentives were to think and act locally. Compounded by the IT Monarchy governance structure, this creates an organizational misalignment that disincentivizes global efforts while indirectly encouraging a decrease in transparency so that locally focused efforts are not broadcast into the purview of global leaders.

X is an organization that plans in great detail collaboratively and documents most everything. As mentioned in the case description, they took large amounts of time to define individual projects, calculate business cases, define and/or select solution options, plan out projects and then sequence projects within a cohesive IT strategy. What is interesting is that in no documentation is there any mention of the ‘most productive consultant 2020’ vision. The sudden appearance of this highly directional vision is perplexing as well as the lack of detail surrounding it as an outlier to everything else they have planned and defined with rigour. What is also interesting is that ‘most productive consultant’ is meant to mean most productive globally. This means that X’s global consultants would have world-leading tools to perform all their tasks. Considering the relative immaturity of X’s IT function, suddenly seeking a world-leading standard is surprisingly ambitious, and ‘emerging from the blue’ is curious given the enhanced governance I2 identified from the BIS with their “budgetary focus” (Interview with I2) to tamp down on initiatives that do not have attractive payback.

The vision of the organization is “A client-centric, global leader in our chosen markets, differentiated through a strong culture of ownership, professional excellence, and investment in our people.” (About, 2015, Organization X website). The vision of IT is

stated many ways in significantly varied text although it seems to remain tethered to, “to deliver effective and efficient technology solutions to support our people in delivering the corporate strategy, driven by the corporate vision, our global values and business goals.” ([Organization X], Business Systems Desired State, 2010, p. 13). Whilst the strategy is to be a global leader, the grammar of the text clearly uses the indefinite article “a”, versus the definite article “the”, making clear that X does not seek to be the best rather they seek to be among the best, like an Olympic athlete and not necessarily a gold medalist. The organization further deliberately moderates its relative dominance to “chosen markets” (About, 2015, Organization X website), which intentionalizes its presence and in no way suggests dominance or provides blanket statements about how it will lead or be the best. This, again, makes, ‘the most productive consultant’ vision of IT curious in its clear misalignment to the corporate vision and contradiction to IT’s own vision in the 2010 IT strategy, which is stated as, “Provide our people with applications and systems that meet their business needs” ([Organization X], Strategy Setting Course for 2015, 2010, p. 20), and “Leverage our current systems when looking for technology-based systems” (p. 20). This is more pronounced given the research findings that many individuals in IT adjudicated existing technology as sufficient yet just improperly configured. So apparently, ‘most productive consultant’, is a political insertion by IT to elevate their status and mission within the organization through the surreptitious adoption of a ‘motherhood statement’ that is hard to reject despite its overreaching and misaligned goal. Without a spotlight illuminating this space, political actions have arisen. From a structural perspective, this mission insertion is insubordinate to the organization in being misaligned and overreaching, but the effect it will have to unify IT and gain support of the ‘working class’ by subverting the inadequacy of the organizational vision may assist

in breaking the cyclical plan-do-fail loop by making IT a champion of the people. The approach and the execution of this political strategy was savvy in being both clandestine and populist, and is a clear example of positive politics, where through heroics individuals attempt to offset the perceived inadequacy of the strategy or the organization’s inability to execute. *The variable ‘achievability of the mission/vision’ appears impactful in understanding how actors respond when facing something achievable or not, with coding as follows per the interview data. Here the value of the variable is unachievable:*

	I1	I2	I3
Mission / Vision achievability	“Most productive consultant 2020”	Per documentation	“Most productive consultant”
	TW	OR	TW

Table 11-Case 1 Interviews Mission/Vision Achievability Coding

Credibility is a key theme among IT leadership, and it seems to trump sensibility. For example, at an update meeting one committee member voiced, “We already have the most expensive Information Management System imaginable and we are not getting much value for the investment!” ([Organization X] IS CMT Meeting, 2010, p. 3). Another individual separately stated, “We have all the systems that we need to continue to function – to keep the business going” ([Organization X] IS Meeting Minutes, 2009, p. 1). In spite of these proclamations by senior committee members within very small committees, IT leadership continued to press on with the acquisition of new systems. Hubris seemed to be a factor among the personalities, and as discovered in the interviews, IT wanted to build credibility and show that they mattered by successfully completing visible global initiatives rather than reconfiguring existing technology.

Regarding the sophistication evident in the technology strategy development process, X undertook numerous in-person and remote committee meetings in their attempts to develop and document a technology strategy. These events were described as mini marathons, each lasting up to several days, and would culminate in various forms of documentation (meeting minutes, action items, draft strategy documentation, etc.). After numerous attempts they concluded that they lacked the sophistication and needed the support of an external party. With external consultants, they described a process that was ‘done to them’ and included a stakeholder assessment. The technology strategy created did include a roster of projects on a timeline, but failed to include architectural principles, responsibilities, and other important components that encourage success in a technology strategy. This supports I2 and I3’s comments that the organization lacks sophistication in this process. *The variable ‘sophistication in technology strategy development’ appears impactful in understanding the behaviour of actors who may lack the expertise to undertake this task and subsequently act in political and uninformed ways, with coding as follows per the interview data. Here the value of the variable is low:*

	I1	I2	I3
Technology strategy development sophistication	Rely on external consultants	“Relatively new”, “changed each year”	Rolling 5 year, based on business case and approval
	EB	TW	OR

Table 12-Case 1 Interviews Technology Strategy Development Sophistication Coding

At an engineering firm, knowledge and knowhow are important and valued assets. In tandem with an ownership structure where a majority of the employees possess an ownership stake, there is significant pressure to distinguish oneself with excellence in both planning and execution. Engineers tend toward precision, so instances of perceived

incompetence or ‘I don’t know’ answers would be viewed negatively. Cautious behaviour would be amplified as in ownership cultures, employee tenure tends to be much longer, so memories and reputations are more enduring. Environments that punish mistakes encourage more secrecy and surreptitious efforts, resulting in lower transparency organization wide. Outside of engineering domains, where X staff felt comfortable to openly voice their expert opinions, there was a noted discomfort in business and IT topics.

Organizations that fail to understand their operating model tend to have struggles when changes are proposed that challenge the status quo especially when it evolves to a new configuration. Per the Ross et al. (2006) model in the Literature Review section, it appears that X was clearly operating in a Diversification Model, yet IT acknowledged the merit in evolving to a Replication model that even had components of Unification. This management decision was based on positive business cases and it was managerially prudent to achieve these goals given their fiduciary roles globally, but the strategy shook their loyalty to their region and created resistance due to the magnitude of the change and resultant decrease in autonomy. Leadership failed to formally identify this situation and the impact a change would have, rather the individuals who comprised the committees intuited this outcome and supported it as global representatives while fighting it as local representatives. *The variable ‘governance structure’ appears impactful in the power distribution among actors and how it is exercised, with coding as follows per the interview data. Here the value of the variable is IT-centric:*

	I1	I2	I3
Governance complexion	IT duopoly	IT Monarchy	IT Monarchy

	I1	I2	I3
	TW, EB	EB	EB

Table 13-Case 1 Interviews Governance Structure Coding

Business Process Integration	High	Coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique business units with a need to know each other's transactions • Key IT capability: access to shared data through standard technology interfaces 	Unification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single business with global process standards and global data access • Key IT capability: enterprise systems reinforcing standard processes and providing global data access
	Low	Diversification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent business units with different customers and expertise • Key IT capability: provide economies of scale without limiting independence 	Replication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent but similar business units • Key IT capability: provide standard infrastructure and application components for global efficiencies
		Low	High
Business Process Standardization			

Figure 17-Operating Models (Ross et al., 2006)

In the IT strategy document, there was a paucity of documented architecture and architectural principles, which are used to guide decision making in all aspects of IT changes such as asset acquisition, integration, standards, etc. Given the backgrounds of some of the individuals on the leadership team (e.g., the CIO's first CIO role was at age 24 for a Japanese bank, approximately 30 years prior), architectural principles, at minimum, would be expected in the IT strategy and the absence of them allows greater latitude and opacity in decision making. Apparently, architectural principles do exist, as revealed in the interviews, that the organization has a 'Microsoft-first' principle in software acquisition as confirmed by I3, so its lack of inclusion reinforces the low sophistication of the technology strategy development process and political exploitation of this fact to decrease visibility in what has been decided so that future rogue decisions meet less opposition.

Strategic Intentions, Organizational Politics and Implementation Success

The following table enumerates the project initiatives from the technology strategy and appends them with details on the scope (beneficiaries), global contribution of budget, political behaviour exhibited in the project, and its implementation success.

Strategic Project	Scope	Size (global budget only)	Political Behaviour	Implementation Success
Workflow standardization for proposals/projects	Global, phased in by Region	\$500,000	High	Low
Project management tools	Global, phased in by Region	\$4,000,000	High	Low
[X]Net improvement for projects	Global, phased in by Region	\$500,000	High	Low
Data rationalization	Global	\$2.230,000	High	Low
Search enhancement	Global	\$860,000	High	Low
[X]Net performance improvement	Global	\$600,000	High	Low
Outage monitoring and helpdesk	Global	\$560,000	High	Low
IT cost reduction	Global	TBD	High	Low
Communication tools	High volume users	\$500,000	High	Low
Infrastructure update	Asia	\$500,000	High	Low
Advisory maturity	Global	\$1,205,000	High	Low

Figure 18- Technology strategy of X (2011-2015), ([Organization X], *Business Systems Desired State*, 2010, pp. 28-34)

The strategic projects outlined in the table were chosen methodically coincident with the bureaucratic model (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974), which is a rational translation of IT initiatives needed to comprehensively support the corporate strategy. The absence of

due dates offers actors the opportunity to use time as a variable to manipulate in political maneuvering when encountering actors with time sensitivity.

As evident by the budgetary values indicating global commitment only, the initiatives were considered at a high level and would require an elaboration and budgetary contribution from the regions to be able to complete the initiatives. This fill-in-the-blank approach lends itself to a convenient appendix of political agendas to support and oppose any initiative, or others by proxy.

Analysis of the strategic projects demonstrates that the technology strategy is intended to advance global initiatives almost exclusively. Political behaviour and implementation success were high and low respectively as determined in interviews and in reviewing documentation. The implementation approach for several projects was determined in the technology strategy (“phased in by Region”) (Interview with I2), which is unusual in the strategy document itself and rather is more often found in the subsequent execution plans when the optimal approach can be ascertained upon determination of resources and capabilities available at that time. Many reasons were provided from respondents why projects failed (inadequate skill, inadequate resources, absent leadership, noncommitment, etc.), yet the alignment in noncompliance to the technology strategy needs no additional explanation. Actors all articulated political agendas and actions, including the global CIO, and knowingly turned their technology strategy into ‘shelfware’, resulting in low implementation success.

Interview Coding

The political factors outlined were expressed in the interviews by respondents summarily as follows, coded based on Sabherwal & Grover’s (2010) ‘political processes’ as described in an earlier section. In each cell, the paraphrased or verbatim statement that best reflects the respondent’s perspective for each coincident variable is provided in summary, obtained in interviews as previously noted:

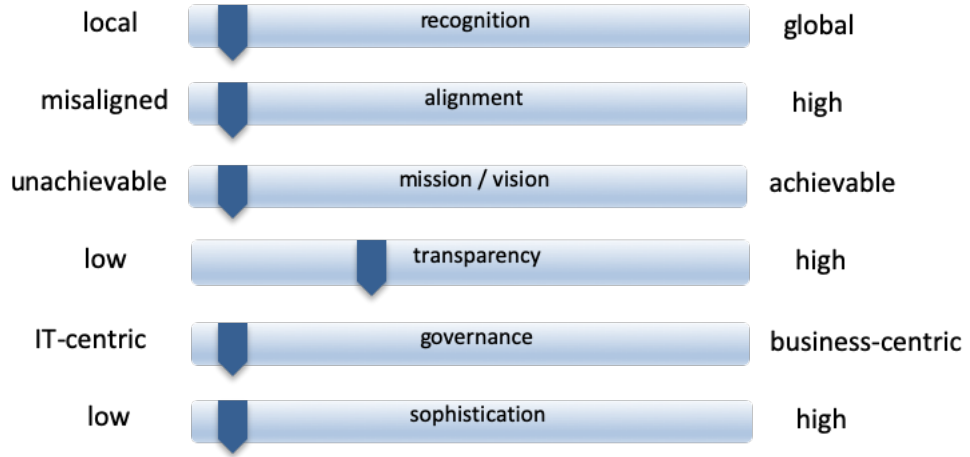
	I1	I2	I3
Recognition	Global mandate, regional priority	State of flux between regional to global	Top-down global
	TW	TW	TW, EB
Organizational alignment	Countless committees	1 leadership team v. regions	GMT has sole authority
	TW, OR	TW, OR	TW, OR, EB
Mission / Vision achievability	“Most productive consultant 2020”	Per documentation	“Most productive consultant”
	TW	OR	TW
Transparency	Highly transparent committees, no transparency in regions	“I don’t actually know [about initiatives]”	“Flying under the radar”
	OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	OR, EB
Governance complexion	IT duopoly	IT Monarchy	IT Monarchy
	TW, EB	EB	EB
Technology strategy development sophistication	Rely on external consultants	“Relatively new”, “changed each year”	Rolling 5 year, based on business case and approval
	EB	TW	OR

TW = Tug of war
 OR = Obstacle race
 EB = Empire building

Organizational Attributes by Emergent Political Factors

The following image illustrates by use of sliders where on the spectrum Organization X exhibited each of the six identified variables that emerged as impactful in the research. This is a summary of the findings presented thus far.

Company X



Case Study 2

Case study 2 (Organization Y) is an integrated power utility company established in 1929 and headquartered in a major Canadian city. It is overseen by a Board of independent directors. This Crown corporation serves 538,000 customers across the province (Organization Y, 2020, 2018-2019 Annual Report. Organization Y website, p. 6), with a power grid that connects to contiguous power utilities to the west, south and east. In 2019 the organization had about 3,200 permanent, full-time employees and manages nearly \$12B in assets; revenue in fiscal 2018-2019 was \$2.7B CAD (Organization Y, 2020, 2018-2019 Annual Report. Organization Y website, p. 9).

In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the IT department spent \$117.3M, of which 40% was recognized as CAPEX ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 36). As specified in the IT strategy, \$1.5B was earmarked in IT spend in the next 10 years, which is a significant increase to the existing spend trajectory. On a per capita basis, this equates to nearly \$3,000 per customer in spend.

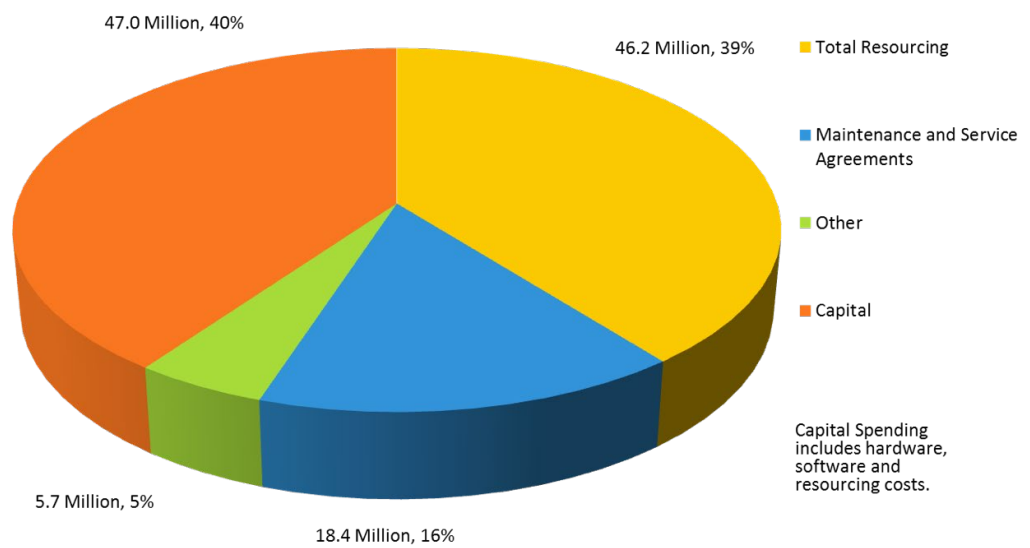


Figure 19-Capital spend at Y 2014-2015, ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 36)

At a corporate level, per the 2018-2019 Annual Report, Y’s vision is, “Powering [the Province] to a cleaner energy future through innovation, performance and service” (Organization Y, 2018-2019 Annual Report. 2020, p. 12), and Y’s mission is, “Ensuring reliable, sustainable and cost-effective power for our customers and the communities we serve” (p. 12). Values are expressed as, “Safety, openness, collaboration and accountability” (p. 12).

Contextualizing by means of historical documents, the IT strategy document for the period 2009-2011 commences by explicitly stating the organization’s vision, mission and values. It is at this time that the IT function declares its refined vision, mission and values respectively as follows ([Organization Y] 2010 Business Plan, 2010):

- “[Y’s] preferred partner in the delivery of business technology solutions” (p. 173)
- “We anticipate and are responsive to [Y’s] needs by providing effective business technology solutions” (p. 173)
- “Responsive, respectful, progressive and accountable in everything we say, do and offer” (p. 103)

The espoused values are elaborated in the technology strategy document, and include language that specifically encourages collaboration, honesty, teamwork, and other values that would discourage political behaviour.

The need for change was identified in the IT 2009-2011 strategy due to a variety of external and internal factors, which include identification of absent standards, antiquated and ill-suited technology, low customer satisfaction, and “cultural factors”, which are identified as inflexible, reactive, slow and insular. The response is a multi-point strategy that shifts to improved alignment, collaboration, proactivity and relevance that result in ([Organization Y] 2010 Business Plan, 2010):

- “Strategic enabler of the business” (p. 177)
- “Strengthen business partnerships” (p. 177)
- “Enhance workforce engagement” (p. 177)
- “Prudent financial management and growth” (p. 177)

- “Enhance [Y] and [IT’s] reputation internally and externally” (p. 177)

In the subsequent technology strategy of 2012 (spanning 2012 to 2027), there were more directional and context-building statements as follows, as well as being reflective of a technocratic, normative tone despite containing ambiguity and abstraction. The style of writing is presumptive, bullying and even condescending in its determination to elevate the organization to a world-leading standard, which is done in spite of the organization’s actual vision that is far humbler and pragmatic. It also over-exaggerates IT’s capabilities and maturity with an arrogance and boastfulness that is atypical of strategy documents:

- “[Y] demonstrates a willingness to view technology as a driver of the positive changes that are critical to fulfill on its desire to be a world-leading utility” ([Organization Y] Technology Plan 2012 – Final, 2012, p. 16)
- “Specific technologies – or combinations of technologies – that positively impact customers, workers, stakeholders and partners and their ability to achieve their goals will be what helps make [Y] a world-leading utility...This necessarily includes the network and communications infrastructure to connect our people to each other, customers, stakeholders and partners, and to the vast organizational knowledge that exists within the corporation.” (p. 15)

- “In the long term, the focus shifts further to an increasingly holistic view of environmental, operational, and financial performance. Technology spending will further shift from infrastructure to business capability optimization and extending [Y] to a world- leading power utility.” (p. 9)
- “Individually, none of the societal or industry changes described in the previous section would be overly difficult to address for a company of [Y’s] experience and resources.” (p. 20)
- “Being a world-leading utility is going to increasingly require effective and efficient use of technology, taking trade-offs into consideration and listening to customers and stakeholders to ensure that [Y] is positioned for the modern business realities described above.” (p. 22)
- “Technology adoption – the change that is the focus of this plan – needs to align with a cause in order for people to commit to it. In this case, the cause is doing what’s right for the people of [the Province], and for [Y] that means being a world-leading electric utility.” (p. 23)
- “There are companies that view technology solely as a cost of doing business. Through this plan, [Y] demonstrates a willingness to view technology as a driver of the positive changes that are critical to achieving the vision of becoming a world-leading utility.” (pp. 5-6)
- “According to Gartner, CEA member utilities’ IT spending with regards to revenue is significantly higher (5.3%) than that of the global database (2.8%), indicating that they may be ahead of the curve. At 4.9% of revenue, [Y] lies in the middle of the CEA participants and below the often benchmarked utilities of [similar organizations] in the study.

The net effect is that implementing this technology plan will require significant investment to remain on the path to being a world-leading utility. It is an investment that [Y] can feel comfortable with, as expenditures are in line with other CEA members.” (p. 27)

- “These solutions will help [Y] become more efficient, reliable, and informed but will not elevate the organization to world-leading utility status. Rather, what will make [Y] world-leading is how these systems are enabled and used by our customers and employees. Is the user experience fast, personal and intuitive? Are the systems accessible anywhere, anytime? Is the interaction between multiple systems seamless?” (p. 59)
- “In [the figure below] four focus areas have been identified as critical in [Y’s] overall vision to become a world-leading utility. This includes power generation, transmission and distribution, employee and customer.” (p. 59)

Generation (safe, reliable)	Grid Management (safe & reliable)	Employee (fast, personal, easy to use)	Customer (fast, personal, easy to use)
Asset Management	Outage Management	Safety Systems	Convenience
	Distribution Management	Learning Management System	Disconnect
	Advanced Metering	Work Management System	Bill inquiries
	Smart Grid	Recruitment	Payment
	Asset Management		Usage Trends
			DSM
Enterprise Information Management	Enterprise Information Management	Enterprise Information Management / Knowledge Access	Enterprise Information Management / Knowledge Access
Communications Systems	Communications Systems	Communications Systems	Communications Systems
Security	Security	Security	Security
		User Experience	User Experience
		Business Process Management	Business Process Management
		Mobility	Mobility

Red = Technology Systems Orange = Business Systems

Figure 20-Defining Power Utility Leadership at Y, ([Organization Y] Technology Plan 2012 – Final, 2012, p. 60)

- “[Y] is moving to be a world leader in Business Process Management through establishing a system of record where the relationship between process, technology and people can be maintained and optimized. [Y] has standardized on the ARIS Toolset, event-driven process chain (EPC) notation, and the American Productivity & Quality Center (APQC) process framework for documenting business processes.” (p. 64)
- “The intent is to establish the [Y] Technology Council and allocate the responsibility of maintaining the technology plan to that group of select individuals. The accountability for the technology plan will remain with the [Y] CIO.” (p. 69)
- “[Y’s] vision is to be a world-leading power company through innovation, performance and service” (p. 11)

It is unclear when and if the IT vision and mission formally changed or whether a single error or strategic insertion in a single document propagated to become the established vision and mission for the IT function because IT strategy documents in continuity do not specify the intention or reason behind the change from 2011 to 2012. Regardless, the change is *highly* substantive from a directional standpoint and provokes an entirely different set of behaviours, investments and professional practices from the established vision and mission statements to those that reflect “world-leading”.

In 2012-2014, the IT function at Y spent considerable effort to create an end-to-end process spanning initiative inception to benefits realization called the Project Value Lifecycle or PVL, which is illustrated in the figures below. Prior to the PVL project, the organization twice attempted to build something similar and admittedly failed due to politics. It was broadly and openly acknowledged by anyone asked that the IT function is highly political, and that Y is a highly political organization:



Figure 21-PVL Conceptual Lifecycle, ([Organization Y] PVL Delivery Process Orientation, 2011, p. 6)

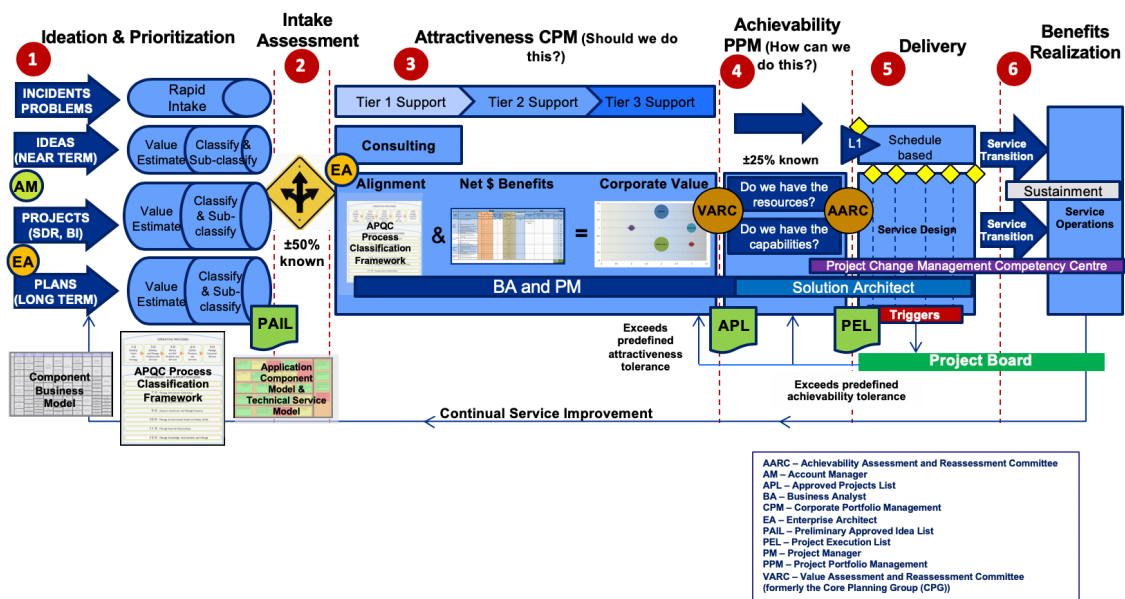


Figure 22-PVL Contextual Model, ([Organization Y] PVL Delivery Process Orientation, 2011, p. 7)

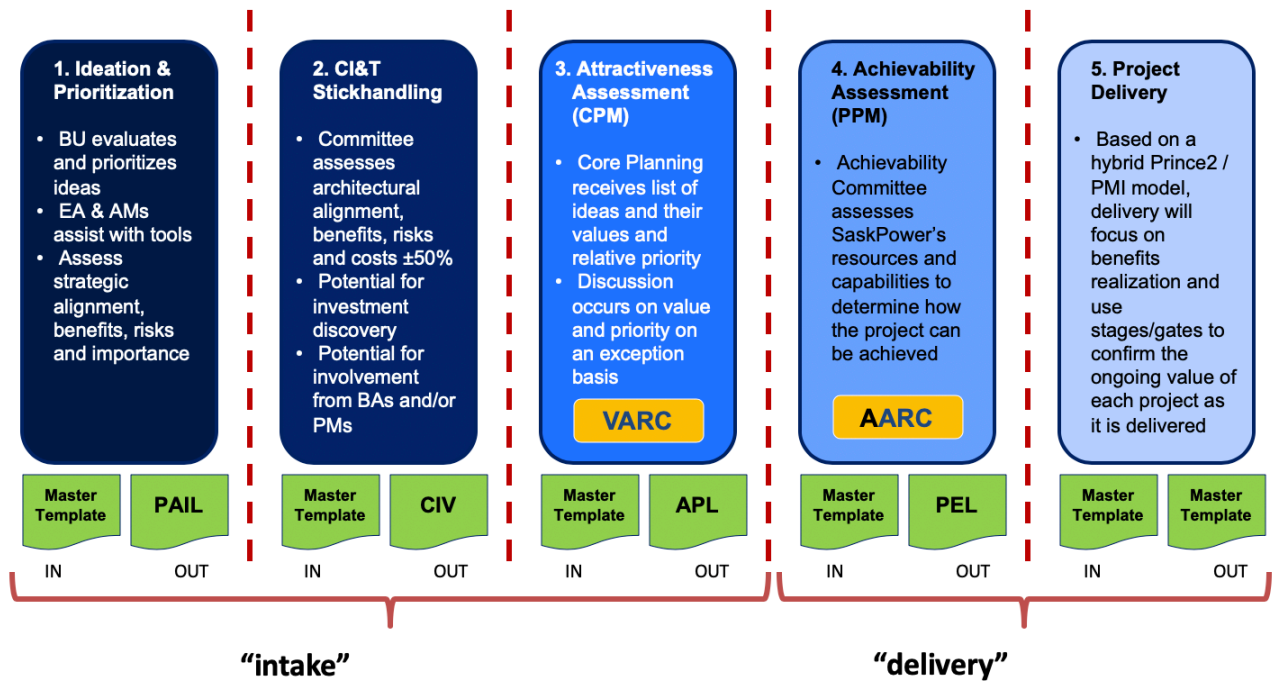


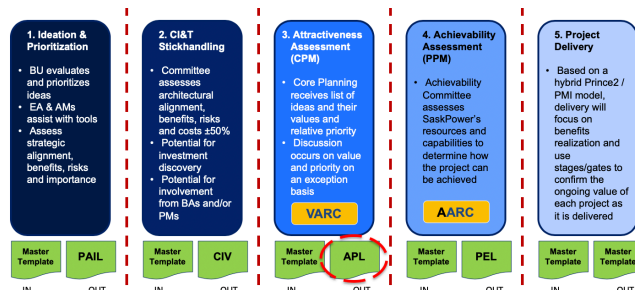
Figure 23-PVL Conceptual Process Model with Committees and Documented Inputs and Outputs, ([Organization Y] PVL Delivery Process Orientation, 2011, p. 38)

The PVL re-established process, procedure, governance, systems and stages to be inclusive of other business units, aligned to the corporate and IT strategies, methodical, predictable, value-based, aligned to best practices, scalable and transparent. PVL resolved longstanding issues related to IT prioritizing initiatives on behalf of the organization, informational blackholes during project delivery, resourcing transparency and hence availability, integration of architectural direction during solutioning, applications of best practices or even good practices like using a business case, over-management of small initiatives, lack of long-term planning, budgetary miscalculation, user awareness, user adoption, issue management, and the aforementioned competitive masterminding as is typical in technocratic environments.

PVL was conceived and built by external consultants and a coalition of volunteers representing all areas of IT as well as having representation from all three of the primary business units (production, distribution, customer service), which helped by triangulating all perspectives of the business unit as well as generating buy-in for the completed system. For portions of the PVL, such as initiative valuation and prioritization, or capture of benefits, influential and outspoken representatives were provided to the working teams from other business units so that these groups also accepted the PVL’s merit and felt that their voices had been heard. The PVL was a novel methodology that was trailblazing in its end-to-end scope and matrixed use of best practices; it was regarded among the professional community as a panacea for all Y’s problems related to project performance.

PVL was adopted in a “big bang” approach and was deemed a success. Yet, despite all the robustness and rigour, PVL and its collaborative and transparent approach still permitted politics, and yielded variances of significant magnitude as actors found ways in which they could politic within the PVL lifecycle.

In 2014-2015, the organization had an Approved Project List (APL) comprised of 67 different projects ranging in estimated size from \$19,000 to \$4,072,000, and



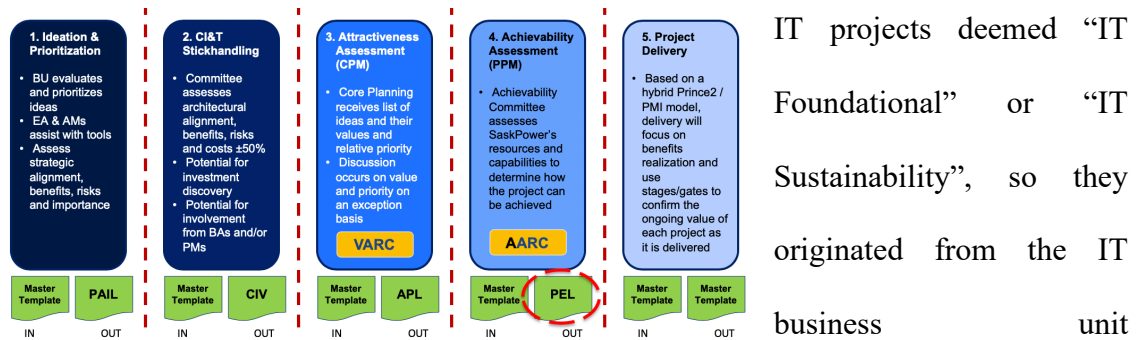
classification ranging from mandatory and non-discretionary to regular and discretionary ([Organization Y] Corp 2014 APL

v56, 2014). The Corporate Value Score, a quantitative measure of the value of the project to the organization ranged from -66 to 950 ([Organization Y] Corp 2014 APL v56, 2014).

Projects were placed on the APL once they passed an approval process within the originating business unit and were evaluated by the Value Assessment and Reassessment Committee (VARC).

Projects were moved from the APL to the Project Execution List (PEL) once they were determined by the Achievability Assessment and Reassessment Committee (AARC) to be “achievable”. The AARC discussed the resources and capabilities required and determined when the project could begin. They were tasked to dynamically allocate resources and capabilities as prioritized by the VARC in the prior stage.

The PEL in November 2014 contained 82 projects, of which 22 were closed/cancelled and 3 were on hold ([Organization Y] PEL November 2011, 2011). This means that IT was managing 57 active projects. Of the 57 active projects, 45 (80%) were



([Organization Y] PEL November 2011, 2011). The other initiatives listed were IT projects, but they originated from other business units and represented the IT component of a ‘business’ project, which may involve very significant IT resources, like in smart metering, for example.

By December 2014, there were 59 active projects with the following characteristics ([Organization Y] PEL November 2011, 2011):

- Risk: 1 red, 14 yellow
- Budget: 3 red, 8 yellow
- Schedule: 5 red, 10 yellow
- Resources: 4 yellow

Active Project Health Report December, 2014

Closed					
BUSINESS UNIT	OVERALL RISK	ISSUES			
		BUDGET	SCHEDULE	SCOPE	RESOURCES
PROJECT NAME					
Information Technology & Security					
2014 Core Infrastructure	Y	G	G	G	G
2014 Net New Hardware Program	G	G	G	G	G
2014 Net New Software Program	G	G	G	G	G
2014 Refresh Program	Y	G	G	G	G
BAR-IBM Lotus Notes Upgrade*	R	G	Y	G	G
BI Capitalized Data Provisioning	G	G	G	G	G
BI Infrastructure	G	R	G	G	G
C-8000 Fibre Route Diversity (OT/IT)	G	G	G	G	G
Core Apps - Oracle Upgrade-Non SAP	Y	Y	G	G	G
Critical Systems Center*	G	G	G	G	G
Enterprise Content Mgmt Collaboration Integration (ECMCI)	Y	Y	R	Y	Y
Enterprise Service Bus	G	G	G	G	G
Environmental Screening System (ESS) Upgrade	G	G	G	G	G
Extend Solution Mgr Functionality	G	Y	G	G	G
GCC Integrated Telephone Consoles	G	G	R	G	G
Highway 16 Fibre Optic Relocation	G	G	G	G	G
Highway 27 Fibre Optic Relocation	Y	G	Y	G	G
Internet Explorer V11 Upgrade	G	Y	G	G	G
ITIM-ITAM Upgrade (formerly called RBAC Implementation)	G	G	Y	G	G
Network Lab*	G	G	Y	G	G
Optical Transport Network Phase 2*	G	G	Y	G	G
OWAN Network Head End	G	G	Y	G	G
OTN Upgrade Phase 2.5 (MLS Core Enhancements)	G	G	Y	G	G
OSM Functional Improvements	Y	G	G	G	G
Perimeter Security	Y	G	G	G	Y
Quality Control Access Database 2015	G	G	G	G	G
Regina Network Core	G	G	G	G	G
SAP Archiving	Y	G	G	G	Y
SAP Fiori Implementation	G	G	G	G	G
SAP GIS Integration	G	G	G	G	G
SAP Personas Implementation	G	G	G	G	G
Security Analytics	G	Y	G	G	G
Service Unit Replacement	G	R	G	G	G
SQL (Monitoring & Backups)	G	G	Y	G	G
Swift Current Service Centre Interconnection	G	Y	G	G	G
Syclo Infrastructure Proof of Concept	G	G	G	Y	G
Telecontrol Fitup	G	G	G	G	G
Video Conference	G	G	G	G	G
Virtual Desktop Integration	G	G	G	G	G
Wireless for Power Plants & Expansion	Y	G	G	G	G

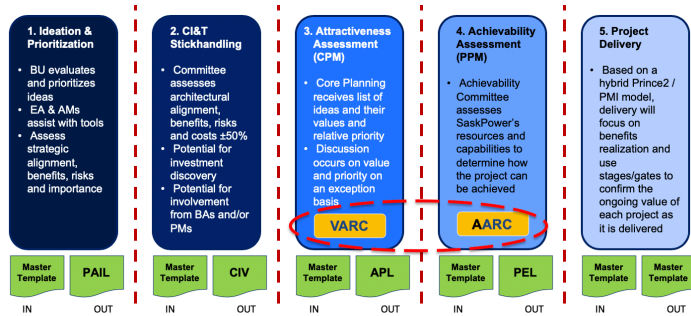
Figure 24- Portfolio Health Report, ([Organization Y] 2014-12 Dec Active Project Health and Highlight Reports, 2014, page 2)

Active Project Health Report December, 2014

		Closed				
BUSINESS UNIT	PROJECT NAME	OVERALL RISK	ISSUES			
			BUDGET	SCHEDULE	SCOPE	RESOURCES
Corporate & Financial Services						
	Impact Replacement	G	G	G	G	G
Corporate Safety						
	Gas Monitoring Replacement	G	G	G	G	G
Customer Services						
	Contact Centre - High Availability	G	G	Y	G	G
	CR&B Collection Process Improvement	G	Y	G	G	G
	CR&B Phase 2	G	G	G	G	G
	MyPower Account Optimization	G	G	G	G	G
Enterprise						
	Environment, Safety & Security Mgmt Info System (ESSMIS) (formerly Incident Mgmt)	G	G	R	G	G
	Security Data Loss Prevention	Y	G	G	G	G
	Human Capital Management Phase 2	G	G	G	G	G
Legal, Land & Regulatory Affairs						
	GEIS Replacement	G	G	G	G	G
NorthPoint Energy Solutions						
Operations						
	Click Optimizer	G	G	G	G	G
	Electric Office	G	G	G	G	G
	Electric Office & Field Smart Optimization	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	M&D Management System*	Y	R	R	G	G
	Quality Control Application Replacement	G	G	G	G	G
	Warehouse Management	G	G	G	G	G
	Weighscale System	Y	G	R	G	G
Planning Environment & Regulatory Affairs						
SDR						
	AMI BR4	Y	G	G	G	G
Supply Chain						
	Procurement - Renew SAP Core Functionality	G	G	G	G	G

Figure 25-Portfolio Health Report, ([Organization Y] 2014-12 Dec Active Project Health and Highlight Reports, 2014, page 3)

The AARC is tasked with preventing and managing issues in resourcing and the VARC is tasked with preventing and managing issues in budget, schedule and scope,



where both committees maintain oversight throughout the lifespan of the project, so the pervasive yellow and red statuses highlight a deviation.

In fact, the report itself is incorrectly labelled by project personnel as, for example, the ‘2014 Net New Hardware Program’ was approved for \$950,000, grew to \$1,679,000 by change request, and spent \$182,950 under the expanded budget ([Organization Y] 2014-12 Dec Active Project Health and Highlight Reports, 2014, page 4). If budget is measured from the baseline, then the total cost of \$1,496,050 reflects a 57% overage, which would earn the budget a red status by their tolerance ranges. If budget is measured from baseline plus change requests, then the variance would be 11% and would earn a yellow status. Despite this, the project was assigned a green status. The next project on the list ignores the change request in calculating the project budget status, which would otherwise make the budget variance 63% (red status). The next project on the list has a base budget of \$3,362,000, releases \$1,034,000 in change requests, and still manages a variance of -\$501,764 on the adjusted amount (p. 5), the budgetary status of the current period is green. The next project (AMI BR4) has perfectly matched estimated and actual costs across two capital and one operational category (p. 6). The next project (BI Capitalized Data Provisioning) was approved for \$450,000, added \$470,638 in change requests, and had a total spend of \$622,814 yet maintained a green budget status for a 32% or 72% variance depending on calculation technique (p. 7). This inaccurate status labelling trend continued in nearly all projects, where change requests were often 50% or more of the original base budget, yet budgets were indicated to be green status. The CR&B Phase 2

project had a \$500,000 baseline but \$1,840,655 in change requests, which resulted in 0% variance and hence green budget status (p. 12). Where change requests were not made, like in the CR&B Collection Process Improvement, variance was 64% yet the budget was only labelled as yellow despite the nearly half-million-dollar overage (p. 13). Or the Critical Systems Center project with a budget of \$3,500,000 and end cost of \$1,974,663 (-44% variance) that was labelled green (p. 15). It would appear that the common tactic of using change orders to achieve a green budget status is exercised consistently in the organization, but there is additional deception in the project status colour since the report variance correspondence falls far beyond the ranges reported. This was found in nearly all of the project status reports in the sample month.

Research on Y focused on the 2014-2015 fiscal year, which corresponded with the 2014-2019 technology strategy. At that time the organization was contemplating an investment of \$10-13B over the next several years to renew and develop necessary infrastructure ([Organization Y] 2010 Business Plan, 2010, p. 16). This included \$1.3B in technology investment over the following 10 years that was intended to establish a more mobile workforce, update and augment plant technology to reflect environmental stewardship goals, and to advance intelligence in the grid, such as implementing smart meters, asset management and outage systems ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 12). IT initiatives in the IT strategy were stated as subgoals of the corporate strategy, and aside from initiatives specific to IT (i.e., software upgrades), there was direct traceability and alignment with the corporate strategy. However, the IT function developed and promoted its own vision and mission statements, which respectively were as follows: “Lead the advancement of technology

and innovative business solutions to achieve [the Organization’s] vision to be world-leading” (p. 4). “Anticipate [the Organization’s] needs and deliver business value through our enabling technology, innovation and partnerships” (p. 4). This disparity with the Organization’s actual vision is significant and will be explored henceforth.

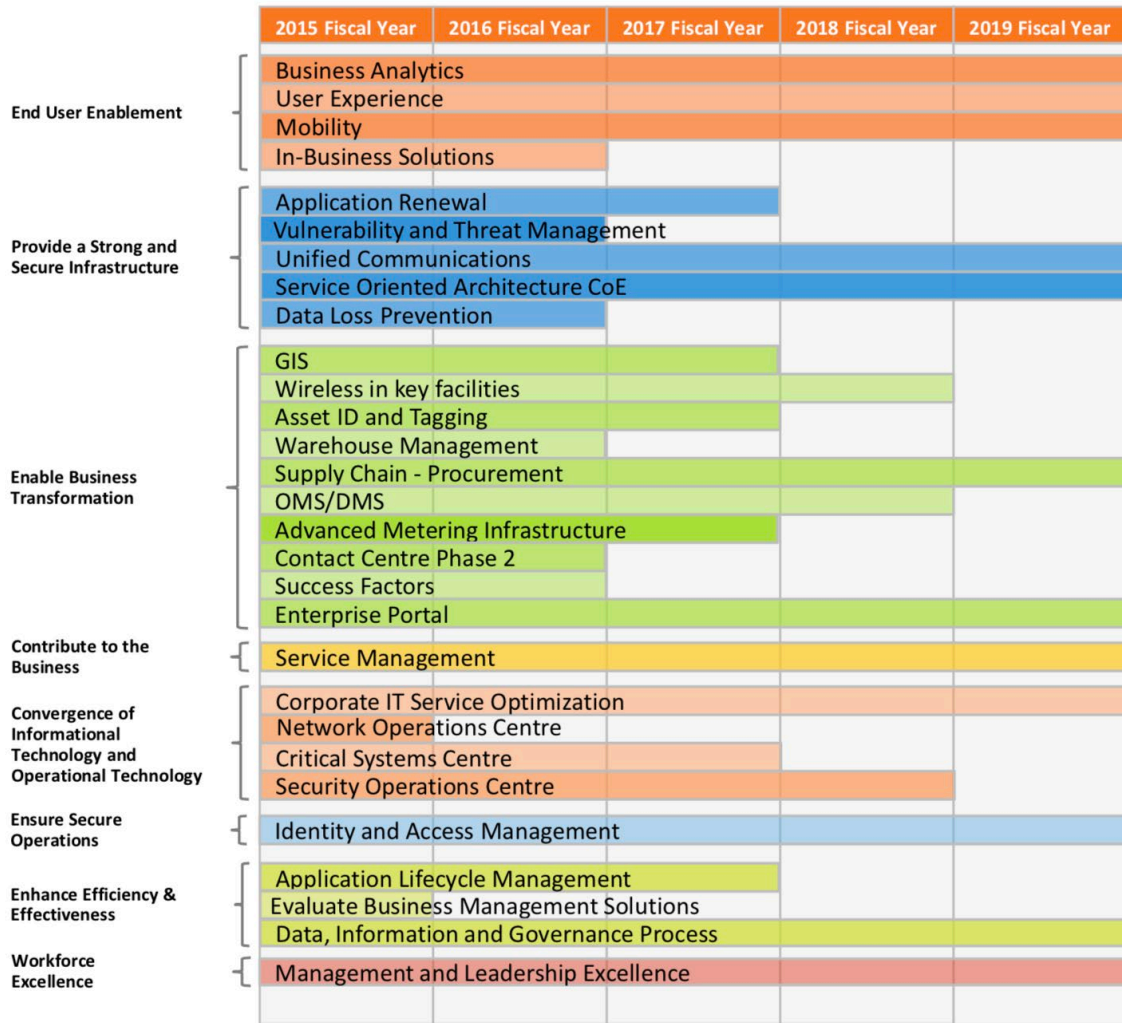


Figure 26-Technology strategy initiatives 2015-2019 (external), ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 34)

	2014 Fiscal Year	2015 Fiscal Year	2016 Fiscal Year	2017 Fiscal Year	2018 Fiscal Year
End User Enablement	Business Analytics				
	User Experience				
	Mobility				
	In-Business Solutions				
Maintain a Strong and Secure Infrastructure	Infrastructure & App Rationalization				
	Primary Data Centre				
	Monitoring and Alerting				
	Security Analytics				
	Logical Access Controls				
	Data Loss Prevention				
Enable Business Transformation	Threat Management				
	GIS				
	Warehouse Mgmt				
	Leverage SAP				
	OMS/DMS				
	AMI				
	Optical Transport Network				
	Customer Self-Service				
	Agent to Customers				
	Success Factors				
	Sharepoint				
	Unified Communications				
	Enterprise Portal				
Ent Incident Case Management					
Enterprise Srvc Bus					
Contribute to the Business	Customer Engagement Model				
	Component Business Model				
	Multi-year Strategies and Roadmaps				
	Evolving the AM Role				
	Srvc Catalogue/SLAs				
Enhance Efficiency & Effectiveness	IT Sustainability Plan				
	Data, Info & Process Governance				
	RIM Compliance Program				
	Address IT Review Findings				
	Eval Bus Mgmt Solutions for IT&S				
	Streamline PVL				
	Single Point of Entry				
	Vendor of Record 3				
Convergence of Informational Technology and Operational Technology	Resource Capacity Mgmt				
	Repatriation Phase 3				
	Computing Service Rationalization				
Safety Management	Network Operations Centre				
	Mgmt and Lead Excellence				
	Safety Management				38

Figure 27-Technology strategy initiatives 2014-2018 (internal), ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan – Dec 31, 2013, 2015, p. 38)

The technology strategy as it was published in internal and external versions (internal is circulated exclusively within the IT department and external is broadcast to the entire organization) shows a highly significant difference in the quantity and nature of initiatives to be undertaken. The internal (IT) version contains roughly twice the quantity of initiatives as the version shown to external audiences.

Documentation supplied by the IT function confirms the motivation (“world-leading”) and approach (technocratically prescriptive) in their project roster, given the following rationales stated in their IT strategy document, noting the authoritative, normative and prescriptive language used, as well as the inclination to improve upon ‘business’ operations, which are outside of the direct responsibility of IT:

- “Top organizations have embraced business intelligence and analytics as powerful tools to manage the performance of their business. In order for [Y] to become world-leading, it needs to ensure it has similar capabilities.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 16)
- “A well designed user-experience allows end-users to complete their work successfully, effectively and comprehensibly” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 16)
- “Mobile devices and apps have the potential to enable [our] workforce to be more productive. Innovation and the advancement of Mobile technologies are essential to [Y] achieving its goal of being a world-leading utility.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 17)
- “Business units have a need for well designed and developed solutions that follow the rigor associated with IT led implementations.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 17)
- “Vendor support is key to ensuring business application resilience.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 18)

- “Establishing this service will enable [Y] to achieve the... [optimization of] business processes involving key information assets.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan – Dec 31, 2013, 2015, p. 22)
- “Support the transformation of day-to-day procurement practices at [Y] in order to achieve best value procurement solutions to internal and external Procurement stakeholders.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan – Dec 31, 2013, 2015, p. 24)
- “[The] CBM [Component Business Model] defines “what” a business does. Focusing on what a business does provides a method to analyze complex business environments in ways that can be readily digested by executives and planning teams. It opens the door to being able to visualize business ecosystems in a wide variety of ways.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan – Dec 31, 2013, 2015, p. 29)
- “To identify priority technologies which will help direct and focus [IT] in developing capacity and capabilities to meet future needs.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan – Dec 31, 2013, 2015, p. 29)
- “Business benefits are an integral part of the Corporate Value Calculator and how [IT] determines which projects should be undertaken on the basis of the value they provide to Y.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan – Dec 31, 2013, 2015, p. 34)
- “Attracting, retaining and training the best employees will help [IT] accomplish its’ goals and aid [Y] in becoming a world-leading utility company.” ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan – Dec 31, 2013, 2015, p. 37)

Materials were requested and received prior to interviews being conducted with the organization and were reviewed in-depth prior to interviews. Interviews were requested with the leaders of the various IT departments and were granted by 7 individuals who represented all IT groups. Interviews were conducted recursively over 3 weeks to ask initial and follow-up questions.

Code	Position	Area	Total
I1	Executive, IT	IT Operations	2
I2	Executive, IT	IT Strategy & Architecture	1
I3	Executive, IT	IT Planning & Finance	3
I4	Management, IT	IT Planning	1
I5	Project Director (former IT Executive)	Corporate Projects	1
I6	Management, IT	Corporate Projects	1
I7	Management, IT	Corporate Planning	1
			10

Figure 28-Interview Details at Y

Interview 1

The following citations with Interviewee 1 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 10, 2015.

A senior member of the Operations group, Interviewee 1 (I1) was asked about process to build the IT strategy (per Appendix C) and I1 responded that the 2013 IT strategy has not been updated rather initiatives have been shifted forward from the 2012 IT strategy, and augmented by the business units' plans as well as newer IT initiatives all toward becoming a "world-leading utility" by means of the architecture group. [*∴ mission/vision achievability = OR*] I1 offered that the prior IT strategy was built by himself, the CIO, and I2, after "locking ourselves in a room." [*∴ technology strategy development sophistication = TW,OR,EB*]

I1 stated that the Strategy group is (excessively) comprised of 30 architects and several dedicated Account Managers who all interface with the other business units to understand their requirements and priorities. Architects are said to tack on their requirements, and much of their activity is motivated by self-esteem and prestige-building behaviours that results in overpromising, heroics and neglect. Architects are constantly in conflict with one another as well as with the Account Managers given the responsibility overlap and competitive arena for expertise. [*∴ recognition = TW,OR,EB*] Because of the conflict within the Strategy group, initiatives are delayed, changed or halted in all stages. This is further amplified by emergent and unplanned issues and imperatives, information politics and other forms of gaming and brinksmanship.

When queried about responsibility for IT strategy implementation, I1 states that Architects are supposed to prioritize initiatives for the Project Management Office (PMO) to execute. I1 declared that there are almost no metrics to control achieve of the IT strategy; existing controls evaluate project delivery and work tasks that may or may not

comprise the IT strategy. Failures to achieve the IT strategy were deemed to stem from a lack of controls over the Strategy group, poor leadership, infighting toward egocentric aims, “diametrical opposition” to the Operations group within IT, and the walls built by Strategy around their “customers” so that they cannot be contacted by anyone but their group. [\therefore *transparency* = *OR,EB*] Governance is shunned to create an “anarchy land grab”. [\therefore *governance complexion* = *TW,OR,EB*].

Several examples were given to elaborate how strategic projects went years over schedule and millions over budget, and the consistent theme is technocratic politicking. [\therefore *organizational alignment* = *TW,OR,EB*] When asked who is accountable and responsible to implement the IT strategy, I1 responded respectively, “CIO or CEO” and “Strategy and PMO”. Responsible was deemed as “everybody in IT”, with the “senior directors and some of the directors would be the ones most responsible,” to which I1 added, “But I would say that I am accountable to my boss, the CIO, to have to be moving the strategy forward.”

Asked about the motivation for individuals to act politically and what the benefit may be, I1 said:

“How about I would say we have a few people who are looking for individual recognition rather than IT success.” “I'm not sure I think its executive attention and then a VP position. I'm guessing. It could be just, or, if you're arrogant sure you get attention, you get to say you control things. I don't know. I do not know.”

“We're very much the knights in shining armor mentality because then you get that personal credit.”

I1 was asked how an individual would build organizational support for an initiative, and responded:

“So, if I wanted something operationally to go, I would need to have my Operational Managers work with the Enterprise Architects and Solution Architects to get it on their radar. They would then make sure that one of our Directors meet with [I7] who's now in charge of technology planning. So, we go to [I7] and he puts it on a list and that list is then prioritized, allegedly by the operational areas...every Enterprise Architect gets an equal say as a Director of Operations. And there are more of them than Operations.

Interview 2

The following citations with Interviewee 2 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 11, 2015.

A senior member of the Strategy group, Interviewee 2 (I2), was asked the common question set (Appendix C). I2 described the process used in 2011 to develop the IT strategy, which included consulting external experts for understanding socioeconomic and market trends, and then assembling three IT leaders in a room to build the strategy in isolation. [∴ *technology strategy development sophistication = OR,EB*] It was a

consultant hired by I2 that developed the mission/vision, one that ensures I2's importance to the organization. [\therefore *mission/vision achievability = EB*]

The process used to develop the 2014 IT strategy involved architects and account managers "negotiating with" business units, and then presenting the business needs to the IT leaders who vote on the prioritization scheme. Architects, the Strategy leader (I2) and CIO can trump any of the voting outcomes as they deem prudent. [\therefore *governance complexion = TW,OR,EB*]

I2 spoke about a new process under development for nondiscretionary initiative categorization where all executives need to agree on this status, and several other changes that would evolve the governance model to a duopolistic model. However I2 acknowledged that "there are certainly other items outside of that." [\therefore *transparency = OR,EB*]

Accountability and responsibility for IT strategy implementation were deemed to fall respectively to "Strategy" and "everyone in [IT]".

Metrics prior to project execution were said to be absent, therefore there is no measurement of the implementation of the IT strategy. The Strategy group accepts responsibility to get each initiative to the PMO for execution.

Discussing the failure of IT strategic implementations, politics were noted at all levels, including with the CIO. There was a "case of personality conflicts", where actors

acted to serve their interests and those of their business units. [\therefore *organizational alignment = TW,OR,EB*]

Interview 3

The following citations with Interviewee 3 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 12, 2015.

A leader in the IT BU and interim CIO, interviewee 3 (I3), was asked the common question set (Appendix C). I3 described the IT strategy development process as aligned to the PVL's corporate value scores. The Core Planning Group (led by Strategy group) prioritizes strategic and discretionary, and a subset of the Core Planning Group advocates BU plans for discretionary initiatives. Despite this formalized process, "a whole host of characters" are involved in building the IT strategy, and this depending greatly on organizational heft and contemporary importance. [\therefore *technology strategy development sophistication = TW,OR,EB*]

Accountability for the IT strategy was given to the CIO, and responsibility for implementation was given to the Strategy group as well as the Operations group (which includes the PMO). However, despite the formal governance scheme, governance is described as constant "anarchy."

No metrics were identified related to the IT strategy directly, but acknowledgement was given for metrics on project execution.

When asked about the reasons why projects did not transpire as planned, I3 described several projects candidly, indicating such things as, “anything in Architecture is the kiss of death where nothing is ever delivered”. Many tactics were described over projects spanning many years. Strategy was identified as the primary culprit for project failures because they refuse to make trade-offs in their attempt to design the perfect robust solution.

I3 claimed that while Strategy was consistently problematic, there was also a cultural issue with competitive undertones expressed at individual and group levels. This results in analysis paralysis, grandstanding, attacks, gold bricking, finger pointing, and open combat. I3 seemed to suggest that the highly demanding and visible environment, with endless opportunities for monkey business and confused governance among the leadership, created a highly political environment with highly detrimental repercussions in implementing the IT strategy. [*∴ governance complexion = TW,OR,EB*]

I3 spoke at length about specific initiatives from the IT strategy and the patterned failure in schedule, budget, scope, risk, staff, leadership and competence. Some was attributed to Architecture’s deficiencies: “I don’t know that Architecture has a real roadmap of where things need to go.” “And so, I think people, I’m assuming as a result, people don’t know what the end state is. And so, they just design in the moment the best they can. And I’ve been told the design with little or no regard to cost that their design is simply, you know, they want to be able to put a checkmark beside every business requirement that’s brought forward and say ‘yes we’ve mapped that’.”

Incompetence was elaborated, “I think that each that individually, everybody has a good intention. I don't believe that anybody sitting there, you know, is purposely trying to design some bullshit solution, but I am getting to the point where I believe that there's an incompetence and I cannot understand for the life of me how this can be this bad”. “I've come to the conclusion that there is incompetence there. Because there is no downside or upside to where you are over-architecting, I think it's because you don't know how to do it any better’.” “What I've heard anecdotally again, we just, we architected the solution and then we changed our mind over and over again and like, and so look, I hear things like hundreds maybe thousands of hours charged to that project by Architecture. At the end of which there still wasn't a design deliverable. And then changing the design such that, you know, the rework that was required was incredible.”

I3 was appointed as the interim CIO and gained a different vantage of the political culture of the IT department and offered the following:

“A lot of the issue of the negative influence in our culture, is it, I think it really comes down to competition, and it's not healthy. It's an unhealthy competition where everybody is trying to, you know, to be good. They're trying to be the one that's noticed. I'm the one that delivered. I did, they're great, it's all around that.”

“This competition, like, which I don't believe this is healthy. Like, instead of pulling together as a team and trying to make [this initiative] now successful and deliver value to the business, we get off siloed and territorial and it has to be my

area that delivered value to the business. At the expense of every other area in IT.” [*∴ recognition = TW,OR,EB*]

I3 was asked about project reporting, and describes how it contributes to the political climate:

“We do publish that report every single month. And you know what it drives? It drives everybody to run around and point the finger at every other area. All after a reason that the actual [number] was so different from the estimate. So, I have a constant battle right now between the PMO and Intake because of course you know our estimates are plus or minus 50 percent coming out of IAC are hitting that about 40-some percent of the time. Not great. So, the PMO are, you know, I mean there's just so, ‘oh my God’, like that's the behavior that that creates, right, because they're always concerned that we're not doing a good enough job defining scope. And the estimates are crap coming out of IAC. The interesting side; I've been fighting and battling this at one point they injected themselves into IAC and that caused...and then they change the representative. So, they sent in a complete Pitbull and the IAC committee meetings were becoming so dysfunctional that the architects were saying they wouldn't even come anymore because they just got beat up on it. I mean it's just unbelievable. I think I've sort of resolved that for now. The part that's interesting though is that when you look at our PVL matrix as you move in depth look like further down the stream, right, so plus/minus 50 percent we're up I don't know 40 some percent plus minus 25. It's a lot. It's lower. And plus/minus 10 percent it's even lower than that. So instead of getting better

and more accurate as the project, as you know, more as the project moves through delivery, we get worse.” [\therefore *transparency = OR,EB*]

I3 was then asked if I3 had any more comments about the politics experienced:

“Well I think in terms of small-P politics and maybe that, you know, I talk about competition and so on I mean. Maybe the one thing that I think perhaps hinders us the most is, I'm not sure, I know that we are not focused on a common goal for IT. And I think that's probably our biggest issue. So, there's all of these personal agendas and objectives that people are looking to advance. And in total they're all for the right reasons at some point in time, right. Like it's not like somebody is trying to implement something that that's just pure garbage and makes no sense. It's just the timing and the priority of those things, I think, is often misaligned and it's misaligned because despite our best efforts to set, you know, a business plan at the IT level and call out what are the success factors, you have individual areas calling out there. [\therefore *mission/vision achievability = OR*] I was just in a meeting yesterday and somebody said to me, ‘well Cyclo is one of the success factors for 2015’ and I said ‘according to whose plan. That's not called out in the IT business plan’. ‘Oh well it's in [I2's] plan and the Technology Planning and Innovation plan’ and I very bluntly said, ‘well I'm sorry about that but that's not going to happen in 2015’. And it's not in the IT plan. So that's the kind of stuff I think [interviewer] that happens there, right. I thought for a moment I mean [I2] did that thinking that was the right thing to do. Right. We needed to implement Cyclo to move ahead on to move things forward but that wasn't what we collectively as a

team set out as an IT success factor. And so, when you now make it one of your objectives and you try to advance it you could potentially be doing that at the expense of something that we had called out as a group as being important. I think that's where we fall off the rails.” [∴ *organizational alignment = TW,OR,EB*]

Interview 4

The following citations with Interviewee 4 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 12, 2015.

A relatively new Architectural Lead in the Strategy group, Interviewee 4 (I4), was asked the common question set (Appendix C). I4 mentioned a new CIO impending (an interim CIO was in place at the time). I4 identified the same political behaviours in the culture and within the project landscape.

I4 described only a tactical IT plan, not a strategy, that was a function of IT executive and middle management conflict and not alignment to the organization's mission or strategy. [∴ *technology strategy development sophistication = TW,OR,EB*]
Individuals “were acting like [projects] were their own individual right”. [∴ *organizational alignment = TW,OR,EB*]
They were seeking recognition and reward for their prowess in IT decision making as well as to prevent negative impressions of prior decisions, which was achieved by means of individual and business unit efforts. [∴ *recognition = TW,OR,EB*]

The organization's mission was deemed to be evolutionary to arrive at its lofty ideal, but I4 identified that the pervasive IT-centric, siloed approach is inhibitory to achieving that goal, especially as it directly altered each project from its enterprise objectives to ones that were more localized and rewarding to the IT mastermind. [\therefore *mission/vision achievability = TW*]

While discussing failures in IT strategy implementation, political behaviour was cited as a dominant factor, with control and ownership most prevalent. The culture was defined as antiquated and structured toward silos, protectionism, powerplays, and over-architecting. [\therefore *transparency = OR,EB; governance complexion = TW,OR,EB*] Political personnel changes among the executive team were mentioned, which were deemed positive since the IT executive team were the most political, and actively cascaded this culture through their teams.

Interview 5

The following citations with Interviewee 5 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 19, 2015.

A former leader in IT and now project sponsor, interviewee 5 (I5), was asked solely about the project I5 was leading, which was a significant initiative on the IT strategy. I5 recounted the project from inception as a struggle due to Architecture being unclear and competitive on intended project goals, and the business (customer) being unsophisticated about the technical aspects of their business objectives. I5 identified many actors in the project: the Business Units to define their respective business

requirements, Architecture to design the solution, I5 as the project sponsor and business advocate and prior purchaser for OpenText technology, Legal for archiving and deletion policies, external development organization hired by Applications, external architect hired as expert, CIO as advocate for SharePoint, PMO as delivery organization, project managers (changed 4 times), business analysts, change management specialists, and many others. [*∴ governance complexion = TW,OR,EB; technology strategy development sophistication = TW,OR,EB*]

This particular project was hailed as emblematic of the political depths of the IT organization as it went years over schedule and millions over budget and was a revolving door of actors and groups who expressed the entire range of political actions. There were observations of positive political actions as well that those intended to overcome resistance and support the project, but the project was deemed doomed not because of the power and politics, but also because the solution was a technical ‘Frankenstein’ and parties were not forthcoming with necessary information. [*∴ transparency = OR,EB*] I5 had earlier purchased OpenText software that was not intended for use yet I5 refused not to have it as part of the solution. [*∴ recognition = TW,OR,EB*] The CIO insisted that SharePoint be used, and so they battled through Architecture and all satisfied on a SharePoint frontend to an OpenText backend despite OpenText being capable equally capable to perform the frontend as well.

I5 recalled, “The ECMCI project struggled to break out of the gate with internal politics, and the internal politics were mainly focused on the Architecture department.

The Architecture department couldn't agree on what they were, what they wanted to accomplish from a technology point of view.”

In prior interviews with other interviewees, I5 was said to have usurped decision-making responsibility despite lacking the authority or belonging to the recipient business area. When asked about this, I5 replied:

“I did a lot of times. A lot of times I've said ‘for Christ’s sake you guys, if you can't agree then we're just going to go down a certain path’, because it seems like the only one that people understand and it wasn't that I was making a technology decision, I mean [I1] kept accusing me as a sponsor of making technology decisions but I was I was actually saying, ‘I'm sick and tired of you guys not making a decision. Pick one, get on with it. And the only one that comes of whoever makes a recommendation we're just going to take it’. And there was a lot of debating between the architect that was hired, which was a gentleman from [external firm] and then the Architecture group, who are all pro SharePoint.”

Asked about SharePoint as an alternative tool to OpenText, and specifically how that decision was made, I5 replied:

“It wasn't. It was it was the CIO basically saying ‘what the hell's the matter with us? Why haven't we implemented SharePoint? What's going on here? So, there wasn't even really a study. It was kind of like, ‘well I guess SharePoint’s the right thing to do’. Came down from [I2], went down to the Enterprise Architect, who

said, ‘well, we're implementing SharePoint’. [∴ *organizational alignment = TW,OR,EB*]

Interview 6

The following citations with Interviewee 6 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 19, 2015.

A new leader in the Project Management Office (PMO), interviewee 6 (I6), was asked the common question set (Appendix C). I6 was a recent hire from another business unit in Y. I6 allocated responsibility for IT strategy achievement to the CIO, and accountability to IT leadership. I6 was unaware of metrics or controls related to the IT strategy but cited many metrics within the PMO that are shared in the monthly reports.

Speaking about IT strategy achievement failure, I6 stated that the PMO gets ill-defined initiatives with unrealistic expectations, [∴ *technology strategy development sophistication = TW,OR,EB*] “thrown over the fence” versus from the technology strategy document. [∴ *transparency = OR,EB*]

“We just get projects given to us from Intake. And often most times then we don't have enough time to execute them on time. Majority of the time they're poorly defined. And the majority of the time we don't have the proper expectations set coming in with our business. So, what happens is we were always it feels like for many of them we're immediately under the gun.”

“I don't think the intake is done thoroughly enough. And the other thing that there is a big accountability problem across the whole project execution because the thing is, is that, so, Intake does their thing and they throw it over the fence and we've got it. And then every now and then, of course, I mean as you're well aware we operate in primarily a matrix delivery and you know I think we've come a long ways in the past since I've taken over anyway in terms of engaging all the areas in and you know as resourcing as senior suppliers in the IT area. But we've got an accountability problem because like I said to [I1] many times when there's a problem regardless of where it comes from, the PMO sort of stands alone in terms of ‘okay we have to resolve this’.” [*∴ organizational alignment = TW,OR,EB*]

Asked about the general climate of politics within the IT business unit in contrast from I6's prior business unit in the same organization, I6 remarked about the divergence in behaviours, with IT exhibiting heroics, convolutions, power struggles and all other forms of political behaviors in great magnitude and in full visibility:

“We don't have this. Doesn't seem to, like I guess when we have an emergency everybody clamours together, we get the job done, right [in my former role]. But what I'm seeing too much of is people working for their own good [in IT] versus we're doing something for somebody in the business, so it's kind of worked together here, and this is pockets, right. I mean there is pockets of, look, I've got a number of my colleagues that we were very seamlessly working together, and we would do anything, like, for example, within [I1's] group. Myself and [several colleagues]. I think we've got a great working [relationship] together because we

always have each other's back. And we would never say anything or do anything that would be harmful to the other. I don't feel that same love from my other colleagues. I would say that. So, I don't know how you describe that. [\therefore *recognition = TW,OR,EB*]

So, you know, from that perspective it's like I get a ton of support whenever I need it. And we get it's always it's a back and forth. It's never, we don't keep track of how we help each other, right. So, it's, I think, that's what's missing because we can't ever predict the problems we're going to have; we're doing complicated things. You can't expect to plan everything out to horrible detail before you go. That's not reasonable either, you know, so you have to you have to kind of go on it on a basis of a level of trust but we're gonna go we've got enough information so let's go and if we run into a problem, which we will, then we're gonna work together and not blame each other. But what happens is when there is a problem the energy is on assessing blame on levelling blame and I think that's a very, very, very bad leadership behavior. You can't you can't get anywhere when people are like that, and the [IT] Directors act like that then, then guess how everybody that reports to them [acts]? It's an issue of leadership as far as I'm concerned and so I'm not, you know, hoping that, you know, maybe it's like that across the company. When I was in [my former business unit] I didn't notice it this bad. Like it's quite a political little group here. But I thought, well, like I said, with [other business units at Y] it's really good. We've got a great team and I hope we stay together.” [\therefore *governance complexion = TW,OR,EB*]

Interview 7

The following citations with Interviewee 7 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, June 25, 2015.

A recent promotion to an IT leadership role, interviewee 7 (I7), was asked the common question set (Appendix C). With respect to the IT strategy development process, I7 clarified that the CIO and the Leads of Strategy, Operations and Finance create it together by looking at corporate strategy and then prioritize themselves despite the value automatically assigned by their own corporate value calculator within the PVL. [\therefore *technology strategy development sophistication = TW,OR,EB*]

I7 identified that there are other forms of initiative intake, and if these requests would win favour in terms of reputational or relational equity, they are placed in the same queue with IT strategic initiatives and compete for the same resources, which would account for some of the poor project performance. I7 also claimed, in stark contradiction, that “they have a very clear plan now because of the ‘one view’ and everybody follows that plan.” [\therefore *organizational alignment = TW,OR,EB*] Summarily, this false impression of transparency is thinly veiled even by the owner of the process to feign openness to IT processes. [\therefore *transparency = OR,EB*]

I7 identified political camps (Strategy versus Operations) that were constantly at odds, and these groups would form coalitions internally and externally for each initiative or project and battle it out. [\therefore *governance complexion = TW,OR,EB*] Strategy is understood to be immature and overstaffed with technocrats who are in constant

competition with one another and the Account Managers in their own group. They are said to have lots of vision but little ability to translate that into action in projects. [\therefore *mission/vision achievability = OR*] At its core the, “massive culture issue”, is attributed to a bloody battle for the CIO role, and the resultant political environment negatively impacts the entire IT organization and its customers. [\therefore *recognition = TW,OR,EB*]

Case Study 2: Within-Case Analysis

The IT function at Organization Y is by all accounts highly political and exhibiting all behaviours, events and processes enumerated in the taxonomies of Sabherwal & Grover (2010) and Grover et al. (2014). An IT Monarchy with a technocratic culture where there is an identified leadership void that both encourages and does not stop political behaviour, as well as participates in visible and high impact politics directly and indirectly. *The variable 'governance structure' appears impactful in the power distribution among actors and how it is exercised;* here the variable value is *IT-centric*. Political behaviours, events and processes transpire at all levels of the IT function, from business analysts to the CIO, and all subgroups from the PMO to Operations to Special Programs. New personnel are encouraged to quickly, 'drink the Kool-Aid' and accept and operate within the highly charged political reality.

Demonstrating expertise and 'saving face' in a technocratic environment are pervasive themes in Y and are apparently important enough to summon external experts and spend large amounts of money and time to support entrenched positions that ostensibly represent technology opinion, but actually are personalized expressions of value and power that if not accepted are instances of defeat, which is why they are argued so tenaciously and fought for throughout the entire lifecycle of the initiative and beyond. In fact, narratives are created for each historical initiative and tagged to the individuals responsible like a proverbial scarlet letter for their entire tenure.

Because Y did not have incentives or disincentives for financial or schedule performance aside from consternation from their colleagues, which was always present, schedules and budgets were essentially ignored as collateral damage from the political gaming. Self-promotion and group promotion reigned supreme, and this was obvious at all times as the primary motivator of behaviour; there was resistance both from political combatants as well as from individuals and groups who seemed to be stewards motivated by the best interest of the organization. These ‘positive’ politics (i.e. I1 & I3) attempted to offset project derailments (i.e. I2 & I5) and more effectively align outcomes to the needs of the customers. Their attempts were often marginalized by the magnitude of the political momentum, because wherever there was an opportunity to be political, it was exploited at all levels, individually and in factions.

In terms of political opportunities, the absence of metrics allowed actors to undertake all forms of politics. In the presence of very rigid silos, the Spotlight Effect (Epley et al, 2002) was absent so political actions were intentionally obscured and amplified. Even when monthly project metrics were shared, it was clear that it, “drives everybody to run around and point the finger at every other area”, per I3, and took place as parties had enough obscurity to exonerate their teams from blame and allocate blame to other groups. *The variable ‘transparency’ appears impactful in actors’ ability to act politically; here the variable value is low.*

Quite significantly, the IT vision and mission dramatically differed from the vision and mission of the organization, where the business unit unprovoked oriented itself toward being, ‘world-leading’, which is unattainable for a regional power utility

with espoused severe expertise and resource shortages. Further, IT's distorted interpretation of its role (intentionally or otherwise) in the organization has been directionally persuasive to the staff to act in ways that are technocratic, exclusionary, and heavy-handed. Having a vision and mission that are both unattainable and approached from an assumption of omniscience will be hugely impactful to those expected to live it in all of their actions. Groupthink (Esser, 1998) is a likely culprit for the convergence on distortion which, ironically, aims to bring harmony and reduce conflict by sacrificing critical thinking.

The world-leading standard is aspirationally ambiguous unless efforts are made in perpetuity to ascertain the most advanced standard in the world, and then to further determine how to exceed whatever is found. Organizations not involved in competitive technological superiority need not pursue advancement so aggressively, hence the IT department's vision may directionally bewilder its workforce in what to do, how to do it, and if and when they have achieved their goal, if ever. Being world-leading would make all ideas, initiatives, practices, procedures, and projects susceptible to criticism at all times, and could evoke 'analysis paralysis', over-planning, delayed delivery, rework, and numerous other characteristics of potentially having the 'rug pulled out at any time' by the introduction of a potentially better way of doing things. Similarly, the project roster would be larger than most firms that do not endeavour to be the best in the world, since being the best is a continuous process without end. This was the pervasive thrust of the IT organization despite the lack of competence, resources, and capabilities that would aspirationally achieve midrange performance, let alone world-leading.

What is also potentially impactful is that the mission of the IT function states that it is anticipatory in nature to the needs of the organization. This is an accommodative and seemingly benevolent mission, but one that suggests that the level of collaboration initiated by IT is low, or that IT acts as a ‘big brother’ to the other business units by knowing what they need in advance given their prescience and wisdom. The choice of the term, ‘anticipate’ with no mention of collaboration, is another directionally defining characteristic of the IT function toward arrogant technocracy, which reinforces the world-leading technological objective by designating decision-makers as those with the greatest expertise in a given area. Technocratic environments are highly political in nature due to competitive attempts to demonstrate expertise (“masterminding”) (Grover et al., 2014, p. 21) and to discredit the expertise of others. Within technocratic environments, seniority is of little consequence, hence the opportunity for political behaviour takes place at all levels within the organization, and can emerge from individuals as well as groups, which can then be challenged and criticized by individuals and groups outside of the IT function, including the Project Sponsor, other functional areas within the organization, external consultants, external salespeople, institutions, the public, the media, and any other stakeholder. Endless susceptibility to challenge and change of core project objectives was a hallmark of strategic projects in-flight, and interviews described these challenges emerging from everywhere, and management’s willingness to not “lock down the requirements” (Interview with I5) was a major contributor in the consistently substantial project overages in cost, schedule and scope. The Architecture group was identified repeatedly as the source of grand imagination and had projects in stasis while they conceived and delivered their masterplan, which was typically debated internally excessively, and

when finally released tended toward over-architecture and artificially increased scope for elegance, best practices, and future needs. The Architecture group then sat in the project to ensure compliance, whilst new architectural challenges arose internal and external to the IT group. Again, it was identified that more pragmatic and more idealistic options emerged throughout the course of the project, and management seized these opportunities, utilizing their political weapons, to achieve their organizational aims. They would be permitted to stall and challenge projects for months and years without executive leadership tamping down.

IT's error in interpreting the corporate vision of, "Powering [the Province] to a cleaner energy future through innovation, performance and service" (Organization Y, 2018-2019 Annual Report. 2020, p. 12) as seeking to be 'world-leading' is profound as it has perpetuated for many years uncorrected despite being shared in numerous documents and presentations to individuals and groups all around the organization. But more than this, the direct quote from the organizational vision, "Powering [the Province] to a cleaner energy future through innovation, performance and service" (Organization Y, 2018-2019 Annual Report. 2020, p. 12), was rewritten by IT as "to be a *world-leading* power company through innovation, performance and service" (italics added) ([Organization Y] Technology Plan 2012 – Final, 2012, p. 11). The technology strategy incorrectly attributes and misrepresents the IT vision ("Lead the advancement of technology and innovative business solutions to achieve [the Organization's] vision to be world-leading" ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan - External Audience, 2015, p. 4)) as the organization's. Misinterpretation of the organization's vision continues to evolve as it suits the whims and desires of the senior IT technocrats. The institution of

IT has itself become a manifested proxy for the organization in a self-referential manner, and somehow this has been invisible or taboo for all employees who have not corrected this obvious error despite its profound direct impact.

Per the differing internal (IT) and external versions (organization) of the technology strategy, the IT group intentionally concealed the true roster of initiatives in the technology strategy from their customers, which also obscures the true quantity of work to which the IT group has committed and the number of resources that will be consumed. The pervasive interpretation of this approach is arrogance among technocrats who believe they know better than the others and must protect them from the complexity of their esoteric and incomprehensible domain. Further, it is interpreted by those with awareness that IT is gifting itself all the technology toys it wants above the needs of the organization whose projects are not getting performed due to these IT insertions. This approach also extends into the culture such that the norm within and among IT personnel is established as obscurity, arrogance, and alienation. This approach sets an inappropriate expectation of IT's workload and will strain IT if their efforts are not ostensibly aligned to the externally understood roster of projects. *The variable 'achievability of the mission/vision' appears impactful in understanding how actors respond when facing something achievable or not; here the variable value is unachievable.* Ironically, from all the additional efforts of IT, interviewees made clear that the IT landscape was unwieldy in complexity (Interview with I7) and that as a result simple tasks were made difficult (Interviews with I1 and I3).

The differing internal and external version of the technology strategy also illuminate the misalignment in the activities of actors in completing the agreed, approved technology strategy that was designed to support the organization's objectives, and by extension, not completing those objectives meant that organizational capabilities, resources and outcomes sought would be not achieved as expected. Not only was the strategy not executed as planned, but the macro process used to develop the technology strategy was described differently by nearly every interviewee, including a vast divergence expressed by the apparent owner of the process (Interview with I7). According to interviews, I1 and I2 were summoned by the CIO to create the technology strategy together; I3 believed the PVL was being used. I7 said that I1, I2 & I3 plus the CIO together compose the technology strategy, yet also referred to the PVL as the request tool from the business units, and further noted that notifications and ASRs (all-service requests) were used too despite that this, "doesn't allow [the organization to have a] one intake approach" (Interview with I7).

Nearly all seemed to agree in the importance in adhering to the process (with the exception of I5), yet nearly all understood and executed differently, using different technology, process, governance, and channels for initiatives. One interviewee (I6) even directly contradicted their statement about the importance of adherence and procedural prudence, and then espoused the merits of the team 'having your back' when shortcuts are taken. I5 was openly verbal about the need to diverge from the process when 'analysis paralysis' was halting project progress and decisions needed to be made, and this admission of noncompliance toward positive politics seemingly explains why I5 was

reassigned and demoted. *The variable 'organizational alignment' appears impactful in actors' duty to achieve the technology strategy; here the variable value is misaligned.*

In most interviews, interviewees described recognition as a driving factor for political behaviour, where recognition was both personal and for various groupings to which actors were associated. I1: “we have a few people who are looking for individual recognition rather than IT success”. I1: “We’re very much the knight in shining armour mentality because then you get the personal credit”. I2: “[I5 and peer] were all about themselves”. I3: “Everyone is trying to be...the one that’s noticed. I’m the one that delivered”. I3: “there's all of these personal agendas and objectives that people are looking to advance”. I7: “it seems that people are really focused on their own best interest and covering their own butts”. The Architecture group, led by I2, apparently were trying to receive recognition as a group. They formed politically against the wishes of the former CIO (“when that [EA] practice was being created, I think there was definitely different views from [I2] and [former CIO] as well”). All interviewees identified Architecture as problematic and low in maturity, including the former head of architecture (I4), which I2 explained as being a function of newness. Per I3, I2 was “pitted” in competition as a potential successor CIO and building the EA practice was an attempt to showcase that I2 was worthy of the CIO role. I2’s efforts to manage perceptions in the failures brought I2 to “sheer exhaustion” (Interview with I3) during continuous heroics to advance this group. *The variable 'recognition' appears impactful to actors in a manner coincident to how they are incentivized; here the variable value is local.*

IT had low sophistication in the technology strategy development process. In 2008 they hired an individual who wrote more a manifesto than a technology strategy. In 2012 the three most senior members of IT composed impromptu the technology strategy themselves. In 2014, IT generated a technology strategy that had an internal and external version, which creates significant confusion and secrecy. The PVL intended to illuminate the initiatives of the highest value to the organization and hence create a project list without political interference, but a project list alone does not comprise a technology strategy despite the support of the interim CIO (I3) and I7, the process owners. *The variable 'sophistication in technology strategy development' appears impactful in understanding the behaviour of actors who may lack the expertise to undertake this task and subsequently act in political and uninformed ways; here the variable value is low to medium.*

Strategic Intentions, Organizational Politics and Implementation Success

The following table enumerates the project initiatives from the technology strategy and appends them with details on the scope (beneficiaries), IT budget, political behaviour exhibited in the project, and its implementation success.

Strategic Project	Scope	Budget	Political Behaviour	Implementation Success
Business Analytics	Organization	High	High	Low
User Experience	Organization	Medium	High	Low
Mobility	Organization	Medium	High	Low
In-Business Solutions	Organization	Medium	High	Low
Application Renewal	IT	Medium	High	Low
Vulnerability and Threat Management	Organization	Medium	High	Low

Unified Communications	IT	Medium	High	Low
Service Oriented Architecture Centre of Excellence	Organization	Low	High	Low
Data Loss Prevention	Organization	Medium	High	Low
Asset Management (GIS)	Organization	High	High	Low
Asset Management (warehouse management)	Organization	High	High	Low
Asset Management (asset ID and tagging)	Organization	High	High	Low
Supply chain – procurement	Organization	Low	High	Low
Smart Grid (outage management/distribution management)	Organization	High	High	Low
Advanced Metering Infrastructure		High	High	Low
Customer Experience		High	High	Low
Human Capital Management		Medium	High	Low
Enterprise Portal		High	High	Low
Service Management	IT	High	High	Low
Corporate IT Service Optimization	IT	High	High	Low
Network Operations Centre	IT	High	High	Low
Critical Systems Centre	IT	High	High	Low
Security Operations Centre	IT	High	High	Low
Identity and Access Management	IT	High	High	Low
Application Lifecycle Management	IT	Low	High	Low
IT Financial Management	IT	Low	High	N/A
Data, Information & Governance Process	IT	Low	High	Low
Management and Leadership Excellence	IT	Low	High	N/A

Table 14 - Project Initiatives at Y, ([Organization Y] IT&S Business Plan – Dec 31, 2013, 2015)

The strategic projects scoped as ‘Organization’ in the table were chosen methodically coincident with the bureaucratic model (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974), which is a rational translation of IT initiatives needed to comprehensively support the corporate strategy. Unscoped and IT scoped projects arguably followed the bureaucratic model but

given the attempt to conceal the IT projects from the organization, and the findings from some interviews, some projects are certainly political insertions by IT actors (i.e., Service Management).

Interview Coding

The political factors outlined were expressed in the interviews by respondents summarily as follows, coded based on Sabherwal & Grover’s (2010) ‘political processes’, as defined in a prior section. In each cell, the paraphrased or verbatim statement that best reflects the respondent’s perspective for each coincident variable is provided in summary:

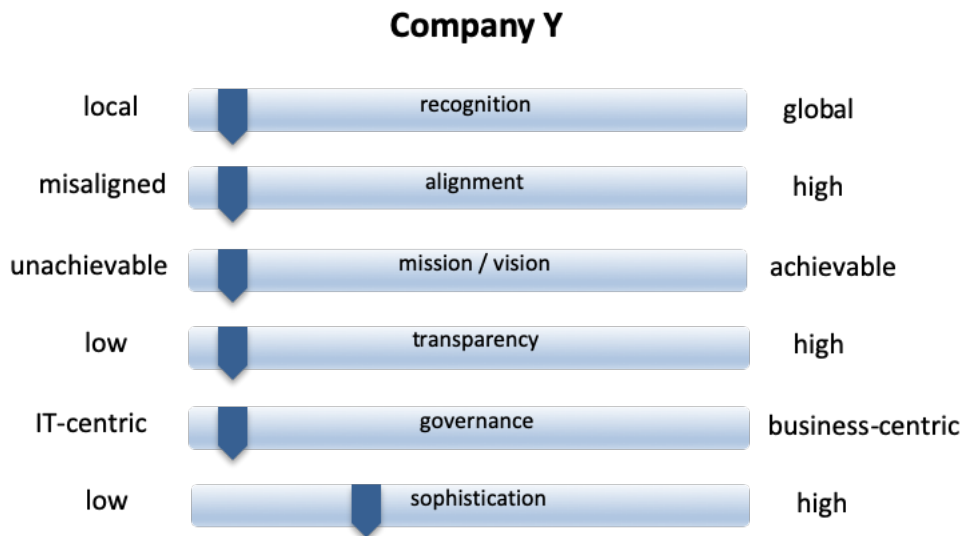
	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7
Recognition	Business unit and individual	Business unit	Business unit and individual “unhealthy competition”	Business unit and individual	Business unit and individual	Business unit. Leadership vs staff.	Business unit, job roles
	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB
Organizational alignment	“diametrically opposed on many things”	“case of personality conflicts”	“we are not focused on a common goal”	“acting as this was their own individual right”	“project struggled to break out of the gate with internal politics”	“PMO sort of stands alone” “Power struggle”	“they have a very clear plan now because of the ‘one view’ and everybody follows that plan”
	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB
Mission / Vision achievability	Per documentation	As (mis)interpreted	Per documentation	Evolutionary	Irrelevant	Irrelevant	Per documentation
	OR	EB	OR	TW	OR	OR	OR
Transparency	“we are brutal on communication”	“There are certainly other items outside of that”	“Just seems very, very broken.”	Silos and protectionism	“unclear and competitive on intended project goals”	“intake does their thing and they throw it over the fence”	“we are very, very siloed”
	OR, EB	OR, EB	OR, EB	OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	OR, EB	OR, EB
Governance complexion	Anarchy “land grab”	IT Duopoly “CIO: we’re going to move this here”	Anarchy “constant battle”	IT Monarchy “the dynamic there was rather than the business”	IT Monarchy “I [made the decisions]”	Anarchy “tug of war” “people working for their own good”	IT Duopoly “We really don’t do a good job in managing that”
	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB
Technology strategy	“self-prestige”, personal	3 senior IT people in a room despite process	“A whole host of characters”	IT executive politics	Competitive, ad hoc, using	ill-defined initiatives with	4 senior people in a room

	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7
development sophistication	promises, despite process				external parties	unrealistic expectations	
	TW, OR, EB	OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB	TW, OR, EB

TW = Tug of war
OR = Obstacle race
EB = Empire building

Organizational Attributes by Emergent Political Factors

The following image illustrates by use of sliders where on the spectrum Organization Y exhibited each of the six identified variables that emerged as impactful in the research. This is a summary of the findings presented thus far.



Case Study 3

Case study 3 (Organization Z) is a Crown corporation within the Ministry of Health whose primary function is information provision to its many stakeholders, and which favours a digitized means of delivery. It is headquartered in a major city in Canada, with a geographic service scope that spans the entire province. More specifically, Z manages health registries; vital statistics; information and analytics services; legal and policy; privacy, access and patient safety, and; security. In the 2017 calendar year, Z managed 199,628 phone calls, 20,588 customers, 232,378 health registrations, 33,117 vital events and amendments, 58,703 vital event certificates, 29,017 emails, 168,524 pieces of mail, 741,955 work items, and 681,772 health card renewal packages ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2017-2018, 2018, p. 37).

Z manages a data warehouse for which it, on a continuous basis, updates and refines information and security policies and procedures. This data warehouse forms the backbone of the consolidation and harmonization of all health and prescription information and security practices across the Province, which was completed in late 2017. A service desk complements the capabilities of the organization by supporting its 88,016 users in various ways, including in 2017 receiving 194,106 calls, and logging 181,775 incidents and requests, of which they resolved 128,399 ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2017-2018, 2018, p. 45).

Z is led by a CEO and five-member executive team and is overseen by a Board that represents the provincial government. Z's vision is, "Empowering patients,

enabling care” ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2017-2018, 2018, p. 10). Z’s mission is, “Making patient information available electronically to patients and the health care team.” (p. 10) Values are, “Respect, engagement, excellence, transparency, accountability.” (p. 10) The organization also touts its ‘four themes’, which are: “patient first” ([Organization Z] Strategic Plan – March 31, 2017, 2017, p. 3); “partner within health system” (p. 3); “trusted” (p. 3), and; “lean” (p. 3).

In addition to themes, Z also promoted ‘principles’ in how individuals and groups should conduct their work to help build and maintain a culture that encourages collaboration and information sharing while decreasing siloes and obstacles.



Figure 29-Principles at Z, ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2014-2015, 2015, p. 15)

The corporate strategy ([Organization Z] Strategic Plan – March 31, 2017, 2017) outlined six strategic initiatives, which were enumerated in a scheme that demonstrated the traceability of the initiative to a theme (above), and go on to describe specific initiatives to be completed within a given timeframe:

1. Get patient information to healthcare providers (p. 3):
 - a. eHS portal complete by March 31, 2014
 - b. Lab, drug and diagnostic reports stored in EMRs, SCM and PHC solutions by March 31, 2015
 - c. Information flow between physician EMR and other entities by March 31, 2015
 - d. Test results sent to primary care provider by March 31, 2015
2. Use technology to assist patients directly (p. 3):
 - a. Develop 3-5-year vision and roadmap for patient empowerment by March 31, 2014
 - b. Patient and physician communication channel by March 31, 2015
3. Support [Z's] stakeholders and customers to implement and maintain technology (ex. Support RHAS, SCA and MOH and support EMR program) (p. 4):
 - a. Customer recognition of [Z's] contribution to health care transformation by March 31, 2014
 - b. Implement core systems by March 31, 2016
 - c. Work on common IT solutions with partners by March 31, 2017
4. Communicate with [Z's] stakeholders and customers to avoid duplication, misunderstanding, etc. (p. 4):

- a. Review of regional IT services by March 31, 2015
 - b. Adopt master schedule of implementations by March 31, 2016
5. Use secure simple sign-on (p. 5):
 - a. Implemented by March 31, 2016
6. Support [the Province's] health system's lean initiative and use lean methodologies and processes to support the roll-out of technology to the health sector (p. 5):
 - a. Participate in Lean initiatives by March 31, 2016
 - b. Align IT projects to the seven flows of medicine by March 31, 2016

In 2012, Z implemented a Kaizen Promotion Office to advance lean principles throughout the organization (Interview with I2). From that time, they have been implementing more processes, supports and standards that are aligned to the Toyota Way (Liker & Morgan, 2006) lean principles. In 2015, Z commenced lean improvement leadership training for all six executives (principle 9). Z utilized Hoshin Kanri (which translates to, 'compass management'), another Japanese derived management technique, which is a strategic planning methodology that helps to enumerate a small number of long-term strategic initiatives, break them down into achievable, time-sequenced chunks, and then cascade responsibility into the organization to achieve all aspects of the strategy chronologically. This methodology exactly aligns to the bureaucratic model of Pfeffer and Salancik (1974), which is the comprehensive translation of needs rationally to the workforce in a manner that is comprehensive.

In preliminary discussions, Z claimed that they had very little political behaviour and that there was no divergence of projects from the strategy. This assertion was explored in the following 12 interviews and ultimately from a site tour. After the first two interviews and the remarkable variance noted from previous respondents, it was determined that a site visit and in-person interviews were prudent for a deeper dive into the organization’s claims.

Code	Position	Area	Total
I1	Executive, IT	IT	2
I2	Management, IT	Corporate Operations	2
I3	Executive, HR	Human Resources	2
I4	Management, Projects	Projects	1
I5	Executive, Operations	Corporate	1
I6	Executive, Strategy	Corporate	1
I7	CEO	Corporate	1
I8	IT entry level	IT	1
I9	Chairman of the Board	Board of Directors	1
			12

Figure 30-Interview Details at Z

Interview 1

The following citations with Interviewee 1 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, July 10, 2015.

A senior leader in the IT department, interviewee 1 (I1), who has been with Z for 2 years, was asked the common question set (Appendix C). I1 elaborated the Hoshin Kanri process used to build the organization strategy with both three- and one-year timeframes. The strategy was built with external assistance, utilizing input from numerous stakeholders including a citizen advisory panel. The executive team meets for four hours per week to discuss implementation progress as well as to discuss the need for any “agile” changes to priorities, budgets and resources.

I1 declared that the VP of IT is accountable for the achievement of the IT strategy, although I1 added that all 174 IT staff members are accountable in some format. I1 declared that the IT management team of 10 individuals is responsible for implementing the IT strategy, the importance of which is articulated through architecture.

I1 said that metrics were plentiful and helped Z achieve such great success in its initiatives thus far. I1 lauded the decision to repatriate roles as employee roles rather than contract roles as a measure to improve the culture.

I1 shared that Z is a unionized environment so formal performance reviews are conducted regularly. Reviews methodically evaluate cause-and-effect relationships in individual performance, which are claimed to depoliticize the feedback and resultant performance. [*∴ recognition = TW*] I1 described the termination of one executive who brought a political approach to the organization, and how another VP was ‘refocused’ by the CEO to address ego-generated issues.

I1 elaborated that prioritization of initiatives is based on the budgeting process, which must be conducted annually with the provincial government. Z is given a fixed dollar amount jointly for sustainment operations and new initiatives and is expected to complete as much as possible given this budget. Priorities are set collaboratively and transparently, and they “reprioritize and evolve some of our decision making based on changing requirements and changing priorities of the system”.

When asked about challenges, I1 replied, “I think that we are moving in the right direction. I think it’s visible, but sometimes I do feel like, from a staff’s perspective, there is a lot of change going on and it's hard to see the forest for the trees and they are right now hitting their heads against trees as they are asked to do some low-level tasks to improve or change the way that we do things and it’s hard for them to see how all those pieces stitch together into a broad vision sometimes which is why I continue to come back with ‘all hands’ [meetings] and reassure everyone that this is what we're trying to do.”

Discussing recognition, I1 offered, “We have, I think, two different models and we try to enact on both of them on an ongoing basis. Recognizing people for the things that they do just part of their job but doing their job in an exemplary way through small tokens of appreciation as well as for more formalized processes people are able to advance in the organization and go through the performance review process to show where they are, perceiving where they’d like to be in the organization and how we invest in them, both in training and skills and knowledge so they can attain that goal.” [*∴ recognition = TW*]

Commenting on politics in Z, I1 said, “Human nature just exists in every organization and you have to deal with different personality types and different kinds of ego. So, that challenge exists but we try to manage that as best as possible. We have transitioned some people out of the organization or into different roles as a result, but the nature of human interaction is still existing across the organization where there is 400 people here in this office so you are gonna have a good mix of different types of people, differing styles of interaction and differing means of trying to get ahead. But I think that we try hard to recognize those items and not reward them.”

Interview 2

The following citations with Interviewee 2 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, July 10, 2015.

A senior leader in the IT department, interviewee 2 (I2), was asked the common question set (Appendix C). I2 claimed to have brought lean to Z, which the organization adopted as part of a political mandate. I2 explained that hoshin kanri promotes visibility or “mieruka” (Toyota principle 7), and traces initiatives transparently from the corporate strategy to all groups and individuals, it is very difficult to politic. The CEO’s adherence to lean and Hoshin Kanri is named as a significant factor in maintaining the apolitical culture of the organization and deflects emergent “noise” from within and without the organization. They make decisions as though the customers are in the room, and in instances where decisions do not directly impact customers or the Hoshins, choices are made “rationally” in accordance with the goals of the company, which are known in short- and long-term. Strategy and progress

thereof are posted on the walls and updated at least daily. Where there are issues, corrective action plans are placed on the walls.

I2 described how there is no distinct sub-strategy of any group in the organization, rather they operate from the organizational strategy. If they have non-strategic initiatives to complete, they create their own plan that works around Hoshins. I2 referenced that numerous active Hoshins are actually IT projects, but the VP of IT will, of course, need to complete other projects as well to have a technologically equipped workforce, and these efforts will be added to the plans of the organization.

The process to develop the organization strategy took two months of planning, and involved the executive team, Board of Directors, political leaders, and the ‘voice of the customer’. It is revisited annually to ensure they have captured all ‘must dos’.

Seven Hoshins were defined in 2014 but only three were achieved due to a portfolio management gap. Their performance since has been much better with the addition of a Portfolio Manager to oversee the set of projects. With respect to the presence of politics in establishing Hoshins, I2 said, “The [priorities] I have seen in our organization I don't think [are a function of politics]. So, part of Lean is making the workplace *very* visual. So, there's been a lot of transparency. So, we have a whole wall of organizations set up to track our Hoshin priorities as well as secondary priorities with project schedules attached on the walls with red-green stoplight status in terms of our progress towards those goals. Anyone in the organization can go and look and see what are the priorities for this year and how we're progressing in terms of meeting them. And

if we're off track on something then a corrective action plan is printed on yellow paper stuck up on the wall. So, it feels very transparent.”

Interview 3

The following citations with Interviewee 3 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, January 27, 2016.

A senior leader in the HR department, interviewee 3 (I3), was asked the question set in person that was composed for Z (Appendix D), which contained general and specific open-ended, exploratory questions, as well as questions specific to the individual's perspective.

I3 was asked to recite the organization's vision, mission and values to ascertain whether they were consciously directional. I3 was able to recall the mission verbatim (“Making patient information available electronically to patients and their health care team”). I3 elaborated that hiring policy seeks individuals who recognize the strength of the vision and mission and will adhere to it diligently.

Speaking about the culture, I3 highlighted agility, fluidity, innovation and goal-orientation as cultural hallmarks. I3 lauds the ‘get it done’ mentality as well as the collaborative and collegial manner of working. I3 spoke of the CEO as “master architect” who empowers the executive team to “drive [the architecture]”. The CEO encourages strong collegiality among executives, with frankness and timely communications emphasized to achieve consistent and effective leadership.

A strong professional tension is identified by I3 between IT and Programs groups due to overlapping resource requirements that are increasing as work increases. There are divergent approaches to managing the situation, and the executives have set a time to discuss it directly to determine a resolution. This is hailed by I3 as representative of the culture among the executive team who, when they encounter a managerial dilemma, take a collaborative and timely approach to resolve it. There is a clear path of escalation for individuals encountering concerns, which can be communicated anonymously if desired, from Manager to Director to Senior Executive to the CEO.

I3 shares a story about an executive who was terminated for being misaligned with the apolitical culture and rather conducted himself/herself with apparent self-interest. I3 says that in Z, political behaviour is seen, “like a wart”. However, I3 indicates that information flow and decision making can take place within cliques, although the comment is not intended to indicate that this behaviour is political, rather that information is transformed prudently within groups prior to sharing so to minimize misinterpretation by presenting a unified message.

I3 stated that what maintains apoliticality at Z is “our vision”:

“It’s really around ‘what’s our role in this whole health system’ and it’s understanding what that is and driving at that so that we really continuously build on that. So, if you are looking from an HR perspective, ‘what are the things that

we are doing there’, we’re really driving on mission/vision in terms of ‘here’s what we do, here’s the impact that we have, here’s why it’s important’, trying to create that personal connection. But from a from a political point of view, no, there is politics all over the place. It’s inherent in just how our setup is funded by the government, for example. So, there’s politics all over the place, both provincially between the different customers that we that we work with, and the pull on our services. Internally within the organization there is politics as well.”

Interview 4

The following citations with Interviewee 4 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, January 27, 2016.

A senior leader in the Culture, Collaboration & Innovation Division, interviewee 4 (I4), was asked the question set in person that was composed for Z (Appendix D), which contained general and specific open-ended, exploratory questions, as well as questions specific to the individual’s perspective.

I4 was asked to recite the organization’s vision, mission and values to ascertain whether they were consciously directional. I4 was unable to recall any. I4, however was able to recall 2 of the corporate principles.

I4 described that lean is “huge” at Z, and it pervades all corners of the organization. I4 described daily agile huddles, matrix structure, and visible status available in real-time. I4 claims a mutually beneficial relationship with the Portfolio

Manager, with whom I4 resources and schedules projects within a portfolio of over 100 individual projects.

I4 describes very low project implementation variance from the strategy. I4 indicates that deadline shifts are unusual; financial variance is unknown to I4.

When asked about political behaviour, I4 cites significant tension between IT and Programs at the group and individual levels that is resulting in “sideways” project performance in a Hoshin. Despite the conflict, I4 thinks they will resolve it somehow. Further, I4 spoke to the motivation to act politically and said, “if I think about all the people here, I’m not sure anyone has done anything to climb up the ladder, how’s that, more of, ‘let’s get it done to make somebody happy’, more than, yeah, than to climb up the ladder.”

Interview 5

The following citations with Interviewee 5 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, January 27, 2016.

A senior leader in Finance, interviewee 5 (I5), was asked the question set in person that was composed for Z (Appendix D), which contained general and specific open-ended, exploratory questions, as well as questions specific to the individual’s perspective.

I5 was asked to recite the organization’s vision, mission and values to ascertain whether they were consciously directional. I5 recited the vision verbatim and

paraphrased the mission accurately and completely. I5 listed two principles from memory.

I5 indicated that lean is a very big factor in the organization to bring about a unified vision, and identify inefficient and ineffective processes, which dramatically changed managerial understanding of their operations and workforce. I5 claimed that Finance was the entry point to introduce lean, which had few benefits relative to the benefits achieved later in other functional areas.

Discussing financial planning in project implementations from the organizational strategy, I5 said that financial constraints are “huge” as a politically funded organization. Despite the financial constraint, *Z has never altered their implementations due to lack of funds*. I5 claims that creative approaches have been used to complete the work, including compromise and leveraging partners.

With respect to financial variance in project implementations, I5 says that there is a great deal of financial engineering performed among government entities so that they purposely spend all of the money they have sought and received, and they will transfer money among them to ensure that each entity within a Ministry performs as expected. *Z* is unique in not being able to “return money” and will have surplus money sent to them at times so the financials may appear “unplanned”.

When asked about improvement opportunities at Z, I5 noted the same conflict between Programs and IT that describes possessiveness over resources and dominance over work prioritization.

Interview 6

The following citations with Interviewee 6 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, January 27, 2016.

A senior leader in Strategy & Risk Management, interviewee 6 (I6), was asked in person the question set that was composed for Z (Appendix D), which contained general and specific open-ended, exploratory questions, and was as some questions specific to I6's perspective.

I6 describes open and fluid communications daily, supported by visuals, that provide timely details to stakeholders to understand how to best support inflight initiatives, promote innovation and encourage a strong and meritocratic culture. I6 also describes weekly and quarterly executive meetings intended to support one another and gauge status and reflect on variance

I6 lauds the approach of the CEO who encourages continuous improvement in “hard and soft sides of the business”, and who appreciates mistakes as learning and growing opportunities.

I6 was asked how people distinguish themselves within their processes or otherwise exhibit self-interested or political behaviour and replied that innovation reports highlight the contributions of individuals so they can be recognized by the organization, as opposed to being recognized in a more limited way:

“Our innovation challenge report came up and she volunteered from her unit to do the report out, she said, ‘I have an innovation’, and she had implemented it and she wanted to report out on it and so the manager is like, ‘absolutely, next activation report out, you’re up’. So, all of the directors, all of the managers, everybody's in there listening, right, and she stood up and she reported out. It was a completely-blow-your-mind innovation, but it was actually helping a different area out...what it did to allow her to stand up and shine and sparkle like that and show her, not just like her innovation and stuff like that, but, like, her desire to really take on some more leadership, her desire to, you know, go above and beyond in those sorts of things.”

Interview 7

The following citations with Interviewee 7 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, January 27, 2016.

The CEO of the organization, interviewee 7 (I7), was asked in person the question set that was composed for Z (Appendix D), which contained general and specific open-ended, exploratory questions as well as questions tailored to I7’s perspective and role.

I7 was asked to recite the organization's vision and mission to ascertain whether they were consciously directional. I7 recited the vision and mission verbatim. I7 elaborated that the vision and mission are directional to the entire workforce in the face of competing priorities and in planning and delivering initiatives. "I think we try to be clear on what we are trying to achieve and why. We continue to try to clarify that because I think it still gets foggy for people when it feels like there are lots of priorities." There are thrice per year all-staff meetings to reinforce the paramount importance of the vision, mission and strategy in everything that is done at Z. The executive team meets quarterly for deep analysis of goal achievement. All key stakeholders are engaged at least annually for updates against goal achievement.

I7 acknowledged the value of lean practices as a philosophy more than a toolset that requires strict adherence. I7 elaborated the values of waste reduction, customer-centred value, stakeholder representation, data-driven decision making and informative metrics, and suggested that these are all supported by lean.

Discussing variance to projects from the strategy, I7 indicated that some initiatives were progressing slower than planned, some of which could be attributed to the seventeen organizations with which they need to collaborate and coordinate. I7 also indicated that their budget was cut 19% over the past three years while demand had increased 40%. Their fact-based use of lean gave Z the evidence needed to "pushback" against unreasonable demands. I7 indicated that there are 16-20 Board priorities annually. In the current calendar year Z would achieve all but 2, where one was impossible and the other is substantively complete (85% staff engagement rate).

The culture, according to I7, has evolved from being an IT shop delivering health services to being a health organization delivering IT services, which maintains some stickiness to the past. I7's direction to her staff is to accept a project and succeed at it or reject it outright. Power is dispersed and distributed to empower the workforce. I7 claims a "benevolent dictator" approach, where coaching and mediation techniques are far more often used than edicts.

I7 states that political behaviour is absent because it is disincentivized, as are individual heroics. Candidness and transparency are encouraged by example and reinforced through open-door and open-invitation policies. Lean is used for consistent, transparent and empowering means of working, and leaders support these practices with servant leadership and leading by example.

Interview 8

The following citations with Interviewee 1 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, January 27, 2016.

Interviewee 1 (I1) was interviewed 4 months prior. I1 is interviewed again and this time in person and was asked the question set that was composed for Z (Appendix D), which contained general and specific open-ended, exploratory questions, as well as questions based on prior findings and role-specific perspectives.

I1 described the organization's evolution from being project-centric to program-centric, needing to integrate IT's sustainment operations into this new landscape. I1 described the shift from providing IT services to clients to providing IT services to Programs, and how this still requires balancing to find the correct formula. I1 encounters politics in the responsibility and accountability of IT-aligned resources as they are seconded to Projects.

I1 claims to speak often with HR because of the confusion created in the new business model and the resultant conflict in decision making. I1 acknowledges the cultural shift required from the IT function and described the transition to lean as "tough" and "forced".

I1 says that collaborative planning processes and pervasive visualizations create great difficulty for political actors. Communication often takes place in groups where all voices are heard and those voices reflect the customer and the stakeholder, not the desires of any political actor. I1 alludes to a perception that I1's actions may be interpreted as political, and admitted they were dictatorial during the "plumbing" stage, but now encourages more collaboration on "higher value activities".

Interview 9

The following citations with Interviewee 9 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, January 27, 2016.

A staff member in IT, interviewee I9 (I9), was asked the question set that was composed for Z (Appendix D), which contained general and specific open-ended, exploratory questions, as well as questions specific to the individual.

A junior employee of Z was sought for a non-managerial perspective and to determine whether the principles and strategies were cascading down into the organization. An earlier interview suggested that a random individual should be selected to gauge consistently among staff, and I9 was chosen at random. I9 identified as a senior application support analyst involved in both projects and support capacities.

I9 was asked to recite the organization's vision, mission and values to ascertain whether they were consciously directional. I5 recited the missions verbatim and could not recall the vision.

I9 claimed that lean is helpful generally but is overreaching to use in IT where delivery methods should align to the leading practices familiar to the workforce, such as the Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC) or Agile. Insofar as work completion and variance from plans, I9 indicated that priorities are understood and maintained by all.

Interview 10

The following citations with Interviewee 10 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, January 27, 2016.

The Chairman of Board, interviewee 10 (I10), offered to discuss politics in person at Z, offering a perspective of how the organization operates within the external political landscape.

I10 indicated that lean had a bad reputation in the province due to bad investment but Z was a good example of how it could work well. The mandate of Z was to build a service and gently introduce it to recipients, so their external image must be one of magnanimity and competence in providing services that are secure, governed and consistent. Because the organization held collaborative sessions with a “patient-first” theme, there was broad buy-in to the plan among participants. I10 laments that CEOs and Minister should have been better engaged in avoid the last 2 years of back-and-forth.

I10 clarified that politics at Z was “small p” politics. This was in large part because I10 dictated to the Minister the approach that was needed to be successful and got agreement. It was also deemed useful that Z generates significant cost savings for the Province and benefits for patients.

The Board was previously ceremonial and now there are active, valuable members who comprise 3 committees. They monitor key metrics of the strategy to evaluate whether activities are on-time and on-budget so they can be optimally supportive to the CEO.

The Board of Z utilizes a strategic plan that is updated annually. The Board also has a communications strategy for both internal and external communications. The Board

presents to Chairs of the health regions, for example, to help Z gain more support among their future customers.

Interview 11

The following citations with Interviewee 2 (anonymous) were obtained in discussion with the author, January 27, 2016.

I2 was interviewed again using new information gathered since the prior interview. I2 elaborated more about the dynamics among the executive team and how decisions were made.

Site Tour

I2 offered a guided, unrestricted site tour of Z's headquarters to see how they performed their work. Because mieruka was so extensively used in the Lean approach, the tour demonstrated how Lean and other tools are used in the organization particularly in achieving the relatively small divergence in implementation from their strategy. Visuals included near real-time status of all important Hoshins, processes and outcomes in the organization, with detailed metrics appended.

Case Study 3: Within-Case Analysis

Z was a unique organization in its pervasive use of Lean and continuous improvement, and unwavering focus on a clearly documented, directional vision, mission and strategy. The CEO was a steadfast proponent of Lean principles and practices, exhibited servant leadership by example, and maintained a collaborative, collegial and accountable culture that repelled siloes and fiefdoms in favour of a bureaucratic model (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974), that was inclusive, substantively non-hierarchical, and goal oriented. Z was supported by an active and influential Board of Directors who helped to obviate resistance and facilitate acceptance among the customers and future customers of Z. The workforce of Z was almost totally aligned culturally and psychologically toward egoless meritocracy, with a strong focus on the customer, per the vision that resulted in the strategy being methodically achieved. When conflict was noted, it was actively steered to resolution, per I3, “One of the things that has been coming up across the organization has been the division between IT and what we term our [Z] programs. And when you look at it, it’s, the root of it is coming up to lack of alignment in between the two executive leaders. The approach would be for the executives to get together and have the discussion which [the CEO] is going to be leading” (Interview with I3). Interviews ranging from business analyst to director to VP to Chairman of Board all shared the same alignment in the objectives of the organization. *The variable ‘organizational alignment’ appears impactful in actors’ duty to achieve the technology strategy; here the variable value is high.*

The political environment was ostensibly narrowed to a single individual (I1) who seemed to be anchored to the ‘old ways’ of doing things, having come from a highly political workplace previously, and then being told to successfully run an IT-dominant organization that had little technological means to deliver to objectives and therefore required assertive and kleptocratic approaches by which progress could be made. I1 was being nurtured by the organization despite the political approach in the hope that the behaviour would be extinguished by effective coaching and defined governance. In any event, the political behaviour was obvious in its expression and impact, and this was because the highly transparent and collaborative manner of working exposed the forms of process friction and governance breaches.

Z utilized the Business Monarchy (Weill & Ross, 2004) governance structure. This approach is business-led but includes a senior IT representative in the committee auspiciously as a business leader. The ‘customer’ was well represented by the committee members both by being physically present in a steering committee, and by having their interests represented by standing committee members. The governance structure was reinforced by the CEO, per I3, “the message was quite clear, and it was to look around the room because these are your teammates. Your team is not the people that report to you. These are, this is your team and don't forget it.” (Interview with I3)

The variable ‘governance structure’ appears impactful in the power distribution among actors and how it is exercised; here the variable value is business-centric.

Decision / Architype	IT Principles	IT Architecture	IT Infrastructure Strategies	Business Application Needs	IT Investment
Business Monarchy					
IT Monarchy					
Feudal					
Federal					
Duopoly					
Anarchy					

Figure 31-IT Governance Archetypes (Weill & Ross, 2005, p. 31)

In Z, IT was the entity with the greatest personnel quantity and greatest financial heft. They were also tasked with dealing with the greatest uncertainty. Per strategic-contingency theory (Hickson et al., 1971) and Pfeffer and Salancik (1974, 1977), greatest power should accrue to IT, and this was true in Z prior to the arrival of the CEO, but a decisive shift in governance and the implementation of comprehensive and transparent Lean processes flattened the power structure to equalize amongst the functions such that the customer’s voice would be heard dominantly and equally by all as the one to follow.

Z communicated their vision, mission, values and principles ad nauseum and made them the basis of hiring, planning, designing, working, reflecting, purchasing and measurement. Unlike the other cases, Z’s mission statement (“Making patient information available electronically to patients and their health care team.”, ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2014-2015, 2015, p. 12)) was achievable, comprehensible and fully aligned to their mandate versus being aspirational and ambiguous. *An unambiguous and achievable mission statement seems highly correlated to implementation success; here the variable value is high.*

In Z, the mission was clearly directional, and it was present and reinforced in meetings where it was always asked, ‘what would the customer think/say/want for this decision’ (Interview with I7) (“think like a patient” ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2014-2015, 2015, p. 15)). Meetings were open-door, interactive and outcome-oriented, reflecting many of Z’s documented values “Respect, Engagement, Excellence, Transparency, Accountability” ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2014-2015, 2015, p. 12)) and principles (“collaboration; focus; communicate; be forward thinking; remove barriers” ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2014-2015, 2015, p. 15)). Interestingly, the mission and vision were recalled verbatim or close to it by nearly all interviewees. In Z clearly these statements were emphasized sufficiently such that they formed part of the operating narrative and acted as a mnemonic throughout activities.

The organization had a single unified strategy that included all functional areas rather than a corporate strategy and separate IT strategy. This cohesion and coordination illuminated IT operations as another business function and not some nebulous and complex back-office function, as it is often treated. Nothing was permitted to be special or mysterious or operate outside of the processes or metrics. This was clear by IT’s own mission statement that reinforced their mandate to be invisible and indistinguishable from the rest of the operations.

By using Hoshins, mieruka, Lean, Kanban, and various other tools and techniques that homogenize and make transparent a comprehensible set of end-to-end processes and outcomes, political behaviours exhibited would be visible like they were

under a spotlight. I2 noted, “part of Lean is making the workplace *very* visual...as long as we have a visibility wall for our priorities that is kept up-to-date...we can point to our wall and say, ‘look, it cannot jeopardize these two must-do-cannot-fail initiatives’” (Interview with I2). Per I2, “we can tell where the work is, we can see what has been done, we can see where there are holdups”. Ostensibly, in the absence of opportunities to covertly act politically, political behaviour is expressed less frequently. *The variable ‘transparency’ appears impactful in actors’ ability to act politically; here the variable value is high.*

There were no rewards or recognitions for individual or group heroics, the only incentives were kudos for organizational achievement of strategic goals and elaboration of innovations that would serve the customer. Per I2, “it’s about the customer”, and outcomes not directly traced to customers, are disincentivized. I3 also indicated that political actions “would be an instant conversation”. I3 continued, “I think there is more of a norm, far more of a social norm around the type of behaviours that are rewarded and those that aren’t”. *The variable ‘recognition’ appears impactful to actors in a manner coincident to how they are incentivized; here the variable value is global.*

Z is an organization with a strong IT heritage, providing digital services to their thousands of clients. They evolved from typical bureaucratic, top-down models of technology planning to wholly inclusive corporate planning supported by recognized Lean techniques. Every interviewee was clear about the strategic aims of the organization, the process by which initiatives were chosen and prioritized, and the approach, resources and timelines available to complete those initiatives. Actors were

sophisticated in these ways, as well as through their years of experience practicing these techniques. *The variable ‘sophistication in technology strategy development’ appears impactful in understanding the behaviour of actors who may have the expertise to undertake this task and subsequently act in apolitical and informed ways; here the variable value is high.*

Z appears to be unique in its relatively apolitical operations, and this is why the organization was studied in greater depth. Per Siggelkow (2007), this ‘talking pig’ provided rich data on how organizations can not only avoid political games but also how to achieve organizational objectives. This will be explored against the body of knowledge in the following sections.

Strategic Intentions, Organizational Politics, and Implementation Success

The following table enumerates the project initiatives from the organization strategy and appends them with details on the scope (beneficiaries), organization budget, political behaviour exhibited in the project, and its implementation success.

Strategic Project	Scope	Budget	Political Behaviour	Implementation Success
Electronic Health Record	Province	High	Low	High
Telehealth	Province	High	Low	High
CDM-QIP	Province	Medium	Low	High
RIS/PACS	Province	Medium	Low	High
Panorama	Province	Medium	Low	High
Drug and Pharmacy Program	Province	Medium	Low	High
SLRR	Province	Medium	Low	High

Strategic Project	Scope	Budget	Political Behaviour	Implementation Success
Quality Improvement Office	Organization	Low	Low	High
Service Desk	Organization	Low	Low	High
Health Cards & Vital Statistics	Province	Medium	Low	High
Privacy and Security	Organization	Medium	Low	High

Table 15 - Project Initiatives at Z, ([Organization Z] Strategic Plan – March 31, 2017, 2017)

Unlike Organizations X and Y, the scope of initiatives is not a business unit but rather either the organization itself or the entire set of clients (the Province). Whether the initiative is technological in nature or not, the perception created by scoping in this way emphasizes to the workforce that there are no meaningful divisions in the betterment of the organization, that all stand to gain when any stands to gain.

Selection of Hoshins (must do, can't fail) was done collaboratively with representation from all stakeholders. Contrary to Organizations X and Y, where geographies and business units respectively would represent themselves, in Z stakeholders looked at outcomes and prioritized based on what must be achieved for customers. EHR was a national collaborative initiative that was highly visible and came with its own funding, and Z understood full participation was mandatory. The other Hoshins were selected as being both attractive and achievable based on available resources and capabilities.

Interview Coding

The political factors outlined were expressed in the interviews by respondents summarily as follows, coded based on Sabherwal & Grover’s (2010) ‘political processes’, as defined in a prior section. In each cell, the paraphrased or verbatim statement that best reflects the respondent’s perspective for each coincident variable is provided in summary:

	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7
Recognition	Business unit and individual	Organization	Organization	“I’m not sure anyone has done anything to climb up the ladder”	Organization “atmosphere that is no blame but still accountable”	Individual (“innovation challenge”) and organization	Organization, health care system
	TW						
Organizational Alignment	“we try to think like we are one organization”	“work as a single system”	“people have your back”	“top down and try not to do it on the side of the desk”	“trying to be collaborative” “matrix environment”	‘Cascade of work from Hoshins’ “both across each layer...also up and down”	“need to collaborate with each other”
Mission / Vision achievability	Aligned to Province	“if you look at the Act that we operate under it it’s fairly clear there”	“we’re really driving on mission/vision”	Aligned to Province	Rote repetition of “common vision”	Aligned to Province	Updated when new businesses were brought into organization
Transparency	“sitting on my wall outside my office for visual consumption”	“visibility wall for our priorities that is kept up-to-date”	“it’s just like a big wart, you just see it”	Matrix provides transparency	“we try to be really clear”	Using meiruka boards. “Information flow”	“I expect that when you are doing anything, you will have talked to anyone else who might be impacted”
Governance complexion	Business Monarchy	Business Monarchy	Business Monarchy	Business Monarchy	Business Monarchy	Business Monarchy	Business Monarchy
Technology strategy development sophistication	Hoshin Kanri, starting from Province, multiple time horizons	Hoshin Kanri, starting from Province, multiple time horizons	Top-down	Top-down	Based on Provincial priorities	Hoshin Kanri, starting from Province, multiple time horizons	Collaborate with 17 different provincial organizations for Hoshins

	I9	I10
Recognition	Organization	Health care system, Province
Organizational Alignment	“we are very well connected”	“we do work closely with the Ministry”

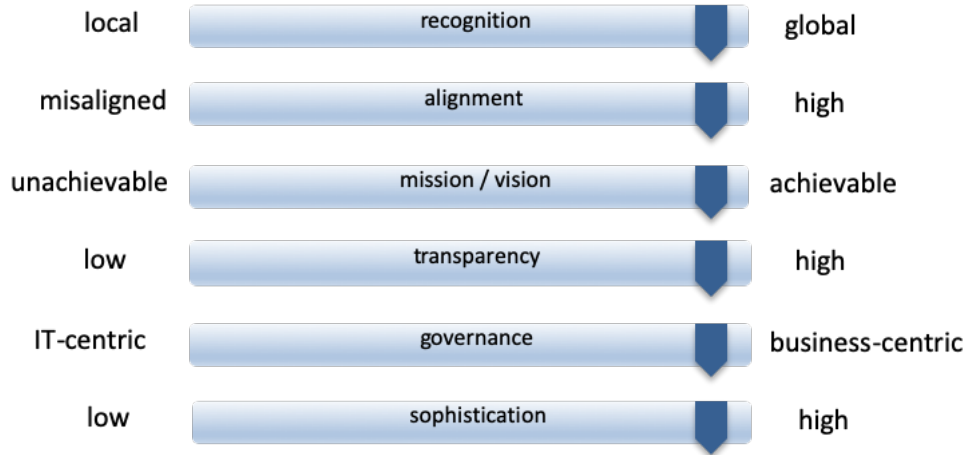
	I9	I10
Mission / Vision achievability	Rote repetition	Pragmatic to avoid politics
Transparency	Ticketing system, work sharing	Collaborate with 13 health regions
Governance complexion	Business Monarchy	Business Monarchy
Technology strategy development sophistication	Priorities cascading from top-down	Strategic plan at the Board level to reflect Provincial priorities

TW = Tug of war
OR = Obstacle race
EB = Empire building

Organizational Attributes by Emergent Political Factors

The following image illustrates by use of sliders where on the spectrum Organization Z exhibited each of the six identified variables that emerged as impactful in the research. This is a summary of the findings presented thus far.

Company Z



DATA ANALYSIS

Within-case analysis was completed within the section of each case. Cross-case patterning is as follows.

Cross-Case Analysis

Some distinct patterns emerge amongst cases where Organizations X, Y and Z respectively tend to generally exhibit the same intensity of characteristics across measures consistently. For Organization X, where politics are impactful to strategy implementation, there is a weak IT Monarchy governance scheme, immature processes, unattainable vision, moderate transparency, regional incentives and moderately defined decision rights. Variables are consistently moderate. For Organization Y, where politics are highly impactful to strategy implementation, there is an IT Monarchy governance scheme in place, immature processes, unattainable vision statement, low transparency, individual-level incentives and poorly defined decision rights. All variables are consistently extreme. And with Organization Z, the other extreme is observed consistently: politics are immaterial to implementation success, a Business Monarchy is the governance scheme, processes are highly mature and continuously improved, the vision is pragmatic and achievable, transparency is high, incentives are organizational, and decision rights are clear. This is summarized in the table below.

Several variables emerged in which a contrast was visible among cases that appeared to correlate with the dependent variable. These are summarized in the following table.

	Organization X	Organization Y	Organization Z
Governance model	IT Monarchy	IT Monarchy	Business Monarchy
RACI clarity	Low	Low	High
IT strategy development methodology	Structured, multi-year Relies on external methodology	Structured but used inconsistently 'Project Value Lifecycle'	Strongly structured, multi-year Hoshin Kanri / lean
IT strategy development discipline	Medium Decided by business case, approached methodically	Low Absolutely not understood	High Quantified. Agreed by Board, Executive and customers
IT's stated vision	'Most productive consultant' Achievability: Impossible Scope: Global	'World's Leading Utility' Achievability: Impossible Scope: Global	"Making patient information available electronically to patients and their health care team" Achievability: Possible Scope: Local
Transparency	Medium	Low	High
Motivation / Recognition	'We are for our region'	'We are for ourselves (at varying altitudes)'	'We are for the customer'
Organizational Alignment	Region	Infighting within BU	Includes CEO, Board and external stakeholders
IT Power	Medium	High	Low
Politicalness	High	High	Low
Strategy implementation success	Low	Low	High

Table 16-Comparison among cases

Some of the variables in the table above are elaborated below.

Governance Structure

Insofar as general characteristics, while X and Y yield different results, they are very similar in many ways starting from the use of the IT Monarchy governance scheme. Excluding the rest of the organization from the translation of corporate goals into IT

initiatives is defining of the organization at a corporate level in that it suggests that IT is permitted to address the complexity of IT alone because it is esoteric and unique from other operations while simultaneously allowing IT to operate under a cloak of secrecy and autonomy that may or may not align with the corporate strategy. Ideas from IT are shopped around in the hopes that others will appreciate these initiatives as fulfilling IT's portion of the corporate strategy, but this approach rather encourages individuals to respond from self-interest to ensure that their function can achieve its goals. Therefore, this governance scheme helps to set the culture and relationships within the organization as political and self-serving on a functional level. To maintain such a scheme, leadership within and without IT either accept the mysterious and hence autonomous nature of IT and thereby segregate and empower business functions in a very distinct manner, or not understand the option for alternate forms of governance that would depoliticize and equalize the power among the functions. For this reason, the chosen governance structure is highly influential and definitional in the political climate, and this sets the stage for how the strategy will be implemented.

Continuing to examine governance, it is well understood that the prudent definition and management of decision rights significantly impacts business outcomes (Weill & Ross, 2004). Organizations X and Y both have exposed significant variation from respondent to respondent in the understanding of the allocation of responsibilities and accountability with respect to IT strategy development and implementation. Where a CIO role exists, accountability for the creation and achievement of the IT strategy resides with that role. Responsibility for IT strategy implementation can reside in several places and still coincide with best practices, but there is significant responsibility with

those leaders who oversee planning (e.g. Strategy & Architecture), delivery (e.g. Projects) and sponsorship (e.g. Operations, Finance). In X and Y there is no concurrence in the understanding of decision rights among any two respondents.

CIOs of both X and Y confirm that they are accountable for the achievement of the IT strategy and both clarify that implementation responsibility resides with their leadership teams. The most senior IT role at Z provided a similar response and then added that responsibility is further cascaded to all IT staff. Because there was no distinct IT strategy at Z, individuals were not asked about the RACI for the IT strategy, but decision rights were clear in the business monarchy governance scheme in place at Z under the CEO's "benevolent dictatorship" (Interview with I7 at Organization Z).

IT Development Sophistication

All three companies employed a structured approach to defining and sequencing the strategic technology initiatives. Processes are mostly defined and mostly understood for all organizations, even when engaging external help. Variance takes place in the discipline adhering to the process. Organization X's IT strategy development process is entirely committee-led where the committee is comprised of a cross-section of regional representatives and hence there is higher adherence while they espouse common aims. Organization Y utilizes an IT strategy process that is very well defined, with process maps, governance matrices, automated tools, training guides, and appointed experts and owners to steward steps. Variance takes place in the adherence to the process at Y, where heroics, self-interest and other political motivations stimulate divergent actions that are not managed within the established governance. Organization Z's IT strategy

development process is embedded within the corporate strategy process, with a defined and collaborative methodology. Adherence is strong and there is clear indication that divergence or undisciplined behaviour would be counteracted with positional authority and cultural norms, all the way to the Board level.

Mission / Vision Achievability

The mission, vision, values, principles, and other documented manners of being compliant are notably very different among organizations, and the autogenous output is highly relevant from organization to organization. Per the within-case analysis in the prior section, Organization X developed pragmatic and modest vision and mission statements, but inexplicably superseded this with an insertion of a more dominant, ‘most productive consultant’ mission, the origins of which cannot be found. Organization Y misinterpreted the organization’s mission and vision and declared their mission to be a ‘world-leading utility’. The aims of both X and Y are essentially unachievable and foment confusion among those who wish to aspire to these aims in their work. The quest to be the best necessitates understanding what the best is, which is a perpetual and resource-intensive process, and outmaneuvering or out-innovating the current frontrunner. Responses to this aim provoke technocratic responses, utilization of external experts, competitive behaviours, and all other measures of outthinking and outperforming internal and external beliefs and ideas. Company Z, by contrast, has a pragmatic and achievable mission that is approved and unaltered by stakeholders and translates the IT initiatives equally alongside other initiatives to bureaucratically deliver on the mission. Directionality for the entire organization coalesces around the mission, which is why it is displayed prominently and reintroduced regularly. The significance of a singular guiding

statement that is existential in nature being ambiguous and unachievable is predictably disorienting for an entire workforce and will spawn political responses that resemble treading in water competitively indefinitely in the unjustified hope that eventually something stable will be found while a pervasive sense of futility ominously remains. The profundity of this reality cannot be overstated with respect to the extent to which the actors will demonstrate political behaviours in such a ‘sink-or-swim’ scenario.

Operational Transparency

Transparency shines a spotlight on activity, which has several effects. Undesirable political behaviours will be undertaken more obscurely, and desirable political behaviour will be undertaken more obviously. This dichotomy metaphorically creates a main stage for the actors to perform that is well illuminated, and dark areas for actors to engage in unsanctioned activity. The broader the spotlight, the fewer dark areas exist and therefore the less negative political action can take place that is surreptitious in nature. Political action can still take place on the main stage, such as promotion of individual accomplishments, but all actors will have full awareness and be able to easily gauge the merit of the political behaviour.

In Organization X, the committee-led approach casts a wide swath of transparency while the committee is meeting. Once the committee disbands back to their regions, it is like switching the light of transparency from on to off, and immediately actors resume their subversive behaviour. In Organization Y, the main stage is omnipresent and so is a vast expanse of dark area, both of which the actors play skilfully and “talk out of both sides of their mouths” (Interview with I1 at Organization X). In Organization Z,

transparency is always high and there is little to no dark space in which actors can undermine the common objectives. Politics play out only on the main stage, and this is why most respondents identified the obvious conflict among known actors. The details were fully understood, as was the process to resolve it.

Span of Recognition

It is a core principle of economics that people respond to incentives, and incentives accrue to those who are recognized as having earned them. Authorities create incentives and offer opportunities for recognition. If there are multiple authorities within an organization, allegiance can vary for those seeking recognition. In Organization X, each region ostensibly had the most compelling incentive system, which is evidenced by the regionally aligned political behaviour that superseded the incentives and disincentives associated with implementing the global IT strategy. In Organization Y, the incentive was strongest for the individual to distinguish themselves even at the expense of their immediate colleagues, which was identified by numerous respondents. Individuals could present their ideas or criticisms directly to the IT management team or could halt or stall a project with a single verbalized doubt. There were other authorities that rewarded political behaviour in X, so groups were polarized in battle as well. In Organization Z, there was only an incentive to act on behalf of the organization (which represented the customer), and a known disincentive to act otherwise. Project outcomes suggest that this was not groupthink coercion toward satisficing, as innovation and improvements were solicited aggressively on a regular basis.

Organizational Alignment

Organizational alignment refers to the cohesiveness within the organization toward the achievement of the strategy. In Organization X, despite organization-wide planning, organizational alignment remained strongest at the regional level where individuals and groups could openly reject global strategic initiatives and opt out of the implementation because their region did not want to participate. In Organization Y, organization-wide planning was challenged in all permutations of the workforce from the individual analyst to the senior executive, from individuals to groups, from singular functions to coalitions of functions. Functions would engage in gaming IT processes, escalating, and all measure of political behaviour to attempt to complete their initiatives. Due to an expressed lack of confidence and frustration for years of failure, customers of IT would even attempt to circumnavigate IT by hiring external parties to complete the work. In Organization Z, alignment was organization wide. From analyst to Board member, there was unblemished cohesion on the goals and their respective timelines.

Implementation success varies significantly among organizations. Organization X routinely fails in their implementations either globally or regionally regardless of whether the initiative is being delivered by internal or external parties. Organization Y ostensibly fails in every project very significantly, and again, this does not vary depending on whether internal, external or blended teams are implementing. Organization Z experiences only minor schedule variation and uses a similar workforce complexion of employees, contractors and consultants.

Politicalness

From the literature review, several authors expounded how the mere opportunity for political behaviour fostered political behaviour in the absence of the Spotlight or Hawthorne Effects (March, 1962; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974; Lee & Bai, 2003; Grover et al., 2014) as elaborated in the variable “Operational Transparency”. The governance model and RACI clarity strongly correlate to the politicalness in organizations as intuitively, the less emphasis there is on orderly decision making, the more disorderly decision making becomes, as was observed in Organizations X and Y. For this reason, politicalness and the resultant political behaviour is viewed as an effect and not a cause.

HOW ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS IMPACT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY

Through inductive research, six independent variables emerged that were impactful in increasing or decreasing political behaviour. They were defined and elaborated previously in the Methodology section:

- Recognition
- Alignment
- Mission/Vision Statement Achievability
- Transparency
- Governance Structure
- Technology Strategy Development Sophistication

The organizations studied are represented by the measurements in these variables in the following manner:

Company X

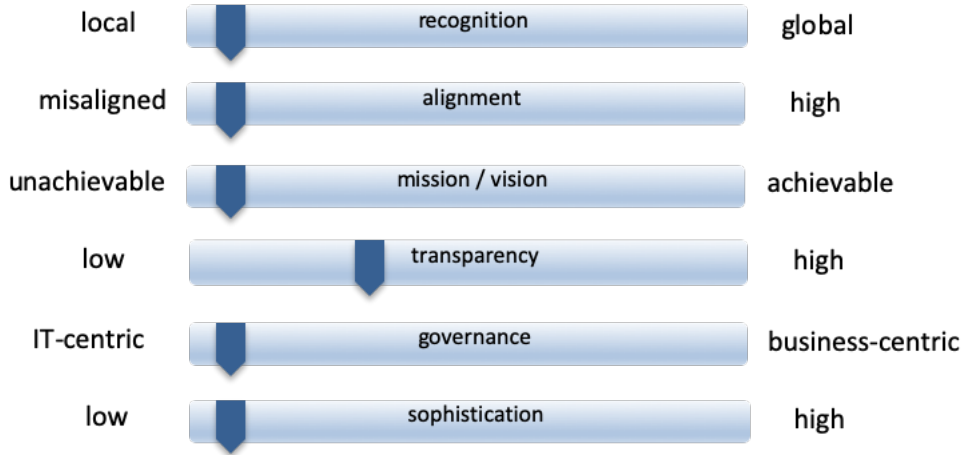


Figure 32-Company X's independent variable values

Company Y

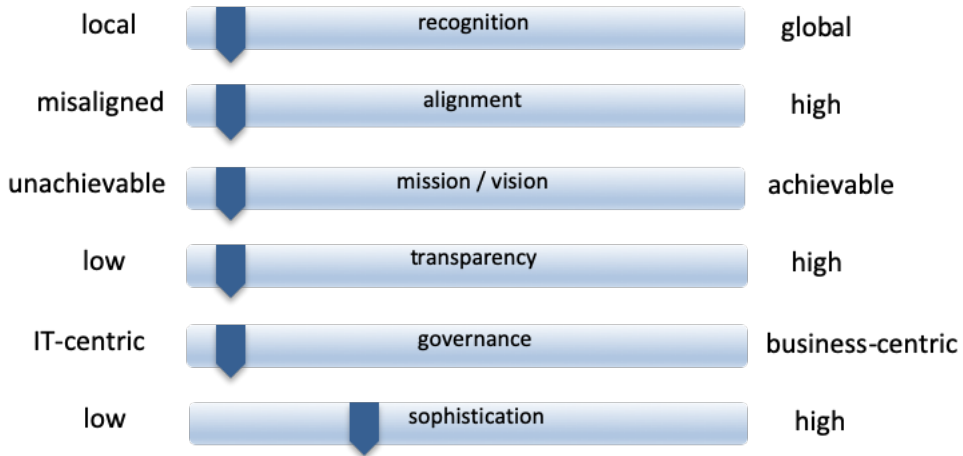


Figure 33-Company Y's independent variable values

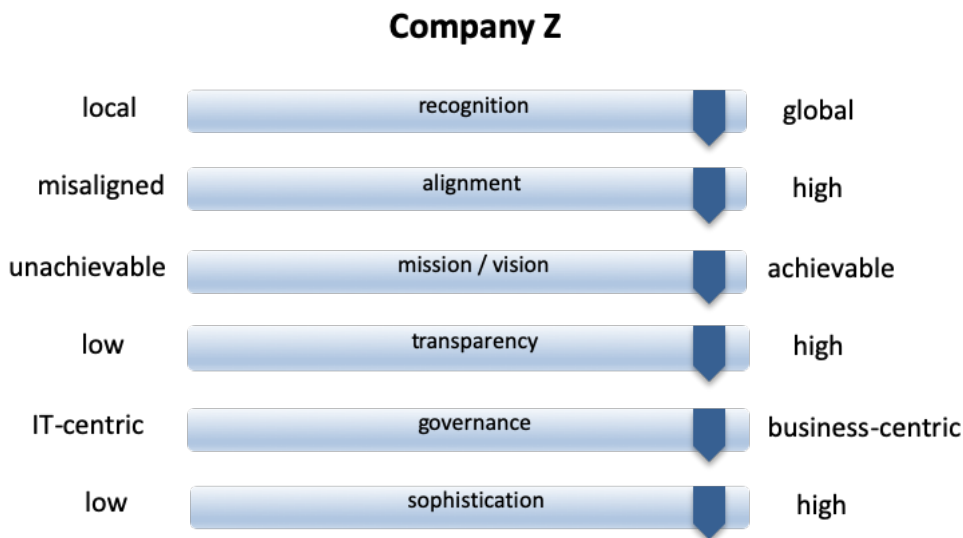


Figure 34-Company Z's independent variable values

Considering the relationship between these variables and technology strategy implementation, there is an identifiable intermediate, dependent variable, *political behaviour*, which expresses a strong, linear, monotonic, positive relationship with the six independent variables. The variable *political behaviour* has a strong, linear, monotonic, negative relationship with the second dependent variable, *technology strategy implementation achievement*. The relationships can be observed in the following illustrations for the three organizations:

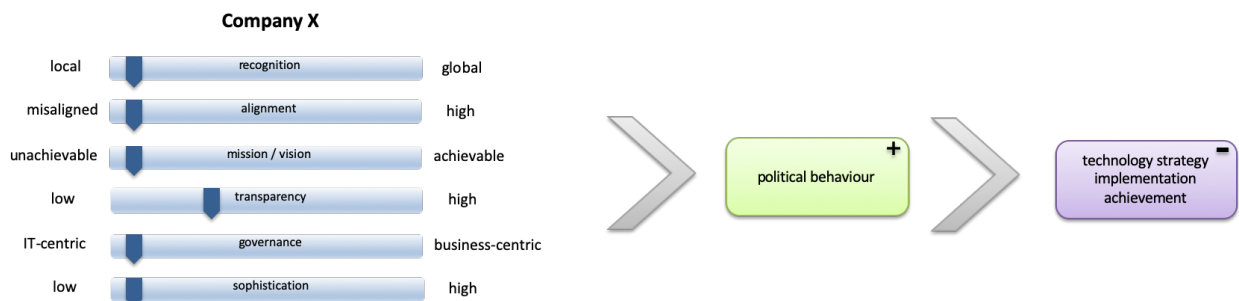


Figure 35-Company X's constructs and outcomes

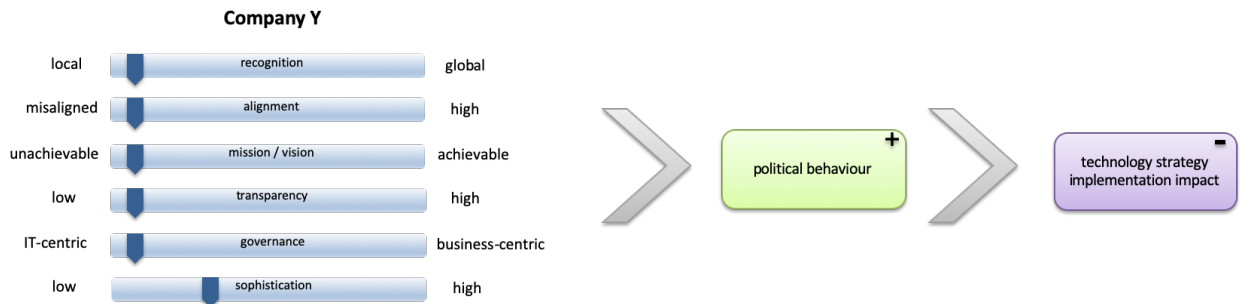


Figure 36-Company Y's constructs and outcomes

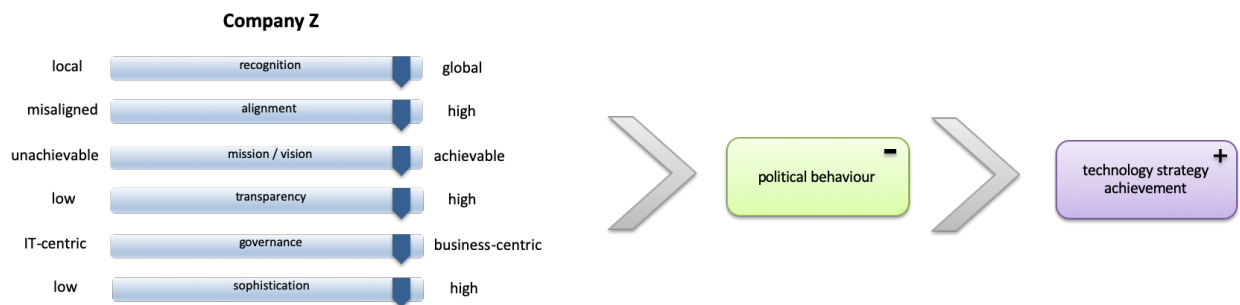


Figure 37-Company Z's constructs and outcomes

The greater the skewness of the independent variables to the left side of the spectrum, the greater the political behaviour expressed, and the greater the political behaviour expressed, the lower the implementation achievement of the technology strategy.

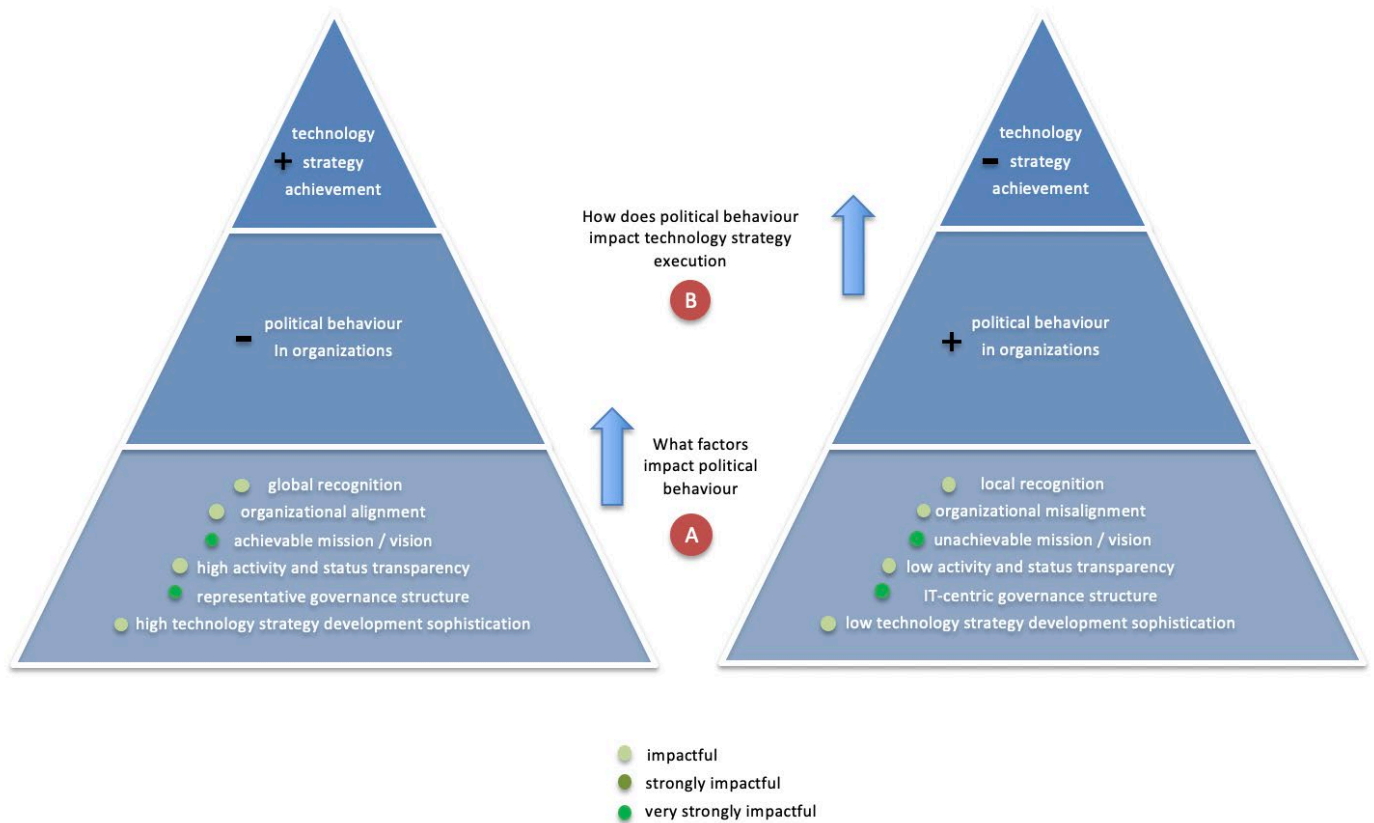


Figure 38-How politics impacts the implementation of the technology strategy

In the figure above the apparent contribution strength of impact of each of the six independent variables is colour coded to reflect their contribution to political behaviour as found in research efforts. Sophistication and transparency had different values in Organizations X and Y yet achieved similar outcomes, so they were deemed *impactful* only in contrast with Organization Z. Recognition and organizational alignment similarly had differing complexions and resulted in substantively similar outcomes among X and Y so were deemed *impactful*. What apparently generated the most impact on political behaviour was the confusion created by unachievable mission/vision statements, and whether IT governed itself exclusively or whether parties external to IT had leadership roles. This is elaborated in the following section.

Organizations X and Y are represented by the pyramid on the right. Their independent variable values are essentially left-skewed, and as result, exhibit strongly political behaviour (illustrated by the + symbol), which results in lower levels of implementation achievement of the technology strategy (illustrated by the – symbol). Organization Z is represented by the pyramid on the left. Its independent variable values are completely right skewed, and as result, exhibit mostly apolitical behaviour, which results in high levels of implementation achievement of the technology strategy.

CONCLUSION

Research efforts examined two organizations, X and Y, that comprised very similar characteristics and as a result, exhibited political behaviour with consequently significant implementation variance from the technology strategy. These organizations had immature processes; technocratic dominance; uncommitted leadership; ill-defined roles; highly resistant workforces; opaque processes; absence of meaningful measurement; obscure accountability; recognition for individuals, protected parties and groups; double standards; gaps in knowhow; insufficient resources; a culture of subversion; and acceptance of a highly political environment readily influenced by institutions, external parties, best practices, trends, emotionality, and a variety of factors. Political behaviours were exhibited vertically at all levels of the organization, and horizontally from individuals to groupings. Research suggested that many of these factors were consequential and not causal to implementation variance. Fundamentally, organizations that can be political, are. And political behaviours result in variance from plans. This finding ‘pulls the rug from under’ most of the prior research, even those that accepted irrationality as an organizational norm, since it makes irrelevant the correlation between the pervasive factors previously identified as the outcomes.

Looking again at the literature review summary of the causes of failure in technology strategy implementation over the prior 45 years (Figure 7), research converges on:

- Inadequate management commitment

- Inadequate control measures
- Rejection by intended users
- Resource gap
- Knowhow gap
- Legacy infrastructure
- Role clarity

Present research strongly suggests that nearly all these factors are, in fact, tactics employed in political gaming and not causes as previously believed, so while there is a strong correlation, there is no causation. This became apparent through an embedded, case study approach, which offered a greater richness in the context by illuminating antecedent conditions, actors' thoughts and feelings, organizational context, and numerous highly relevant factors that would otherwise have been missed had another approach been taken.

Organizations X and Y both had a 'perfect storm' of process immaturity, ill-defined governance, ill-enforced rules, encouragement of personal achievement, opaqueness to surreptitiously expressly personal agendas, obvious polarities between agents and stewards, cultures of conflict, flexibility to obstruct and question decisions, and essentially anything else that may contribute to implementation variance. But Organization X had some degree of transparency and Organization Y had some degree of technology formulation sophistication, so given their outcomes the strength of these factors may be diminished when compared to the others.

From a research standpoint, sometimes one cannot isolate the ‘signal in the noise’ when the metaphoric noise is too loud. What can be done, however, is to explore a different type of organization to evaluate the impact of dissimilarities when some of the factors are different so that some noise can be moderated to gain better clarity on the signal.

Organization Z was mostly apolitical, which offers the aforementioned contrast since their implementation outcomes are effectively the opposite of Organizations X and Y in that they achieve their strategy on scope, on budget and on schedule. One senior leader in Organization Z exhibited some obvious political behaviour, so it is understood that the complete absence of political behaviour, and hence organizational alignment, is unnecessary. And because this individual controlled all of IT, there was less than perfect transparency into resourcing, for example, as identified by several others in the organization, so it is understood that perfect transparency is not required.

Where Organization Z exhibited unblemished consistency, and areas which were opposite to those exhibited in Organizations X and Y, were in *individual recognition*, *mission/vision statement achievability* and *governance*.

There is an intuition to accompany the academic work in governance, which suggests that parties able to formally and authoritatively represent themselves, who are exposed to the competing initiatives of the organization and must collaboratively allocate limited resources to those initiatives in a manner that best suits the organization, will do so. This, in fact, resembles the bureaucratic, rational models espoused by researchers

such as Pfeffer & Salancik (1974). But this alone is not sufficient, as we learned in Organizations X and Y, both of whom have some semblance of this collaborative approach, but it becomes more a ‘dog and pony show’, meant to placate and deceive the other business units while the true IT-centric, technocratic governance takes place subsequently to neutralize this effort. Whereas in Organization Z, alignment to and enforcement of the Business Monarchy governance structure ensures that all actors work from one technology strategy, and that any attempt at divergence will be seen transparently and be viewed through the interest of the organization, not the group or individual.

In Organizations X and Y, recognition is ultimately individual, and because of this, many interviewees affirmed that the reason individuals exhibit heroics, malice, sabotage, and all other political behaviours, is to elevate personal standing. Even when groups are the combative entity, or even when a position is taken by proxy, behind every political action is an individual who is seeking to elevate their standing. Rewards were given to individuals who were paraded on stage in front of the entire business unit and their partners during annual all-hands meetings. In Organization Z, there are no individual metrics or rewards. In fact, groups are tasked with the periodic generation of innovation under threat of exposure of nonparticipation. Innovation needs not be specific to one’s own group, in fact, cross-group improvements were encouraged. One interviewee at Organization Z did attribute an innovation to an individual, so this phenomenon of individual recognition is taking place in an informal capacity, likely reducing the strength of this factor.

What was strongly additive to the body of the knowledge is the relationship between implementation variance and the organization's mission and vision statements. Quite profoundly, Organization X developed pragmatic and modest vision and mission statements, but somehow had this usurped by an unachievable and overly ambitious, 'most productive consultant', the origins of which could not be found. Organization Y vastly misinterpreted the organization's mission and vision and declared their mission to be a 'world-leading utility'. This, too, is unachievable and inappropriate for a non-profit provincial monopoly as it would misdirect scarce resources from more pragmatic duties. Both missions would derail management from sensible, grounded decision making and rather put them in pursuit of the unattainable. In Organization X, approaches were relatively more grounded given their smaller scope in being the best. However, in Organization Y, given their aggressive and omniscient scope, their approaches were erratic and reminiscent of a fight or flight response. They developed elaborate, elegant solutions, like the fable about the emperor's new clothes, and took pride in ensuring that everybody knew the fallacy under which the tailor was claiming. Then they would fight and/or flee in the consequent conflict generated through stories and sensemaking.

Organization Z, by contrast, had a pragmatic and achievable mission. "Making patient information available electronically to patients and their health care team." ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2014-2015, 2015, p. 12) Their vision and values reinforce this mission by being similarly pragmatic, unambiguous and directional. Given these findings, there is a strong implication that the achievability of organization's mission and vision statements is a causal factor in the facilitation of political behaviour.

In summary, the findings of this research introduce powerful and heretofore unexamined variables that play a significant role in shaping how organizations operationalize their IT strategies, addressing a longstanding academic gap and providing rich insight for business managers. The findings cast further doubt on the bureaucratic model (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974), in fact they suggest that rational factors are merely tools of manipulation for political actors and past research erroneously reversed causation.

Inductive study of the political monster that plagued organizations found that, like the fabled boogeyman, it lurks in the shadows and grows more strongly in the minds and actions of the believers. And like the boogeyman, it can be neutralized in the light, with sensible reasoning and cooperation that actively seeks to dispel what causes such issues.

CONCLUSIONES

Los esfuerzos de la investigación examinaron dos organizaciones, X e Y, que presentaban características muy similares y, en consecuencia, exhibían un comportamiento político con una variación consecuentemente significativa en la implementación de la estrategia tecnológica. Estas organizaciones contaban con procesos inmaduros; dominio tecnocrático; liderazgo no comprometido; roles mal definidos; fuerzas de trabajo altamente resistentes; procesos opacos; ausencia de mediciones relevantes; responsabilidad diluida; reconocimiento de individuos, partes y grupos protegidos; doble rasero; lagunas en el conocimiento; recursos insuficientes; una cultura de subversión y aceptación de un ambiente altamente político fácilmente influenciado por instituciones, partes externas, mejores prácticas, tendencias, emocionalidad y una variedad de factores. Los comportamientos políticos se manifestaban verticalmente en todos los niveles de la organización, y horizontalmente desde los individuos hasta los grupos. La investigación indica que muchos de estos factores eran consecuentes y no causales de la variación en la aplicación. Fundamentalmente, las organizaciones que pueden ser políticas lo son. Y los comportamientos políticos dan lugar a desviaciones de los planes. Esta conclusión “tira de la manta” de la mayor parte de las investigaciones anteriores, incluso de las que aceptaban la irracionalidad como norma organizativa, ya que hace irrelevante la correlación entre los factores omnipresentes previamente identificados como resultados.

Volviendo al resumen de la revisión de la literatura sobre las causas del fracaso en la implementación de la estrategia tecnológica en los últimos 45 años (Figure 7), la investigación converge en:

- Compromiso inadecuado de la dirección
- Medidas de control inadecuadas
- Rechazo por parte de los usuarios a quienes va destinada
- Falta de recursos
- Falta de conocimientos técnicos
- Infraestructura heredada
- Claridad de roles

La presente investigación indica firmemente que casi todos estos factores son, de hecho, tácticas empleadas en el juego político y no causas como se creía anteriormente, por lo que, si bien existe una fuerte correlación, no hay causalidad. Esto se hizo patente mediante un enfoque de estudio de caso integrado, que ofreció una mayor riqueza en el contexto al iluminar las condiciones precedentes, los pensamientos y sentimientos de los actores, el contexto organizativo y numerosos factores muy relevantes que, de otro modo, se habrían pasado por alto si se hubiera adoptado otro enfoque.

Tanto la organización X como la Y presentaban una ‘tormenta perfecta’ de inmadurez de procesos, gobernanza mal definida, normas mal aplicadas, fomento de los logros personales, opacidad para expresar subrepticamente las agendas personales, polaridades evidentes entre agentes y administradores, culturas de conflicto, flexibilidad

para obstruir y cuestionar las decisiones y, esencialmente, cualquier otra cosa que pueda contribuir a la variación de la aplicación. Sin embargo, la Organización X tenía cierto grado de transparencia y la Organización Y cierto grado de sofisticación en la formulación de la tecnología, por lo que, dados sus resultados, la fuerza de estos factores puede verse disminuida en comparación con los otros.

Desde el punto de vista de la investigación, a veces no se puede aislar la “señal en el ruido” cuando el ruido metafórico es demasiado fuerte. Sin embargo, lo que se puede hacer es explorar otro tipo de organización para evaluar el impacto de las disimilitudes cuando algunos de los factores son diferentes, de forma que se pueda atenuar parte del ruido para obtener una mayor claridad en la señal.

La Organización Z era mayoritariamente apolítica, lo que ofrece el contraste antedicho, ya que sus resultados de implementación son efectivamente los opuestos a los de las Organizaciones X e Y, en el sentido de que logran su estrategia en términos de alcance, presupuesto y calendario. Un alto directivo de la Organización Z mostró un comportamiento político evidente, por lo que se entiende que la ausencia total de comportamiento político, y por tanto de alineación organizativa, es innecesaria. Y dado que este individuo controlaba toda la TI, había una transparencia menos que perfecta en cuanto a la dotación de recursos, por ejemplo, tal y como identificaron varios otros en la organización, por lo que se entiende que no se requiere una transparencia perfecta.

Donde la Organización Z mostró una coherencia intachable, y áreas opuestas a las exhibidas en las Organizaciones X e Y, fue en el reconocimiento individual, en la viabilidad de la declaración de misión/visión y en la gobernanza.

Existe una intuición que acompaña a los trabajos académicos en materia de gobernanza que sugiere que las partes capaces de representarse a sí mismas formal y autoritativamente, que están expuestas a las iniciativas en competencia de la organización y que deben asignar de forma colaborativa recursos limitados a esas iniciativas de la manera más conveniente para la organización, lo harán. Esto, de hecho, se asemeja a los modelos burocráticos y racionales defendidos por investigadores como Pfeffer y Salancik (1974). Pero esto no es suficiente, como aprendimos en las Organizaciones X e Y, que tienen alguna apariencia de este enfoque colaborativo, pero se convierte más en un “número circense”, destinado a aplacar y engañar a las otras unidades de negocio, mientras que la verdadera gobernanza tecnocrática centrada en la TI tiene lugar posteriormente para neutralizar este esfuerzo. En cambio, en la Organización Z, la alineación con la estructura de gobierno de la Monarquía Empresarial y su aplicación garantizan que todos los actores trabajen a partir de una misma estrategia tecnológica, y que cualquier intento de divergencia se vea de forma transparente y se vea a través del interés de la organización, no del grupo o del individuo.

En las organizaciones X e Y, el reconocimiento es, en última instancia, individual y, por ello, muchos entrevistados afirmaron que la razón por la que los individuos exhiben heroicidades, maldades, sabotajes y todos los demás comportamientos políticos, es para

elevar la posición personal. Incluso cuando los grupos son la entidad combativa, o incluso cuando se adopta una posición de forma vicaria, detrás de cada acción política hay un individuo que busca elevar su posición. Se recompensaba a los individuos que desfilan en el escenario delante de toda la unidad de negocio y de sus socios durante las reuniones anuales de todos los grupos. En la Organización Z, no hay métricas ni recompensas individuales. De hecho, se encarga a los grupos la generación periódica de innovación bajo la amenaza de dejar expuesta la falta de participación. La innovación no tiene por qué ser específica del propio grupo; de hecho, se fomentaban las mejoras entre grupos. Un entrevistado de la Organización Z atribuyó una innovación a un individuo, por lo que este fenómeno de reconocimiento individual tiene lugar de manera informal, lo que probablemente reduce la fuerza de este factor.

Lo que se añadió al conjunto de conocimientos fue la relación entre la variación de la aplicación y las declaraciones de misión y visión de la organización. La Organización X desarrolló declaraciones de visión y misión pragmáticas y modestas, pero de alguna manera fueron usurpadas por un “consultor más productivo”, inalcanzable y excesivamente ambicioso, cuyos orígenes no se pudieron rastrear. La organización Y malinterpretó grandemente la misión y la visión de la organización y declaró que su misión era ser una “empresa de servicios públicos líder en el mundo”. Esto también es inalcanzable e inapropiado para un monopolio provincial sin ánimo de lucro, ya que desviaría los escasos recursos de tareas más pragmáticas. Ambas misiones desviarían a la dirección de la toma de decisiones sensatas y fundamentadas y la impulsarían a buscar algo inalcanzable. En la Organización X, los enfoques eran relativamente más

fundamentados debido a su objetivo de ser los mejores a menor escala. Sin embargo, en la Organización Y, dado su alcance agresivo y omnisciente, sus planteamientos eran erráticos y recordaban a una reacción de lucha o huida. Desarrollaban soluciones elaboradas y elegantes, como la fábula del traje nuevo del emperador, y se enorgullecían de asegurarse de que todo el mundo conociera la falacia bajo la que se amparaba el sastre. Luego luchaban o huían en el consiguiente conflicto a través de la generación de relatos y la dotación de sentido.

La Organización Z, por el contrario, tenía una misión pragmática y alcanzable. “Poner la información sanitaria electrónica importante en manos de los pacientes y su equipo sanitario” ([Organization Z] Annual Report 2014-2015, 2015, p.12). Su visión y sus valores refuerzan esta misión al ser igualmente pragmáticos, inequívocos y direccionales. Teniendo en cuenta estos resultados, hay una fuerte implicación de que la viabilidad de las declaraciones de misión y visión de la organización es un factor causal en la facilitación del comportamiento político.

En resumen, los resultados de esta investigación introducen variables poderosas y hasta ahora no examinadas que desempeñan un papel importante en la configuración de la forma en que las organizaciones acometen sus estrategias de TI, llenando una vieja laguna académica y proporcionando una visión enriquecedora para los gestores empresariales. Los resultados arrojan más dudas sobre el modelo burocrático; de hecho, indican que los factores racionales son meras herramientas de manipulación de los actores políticos y que las investigaciones anteriores invirtieron erróneamente la causalidad.

El estudio inductivo del monstruo político que azotaba las organizaciones revela que, como el legendario hombre del saco, éste acecha en las sombras y crece con más fuerza en las mentes y las acciones de los creyentes. Y, al igual que el hombre del saco, puede neutralizarse por medio de la luz, con razonamientos sensatos y una cooperación que busque activamente disipar la causa de esos problemas.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

As described, research findings have profound theoretical implications as they relate to understanding the impact of politics in the implementation of technology strategy. Because these have been elaborated in previous sections, this section will provide a brief summary.

Extant research over decades articulated a number of rational factors that correlated with technology strategy implementation gaps (Figure 7) which carried the overarching presumption that things such as resource deficiencies or inadequate management commitment explained the vast divergence in implementation from planning efforts and organizations merely needed to plan and resource their projects better to achieve their technology strategy (Lederer & Sethi, 1988; Wilson, 1991; Lederer & Sethi, 1996; Sabherwal, 1999; Sambamurthy & Kirsch, 2000; Shaw et al., 2001; Basu et al., 2002; Hartono et al., 2003; Dhillon, 2004). More contemporary researchers noted the absence of consideration of political factors in this divergence, and set about exploring political impacts (Simon, 1955; March, 1962; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974; Simon, 1979; Keen, 1981; Gottschalk, 1999; Sambamurthy & Kirsch, 2000; Jasperson et al., 2002; Lee & Bai, 2003; McGovern & Hicks, 2004; Wainwright & Waring, 2004; Cordoba, 2007; Silva, 2007; Kim & Kankanhalli, 2009; Karlsson, Taylor & Taylor, 2010; Singh & Hardaker, 2013). Some of these researchers called for case studies and broader, exploratory research techniques as the research approach given the richness of the context being studied (Yin, 1981; Eisenhardt, 1989; Orlikowski & Gash, 1994; Nandhakumar &

Jones, 1997; Rathnam, 2005; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Lapointe and Rivard, 2007; Milani et al., 2008; Singh & Hardaker, 2013; Grover et al., 2014).

It is tautological to conclude that in the absence of a project prerequisite the project will fail, however theory from early researchers was valuable in identifying some of the less obvious variables that are in fact unidentified projects requirements, such as management commitment or expertise. So, while these rational factors are required for technology strategy initiatives to be implemented successfully, organizations today have this awareness and we now know that these variables are not causal to implementation variance, rather they are tools used in political behaviours to achieve political aims. Prior theory had reversed causation, and mistakenly equated correlation to causation.

From this present research, the theory now stands that in the presence of rational project requirements, political behaviours will determine the success or failure of a project, and not in a cause-and-effect relationship but rather in a political vortex of efforts from various groups at various levels to support and sabotage initiatives as they traverse their lifecycles like targets moving through a shooting gallery. Rational factors are the political levers that are pulled, like withdrawal of personnel or failure to participate, and conversely in positive politics, overfunding an initiative when saboteurs remove their financial contribution in an attempt to halt progress.

From a theoretical standpoint, prior calls for richer, exploratory analysis were highly prophetic in illuminating a deeper explanation. In studying power and politics, it is incumbent on researchers to acknowledge apriori that presumptions and preconceptions

are likely less useful than building theoretical constructs tabula rasa while immersed in organizational context. The rational and visible elements of an organization form a metaphoric game that is supposed to be played in predictable manner. The technology strategy describes each progressive move until the game is won using people, money, time, and expertise. Politics determine what moves will actually be made and what outcome will actually be achieved, and failure to understand and address that in the research approach fails to understand the phenomenon since politics is what is truly impactful to technology strategy implementation.

As it was discovered in the research, organizational politics appear wherever the opportunity arises. In light of this, theoretical constructs must include this seepage that moves fluidly between variables to wherever it may make an impact. This awareness was created through case studies by using open ended questioning that was qualitative in nature. Subsequent research should use similar exploratory and inductive methods to ensure that they harvest the richness and comprehend the fluidity that exists in political study.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Lederer and Sethi (1988) found that 38% of projects initiated were not previously identified in the IT strategy, and that two years after the completion of the IT strategy, only 24% of the planned initiatives had been *commenced* (p. 455). This significant variance was quantified in the QVL, and was noted to pose an existential risk to organizations unable to track inventory, connect to partners technologically, or offer competitive services, for example. Being technologically current and able is a fundamental capability for many organizations today, which is why the technology strategy is so vital to its present and future success.

Organizations seeking to eliminate implementation variance from their technology strategies necessarily must bring prerequisite resources and capabilities, as common sense and copious extant research would dictate. What is additive to this prescription is that organizations must identify and manage political behaviour like any other factor since, as we learned from Organization Z, management of politics vastly increases success in the implementation of the technology strategy. This includes acknowledging political inclinations of individuals and groups, subordinates and superordinates, internal and external parties, and all other actor permutations. This also very importantly includes the structures and guidance that enable or disable political behaviour, such as governance structure, mission/vision statements, and forms of employee recognition, as these can not only encourage political behaviour, but help to conceal it when it is looking for a cloak under which to operate.

‘Power’ and ‘politics’ are dirty words in the organizational lexicon. Admitting the presence of these suggests an environment that encourages manipulation, sabotage, and self-promotion, which is often the case. However, denial is not a useful strategy in an organizational context and the direct and indirect repercussions of doing so are formidable enough to warrant change. Practical implications strongly suggest that management must directly address politics if they wish to lessen variance from plans, however, as articulated by I3 at Organization Y, “the best revenge is a fish you eat frozen” (Interview with I3), which seems to imply that left to individuals, the removal of politics will itself become a political exercise, and only a comprehensive approach like that at Organization Z will be adequate for managing politics.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Participant organizations all were headquartered in Canadian prairie provinces hence a selection effect may be present. While this region is anecdotally regarded to be quite multicultural, it is possible that the generalizability of the results may be challenged when evaluating other organization locations or sizes.

Three case studies were undertaken. This was sufficient for inductive, exploratory research. Future research may want to evaluate a greater number of cases or spend more time in a smaller number of cases, depending on the intent of the research.

Studying politics is difficult for any researcher as politics manifests in many ways that require deep contextual understanding. Political behaviours, by design, attempt to make things happen differently than planned, not happen at all, or happen in a manner to sabotage an individual or a group, or to a change initiative. Actors have a significant and often misunderstood arsenal of tools and tricks at their disposal, which include such things as negative power, which is where in the absence of formal power, an actor can slow or halt efforts, like an individual feigning a technical issue or incompatibility that can stall a project. Best efforts were made to understand the politics underway by looking first at the variance against the technology strategy and working backwards. Assuming that successful implementation implies an absence of politics may be incorrect, as positive politics may have neutralized negative politics, or the political efforts were ineffective. In this research, in the absence of the observation of neutralizing politics, assumptions were maintained. It is also very clear that some actors used the research efforts as a

platform for political behaviour and/or to showcase and boast of their accomplishments and political talent.

While the findings are preliminary, managerial implications suggest that organizations that wish to better achieve technology strategy implementation ought to adopt an achievable, unambiguous mission statement, and ensure that it is unaltered. Further, organizations ought to adopt the Business Monarchy governance structure to ensure and enforce cross-functional representation in resource allocation decisions so that the needs of the organization are achieved without undue influence of and confusion by technocrats. Recognition ought to be global for all instances of performance, with incentives aligned to outcomes that celebrate collaboration and inclusiveness for the entire breadth of the organization. The greater the sophistication in creating the technology strategy, and the greater the organizational alignment for achieving it, the less variance will be experienced. Finally, organizations should strive for the greatest possible transparency in their processes so that there are no dark areas in which politics can grow and fester.

Future research should attempt to measure the strength of the six independent variables, independently and in permutations, and to better understand the direct linkage between political behaviour and implementation variance of the technology strategy.

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APPENDIX A – TAXONOMY OF POLITICAL PROCESSES IN SYSTEMS

DEVELOPMENT

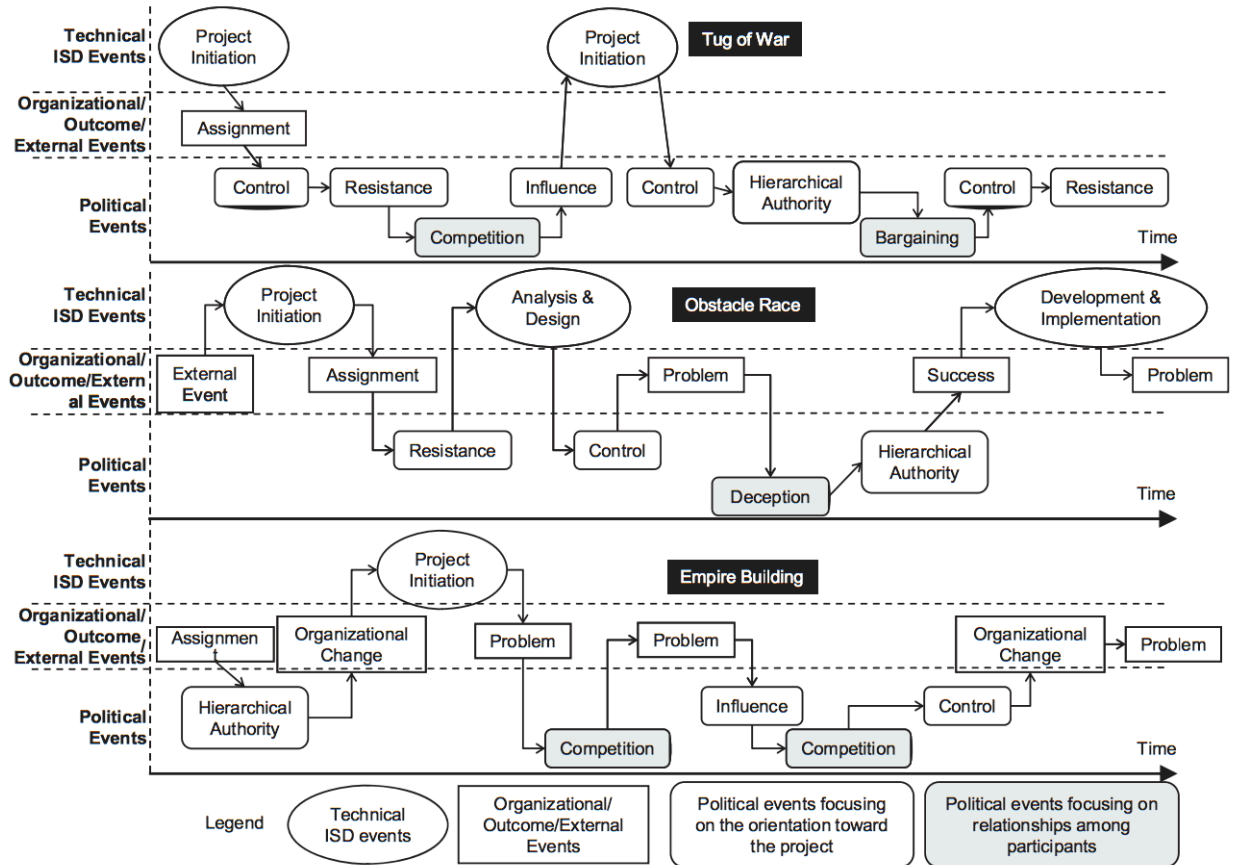


Figure 39 - The Three Political Processes as Event Sequences (Sabherwal & Grover, 2010, p. 436)

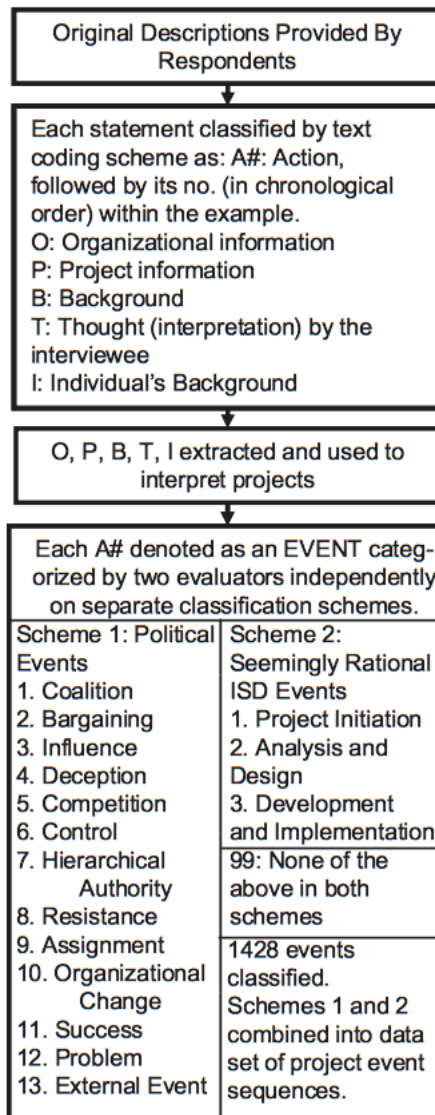


Figure 40 - Coding System Used for Taxonomy of Political Events (Sabherwal & Grover, 2010, p. 432)

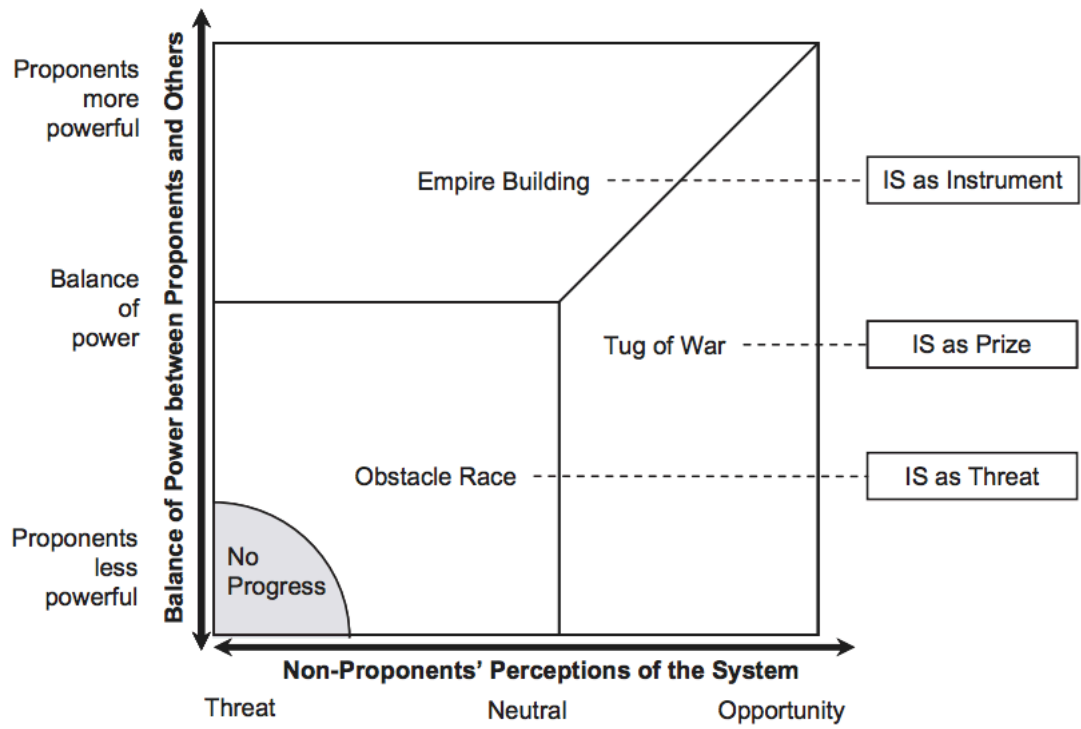


Figure 41 - Political Processes by Power and Perception (Sabherwal & Grover, 2010, p. 441)

APPENDIX B – INFORMATION REQUEST

Please select one complete calendar year to consider. For that year, please supply the following or its equivalent. If the document doesn't exist, simply indicate that. Nothing will be disclosed from this information.

Strategy
1. IT strategy (any document outlining the long-term vision and/or roster of projects for the coming period)
2. Any revisions to the IT strategy throughout the year
3. Any status updates published or delivered
4. Copy of the corporate strategy for the same year
Planning
A. Project proposals or submissions
B. Meeting minutes for project submission evaluations for execution (or inclusion in strategy)
C. Project execution list
Implementation
I. Portfolio status reports for each month
II. Project status reports for each project (detailed version)
III. Details on project risks, issues, problems, changes

IV.	Details on decisions related to project halts, deferrals, cancellations
V.	KPIs for individuals involved in project success
VI.	Dashboards or reports for projects, strategy

APPENDIX C – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (STANDARD)

Exploratory Interview Questions – questions will also be asked freeform

Name:
Title:
Contact Information:
Seniority Level:
BU/Group:

1. What is the process to develop the IT strategy (referring primarily to the year under review)?

Seek details on:

- Formal versus informal processes
- Governance formalities (parties accountable, responsible, consulted, informed)
- Breadth of input and consultation
- Weight of input by individual/seniority/BU (with an explanation of why)

2. Who is accountable for achievement of the IT strategy?

3. Who is responsible for implementation of the IT strategy?

4. What metrics or controls exist to monitor achievement of the IT strategy?

5. (Looking at projects completed and not [toward the IT strategy]), what were the reasons why the projects did and did not transpire as planned?

Seek details on:

Sequencing/Priority of projects

Characteristics of sponsor

Instances where influence was exerted (look past budget, schedule)

Internal versus external parties (and for external, work arrangements)

APPENDIX D – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (TARGETED)

1. All: Can you recite from memory the organization’s vision and mission? Values?
 - a. Vision: Empowering Patients, Enabling Care.
 - b. Mission: Making patient information available electronically to patients and their health care team.
 - c. Values: Respect, Engagement, Excellence, Transparency, Accountability.
2. All: To what extent is ‘lean’ a factor in your operations? How does it impact you?
3. All: And department?
4. All: What are the principles that the organization operates by? [below]

5. HR: What unique qualities do you seek in new hires?
6. HR: How do you find candidates with these qualities?
7. HR: I understand that there was a dismissal for “political behaviour”. Can you comment on that?

8. Projects: Tell me about portfolio management?
9. Projects: How are responsibilities assigned in the organization?
10. Projects: What is the reporting structure of the PMO?
11. Projects: What is the general variance of project estimates to actuals?
12. Projects: What is your portfolio management approach?

13. Finance: To what extent is money a constraint to the organization?
14. Finance: Has a lack of funds ever altered plans?
15. Finance: I understand that priorities are based on budget and return on investment. Can you elaborate on the business case approach?
16. Finance: What is the general variance of project estimates to actuals?

17. Communications: What is the “brand” of the organization?
18. Communications: What is the communication strategy?
19. Communications: How does that support the organization’s success?

20. Risk: Can you describe your business area and what it does? How many people does it employ?
21. Risk: Why is strategy paired with risk?
22. Risk: What is the strategy of the organization?
23. Risk: What are your primary risks? How are they managed?

24. CEO: How is eHealth progressing against its target timeline and budget?
25. CEO: How is eHealth successful in achieving its strategy?

26. CEO: How are responsibilities assigned in the organization?
27. CEO: Would you say there are coalitions or other influential groupings?
28. CEO: Where does power reside in the organization?
29. CEO: There's an academic theory called the 'strategic-contingency theory' which says that power accrues to those groups that can best cope with the uncertainty faced by the organization. Where does the most uncertainty reside?
30. CEO: There's another academic theory that says that power accrues to those groups with the greatest personnel and budget. Which group has the greatest personnel and budget?
31. CEO: How are disagreements resolved?
32. CEO: What will eHealth do once the strategy is achieved in March 2017?
33. CEO: What does IT do?
34. CEO: How do external consultants support eHealth?
35. CEO: Why were roles repatriated? How has that worked?
36. CEO: What effect does having a unionized environment have on the organization?

37. IT1: Tell me about the Quality Improvement Office?
38. IT1: Does the organization ever diverge from the corporate strategy?
39. IT1: I understand that the Ministry of Health mandated lean. Is this why it was adopted by eHealth?
40. IT1: What would be your prediction of events if lean was abandoned today?
41. IT1: Has anything changed since we spoke last on organizational performance?

42. IT2: When we spoke last you talked about agile changes to strategy. What changes have taken place and why?
43. IT2: You mentioned that the decision making and governance processes are being put into place around portfolio management. How are those today?
44. IT2: Can you speak about the absent process discipline in implementation?