THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND POWER ON STATUS:
HOW IT IS MANIFESTED IN THE OPEN OFFICE

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By
Lori A. Anthony

Dr. Benyamin Schwarz, Dissertation Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND POWER ON STATUS: HOW IT IS MANIFESTED IN THE OPEN OFFICE

Presented by Lori A. Anthony, a candidate for the degree of doctor of philosophy, and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

____________________________________________________
Benyamin Schwarz, Ph.D.

____________________________________________________
Ruth Tofle, Ph.D.

____________________________________________________
Newton D’Souza, Ph.D.

____________________________________________________
Victoria Johnson, Ph.D.
CULTURE AND POWER ON STATUS IN THE OPEN OFFICE

DEDICATION

For my loving, patient, husband.
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ACADEMIC ABSTRACT

Organizational hierarchies are morphing from vertical to horizontal and as such, transforming cultures are shifting the focus from individualistic centrality to team performance and recognition. Status demarkation is blurred as employees struggle to define self-efficacy and establish identity within the organization.

This multi-site case study assumed a constructivist stance, building rich theory from employees’ perceptions of where and how they work. Guided by a grounded theory methodology, data collection was triangulated across 96 interviews, observations captured through photographs and memos, and document review of floor plans and websites of two well-established corporations. Data was transcribed and coded resulting in emergent themes of representativeness, cultural underpinnings, collaboration, hierarchy, and power. Using Duffy’s organizational structure as the conceptual framework, these themes informed the classification of work environments as hives, dens, cells, and clubs which were assessed against the constructs of autonomy, interaction, power, and status.

The theoretical supposition purports that collaborative work cultures must instill high autonomy and interaction among employees and in so doing, must mitigate the notion of ‘power over’ as manifested by hierarchy and surveillance. Evidence suggests that true collaboration is seemingly cloaked by the latent desire to watch others, the need for status, and the underlying manifestation of power as evidenced by the allocation and assignment of workspaces. While the organizational directive is to perpetuate a collaborative culture as evidenced by project and team work, the physical work environment
overtly perpetuates the ‘us versus them’ or ‘power over’ culture nullifying innovative transformation and progress.

*Keywords:* power, organizational culture, collaboration, workplace, design, status, hierarchy, open office, innovation
INTRODUCTION

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”
Alice Walker

Overview

On April 18, 1977, the New Yorker magazine published a cartoon depicting a large open office environment with row after row of similar office cubicles (see Figure 1). In the parody, a male employee was being promoted and told that while no raise was possible, he was being advanced two cubicle spaces (Arno, 1977, p.33). This satirical message seemingly mocks the value corporations assign to an open office cubicle while conveying management’s power over the allocation and distribution of employee workspaces. Additionally, it communicates the belief that employees covet specific cubicle spaces and value them as symbols of status denoting exceptional performance within an organization.

While historically the marker of high status and power was the corner office with windows and a view, today’s office landscape is much different. Organizational hierarchies are flatter meaning there are not as many levels of workers between the entry level to the president or chief executive officer. This flattening has manifested itself into the physical environment with the overwhelming response and use of the office cubicle. The flatter hierarchical structure coupled with the rising cost of corporate real estate has all but eliminated the once held standard of private offices for all (or most) workers.
In 1974 a market research firm reported that “cubicles accounted for 20% of all new office furniture expenditures” while in 1980, a study showed that half of all workers were placed in cubicles (Franz, 2008, p. 132). In 2008, Steelcase, the largest manufacturer of office cubicles, reported that the cubicle was the work environment for almost 70% of office workers (Franz, 2008). Most recently, there has been a shift in work
processes – employees are working in teams, collaborating, and telecommuting. Interior designers are responding by integrating spaces conducive to these new modes of working into office cubicle layouts. Instead of 70% of the workers sitting in individual cubicles as reported in 2008, the ratio has shifted to 70:30 in favor of non-dedicated open collaborative spaces (Hendy, 2013). To that end, these new types of collaborative spaces are supplementing the open work environment and have not necessarily replaced the cubicle. Instead, panel heights are lower (allowing for seated privacy) and individual workspaces are now smaller (Hendy, 2013).

Often criticized in literature and the media, the open office cubicle is mostly blamed for lack of visual privacy, poor acoustic properties, imbalanced thermal conditions, and inadequate lighting. With nicknames such as Dilbertville, cube farms, ice cube trays, and carpeted parking lots, the office cubicle has assumed a pop culture of its own. Although today’s office landscape looks somewhat different from the one published in the New Yorker, the cubicle remains a fixture despite the criticisms.

Given that technology (i.e. information sharing and mobile communication), coupled with telecommuting and a changing corporate culture, have perpetuated a shift in workplace needs, the recent trend of providing non-dedicated workspaces (i.e. touchdown spaces and long collaborative worktables) has led to smaller individual cubicles. Nevertheless, corporations have invested millions of dollars in panel systems and standardizing their office environments based on established hierarchical norms. Therefore, it is unlikely they will abandon the office cubicle altogether thereby rendering workers few options but to continue to work in these types of environments.
The new ways of working have led to the reduction, and in some instances elimination, of the quintessence of high status - the private office- leading one to wonder what, if any, role the modern work environment has in communicating status. In the open plan, amenities such as the amount of storage, a guest chair, larger and more work surfaces, privacy, the freedom to personalize, and location near a window are allocated based on one’s rank within the hierarchy of the organization (Abraham, 1999) - but are these sufficient status markers? According to Jacqueline Vischer, Professor Emeritus at the University of Montreal and Founder-Director at Buildings-In-Use (2005), “space is a reward for good performance and a symbol of an employee’s status in the organization. The socio-spatial contract exists between all employees and the companies they work for” (p.5).

Americans tend to define self-worth based on occupational success. Since as far back as 1890, researchers have argued that self-esteem responds to successes and failures in the domains where individuals stake their self-worth (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). In 1989, Kernis, Grannemann, and Barclay conducted a study testing levels of self-esteem as predictors of anger and hostility. Results determined that low self-esteem is a predictor of these negative behaviors. Without evidence of spatial markers communicating status and success in the open plan work environment, are employees susceptible to frustrations leading to increased anger and hostility that result from low self-esteem and unrealized self-worth?

**Purpose**

To date little consideration has been given to the relationship between the value employees assign to the office cubicle, the power managers hold in their assignment and
distribution, and the influence of organizational culture on decisions related to these types of work environments. Where status was once clearly communicated with the private office, it is now muddled with the perpetuation of smaller and unassigned workspaces.

The purpose of this study is two-fold:

1. To explore the open office work environment as a perceived status marker
2. To determine how the manifestation of power in the allocation and assignment of workspaces is influenced by a changing organizational culture

Research Questions

In an exploratory study by Lipman, Cooper, Harris and Tranter (1978), the authors struggled to develop a taxonomy connecting power with office layout/organization. The research presented literature that suggested ‘the official’ managerial position of office layouts. That is, the arrangement of office space

...determines and supports particular patterns of behavior among office personnel and, so, affects the productive performance of their tasks. Layout is viewed as a means of ensuring efficient work. Exponents of this view seldom refer explicitly to, let alone analyze the social circumstances and relationships – especially the power relations- that give rise to and sustain office layouts (Lipman, Cooper, Harris & Tranter, 1978, p. 28).

The research findings supported a pragmatic managerial position - managers simply viewed office layout as a means to efficiency, not as a manipulatable mechanism to bring about productivity.

Lipman et. al’s unrealized connection between power and office layout led to a realization that theoretical constructs need to guide inquiry - not pragmatic judgements. The opportunity for further understanding seems to be in grounding a study in theory outside the domain of office planning. This research, posits that the theoretical constructs
found in the four components of status, power, physical workspace, and organizational culture are interdependent and interrelated. The following are the research questions for this study:

1. How do employees perceive the open office as a symbol of status?
2. How is power manifested in the allocation of the open office workstation assignment?
3. How does corporate culture influence decisions pertaining to the open office work environment?

**Definition of Terms**

It would be presumptuous to assume that everyone reading this manuscript has a background in workplace research. To that end, below are terms used repeatedly throughout this manuscript with their definitions as evidenced within the context of this work.

*Cubicle:* A semi-enclosed workspace made up of high or low partitions (i.e. panels) with attached or freestanding componentry such as work surfaces, drawer pedestals, and storage bins

_Private Office:* A room with floor-to-ceiling walls and a door

_Collaborative Workspace:* Any low or no partitioned work environment that fosters communication, interaction, and visibility between employees

_Innovative Workspace:* Any work environment that deviates from the traditional cubicle and private office configuration

_Open Plan:* A general term used to describe a work environment where employees are not in private offices

_Desking/Benching:* Employees sitting at tables or desks with or without low screens

_Corporate Culture:* Established values, assumptions, and tendencies governing organizational decisions and controlling employee behaviors
Employees: Unless otherwise noted, references to employees includes workers and managers but not chief executives

Narration

This is a grounded theory endeavor and as such the researcher is encouraged to be actively engaged in synthesizing and communicating findings. For this reason, I have used the first person where deemed appropriate to elicit richer engagement with the narrative. Charmaz (2006), offers “grounded theories need not be voiceless, objectified recordings...We can weave our points of view into the text and portray a sense of wonder, imagery, and drama” (p. 174).

Summary

The physical office workplace continues to rely on cubicles and offices to house today’s employees and as such, remains the medium by which status is communicated. While the ratio of workers situated in each has reversed over the years, the propensity to adopt new types of work environments is unlikely despite the shift from individualistic to collaborative team work. Yet with hierarchies transforming from vertical to horizontal and organizational cultures favoring collaboration, more employees are relegated to the open office cubicle making the quintessential status marker, namely the private office, nearing extinction. Seemingly, then, the cubicle has assumed the role of demonstrating status, making the allocation and assignment of such spaces germane to understanding how power and status are related constructs. Exploring how status is communicated within a changing organizational culture, this study integrates an interdisciplinary definition of power outside the domain of architecture. As with any account of present day
phenomenon, it is important to place concepts within an historical context. By so doing, the findings from this study are amalgamated with precedent and contribute to the current body of knowledge within the field of architecture and design. The following chapter reviews seminal work related to the constructs of workplace, status, organizational culture, and power. Additionally, it presents the conceptual framework for this study, Francis Duffy’s organizational structure of the den, hive, cell, and club, as it relates to the affiliated notions of autonomy and interaction.
CHAPTER ONE

Background

It has been documented that status in the workplace is an essential incentive for performance (Sundstrom, 1986). Rank can be communicated with status markers - those characteristics of the workplace that signify the occupant’s position within the organization (Konar & Sundstrom, 1982). Status markers are typically evidenced by furniture, square footage, and location in the office. Historically, workers aspired for the corner office - the ultimate status marker and epitome of demonstrated success. Yet as organizational hierarchies flatten, the cost of office space increases, and organizational philosophies focus on integration and teamwork, the corner office is nearing extinction and workers at all levels find themselves working in an open office environment. To examine these issues further, this discussion will present the semiotic idea of the office cubicle as a symbol of status and the rationale for why these symbols are necessary motivational constructs ultimately leading to worker self-esteem and the assignment of power.

The design of the workplace is dependent on the principles, beliefs, and culture of an organization. It is largely influenced by the relationship between the environment and the user. Architects and designers incorporate knowledge from these sectors to inform their design, and understanding organizational issues related to the physical work environment including allocation of space, style of space, location of workers, adjacencies, corporate image, corporate hierarchy, and organizational values informs the design of an office. They then translate these intangible elements into a physical environment that is seemingly aesthetically pleasing and functional for workers.
Much has been documented in the architecture and design literature about employee performance and preferences related to the work environment. One of the most comprehensive studies was published in 1985 by BOSTI (the Buffalo Organization for Social and Technological Innovation), founded by Michael Brill. Conducted over a six year timeframe, this research included more than 10,000 workers across 100 organizations (BOSTI, para. 2). The resulting two volume publication *Using Office Design to Increase Productivity, Volumes I&II*, was the first to report on the interconnectivity between office layout, worker productivity, and quality of life (BOSTI, para. 2). Since the publication, research on workplace issues has been abundant yet no such overarching research has been repeated.

While research on workplace issues is well documented in the design body of knowledge, it is evident that most business, management, and organizational psychology literature do not acknowledge the influence of the physical workspace on employee behavior or satisfaction. Yet “the primary purpose of a workplace is to support an organization’s mission” (Brill & Weidemann, 2001, p.14). Despite the rich conversations within the design community on issues related to ergonomics, privacy, territoriality, and status, research around issues related to the physical work environment has not breached the business and management domains.

**Seminal Historical Benchmarks**

Many have documented the history of the office. The intent of this section is not to parrot the facts for the sake of obligation given the nature of this study, but to chronicle the seminal historical benchmarks and provide context for comments such as ‘coming full
circle’ and ‘being at the beginning’ conveyed during employee interviews. By so doing, the emergence of the open office, the factors influencing it’s evolution, and the current mindset driving more open collaborative environments will elucidate the many ways the office environment has come full circle.

While the evolutionary discourse of offices can begin as early as the 16th century (Klein, 1982), this explication begins with influences from the Industrial Revolution to provide context in chronicling the history of the open office.

**Industrial revolution.** Much has been documented on the impact of the Industrial Revolution on manufacturing and production but it’s influence on the office environment is unprecedented. One of the most important developments of this time in building and construction was the introduction of steel-frame manufacturing which facilitated the support of walls and decks giving way to unrestricted floors and open office configurations (Sundstrom, 1986). The benefits were immediately evident - “...large open offices are better than the same space cut into smaller rooms, because they make control and communication easier and provide better light and ventilation” (Barnaby, 1924, p. 400). Additionally, unlike the cellular offices of the 1880s, open offices provided owners with the flexibility to procure new tenants thereby increasing rental income and motivating the construction industry to erect new buildings with open floors.

One of the first examples of the open plan office environment in the United States was the Larkin Building in Buffalo, New York, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1904 to foster a “communal experience” among clerks while perpetuating a corporate culture of managerial control by means of surveillance (Duffy, 1980; Barnett, 1974, p. 128). The
open plan of the Larkin building fostered productive work flow particularly paper dissemination between employees and departments. Despite the notability for its open work environment, the Larkin building maintained private offices for managers and professionals (Sundstrom, 1986).

While steel manufacturing impacted building construction, the emergence of new management philosophies transformed work processes. The introduction of Scientific Management by Frederick Taylor, (Taylorism), revolutionized industry by separating those who performed work tasks from those who designed them, offering economic incentives for hard work, and subjecting the workplace to empirical study as a strategy for solving problems (Jex & Britt, 2008). This empirical testing was evidenced in 1924 when a group of Harvard researchers collaborated with the Western Electric Company on the Hawthorne Studies. The objective of the investigation was to study the impact of environmental factors on worker productivity (Jex & Britt, 2008).

**Hawthorne studies.** Between 1927-1932, The Hawthorne Works commissioned a study testing the influence of light on productivity (Mayo, 1933; Whitehead, 1938). Outcomes suggested that regardless of the light level, productivity increased because workers perceived interest directed toward them and positively responded. Although later rebuked, this study is significant to the discussion of the workplace because it lays the foundation for organizational behavior and the impact changes in the workplace can have on employee motivation and productivity. “Instead of treating the workers as an appendage to the machine, [as Taylorism would suggest], the Hawthorne experiments brought to light ideas concerning motivational influences, job satisfaction, resistance to
change, group norms, worker participation, and effective leadership” (Sonnefeld, 1985, p. 125). Soon after the findings were reported from the Hawthorne Studies, World War II commenced, once again transforming work processes.

**The corporate headquarters.** During and after World War II, the number of white-collar workers increased exponentially. Corporations began to consolidate multiple locations which transformed many multi-tenant office buildings into corporate headquarters where all business functions were housed in one location. Architects designed and erected new corporate headquarters which empowered business owners with input into the design, layout, and aesthetics of the building. Architectural office design, once evidenced in symbolism and aesthetics, transformed to the ideals of form and function during the Modern Movement.

**The modern movement.** While the Industrial Revolution transformed building construction, office layout, and modes of work, the modern movement underscored the connection between the office building and social relevance by shifting the focus from the manifestation of work production to the “‘higher 'morality' of structural expression. Confronting the 'chaos of the times' with the order and rationality of the machine process, this morality exercised a powerful hold on the architectural imagination” (Gatter, 1971, p. 6-7). During this time, the disassociation between the building and the activities within prompted interior design to disunite from mainstream architecture and establish a distinct specialty in office design (Piotrowski, 1999).

In response to the modern movement, researchers investigated the role of organizational structure as it related to employee satisfaction. Although office trends seemed
to perpetuate the idea of the open office, a more educated workforce soon became disgruntled with the configuration of managers in private offices around the perimeter of the building and workers in the open office (Piotrowski, 1999). Yet despite the discontent, by the late 1950s organizational manuals were endorsing an integrated open concept in which “the open office space would accommodate increases and decreases of personnel by the mere switching of occupants or private offices or by shifting desks” (Sundstrom, 1986; Ripnen, 1974, p. 619).

**Burolandschaft.** The human relations movement promoted innovative theories around communication and worker input into decision making while the campaign toward industrial democracy encouraged employee equality and engagement with less importance placed on status and authority (McGregor, 1960; Sundstrom, 1986). Open office work environments seemingly embodied all of these values and as a result, the typical American bullpen office layout that was evidenced by row after row of desks amassed in a large open room, was transformed to an innovative design approach termed *office landscaping*. This concept, which originated in the 1950s by the Quickboerner team in Germany, changed the nature of office design (The Business Press, 1969). The Quickboerner team determined that work environments needed to facilitate communication with work and paper flow. The elements of office landscaping included an open space with minimal hard wall applications, an absence of private offices, meandering paths to create interest, curved moveable panels for division of space, desks arranged to promote communication but situated in such a way that direct eye contact was not possible, open
filing areas central to all employees, and many plants which helped divide space (Pile, 1978).

The office landscape concept of planning was viewed as an obscure method of situating people in spaces that had no geometric symmetry and no perceived organizational layout. Although this new concept originated in Germany, much of Europe was hesitant to adopt this radical new way of designing office space in that they believed the office landscaping method of planning was hindered with many restrictions and dictated the manner in which an office was designed.

It was not until 1967 that Burolandschaft was implemented in the United States (Sundstrom, 1986). As part of an experiment, the DuPont company in Wilmington, Delaware, configured one floor in the conventional manner of closed offices with minimal open plan areas and another floor adopted the Burolandschaft layout. Upon doing so, the company noted two major advantages. First, changes to the Burolandschaft configuration were quick and inexpensive thereby facilitating the accommodation of more employees. Second, maintenance costs for this floor were lower because of the open configuration (Sundstrom, 1986). The new layout was deemed successful and acceptance of the open plan office environment flourished as the Burolandschaft concept was quickly adopted by other U.S. companies (Sundstrom, 1986). This type of office layout became the foundation for open office planning as it is known today.

In spite of the celebrated benefits, critics of Burolandschaft noted contention with two traditional practices: that of managers foregoing private offices and the loss of status as evidenced by the physical work environment. “Private offices were traditional marks
of status, and managers were understandably reluctant to give them up, even to promote egalitarianism” (Sundstrom, 1986, p. 38). Aside from inflexibility, the Quickborner group asserted that private offices perpetuated class distinctions among employees whereas integrating the manager into the day to day operations of the workforce promoted teamwork and camaraderie between management and workers (Piotrowski, 1999). Other difficulties noted with the new open landscape configuration centered on noise, privacy and storage.

Robert Propst and Action Office. Concurrent with the emergence of office landscaping, Robert Propst, a researcher and inventor, inadvertently revolutionized the componentry of the open office as it is used and recognized today. In 1960, Herman Miller, Inc. hired Propst to develop innovative products for the commercial furniture industry (Piotrowski, 1999). In the late 1960s, his designs for Action Office (AO), a partitioned panel system consisting of screens, modular work surfaces, and hanging storage components addressed the increased need for privacy and storage in the open office environment (Pile, 1978). This system gave designers the opportunity to provide workers with individual work areas, centralized filing, and acoustical privacy while maintaining a sense of openness. It gave companies the flexibility to reconfigure layouts and standardize furniture purchases. Additionally, systems furniture, as it was soon to be named, was economically enticing as companies could depreciate the assets as furniture over a seven year timeframe (Piotrowski, 1999).

The panel system sparked excitement in the office furniture industry and soon the furniture manufacturing giants Steelcase, Haworth, and Knoll each had their own version
of Action Office. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s enhancements such as electrified panels, additional storage components, and upgraded fabrics and finishes provided workers with better work environments that fulfilled a multitude of requirements. Interior designers and architects became accustomed to designing with panel systems and including the “ice-cube” tray layouts in their designs. National surveys reported that by 1980, one in three office employees worked in these types of environments (Louis Harris and Associates, 1978; 1980). These layouts satisfied the need for privacy and individual work - collaborative meetings and work requiring interaction typically occurred in a conference room.

Just as critics found issue with Burolandschaft, so too did they question the conceptual application and practicality of open plan (Duffy, Cave, & Worthington, 1976; Office Landscape: Pro & Con, 1968). Despite the criticisms, companies continued to employ the open plan concept until the late 1970s when they began to disclose the flaws and deficiencies associated with the open office (Sundstrom, 1986). They reported issues of discontent regarding noise, privacy, movement, and the removal of the quintessential status marker - the private office. By 1980 designers responded to these concerns and began integrating open office workstations with private offices (Ellis & Duffy, 1980; Rout, 1980).

**BOSTI.** In 1985, the Buffalo Organization for Social and Technological Innovation (BOSTI) published a comprehensive workplace study involving more than 100 organizations. Manipulating the physical work environment of more than 10,000 employees, the study employed a quasi-experimental research design to assess satisfaction and
performance related to the open office. Variables including privacy, status, acoustics, enclosure, temperature, and lighting were evaluated against four measures - satisfaction with the job and environment, communication facilitation, and job performance (Brill, Margulis, & Konar, 1984). Findings highlighted the impact of job satisfaction and performance related to the physical work environment on organizational economies (Brill et al., 1984; Brill, Weidemann, Alard, Olson, & Keable, 2001).

**Teaming & Collaboration.** With the advent of the 1990s, attention turned to communication and technology. Group work and teaming became important as the use of teams in organizations was increasing. The need for a designed layout that incorporated both a space for private work as well as areas for group interaction was integrated into the design program. A balance between the open design of office landscaping and the individual private cubicle became the challenge for designers in the 1990s. Furniture manufacturers responded to these challenges by introducing mobile furniture such as moveable screens, storage pedestals, and conference tables. No longer were designers able to block in row after row of cubicles. They needed to design collaborative environments as constantly changing dynamic spaces. The furnishings for teaming environments provided challenges in accommodating cabling and communication connections yet responded to the new alternative ways of conducting work. The teaming layouts resembled those of office landscaping - free flowing pathways and integration of spaces very similar to those found in the early open offices. Many considered teaming a fad of the 1990s, however, group work gave way for improved processes and products, collaboration across disci-
plines, and quicker cycle times (Van Aken, 2000). Teams varied in size and function, yet they proved to be an integral part of the organizational composition and structure.

**Declining economies.** Economic challenges as well as technological advancements in the late 1990s and early 2000s perpetuated the introduction of flatter hierarchies, the consolidation of work processes, and new modes of working. Flatter hierarchies meant a diminution in managerial levels and thus a reduction in overall salaries. Consolidation of work equated to condensing employees into smaller workstations thus increasing floor density and reducing real estate costs. With advances in technology, many organizations capitalized on the flexibility it offered and gave workers the option to telecommute, job share, or work from home.

**The digital revolution.** Referred to by some as the Digital Revolution, the early part of the 21st century saw dramatic increases in the use of the internet as a primary source of information, cellular telephones, and laptop computers. Companies were expanding their markets internationally and because of the various time zones, the typical eight hour workday was no longer the norm. Technology presented new opportunities for working - the computer and telephone were no longer tethered to the office desk. Mobility not only fostered modes of working outside the office building but presented opportunities within the physical work environment. Collaboration among work teams became expected and designers began integrating amenities such as lounge spaces and coffee bars which served as impromptu meeting spaces. Some companies took the idea of offering amenities to an extreme and in the early 2000s Google was featured for its innovative workspace that offered playgrounds, restaurants, and concierge services to its employees.
Forecasting. The open plan continues to house most of today’s workforce with approximately 70% of U.S. employees working in these types of office environments (Wong, 2013). Three factors contribute to the 2013 workforce: technology, globalization and a new generation of workers (Gensler, 2013). These factors impact the work environment in several ways. First, according to Georgia Collins, director of DEGW North America, real estate portfolios will diminish as organizations analyze the use of their physical workspace. It was reported that cubicles and offices are only occupied three hours per day (Collins, 2010). Such use is not sustainable or cost-effective thereby forcing companies to evaluate space use and allocation. The second factor is that work environments will favor collaborative spaces over individual workstations (Collins, 2010). Given that employees can work from anywhere, time in the office will typically be spent collaborating with others. The final factor is that office work environments must offer employees choices (Collins, 2010). Collins compares today’s work environment with the urban planning philosophies of Jane Jacobs: “...density and mixed activities are good. Main streets, neighborhoods, and community centers are only “great” when they have people in them. Design for density and serendipity” (2010, para. 20).

One of the critical deficiencies in today’s workspace is the limited space available for focused “heads down” work. Offering an environment that empowers the worker to make choices that are best for the type of work they are doing changes the supposition of ‘power over’ (when workstations were allocated and assigned by managers) to ‘power to’ (work environments that promote productivity through autonomy) - sanctioning and trusting employees to find a suitable environment that fosters different modes of work.
Conceptual Framework

The office building has come to represent societal norms and organizational patterns. To understand why these structures have changed city landscapes, it is important to understand the people who work in these buildings and the culture of the organization that drives the workplace layout. Although buildings do not always depict what society values, offices do reveal the values of those who work in them. However, this may be a distorted glimpse of society given that building occupants change and may only occupy a space for a short period of time.

There is a clear distinction between the physical building structure (core) and the interior environment (spatial orientations, materials, furnishings etc.). To understand the user, an examination of the interior space reveals information about the relationship between the worker, the organization, and the building. Even when an organization has vacated the space, remnants of their culture remain inherent to the building and interior layout.

In 1992 Francis Duffy, a renowned architect credited with significant research in correlating organizational structure with physical work environments, identified four factors that contribute to the design of an office. These factors can be categorized as either internal or external and include office technology, office organization (internal) and building construction, real estate factors (external), with internal factors office technology and organization being most germane to this explication. Office technology refers to the duties performed in an office environment, the equipment used to facilitate work, and the flow of communication and work among the employees and managers whereas office or-
ganization is the complex interpersonal relationships between workers. According to some social scientists these internal factors should be considered collectively with an understanding that work efficiency and effectiveness can be influenced by the design of a workplace.

Duffy’s internal and external factors position the worker as an auxiliary benefactor of organizational decisions. Within the context of these four factors, corporate leaders dictate the office technology (work processes) and set the tone for interpersonal relationships between employees (office organization). The literature on office planning and design details the role of organizational structure on workplace features. ‘Structure’ as it is referred to here includes work roles and work units and their interrelations (Payne & Puch, 1983). Yet, the missing constituency in this work involves those who are impacted the most - the workers.

Despite information detailing the historical significance of office buildings, the prevalent architectural details, and notable architectural influences, there had been very little (if any) theoretical appreciation for the relationship between workers, organizations, and the office layout. In 1997, Duffy introduced a framework that addressed the worker through the constructs of autonomy and interaction by analyzing the connection between the physical environment (i.e. technology, spatial layout, the amount of enclosure, type of furniture) and organizational structure. He identified that autonomy and interaction typify worker engagement and that jobs can be classified according to the degree to which employees collaborate with others in the organization (interaction) and the measure of freedom and self-determination exercised in carrying out an assignment (autonomy). Office
work can be assessed across a high/low continuum of the two constructs generating a model of four types of work environments: hive, cell, den, and club (Duffy, 1997). These work types are evidenced by the evolving architectural forms of the office, organizational structures, and the way work has changed.

The hive, as presented by Duffy is an environment that is distinguished by “individual, routine-process work with [...] low autonomy” (Duffy, 1997, p. 62). These types of work environments are characterized by simple, open workstations that are typically ganged cubicles (Duffy, 1997). Hive employees, such as those who work in call centers, or data processing departments, typically work alone, are responsible for routine process work, sit at generic workstations for long periods of time, and keep a regular eight hour work schedule. Generally, hives are part of a hierarchical organizational structure that facilitates supervision by way of surveillance.

The cell is a workplace that facilitates high autonomy and is evidenced by enclosed offices or individual workstations with high panels or walls. The private office or workstation (cell), has traditionally symbolized someone of authority such as a manager, supervisor, lawyer, or accountant who works on complex tasks that require quiet environments for concentrated work. The work schedule for cell employees is typically sporadic with extended time out of the office and long workdays.

The den is described as offices that are “...not necessarily highly autonomous” (Duffy, 1997, p. 64). Dens balance open group work spaces with private individualized workstations and workers, such as those employed by design or advertising firms, tend to
work on project teams where tasks are short term but intense. Because of the nature of fostering collaboration and communication, den workers exhibit a collective productivity.

Finally, the club represents an organization that values knowledge work. These types of work environments are highly autonomous and integrate malleable, “time shared task-based settings” (Duffy, 1997, p. 65). Club employees work extended hours, are typically employed by advertising or technology companies, and are highly mobile and creative. The club is evidenced in organizations with flatter hierarchies and innovative work cultures.

Work has evolved since Duffy originally introduced the framework, with Americans now spending approximately 1700 hours at work each year (C.W. & A.J.K.D., 2013). Work environments no longer segment workers into private offices (cells) - the design is primarily variations of open plan (hives, dens and clubs) resulting in buildings that are designed to accommodate these types of configurations. As technology and globalization continue to be the driving forces behind how work is implemented, organizations need to be innovative, attentive, and progressive in how they think about the physical workplace. Acquiring and retaining talented employees keeps an organization competitive - providing employees with the work environment that is conducive to the way they work keeps an organization productive. According to Vischer (2005), “…the individual office, desk or workstation is a powerful and deeply rooted symbol of the individual’s and the organization’s mutual rights, responsibilities, expectations and commitment - the socio-spatial contract” (p.6). That socio-spatial contract assumes a symbolic contractual agreement between an employer and the employee where the employer prom-
ises to provide physical space, pay, and benefits in exchange for work performed. This workspace often defines and communicates an employee’s position and/or rank within an organization and is highly valued.

Despite the importance placed on the work environment by employees, their involvement in the design and implementation of the workspace is typically limited. Select representatives may be involved in the design programming phase yet in-depth input is not common. Because input tends to come from the same parties (i.e. management, architects, and designers), there is little infusion of new ideologies or innovations in office buildings or interiors. While traditionally workers only contribute peripherally to the design of their work environment, Duffy’s framework fosters ways of incorporating characteristics of the worker into the design process and in doing so, challenges the latent properties of power and status exhibited through design and workplace assignment.

**Status in the Work Environment**

Status as reported here refers to the ranking of an employee measured on an organizational value scale (Duffy, 1969). It is unstable, must be earned by the employee, and validated by others within the organization (C. Wright Mills, 1951). Philosopher Thomas Hobbes stated that “people normally seek to increase their power whenever possible - not because of a desire to dominate others but out of chronic insecurity - safety means maximizing one’s power where possible” (1994, p.58). Critics of the open office landscape responded by stating that employees in this type of egalitarian environment would make adjustments and take it upon themselves to communicate their rank, status and power by devising distinct status markers.
Organizations, by definition are groups of people who work independently toward a common goal (Katz & Kahn, 1966). They do not need walls or physical structures to exist - instead they require that people have a collective sense of purpose (McShane, & Von Glinow, 2010). Those working in a physical office environment often assign meaning and symbolism to physical settings apportioned and allocated by organizations (Gorawara-Bhat, 2002). This meaning is given to, and derived within, the context of the social organizational structure (Mead, 1934).

Today, the nature of work is changing at a rapid pace and as such, organizational structures are also changing. Hierarchies are flatter and lines of status demarcation blurred. Some innovative companies such as the online retailer Zappos are debunking traditional and even flat hierarchies in favor of holacracy - an organizational structure with no job titles or managers (i.e. no hierarchy). According to HolacracyOne’s website, the term is used to describe a “comprehensive practice for structuring, governing, and running an organization. It replaces today’s top-down predict-and-control paradigm with a new way of achieving control by distributing power” (HolacracyOne, 2014). Physical work environments will be assessed against these new work paradigms with workers struggling to redefine the value placed on where they work.

Organizational status differences present barriers to communication. Thus, in organizations with flat structures, team based boundary-less environments are meant to foster free flowing communication among workers (Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1999). In this informal structure, however, status is not necessarily defined by physical demarcation - instead it can be assessed against one’s abilities, social position, and success within the
According to Carzo and Yanouzas, authors of *Formal Organizations: A Systems Approach* (1967), organizations can be categorized into three subsystems, technical, social, and authority with each subsystem evoking a different meaning of status (see Table 1).

Table 1

**Status across Three Organizational Subsystems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Subsystem</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Holds status because of his/her ability to meet the job requirements. Status is the same as job in importance in the technical structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Holds status because of the sentiments of others in the system. For example, the leader is the most liked person in the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Holds status because of degree of success attained in implementing his/her decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Adapted from R. Carzo and J.N. Yanouzas (1967), Formal Organization: A Systems Approach.*

Status in this context is not dependent upon the physical environment but relies on the organizational structure to define it. Individuals place value on their position or status in a group because “high status validates their self-identity, self-esteem, and self-respect, and they seek information that confirms that they have a respected position in the group” (Tyler, 1994, p.852). “Without signs of status, employees in an organization would either be a confused rabble or would spend most of their time trying to figure out how to relate to others in the system” (Davis, 1977, p.32).

The success of the physical work environment is often measured against two criterion: worker performance and worker satisfaction (Sundstrom, 1986). Whereas performance centers on issues related to individual or team achievement, satisfaction en-
compasses employees’ perception of the job as well as the physical environment. To the extent that symbolic explication of the spatial organization of the workplace is consistent with individual self-assessment, job satisfaction, and environmental satisfaction, work performance is improved. According to McCoy (2002), “Inconsistency and incongruence between the sense of identity and features of the physical workplace may contribute to dissatisfaction and inhibited performance” (p. 455). Often satisfaction is contingent on an employee’s perception of fairness or equity as manifested in how an organization recognizes and rewards its employees. The work environment has historically been used by organizations to differentiate employee status which has led to the evolution of theories addressing the workplace and status.

In 1963, a hallmark theory of motivation was introduced by John Stacy Adams a workplace and behavioral psychologist, who asserted that employees seek to maintain equity between the inputs (education and competence) that they bring to a job and the outcomes (pay, job satisfaction, and work environment) that they receive from it against the perceived inputs and outcomes of others (Adams, 1965). Equity theory proclaims that employee satisfaction is relational to fair/unfair distributions of resources and that employees value fair treatment (Miner, 2002). This belief causes them to be motivated to maintain the equity between co-workers and the organization (Miner, 2002). Equity in the workplace is based on the ratio of inputs to outcomes. Inequity in the resulting ratio leads to job dissatisfaction. Understanding the significance of the work environment and how it is valued by today’s worker is critical in evaluating outputs. Balancing the perceived value of inputs with outputs inherently influences organizational decisions on
workplace design. Equity theory seemingly correlates with the Burolandschaft philosophy of office layout, an organic arrangement of furniture where office design downplays the display of rank and status.

Conversely, sociologist Stuart Adams (1953) put forth the idea that people strive for consistency in their status relationships and agreement between the various rankings. His status congruency theory postulates that in principle the highest-ranking employee is ranked as such over multiple domains with each member of the organization in agreement. Further, the theory infers that employees are “most satisfied when workspaces are congruent with formal rankings in the hierarchy of power” (Sundstrom, 1986, p. 240). If employees perceive their workspace to be of appropriate appointment (i.e. more desirable than those of lesser rank and less desirable than those of higher rank), they are satisfied. People experience balance and accord if their workspaces are more desirable or better appointed than the workspaces of lower-ranking people but not as nice as those of higher-ranking people. However, if a workspace is deficient in something present in a lower ranking employee’s space, congruency theory posits dissatisfaction and an attempt by the higher ranking employee to remedy the imbalance.

While workplace features communicate status, they may also motivate and incentivize employees to strive for advancement (Holtzman, 1978). In other words, status markers may be valued more for what they represent than for their inherent value. While status markers may have seemingly served as incentives, instead, the incentives were the highly valued promotions that the status markers signified - the status markers were primarily symbols. Without signs of status, however, employees in an organization would
be stressed as they expend considerable time and effort trying to determine how they relate to others in the system (Davis, 1977).

**Semiotic underpinnings.** If status markers are primarily symbols, they assume a semantic rationale and take on specific assigned meaning. According to the theories of Peirce and Morris, semantics are divided into categories that include symbols and while a symbol is perhaps “initially arbitrary or non-motivated…its subsequent use is motivated or based on some determinants” (Mallgrave & Contandriopoulos, 2008; Jencks, 1969, p. 11). The designation of objects as status markers assigns social meaning that is subject to change. To that end, Jencks (1969) issues two points related to this social meaning:

1) that every act, object and statement that man perceives is meaningful…

2) that the frontiers of meaning are always, momentarily, in a state of collapse and paradox (p. 11-13).

Status markers take on meaning by those who designate and value them important. This assignment is typically dependent on the culture of the organization and is constantly re-defined. For example, status at one time may have been evidenced by the corner office whereas years later it is displayed by moving to a cubicle closer to the window (as per the cartoon presented earlier). Regardless, the premise is that status is assigned and markers hold meaning to those who have them and those who covet them.

**Motivational constructs.** Why is status important? As mentioned earlier, most studies on the workplace environment focus on environmental issues in hopes of improving motivation and performance. Yet, is perceived status motivation for improved employee performance? Particularly relevant for this study is an exploration of the expec-
tancy theory of motivation. Expectancy theory is used to motivate people with the premise that specific behavior or performance will lead to specific outcomes (Vroom, 1964). Those outcomes are predicated on what workers value and perceive as rewards - not necessarily based on reality. The expectancy theory framework defines motivation as effort, that encourages performance, that in turn leads to specific outcomes (see Figure 2). The underlying question with this model is what role does the physical work environment play on outcome?

![Figure 2](image)

*Figure 2. The expectancy theory (Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1999).*

American psychologist Frederick Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory (also known as the Hygiene Theory) suggests that workers who are satisfied with their work have the internal motivation to work diligently (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Herzberg proposed that two different sets of factors contribute to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors (or dissatisfiers) such as pay, job security, working conditions, and company policies affect job satisfaction (Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1999). Negative aspects of these factors contribute to dissatisfaction. It is important to note, however that positive hygiene factors will not necessarily motivate employees to work. The second set of factors (motivators) includes achievement, responsibility, and growth opportunities (Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 1999). Motivators can lead to job satisfaction and improved performance. Organizations must first attempt to remove negative hygiene factors and provide opportunities to foster those factors that motivate their employees.
The concept of self-esteem is a principle of motivation. As defined by Weber (1922), social status is an effective claim to social esteem in terms of negative or positive privileges. One of the most widely known theorists on self-esteem is Abraham Maslow who believes that self-esteem derives from the need for respect which includes recognition, acceptance, status, and appreciation (Maslow, 1954). Maslow’s hierarchy illustrates the position of self-esteem in relation to needs. Penultimate in the hierarchy, fulfillment of the self-esteem need is crucial before an individual can go on to pursue self-actualization (Maslow, 1954).

All people have a need or desire for a healthy, stable evaluation of themselves thereby leading to self-worth and self-esteem. The need for these traits can be classified into two categories. The first, addresses needs pertaining to the desire for strength, confidence, and achievement leading to freedom and independence. The second includes the need for prestige and the desire for a good reputation as defined by esteem from other people. These traits include fame, glory, status, recognition, and attention (Maslow, 1954). As presented here, it would seem that there is a direct correlation between status and self-esteem. To that end, there are several factors that influence worker self-esteem and the actualization of status. Many of these factors are predicated on the role of power and how it is manifested in the office environment.

**Organizational Culture**

Over the past few decades, sociologists, workplace researchers, and corporate leaders have come to study organizational culture as a means of understanding the ethos and operations of an organization. In doing so, they have looked to organizational val-
uses, habits, rituals, philosophies, behavior, and symbols to define and explain culture.

Formally defined, culture is:

...a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 2004, p. 17).

Deciphering, categorizing, and analyzing culture is challenging as groups and organizations are constantly concerned with solvency, expansion, and the internal balance between human capital and organizational processes. Researchers aspire to distinguish and label culture types for empirical study but different organizations have unique cultural paradigms with varying core beliefs making the assignment of typologies and labels somewhat ambiguous (Schein, 2004).

When studying organizational culture it is important that the data be collected by members’ own volition and that they are not coerced. Organizational members must be vested in the process either because they commissioned the study and recognize the benefits of revealing themselves to the researcher or, if the researcher initiated the project, members perceive an advantage in participating (Schein, 2004). Data collected must be useful to the organization and a valid representation of the culture. Validity, or correctly deciphering the data, involves two criterion: accuracy and interpretation. Methodological triangulation serves to control accuracy while predictability (foreseeing how the organization manages future issues) is critical in validating interpretation (Schein, 2004). Culling accurate information to determine the culture of an organization is arduous and
complicated but understanding the unique underpinnings of what drives and maintains an organization is the hallmark of predicating it’s successes and failures.

Leaders are instrumental in the formation of corporate culture. This is not to say leaders are solely responsible for culture but if the health and vitality of the organization are at risk, it is the responsibility of those in charge to assess and correct the problem. In this way, leadership and culture are interdependent (Schein, 2004). A leader’s role is to build and direct culture while recognizing the need for change if the existing culture proves to be dysfunctional (Schein, 2004). To differentiate a leader from a manager or administrator, “one can argue that leadership creates and changes cultures - while management and administration act within a culture” (Schein, 2004, p. 11).

Once a cultural direction is formulated, leaders need a means of implementing and embedding it in every aspect of the business model. Schein (1992) stipulates primary and secondary attributes for integrating and fortifying culture (see Table 2). Addressing the primary mechanisms was beyond the scope of this research, but what is particularly germane is one aspect from the secondary list: design of facilities.

The physical work environment is used as a medium by corporations to communicate intrinsic values through design (Schein, 2004). Choices related to layout, spatial concepts, and organization reinforce a company’s identity and communicate employees’ roles within the corporate structure. The complexity and diversity of titles, positions, and roles combined with the temporary nature of organizational structures directly relate to the social symbolic properties manifested in the physical work environment (Moleski & Lang in Wineman, 1986).
Table 2

*Primary and Secondary Attributes for Integrating & Fortifying Culture*

**Primary Mechanisms**
- Prioritization of issues addressed by the leader
- Means of reacting to crises
- Leading by example
- Procedures and standards for reward allocation
- Criteria for hiring and firing

**Secondary Mechanisms**
- Development of management systems and procedures
- Development of organization structure

*Design of facilities*
- Stories, legends, and myths
- Formal Statements

Note: Adapted from E.H. Schein (2004). Organizational Culture and Leadership, 2nd edition

Spatial layouts are used to channel behavior making them instrumental in building and reinforcing conventional norms yet because suppositions about space are somewhat ambiguous, the physical environment is often taken for granted (Berg and Kreiner, 1990; Gagliardi, 1990; Steele, 1973b, 1981; Schein, 2004). It is assumed that all or most office spaces convey meaning through conventional desks, chairs, cubicles, offices, and individual personalization, but the design of a corporate environment integrates visible features accessible to outside constituencies such as clients, vendors, and visitors thereby necessitating a cohesive internal and external cultural message (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010; Schein, 2004).

Disregarding employees’ experiences and interpretations of spatial symbols, and emphasizing “currently fashionable images of office design” can misrepresent and obscure the corporate message (Moleski & Lang in Wineman, 1986, p. 12). For example,
the decision to integrate open collaborative work environments without regard for the current organizational climate may have perpetuated the idea that leadership is indifferent to the needs of the individual employee and the perceived loss of status by those relegated from a private office to a cubicle. As offered by Moleski & Lang in Wineman (1986), “the anonymous and impersonal visual character of modern design can create a cold and dehumanized image of the organization” (p. 13). Responding to current trends without acknowledging the existing organizational culture obscures the corporate message, perpetuates a loss of identity, and hinders progress in realizing meaningful change (Moleski & Lang in Wineman, 1986).

Power Theory

Power is a much sought after attribute that must be studied and considered - it is not simply an ubiquitous state but is at the heart of the essence of human beings. It is a process that focuses on the relationship between people and various organizations. As first presented by Dennis Wrong and modified by Hearn, power is defined as “the capacity of some agents (broadly defined) to achieve intended and foreseen effects on other agents and the world more generally” (Hearn, 2012, p. 16).

The conceptualization of power. Presented as the ‘family’, the concepts of domination, authority, and legitimacy are inherent and integral to the discussion of power. Each theoretical position put forth by noted theorists is inevitably grounded in one or more of these themes. To fully understand the theories, it is important to first explicate these three concepts to provide context for the theoretical positions.
**Domination.** Often discussions of power are really that of domination. Domination, as defined by Hearn “refers to a situation where an agent exercises relatively stable, ongoing control over the actions of other agents” (2011a, p. 203). It is fundamentally dependent on the relationship between actors and the degree of power each possess. It’s acceptance is dependent on the conditions and context with which it occurs. Domination is not sporadic but is habitual and often taken for granted. Clearly it is important to distinguish between the idea of ‘power to’ and domination, noting that ‘power over’ is an intermediary between the two. Noted theorists whose definition of power center on the concepts of domination and ‘power over’ are Michel Foucault, Steven Lukes, and Pierre Bourdieu.

**Authority.** Authority and legitimacy are conduits to understanding power with legitimacy being a means to observe authority. Authority needs legitimacy and it emerges from the desire to isolate ‘power over’ and channel it toward efforts that constitute legitimate authorities. It suggests an expressive association between those imparting an order and those receiving them. As defined, authority is the power to “give orders, make decisions and enforce obedience...to influence others especially because of one’s commanding manner or one’s recognized knowledge about something” (Hearn, 2012, p. 22). It not only represents the power to give a command but also to have it obeyed.

Talcott Parsons, Barry Barnes, and Dennis Wrong offer theories of power embedded in the concept of authority. Wrong’s position centers on the association between commands and obedience whereby legitimacy is simply one form of authority. He offers five different bases of authority:
Coercion (where commands are obeyed in order to avoid physical or psychological harm), inducement (where commands are obeyed to obtain certain rewards, not because of belief in the validity of the command itself), legitimacy (where there is a recognition of a general right to command and an obligation to obey, apart from the specific content of orders), competence (where there is recognition of expertise or specialized knowledge that underlies commands), and personhood (where particular concrete commitment to an individual person motivates one to follow the others will as if it were their own) (Hearn, 2012, p. 27).

Legitimacy. Legitimacy is abiding to rules or laws and must be defendable with logic and reasoning. Recently clarified by social scientists, legitimacy matters because it has shifted the emphasis from “can x lay claim to y” to ‘can x rule over y’ and from ‘is the claim legitimate’ to ‘does rulership have legitimacy’” (Hearn, 2012, p. 23). Dennis Wrong and Max Weber are noteworthy theorists who position power under the auspices of legitimacy whereby the power to validate and consent is established and replicated.

Power theorists. There have been many philosophers theorizing the concept of power. As early as 1532, Niccolo Machiavelli presented his hypothesis in the writing of The Prince. This seminal work was the first to recognize a hierarchy of values and in so doing acknowledge the necessity of doing evil to protect the higher good. Often referred to as “the problem of dirty hands”, those with power are often forced to confront the quandary of ideal conduct and “achievement for the collective good” (Hearn, 2012, p. 44). Additionally, Machiavelli’s theories marked a noted change in considering power in terms of the relationship between superiors and subordinates thereby leading to the current ideas of structure and agency (Hearn, 2012).

Since Machiavelli, theorists such as Marx, Weber, Dahl, Parsons, Lukes, and Foucault, have postulated on power from various perspectives. Karl Marx, while never for-
mally offering a proper definition of power, was known for offering spirited criticisms around power relations. He was interested in investigating social discord as causal action and his studies examined power across four constructs:

1. social labor - the idea that as social human beings we create our physical and mental world
2. mode of production - monitors the changes in production as it relates to social labour leading to justifications of how the product of power is distributed
3. class - societal class conflicts drive the mode of production
4. alienation - the idea that by our own doing, we employ power to oppress. Marx presents the possibility of ‘power to’ without ‘power over’ (Hearn, 2012).

Max Weber’s work was influenced by the works of Marx and Nietzsche and professes legitimacy to be the fundamental foundation of power. It ensures compliance of actor B because he/she views A as acting appropriately. This perception then fosters consent. The idea of the legitimate control of A can be manifested in a variety of ways. According to Gilbert Fairholm (1993), control is evidenced by directing others to comply, reliance on rules to establish acquiescence, instituting procedures and policies to maintain the position of power, stipulating that others adhere to established channels, and legitimizing directives based on tradition or law.

Weber defines power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” whereas domination is “the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons” (Weber, 1978, p. 53). Power, according to Weber, suggests that an individual in a social relationship can maintain free will despite the opposition of others. While this definition is somewhat
broad, it encompasses a vague perspective of power types. Conversely, domination is a more carefully defined concept - specifically, "...every genuine form of domination implies a minimum of voluntary compliance, that is, an interest (based on ulterior motives or genuine acceptance) in obedience" (Weber, 1968, p. 212). A dominate power relation includes discretionary conformity, self-serving interest, and trust in the legitimacy of the efforts of the dominating party (Gingrich, 1999). Despite the narrow focus, Weber’s definition of domination is beneficial in understanding the formation and interplay of social relationships.

Weber defines authority based on three quintessential typologies: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal with authority evidenced uniquely across each classification (Fairholm, 1993). Power is effective in the first category because leaders have control over what becomes tradition or convention. This tradition is evidenced when power becomes legitimized and is justified when subjects conform to traditionally established behavioral norms (Fairholm, 1993). Weber’s charisma classification is grounded in personality suggesting that magnetism and charm facilitate power and attract followers who are acceptant of commands based on the temperament and disposition of certain leaders (Fairholm, 1993). The final classification suggests people are acceptant of authoritative commands because they deem them as rules, policies, or laws. While the appeal of Weber’s typologies is their universality, they tend to be difficult to actualize individually. The challenge is in identifying each typology as an isolated concept when in fact they are most often evidenced in combination (Fairholm, 1993).
Just as power and domination are synthesized in Weber’s writings, so too are authority and domination. He defines authority as a form of domination whereby subordinates comply because of perceived legitimacy. Authority becomes a sustained implementation of dominance which over time subsumes into regularity and structure (Gingrich, 1999). Weber envisioned the future as one where this regularity is grounded in the rational-legal type of authority despite the emergence of a charismatic leader. His prophecy suggests the prevalence of legal authority which can be evidenced in today’s bureaucracies (Gingrich, 1999).

Robert Dahl generally preferred the term ‘influence’ to that of power although he also treated them interchangeably. He offers the following definition of power (or influence): “A has power over B to the extent he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl, 1957, p. 202-203). The key to this definition is the focus on one person affecting the behavior of another - power being in the relationship between the two. Dahl sees power as an investigation into the decisions of opposing wills where only one can be the victor.

Talcott Parsons puts forth the idea that power is realized through a subject’s acceptance thereby making it a corollary of authority. In this way, power symbolically embodies authority and serves as a catalyst to getting something accomplished. For Parsons, society is imbued in an “overarching system of legitimate authority that regulates behavior” (Hearn, 2012, p. 26).

The theory of power as proffered by Michel Foucault is often enigmatic and abstruse. His definition amalgamates power with the constructs of truth and knowledge and
offers, “we are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth” (Foucault, 1977, p. 93). This is realized in our subjectivity, that sense of self which is “an historical creation, shaped by wider societ-al patterns of the production of power and truth” (Hearn, 2012, p. 20). Foucault was interested in how and why society synthesizes truth and knowledge with intent towards “showing us what is distinctive about the way that a certain epoch structures the relation between the visible and the invisible, what is seen, and what is said” (Piro, 2008; Shapiro, 2003, p.235).

According to Foucault, power originates from two sources: sovereignty or discipline. Sovereign power assumes top down rule or what Foucault termed “verticality” as evidenced by monarchies or governments. This “binary division” distinguishes disciplinary power as much more dispersed, subtle, less visible, and unknowingly affecting subjects, whereas sovereign power is discernible through “visible nodes”(Shapiro, 2003, p. 199; Piro, 2008, p. 41). Disciplinary power is pervasive and because sources are imperceptible, subjects are ignorant of being watched. For this reason, Foucault puts forth the notion of “inverting the verticality of the power relationship” from hierarchical to one that is flatter and more “equally balanced” (Piro, 20008, . 41).

Foucault’s infusion of architecture into the power colloquy positions it as a catalyst for identifying and understanding societal problems. As Hays (2000) puts forth, “it is the techniques for practicing social relations, which are framed and modulated spatially, that allow for the efficient expansion of power or alternatively, for resistance” (p. 428).
Panopticism & Foucault. The Modern period saw the emergence of professional disciplines and institutions such as medicine (hospitals), psychiatry (mental institutions), and criminology (prisons) which sparked in Foucault an interest in the subsumed superior knowledge of those engaged in the professions and their domination over the subjects they served or attended (Hearn, 2012). Most germane for this research is Foucault’s theories on how the practices and techniques of power are normalized in these institutions. Work in this area led to a fascination with the organization of space (in particular Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon), namely how it can facilitate understanding, secure conduct, and exhibit power.

In his book *Discipline and Punishment*, Foucault examines the concept of visibility and invisibility as a means of obtaining power, control, and domination through architecture (Foucault, 1977). The Panopticon is a building that is organized so that all interior spaces (cells) are visible from a central point or tower (dictionary.com). “All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker, or a schoolboy” (Foucault, 1977, p. 200). According To Foucault, architecture has the propensity to be beneficial or baleful - the Panopticon an example of the latter. With the integration of surveillance into the built environment, he viewed the Panopticon as representative of a malevolent and carceral society (Piro, 2008). Critics of Foucault expressed concern in his failure to differentiate carceral actions with societal conventions in that daily rituals call for compliance which is not necessarily a submission of power.
Bentham proffered that power in the Panopticon is both visible and unverifiable; visible by means of the central point observable at all times by the subject and unverifiable in that the subject never knows at any given point in time if they are being watched (Foucault, 1977). In this way, the building becomes a machine “for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it...” (Foucault, 1977, p. 201). Despite the unrealized actualization of the Panopticon, Foucault used the ideology behind the design concept as a metaphor for “society’s disciplinary capacity” and a hierarchical network that created what he describes as a “dystopian unfreedom” (Piro, 2008, p. 36). By so doing, he brings to the forefront of theoretical suppositions the realization that architecture plays an integral role in power relations.

The position of Steven Lukes, noted professor in sociology at New York University, is most applicable to this study when overlaid with the theoretical underpinnings of Michel Foucault. In 1974, Lukes presented a short essay asserting a revisionist stance on power entitled *Power: A Radical View* (PVR). This seminal work was remarkable in that it attempted to define the concept of power and more importantly, conceive how it could be empirically studied and measured. Lukes defines power as “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interest” (2005, p.37). His fundamental supposition in this definition is grounded in the idea that power is weighted heavily on values and not always observable. As such, the central theme is it’s focus on B’s compliance and acceptance.

*Three dimensions of power.* Lukes’s work analyzed the evolution of examining power from three dimensions, namely the one-dimensional view as presented by plural-
ists such as Robert Dahl, Nelson Polsby, and Raymond Wolfinger, the two-dimensional view (a critique of the first) put forth by critics such as Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, and the third dimensional view - Lukes’s response to the shortcomings of the first two dimensions.

First dimension. The first dimension of power references noteworthy work by pluralist Robert Dahl. Dahl (and others) put forth the premise that power is an observable behavior with a focus specifically on decision making whereby A has the power to get B to do something he/she would not normally do. This view of power is “seen as policy preferences revealed by political participation” (Lukes, 2005, p. 29). The criticisms of this dimension center on the supposition that conflict must be observable. This view is limited in that it is too dependent on behaviorism and apparently dismisses inaction and non-decision making power. In response, critics of this pluralist view developed a slightly more encompassing view referred to in PVR as the second dimension.

Second dimension. The second dimension of power is seemingly a critique of the behavioral focus presented in the first dimension. Here the emphasis is also on decision making but this concept of power affirms that these decisions (and what Bachrach and Baratz (1970) refer to as non-decisions) can be observed overtly or covertly. With the two-dimensional view of power, interests are subjective and viewed as “policy preferences or grievances” (Lukes, 2005, p.29). Because the second dimension encompasses non-decisions, it is difficult to observe. Lukes position is that there are deficiencies in the first two dimensions and that his third dimension is more conducive for understanding and empirically studying power.
Third dimension. The third dimension put forward by Lukes critiques the behavioral focus and centers on “decision making and control over the political agenda (not necessarily through decisions), issues and potential issues, observable…and latent conflict, and subjective and real interests” (2005, p.29). The significant hypothesis of this definition is the idea of latent conflict by way of manipulating what people want whereby those subjected to power are unaware and do not express their interests. The power to shape perceptions, ideas, and preferences by preventing the formation of grievances is a fundamental aspect of the third dimension. Further, Lukes addresses the concept of authority by presenting a conceptual map outlining the relationships between power, influence, and authority all within the framework of the absence or presence of conflicts of interest. Authority is power when there is observable or unrealized discrepancies in values and interests (Lukes, 2005).

Authority and legitimacy are conduits to understanding power with legitimacy being a means to observe authority. Authority needs legitimacy and it emerges from the desire to isolate ‘power over’ and channel it toward efforts that constitute legitimate authorities. It suggests an expressive association between those imparting an order and those receiving them. As defined, authority is the power to “give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience...to influence others especially because of one’s commanding manner or one’s recognized knowledge about something” (Hearn, 2012, p. 22). It not only represents the power to give a command but also to have it obeyed.

Lukes stance on consent is precipitated by the latent unknown of B. In this regard, Lukes agrees with Charles Tilly (1991) who proclaims that B will remain unaware
of their “true interests because of mystification, repression, or the sheer unavailability of alternative ideological frames” (Lukes, 2005, p. 10). This lack of recourse correlates to powerlessness which perpetuates consent - people feel helpless and therefore agree (Morriss, 1987). Further, Lukes believes in the latent manipulation of B’s awareness, understanding and predispositions and in so doing A garners consent. This consent can be willing or reluctant and is not mutually exclusive - “one can consent to power and resent the mode of its exercise” (Lukes, 2005, p.150).

Critics of Lukes’ third dimension claim his definition of power subsumes the mantra of “power over” and is really defining domination, not power. Domination, as defined by Hearn “refers to a situation where an agent exercises relatively stable, ongoing control over the actions of other agents” (2011a, p. 203). It is fundamentally dependent on the relationship between actors and the degree of power each possess. It’s acceptance is dependent on the conditions and context with which it occurs. Domination is not sporadic but is habitual and often taken for granted. Clearly it is important to distinguish between the idea of ‘power to’ and domination, noting that ‘power over’ is an intermediary between the two. In his updated essay on three-dimensional power theory, Lukes intentionally presents power as domination. Power in this context can occur through forceful, purposeful means or through indiscriminate devices. It “occurs where the power of some affects the interests of others by restricting their capabilities for truly human functioning” (Lukes, 2005, p. 188).
Summary

Notable benchmarks in the history of the office are germane to this study - namely the evolution of the corporate office building catalyzed by innovations of the Industrial Revolution and the modern movement. Unobstructed floorplates within the building structure gave way to the open office as was evidenced by the layouts of Burolandschaft and the panel system of Propst’s Action Office. Teaming and groupwork became prevalent in the late twentieth century as declining economies perpetuated downsizing and layoffs, and the digital revolution made way for worker mobility. The impact of these developments are still evidenced in today’s work environment and offer a contextual foundation for understanding this research.

This foundation was further informed by the conceptual framework for this study. Duffy’s organizational classifications were used to assess power and status across the domains of autonomy and interaction. By so doing, work environment types were identified and categorized according to the four classifications of den, hive, cell, and club. This framework offered a schema for connecting the physical environment and organizational structure.

Fundamental to the assessment of power and status is organizational culture. Analyzing culture is challenging but choices related to layout, spatial concepts, and organization reinforce a company’s identity and communicate the organization’s culture. Often, the physical environment is taken for granted yet spatial layouts can be instrumental in channelling behavior and reinforcing conventional norms. As many organizations are transitioning to collaborative team work, there is a propensity to follow current trends
without acknowledging the existing organizational culture. By so doing, the organization obscures the corporate message, perpetuates a loss of identity, and hinders progress in realizing meaningful change. Such ambiguity leaves employees grappling with identifying their rank and status within the organization.

Status is the ranking of an employee measured on an organizational value scale (Duffy, 1969). Several theories presented in this narrative addressed the idea of status - specifically those that relate to fairness and self actualization. Relevant to today, the changing nature of work and organizational structures perpetuate blurred lines of status demarcation with workers struggling to redefine the value placed on where they work.

The underlying theme throughout this study is the influence of power as it is manifested in the physical work environment. While previous design studies related to the workplace take a cursory nod to power, this research is informed by an interdisciplinary approach to power theory. Specially germane to this study is the theoretical positions of Michel Foucault and Steven Lukes. Foucault’s perspectives on Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon can be correlated with today’s open office and understanding the power relationships within the corporate culture can be guided by Lukes third dimension of power.

To examine status within the constructs of organizational culture and power, this research assumed a social constructivist epistemology, an interpretivist theoretical perspective, and employed a grounded theory methodology against two case studies. The next chapter proffers details of the selected cases as well as an account of the methods used for this study.
CHAPTER TWO
Methods

Intrinsic Methodological Rationale for this Study

The recent appeal to sociological theories is derived from an acknowledgement by the architectural profession that a building cannot be disengaged from human activities and interactions. This shift has focused attention away from formal, causal positions grounded in traditional methodologies in favor of a more vernacular interpretation of human behavior and societal norms. At issue here, however, is the propensity for the behavioral sciences to favor positivistic means to describe phenomena (Lang, 1987). Even within the behavioral science field there is discord and uneasiness at using scientific methods to build theories related to human behavior. Rigorous scientific methods leading to empirical facts “do not guide practice; theory can. Research needs to focus on theory building” (Lang, 1987, p.22). Architecture may be misguided in its belief that behavioral sciences that employ the scientific method will help guide theory and enrich architectural perspectives related to human behavior. In favor of Lang’s position, Clegg and Pitsis (2012) offer that social science is “not a sphere characterized by the elegant theory-driven abstract rationalities of the hard science model” (p. 67) leading one to believe that if there is momentum by behavioral scientists to forego scientific means as a way of investigating human behavior, architecture will inherently benefit.

The fundamental nucleus of the built environment is not in the structures themselves but in the people who inhabit them - architecture and human activity are intrinsically interconnected. If there is consensus that human behavior is uniquely different from natural science, it would seem logical to deduce that the study of human behavior - and
by extension architecture since they can’t be bisected - should not employ the same
methods of inquiry as science.

At a recent design educators conference I noticed very few presentations focused
on workplace research yet the design trade magazines are continually reporting new and
innovative ways of working while manufacturers and design firms are putting forth white
papers as a means of communicating soft research. This disconnect between theory and
practice is layered and complex. There are various opinions as to the genesis of the al-
ienation but it would seem the issue has origins across many domains: epistemology,
methodology, and hermeneutics. At its essence, it goes back to the fundamental questions
of what do we know; what do we want to know?

The longstanding debate between theory and practice calls to question the under-
lying issue of whether theory is even needed to guide architecture. Gutman (2010) pur-
ports that theories are principles that guide practice whereas disciplines such as science
would be puzzled by this stance given the inherent nature of theory in science - one of
constructing meaning to describe the world, not of guiding or prescribing how action (i.e.
practice) should take place (Hillier, 1996). The position I put forth here is that architec-
ture draws from how the world should be and it’s theories should support that perspec-
tive. Architectural theory is not only meant to guide practice but it should also provide
rich and meaningful frameworks that bring significance to design.

There is confusion as to architectural theory’s domain - is it scientific or norma-
tive? Does it draw from analytics or is it more abstract? Some would claim that there is
a distinct difference between science and architecture with scientific theories being ana-
lytic and architectural theories - if they hope to be predictive - normative. Others, argue that despite what they should be, architectural theories are really analytical - not dissimilar from science. Still others, such as Feyerabend (1975), believe architectural theories to be an amalgamation of the two. The disparity has contributed to the disconnect between theory and practice thereby strengthening the theoretical silos - practice convinced that theories are formal abstractions and theoreticians regarding practice as simply a “process of production without existential meaning, clearly defined aims, or reference to human values” (Perez-Gomez, 1983, p. 8).

Changing mindsets can be seemingly insurmountable and deviating from the longstanding traditional norm of scientific inquiry could lead to obsolescence, but if architecture and practice are so disparate as Bolan (1980) suggests, only by pioneering a new methodological standard integrating the built environment with human behavior will architectural theory be holistically rich in meaning and useful to practice. Communication will be important in supporting such an undertaking and unlike Rosmarin (1984) who supports a common, universal language, instead theory and practice can have distinct vocabularies - it is simply a matter of ensuring that both practitioners and theoreticians are semantically fluent in both.

I present this narrative to substantiate the rationale for employing a qualitative stance for this research. If there is any hope of once again making workplace research meaningful, it needs to be conducted within the realm of addressing the human condition and articulating a theoretical rationale that is germane to practicing professionals.
Epistemology & Theoretical Perspective

Qualitative research promotes the discovery of meaning through participant experiences, interactions, and thoughts formed within culture (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Patton, 2002). It fosters in-depth investigation into the understanding and meaning of experience from a participant’s point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A qualitative paradigm was selected for this research to fully ascertain the value workers place on their work environment and their perceptions of open plan within transitioning organizational cultures. While many workplace studies assume the rigor of variable testing, I was drawn to the idea of connecting with employees on a humanistic level by drawing meaning and assigning value to their words and actions. As stated by Berenice Fisher, “I saw that being an intellectual didn’t have to be removed from people’s lives, that it could be connected directly to where people were in the world and what they thought about it” (as cited in D. Maines, 1991, p. 8).

Constructivism.

...researchers’ entrenched assumptions grind the lens for viewing the world and filter their resulting images of it. What we define as data and how we look at them matters because these acts shape what we can see and learn (Charmaz, 2006, p. 132).

This study originated from an epistemology of social constructivism which has its genesis in constructionism and social constructionism. The cornerstone of constructivism is that the study of humans differs from that of the natural world (Guba and Lincoln, 1990). Constructionism purports that “meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43). Because meaning is constructed, a single belief cannot be deemed valid or true - only useful or not useful.
(Crotty, 1998). Whereas constructionism posits that humans continually construct meaning from their interpretations of reality, social constructionism postulates that reality and meaning are socially constructed and understood within the context of a particular culture. Collective understanding stemming from culture provides the framework for meaning and subsequent decisions (Crotty, 1998). While culture is the essence of social constructionism, the richness in meaning created by the views of an individual is the cornerstone of social constructivism.

In assuming a constructivist epistemology, a researcher’s views and perspectives are embedded in the theory - not divorced from it. Additionally, this approach situates experiences within a larger context by examining them within the framework of other systems, relationships, and circumstances (Charmaz, 2006). In this way “...differences and distinctions between people become visible as well as the hierarchies of power, communication, and opportunity that maintain and perpetuate such differences and distinctions” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 130-131). Knowledge is not found or discovered but instead constructed by forming meaning from this framework. The constructivist develops theories and ideas from these abstractions all the while being receptive to refinement and modification based on new experiences (Schawndt, 1998). Adopting a constructivist stance requires vigilance, rich data, and wisdom to discern and differentiate manifestations of meaning.

**Symbolic interpretivism.** This study was grounded in the social constructivism epistemology in that it sought to develop a deep understanding of the meaning and value employees assign to the open office work environment. Just as constructivism is centered
around the individual, so too is interpretivism. Interpretivism is focused on an individual’s construction of meaning within a phenomenological experience and retorts the positivist cause-and-effect position of social science (Groat & Wang, 2002; Crotty, 1998). Interpretivism as evidenced by symbolic interactionism was the theoretical perspective for this study. This perspective was selected because interpretivism manifests in participants meaningful participation within a social and cultural context. Additionally, the researcher does not need to be on the periphery of engagement but can integrate personal experiences, feelings, and interpretations into the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

With origins emanating from the works of G.H Mead and subsequently his student, H. Blumer, symbolic interpretivism is a corollary of interpretivism, and assumes the stance that individual actions construct meaning then influence consequent actions (Charmaz, 2006). Blumer submits three basic assumptions:

1. that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them;
2. that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows;
3. that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

As Charon, (2007) summarizes, “to understand human action, we must focus on social interaction, human thinking, definition of the situation, the present, and the active nature of the human being” (p.30). In doing so, however, it must be within a cultural context for it is shared values, history, and beliefs that shape man’s understanding and meaning (Charon, 2007; Crotty, 1998). Symbolic interactionism focuses on how man finds meaning in his world and how this meaning informs actions. Symbolic interactionism precipi-
tated grounded theory - a methodology that is without pre-determined boundaries and fosters theory creation (Charmaz, 2005). This research sought to understand the meaning employee’s assign to the open office work environment and for this reason, grounded theory was a befitting methodology.

Methodology

**Grounded theory.** Originating from Glaser and Strauss in 1967, grounded theory is a form of ethnographic inquiry that inductively and systematically develops theory from rich data (Crotty, 1998; Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theorists are nondiscriminatory and open to ideas presented by the data. Theories developed from this methodology are not discovered but are constructed thus supporting the framework of symbolic interactionism within a constructivist epistemology (Charmaz, 2005).

According to Charmaz (2005), “grounded theorists do not have to write as disembodied technicians” (p. 174) - their perspectives can be integrated into the fold of the narrative. Unlike traditional forms of positivist research that report findings behind a third person voice, I have integrated the use of the first person where appropriate in communicating my involvement with the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data.

The grounded theory process is not straightforward and requires continual analysis of the data collected (Charmaz, 2006). Research questions are open for revision based on data analysis leading to avenues unimagined at the onset of the study. Interview questions are open ended fostering meaningful engagement between the participant and interviewer. Observations are ongoing and memos document researcher insights throughout
the process. Data is recurrently analyzed by coding for common themes that emerge from the data and in this way, theoretical underpinnings are constructed and cultivated.

**Case studies.**

... sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases - not in the hope of proving anything but rather in the hope of learning something (Eysenck, 1976, p. 9).

Fundamentally germane to the discussion of case studies is the contradictory stance that research must be universal. Beginning with Plato, this mantra has been a standard criterion for modern science, yet, if the study of human nature warrants methods different from science as offered earlier in this section, it would call in to question the applicability of universality in human behavior research (Flyvbjerg, 2001). This stance supports the use of a method (i.e. the case study), that moves from prescribed conjecture and generalities to one that offers a sound and contextually rich understanding of human behavior.

Case studies are deep explorations of a single instance that can range in size from an individual to a community or larger territory (Sommer & Sommer, 2002). They employ a multi-method approach and while other methods dissect a situation or event into multiple parts, case studies “maintain the integrity of the whole with its myriad of interrelationships. It represents a holistic approach to research and rests on the assumption that understanding is increased by considering the entire entity rather than breaking it into its constituent parts” (Sommer & Sommer, 2002, p. 203). A single research method may address one or two concepts, but the complexity of investigating the relationships between the work environment, status with power, and power with organizational culture, requires a method that fosters in-depth exploration resulting in rich data.
**Critical case.** While natural science offers opportunities for statistical generalizations, case study research contributes to the development of theoretical propositions (Yin, 2009). In this way, case study research is generalizable and contributes to the theoretical body of knowledge within a given domain. While universality is not the prime objective of case study methods, there are times when logical generalizability is possible with the judicious selection of critical cases (Flyvbjerg, 2001). A critical case is one that demonstrates “strategic importance in relation to the general problem” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 78). If a situation holds true for a specific (critical) case, it is regarded as representational and can be considered valid across a multitude of other cases and situations.

The two cases selected for this study, VaporCorp and WellnessCorp, are critical cases in that both are representational and typify conventional work environments comprised of private offices and cubicles. They were selected because of their ordinariness and while studying these critical cases does not automatically warrant universality applied across all similar cases, plausible generalizations based on collected evidence can be inferred.

**Multiple-case.** Yin (2009) suggests a multiple-case study design over a single case to enhance the analytic benefits of comparing and contrasting two or more cases. The logic for selecting multiple cases for this study is in the desire to infer similar results. Because the physical work environments at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp are characteristically similar, theoretical replication and validity are tenable.
Sample

**Purposive sample.** A purposive sample is one in which participants are selected based on the purpose of the research and the characteristics of the population. Purposive sampling is widely used in intensive case studies (where the object is to identify and describe a cultural phenomenon) (Bernard, 2013). Many factors can determine the rationale for selecting a sample. The sample may demonstrate an extreme or deviant case, several cases may be selected because they demonstrate very different perspectives, a sample may be selected because of the intensity in which it exhibits certain features, or a sample may be selected because it is typical (Flick, 2009). The cases selected for this study reflected the latter type - two well established corporations steeped in history that represent the idea of “corporate America”. These firms were purposively selected because they represent typical corporate work environments comprised of cubicles and private offices.

**Snowball sampling.** Snowball sampling is a technique used to identify critical cases (Patton, 2002). This strategy queries people who know people, who know people, in discerning applicable cases for study. For this research, it was challenging to find sites willing to share employee time, internal documents, and proprietary information. As a result, snowball sampling was crucial in identifying possible cases. I sought assistance from interior designers, architects, colleagues, and professionals from my institution’s advisory board in identifying possible cases. An interior design colleague suggested I contact a mutual acquaintance who had just accepted a position with WellnessCorp and upon doing so, the acquaintance provided me with contact information for the Vice President of Facilities. Further, an advisory board member from my institution whose firm
holds the corporate interior design contract for VaporCorp suggested I communicate with his contact in facilities. Only by employing snowball sampling methods was I able to identify and secure the cases for this study.

The Cases, in Detail

The intent of this research was to develop an understanding of employees’ perceptions of working in an open office environment. As a former office planner, I was curious to see if much had changed since the 1980s and 1990s when I designed these types of spaces. The cases for this study, VaporCorp and WellnessCorp, were selected for two reasons:

1. they agreed to be studied
2. they represented traditional corporate office layouts evidenced by floors of employees in paneled cubicles and private offices

In preparation for this study, I toured Google’s headquarters and Cisco’s primary office in San Francisco, CA. The work environment at Google integrates thematic areas with playful elements as evidenced by a full replica of SpaceShipOne, a dinosaur skeleton, volleyball courts, and various food areas designed to accommodate informal meetings and individual focused work. The multi-building headquarters encourages employee integration between sites by providing outdoor courtyards meant to foster impromptu gatherings and bicycle transportation for traversing the 26 acre campus. While the Google environment was certainly an interesting spectacle, I knew that type of environment was characteristic of a unique organizational culture with purposeful anomalous intent. In contrast, Cisco’s newly remodeled 110,000 square foot office suite presented a sophisticated open working environment. Designed for collaboration, employees are situated in
teams, sitting at high tables without any screening or partitions. Managers are integrated within their teams and are non-distinguishable from other members of the group - there are no private offices. A variety of meeting spaces, including yurts and cabanas, foster interaction and casual engagement.

Although the work environments at Google and Cisco offered insight into innovative ways of working, the extrapolation of such flat hierarchical structures and open collaborative workspaces to other geographic locations, particularly the east coast, was questionable. Yet the preponderance of corporations struggling to maintain a competitive market advantage is evidenced by the marked increase in transforming the physical workspace to facilitate cultural change. Some corporate giants such as H.J. Heinz Company in Pittsburgh, PA radically overhauled their headquarters from traditional cubicle/office layouts to an open collaborative environment with desks and low screens known as *benching*, while others are piloting these types of workspaces with specific departments, floors, or subsidiaries.

I initially contacted WellnessCorp and VaporCorp assuming they worked within the traditional office design paradigm of offices and cubicles. While these conventional layouts were prevalent, both companies were experimenting with prototypical floors of innovative, collaborative workspaces. Each differed somewhat in their approach, but both were eager for feedback regarding employees’ perceptions of productivity and collaboration in these new types of work environments. The similarity of case selection, while coincidental, proved instrumental to this research and offered rich insight into the physical response to the pressures of changing organizational cultures.
To fully appreciate and contextualize the research findings, I offer background information including general descriptions of both companies, insight into the architecture that houses them, and an overview of the interior work environment.

**VaporCorp.** The first case, VaporCorp, is the parent company of six manufacturing enterprises distributing consumer goods domestically and internationally. They employ approximately 10,000 workers in multiple locations throughout the US. Listed on the National Historic Register, VaporCorp’s main corporate headquarters building (known as HQ), is an International Style, three story structure in the suburban campus setting of a major east coast city (see Figure 3). Designed in 1958 by Master architect Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, the building and its serene tree-lined setting were celebrated as “an archetype of modern suburban office development” (Harding-Sadler & McDearmon Witt, 1999, p. 1). Described as a building worthy of architectural distinction, the timeless and sophisticated structure features a multi-story piazza, reflecting pool, and formal gardens (Harding-Sadler & McDearmon Witt, 1999).

During my initial visit to VaporCorp, I was struck by the formality and symmetry of the building and surrounding landscape. On approach to the building, I passed by a formal tree and hedge lined reflection pond. This pond, visible from one side of the building adds a zen-like aura to the entry of this headquarters. This natural setting, juxtaposed with the concrete form of the building offered the impression of guarded formality with a quiet reserve.
This perception continued as I entered the building. The spacious and bright lobby welcomes employees and guests with a classic style and contemporary decor that overlooks the central atrium (see Figure 4). This space hosts community functions, serves as a museum space for rotating exhibits, and is the central hub for the headquarters. Also located on this floor are a coffee shop, lounge areas for informal gatherings, a large conference facility, “Executive Row”, and a central escalator leading to the upper two floors of office space.

The interior three floors of the headquarters building are connected by a central escalator where chance meetings with employees and informal conversations take place. Glass partitions enclose the entrances to each floor from the central lobby and escalator thereby elongating views to the outside (see Figure 5). Offices with glass front walls that enable natural light to permeate the interior spaces on the floor, line the perimeter of the
building. Cubicles with panel heights of approximately 60” are situated in the interior of each floor with the exception of administrative workstations that have a low panel with a counter. All floors in this building (HQ) are similar in layout and configuration (refer to Appendix D for a typical floor plan of this building).

Figure 4. Lobby of VaporCorp headquarters. The glass wall dividing the public from the private is evidenced by the double door in the background. Permission courtesy of VaporCorp and AECom.

Figure 5. View of the cubicle environment from the escalator at VaporCorp. Permission courtesy of VaporCorp and AECom.
VaporCorp relocated its headquarters from New York City in 2003 and with the acquisition of additional subsidiaries, the parent company soon found the need for additional space. This compelled them to lease six floors in what is considered the “Annex” building (HQA) across the street (see Figure 6). This building is arranged similar to the headquarters building in that private offices line the perimeter whereas cubicles are situated in the interior. Unlike the headquarters building, the central core supports building mechanicals with a central elevator connecting each floor (refer to Appendix E for a typical floor plan of HQA). To maintain a sense of unity between the two sites, an old underground connector was renovated to shelter employees from the weather as they travel between the buildings. All floors in this building accommodate VaporCorp employees and follow the traditional cubicle/office layout with the exception of the third floor which houses Innovate, a new subsidiary company located on a prototypical floor designed to foster collaboration and innovation (refer to Appendix F for the floor plan of Innovate). This floor features an open kitchen, multiple areas for small or large gatherings, and low paneled individual cubicles for all employees except vice presidents who sit in large private offices.

Figure 6. Exterior photograph of VaporCorp’s Annex Building. Retrieved from Google Maps.
WellnessCorp. The second corporation, WellnessCorp, is a healthcare service provider employing approximately 19,500 workers in the northeast United States. In stark contrast to the tranquil setting of VaporCorp, WellnessCorp is the primary tenant of a downtown skyscraper with 29 floors of office space situated above two stories of retail shops. Designed by Stubbins Associates in 1988, this granite and glass structure was built as the final development project in the city’s revitalization effort. With influences from the International Style, the building has been described as having an “elegant clunkiness” (Miller, 1985, p. 1). Originally the owners wanted a structure taller than what was eventually built - upwards of 40 or more stories. City planners condoned the idea stating the height would overwhelm and distort the city skyline. To compensate for the lost height, the architects integrated a 13 story mast protruding from the upper most part of the roof structure. With a pyramidal stepped back profile and it’s soaring mast, the WellnessCorp headquarters is a distinctive landmark that adds a unique silhouette to the city’s urban landscape (Toker, 2007) (see Figure 7).

The initial visit to WellnessCorp contrasted that of VaporCorp in that I navigated city streets to find parking and upon entering the headquarters building, I was surrounded by shoppers and pedestrians patronizing the two stories of retail shops and restaurants. A central security station was the gatekeeper for access to the elevators and only after checking in with the guard was I escorted to the bank of elevators. This chaotic setting was loud, energetic, and crowded leaving me with a sense of welcomed quiet once I reached my destination floor. The grandeur of the building’s height, combined with the
hubbub of the city streets and building lobby offered an impression of centrality and im-
portance.

The 29 floors of this building are accessed by a central bank of elevators. The
building’s central core houses the structure’s mechanicals with office space occupying
each of the four sides. Private offices are located on the interior and exterior with execu-
tives in corner suites. Double sided cubicle runs vary from 6 to 14 people and are ar-
ranged along the interior but because offices do not occupy all of the exterior perimeter,
natural light filters in to the cubicle area (refer to Appendix G for a typical floor plan of
this building). Furniture and office configurations on all floors of this building are

Figure 7. Exterior photo of WellnessCorp. Image from HoboJones with licensing permission from http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en. Image has been altered - exterior signage identifying WellnessCorp’s identity has been removed.
somewhat similar with the exception of the 12th and 24th floors. The 12th floor was recently redesigned with low 42” high panels to foster collaboration. Cubicle layouts on this floor are similar to other floors, the only difference is the lower panel height and managers sitting in open plan (refer to Appendix H for a floor plan of this floor). The 24th floor is an innovative prototypical design fostering collaboration with open desks (i.e. benching), break out or huddle rooms, a large central kitchen, and informal gathering spots. All employees on this floor sit at a desk that either faces the window or another employee. Managers are in low height paneled cubicles while directors are in private offices (refer to Appendix I for a floor plan of this floor).

Increased need for space due to acquisitions prompted WellnessCorp to lease space in the adjacent renovated retail building across the street (see Figure 8). Similar to VaporCorp, a pedestrian bridge spanning the street between the buildings links occupants of one site to the other. The furniture and office layouts for each floor of the retail building feature the traditional high walled paneled cubicles with managers and above in private offices.

In the 1990s WellnessCorp merged with another large healthcare service provider and assumed occupancy of buildings at it’s Hillsite campus, approximately three hours from the downtown headquarters (see Figure 9). At Hillsite, traditional configurations are prominent but, similar to the headquarters building, several floors have been converted to open collaborative work environments as evidenced by one floor of 42”H panels and another showcasing a benching environment.
The similarities between VaporCorp and WellnessCorp are quite remarkable.

Both are housed in typical office buildings yet one is in a suburban office park and the other is situated in an downtown urban setting. Both companies utilize cubicles and pri-
vate offices to house their employees and each is testing innovative collaborative environments.

**Data Collection**

**Pilot study.** In 2014 this study was pilot tested with a small architectural firm of 26 employees. Approval was granted from the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board as an exempt study. A grounded theory method analyzed data collected from 13 employee interviews, observation, and photographs of the office environment. Although limitations of time (I was only permitted onsite 2 days) prevented sufficiency, this small study helped refine interview questions and identified themes that were then integrated into the questions used to guide this research. Themes emerged across the domains of power, status, and culture and included surveillance, spatial allocation decisions, spatial hierarchy, and organizational knowledge (knowing what’s going on). Assimilation of these themes is evidenced in questions for the larger study such as:

- Have you been promoted?
  
  If yes, did you change cubicles?
  
  If yes, who reassigned you to your new workspace?

- What factors influence the decision making process for assigning workstations?

- As an outsider, how would I be able to tell (based on cubicle location and amenities) the rank of the employee?

No specific question regarding surveillance was asked of all employees for this study but when employees conveyed the idea of “being watched” or “watching” I urged them to elucidate their perceptions regarding this topic.
**Procedural overview.** Initial introductory meetings were scheduled with VaporCorp and WellnessCorp to ascertain expectations, goals, and parameters around conducting the study. After receiving consent from both companies, I obtained signed letters of permission. My primary contacts, both in the facilities departments, expedited these permissions and assisted in planning the activities for my visits.

I was onsite two weeks at VaporCorp and during my visit, I interviewed 58 employees, observed and photographed work environments, and participated in two social gatherings - one a tour of a newly renovated historical museum funded largely by VaporCorp and sponsored by the facilities department, the other a lunch at a local restaurant to celebrate an employee’s birthday. At WellnessCorp, I spent one week onsite at the headquarters location conducting 21 interviews, observing, and photographing the work environment. During my initial introductory meeting at WellnessCorp, facilities managers expressed interest in obtaining feedback from employees regarding the newly renovated 24th floor - an innovative collaborative environment integrating open desks (i.e. benching) with low walled cubicles and huddle rooms. It was not until I concluded the onsite interviews that I realized I had not met with anyone from that floor. To remedy the omission, my facilities contact arranged telephone interviews with nine employees from the 24th floor. Additionally, I travelled to the WellnessCorp Hillsite location - approximately three hours from the downtown headquarters - and spent one day conducting interviews with six employees, observing, and photographing the work environment at that location.

**Interviews.** Rich and compelling data can be garnered through face-to-face interviewing. This process gives individuals the opportunity to communicate their stories,
beliefs and views on a particular topic. Open-ended questions foster engagement between the participant and interviewers permitting conversational tangents that may lead to unimagined discoveries. Rubin & Rubin (2005) categorize qualitative interviews across two dimensions - breadth of focus and subject of focus. Given the nature of this study, the interviews conducted were broadly focused and concentrated on meanings and frameworks (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

For this study, an ethnographic approach guided the interviews. Ethnography is an approach whereby the researcher examines the culture of a given group in its natural setting over a period of time (Creswell, 2003). Participant interviews, observations, and researcher immersion provide rich and meaningful descriptions related to the individuals and culture (Patton, 2002). Although full researcher immersion was outside the scope of this study, interviews were an important vehicle for eliciting employees’ views, beliefs and values related to their work environments.

Interview questions were open ended and related to the concepts of power, status and culture. VaporCorp did not review the questions prior to the interviews but WellnessCorp requested a draft copy of the questions. A subsequent meeting with the facilities manager at WellnessCorp refined the wording of several questions (i.e. ‘status’ was changed to ‘rank’, numerical age ranges were translated to generational years of birth). I made modifications to specific questions to quell the concerns of the WellnessCorp managers without compromising the intent and desired solicitation of information from employees for this study.
Interview participants were selected by my contacts in the facilities department. At VaporCorp, a systematic random selection process was used. Starting with a base of 819 employees at both the headquarters and annex locations, employees were sorted and grouped by function to ensure representation across departments. Each participant was numerically coded (0-6) and a random number (2) was used for participant selection. E-mail invitations were distributed to 116 employees and 59 agreed to participate. The interview schedule was created internally based on employee availability.

At WellnessCorp, a global e-mail was distributed by my facilities contact to department managers at the headquarters and the Hillsite locations. Selection was not random as managers selected employees to participate. One employee told me why he was selected:

I believe in being honest and upfront, and my boss, when she told me about this, she said I'm just handpicking a few people because I believe you will be honest. I believe you will be honest in a constructive way.

I interviewed 21 employees onsite at the downtown headquarters location, conducted 9 telephone interviews with employees from the 24th floor, and met with 6 employees at the Hillsite location.

**Demographics.** Demographically, there were similarities between the employees I interviewed at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp. Members of the GenX generation outnumbered Millennials and Baby Boomers, more than half of those interviewed had tenure of 11 years or more, and approximately half of the employees I interviewed sat in cubicles with panels 60”H or greater. Differences between the two companies were evidenced by WellnessCorp having more employees with 2 years or less of service, there were more
females than males interviewed but at WellnessCorp that ratio was much higher, and while WellnessCorp has employees sitting at desks with screens (i.e. benching), VaporCorp did not utilize such configurations. Finally, the number of VaporCorp employees sitting in private offices far exceeded that of WellnessCorp. Table 3 details the demographic data for both cases. The demographic composition of those interviewed is valuable in providing context for the forthcoming narrative.

Table 3

*Demographic composition of interview participants for VaporCorp and WellnessCorp.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>VaporCorp</th>
<th>WellnessCorp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millennial (Age 0-34)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen X (Age 35-49)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomer (Age 50-68)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>VaporCorp</th>
<th>WellnessCorp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>VaporCorp</th>
<th>WellnessCorp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 years</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ years</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Workspace</th>
<th>VaporCorp</th>
<th>WellnessCorp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desk/Table</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cubicle with 42”-48”H panels (open collaboration)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cubicle with 60”H or greater panels</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* VaporCorp: n=58; WellnessCorp: n=37.

*Interview sessions.* VaporCorp did not permit the interviews to be recorded and because researching this site required a hotel stay, it was not financially feasible to employ a notetaker. For this reason, I was solely responsible for recording interview re-
sponses while maintaining participant engagement. When recording an interview is not possible, Werner (1999) puts forth that the researcher should listen carefully, record as soon as the conversation is over, review and refine the notes at the end of each day, and transcribe the interview. To facilitate note taking, I formatted the interview guide adding space after each question for recording the responses and photocopied one interview guide for each participant. During each session, I recorded participants’ responses as closely as possible and after each interview, I re-read my notes clarifying incomplete thoughts and noting direct quotes. Each VaporCorp interview session was transcribed at the end of the day.

Wellness Corp did permit the recording of interview sessions. To that end, responses to questions and voice intonations were captured verbatim. The interview process, however, was similar to that of VaporCorp. After initial introductions, I asked each participant for permission to record the session with the understanding that the recordings would not be shared or distributed. No one refused to be recorded. The nine telephone interviews conducted with employees from the 24th floor were also recorded using a speakerphone and separate recording device. During each session, I noted on the interview guide key points that I wanted to remember. At the conclusion of each session, I compiled notes detailing concepts that emerged from the conversations and listed follow up questions that needed clarified.

Grounded theory informed the process of data collection. The robustness of grounded theory is in the continual analysis of the data during collection. As data was amassed, I reviewed interview responses, photographs, and memos conveying thoughts
and impressions. This continual review enabled me to refine and direct the process as the study progressed. It was particularly helpful in refining and redirecting interview questions.

To elucidate, at VaporCorp, I presented the cartoon mentioned in the Introduction to participants and asked them to respond. Many were confused by the message, had very little to offer by way of commentary, and thought the situation presented in the parody was dated. For these reasons, after the first day, I deleted this question from the interview guide. At WellnessCorp, insight into the newly renovated 12th and 24th floors prompted additional questions regarding people’s perceptions of such an open working environment. This information then informed additional questions asked during the telephone interviews with employees from the 24th floor such as “What were your initial thoughts before moving to this floor?” and “What was the biggest challenge you faced when you first moved in?”. Further, memos recorded follow up questions and possible meanings for what was reported. An excerpt from one such memo read “…since it’s seemingly a culture of office versus cubicle (status seems evidenced by those who have it) - I added a question ‘Do you aspire to have an office’ to those I interview who sit in a cubicle.”

Theoretical sufficiency is a term used to describe the saturation within a category (Charmaz, 2006). Sufficiency is achieved when new data no longer presents novel contributions to a category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Because I had limited time with each employee, sufficiency was dependent on the number of employees interviewed. Sufficiency at VaporCorp occurred on or about the beginning of the second week of interviews while at WellnessCorp it was noticed after the third day of onsite interviews. New infor-
information was gleaned from the telephone interviews conducted with WellnessCorp employees from the 24th floor and sufficiency with that group occurred after the eighth session.

Photographs. Photographs can provide significant data because they capture and document a moment in time. Symbolic interactionism supports the use of photographs in research as is evidenced by Gateson and Mead’s hallmark 1942 ethnographic study of the Balinese culture (Flick, 2009). In this study the researchers recognized that photographs were not simply reproductions of reality but were “presentations of reality, which were influenced by certain theoretical assumptions” (Flick, 2009, p. 240). In 1963 Mead summarized the use of photographs in social research as tools that provide a detailed account of the facts while presenting a holistic view of lifestyles and conditions (Flick, 2009).

This study utilized photos of the work environment to document characteristics related to status, culture, power, and value. Photos sessions were scheduled during times when employees were out to lunch or gone for the day. I was escorted to all floors by my facilities contacts at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp. The facilities manager at the WellnessCorp Hillsite location also accompanied me as I photographed that facility. Photos at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp were taken after interviews had commenced. Photographing after interviews had started enabled me to be mindful of capturing images representative of what I was being told in the interview sessions.

Document review. Another ethnographic method is the analysis of documents to enhance the understanding of culture and institutional routines (Flick, 2009). Promo-
tional materials, namely the corporate mission and value statements from the companies' websites, were used to ascertain insight into organizational culture. Building floor plans and furniture layouts were compared with employees’ rank, workstation size, location, and amenities to provide an understanding of hierarchical furniture allocation within the context of organizational culture and status.

Data Analysis

**Grounded theory.** Using grounded theory to guide data analysis, the researcher moves from “lower level concepts to higher-level theorizing” (Patton, 2002, p. 491). By so doing, collected data is reviewed and coded (open and axial coding), open and axial codes are analyzed for emerging patterns and themes (selective codes), and finally selective codes are synthesized into theory. This process of analysis promotes continual exchange between researcher and data as raw data is transformed from words, phrases, and images to a meaningful philosophical stance.

As data was transcribed and coded, frequent comparisons across interviews and cases noted similarities, differences, and anomalies. Often annotations were scribbled in the margins of coding sheets to capture thoughts at the moment of analysis and were later used for open and axial coding. Emerging themes and possible theoretical underpinnings were captured in memos which contributed to the development of theory building and synthesis.

**Coding.** Coding is the foundation of grounded theory data analysis. In essence it is “labeling phenomena” by deconstructing and conceptualizing, formulating categories across common themes, and constructing theory from patterns that emerge from the data.
There are three stages of coding in grounded theory:

1. Open coding - the text is read to identify relevant categories
2. Axial coding - categories are refined and related
3. Selective - the central category is identified and related to other categories (Gibbs, 2007)

While the original intent was to code the data as it was collected, coding actually began after the data was collected and transcribed. During and after data collection, memos and journal entries captured thoughts and nascent ideas pertaining to insights from participant interviews and observations of each site. These memos were an integral part of synthesizing the data and identifying emergent themes.

Case records. Case records arrange raw data whereby “information is edited, redundancies are sorted out, parts are fitted together, and the case record is organized at a level beyond that of the raw case data” (Patton, 2002, p. 449). The process of building case records for VaporCorp and WellnessCorp began with sorting and organizing the massive amount of interview data from the transcriptions (see Figure 10). The resulting data were uploaded to two comprehensive spreadsheets (one for VaporCorp and one for WellnessCorp) organized by interviewee (listed as a representational code i.e. WC1, WC2, VC1, VC2 etc.), age of the employee (as defined by generation), gender, tenure, office/cubicle, manager/non-management, building/floor, and categorized by interview questions (see Figure 11). By marshaling the extensive amount of raw data into a thorough and orderly format, these documents served as the primary case records for this study. These documents were extremely useful in cross-referencing information in that I could quickly reference a participant’s response to a specific question.
### Initial Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WC21</th>
<th>Initial Coding</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>plenty of space communication among team everyone is relatively close</td>
<td><em>What are one or two aspects of your workspace that you value the most?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td>very typical corporate space</td>
<td>Everything is there, I think I do have plenty of space. We have some flexibility to lean on team members. There is some communication amongst the team as far as initiatives. Everybody is relatively close. We have some IM functionality. If you don’t want to get up and chat, you can just IM them quickly. It’s very functional. I would say it’s a very typical corporate space based on where I’ve been. I’ve done a couple of other companies locally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Management Cube</td>
<td>it’s mine no one else uses it not sharing It’s my own little world</td>
<td><em>Do you have a sense of ownership towards your workspace?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yeah. It’s mine. No one else uses it. There’s not sharing. It’s my own little world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10.** Initial coding from an interview with a non-management employee from WellnessCorp. Letter codes correlate to interview question categories established to organize the case record.

**Figure 11.** Example of the case record for VaporCorp.
Interviews. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), open coding can begin with analyzing the data line by line, by sentence or paragraph, or by examining an entire document. Originally the words and phrases uploaded to the case record were used to code. I soon realized, however, that dissecting the data in this way diluted the rich context behind the interview responses. For that reason, codes for this study were generated by appraising phrases and paragraphs for each transcribed interview. When employing such a strategy, it is suggested that researchers continually ask “What seems to be going on here?” and “What makes this document the same or different from the previous one I coded?” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 72). Phrases and quotes representative of specific concepts for both VaporCorp and WellnessCorp were highlighted or underlined and during open coding, the data was organized and put into categories based on similarity and sameness (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Excerpt from an interview with a non-management employee from WellnessCorp. Example of open coding sheet.
Memos were written and used to document themes and categories as they emerged from the text. Coding sheets detailed all coding decisions from axial codes to selective codes (refer to Appendix J for code sheets). In the course of axial coding, categories focused on the most significant and frequent codes reducing them down into further subgroups and categories (Charmaz, 2006) (see Figure 13). Axial coding identified reoccurring themes and outliers as they related to the research settings (Figure 14). During the open coding and axial phases, codes were separated from the context. It was not until the selective coding phase when codes related back to the setting (Charmaz, 2006). Even during the writing of this narrative, codes continued to be refined.

**Theme: It's looks good...**

"I mean it's new. When you get off the elevator, it's bright. Kind of energetic. A lot of other elevators because we're on the 26th floor. So I'll ride up and I know this building. Some of the other floors are kind of dingy and older."

**Theme: Territoriality...**

"So as much as I can. I do try to not go too much into my neighbor's space. So I try to really keep it as my little area."

**Theme: Social**

"I don't know how often people eat... People I do see them still bring their lunch don't eat in the kitchen. They'll make use of the space. We've had a lot of food days amongst the floor even tomorrow they're doing a big Thanksgiving celebration floor-wide."

"And we have different departments on our floor, so it's kind of a good way to get to know people. You really do see a lot of people regularly. More so than if you're all tucked away in little cubes."

---

**The Privileged**

Employees who work in that space take it for granted when they work there everyday

The space was given to them – it was (is) a privilege, they have no ownership - there is no hunger for the space.

---

*Figure 13.* Screen capture of axial coding. Color coding initially represented case distinction (i.e. VaporCorp, WellnessCorp, 24th Floor etc.) but was later abandoned when I realized I didn’t need to compartmentalize responses based on case.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>axial codes</th>
<th>selective codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I just got used to it</td>
<td>The Quintessential Workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dismal Workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Good Cube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can hear you!</td>
<td>Sense of Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It's Mine, Mine, Mine!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't Get too Comfortable, I Can Say You!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Us versus Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The class system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Coveted Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I deserve it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It starts at the top...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New isn't always better.</td>
<td>The Changing Organizational Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Times are Changing...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Out with the old...In with the new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Our personas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Move from the “Hive” to the “Den” (Duffy)</td>
<td>The Collaborative Workspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Move from the “Hive” to the “Den” (Duffy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s all about collaboration...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The hive (12th floor &amp; EEB Campus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narcissism is the Mother of Invention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I just got used to it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of individuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Privilege</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better you than me!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s a Distraction...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s looks good...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Territoriality...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SSSSSS!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I can hear you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New isn’t always better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Allocation of Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s crowded in here!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The best laid plans...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The deception in the rule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 14.** Excerpt of final selective coding. Color coding was used as an organizational tool.

**Photograph and document coding.** Photograph data were assessed and evaluated for representativeness of organizational characteristics and culture. Because I began the site visits with the interviews, my selection of what to photograph was guided by my curiosity to see firsthand what I was being told by the employees. While the initial premise of photo documentation was to discover, the photographs instead reinforced the interview data.

Branding materials, promotional materials, and floor plans were reviewed and used to assess organizational culture and hierarchy. These documents were analyzed in-
dependently and then compared with the interview and photographs. While branding materials were beneficial in understanding the firm’s self-image, the floor plans and photographs were useful in identifying displays of status, culture, and power.

Validity

Validity is truth, “interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (Hammersley, 1990, p. 57). Constructivist and interpretivist approaches to qualitative research have introduced new perspectives on evaluating quality. Lincoln and Guba (1986) call for a divergence from positivist criteria and put forth “credibility as an analog to internal validity, transferability as an analog to external validity, dependability as an analog to reliability, and confirmability as an analog to objectivity” (p. 76-77). Wallendorf and Belk (1989) and Schein (2004) proffer strategies for assessing trustworthiness in qualitative research with the most pertinent to this research including triangulation, member checks, debriefing by peers, reflexive journaling, and assuming a consultatory role.

Triangulation. For each case, triangulation across sources was realized by interviewing managers versus non-managers, employees from various departments with varying years of tenure and experience, those who sit in traditional cubicles, private offices, and open desks, across two similar purposive cases. Triangulation of data collection methods included interviews, observation, and document review while data analysis compared emerging themes across these methods.

Member checks. While the intent of member checks is to allow participants to comment on the written interpretation, I had to be mindful of employee’s time. I did not
have them review the written narrative but instead employed a variation of member checks during the interviews by repeating phrases back to employees in my own words interpreting meaning from an etic perspective. Employees either agreed or clarified my interpretations which then fostered meaningful dialog and insight.

**Debriefing by peers.** Coding rationale and emergent themes were reviewed by two peers who were familiar with the study but not directly involved in data collection. Feedback resulted in clarifying the representation of the coding materials. Each colleague reviewed raw data, open, axial, and selective coding and both concurred that the themes made logical sense and had no additions, deletions, or modifications to the coding themes. The final document was read for clarity by two colleagues and resulted in clarification of content, synthesis of information, and suggestions for contextual linking between topics.

**Reflection journaling.** Because an interpretivist perspective calling for researcher engagement guided this research, I captured personal interpretations and musings of what I was learning and observing in the field in a reflection journal. Differing from the field notes I collected to document factual occurrences, reflection journals are beneficial in identifying researcher bias and formulating tentative explications of theoretical underpinnings.

**Consultatory role.** According to Schein, (2004), “to gather valid cultural data the “subjects” must come to view themselves in some sense as “clients: who will be helped in some way by the research process” (p. 208.). When I first met with VaporCorp and WellnessCorp, we agreed that I would share coded data, stripped of any identifying
information, with my facilities contacts. During those initial meetings I established a consultatory role in promising to conduct a study that would generate feedback and ultimately help each organization.

Because of the spatial focus, cultural assessment was dependent on my observations, engagement with employees (outside the formal interviews), interviews, photographs, floor plans, and corporate websites. Jex and Britt (2008) stress the importance of internal informants in making sense out of what is being observed. In discerning organizational culture, my facilities contacts served in this capacity by offering insight on discrepancies or clarity on issues raised in the interviews and during field observations.

Summary

This study adopted a grounded theory methodology using two purposive cases: VaporCorp, a manufacturing parent company and WellnessCorp, a healthcare service provider. These cases can be considered critical in that their work environments typify corporate America. Similarities between the cases included their response to housing employees in private offices and cubicles and their prototypical floors meant to foster collaboration and team work. Differences included their physical setting, business type, geographic location, and number of employees.

Methods for this study included interviews with employees, observation, and document review of websites and floorplans. Validity was evidenced in methodological and data triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks. Grounded theory guided data analysis with themes emerging from the data and continually refined. The next chapter details the research findings across the five major themes of The Changing Or-
CHAPTER THREE
Findings

In presenting case study research, Patton (2002) suggests writing a narrative that is descriptive and provides the reader with an appreciation of the uniqueness of each case. The narrative in this section proffers an account of employees’ perceptions of the office work environments at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp based on emergent themes from the data. Throughout this discussion, distinct characteristics of each case are highlighted while similarities and differences offer critical discernment of how each company addresses spatial issues within the physical work environment. Chronicled thematically, insights into the changing organizational landscape, the quintessential workplace, hierarchy and status in the work environment, the collaborative workspace, and power and space, disclose employee attitudes across the constructs of culture, power, and status.

The Changing Organizational Landscape

“...have them retire them so you can bring new blood and make the transition much better... you become more innovative because you get fresh ideas.”
— WellnessCorp Employee

Corporate personas. The most significant factor in determining corporate culture is understanding how the organization fits within it’s market and the manner by which it addresses issues related to the business environment (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). How a company responds to matters of product, competition, customers, and technology, frames its values and mission while informing organizational culture (Moleski & Lang in Wineman, 1986). The current organizational landscape and corporate culture at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp are precipitated by changing leadership, product redefinition, increased competition, and external pressures. These factors have informed public image,
modified internal processes, and transformed organizational structures as evidenced by their corporate doctrines (see Appendix K for VaporCorp and Appendix L for Wellness-Corp).

Organizational culture is the foundation for placing the other emergent themes from this research in context. The mission and values statements for both VaporCorp and WellnessCorp were used to inform the assessment of each culture. VaporCorp’s doctrines focus on leadership, external issues, consumers, and shareholders putting forth values related to integrity, trust, and quality. WellnessCorp is a company in a state of transition with new leadership redefining the organizational structure and strategic goals. Their mission aligns quality service with customer satisfaction while their values emphasize an inclusive employee culture, stewardship, trust, integrity, and quality.

What’s it like there? During interview sessions, I asked employees to describe the organizational culture and to then explain how the culture is manifested in the office environment. I kept the interview responses from each company separate to allow insight into each unique culture. Hundreds of phrases were coded and the emergent themes related to the culture at VaporCorp were:

- **organizational personality** (fun, cliquish)
  “...everyone’s friendly”

- **organizational drivers** (compliant, reactive, risk adverse)
  “used to doing business the old fashioned way – ‘a red neck farmer doing business on a handshake’”

- **structure** (hierarchical, good old boys, territorial, status)
  “…it’s very paternalistic”

- **innovation/change** (we’re evolving)
  “they’re making an effort”
When comparing the emergent cultural themes, personal observations, and informal conversations with corporate mission and value statements it was evident (despite the sometimes negative descriptors from employees) that these overarching statements permeated and informed the sentiments expressed by the employees. Table 4 details the alignment of VaporCorp’s cultural themes, employee descriptors, and corporate mission and values statements.

Interestingly, most employees considered the culture at Innovate, VaporCorp’s new subsidiary, to be unique and commented that it was fast paced, more personal, and less conservative (i.e. they can wear jeans) than VaporCorp. Several who work for Innovate offered: “we are unique”, “there are higher expectations on us - all eyes are on us”, “we are open to trying new things”, “they only get the best and brightest for Innovate”, and “We are part of something different which can be difficult”. They also commented that the physical work environment was evidence of VaporCorp’s corporate-wide innovation initiative, however management styles seemingly conflict as perceived expectations for performance and success are seemingly higher at Innovate.

While descriptors are helpful, to truly assess an organization’s culture, it should be done within a framework, model, or typology. One of the most popular is the O’Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell model whereby “cultures can be distinguished based on the predominant values that are reinforced within a particular organization” (Jex & Britt, 2008). This model proffers that organizational culture can be appraised and profiled across seven value dimensions by assigning high or low value to one or more of those dimensions (Jex & Britt, 2008).
Table 4

*Cultural Themes, Employee Descriptors of Organizational Culture, and Corporate Mission and Values at VaporCorp*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
<th>Representational Descriptors</th>
<th>Corporate Mission and Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Personality</td>
<td><em>Social:</em> fun/friendly/enjoyable/cliquish/nice/colllegial/sociable/comfortable/positive/community focused</td>
<td><em>Align with society</em> <em>Sharing with others</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Spirit:</em> morale/upright/conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Drivers</td>
<td><em>External:</em> regulations/compliant/competitive/good at what they do/reactive/</td>
<td><em>Satisfy customers</em> <em>Create substantial value for stakeholders</em> <em>Passion to succeed</em> <em>Integrity, trust, and respect</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Perceptions:</em> risk adverse/conservative/fear/afraid/learn from mistakes/hidden/sheltered/paranoid/ashamed/perfection/getting it right/elitist/intelligent/pride</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Expectations of Employees:</em> driven/passionate/motivated/vested/demanding/goal oriented/commitment/hard working</td>
<td><em>Satisfy customers</em> <em>Create substantial value for stakeholders</em> <em>Executing with quality</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
<td><em>Structure:</em> Hierarchical/Segmented/Levelism/Status/Territorial/Evaluative/controlling/power/control/formality/diverse/inclusive/homogenous/culture depends on department/dysfunctional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Operations:</em> bureaucratic/process oriented/accountable/efficiency/simplification/execution/internal communication</td>
<td><em>Satisfy customers</em> <em>Create substantial value for stakeholders</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation/Change</td>
<td><em>Change:</em> change/evolving/making an effort/improvement/restructuring and turnover/peaked/transition/Innovative/collaborative/team/cross disciplinary</td>
<td><em>Driving creativity into everything we do</em> <em>Invest in leadership</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What makes this model applicable to this research is its unique association between organizational culture and employee personality (Jex & Britt, 2008). Assessed across the pre-defined constructs of innovation, stability, respect for people, outcome orientation, attention to detail, team orientation, and aggressiveness, VaporCorp appears to have a culture that favors stability, (“conservative”, “risk adverse”), is outcome oriented, (“perfection”, “getting it right”), and values details, (“regulations”, compliance) (see Table 5). This informal analysis was completed based on observations, data collected from interviews, informal conversations, and by a process of elimination. To explain, VaporCorp’s environment is one that favors traditional work processes and while teaming is suggested at Innovate, corporate-wide teaming does not appear to be an existing (at the time of this study) priority. While employees reported a competitive spirit, I did not sense internal aggression or conflict toward each other and although employees seemed collegial, respect for employees was not at the forefront of the corporate message.

Interestingly, Vaporcorp values creativity and innovation and while evidence suggests they are fostering that mindset, employees report the organization is resistant to change and risk adverse. One employee told me that “management expects you to be innovative and creative” but that “[management] likes things done right the first time and you need to follow the rules”. Seemingly innovation is a goal of this organization but tradition and culture are potential roadblocks in its realization.
Table 5

**VaporCorp Cultural Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational culture dimension</th>
<th>Characteristics of the dimension</th>
<th>VaporCorp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>The extent to which an organization encourages employees to be innovative, seek out new opportunities, and take risks</td>
<td>Aspiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>The extent to which an organization emphasizes rules and values predictability</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for people</td>
<td>The extent to which an organization emphasizes mutual respect, fairness, and tolerance of differences among employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome orientation</td>
<td>The extent to which an organization encourages employees to take action and to strive for excellence in their work</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention to detail</td>
<td>The extent to which an organization encourages employees to be precise and detail-oriented in doing their work</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team orientation</td>
<td>The extent to which an organization emphasizes collaboration and teamwork among employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressiveness</td>
<td>The extent to which an organization encourages competition and aggressiveness among employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


At WellnessCorp, themes were similar to VaporCorp but descriptors covered a wider range of constructs. Cultural themes included:

- **organizational personality** (caring, work/life balance, values the employee)
  “I do think that the culture is that the company really wants to take care of its people”

- **organizational canons** (work for the good of the employee, high expectations)
  “the customer comes first”

- **organizational drivers** (come in and start sprinting, fairly transparent)
  “…very risk-adverse, if you will, very rigid with not taking risks, being afraid to make mistakes…”

- **organizational health** (no true culture here, competition issue is huge, uncertain)
  “I’m sorry I’m really, really struggling because the culture used to be better”
**organizational structure** (top down, successful and highly functional teams)
“I think that there are silos of departments…”

**innovation/change** (cutting edge, culture is shifting, constant state of transition)
“The culture right now is that of a company that is in transition, and it used to be the elite kid on the block. It's not anymore, and so you have this you have to work harder.”

Despite the expansive list of descriptors, it was challenging to get employees to discuss culture. Only after several reiterations of the question, (i.e. ‘how would you describe the organization to someone thinking of applying for a job?’) was I able to understand people’s perceptions of culture. Table 6 details the relationship of WellnessCorp’s cultural themes, employee descriptors, and corporate mission and values statements. Unlike Innovate, there was minimal distinction between the perceptions of culture from employees working on the innovative 24th floor and the other employees at WellnessCorp.

When assessed against O’Reilly et al’s model, WellnessCorp - evaluated across the same criteria as VaporCorp- seemingly has a culture that favors respect for people, (“values the employee”, “the company really wants to take care of its people”), is outcome oriented, (“do whatever it takes for the customer” “umbrella message is the customer comes first”), and has a team orientation (“good amount of collaboration”, “inter-departmentally”, “successful and highly functional teams”) (see Table 7). Transition, change, and transformation were recurrent cultural themes at WellnessCorp leading me to believe that while stability may be a goal, it is not part of the current organizational landscape. While I would be negligent to imply that WellnessCorp is not focused on details, it appeared to be an assumed trait and because of the teaming nature of the organization, aggressiveness was not a cultural characteristic.
Table 6

*Cultural Themes, Employee Descriptors of Organizational Culture, and Corporate Mission and Values at WellnessCorp*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent Themes</th>
<th>Representational Descriptors</th>
<th>Corporate Mission and Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Personality</td>
<td><em>Employee Value:</em> flexible/caring/values the employee/autonomy/work/life balance</td>
<td>People matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Morale:</em> it’s been a long time since people were excited/you can feel the excitement coming back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Diversity &amp; Inclusion:</em> very much about diversity and inclusion/inclusive</td>
<td>People matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Canons</td>
<td><em>Values and Ethics:</em> high expectations/demanding/put in the hours/everybody should work for the good of the employee</td>
<td>Stewardship Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mission:</em> big focus is on the customer/umbrella message is the customer comes first</td>
<td>Trust Integrity Customer Focused Collaboration Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Drivers</td>
<td><em>Expectations:</em> come in and start sprinting/stodgy/productive/fast paced/stressful/generational/structured/formal/very risk adverse/professional</td>
<td>Transparency: fairly transparent/communication is good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Transparency:</em> fairly transparent/communication is good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Health</td>
<td><em>Ambiguous:</em> no true culture here/there’s no distinction between departments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Organizational Health:</em> (competition) issue is huge/challenging/secure/stable/successful/uncertain/stressful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
<td><em>Structure:</em> top down/very hierarchical/matrix</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Compartmentalized:</em> everyone worked in silos/don’t collaborate across departments and functions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Collaborative/Team:</em> collaboration/successful and highly functional teams</td>
<td>Customer Focused Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation/Change</td>
<td><em>Innovative:</em> says they are one way but they are no where near there/wants to be innovative and collaborative, cutting edge/exciting/pioneer</td>
<td>Courage Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Changing:</em> culture is shifting/growth has driven the change/adjusting/constant state of transition</td>
<td>Courage Innovation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*WellnessCorp Cultural Assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational culture dimension</th>
<th>Characteristics of the dimension</th>
<th>WellnessCorp</th>
</tr>
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<td>Aggressiveness</td>
<td>The extent to which an organization encourages competition and aggressiveness among employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A few employees at WellnessCorp mentioned “innovation” as representative of the culture but most remarked about the ongoing changes. While innovation is listed as a core value, employees report a longstanding mantra of “we’ve always done it this way”.

As one employee shared:

WellnessCorp is an old company. At one time if you were here for 25 years you were a rookie. There were some real gray beards. It's changed a lot. Growth has driven that because the organization has grown so much. This organization probably has no more or no less [gray beards] than others I've seen. I don't think we're that stuck in the mud, but at the same time, there's a few things that are, oh we've always done it that way. You still hear that from time to time.

Some WellnessCorp employees indicated that the changing culture fostered innovation but others stated, “[management] says they are one way but they are no
where near there” and “culturally [we are] on the right path but not there yet”.

Despite the perceived slow progression in this area, the physical workspace on the
24th floor is a tangible symbolic nod toward the corporate value of innovation.

Both companies are working toward an innovative culture but based on information gleaned from interviews and personal observation, it is evident that it is not integral to their existing culture. Certainly there are representational manifestations of innovation but corporate wide adoption is still in its infancy.

**It starts at the top.** Leadership and culture are closely aligned and as such, the cultures at WellnessCorp and VaporCorp are in transition as employees acclimate to new leadership. VaporCorp’s CEO assumed the top leadership position in 2012 and Wellness-Corp’s CEO was installed in 2014. New leadership is a welcomed change for employees at both organizations as VaporCorp faces challenges related to regulatory issues and declining product market share, and WellnessCorp, once the sole healthcare service provider in the region, struggles with keeping customers as a major competitor began offering similar services in January 2015. Employee acceptance and enthusiasm has been favorable for both CEOs with one WellnessCorp employee going so far as to imply saviour-like qualities of their new leader:

...I think the biggest thing that happened recently, is the new CEO was just, he was honest for the first time. You're sitting in a room and you all know the answer. But nobody will say the answer, and he stepped up and just said it. And it's like you watched him get a round of applause and you thought, ‘There he is...That's the one.’

Another employee recognizes the shifting culture and attributes much of the change to the new CEO:
I've seen where 10 years ago, if you weren't able to work and you weren't able to be here every day consistently, then you weren't here because there were people down the street waiting to take your place because everybody wanted to work at WellnessCorp. Now...I think that the culture from the employee standpoint is more ... it's more entitlement focused than it is dedication, loyalty to the organization. I would say with the new CEO, I'm starting to see that shift back...So I think that that culture's starting to shift now. I think the new CEO has definitely put the focus back into, 'We need you to be happy while you're here but first and foremost you need to remember why you're here.'

The new leadership is transforming culture but there still remains a hierarchical structure. As a VaporCorp and WellnessCorp employee stated, “it's all set from the top down and there's all new leadership from the top down” and

From a culture perspective, I think there is a top-down mentality, not necessarily negatively. Orders come from upon high. Whether it’s right, wrong or indifferent, that’s not always shared, but it’s certainly what’s prescribed to be right for the organization and to move forward.

Hierarchy, despite it’s perceived negative connotations, adds structure and order to an organization - it’s offers security in knowing who is in charge. If it’s too restrictive, however, it can suffocate creativity and innovation as one VaporCorp remarked, “you always have to check with your boss and make sure you don’t step on toes”.

*Leadership, culture, & space.* Communication between leadership and employees is critical during organizational change (Milliken, 1987). When change is imminent, employees need timely and factual information to synthesize and predict how it will effect them (Sutton and Kahn, 1986). If information is unable to be shared, leaders should explain why it is not possible and offer a timeline for forthcoming updates (DiFonzo, Bordia, & Rosnow 1994).
The new executives at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp are working toward establishing their cultural philosophy and implementing spatial changes to reflect new corporate messages. The design intent of the Innovate space at VaporCorp was initiated by upper management sending the message of a shifting culture favoring collaboration. At WellnessCorp, a vice president mandated lowering the cubicle walls on the 12th floor to foster collaboration and top leadership was instrumental in promoting a collaborative culture in the design of the 24th floor. Despite the well-meaning intent behind the re-design of these spaces, perception from employees is that the mandate was top-down, the rationale and implementation was not well communicated, and there is superficial interest from executives on employee satisfaction. Several comments particularly highlight these concerns:

When they did this [redesigned the collaborative floor at the WellnessCorp Hillsite location], there was no feedback requested even from the employees...This is what you're going to do, boom, studies have shown that this is the best way, boom, now we do it, this is what you get. That goes both for what we have on the third floor, and the collaborate environment on the second floor. That was run through very poorly. There was nothing even asked or anything like that. It was just this is what it is, go at it. Have fun, and work.

... there was upper level management within WellnessCorp, we end up riding the same elevators. As I've gone up the elevator, this is right after we had moved in, the upper level management saw that the 24th floor was selected as far as a destination on the elevator. They said, ‘Oh, I see there's somebody going to the 24th floor.’ I said, ‘That would be me,’ and I said, ‘So what do you think about it?’ At the time I was still going through my ‘I need to adjust to this’ period, I basically said, ‘It's great. You should try it some time.’ I am still working here, so I guess they didn't hold that against me. It's funny because sometimes you get ... the edict comes down. This is what you're going to do, and I need a job. I'm going to deal with it, but do the upper levels really know what
you're going through? Of course not. They're still in their offices with closed doors and all that. I was just trying to send a subtle message. Maybe it wasn't so subtle, but I was trying to send a message that not everybody is adjusting on the same level... ‘It takes a period of time, and you should try it. Then you'd really see what it's like.’

and

Well, I think when people started hearing about it and then actually went up and looked at it, I think the timing of it was off because it happened right around the time some displacements were going. And in an employee’s mind ...they don't see the value, they see the cost. So, you just put in this shiny, cabinet counter thing, which how many people are going to use that? And all my friends just got let go. So, I think the correlation got missed. I think there's up dates that could absolutely be made, but I think there has to be … I think there needs to be a greater communication between the work forces and the actual design. I understand that the new thing is collaborative space or the new thing is low walls, but if you've got 10 people facing each other and they're all trying to do processing, now they feel like there's no privacy, and back in kindergarten, and mentally that starts to shut that productivity down.

finally

I do have to say when we were also moving to this floor space, they were like, "That's not fair. I have to sit at table. How come our executives up on 31, have these elaborate offices, if we do this we need to lead by example. How will they feel if they have a space like this and sit at a table?

Employees are adjusting to the mandates from top management, but evidence suggests that an empathetic sensitivity to the plight of employee adaptation would go a long way in conveying understanding and fostering goodwill. Overall, employees are cautiously optimistic that top management’s fresh ideas, innovative mantras, and contemporary visions will pilot VaporCorp and WellnessCorp to where they need to go. As one WellnessCorp employee stated, “...so we’re moving in the right direction but are we too fast? Maybe, but if we are not fast, we are going to have some challenges”.
**Times are changing.** With the changing leadership, and challenges facing the traditional business paradigms, it is understandable that during interview sessions with WellnessCorp and VaporCorp employees revealed companies in transition and a transforming organizational culture. As two WellnessCorp employees told me,

...we are in a transition period where we are trying to, from a company standpoint, keep our accounts because RivalCorp is competing with us and there is this big rivalry right now. I think people's pressers and stress have escalated extremely. Budgets are cut very, very tight to keep probably prices competitive... this year has been very difficult where people are asked to do a lot with little.

and

Okay, one thing I can tell you from my limited experience with WellnessCorp is I think there’s a lot of transformation that’s happened recently - at recently, I mean I’m happy to see all this transformation and there’s a lot of people who recognize that we cannot operate in exactly the same way we operated decades ago...

The ongoing transformation has resulted in redefining processes and learning new expectations. Turnover is evidenced at both companies as employees try to determine where and how they fit in the new structure. As one WellnessCorp employee shared,

it’s an organization in transition. It’s transforming the way the game is played. There has been...turnover. Not necessarily for negative reasons, I’m not trying to imply that, but just trying to get the right fit, build the right teams to support where they’re trying to go. Chaotic is a harsh word. I hesitate from using it. It’s ever changing, let’s put it that way.

While new leadership will inevitably bring about changes to processes, redefine expectations, and propel the companies is new directions, the transforma-
tion takes time - it is not immediate. I asked one employee at WellnessCorp if he thought the company could respond quickly to change. He responded,

Well, it is hard to turn an 18-wheeler around, isn't it? Of organizations our size, we're probably about average, maybe a little slower to respond...We're not complete dinosaurs, but it takes some time.

Slow progress can be perceived as a disconnect with leadership assuming a global perspective and employees actualizing day to day work. One WellnessCorp employee shared, “There's a major disconnect in our senior leadership and what we are. That's just the reality of it.”

Implementing a new leader’s vision can be challenging as ambiguous expectations, limited human capital, and changing physical spaces are manifested in employee stress. Stress occurs when there is an imbalance between expectations and the capability of humans to respond. The leadership and spatial changes evidenced at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp perpetuate stressors as employees struggle to assimilate the new rules, standards, and processes. Many employees referenced ‘stress’ when discussing organizational culture. Several told me,

Not only do we not have the manpower to keep up with everything that is coming our way, because the don't have any money to go externally so they are all keeping internally. I feel the strain. We work with every department in the company. It's just everybody is strained.

and

I think with the amount of transition, it’s stressful, put it that way. Some of it is good, some of it is difficult. Not to imply negativity again, it’s just a very, very dynamic change in the environment.

finally,

Change is hard, and I think that’s what a lot of people are experiencing. I don’t know the demographic here real well, but I get the impression there was a number of longstanding employees, and this is how WellnessCorp did it, and this is how we functioned,
and when you change that game, and try to take a company that was very, I want to say stagnant per say, but comfortable in their ways, and tried to run them in a different manner from what they’re used to, that’s just inherently difficult, and the amount of change is overwhelming for some people, not myself.

Stress can negatively affect employees to the point of fostering insecurity and paranoia - particularly in light of turnover. Multi-generational workforces with varying years of tenure (from a few months to 37 years) offer different perspectives on change, stress, and adaptation. Some believe because of the long tenured employees there is a culture of biding time until retirement, “... there's the culture of, I’m here because I have two more years and I have to retire”, while others see the retiring baby boomer generation as a means of starting new, “out with the old and in with the new”. Still others profess it’s not generational but merely the ability to adapt:

Just from my seat, I can't tell this for sure; because, I don't have as much visibility or understanding across the organization, but some of the folks who have left either voluntarily or otherwise were the kind of folks who found it difficult to be flexible or to collaborate. Those folks, it was like okay, we don't really have the time or the room for that.

While stress was an underlying theme, some employees viewed the changes as restorative and inspiring and welcomed the opportunities afforded by the transformations. One stated, “It’s a fresh outlook on things, and building to a brighter horizon, or future”. Several referenced the mandate to approach tasks in unconventional ways with one employee offering,

We're starting to think about things differently. We're being asked to think about things differently, let's put it that way. A lots changed in the last, just in the time I've been here, just two years. I've seen a lot of change. There have been some times we've, we're
certainly growing. There's people coming on all the time. We do have some people who have left us.

As change and transformation affect employees in various ways, each scrambles to regain control and find their niche within the organization. I equate this mindset to the children’s game of musical chairs - when the music stops (or the culture is well-established), employees don’t want to be left without a seat. Because of the unsettling and changing cultures at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp, I was curious to learn if employees had a sense of ownership or attachment to their desk, office, or cubicle.

**It’s mine, mine, mine!** Personalization, a term derived from the environmental psychology discipline, has come to mean the intentional enhancement, decoration, ornamentation, or refinement of an interior meant to reflect the personality of an individual (Sommer, 1974; Sundstrom, 1986). The very act of personalizing the workplace suggests individualized adornment of one’s workstation (i.e. photos of children or pets) which inherently fosters communication among employees. Personalization conveys a worker’s self identity as well as the “amount of freedom and control the organization allows the individual to exert over the workspace” (Sundstrom, 1986, p. 218). Conversely, personalization gives workers a sense of control over their work environment which could lead to organizational commitment and place attachment (Sundstrom, 1986).

There was a time when employees committed to one company until retirement and in turn companies took good care of their employees (i.e. salary, pensions, and lifelong healthcare). VaporCorp, in particular, is transitioning from this type of business model with baby boomers remembering the days when employees were taken care of un-
til and beyond retirement. Today, however, businesses are more fluid, employees are more transient, and employers less ardent in fulfilling the socio-spatial contract Vischer (2005) purports as the spatial reward for performance. As changing cultures influence the design of more open, collaborative workspaces, where people are allocated smaller individual spaces, I was curious to know if employees had a sense of connectedness to their environments and if so, to what extent did they personalize their desk, cubicle, or office. Surprisingly, given the cultural variability at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp, many employees stated they felt a sense of ownership toward their workspace and did personalize it at least minimally. Several reported,

People still want a place to call home but even if it is not assigned there is the understood “mine” – i.e. cafeteria seats in school – not assigned but you have your seat

I think it's just acceptance that this is your space, and this is what you do...

It's like your home. That's where you work. It's comfortable.

It’s mine. No one else uses it. There’s not sharing. It’s my own little world.

I'm very comfortable where I'm at. Like I said, it might just be because it's home to me. I've been here so long and in that area so long.

I have some photographs of my daughter and things like that.

Interestingly, one WellnessCorp employee told me there were policies against personalizing the workspace. He states,

I have [personalized his workspace]. WellnessCorp policy is not to personalize the space to a great degree so even though the company through human resources discourages that, certain personal items are still acceptable like family photos – and team support – but overall it’s frowned upon to personalize the space.
Despite the policy, I observed many signs of personalization at WellnessCorp and also at VaporCorp. Figure 15 is a manager’s office at VaporCorp. The “banana figure” is visible from the main corridor and set the fun and engaging tone for that corner of the floor. In addition to the figure, this employee elected to hang artwork and display musical instruments in his office. Figure 16 is an administrative cubicle at WellnessCorp that shows evidence of personalization in the Halloween decorations, name plate, calendar, and awards whereas Figure 17 - also a at WellnessCorp - displays sports team memorabilia.
Sundstrom (1986) reported, “personalization may give people a sense of control over their workspace, which might eventually lead them to feel attached to their organization, and the display of personal objects could actually contribute to commitment” (p.
With unsettling times, it is clear some employees believe the way to control chaos is through personalization.

**Don’t get too comfortable.** Despite the number of people who reported a connection to their workspace and a need to personalize, transitional and changing organizational cultures cultivate employee insecurity and angst. As has been stated, turnover is evident at both WellnessCorp and VaporCorp as one WellnessCorp employee reiterated, “lay-offs have been happening left and right”. Many communicated their disquietude within the context of ownership and personalization:

Somebody gave me some advice, probably about a year ago, that if your space is too personal, you have too much ... It's not my space. This is WellnessCorp's space. Do I want to see my daughter and remind myself why I work? Yes. Do I want everything that's surrounding me to feel like me? No, for that reason, I don't want to feel like that it is mine because it's not.

I work in HR and at the end of the day, I know that this is not my house. That is not my living room. I did not buy that chair. I did not pick that file cabinet and if tomorrow somebody orders you out, you're going to go because you weren't hired for that space, you were hired for a job.

Because at any given point in time I could be told I need to move so, ownership, I mean I take care of it but I know it's not mine. I mean, wherever they would move me is where I would be seated.”

...I have to just tell them [her employees] this is just work...this isn't your home. This is where we work. Yes we need to get comfortable here, but you can't get overly comfortable.

Still others recognize their vulnerability within the temporariness of today’s work culture:

I don't have more things on my desk than I can fit in the bag I brought to work.
You only know what could happen, and I'd rather just be able to pack my own bag and leave. That's just the way I operate.

I have some pictures but nothing's permanent.

As the cultural message continues to be engrained in the minds and hearts of the employees at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp, the sense of stability - particularly at WellnessCorp - should be reinstated. But various elements of work must be in harmony to truly realize forward progression. The physical work environment will need to respond to the changing needs of those it serves. Moving forward and working toward innovation requires that the physical work environment supports those efforts. Dated, traditional workspaces can be as archaic as the typewriter - while it still functions, it does not fully support the needs of today’s worker.

The Quintessential Workplace

“I've just come full circle...
here we are at the beginning again.”
WellnessCorp employee

Leaders with a succinct philosophy embody it in the design of the physical work environment (Schein, 2004). Design that is not reflective of the corporate message assumes the vision of the design team, facilities group, or other subunit tangent to the leader. The design of the workplace is dependent on the principles, beliefs, and culture of an organization which is largely influenced by the relationship between the environment and the user. Architects and designers incorporate knowledge from these constituents to inform their design while integrating organizational issues related to the physical work
environment including allocation of space, style of space, location of workers, adjacencies, corporate image, corporate hierarchy, and organizational values. They then translate these intangible elements into a physical environment that is seemingly aesthetically pleasing and functional for workers. Sometimes these designs are successful while others fall short of their intended purpose. As two WellnessCorp employees who sit on the 24th floor shared:

...I think there needs to be a greater communication between the work forces and the actual design. I understand that the new thing is collaborative space or the new thing is low walls, but if you've got 10 people facing each other and they're all trying to do processing, now they feel like there's no privacy, and back in kindergarten, and mentally that starts to shut that productivity down.

and

It's like us, we build software, right? I'm on the business team, so we have to talk to the end-users to deliver our capability for them and if we don't talk to the end-user and try to understand the problem they're trying to solve, whether something works and get their input, no matter how well or effective the system is, if the user doesn't like it, and it's not efficient for them, then we have failed to do our job. I think it's the same way, that design aspect that you have to really work with the end users to get it right.

Spatial messages integrated throughout the design of a work facility are received by various constituents and if effectively managed and directed, reinforce a leader’s message. As one WellnessCorp employee stated, “Your space is representative of you. So if it's outdated, the correlation would be, ‘Is your work outdated? Is your way of handling your customers outdated?’”.

The antiquated workplace. The issue of a dated work environment was a recurrent theme throughout the interviews - particularly from employees at WellnessCorp
where most of the 29 floors remain dated and old-fashioned. Several employees expressed discontent when I asked them to describe their work environment:

I think it's really a traditional sort of old-fashioned corporate work environment like you would expect to see in any; you know, that you've seen in movies, that you've seen anywhere... I bet if you were to come here twenty years ago about the layout, I doubt you've seen much change in this building.

and “...my workspace in general though, it's just dismal.”

Some employees commented on the homogeneity of the space while others remarked on the function and aesthetics of the workspace:

I think it looks still too sterile. It looks like we're just anybody else.

it’s old...dated, and boxy - it’s functional for what it needs to be done

and we’re talking about 20-plus-year-old cubes, relatively higher panels, which I’m okay with. That’s not necessarily the issue. Older carpet, yellow paint, it’s not very vibrant, it’s pretty bland. That’s all … and aged.

Other interesting sentiments that offered insight into the how employees describe their workplace include references to mazes and houses:

It's like a maze. You can't see what anybody's doing, it’s a high kind of maze making it very quiet to the point where you don't know who is or what they're doing behind the cubes.

...we are like ‘perfect cut houses’ right next to one another

The office environment often sets the stage for organizational culture. Yet despite various renovations not all employees sit in cubicles representative of an aspiring innovative culture. I asked employees from both companies how the organizational culture is represented in the physical work environment. A WellnessCorp employee stated:
We're changing, and we're not really doing a whole lot to change the workspace. Of all the places I've been to date, and I've had a few jobs, it is the most dated work environment. Our floor, I think, was kind of renovated to house us, and we inherited cubicles that look like they were at least 15 years old with stains on the walls, on the fabric and stuff like that. I don't think that the work environment or workspaces really kind of portray the culture that's kind of cutting edge, or this healthcare leader I don't think so.

Figures 18 and 19 are representative of this employee’s comments and illustrates the stained, dated appearance of the cubicle environment on her floor. Ceiling heights are low in this space enhancing the feeling of confinement and compartmentalization.

*Figure 18. Older cubicle environment at WellnessCorp.*
Dated environments were not limited to the cubicle environment at WellnessCorp. Office environments - particularly in the headquarters building are also dated. Figures 20 and 21 depict typical managers and directors offices with styling that dates to the 1990s. The vice president’s corner office that housed me during my visit was appointed with traditional, dated furnishings and fabrics - those I specified as a designer in the 1980s and 1990s (see Figure 22). Certainly it can be argued that traditional styling is timeless but the color palette combined with shiny brass accessories dated the office and was in keeping with the outdated cubicle environment just a few feet away (both spaces are on the same floor).
Figure 20. Manager’s office at WellnessCorp

Figure 21. Director’s office at WellnessCorp
The archetypal cubicle. Historical precedent is evidenced in the work environments at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp. As I toured the floors of both companies, I couldn’t help but notice the uniformity and indistinctness evidenced by the traditional cubicle environment - similar to those built in the 1980s and 1990s. The cubicles - particularly those at VaporCorp - were seemingly uniform in size and configuration implying the existence of corporate standards and rules for furnishings and equipment. At VaporCorp, cubicles integrated wood cabinetry including drawers, overhead storage, and a tall coat closet that is valued by many I interviewed, with seated height privacy panels (see Figures 23 and 24). Front panels are lower with administrators having a small counter. Name plates are affixed to the outside of each workstation. Interesting, when I asked employees what their favorite workspace was in the building, several referenced the “luxury cubes” where the lower side of the workstation fronts the windows with a view of the reflection pond or grounds (see Figure 25). Cubicle interiors have a rounded corner work surface for a computer monitor (see Figure 26).
Figure 23. Integration of wood cabinetry at VaporCorp. The small coat closet is on the right side of the cabinet run. Name plates are visible on the exterior of both workstations.

Figure 24. Typical cubicle cluster at VaporCorp. The front workstation is an administrator.
At WellnessCorp, cubicles integrated laminate work surfaces and overhead storage with fabric panels (see Figure 27). Configurations were not as standard as seen at VaporCorp with cubicles modified to fit within the building’s architectural limitations (see Figure 28). Panel heights were consistent throughout with administrator workstations.
recognizable by the lower front panel and counter. Corner work surfaces hold monitors and typically two work surfaces flanked either side of the corner. While both environments were dated, the integration of the wood storage offered the impression of Vapor-Corp’s attentiveness to provide high quality furnishings for its employees.

Figure 27. Fabric panels and laminate work surfaces and overheads at WellnessCorp.

Figure 28. Fabric panels and laminate worksurfaces and overheads at WellnessCorp.
At VaporCorp, the proportion of offices to cubicles on each floor of the headquarters building was approximately 1:1. One of my earlier memos explained, “Because of the building structure, there is never a ‘sea of cubicles’ - hallways and the building core break up the monotony”. Seemingly the infusion of private offices dispersed into the interior also alleviated the repetitious rows and aisles of cubicles. At WellnessCorp, the sheer number of cubicles outnumbered the offices. On a typical floor there were approximately four cubicles for every one office. Consequently, the density of cubicles warranted long runs and multiple clusters of workstations substantiating the comments employees made about the environment resembling a “cubicle farm”:

I think the aesthetic in a lot of the environment, at least that I’m experienced with, if you look at that it’s a cube farm, right? That’s old school mentality thinking. A lot of people have asked why don’t we have touch down spaces or a general space, even over lunch, that café-type area here you just say let’s go to the break room, sit down, and have lunch or have a discussion. Now we have a cafeteria, so that capability is there. A lot of organizations have that kitchenette, where maybe you can sit down, and grab a drink and just have that brief business conversation.

And another reference to the cube farm: “I’m not raining on the organization but it’s a pretty stuffy environment. It’s truly the old school cube farm.” One employee went so far as to offer an analogy with Figure 29 illustrating his point:

... the cattle – every cow or horse has their own stall and I don’t mean that in a derogatory way – you asked earlier what comes to mind – to give you background – we have animals, we have horses, we have cattle so that’s where that comes from...We put the horse in the stall and expect it to survive there and pros per – that’s their stall – employees – they are human beings, they want to work, move, create plan – they are constantly in motion and they feel they are in charge of – they have freedom and they want those freedoms and having a stall or having a place is important but its less important – or less creative.
Figure 29. The cubicle as a stall at WellnessCorp.

Yet not all employees at WellnessCorp sit in this type of environment. Some spaces - particularly in the WellnessCorp retail annex building - are brighter with newer panels and componentry (see Figures 30-33). Color impacts perception of this space as finishes and colors on the floors of this building are warmer. Updated contemporary lounge furniture (see chairs in the foreground), modern lighting fixtures, and graphic carpet enhance a traditionally uninspiring cubicle environment. While floor density in this building is greater than that of the main headquarters building, higher ceiling heights and indirect lighting promote an open, lighter appearance.
Figure 30. WellnessCorp cubicle environment (retail building).

Figure 31. WellnessCorp cubicle environment (retail building).
Figure 32. WellnessCorp manager’s cubicle (retail building).

Figure 33. WellnessCorp cubicle interior (retail building).
Full circle. WellnessCorp and VaporCorp are representational of many corporate offices with 1980s and 1990s cubicle environments epitomizing the highly satirized “cube farm”. Yet their decisions to implement prototypical floors designed to foster collaboration align with the evolution of the office. With the same intent as the Hawthorne studies, they are testing environments for employee satisfaction and productivity and although furniture is fixed and not mobile as evidenced in the earlier teaming environments of the 1990s, VaporCorp’s Innovate and the 24th floor at WellnessCorp promote teamwork and collaboration. Technology promotes worker mobility in that work is no longer dependent on the spatial limits of a telephone cord - instead employees can relocate to lounge areas or huddle rooms depending on the task or project. Similarities between the benching work environment at WellnessCorp and 1904 Larkin building are discernible regardless of the more than 100 years that separate them (see Figures 34 and 35). Both offer the worker a small desk, chair, and storage pedestal with little privacy. While the intent of such configurations differ - the Larkin layout fostered paper circulation whereas WellnessCorp promotes collaboration propagated as cutting edge, today’s open desking or benching environment is fundamentally the same as those evidenced in the early 20th century.
Figure 34. Larkin Building. Reprinted with permission from ©Buffalo History Museum, used by permission.

Figure 35. Open desking (i.e. benching) environment at WellnessCorp
The reported difficulties with noise, storage, and privacy in open landscape are mimicked at WellnessCorp. As one employee from the 24th floor discussed problems with noise:

The hardest thing though, I will say, to get used to is the noise. I assume that everyone else in the room would say the same thing because we've all had our issues with it. The problem is, we moved to this collaborative workspace, but we work across several campuses. We still have to be on the phone a lot.... It's not like moving to this collaborative space suddenly solves that where we can always have in-person meetings. One big problem is that I sit probably 3 feet away from another person and there is nothing dividing our workspace. If we're both on the phone it can be loud or if I'm on the phone and he's talking to someone in person and they're having a conversation right next me, it makes it hard for me not just to hear but to focus on my call.... that has been the biggest hurdle for me.

Another commented on privacy and storage:

I honestly believe, deep down in my gut, that we communicate better because of this environment. There is a price to be paid, and that price is privacy and general storage type area. From a purely communicative idea, yeah, good idea. From everything else, I kind of, I guess if I were drawing it up myself after what I've been through over 40 years of experience, I would try to give somehow a little more privacy and a little more storage into an open environment.

Managers acquiesce to relinquishing their offices in favor of a more collaborative work environment yet most pine for the privacy and status afforded by the private office. As one WellnessCorp manager from the 24th floor told me:

I really want that to be captured. I don't know if it's going to do any good or not, but yeah, as a manager, I have to have one on one confidential conversations all the time. I need private space and sometimes, the huddle rooms are not available or just very
inconvenient to ask to pick up everything and go to one of those rooms. It doesn't have to be a big office space, but some type of private space would be very, very helpful.

At Innovate, managers and directors expressed such dissatisfaction with sitting in open plan that the Vice President is considering moving them to a semi-private office setting (two managers or directors share one office). Interestingly, just when it seems the office is changing in novel ways, in fact historically, it is simply an updated version of what has already been done. Today’s open office and benching environments are experiencing the same problems and difficulties experienced with burolandschaft - a lack of privacy, issues with noise, and minimal storage. So too is the response of pulling managers from the open plan and returning them to the private office. Seemingly, problems with the office are not new nor are the environments that try to address them - the office environment has come full circle.

**Hierarchy & Status in the Work Environment**

“...workplace is a status symbol – it gets in the way and promotes the wrong behaviors.”

*Innovate employee*

Despite the move toward relegating managers to open plan, many continue to pine for the privacy and status afforded of the private office. As the quintessential symbol of rank, nothing exemplifies status more than the “Executive Row” at VaporCorp.

**The coveted office.** Located on the first floor of the headquarters building, the corridor of executive offices at VaporCorp known as “Executive Row” lines the south side of the building (for floor plan see Figure 36). My facilities contact provided me with a tour of the executive suite and simply the transition from the tiled public lobby to a
heavily padded berber carpeted hallway was memorable (see Figure 37). Once we reached the “Executive Row” corridor, I noticed administrative assistants outside each office. Seemingly gatekeepers to the executives, no one entered or exited without their permission. The corridor had a museum like quality with noteworthy artwork adorning the walls and a quiet, hushed atmosphere encouraged whispering. The offices were appointed with traditional furniture and decoration which contrasted with the contemporary architecture of the building. Ceiling heights were approximately 14-16 feet tall which further enhanced the grandeur of the spaces. In most corporate headquarters executive wings are typically located on the uppermost floors of a building because they offer the most impressive views. However, the first floor location of “Executive Row” offered VaporCorp executives private entrances to each office and an adjacent outdoor terrace accessible only from that wing of offices.

Figure 36. Floor plan of “Executive Row” at VaporCorp.
Although equally coveted by WellnessCorp employees, the executive offices were more secluded and I did not have an opportunity to tour those workspaces. Unlike VaporCorp’s first floor location, WellnessCorp executives enjoy panoramic views of the city from the 30th floor of the skyscraper headquarters building.

While Executive Row and the top floors at WellnessCorp epitomize the ultimate status marker, many employees realize the reality of obtaining such stature is unlikely and aspire for more achievable physical embodiments of status. Private offices are abundant at VaporCorp and all are furnished with wood case-goods (see Figure 38). Many have beautiful views of the reflection pond or landscaped grounds while others look on to the central courtyard (see Figure 39). Most notably is the interior full-glass window in all VaporCorp offices that fronts the hallway and offers visibility into the interior of the floor. Only offices with locations on main corridor junctions are afforded a drapery to cover the interior window (see Figure 40).
Figure 38. Director’s office at VaporCorp with wood case goods.

Figure 39. Manager’s office at VaporCorp with view of the reflection pond.
Office corridor at VaporCorp. Office at the corridor junction has drapery covering the front window.

Not as numerous as VaporCorp because many managers sit in cubicles, the offices at WellnessCorp, depict a variety of different styles depending on the building. In the headquarters building offices are older with dated furnishings. In the retail building across the street as well as at the Hillsite location, offices marry the cubicle environment in that they are lighter, have brighter colors, and updated case goods (see Figure 41).
Us versus them. At VaporCorp managers above a particular grade level sit in an office. While there was some debate as to the level (some claimed it is 12 while others insisted it is 13), overall there was a consistency and correlation between rank and private office allocation. The only exception was the law department where all attorneys regardless of rank had an office. Inevitably, this division between those who sit in cubicles versus those who have private offices perpetuates a class system whereby employees are designated by those who “have” and those who “have not”.

Spatially, the prominence given to the private office is evident at VaporCorp. Offices line the perimeter of the building and consequently have windows - a much coveted amenity among office workers. Interior windows in the front of each office permit daylight to filter in to the cubicle floor space while offering opportunities for managers to
observe employees in cubicles and employees to view managers (see Figure 42). This relationship elevates the status of the private office and reinforces the divide between those who have an office and those who do not.

Figure 42. Private office relationship to cubicles. Offices have interior windows which allow visibility into the cubicle area.

At VaporCorp status ranking constitutes those who have offices versus those who do not and those who work for Innovate and those who do not. As one VaporCorp employee eloquently stated: “people think because I’m out here [meaning in a cubicle] my voice is a bit different”. Another offered, “it’s not about cube versus office, it’s about everything versus the Innovate space”. Employees at VaporCorp are routinely rotated every two or three years to different departments giving employees a global perspective and holistic appreciation for the operations of the company. Because this is corporate
policy, it is possible for employees at Innovate to transfer from that subsidiary to a department at VaporCorp. If and when this happens, one VaporCorp employee questioned “...how is it going to be possible to off-board from a ‘have’ to a ‘have not’?”.

At WellnessCorp the sentiments regarding a class system were similar: “There's not so much of an in-between hierarchy. It's either a cube or an office...” and

You've got your managers in their office, the vice president in the big office. If you come down, and then the leads and project managers are all against the window...It says hey you're not just a staff you're a little more than a staff, you're a lead, you're a lead accountant, you're a lead analyst, you're a project manager. You get a window seat.

While others offered: “If I were to move up to management, yes, you'd get an office or a bigger cubicle. I think that's the pecking order.” and “I think having an office, it's a signal of management I guess. If somebody has a nicer office I think it generally indicates they're further up the food chain.”

Some employees commented on the distinctions between classes of workers:

“The way you can tell a manager from a normal person, their cubes are a tiny bit bigger.” and “If you are in a cubicle you get no respect...it is assumed that you are an admin person.” Interestingly, some employees spoke specifically about the class system and the boundaries created by hierarchy: “I don’t think a workstation needs to be a class system per say. It’s how you use it, how you have the spaces that enable you to get things done.” and “The office fuels a sense of hierarchy in a detrimental way it creates a boundary line – you either “do or don’t” have an office”. Finally, while most reported division between those with cubicles and offices, one WellnessCorp employee offered a unique perspective:
I guess you could also think that those working in the old environment are less valuable and less creative than those individuals working in newer space so there’s a legacy interpretation and a value interpretation - newer, collaborative, modern, custom space versus older space that is not as collaborative might say to employees that they are not as valuable.

Class distinctions were not limited to offices and cubicles. Employees on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp differentiate classes based on who has an office, cubicle, and desk. Because so few have offices on that floor, the struggle is evidenced between those sitting at desks and those who have cubicles (see Figure 43). As two employees explained:

My lead is not in the same area. She's over … if you came up the ramp instead of walking straight to the windows, you would make a left. There's another area of little cubes. They're actually like mini-cubes in there. They're basically for us lower level people, you get tables. Then when you step up a grade you get little mini-cube areas in there. That's where she sits.

and

There is definitely a difference between the stations in our room versus stations where the leads and the managers versus the directors. The directors have their own offices...they have doors actually on them. I don't know. If someone walking around on the floor has to figure out who is in charge, they would know it's not me.

It is difficult to image that the cubicle - the object of such satire and parody - is now coveted and viewed as a step up in the hierarchy of spatial organization by many sitting at desks on the 24th floor.
Finally, I was curious to learn if employees thought the desire for an office was generational - did the class divisions extend to generations and were baby boomers more likely to want an office? As two WellnessCorp employees shared, “I'm not a baby boomer and I'm hung up on the office...it's a stature thing.” and

To allow for effectiveness – I am from the boomer generation where typically as you rise in the organization to higher levels you receive more privacy – if you are supervising people you need to be able to speak confidentially, not on the floor, so you need private space.

When I asked employees at WellnessCorp and VaporCorp to describe the organizational culture, one particularly insightful comment specifically addressed hierarchy within the context of organizational structure:
It’s hierarchical and collaborative, it is team oriented with higher level decision making is hierarchical – medium level is team oriented and professional level – there is a lot of independence depending on what you do and more and more trust and flexibility to be provided – and it’s a motivation to be more effective...it’s a real matrix here – it is kind of an unwritten matrix – there is a hierarchical structure top to bottom and then left to right there are matrices that are very client delivery and team service – client delivery – client service – team delivery oriented.

The ambiguity at WellnessCorp regarding the standards of office allocation perpetuates uncertainty and questions related to status. As one employee shared:

We have managers that are in offices and cubes. I know there are managers that they think that that's their status by having an office, but that's not ... I've sat in cubes, offices in other jobs, and I don't really think that means ... I had my old job, my director sat in a cube across from me. To me that's not really an indicator.

This is particularly evidenced by employees of the 24th floor. One sitting at an open desk shared, “There's other peers of mine in other areas that have cubes, but I just think it's hard to say because there are positions much lower than mine in a cube.” It’s difficult to distinguish one department from another on this floor and when I toured, there was no obvious indication of status markers - all the work areas in the open desking rooms looked the same. Employees also recognize the homogeneity:

Everybody, we have … how many of us … 8, 16, 24, 32, maybe 40 people in the room. We all have a variety of roles in that room, but we all look the same, if you will. I don't know that you could tell by first look there, but then if you stepped into the other area where my lead is you could tell that there's something different going on there because there's a couple of offices.

Individual space is so limited in this area that employees barely have room to display personal photos let alone certificates, awards, or other usual artifacts of status. I believe em-
employees on this floor are still “trying to figure out how they relate to the system” as proclaimed by Davis (1977). The work environment has historically been used by organizations to differentiate employee status which has led to the evolution of theories addressing the workplace and status. One interesting comment from a WellnessCorp employee emphasized the idea of fairness:

I've worked for ten years to get here. I've now reached manager, and you're going to tell me I'm still seeing a cube? I have people underneath me who report to me, but I still have to sit in a cube. I deserve it.

**I deserve it.** Throughout the interviews, employees discussed status within the context of a better workspace - either a private office, larger cubicle, or for those employees on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp, a move from a desk to a cubicle. They clearly communicated that working hard (effort) and performing well (performance) warranted spatial recognition (the outcome). During our conversations, they framed their comments about status moves as something they “deserve” or something they’ve “earned”. As several shared:

[In her old position]... I was a supervisor, had a very large space, worked for a gentleman that was new in the company. Then his boss I actually worked for, for years, so I had that relationship with her. She was very you know, when you're a manager, this is what you get...this is your reward, so she would fight you know, there are some floors that now managers are in a cube, it's just how it is. She fought to get her managers into an office because that’s what they deserve. I think it all depends.

I feel that management should have offices. It's a symbol, I think, of status and awareness that this person can talk to you privately and you can manage people...

I think that my area demonstrates that it's a management position. It's a larger, more open window seat which signifies, to most
people, that that is somebody with a higher title, somebody that has earned that position.

As one VaporCorp employee succinctly states, “... you drive to get to the next level and a private office which indicates ‘you’ve arrived’”. Another offered, “...people who have been in a cube for a long time –it doesn’t mean their career is less successful.” A WellnessCorp employee remarked, “To me, an office doesn't say, ‘I've made it.’ For some people it does, but for others it doesn't. If that’s what makes you feel good about yourself at work, but I couldn’t care less.” To that end, there are several factors that influence worker self-esteem and the actualization of status. Many of these factors are seemingly predicated on the role of power and how it is manifested in the office environment which gives rise to the question of how status is realized in the new collaborative work environments at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp.

The Collaborative Workspace

“...having them move to a collaborative place, they think that you're stripping them of almost their being, they resist, and that's the piece that you have to work on.”
Director at WellnessCorp

Collaboration and teamwork have not always been a priority in the American business paradigm. Historically, rewards were based on individual performance with little recognition given to teamwork. With technological advances, changing governmental regulations, and increased global competition, the focus has veered away from individualistic work limited to interaction within specific departmental silos, to project work involving multiple constituents across a multitude of various sectors within an organization. Although organizations recognize the need of adopting new processes, this shift is not
straightforward, as businesses struggle with how to manage, reward, and support collaborative teams.

**The move from the “den” to the “club” (almost).** Both WellnessCorp and VaporCorp are testing new and innovative workspaces to support collaboration by moving from what Duffy classified as a “den” environment (characterized by complex and continuous work areas) to the “club” (characterized by manipulable space dependent on task). Duffy may be skeptical at depicting the Innovate space and 24th floor at WellnessCorp as ‘clubs’ but for these two companies, the shift from the traditional high walled cubicle environment to an open collaborative workspace embodies the spirit of innovation in that it promotes and supports new business paradigms. For that reason, I believe there is an intermediate structure that is more evolved than a den but not as autonomous as a club.

**VaporCorp’s Innovate.** VaporCorp’s new subsidiary Innovate recently moved to a floor in the Annex building designed to promote collaboration, impromptu meetings, and facilitate innovation. Seen as an opportunity to showcase this new company with a distinctive work environment, Innovate is seemingly the envy of many VaporCorp employees. While it may be because Innovate employees can wear jeans (VaporCorp employee dress is business casual but some still wear suits and ties), many did comment on the office environment, stating that it offers a “different feel to work”, it is “unique - they share large open spaces” and “there are self-made pockets of collaboration space”.

The floor is immediately distinguishable as different. It has large open spaces scattered throughout the floor to foster teamwork and collaboration. Open spaces are
distinguished as ‘collaborative’, ‘teaming’, ‘conference’ and ‘work’ whereas spaces with
doors and hard walls are labeled ‘enclave’, retreat’, ‘huddle’ and ‘telephone’ (refer to Ap-
pendix F for the Innovate floor plan). There are approximately 35 cubicle workstations
on the floor and 10 enclosed rooms which could easily accommodate private offices sug-
gestling a propensity for acquiescing if managers and directors offer too much resistance
to being in a cubicle (this is already happening).

A large common area is accessible from the elevator lobby and accommodates
open informal meeting spaces for more intimate conversations, a large central kitchen
meant to bring people together, and a large work table to accommodate impromptu gath-
erings with small or large groups (see Figures 44 - 50). While I expected to enter a space
full of activity, when I toured the floor (mid-afternoon), this space was not being used,
the televisions were off and the space was very quiet. Apparently this sense of quietude
is common as one VaporCorp shared, “it seems underused”

Figure 44. Open collaborative space right off the elevator lobby at VaporCorp
Figure 45. Open collaborative space right off the elevator lobby at VaporCorp.

Figure 46. Open kitchen right off the elevator at VaporCorp.
Figure 47. Large common table in the open collaborative space at VaporCorp

Figure 48. Informal lounge spaces used for collaboration at VaporCorp
Each employee at Innovate has their own individual cubicle (see Figure 51) similar to those found at VaporCorp but with lower paneled walls in the front. Managers and directors are situated in cubicles with only the vice president in a private office. I met with the vice president in his office and it was extremely spacious and well-appointed. A converted conference room, the office accommodated a seven or eight foot round table/desk and a back wall of built-in storage cabinets and work desk.


\textbf{VaporCorp.} While only those at Innovate have a dedicated floor designed specifically for collaboration, employees at VaporCorp have improvised and created pockets of collaboration space. Some departments have converted conference rooms or unused offices into “themed” rooms and furnished them with sofas and comfortable lounge furniture (see Figure 52). If rooms are not available, cubicles have been reconfigured to open up enough space to accommodate informal gathering areas of varying sizes and even a ping pong table (see Figures 53, 54, and 55). This creative ingenuity in making the traditional cubicle environment more collaborative is viewed by some as more successful than the Innovate space. On traditional floors, employees come together to determine what they need and make modifications to accomplish their goals whereas at Innovate, employees were “given” the spaces to use and it’s up to them to adapt to the space rather than having the space adapt to them.
Figure 52. Converted collaboration room.

Figure 53. Converted collaboration space within cubicle environment.
**Figure 54.** Converted collaboration space within cubicle environment.

**Figure 55.** Converted collaboration space -with ping pong table within cubicle environment.

**WellnessCorp: 24th floor.** The new 24th floor at WellnessCorp’s headquarters drastically contrasts anything else in the building. Built about one year ago, it accom-
modates teams of business and technical analysts and was meant to foster collaborative project work. Instead of having key constituents scattered throughout the building, the intent was to house everyone with a vested interest in a specific project on one floor to make work processes more efficient. By so doing, the design of the space promotes easy access to team members and managers.

The director from the 24th floor was particularly insightful. I include her quote, admittedly quite lengthy, to my question “What prompted the idea of this kind of floor...where did the idea come from? Her response, in its entirety provides richness and context as she described her involvement with the planning of this floor:

I was part of a team to do an assessment before we moved to the floor and research whether floor space, collaborative spaces make workers more productive. We had a lot of debate on the project team, but later we all agreed through the facts and data we had, and the exercises that we worked on, yeah, floor space does make you more productive. It reduces email, the face-to-face removes roadblocks much quicker.

We looked at case studies, we looked at even different types of floor space, etc. He [the vice president] wanted a recommendation from us and we recommended that yes, floor space does make a difference because space is about who you are – your being. You come into work with a certain title, and stay that way traditionally and you behave a certain way, you're confined in your space, but once the barriers are down, you have to engage with people, you bond better, you react better, you become closer in trying to deliver what you need to because of a personal aspect of being so close with each other all the time. We recommended that we move forward with the idea. Probably a year had passed and then someone said they created this space and ironically, our team was having a lot of trouble between business and technical. We were always arguing back and forth, if you will, one was pointing the finger. IT said you didn't write the (something) well, the business team said it's the developers' fault. They keep making mistakes. They don't understand the requirements. We had a lot of defects.
Our projects were in trouble. They said that there was a floor space available and I said we would love to move up there. They said that they typically move projects that are say, quote, in trouble or in jeopardy to a collaborative space to, quote, force people to work better together.

I was all on the idea, I was all on top of it, wanted to come up here, came and visited the floor. That's what I meant about trying to convince other people. I had to convince my peer that it's the right thing for us. A lot of people were hesitant or reluctant, but it's the best thing that ever happened. The team works very close now, they're very engaged, in fact a lot of the conflict even from me personally working with my peer, things that we challenge back and forth, we've almost become best friends now. She sits right next to me, she comes out when there's problems, I do the same, leaders do things much more quickly, we're online. We feel like we're trusted partners, before we felt more isolated and it was often them- I've seen the results. People on the floor still complain about their space or maybe being too noisy, but I think that contributed to how we're dumping more people on the space because there's no room versus using it as it's intended for a collaboration space.

I had toured the floor before I interviewed this director. Her insight offered clarity to what I had experienced when I observed the floor.

The approach to the office environment from the elevator lobby differs from other floors as employees, visitors, and guests view white boards with post-it notes, story-boards, and brainstorming notes clearly on display (see Figure 56). Ramps lead up to the main level where there is immediate chaos. In stark contrast to Innovate, when I stepped on to this floor, the noise and activity level noticeably elevated as people were up and moving about, talking on the phone, or talking with other members of the floor. Remembering my experience at Innovate, I asked one employee if the floor had always been this active. Given how active the floor seemed, I was surprised to learn that,
in the beginning, people were super quiet. They were afraid of bothering their neighbors. Everybody was kind of trying not to talk too much, - to make it look like we weren't doing work. As time evolved, I think people went back to their normal voices, they stopped worrying about am I disturbing my neighbor, if we need to group together we do it.

But I think in the beginning people were much more reserved. A lot of times in the beginning I would see people in their desks, not moving around, not using the collaborative space. The same way they were when they had cubes.

Figure 56. Entrance to the 24th floor from the elevator lobby.

Once I reached the main level, I noticed that on this floor, employees sit in a large room with table desks (i.e. benching). Figure 57 displays the layout of a corner of the 24th floor (for an overall floor plan, refer to Appendix I). People sit in pairs but each has a dedicated space. Table desks are arranged along the window or in the interior of the floor (see Figures 58-60). Interior desks offer a small low screen separating one employee from the next. Employees were originally allocated one mobile pedestal for every two employees but sharing quickly became problematic and each employee then received
a dedicated set of drawers. Leads (i.e. supervisors) and managers sit at small low paneled cubicles in an area adjacent to their employees with only directors and above in private offices. Tables without screens in the center of the space are meant for collaboration and team work.

*Figure 57.* Segment of the 24th floor illustrating the layout of desks and cubicles.
Figure 58. Individual work desks (i.e. benching) on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp headquarters.

Figure 59. Individual work desks (i.e. benching) on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp headquarters.
Figure 60. Lead/manager cubicle on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp headquarters.

Common areas on the floor include a central kitchen and small huddle rooms (see Figures 61 and 62). Unlike the many informal open collaborative lounge areas at Vapor-Corp, density on this floor is high leaving little real estate for these types of arrangements.

Figure 61. Open kitchen on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp headquarters.
WellnessCorp: Hillsite location. At WellnessCorp’s Hillsite location, an innovative floor was designed to foster collaboration. Unlike the headquarters location, and similar to VaporCorp, this floor is quiet and not highly populated. Similar to the headquarters location, employees sit at table desks or a variation while leads and managers occupy small cubicles (see Figures 63 and 64). A central kitchen offers opportunities for informal, collaborative meetings (see Figures 65 and 66).
Figure 63. Variation of benching area at WellnessCorp - Hillsite

Figure 64. Lead/manager cubicles at WellnessCorp - Hillsite
Figure 65. Open kitchen on collaborative floor at WellnessCorp - Hillsite

Figure 66. Open collaborative space at WellnessCorp - Hillsite
The move from the “den” to the “den”. The 12th floor at the WellnessCorp headquarters building was recently redesigned per the mandate from a vice president to lower all panels in an attempt to promote collaboration. I had an opportunity to interview someone involved with coordinating the project who offered,

The VP of marketing - he wanted it done, so they went through the process of paying for reducing all of the cubicles down. I don’t know his mindset around doing that other than he wanted more collaboration or something to that effect. All I know is when I go up there, nobody's there...It feels that way anyway, so I'm not seeing collaboration, and truly, Pam and I did not want to move up there because of the low walls.

Touted as an innovative workspace, this unorthodox approach to creating a collaborative work space retained the original floor plan while the panels heights were lowered from 65”H to 42”H. Employees can see one another but there are very few impromptu break out areas and conference rooms need to be scheduled. On this floor, managers sit in cubes among their employees. Similarly, this idea was mimicked at the Hillsite office (see Figure 67).

While this space is touted as innovative and collaborative it is not fitting to be categorized as a “club” per Duffy’s definition. In fact, describing this space as innovative is seemingly an oxymoron as there is a disconnect between intent and realization. In this configuration, employees have seated privacy - if they want to collaborate, they need to stand. This type of environment may be conducive for call centers or other similar functions where employees remain at their desk for the majority of the day, but it is not typically beneficial to project teams who need visual and audio access to each other without having to rise from their seat.
Figure 67. Low paneled cubicle environment meant to foster collaboration at Wellness-Corp.

In addition to collaboration, employees were told that lower panel heights allowed natural light to permeate into the interior of the floorspace. As one manager shared,

... the reason why we are the way we are it's been explained to us, is so natural light can come in easier. That's why the cubicle walls are low for natural light, even though the fact that the people sitting by the light pull the shades down, because they can't see the screens otherwise.

He went on to share his thoughts on collaboration,

If you put collaboration equals chit chat, then yes. There's a lot more talking now, but everybody tries to be very quiet so they don't disturb. There still is a lot more talking talking talking. Some of it is work, some of it is not work. When people sit in higher walls, then it's not much talking, period.
Not always work, work, but I do feel that for me at least, it's better to have it this way. I know the staff doesn't like it at all. They have even smaller... I have a manager size cube, which is a little bit bigger, and they have even smaller work areas.

New work environments that deviate from tradition in appearance and function are susceptible to criticism, envy, and praise offering fodder for lively debate as the future of the physical workspace is redefined.

The privileged. Novelty breeds jealousy and such is the case with the Innovate space. Some VaporCorp employees commented that the new company has not proven themselves yet to warrant such a spatial reward. Other comments included “they got our money”, “there is friction in the Annex building”, “it’s us versus them” and “other companies are carrying the weight by putting money behind them”. Time may squelch the contentious envy but many are watching to see if the Innovate work environment is a prototype for future VaporCorp floors.

Better you than me! Sentiments at WellnessCorp were much different. Instead of the envy evidenced at VaporCorp, many WellnessCorp employees not sitting on the 12th or 24th floors were relieved to be in their traditional cubicle environment and assumed the attitude of “better them than us”. I asked employees who did not sit on one of these floors what they thought of these types of floors. One manager shared his conversation with his colleague who sits on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp:

We've had a lot of conversations about his workspace and how ... His view is he likes it, but it just sounds like a nightmare. Again, as somebody that's used to being in these shared spaces all the time and actually I worked; when I was in public accounting I worked in one of those offices in Russia for a year. It was this kind of where instead of cubes they just had ... You felt like you were in school. There were long tables, very long tables, and you had a
little divider about this high in between your workspace and the
next person's workspace. I felt like I was in a call center. You got
one person on each of you and there was absolutely no sense of
privacy or anything. For me it was distracting because there's a
lot of noise, ... I put my headphones on all the time because it was
hard for me again to stay focused on what I was doing without
being distracted by other people's conversations and that kind of
thing. Not that they were being loud, but just they were there.

Another employee shared

...this is my current cubicle ...it was a nice size but I have been on
floors where they put people in small cubicles and even the short ...
the height of the panels - the shorter ones. I hear, and it's a hear,
that people, they don't like being in a little cubicle, especially if
you may have come from a larger cubicle or now the shorter
cubicles. I haven't been in that situation, but I have heard it's
happening and they don't like it.

Some employees at WellnessCorp remain skeptical of the new work environments
and perceive them to be trendy. When I asked one employee what she thought, her sim-
ple response was “I’m not buying it”. Another offered,

I don't know if it's a trend or I don't know it's the way that we're all
going, but low panels, open collaboration, impromptu places for
people to come together and meet, but everything is pretty open
and there's really very little distinction between ... It's more setting
I think than people's spaces...I hate that idea. I know somebody
pretty well who works at [...] and I know they have that.

And still another referred to the new configurations and work floors as ‘retro’,

I've been on one of the floors that have been renovated that looks,
call it retro for lack of better term. I'm going, this is really
different. This is really, really odd. Everything is really, really
open...very retro...I don't care for it.

When I had an opportunity to talk with employees who sit on the 24th floor, I was curi-
ous to know what they believed others thought of the space. One woman shared,
I think most of them perceive it as 'wow, that's fancy'. Anytime the elevator stops on my floor and they get a glimpse of the lobby, they comment on how it looks, but I know other people certainly view it as a terrible floor to be stripped of your privacy and your personal space.

Another offered:

I've heard a couple things. I've heard that they want to sit there. It is the up and coming, the new workspace, it's an exciting new place. But then I've also heard that oh, you're losing all your space. You're losing your privacy. Who wants to sit there? And I'll say that our group is mixed. I mean, definitely, the majority of the group was not excited about moving to the 24th floor, even though it was more of the up and coming workspace, and I will still say that there is still quite a few that are very disgruntled about the workspace.

Employees have a sense of dread when they are told their space is being remodeled. Many hope that the new configuration will not resemble the 12th floor. Two employees shared their thoughts on the low paneled environment,

I can tell you this. Everybody in our department has had a reason to go to the 12th floor where marketing is, that has those low walls, as up to 24, which is IT and again, has that open type of structure...I can tell you that everybody is happy and grateful that we have the kind of [workspace with high panels].

Yeah, especially up on 12 and marketing, it looks like a secretarial pool from the 1950s or something like that. We're just amazed that anybody gets anything done because anytime anybody just shifts in their chair, the person sitting as far away from them as I am to you sees it, and we just think it would be terribly, terribly distracting, especially for the kind of things that we do, to be focused and try to be creative and so forth.

When they first told us they were going to remodel I was thinking oh please don't let it be like those areas, and we were fortunate that it worked out that way.

and
Those low cubes where you sit there and I can look at the guy working in front of me, that's unbelievably bad. I couldn't imagine working in an environment like that... It would be a problem and a detriment to me. I need to be able to go to my cube as my – to your point - my private space, where I can sit there. I can put my headphones in, I have pictures of my kids, pictures of my wife, and I can sit there and put my headphones in and say okay this is what I have to get done.

Even though several employees attributed their opinions to age, “I am anti-low wall, and it could be because I'm older.”, others attributed acceptance and satisfaction to personality type. One told me an open environment is much more conducive to extroverts - introverts would not be comfortable working in such spaces. A manager at Innovate concurred and described the appeal of Innovate as generational - one that appeals to younger generations. Despite the age or generation of the workers at Innovate or WellnessCorp’s new innovative floors, employees are called on to work collaboratively, regardless of the year they were born.

As one baby boomer shared about working on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp,

They told us it was an open environment. They actually took us on a little field trip to show us what it looked like over there. We took a look at it and I guess I have to say that I am old. I kind of say that jokingly but I say that because I've been around for long time. When I first got out of high school I went to work for corporate America downtown and that was in 1974 and there weren't any cubes back then, there weren't any partitions back then. It was an open environment. With that open environment I guess I got used to the open environment. It's what the norm was for me. It was just the way it was.

It’s all about collaboration... The physical environment plays a significant role in supporting teamwork and fostering collaboration. While the term ‘collaboration’ is used in many different contexts, collaborative space is typically equated with low or no
paneled open work spaces. Many at WellnessCorp equated “collaboration” with low or no walls because of the precedent of the 12th and 24 floors. Several employees commented on the visibility of seeing other co-workers in such open environments but acknowledged that collaborative spaces should have areas where impromptu meetings are possible without having to schedule a conference room. Others expressed amazement that anyone is able to get anything done in the open spaces because of the distractions,

I guess if I think of being in a more collaborative space, I'm not sure I would ever get anything done because I have, I don't know, eighteen people that report to me. I have a couple of managers too. If I would be in a space that lent itself more to people just coming and stopping over every five minutes it would be very difficult for me to get everything done that I need to.

These concerns raise the question of processes. How does one collaborate? Organizations can’t simply put people in wide open spaces and expect everyone to know how to work together productively. Managers need to coach employees and encourage those who may be shy or introverted to engage with others. Those not comfortable in these types of environments revert to old processes and methods of communication such as e-mail or instant messaging and need to be prodded to get up and talk face-to-face. I once again refer to the interview with the WellnessCorp director from the 24th floor in offering insight into the inception of the floor and the adaptation of the employees who report to her. The quotes are lengthy but truly capture the essence of this discussion. She addressed the topic of communication,

In both environments it's hard to find people. What I found is that barrier, if you will, is in the previous environment, they felt independent and didn't have to engage in people if you will, they walked around, checked each cube and finally found someone. In this environment, they were forced to ask people and engage with
them to find them, so I'm giving you another example. We moved up here and there were people on my team that were sitting in the open spots, they were just lined up in tables. They were IT programmers there and then business analysts sitting there. They all moved up. One of them came up to me and said, ‘Is someone going to introduce us to those people on the other side?’ I'm like, ‘Boy, have mercy! We're in a collaborative space! Get up and introduce yourself!’

The whole purpose is that you engage, you become more assertive, you're there with the people, you're collaborating, you want someone to introduce you!" They're sitting right across from each other, but they have this cultural perspective, if you will, that they're used to that you don't bother people or someone needs to formally introduce you to someone else, so I correlate that with your question in that they're used to walking in twos, formally looking at names in a formal, tagged way, finding people without interruption, they come to this environment and it hits them in the face that there's nobody here to guide you or tell you. You're all here sitting together. You're empowered to figure it out. I found that as a big culture change to them and pushing people to take that first step and leading by example, walking around myself, saying hi to everybody, engaging them so that they can see it's a very informal, unstructured floor, by design. You can engage.

Old work habits stand in the way of fully utilizing the built space. If someone sits at their desk all day, the wall of white boards go unused. One employee shared her observation of how employees on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp used the common kitchen,

But the one thing that caught my eye was there was this giant kitchen and over 20 feet away was one of those collaborative tables with all the employees. And on the wall is the brand new flat screen TV and all the video conference equipment and they pulled file cabinets over to put their food there, so they didn't have to share it with the rest of the floor. There's a huge kitchen island right there and I thought, ‘And now you've just lost the entire concept of this floor.’
To fully realize the power of collaboration, it needs to go beyond an open kitchen, lounge areas or desks - work processes much support collaboration. One manager shared,

We can't just build cool, collaborative looking spaces with a lot of flashy, poppy colors and say we offer a Google environment now because it goes beyond that....If we're just looking at that, it's one dimensional and you're not going to really embrace the whole thought process.... It's how you engage, it's how you ... There's so many elements. It's a wheel. Space and facilities is one wheel as is recruitment efforts, retention efforts, engagement efforts, acknowledgement, career pathing. All of these things all play together. Those are my thoughts on it....24's collaborate. It allows you to get a lot of things done. For those who haven't worked in a 24 environment, immediately they're going to push back because you've knocked their walls down. They can't hide in their little cave. Then they get used to it and they'll probably like it. The thing is all the leaders want that space because they feel all their people need to have their walls knocked down. They need to be in the area so they can run back and forth and have these sprint meetings and whiteboard and get things done.

Collaborative work is not for everyone - but what I found during my interviews was the tendency for people to judge the process against the environment. Many referenced collaboration within the context “benching” seemingly equating the two as one in the same. Others discussed what they would be losing (mostly related to privacy and storage) for the sake of collaboration and several were adamant in condoning benching for full time employees.

Amid the skepticism surrounding collaboration and the spaces that support it, those who have been working in these types of environments offer testimony to the power of working together. I asked employees what they value most about their workspace. One offered an example where the collaborative environment supported the needs of her team
and “made the project better”. Her team used the large white board spaces for brainstorming sessions and frequently met at a large common table to collaborate. Any issues that arose were quickly addressed because the work environment offered proximity to her group and facilitated communication. Whereas the high paneled cubicle environment hindered open communication, collaborative spaces encourage it. As one manager from the 24th floor at WellnessCorp offered,

> My personal opinion and approach is that I like to see people. When I described to you the previous environment, it was high walls and so quiet to the point where I felt like I'm invading some one if I were to walk to their cube or I'm bothering them because they're sheltered in a cube, if you will, and in silence or by themselves. I personally don't like that. I like the openness, I like to engage with the team, to walk around, see them work, get things resolved, so I'm very much an advocate of this kind of thing and I was looking forward to it. I had to do a lot of the convincing to some people to help them adopt the idea and that we need to make it work.

Granted, in an open environment it’s possible to overhear conversations but several employees told me that by hearing other’s conversations it’s often possible to offer help to those in need.

An interesting perspective on working in collaborative spaces was one of shared responsibility and camaraderie. The isolated, hidden nature of working in higher paneled cubicles facilitates cowardice in casting blame or finding fault because there is no visual connection. In a collaborative space, the blame is dispersed among the group and everyone works together to resolve issues. Additionally, being in this type of open environment provides opportunities for team members to offer solace, comfort, and support if organizational messages from top management are unpleasant (i.e. layoffs). During diffi-
cult times, it’s easy to recognize stress from peoples’ facial expressions and demeanor - in a cubicle environment this can stay hidden - in an open space, everyone knows.

**Consolidation.** Moving to smaller spaces is difficult for any employee but those moving to the benching desks on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp found it particularly challenging. Employees were told they were to consolidate belongings down to one shared drawer pedestal. Originally, the design specified one two drawer pedestal for every two employees. Files were purged and personal affects went home as employees tried to condense years of collected work and memorabilia down to one drawer.

I asked the director to comment on the impact the move had on her group,

> The biggest concern; first they were reluctant. They thought they were losing a lot. Their thinking historically is you get space for entitlement. It is true, the more you move up in your role, you get a bigger cube as a lead and then you get an office in some cases as a manager and then later managers didn't get offices, even in our previous environment, but they got bigger cubes, so the more you moved up in your role, the bigger space you had.

> A lot of them had a lot of personal things around them, they said they spent a lot of time at work, they like having their stuff with them. I encouraged them to go take a tour and look at it, so they walked around and the first thing they were concerned about is losing their space. Keep their very small, in some cases, folks don't have cubes, they're just a line on a table and they pull the chairs up to a table, so they felt an immediate loss with their personal attachments that they had in terms of artifacts that they had with them in real life that they have to downsize or almost get rid of everything personal. That was a big change for them culturally.

Eventually, managers recognized that sharing a pedestal was not ideal. Issues related to security were raised by female employees as they struggled to identify locations to securely store purses. Additionally, items of a personal nature made them uncomfortable sharing with male colleagues. As one female employee stated, "I have to share a
cabinet. We have one key. We have to share it, but I have some feminine products. I'm not very comfortable sharing my…it’s embarrassing you know.” Management conceded that more storage was needed and purchased additional pedestals but at the expense of taking up floor space. Pedestals are now against walls or in the aisles.

Opportunities for personalization - or lack there of - fostered feelings of loss by many employees moving to this floor. As one new mother shared, moving from a cube decorated with reminders of her son to an environment with no pin-up space was challenging. Additionally, WellnessCorp distributes corporate ‘tchotchkes’, posters, and large calendars to employees. This new environment does not accommodate storage for these types of items underscoring the disconnect between the policies implemented by upper management and their impact on employees on this floor. The corporate initiative is to go paperless yet the senior vice president is constantly distributing paper. As one employee shared,

Every initiative, there's all this documentation you get. And I'm like ‘where am I going to put this? This is great but where am I putting this?’ So it's kind of sending mixed signals, yes we want this open workspace, we want collaboration, we want to go paperless but then I feel like every chance they get, ‘Oh, well here's this poster to hang’...silly things like that, so it's a little counter intuitive to some of that direction.

**Necessity is the mother of invention.** Human beings are resilient. To counter the lack of pin-up space or display space, employees at WellnessCorp devised creative solutions to transform the space into a productive work environment. Management initially discouraged some of the ideas for display countering that resorting to “old ways”
(i.e. attachment to paper) was not an efficient use of the space. From the director’s perspective,

...other concerns that they had were; they were used to pin boards where they pinned a lot of paper off of stuff that they accessed routinely. Some of them complained they didn't have space to do that, which they didn't. They didn't have pin boards or anything. It was interesting because you know the quote, “necessity is the mother of invention”, they started inventing all kinds of ways to pin stuff up. It was interesting to see it. I said look at the bright side, look how creative you guys are. They found ways to create pinning things up or posting things which then we were advocating not to do a whole lot of that because now your used to your space and your making the new space look like your old, so think about it where it's simple, clean, efficient and if you were to move around, mobile-y across the floor to do project work, are these things really necessary for you to pin up all the time or do you have other electronic means or something to get those because the intention is for you to move around and take your laptop with you versus being stuck in your seat all day like you traditionally were in your previous space.

Employees complained that it is difficult for others to know where they sit. When they sat in cubicles, name plates were attached to the outside panel. In the new open environment, there is no room to pin up name plates. Employees devised a holder or stand by turning two binder clips upside down and attaching name cards to the clips. With display and personalization limited in the open workspace, employees also demonstrated creativity in devising ways to integrate photos into their area. As one employee shared and several mimicked,

I try to do what I can to make it feel like it's my little place. The cabinet that fits to my left, the small filing cabinet that they gave us. A friend of mine got me a coupon for a website that you can print out your Instagram picture onto magnets. I printed a bunch of my Instagrams out on magnets and stuck them on the cabinet...I try to do what I can to make it feel like it's my little place.
These small but significant solutions empowered the WellnessCorp employees on the 24th floor to control their environment and make modifications that alleviate perceived deficiencies.

**Shhhhhh!** The most significant issue reported by almost everyone working in the open collaborative environment was the issue of noise - one employee equated it to a marketplace. Equating back to the same issues reported of the Burolandschaft environment, overcoming issues pertaining to noise was - and still remains - particularly difficult. At WellnessCorp, employees sit in large open rooms. Because projects often involve team members and outside constituents from other campuses, employees are often on the phone. Some go so far as to put their calls on speaker which perpetuates the noise and chaos. Additionally, work tables in the center of the room have poly-com speakers. While not used daily, when the IT department releases a new software version, the poly-com is open all day to troubleshoot client problems thereby elevating the noise level.

Employees at benching stations as well as managers in low cubicles reported that the noise effected their ability to concentrate. Many noted a perceived drop in productivity and suggested that some type of screen or divider be added to “block the noise from the people sitting around you so that when you do sit down and your head's down working, you can actually focus”.

**It's a distraction.** To counter the noise, employees often wear headphones. While this helps to drown out sound, it perpetuates subtle movements that can be a distraction for others. One employee shared her use of headphones,

I'm sure the people that sit behind me just absolutely love me,
because when I start working and I have the headphones on my head starts bobbing, they're probably sitting there going, ‘Oh jeez. What is she listening to today?’

Distractions can be detrimental to concentration and focus. At VaporCorp and WellnessCorp, huddle rooms provide privacy and quiet for individual work or small group meetings. When I asked one supervisor if she ever used the huddle rooms, she responded,

I've also used those to, for lack of a better word, hide. So if I have an assignment that I need to get done and I need to be able to focus and I can't have people stopping at my desk, I will go to one of those rooms so I can kind of block everything out and get work accomplished.

Employees (particularly managers) at WellnessCorp reported that they used the huddle rooms but expressed concern that there were not enough to accommodate the density on the floor. I was told there were additional employees being moved to the 24th floor and with more people, this shortage of huddle rooms will only exacerbate an already tedious problem.

Working in an open environment offers direct visibility leading colleagues to assume that because others can be seen, they are available for conversation. This constant interruption is distracting and can disrupt heads down work. Additionally, once conversations start, others join in adding to what one manager referred to as “chit chat”.

The high cubicle environment offers visual privacy whereas in the open workspaces anytime someone gets up from their chair there is a propensity to look up. Many reported this was still an issue and because of the unpredictability (it’s impossible to know when someone is going to get up or walk by), it is not something easily remedied.
All in the name of privacy. Second to noise was the issue of privacy for employees working in open collaborative spaces. Employees were apprehensive about the loss of privacy and reported issues of being “exposed”. Activities such as eating lunch, taking a personal phone call, or blowing one’s nose are often taken for granted within the privacy of the cubicle but in the open environment these types of occurrences are on display for all to see.

Every manager I talked to expressed concerns with collaborative spaces and privacy. If managers want to have a private conversation with an employee, they need to go to a huddle room or reserve a conference room. Confidential discussions cannot and should not be conducted within the open environment. The latent implication with holding meetings in huddle rooms lies in other employees on the floor acknowledging the manager/employee conference and surmising the reason for the exchange.

In addition to private conversations with employees, managers and others found it difficult to have a private telephone conversation in the open plan. Many would step away from their desk so as to not be heard or disrupt those around them. Innovate has two telephone rooms on the floor whereas the elevator lobby was reportedly the most common place for WellnessCorp employees to make phone calls.

Many managers reported the need for privacy in negotiating with outside vendors. They shared that they did not feel comfortable brokering deals and being persuasive in front of others. Employees expressed concern when confidentiality is breeched because of overheard telephone calls. As one employee shared,

...I'm expecting my second baby...and it was before I had hit 12 weeks. Until I really get to that 12 week mark I didn't want to tell
too many people. And I had to make an appointment and it was quick, so obviously I could have gone on my cell phone and gone elsewhere. But I think maybe the doctor's office called me back on my work phone, I think that's what had happened...They were asking me some questions, ‘Oh is this a visit regarding pregnancy?’ It was just some sort of a follow up and I trying to kind of like ‘yeah’ but not really use the word ‘pregnant’ or ‘pregnancy.’ That was an example of a time where I was kind of, ‘well I don't want people to hear my conversation type of thing.’

**Loss of individuality.** As was mentioned earlier in this paper, people have a need for self actualization as defined by others. This self-worth is evidenced in traits that include reputation, fame, glory, status, recognition, and attention (Maslow, 1954). The move to an open collaborative space seemingly void of traditional status makers establishes worker anomomity. The director from WellnessCorp shared this insight regarding the transition of her employees when they first moved to the floor,

...people come in with a title and a space and they come with that title and sit in that space and they feel like "This is who I am in this space." Then have them move to a collaborative place, they think that you're stripping them of almost their being, they resist and that's the piece that you have to work on. When we first moved here I got my managers together and said we need to be advocates and help people navigate the floor, listen to what their problems are. It's not just about here, you go sit there. You have to help them because there's a psychological, emotional aspect that comes with this that is key to getting it right.

The loss of individuality for the collective good of the team does not give employees the necessary opportunities for developing individual self-worth and as such, long term affects to employee self-esteem is in question.

**Don’t cross that line!** Definitions of territoriality typically have two foci - one that directs attention to the demarcation, control and defense of space whereas the other attends to more organizational benefits of territoriality. Territories are not only organiza-
tional devices, they may be important and valued in their own right due to symbolic and status value. There are three types of territories primary, secondary, and public (Brown, 1987). These territories can be identified and distinguished by humans based on psychological centrality and duration of use. Another distinguisher is ‘marking’ which promotes identity display in establishing territory. Markers may be physical, social, and/or non-verbal. Intrusion - the antithesis of interaction - ignores markers/markings. In primary territories, intrusion appears intentional whereas secondary territories may be more susceptible. Motivation for intrusion on secondary territories can be intentional or accidental whereas invaders of public territories are likely to respond by retreating.

While Innovate employees retain private workstations, those “benching” on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp are redefining territoriality. The reduced size of the workspace combined with minimal storage perpetuates encroachment into neighboring desks. As one employee offered, “I do try to not go too much into my neighbor's space. So I try to really keep it as my little area.”. Defining personal boundaries on this floor is challenging. Those along the window enjoy an architectural boundary but employees sitting in the interior of the floor not only deal with territorial issues left and right but also straight ahead. One woman shared her request for a divider,

Honestly, I think the biggest thing that I would want is just a divider between me and the guy next to me. I've seen them actually, in similar spaces. I've seen where it's just like a panel set up on the table. That would make such a difference, at least in my opinion it would.

Let’s be friends. While collaborative spaces drive some to want to cordon off their workspace, the tradeoff for others is the sociability these environments promote. 
Getting to know colleagues on a personal level fosters camaraderie and can even help newer employees adapt and acclimate. As one employee shared,

I was working with people who were at my level. We were in the same position and then there were business analysts who at the time were above me. I was a little shy but I think having the open workspace actually helped because I was communicating with those people more. If I was having a conversation with one person and somebody had an answer or could help or contribute in some way, they speak up. It gave me the opportunity to get to know those people and to learn more faster. I think it was actually pretty essential to my transition to be honest with you because I don't know how well I would have communicated with those people if there were walls to separate us.

Innovate, the 24th floor at WellnessCorp, and the collaborative space at the WellnessCorp Hillsite location have large communal kitchens and several areas with large flat screen televisions hanging on the walls. Because of the common kitchen, employees prepare and share food, “we've had a lot of food days amongst the floor even tomorrow they're doing a big Thanksgiving celebration floor-wide.” Events like this bring people together,

And we have different departments on our floor, so it's kind of a good way to get to know people. You really do see a lot of people regularly. More so than if you're all tucked away in little cubes.

The televisions also bring people together,

During the World Cup it was broadcast on the large screen tvs. People would come over to watch it but would inevitably talk business. Work got done but it brought people who might not otherwise be on that side of the floor together.

Because there is a social component to the collaborative work environment, there is inherently a more relaxed atmosphere. That’s not to say there isn’t a seriousness to the
work but the open collaborative environment infuses the social component missing in many traditional cubicle environments.

I just got used to it. Remarkably, a sentiment that I heard repeatedly was, “I just got used to it”. Employees would begin by describing issues pertaining to noise or privacy and usually complete their commentary explaining that once they were more comfortable in the environment, the problems they originally experienced were inconsequential. Most did talk about an adjustment period - particularly those sitting on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp. As some employees shared,

It took me a little while to get used to it. Lack of privacy, first. That took a little while to get over that, like eating in front of people because I eat at my desk a lot. That was different. Sometimes I might need to put on some more deodorant halfway through the day. That was like, okay, do I go to the bathroom? Do I take it out and just do it here? Once you get to know people then you're a lot more comfortable. I like it.

Yup. I think it's a great … I love the way this is set up. It took me a little while to get used to but I love it now.

Right now, honestly it does not bother me. I mean, a lot of people may feel differently, but I've gotten used to it.

I think honestly we've adjusted. I don't really have any cares about privacy anymore. If I want to eat my breakfast, I eat it at my desk. If I want to make a phone call, I make it. I think truthfully, I think over time we've kind of learned how to tune each other out, where initially we were a distraction to one another, I think. I could hear everything that my neighbors were doing and it would some what catch my attention. But I think now we’ve learned to kind of tune out the noise around us.

We've been here since last November so almost a year. I feel like all of us have gotten used to it, however, most of us don't think it's the ideal work environment.
The issue of noise is ongoing and while some reported strategies for overcoming the issue, many still find it problematic. As with moving distractions, noise is somewhat unpredictable and difficult to anticipate. While some are able to “tune out” the noise, most employees address the problem symptomatically by simply asking the offender(s) to turn down the music or “keep the noise down”.

**New isn’t always better.** An interesting comment from several employees at WellnessCorp related to health and wellness. Ironically as a healthcare service provider, employees reported that the 24th floor was a “petri dish” of germs. During cold and flu season, people are blowing their noses and sneezing and because of the partitionless environment, germs and infections spread easily. One employee reported that her manager distributed an e-mail last winter begging people to work from home if they were sick.

Another issue related to wellness in the collaborative work environment was mental and physical health disclosure. I had the opportunity to interview an employee who works in human resources and handles ADA requests and modifications for WellnessCorp. While she does not sit in a collaborative environment, she counsels employees who do. She reported a significant rise in requests due to the open workspaces related to ADHD, seasonal affective disorder (SAD), Asperger syndrome, and other mental and physical disabilities. She offered,

> So, if I take people that are not comfortable, or more introverted, or they just want to come in and do their job and go [home], and I put them in a low wall, open area, I've now messed with their psyche and now I've impacted my productivity.

Those with ADHD who are moved to an area with low or no cubicle walls must now deal with distractions. These employees are requesting to work from home or to be moved.
Employees with SAD actually benefit from the open environment because lower partitions allows natural light to filter further in to the interior of the floor. People with Asperger syndrome need quiet spaces in order to concentrate and are asking to be moved to somewhere secluded within the open environment (i.e. away from the copier, kitchen, etc.).

Employees who may not have needed to divulge medical or psychological issues are now forced to come forward in light of working in the open collaborative environment,

And that's why we're seeing the escalation in modifications and adjustments because an employee will come to us, and it does be come a little stressful for them because now they may be disclosing something that if they didn't get moved, we would have never known. And now they have to come to somebody and they have to say, “I have this issue. I have this disorder.” Or, “This situation gives me anxiety.

Power & Space

“I need to watch who's working and who's not working.”

WellnessCorp Vice President

I Can See You! The notion of surveillance is not new. Foucault described the power in one person watching over another in his explication of the manipulation and arrangement of architecture in facilitating surveillance. Although explained within the context of a prison, the correlation with the office environment is tenable. Historically, office environments - namely those that featured row after row of desks - were configured in such a way that managers could meander up and down aisles watching their employees. When managers were relegated to private offices, supervisors were still patrolling the
floor but when employees were encased in high panels, the idea of visual surveillance became somewhat obsolete. The only opportunity for visual monitoring was if the workstation was positioned in such a way that the manager in the private office had direct visibility into the cubicle.

The concept of surveillance, or being watched, was evidenced in the traditional and new collaborative workplaces at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp. Private offices at both companies have floor-to-ceiling interior windows with views into the open office (see Figures 68 and 69). While justified as an architectural feature to bring natural light into the interior of the floor plate, I couldn’t help but wonder if it was a way for managers to watch their employees and vice versa. The lack of blinds or shades on the interior windows at VaporCorp (with the exception of the offices on major aisle junctions) indicated a rule about keeping visibility accessible and when I asked employees, they confirmed that indeed shades are not permitted. No such rule was evident at WellnessCorp as many interior office windows had decorative appliqués or blinds (see Figure 70).

*Figure 68. Glass front office at VaporCorp - photo taken from the hallway.*
Figure 69. Glass front offices that face the open plan at WellnessCorp.

Figure 70. Director’s office at WellnessCorp. Interior window has appliqué to provide some privacy.
Figure 71 is a floor plan of a typical floor at VaporCorp’s headquarters building. Private offices line the perimeter walls and the red lines on the plan indicate interior window locations. Cubicle clusters are highlighted in blue to illustrate the relationship and sight lines from the private offices to the cubicle workstations. Because of the number of private offices at VaporCorp, very few cubicle clusters are not in the direct line of sight of a manager. When I asked an employee at VaporCorp how the culture is evidenced in the physical work environment, he simply stated, “being watched.”
The term ‘surveillance’ typically carries negative connotations but visibility can be beneficial in facilitating communication between managers and employees (see Figure 72). Administrative assistants can monitor manager’s availability whereas managers can see if an employee is having difficulties. If employees can see one another, it helps with collaboration and exchange. One employee from WellnessCorp’s 12th floor commented, “It's nice you can stand up and you can see what everybody's doing.”

How visibility is managed and by what means it is regulated, determines it’s effectiveness. Full glass front windows may not be an ideal feature as most managers I talked to pined for blinds or draperies. When I walked down the hallway at VaporCorp, I couldn’t help but gaze into every office I passed. It was natural curiosity to see what (and who) was in the next office. One WellnessCorp manager described his experience from inside an office with a full front window, “I feel like I'm being rude a lot of times because I'll shut the blind but if I don't, I'm like a zoo animal.”

Figure 72. Glass front offices promote direct visibility to administrators at VaporCorp.
Surveillance was a motivating factor in the decision to convert high panels to low on the 12th floor at WellnessCorp. The vice president who was responsible for the mandate couched his decision in the need for more collaboration. Latent underpinnings, however, seem to suggest an alternative motive as told to me by a woman who reported to him, “That's what my former VP, he thought, ‘We need to collaborate more. I need to watch who's working and who's not working. Not, everybody is working. That's what you get paid for.’” He was successful in expanding sight lines and promoting visibility across the floor (see Figure 73) yet while seated privacy is possible, anyone up and moving about is clearly on display.

*Figure 73.* Typical 42”H panel environment with sight lines across the floor.

Surveillance is particularly prevalent in the open plan where managers and supervisors are intermingled among employees and on the floors with the lower cubicles or
benches, observation is inevitable. As one manager from the 24th floor at WellnessCorp explained,

> From a management perspective it’s easy to view what other people do. Also now that everybody sits on the entire floor, which also it's easier to get in contact with other people in other departments that you need to work with. The other department where we work used to be on different floors. It was very hard to get a hold of people and that kind of thing. Now you can directly see if that person is there or not, if the director's door is opened or closed, or they're late and that kind of thing. Its easier now to get a hold of people. Definitely.

With these new collaborative workspaces, visibility perpetuates managers monitoring employees and employees monitoring each other. No longer can someone come in late or leave early without being noticed. As one employee shared, “So everybody sees when you come, they see when you go, they see when you leave for lunch, they hear you on the phone. There is no privacy whatsoever.” While this may assist managers in supervising their employees, it often feeds ill will among workers who misinterpret tardy behaviors.

When I asked one lead (supervisor) at WellnessCorp about how she felt being in the open environment she told me:

> We went through a process where a lot of our team members would judge others. So they would see you come in at 10:00 and then they would see you leave at 4:00 and they would question, why did they come in late and leave early? But yet you had taken a half day, they don't have that type of knowledge to make up that other time. There was a lot of that....I think now people, we just don't care anymore. In my mind, my business is my business. It's not your concern when I come or go. It took a while to get past the what are people thinking of me. Even my manager. I would feel, for the longest time I would feel extremely guilty if I went home at 4:00 because my manager is sitting 2 cubes away and he's still here and he sees me leaving. But what he didn't see is that I've been in since 6:30 and he only came in at 9:00......I'm not officially in
management, but I do lead a team of individuals. Even for them, for the longest period of time, they would say, 'You know, every time I walk away from my desk you look up. I feel like you're paying attention to when I'm coming and going.' I'm really not. It's just that it caught my attention...It's not that I care that you're taking a coffee break or you're going to lunch, it's just you notice things when you're in that open environment. Although she couldn’t say for sure, when I asked her how long it took to get used to this type of environment, she told me about one year.

Foucault (1977) writes “...the inmate [or employee] must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so” (p. 201). Having visual access to team members can be beneficial in collaboration, however when employees sense an ongoing propensity of being watched, they either rebel or adapt by adjusting their behaviors accordingly.

**The best laid plans.** The original design of the 24th floor at WellnessCorp was to integrate large collaboration tables among the benching areas with the intention that teams would gather and work at those tables. As time passes, managers and the facilities group have started converting those collaboration tables to benching stations for full time employees. As one employee explained,

I guess when they first designed the room, the room was designed with all the people facing out the window. Immediately behind me was a whole bunch of tables that was the collaborative space. After that set of tables, there was another double row of people. It was like they had the people on one side of the collaborative space and on the other side of the collaborative space, and then they had these big tables in the middle of the room...it afforded a sense of openness, and the noise level wasn't too bad. Then all of a sudden they decided we got to put more people in here. Those tables in the middle of the room that was the collaborative space became people space. They filled it with people, so now instead of just having the eight of us facing the window and then this little area where we could get together if we needed to and 16 other people on the other end, now all of a sudden, they added 16 more people to that
area...the sound level went up when they did that, and it's ... so the actual collaborative space that there was, that kind of went away. We walk over to people's desk. We didn't ever use those tables for collaborative. When they were open, we would use those for when they had a food day and eat. Now it's just basically wall to wall people, so that collaborative isn't there. That doesn't mean that I can't get up and push my chair over, and I'll sit beside somebody. We'll sit there and do a little meeting or something, so that's fine.

and the director offered her thoughts,

Crowding is definitely a problem and strategically putting people together that work together on similar projects in places like that is important. Otherwise you can't even use it how it's intended. We have a TV that looks really pretty, but no one turns them on. At first when we started, it was hard for he people to adapt and I told them, "Turn the TV on, to get connected to Camp Hill! Be loud, be engaging, that's what that's for!" The more people that moved on, even though we're promoting that, it's OK to be loud and engaging, that's what you're here to do together, the first week or so, then more people moved on the floor and we couldn't really send that message anymore because it was too distracting. There's definitely things that need to be looked at and revisited, but the no. 1 thing I would say is you cannot just maximum people on the floor because there's not enough seats because then you just distort the whole concept. If we were to do that across all WellnessCorp, knowing the seating issues we're going to have, people are going to be unhappy because we're going to have a lot of space, but again, we're just throwing people into them without thought and we're just using them because we need space quickly. Then people become resentful and unhappy in their space.

Converting these collaboration spaces not only adds people to an existing floorplate but scatters teams across the floor - counter to the original intent of the design. As reiterated by an employee from the 24th floor,

it would be nice if we were able to really use that space the way it was intended, with the right people there...but we are now having a bunch of people moving in, and so there are a couple seats down at the end of my table that are going to be people from Portal, so
they're not even people we work with...so, now you're going to have to deal with listening to their conversations that have nothing to do with any of your projects...which can be difficult. So, now you're mixing 2 completely different departments into one room and seats that are right beside you...so, you're not going to be collaborating with them for anything..it's available real estate, that's what's open, so that's where they're putting them.

**It's crowded in here!** Decisions to increase density and convert collaborative tables to house full-time employees on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp have had a significant impact on employees as rooms originally set up for interaction are crowded and extremely noisy. Several expressed their concerns about crowding citing increased sound levels as problematic, while others are self conscious about being in such close proximity to one another.

I will say it's very crowded and that's what's playing in my mind right now, and they're trying to push more people into it, so it really, it's loud, I guess is my point. It's loud and crowded.

One employee explained how it was difficult to eat lunch at her desk,

So, then you kind of have this one little space, and you're trying to write there, and the same thing goes at lunch time. I don't take a lunch break, because I normally have meetings through lunch. So now, I'm trying to eat at my desk, and now my foods wafting, my smell, my food is wafting over to this person sitting 6 inches from me...It's like, ‘Sorry! I'm not going to bring fish ever again! Promise!’

Although the initial move to the 24th floor at WellnessCorp was an adjustment, over time, employees adapted. As new employees - on a variety of different, unrelated teams - are integrated on to the floor, however, employees once again, need to adapt. One employee shared, “sticking another person [beside me], it's very hard to put that many peo-
ple at one table and have everybody be able to concentrate on what they're doing...or even be able to write.”

As has been alluded to in this narrative, employees are very adaptable. They are creative in devising “work-arounds” when faced with workplace challenges. To address the issue of crowding, employees have coordinated work-at-home days to coincide with their neighbor’s on-site days. As one employee explained when I asked if she found herself working at home more often,

Well, we're given the option to work at home 2 days a week, and I think most people, and a lot of people are trying to schedule it around, ‘OK, he sits beside me, what days does he work at home?’ So, that one girl that's going to move in besides the guy that's closest to me. He works on Monday, so does she. She's at home Tuesday, he's in the office. He's at home Wednesday, she's in the office. So, they're trying to stagger it so there's only maybe one or two days a week, but they're sitting directly beside each other.

What was originally designed as an innovative team environment, the 24th floor has been nullified for the sake of economy. Decisions regarding increased floor density, the integration of unrelated employees working on different teams and the overall allocation of space are latent displays of power as purported by Lukes (A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interest). Employees are left to “figure it out” as they creatively devise means of adapting, adjusting, and avoiding issues that are imposed on them by these decisions. Managers and facilities planners assume responsibility in the control and allocation of space and in so doing must recognize the consequences of their decisions on how they affect employee well-being and satisfaction.

The exception to the rule. The old adage “rules are meant to be broken” is evidenced in managerial decisions regarding space. At both VaporCorp and WellnessCorp,
employees indicated inconsistencies with spatial standards. Employees are often perplexed by these ambiguous decisions which can lead to resentment and perpetuate divisions between managers and employees. As one employee states,

I guess since I have the larger cube, it does let people know that I have a ...higher position. There's some bigger cubes. It's very strange how these cubes are sized. If you go over here, pharmacy, they have larger cubes than we do for some reason. These cubes are a lot bigger...I don't know what that means. I think they're just consultants or analysts. Actually then, I know maybe this person's consultant, but right next to her is her manager. I don't really know how they're structured.

Employees are satisfied when they perceive equity or fairness in the allocation of workspaces. Managers, in their deviation from the standards, set precedent for ambiguity and discontent leading employees to be puzzled about the organizational structure and rules. Managers have the power to alleviate the anxiety by enforcing consistency and transparency into the assignment of workspaces.

**Summary**

VaporCorp and WellnessCorp are both corporate giants steeped with history and tradition - the former a leader in consumer goods, the latter in healthcare services. External factors such as competition, regulatory restraints, and offshore outsourcing have forced these two to reconstruct their corporate personas and redefine their business models. No longer can they rely on historical precedent but instead must navigate unchartered business paradigms if they expect to remain solvent.

As VaporCorp and WellnessCorp venture to transform their businesses, each has struggled with identifying a leader with the qualities of a visionary and the bravery of an innovator willing to take risks. Most recently, both have recognized these qualities in
new CEOs - VaporCorp installed their new leader in 2012 and WellnessCorp as recent as 2014. With this new leadership, evidence of new strategic initiatives, transformation of old processes, and a shift from egocentric passivity to forward thinking innovation indicates that the traditional mantra of “we’ve always done it this way” is becoming obsolete. “Organizational change is typically activated by a relevant environmental shift that, once recognized by the organization, leads to an intentionally generated response” (Porras & Silvers, 1991; Jimmieson, Terry & Callan, 2004, p. 11). But with progress comes uncertainty and the changing corporate landscapes at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp have impacted all employees. Many have left the company while others adapt and try to synthesize expectations and redefine a “normal” workday. Some employees have grappled to stay connected through personalization citing a need to feel comfortable and have a space of their own. Still others, recognized that such connections are fleeting and space is temporary.

Leaders have significant influence over the design of the workplace as interiors are meant to communicate the corporate message to internal and external constituents. Defined by their mission and values, VaporCorp and WellnessCorp promote innovation through creativity - this is part of their persona. As such, innovation as it is manifested by collaboration is at the forefront of the corporate initiative. Although there have been floors redesigned to promote the emerging corporate culture at both VaporCorp and WellnessCorp, the majority of the physical work environment is slow in responding to the changing organizational culture. Furniture in many areas has not been updated with cubicle environments and private offices resembling those of the 1980s and 1990s. Yet with
floor after floor of furniture inventory and assets, it is somewhat unreasonable to expect a radical redesign and reconfiguration of the existing workspaces.

Private offices are also dated but continue to be coveted by employees as the quintessential marker of status. Inequity between those who have and those who don’t is evident and has perpetuated an internal class system as was confirmed as an “us versus them” mentality. Desire for an office does not seem to be generational as I originally thought but an aspiration to many symbolizing hard work, success, and recognition.

Class differences are not limited to office versus cubicles but also those sitting on “special” floors and those who are not. This is much more evident at Innovate as VaporCorp employees covet the updated design, collaborative spaces, and communal gathering areas. Innovate employee retain their individual cubicles which resemble the size and amenities at VaporCorp explaining why many working for the parent company expressed a desire to work in the new environment. Those at WellnessCorp sitting on the 12th or 24th floors are “different” and while most would agree these are not coveted floors, many WellnessCorp employees desire the newness and contemporary design of the 24th floor.

Several employees expressed the idea that the work environment is coming full circle. I believe this is true as the new open collaborative spaces are reminiscent of Burrolandschaft designs. However, instead of featuring furniture mobility as evidenced from the earlier configurations, today’s collaborative spaces promote worker mobility. Employees are expected to select what work environment best suits their needs at a given time dependent on task. Conceptually, this is ideal, but it requires a radical culture shift.

As was evidenced at both Innovate and WellnessCorp (24th floor), employees had a ten-
dency to transfer traditional ways of working to the new collaborative environments. As a result, employees were (and many still are) at their desks the majority of the day - not in keeping with the spirit of a collaborative workspace. To that end, while I described the collaborative spaces at Innovate and the 24th floor at WellnessCorp as representative of Duffy’s “club” structure, they are in fact, emerging clubs. To date, they do not fully embody the autonomy of a club but there are processes in place to facilitate the realization of a “club” work environment. Shedding old habits takes time and with proper management and guidance, along with support from corporate leaders, these floors may in fact typify the embodiment of an innovative club culture.

The anomaly to this study was the 12th floor at WellnessCorp. Although designed and intended to support collaboration, the environment is steeped with hierarchical underpinnings. The concept of surveillance coupled with individualistic silos counter the intent and spirit by which the space was imagined. Not only does the physical environment seemingly not support the intent, the processes and culture fail to foster true collaboration. Changing organizational culture is not easy and it can’t be accomplished by a mere change in panel height - it is a holistic transformation that fully integrates space with processes and only in this way can cultural change be realized.
Manifestation of Issues

Throughout this study, issues related to traditional and collaborative work environments at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp emerged to the forefront of discussions. I believe they are worth addressing here and will do so within the context of environment and behavior literature and the conceptual framework.

Organizational change, such as that experienced at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp, can be deemed a “critical life event” resulting in potentially negative employee behaviors induced by stress (Jimmieson et al., 2004, p. 11). It can be detrimental if employees experience uncertainty in their perceived roles and responsibilities - particularly if they regard the change as a roadblock for career success or financial well-being (Callan, 1993). Additionally, changes in the physical workspace, may facilitate employees’ sense of loss over intangibles such as prestige, power, and social engagement (Greenhalagh & Rosenblatt, 1984). Thus, as a result of organizational changes, employees at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp face unique challenges and a multitude of environmental workplace stressors.

**Stress.** Environmental stressors can be identified by examining the physical characteristics of the workplace - how humans cope with stress is dependent upon individual reactions to certain conditions. Stress occurs when there is an imbalance between environmental expectations and the capability of humans to respond. Theoretical perspectives on stress can be approached from either a physiological or psychological perspective with each paradigm focusing on a different dimension of stress. The psycho-
logical perspective focuses on an individual’s ability to interpret meaning from the environment which directly relates to power and status. The implications of this perspective include how a person perceives environmental demand as manifested through domination and surveillance and environmental cues as evidenced by status markers.

There are several models of environmental stressors but the most relevant for this study is the control model which illustrates the need for humans to master their environments. The concept of control correlates to autonomy by means of decision making and according to Evans and McCoy (1998), autonomy is the “mastery or ability to take action, to alter or regulate the environment” (McCoy, 2002, p. 453). Humans have a propensity for mastering their environment (Averill, 1973; White, 1959) as was evidenced by employees on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp, and as such, unrealized assimilation due to loss of control leads to unfavorable repercussions and undue stress (Evans & Cohen, 1987).

While the physical work environment can support creative engagement and autonomous action (McCoy, 2002), it can also facilitate undesirable constraints, reduce choices and exacerbate unwanted stressors (Glass & Singer, 1972; Evans & Cohen, 1987). Evidence of control as it relates to power, status, autonomy and interaction in the workplace can be manifested through spatial organization, privacy, territory and personalization.

**Spatial Organization.** As presented by McCoy (2002), control can also be evidenced in the physical environment by an individual’s control over furniture arrangement, the location of the workstation within the layout of the office, and control over visual or
auditory distractions. When assessed against the ‘power over’ and ‘power to’ paradigms, it would seem that control is evidenced in the physical environment regardless of organizational type, when managers dictate where employees sit (office versus cubicle versus bench), how they interact (i.e. collaboration), and the type of equipment and workstation each employee is allocated (i.e. one shared pedestal for every two people). Control is exhibited in ‘power to’ environments (i.e. club and den) whereby individuals have the autonomy to control where they sit, how they interact with each other, and how furniture is configured to support their needs.

Status is controlled through spatial organization and is evidenced by workplace configurations (i.e. workstations along windows) and assignments. Stress becomes a factor when employees perceive unfair status (i.e. someone of lower rank gets a highly coveted window workstation) as was evidenced at both VaporCorp and WellnessCorp. Adams’ equity theory (1965) asserts that there is a correlation between the perception of fairness and employee satisfaction (Miner, 2002). Equity theory seemingly correlates most with Duffy’s club environments where office design downplays the display of rank and status and promotes the ideals of high autonomy and interaction. Job dissatisfaction is based on the perceived inequity of inputs to outcomes making it is important to recognize the significance of autonomy and interaction in balancing inputs with outputs.

Unlike equity theory that strives for balance, Stuart Adams (1953) proffers that employees are content when rank and order are transparent and considered in line with the organizational hierarchy. This also holds true for autonomy and interaction. If employees perceive their workspace, degree of autonomy, and level of interaction to be ap-
propriate they are satisfied. People experience balance and accord if their workspaces, autonomy, and level of interaction are more desirable or better appointed than that of lower-ranking people but not to the degree as those of higher-ranking people. If, however, a workspace, autonomy, or interaction is deficient but present with a lower ranking employee, congruency theory postulates an attempt to assume control over the imbalance. Employees at both VaporCorp and WellnessCorp expressed issues over the imbalance of workplace assignment and allocation. Their expressed dissatisfaction seemingly affirms the theory’s hypothesis.

**Privacy.** Privacy considers the level of interaction with others (desired privacy) and the degree to which one interacts with others (achieved privacy). It is a central concept by which someone makes him/herself available or not to another. A key issue in environment and behavior, it can be defined as “an interpersonal boundary process by which a person or group regulates interaction with others” (Altman, 1975, p.6). If achieved privacy is lower or higher than expected privacy, imbalance results leading to a shift in adaptation level and stress. Issues of openness and closedness or the degree to which one is accessible or inaccessible in the workplace change and shift over time. This was particularly evidenced in the move from traditional high paneled cubicle environments to the open collaborative floors at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp. There are behavioral mechanisms used to promote privacy goals that include verbal and paraverbal behavior (content/style of verbal responses), personal space (area around a person), territory (geographical uses and possessions) and cultural mechanisms (customs and norms).
As presented by Duffy, different organizational structures regulate interaction with others as well as the environment differently and it is not necessarily measured by degree of privacy. What differs among these two organizations is how individuals are permitted to assert control over interaction (i.e. power). There are two distinct approaches to defining privacy - one emphasizes seclusion or withdrawal (i.e. “a feeling that others should be excluded...” (Bates, 1964)) while the other focuses on degree of control (i.e. “...the ability to control interaction...” (Rapoport, 1972)).

Beyond definitions, there are four types of privacy, three of which correlate to Duffy’s organizational spatial types. These include solitude (person is alone/cell or secluded in a huddle room), intimacy (small group separate from others/club and den as evidenced by the various impromptu meeting spaces at Innovate), anonymity (lost in a crowd/hive as evidenced in the benching environment) and reserve (tuning people out as reported by supervisors and managers in low cubicles at WellnessCorp). Individuals or groups look for balance between “openness and closedness” - too much or too little separation is not desirable. This balance is dependent on the amount of control over boundaries and protecting oneself from the influence of others.

Mechanisms for regulating privacy include verbal communication (where one conveys messages such as “keep out” or “come in”) and nonverbal behaviors such as body language. Environmental mechanisms such as clothing and adornment communicate messages of approach and territory. They also convey invisible boundaries surrounding an individual that can be used to regulate interaction and privacy.
Issues of privacy, personal space, territory and crowding embody the meaning of the relationship between environment and behavior. Understanding the psychological and physiological affects of these concepts is critical in infusing people into workplace settings. Most often interpreted pragmatically by designers, (i.e codes, furniture arrangements, egress), the behavioral implications of these concepts coupled with their impact on autonomy, interaction and power can negatively or positively define an office environment.

**Territoriality.** Employees on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp indicated a desire for additional screening to facilitate the distinction of territorial boundaries and managers reported dissatisfaction in sitting in open plan because of intrusions that led to distractions, interruptions, and stress. Across all five territorial dimensions (duration, centrality, marking intentions, marking range, and territorial intrusion) it is apparent that different types of territories can be used for different functions. The primary territory is most likely to express a sense of identity, it is multi-functional, conveys high autonomy, and allows for order and control. Duffy’s ‘cell’, or the private office best illustrates this type of territory. Secondary territories are most likely controlled by a group while control in public territories is restricted and dependent on the predictability of behavior rather than the ability to create and enforce rules. The ‘club’ and ‘den’ workplace types integrate secondary territories into their spatial layouts. Territorial ownership varies according to the characteristics of a setting. These characteristics include territorial markers, architectural features, composition of the occupants (gender, age culture etc.) and group size.
**Personalization.** Personalization, a term derived from the environmental psychology discipline, has come to mean the intentional enhancement, decoration, ornamentation or refinement of an interior meant to reflect the personality of an individual (Sommer, 1974; Sundstrom, 1986). There is a direct correlation between personalization, interaction, status, autonomy and power. The very act of personalizing the workplace suggests high interaction with individualized adornment of one’s workstation (i.e. photos of children or pets) inherently fostering communication among employees. Status is realized through the outward display of status markers.

In the workplace, personalization can be impacted by autonomy and power often with someone other than the user having control over its display and actualization. Employees on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp were impacted by their limited ability to personalize their new workspaces. Personalization conveys a worker’s self identity as well as the “amount of freedom and control the organization allows the individual to exert over the workspace” (Sundstrom, 1986, p. 218). Conversely, personalization gives workers a sense of control over their work environment which could lead to organizational commitment and place attachment (Sundstrom, 1986). The Instagram photo magnets and creative nameplates are examples of employees demonstrating control over their new work environment.

**Crowding.** The concept of crowding in the workplace is a relatively new phenomena but with the popularity of benching, issues related to highly populated spaces are inevitable. Crowding is defined as “a form of stress that sometimes occurs in a densely populated environment” (Baum and Epstein, 1987; Skokols, 1972; Sundstrom, 1975a, b).
One theory purports that crowding is acute when individuals “spend[s] much time, relate[s] to others on a personal basis, and engage[s] in a wide range of personally important activities” (Skokols, 1976, p.73). Largely studied within prison or dormitory settings, findings indicate that crowding adversely affects performance, however, there has yet to be a correlation with these findings to an office setting.

**Self-efficacy.** The propensity of employee adaptability in response to organizational change was a recurrent theme throughout this study. Within this context, self-efficacy is defined as “an employee’s perceived ability to function well on the job, despite the demands of a changing work environment” (Jimmieson et al., 2004, p. 13). Those who are unable to adapt to the organizational changes demonstrate feelings of inadequacy, incompetency, and powerlessness in the ability to cope (Bandura, 1977). Conversely, employees with high efficacy are able to synthesize and manage the stress related to organizational process changes (Jimmieson et al., 2004).

Situational appraisal is the ability to consider the context of the change events as well as employees’ cognitive ability to interpret the circumstances (Terry & Callan, 2000). There are two levels of situational appraisal: primary is employee’s correlation of the situation to their well-being and secondary is employees ability to assess how to manage the conditions (Jimmieson et al., 2004). This is particularly germane to understanding why the employees on the 24th floor at WellnessCorp repeatedly responded “I got used to it”. The context was perceived to be for the betterment of the organization and the ability to understand the conditions was dependent on managerial and peer support, employee personality, and organizational transparency.
Theoretical Supposition

While the examination of status in the open office work environment is well documented, this study facilitated its analysis through the distinct lens of power theory. Historically power and authority were evidenced through surveillance, yet with the changing modes of working, managers and employees are not always in close proximity. Power theory has not been included in discussions of office environments in that any mention of power tends to be superficial. The shift in power from ‘power over’ (surveillance and dominance) to ‘power to’ (power as a means of accomplishing work) seems inevitable in the work environments of progressive, forward thinking companies. How can power theory be used to inform the transition from an environment of dominance to one of facilitation? This amalgamation of power theory and design practice contributes to the body of knowledge by presenting a grounded theory demonstrating that power and design are cor-reational concepts instead of pragmatic abstractions.

Grounded theory guided this research as data was collected, themes emerged, and theory was constructed supporting the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism. As such, employees at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp offered insight into their workplace within the social context of the organizational culture resulting in a rich understanding of their history, shared values, and beliefs. The process of analysis was continual as themes were refined up to, and during, the writing of this narrative and while the research ques-tions informed the context of the inquiry, I was open to new discovery and followed tan-gent paths as they were presented. Emergent themes of representativeness, cultural underpinnings, collaboration, hierarchy, and power represent the phenomenological experi-
ence realized from these two cases. This discussion synthesizes the data across multidisciplinary domains and presents a theoretical supposition that is germane to both theory and practice.

Duffy’s postulated relationship between organizational structure and the physical work environment served as the conceptual framework for this study. Today, corporate ‘culture’ is at the forefront of organizational discourse as companies are employing the physical workplace as a medium for communicating their identity. Google was one of the first with its playful and novel approach in redefining the meaning of ‘office’. Other companies are integrating “Google-like” concepts and amenities to foster an innovative, collaborative culture. Emerging cultures at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp are transforming from traditionally conventional hierarchical organizations to collaborative work models integrating more autonomy and interaction into the workplace. Extreme variations of organizational structures such as holacracy adopted by Zappos questions the existence of hierarchy and establishes a corporate culture that fosters equality. The concept of ROWE - Results Only Work Environments perpetuates work/life balance and evaluates workers on performance, not their presence in an office. Understanding how work cultures inform the design of the physical environment facilitates a workplace that compliments and reinforces an organization’s image, values and goals.

Presented here is a theoretical explication identifying the correlation between these related canons constructed from the emergent themes. The relationship between leadership decisions governed by changing organizational values, the perpetual hierarchi-
cal divisions, and the innovative responses to collaboration, informed the constructs of autonomy and interaction which were correlated with power and status.

**Power & Autonomy**

Power theorists categorize the concept of power as either being dominant (i.e. ‘power over’) or productive (i.e. ‘power to’). These two perspectives, ‘power to’ and ‘power over’ are relevant to the discussion of autonomy as presented in Duffy’s framework in that it correlates across the four classifications of office types: hive, den, cell, and club:

*Hive:* Surveillance is a contributing factor to the concept of dominance which embodies the idea of ‘power over’.

*Cell:* The private office or workstation (cell), has traditionally symbolized someone of authority and therefore epitomizes the concept of ‘power over’.

*Den:* Because of the nature of fostering collaboration and communication, den workers exhibit a collective productivity that exemplifies the notion of ‘power to’.

*Club:* Just as with den workers, those working in club environments foster collective productivity and ‘power to’.

Although power is distributed across the four domains (see Figure 74), it is difficult to extract a hypothesis regarding affect between power and autonomy. What can be discerned from this presentation is that historical ways of working (cell and hive) are representative of ‘power over’ structures whereas progressive organizations employing den and club settings cultivate ‘power to’ cultures. Additionally, the two most divergent workplace settings - the cell and club - are distinct and easily identifiable whereas the hive and den environments are more similar. In the hive and den, workers have little or no autonomy with the only distinguishing characteristic being the manifestation of power
- the hive is focused on dominance or ‘power over’ whereas the den fosters productive power or ‘power to’.

![Power & Autonomy Diagram]

Figure 74. Duffy’s organizational structure overlaid with power and autonomy. Although organizationally categorized as a “den”, the 12th Floor at WellnessCorp and the Hillsite location indicates the propensity for the den to assume the properties of a hive when the culture and work environment do not encourage high autonomy or ‘power to’.

The main point of interest with this model is evidenced by the 12th floor at WellnessCorp (and the Hillsite location). These floors were built to promote ‘power to’ yet the organizational culture, hierarchical underpinnings, lack of real collaboration, and a propensity towards surveillance have manifested a dichotomy between intent and realization. This disconnect is important in that to truly transform culture, the relationship between autonomy and power intent must align. Change is not possible by merely altering the workspace as Foucault would suggest, nor will it be realized by changing the culture without a physical environment to support it.

The concept of control is evidenced in both the application of ‘power over’ and the promotion of ‘power to’ with the former (‘power over’) demonstrating a loss of
autonomy whereby decision making and authority are acquiesced by the subordinate. This correlates with Steven Lukes’ definition of power where “A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B’s interests” (Lukes, 2005, p. 37). Ultimately, this perceived loss of control contributes to B’s propensity for stress and can lead to emotional and intellectual deficiencies and diminished motivation (Seligman, 1975). Conversely, ‘power to’ is also correlated with control in that increased autonomy leads to the propensity to engage in productive decision making thereby lowering the risk of environmental stress.

When assessed against the ‘power over’ and ‘power to’ paradigms, it would seem that control is evidenced in the physical environment when managers dictate where employees sit, how they interact and the type of equipment and workstation each employee is allocated. Control is exhibited in ‘Power to’ environments (i.e. club and den) whereby individuals have the autonomy to control where they sit, how they interact with each other, and how furniture is configured to support their needs.

**Power & Interaction**

While power and autonomy were evenly distributed across the power dimensions (i.e. over and to), the relationship between power and interaction is quite different. What seemingly demonstrates a correlation (not meant to represent statistical significance) is the clustering of work environment types as they relate to interaction and power (see Figure 75).
In hive environments, “workers sit continuously at simple workstations for long periods of time on a regular nine-to-five schedule...” (Duffy, 1997, p. 62). Interaction among workers occurs during lunch and on breaks and Duffy deems the hive as one with low interaction (Duffy, 1997). It was determined in the previous section that hives are subjected to surveillance and therefore represent ‘power over’ work environments. Similarly, the cell “accommodates individual, concentrated work with little interaction” (Duffy, 1997, p.63). Those who work in cells are typically authority figures and as such, exemplify the concept of ‘power over’.

The “cell” and “hive” indicate that low interaction with others signifies authority and/or dominance. For the cell, ‘power over’ could indicate control or authority over others. The private workspace has long been the standard for supervisors and managers so this type of environment represents the dominance over others. The hive, however, is
evidenced by workers as the recipient of authority or dominance. These types of workspaces are typically monitored closely by supervisors or managers. Both the hive and cell represent different types of ‘power over’ (one the recipient and one the authoritarian) with the common characteristic being low interaction.

The den work type is “associated with group work, [and is] typically highly interactive...” (Duffy, 1997, p. 64). Group work fosters engagement and proactive, collective production. As such, power shifts from one of dominance to a more constructive force facilitating positive outcomes and results. Similarly, working in a club environment is highly interactive and goes beyond the den in promoting collaboration and productive work.

Unlike the hive and cell workers who exemplify highly hierarchical organizational structures, den and club workers represent flatter organizational hierarchies. Interestingly, WellnessCorp’s 12th floor and Hillsite location were classified as “dens” because of the intent of why the space was redesigned - to promote collaboration. In reality, there is low interaction among employees as evidenced by the individualized workstations, the hierarchical presence, and little to no spaces other than formal conference rooms to conduct informal or impromptu meetings. Again, the disconnect between why the space was designed and the reality of how workers engage in the environment demonstrates the importance of considering power in actualizing collaboration intentions.

While most work environments today model the den workplace type, the trend to flatten hierarchies (or eliminate them) and reduce the number of individualized workstations reinforces the need for more club-like workspaces. The key to both the den and
club environments is perpetuating a highly synergistic workforce by facilitating a work environment that supports such interaction.

**Status, Interaction and Autonomy**

Organizations, by definition are groups of people who work independently toward a common goal (Katz & Kahn, 1966). They do not need walls or physical structures to exist - instead they require that people have a collective sense of purpose (McShane, & Von Glinow, 2010). Whether it be a hive, den, or cell environment, those working in a physical office environment often assign meaning and symbolism to the physical settings apportioned and allocated by organizations (Gorawara-Bhat, 2002). This meaning is given to, and derived within, the context of the social organizational structure (Mead, 1934).

Organizational structures that foster low interaction and low autonomy among workers utilize hive-like workspaces. Hives embody a hierarchical structure and status is evident in this type of physical work environment through favorable workstation location (i.e. close to a window) and/or special amenities (i.e. extra storage, additional seating, higher panels etc.). Low interaction and high autonomy (cells) also prescribe to status. Private offices and/or workstations embody the ideal of high status. Environments with low interaction but high autonomy (dens) also perpetuate status because while group work is evident, workers still maintain a private workstation. As with hives, status in dens is evidenced by workstation location and/or amenities. From these three work types, it can be deduced that if either interaction or autonomy are low, status will exist (refer to Figure 76). Conversely, the club, which depicts high interaction and high auton-
omy conveys the supposition of low status. In these types of environments, the focus is less on the individual and more about the group or team thereby rendering status as seemingly unimportant. Interestingly, the amenities and work processes at Innovate (i.e. informal lounge areas, small huddle rooms, large kitchen) seem to suggest “club” yet the undercurrent of hierarchy is palpable. Employees have individualized cubes that resemble those at VaporCorp and private offices suggest the continuation of the “us versus them” paradigm. On the 24th floor at WellnessCorp, hierarchical representations are less distinct but still exist. Despite the claim of a flatter hierarchy the culture on this floor has introduced another hierarchical layer; instead of office versus cube, the class divisions now represent office versus cube versus desk.

Legend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 76. Status, Interaction & Autonomy.
Today, the nature of work is changing at a rapid pace and as such, organizational structures, cultures, and work types are also changing. Hierarchies are flatter and lines of status demarcation are blurred if not eliminated as work places are transitioning from traditional types (hive, den and cells) to open, collaborative, less individualized environments (clubs). In organizations with flat hierarchies, team based boundary-less environments where autonomy and interaction are high, status is not necessarily defined by physical demarcation - instead it can be assessed against one’s abilities, social position, and success within the organization. Status in this context is seemingly not dependent on the physical environment but relies on the organizational structure, high autonomy, and high interaction to define it.

The theoretical supposition offered here posits that organizational culture drives spatial decisions. In this way, autonomy and interaction are organizationally defined across a high/low continuum with low dimensions embodying the concepts of ‘power over’ and status impacting workplace location and spatial hierarchy. High dimensions of autonomy and interaction, driven by organizational culture, facilitate ‘power to’ and low status thereby establishing an environment rich for collaboration (see Figure 77).
Organizational Culture

- Autonomy
- Interaction

Power Over & High Status

- Workplace Location
- Spatial Hierarchy

Collaborative Workspaces

Power To & Low Status

Spatial Decisions

Figure 77. Theoretical Supposition
While the physical work environment can support creative engagement and autonomous action (McCoy, 2002), it can also facilitate undesirable constraints, reduce choices and exacerbate unwanted stressors (Glass & Singer, 1972; Evans & Cohen, 1987). It has been demonstrated that determinants of power, status, autonomy and interaction in the workplace can be manifested through organizational culture and the physical work environment. Power and status are important underlying constructs affecting the realization of organizational culture - to devalue them as major components in the planning and design of the workplace is detrimental to employee well being and the health of an organization.

**Conclusion**

This grounded theory research posits a theoretical supposition informed by disciplines outside of architecture/design and proffers the position that the domains of power, status, and culture are interrelated and connected. Data collection methods were triangulated and analyses reveled emerging themes of representativeness, cultural underpinnings, collaboration, hierarchy, and power that were amalgamated into a constructed theory rich in meaning and relevant to practice. Because it assumed a constructivist epistemology, was guided by a symbolic interactionist theoretical framework, and refrained from positivist methods, employees’ voices are interwoven into the narrative and recount the story of what is happening in today’s workplace.

The prevalence of workers in an open office work environment is not likely to wane any time soon. As organizational structures transform hierarchies from vertical, to horizontal, to non-existent, and work environments morph from dens to clubs, employ-
ees’ adaptation will depend on their ability to find the balance between environmental stressors and self-efficacy. With many of the stressors related to the physical work environment, measures to foster control over these factors empower and instill a sense of employee connectedness to the organization.

Spatial workplace issues are shrouded with latent power as defined by Steven Lukes’s third dimension and control realized in the design of the workplace as put forth by the theories of Foucault illustrated in his discussions of the Panopticon. Lipman, Cooper, Harris & Tranter’s pragmatic attempt to connect power with the physical work environment failed to integrate theories outside the domain of office planning. Power is the overlying construct directing autonomy and interaction and as such, in an emerging organizational culture, it is the latent variable often considered taboo but should not be overlooked. The physical work environment can either help or hinder progress - design informed by power is instrumental to the success of an evolving, collaborative workplace representative of an innovative organization culture.

This research introduces a supposition that amalgamates seemingly disparate concepts and presents the possibilities for future study. It contributes to the body of knowledge by proffering a unique perspective on the relationship between power, status, culture, and the open office work environment. Although each domain can be considered independently, the richness of this study is in the connectedness across constructs. While the implications are not universal, these cases are critical (i.e. typical), meaning theoretical generalizability is plausible. Investigation into various organizational types and structures will apprise and continue to develop the supposition. Longitudinal studies focused
on adaptability and productivity may build on this foundation and additional examination into emerging collaborative workspaces will further inform power’s role and influence on design.
REFERENCES


*Academy of Management Review, 9*, 438-448.


CULTURE AND POWER ON STATUS IN THE OPEN OFFICE


APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A

Research Design

Goals
1. To understand if and how managers administer power over employees by the allocation and assignment of workstations
2. To understand the interaction between various ranks (informs culture and power)
3. To understand how employees value their work environment (informs power, status and culture)
4. To understand if organizational culture aligns with decisions regarding physical workspaces and sentiments of employees (informs culture and power)
5. To define the organizational culture (informs culture, status and power)
6. To inform further inquiry

Conceptual Framework
1. Equity Theory
2. Status Congruency Theory
3. Expectancy Theory
4. Hygiene Theory
5. Power Theory

Research Questions
1. How do employees value the open office workstation as a symbol of status?
2. How is power manifested in the allocation of the open office workstation assignment?
3. How does corporate culture influence decisions pertaining to the open office work environment?

Methodology
- Qualitative study
- Social Constructivism epistemology
- Interpretive/Symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective
- Grounded theory methodology
- Case study methods
- Data collection: interviews, photographs, document review

Validity
- Method triangulation
- Data triangulation
- Reader coding review
- Comparison of materials
APPENDIX B
Letter of Consent

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Researcher’s Name(s): Lori A. Anthony
Contact Information: lam8@missouri.edu
412-780-4440
Project Title: The Influence of Organizational Culture and Power on Status: How it is Manifested in the Open Office

You are being asked to participate in a research study about the open office work environment that is being conducted for the purpose of satisfying the PhD requirements at the University of Missouri. This research involves interviews with the researcher, onsite observation of employees engaging in a normal workday, and the collection of photographs of workstations and offices (without employees in them).

Initial interview sessions should take no longer than 30 minutes. You may, however, be asked to participate in subsequent interviews to clarify and further the understanding of a particular topic.

Data collected for this study will be confidential and coded so that no identifying information can be linked to you.

Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. If at any time during the process you do not want to continue to be in the study, you may terminate participation by simply informing the researcher of your desire to withdraw.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study.
Lori A. Anthony

I have read this consent form and my questions have been answered. My signature below means that I do want to be in the study. I know that I can remove myself from the study at any time without any problems.

_____________________________________    _____________
Participant                           Date
Time of Interview:
Date:
Interviewee’s Title:
Age Code:
Amount of time working with this company:
Code: _______
Manager Yes_____  No _____

1. What was your position/rank when starting with the company?

2. When you first started, where was your workstation? (use floor plan and have participants place “x” on cubicle) (note current position if different)

3. Have you been promoted?
   a. If yes, did you change cubicles?  (status) (research question 3)
   b. If yes, who reassigned you to your new workspace? (power) (research question 2)

4. If you are promoted, do you expect your workspace to reflect your new position? In size/location? (status) (research question 3)

5. What do you perceive to be the most appealing workstation in your department? Why?  (status/culture) (research questions 1 and 3)

6. What are some adjectives you might use to describe how you feel in your workspace?

7. What factors influence the decision making process for assigning workstations?  
   (power/culture) (research questions 2 and 3)

8. Are there rules about changing workstations if you want to? (power/culture) (research questions 2 and 3)

9. Who oversees and regulates workstation assignment?  (power) (research question 2)

10. As an outsider, how would I be able to tell (based on cubicle location and amenities) the rank of the employee? (status) (research question 3)

11. How would you describe the organizational culture here? (culture) (research question 3)

12. How is the culture evident in the physical work environment? (culture) (research question 3)
APPENDIX D

VaporCorp HQ Floorplan (Typical)
APPENDIX E

VaporCorp HQA Floorplan (Typical)
APPENDIX F

VaporCorp Floorplan (3rd Floor Innovate)
APPENDIX H

WellnessCorp Floorplan (12th Floor)
APPENDIX I

WellnessCorp Floorplan (24th Floor)
### APPENDIX J

#### Coding Sheets

Axial Coding Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axial Codes</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismal Workplace</td>
<td>Discussions relating to the age and appearance of the workplace</td>
<td>Several WellnessCorp employees indicated panels that were stained, carpet that was dirty and cubicles that were old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Good Cube</td>
<td>Discussions relating to what is perceived to be the ‘best’ cube</td>
<td>Some employees at VaporCorp mentioned the “luxury cubes” - those directly up against a window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Can See You!</td>
<td>Discussions relating to surveillance</td>
<td>The Vice President at WellnessCorp lowered the panels on the 12th floor so managers could watch employees. VaporCorp offices have glass fronts enabling them to watch and be watched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s Crowded in Here!</td>
<td>Discussions related to the density of employees in collaborative work environments</td>
<td>WellnessCorp employees on the 24th floor indicated that others would be moving to their floor and occupying what was collaborative work tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Best Laid Plans</td>
<td>Discussions relating to the modification of original intent and design of the work environment</td>
<td>WellnessCorp employees on the 24th floor indicated that others not related to their teams would be integrated among them. Innovate employees indicated that managers would be moving out of cubicles and back to offices (shared)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Exception to the Rule</td>
<td>Discussions relating to inconsistencies in rules related to workspace type (i.e. office vs cube)</td>
<td>Employees at VaporCorp indicated that grade 12 or above employees in the HQA building get offices while those at HQ must be grade 13 or above to get an office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Codes</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us Versus Them</td>
<td>Discussions of distinctions between groups</td>
<td>Many indicated the difference between those with offices versus those with cubicles At VaporCorp, employees indicated a distinction between those who work at Innovate and those who do not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Class System</td>
<td>Discussions related to rank or level</td>
<td>One employee reported that there is status that goes with being an executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>Discussions related to audio and visual privacy</td>
<td>Many employees discussed privacy issues related to being able to hear from one office to another or having to walk away from their desk to take a personal phone call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coveted Office</td>
<td>Discussions related to the desire for a private office</td>
<td>While some employees stated they didn’t care, others (in cubicles) were anxious to have a private office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Deserve It</td>
<td>Discussions related to the perception that a private office was earned</td>
<td>Several employees stated that they believed because they had worked hard, they deserved a private office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
<td>Discussions related to how the company is structured</td>
<td>Many employees reported a hierarchical structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It Starts at the Top</td>
<td>Discussions related to the changing culture being led and directed by executive management</td>
<td>Reported top-down mentality driving change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times are Changing</td>
<td>Discussions related to changing organizational cultures</td>
<td>Both companies have new CEOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s Mine, Mine, Mine!</td>
<td>Discussions relating to the idea of spatial ownership</td>
<td>Employees reported ownership to their workspace while others did not Almost all employees personalized in some way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Get too Comfortable</td>
<td>Discussions related to the lack of stability and permanence with workspaces</td>
<td>Employees moved from one location to another quite often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Persona</td>
<td>Discussions related to public perception of the company</td>
<td>One WellnessCorp employee reported that the umbrella message was ‘the customer comes first’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Codes</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Move from the Den to the Club</td>
<td>Discussions related to the perceptions of transitioning from a traditional cubicle environment to a more open collaborative space</td>
<td>Employees commented on perceived losses of privacy and storage while others saw the benefits of increased collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The den (12th floor &amp; Hill Campus)</td>
<td>Discussions related to the collaborative environment with a traditional layout and 42”H panels</td>
<td>Some reported that they are happy not to be moving to such an environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Discussions related to the mandate to consolidate belongings at for employees moving to the 24th floor at WellnessCorp</td>
<td>Employees on the 24th floor reported the allocation of 1 storage pedestal shared between two employees as their only personal storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessity is the Mother of Invention</td>
<td>Discussions related to the idea that employees will devise ‘work arounds’</td>
<td>WellnessCorp employees on the 24th floor devised name plates with binder clips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just got used to it</td>
<td>Discussions related to employee adaptation</td>
<td>WellnessCorp employees on the 24th repeatedly remarked that they adjusted to the noise and activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Individuality</td>
<td>Discussions related to identity</td>
<td>Many employees reported homogeneity and a lack of identity - particularly at WellnessCorp on the 24th floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privileged</td>
<td>Discussions related to the perception of Innovate employees being privileged</td>
<td>Several employees commented that Innovate employees haven’t earned the new space and that they take it for granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better you than Me!</td>
<td>Discussions related to the perception of employees on the 12th and 24th floors at WellnessCorp</td>
<td>Most employees reported that they are happy not to be working on these floors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Discussions related to the move toward an innovative culture</td>
<td>One employee commented that the organizational culture wants to be innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s a Distraction</td>
<td>Discussions related to the distractions evidenced in open collaborative environments</td>
<td>Several employees reported issues with interruptions because of being visible to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial Codes</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>It Looks good</td>
<td>Discussions relating to new furniture and amenities</td>
<td>Employees reported that the 24th floor at WellnessCorp and the Innovate space has new paint, carpet, kitchens, and furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cube</td>
<td>Discussions related to the cubicle environment</td>
<td>One employee equated sitting in a cube with cattle stalls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territoriality</td>
<td>Discussions related to staying within the allotted workspace</td>
<td>One employee from the 24th floor at WellnessCorp indicated a fear of encroaching on her neighbors desk space (she sits in a benching environment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shhhhh!</td>
<td>Discussions relating to noise as a distraction - particularly in collaborative environments</td>
<td>Employees reported difficulty hearing telephone calls because others were taking calls on speaker phones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can Hear You!</td>
<td>Discussions related to the false sense of privacy in the private office</td>
<td>Employees acknowledged the lack of acoustical privacy in private offices and open plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Isn’t always better</td>
<td>Discussions related to the unplanned for consequences of open collaborative spaces</td>
<td>Issues regarding germs spreading more quickly and disclosure of ADA issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s all about Collaboration</td>
<td>Discussions related to the need for working together</td>
<td>Employees at Innovate expressed the increased ability to work together because of the physical layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out with the Old...In with the New</td>
<td>Discussions related to employee tenure</td>
<td>One employee commented on the need for baby boomers to retire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function drives Form</td>
<td>Discussions related to accommodating work needs</td>
<td>One employee commented on the need for an office because of the type of work he does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Discussions relating to the promotion of social engagement in the work environment</td>
<td>One employee talked about another coordinating a Thanksgiving dinner for everyone on the floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selective Codes</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Axial Codes within this Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Quintessential Workplace</td>
<td>This category addresses the physical work environment</td>
<td>Dismal Workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Good Cube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Ownership</td>
<td>This category addresses ownership and the sense of connectedness with a workspace</td>
<td>It’s Mine, Mine, Mine! Don’t Get too Comfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>This category addresses the issue of rank and status within the workplace</td>
<td>Us versus Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The class system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Privacy</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>The Coveted Office</td>
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<tr>
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<td>I deserve it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It starts at the top...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Changing Organizational Landscape</td>
<td>This category addresses cultural change</td>
<td>Times are Changing...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Out with the old....In with the new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Our persona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Collaborative Workspace</td>
<td>This category addresses collaborative workspaces</td>
<td>The Move from the “Hive” to the “Den” (Duffy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It’s all about collaboration...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The hive (12th floor &amp; Hill Campus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Necessity is the Mother of Invention</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I just got used to it</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of Individuality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Privileged</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Better you than me!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>It’s a Distraction...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It’s looks good...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Territoriality...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shhhhhhh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I can hear you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New isn’t always better.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Selective Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selective Codes</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Axial Codes within this Category</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocation of Space</strong></td>
<td>This category addresses how space is allocated and assigned</td>
<td>It’s crowded in here! The best laid plans... The Exception to the Rule I Can See You!</td>
<td>Codes related to criteria for allocating space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Final Coding Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Codes</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sub themes within this Category</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Changing Organizational Landscape</strong></td>
<td>This category addresses corporate culture, the impact of executive leadership and the response by employees to connect with the company and physical work environment</td>
<td>Corporate Personas What’s it like there? It starts at the top Times are changing It’s mine, mine, mine Don’t get too comfortable</td>
<td>Codes were refined and reorganized to specifically relate to a changing organizational culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Codes</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Sub themes within this Category</td>
<td>Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The Collaborative Workspace | This category addresses collaborative workspaces                            | The move from the “den” to the “club” (almost)  
The move from the “den” to the “den”  
The privileged  
Better you than me  
It’s all about collaboration  
Consolidation  
Necessity is the mother of invention  
Shhh!  
It’s a distraction  
All in the name of privacy  
Loss of individuality  
Don’t cross that line  
Let’s be friends  
I just got used to it  
New isn’t always better                                                                 | Codes were refined and reorganized to reflect perceptions and issues with the prototypical collaborative spaces at VaporCorp and WellnessCorp                                                                 |
| Power & Space               | This category addresses issues and criteria related to the allocation and assignment of space. Additionally, it addresses surveillance. | I can see you!  
The best laid plans  
It’s crowded in here!  
The exception to the rule                                                                 | Codes were refined to describe how decisions regarding the allocation of space can disrupt intent, perpetuate the concept of watching, and facilitate crowding. Additionally, codes related to ambiguity in space allocation were included in this category |
APPENDIX K

VaporCorp Mission and Value Statements (from the corporate websites)

Our Mission & Values

How we conduct business is as important as the business results we achieve. We incorporate our Mission & Values into every aspect of our business from developing our strategies, to making business decisions, to how we evaluate and reward our employees.

Our Mission

Our Mission is to own and develop financially disciplined businesses that are leaders in responsibly providing superior branded products. In pursuing our Mission, we and its companies:

- **Invest in Leadership**
  - We will invest in excellent people, leading brands and external stakeholders important to our businesses’ success.

- **Align With Society**
  - We will actively participate in resolving societal concerns that are relevant to our businesses.

- **Satisfy Consumers**
  - We will convert our deep understanding of products that satisfy their preferences into better and more creative

- **Create Substantial Value For Shareholders**
  - We will execute our business plans to create sustainable growth and generate substantial returns for shareholders.

Our Values

Our Values guide our behavior as we pursue our Mission and business strategies.

- **Integrity, Trust and Respect**
  - We believe in operating with integrity, trust and respect, both as individuals and as a family of companies.

- **Passion to Succeed**
  - We demonstrate a passion to succeed in all aspects of our businesses.

- **Executing With Quality**
  - We believe in executing with quality by understanding and responding to our companies’ consumers’ preferences.

- **Driving Creativity Into Everything We Do**
  - We believe in driving creativity into everything we do, resulting in innovation and continuous improvement for our companies’ consumers and our business processes.

- **Sharing With Others**
  - We believe in sharing with others, unleashing the tremendous resources of our people as a force for good into the communities in which we live and work.
APPENDIX L

WellnessCorp Mission and Value Statements (from the corporate websites)

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

MISSION

is an interdependent system designed to deliver high quality, accessible, understandable and affordable experiences, outcomes and solutions for our customers.

VISION

dedicated and respected employees will be leaders in the health care industry, working to improve the total health care experience of our customers.

VALUES

- **People Matter**
  Every person contributes to our success. We strive for an inclusive culture, regarding people as professionals and respecting individual differences while focusing on the collective whole.

- **Stewardship**
  Working to improve the health of the communities we serve and wisely managing the assets which have been entrusted to our care.

- **Trust**
  Earning trust by delivering on our commitments and leading by example.

- **Integrity**
  Committed to the highest standards encompassing every aspect of our behavior including high moral character, respect, honesty and personal responsibility.

- **Customer-focused Collaboration**
  Because no one person has all the answers, we actively seek to collaborate with each other to achieve the right outcomes for our customers.

- **Courage**
  Empowering each other to act in a principled manner and to take appropriate risks to do what is right to fulfill our mission.

- **Innovation**
  Committed to continuous learning and exploring new, better, and creative ways to achieve our vision.

- **Excellence**
  Being accountable for consistently exceeding the expectations of those we serve.
VITA

Lori A. Anthony has an undergraduate BS degree in interior design from Seton Hill University and upon graduation she worked as a corporate interior designer designing office environments. She practiced for 16 years and during that time she managed several design departments. In 1996, Lori starting teaching part time and in 1999, she decided to attend graduate school. She earned a MS degree in interior design from Virginia Tech. In 2001, she started teaching full time at La Roche College in Pittsburgh and one year later was promoted to department chair. In 2006, she left La Roche and went to help build the interior architecture program at Chatham University and in 2008 she became program director over three degree programs. In 2012 she decided to leave Chatham to teach in a new online graduate program in Design Thinking at Radford University. She is NCIDQ certified, has chaired many CIDA visits, and was President of the ASID PA West Chapter in 2008-2009. She is a member of EDRA, and DMI. Lori currently lives in Greensburg, PA with her husband Marc and their three dogs, Lucy, Greta, and Dobbie.