INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA

UMI®
800-521-0600
THE HUMANIZATION OF TEAMS IN ORGANIZATIONS—FACT OR FANTASY: EXPLORING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

by

Nancy Eleanor Thomson

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Adult Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

© Copyright by Nancy Eleanor Thomson 1998
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-41599-6
THE HUMANIZATION OF TEAMS IN ORGANIZATIONS—FACT OR FANTASY: EXPLORING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

Nancy Eleanor Thomson

Doctor of Education

1998

Department of Adult Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology

University of Toronto

ABSTRACT

This study examines the application of teams in business organizations, with a focus on women's experience of teams. While layers of conventional, hierarchical management continue to exist in the organizations studied, alternative, team-based approaches had been implemented.

The study has implications for the role of the practitioner in the implementation of teams in organizations. The changing demographics of the work force, with a growing number of women, demands attention to the creation of team environments in which female members feel supported and acknowledged.

The research examines the individual experiences of 11 Caucasian women, all of them in either middle or senior management, who work in teams. The gender composition of the team experiences ranges from all-female to single female.

Literature is examined in three primary fields: current trends in organizational
development with a focus on learning organizations; theory on women’s development, research on women’s issues in employment and a feminist critique of organization development literature; and literature on team theory and research.

The issues were studied from a qualitative perspective with an underlying rationale based on the theoretical perspective of phenomenology. The participants formed a homogeneous sample of the same gender from six research sites. Interviewees were volunteers selected from private organizations. Data were gathered through confidential semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth interviews.

The findings of the team experiences are clustered around four general themes: sense of support; exercising power; people’s relationship to work; and organizational culture practices. Findings are discussed in the context of the relationships and gaps between the women’s perceptions of the organizations’ concept of teams—organizations’ promise of teams—and their experiences of teams—teams in practice.

During the course of the research, the inquiry expanded into an exploration of the participants’ confrontation with the promise(s) of the team experience. The team structure provided the vehicle through which to explore women’s expectations and their role in organizations.

The study concludes with directions for further research and educational recommendations. Suggestions for practitioners implementing teams are offered: incorporating woman-centred values, and recognizing that individuals have pre-existing mental models and assumptions about teams that may influence their team experiences.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Dr. Lynn Davie, the Chairperson of my dissertation committee who graciously coached me, offered insights and alternative perspectives to facilitate the development of the thesis story, I would like to express my immeasurable appreciation for his sustained encouragement.

Thanks also to other members: Dr. Heather McLean who initially started on my committee, however was unable to continue, assisted with the preliminary development of the research project. Dr. Lana Stermac who was always there to provide support and to make helpful comments and suggestions. Dr. Barbara Burnaby joined my committee and offered a thorough and constructive review of my work, thoughtfully challenged me and provided professional and academic guidance which was instrumental in further development of the quality of this project.

I extend my deep gratitude to my friend Gord Bullock, to my son Glen Alexander who came into this world in the spring of 1994 in the midst of this project and has been a shimmering light in my life, and to my extended family. Thank you for your understanding.

I am indebted to my dear colleague Kali Hewitt-Blackie. Throughout my thesis journey we experienced a synchronicity that was magical in the evolution of this project.

I am grateful to Dr. Diana Denton, who initially encouraged me to pursue my education at O.I.S.E. and has continually provided insights and reflections over the years.

Special thanks and appreciation to many friends and colleagues who cheered me on and urged me to pursue this project to completion: Karon West, Dr. Mary McLean, Dr. Paul Woolner, Dr. J. William Pfeiffer, Patricia Aitken.

My thanks also to Angela Barker, Anita Smale and Jim Barnes for their editorial assistance, and to David Jang for his assistance in preparing the graphics.

Finally I wish to thank my research participants who gave their time, energy and trust, and allowed me to touch their experience through this study.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT** ...................................................................................................................... ii.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** .................................................................................................... iv.

**1. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS** ................................. 1

1.1. Purpose of the Research—The Promise of Teams ......................................................... 1

1.2. The Development and Organization of the Study ......................................................... 4

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW** ................................................................................................ 5

2.1. Section I: Organization Development: A Perspective .................................................. 5

2.1.1. Definition of Organization Development ................................................................... 5


2.1.3. Towards a Conceptualization of the Learning Organization: Learning Concepts .... 10

2.1.4. Learning Organizations .............................................................................................. 11

2.1.5. The Practice of Learning Organizations .................................................................... 15

2.1.6. Summary of Section I ............................................................................................... 19

2.2. Section II: Women’s Ways ............................................................................................ 20

2.2.1. Feminist Critique of Organizational Development Literature ................................. 20

2.2.2. Theoretical Models of Women’s Development .......................................................... 24

2.2.3. Research—Women-in-Management ........................................................................ 31
2.2.4. Women's Ways of Leadership ........................................ 35
2.2.5. Women's Language ................................................ 37
2.2.6. Public Opinion—Popular “How To” Books ....................... 40
2.2.7. Summary of Section II ............................................ 41
2.3. Section III: Teams in Organizations .............................. 43
2.3.1. Introduction ...................................................... 43
2.3.2. Espoused Teams: The Promise of Teams ....................... 44
2.3.3. Critique of Teams ................................................. 60
2.3.4. Alternative Structures from a Feminist Perspective .......... 62
2.3.5. Research on Teams Implemented in Organizations .......... 64
2.3.6. Summary of Section III ........................................... 66
2.4. Section IV: Chapter Summary ...................................... 68

3. RESEARCH INQUIRY—METHODOLOGY .............................. 72
3.1. Research Approach .................................................. 72
3.2. Selection of Participants .......................................... 73
3.3. Data ................................................................. 75
3.4. Interview Guide .................................................... 76
3.5. Data Analysis ........................................................ 77
3.6. Focus of the Analysis .............................................. 80
3.7. Memo-taking ....................................................... 80
3.8. Beginning the Analysis ........................................ 81

4. FINDINGS .......................................................... 83

4.1 Introduction ....................................................... 83

4.2. Section I: Participant Profiles and Context .................. 83

4.3. The Context: Teams in the Organizational Culture ............ 86

4.3.1. Organizational Structure .................................... 87

4.3.2. The Espoused Approach Towards The Implementation of Teams ................. 87

4.3.3. Respondents’ Perceptions of the Organizational Team .......... 89

4.3.4. The Language of Teams: Teams, Committees, Task Forces .......... 90

4.3.5. Summary of Section I ........................................ 91

4.4. Section II: Team Experiences .................................... 92

4.4.1. Team Experiences—Theme: Sense of Support ................ 94

4.4.2. Team Experiences—Theme: Exercising Power ................ 97

4.4.3. Team Experiences—Theme: People’s Relationship to Work ......... 100

4.4.4. Team Experiences—No Gender Differences in Experiences ......... 103

4.4.5. Balance: Work and Family ................................... 103

4.4.6. Summary Section II ......................................... 105

4.5. Section III: Culture ............................................. 106

4.5.1. Introduction .................................................. 106

4.5.2. Rewards and Recognition .................................... 106

vii.
4.5.3. Being a Team Player .............................................. 108
4.5.4. Networking, Celebrations and Social Functions ....................... 109
4.5.5. The Game You Have To Play ..................................... 111
4.5.6. Summary of Section III ............................................ 115
4.6. Chapter Summary ...................................................... 115

5. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION .................... 118
5.1. Introduction .................................................................. 118
5.2. The Organizations’ Promise of Teams: The Perceived Team Characteristics and Expected (Perceived) Organizational Changes .................................................. 118
5.3. Teams in Practice: Women’s Experiences .................................. 123
5.3.1. Compensation, Rewards, and Recognition ............................... 125
5.3.2. Networking, Celebrations and Social Functions ....................... 126
5.3.3. Experiences that Described the Theme Sense of Support .......... 128
5.3.4. Experiences that Described the Theme Exercising Power .......... 132
5.3.5. Experiences that Described the Theme People’s Relationship to Work 145
5.4. Conclusion—Barriers to Implementation .................................. 149

6. CONCLUSIONS .............................................................. 153
6.1. Purpose and Findings of the Dissertation ................................. 153
6.2. Reflections on the Research Methodology and the Research Question 154
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and General Research Questions

1.1. Purpose of the Research—The Promise of Teams

This is a thesis about organizations’ application of team structures. The study occurs in hierarchical organizations that have implemented teams. Even though the number of layers of management have been reduced, some hierarchy still remains and is part of the essence of this study. Understanding women’s experience of teams in hierarchical organizations is the purpose of this research.

My personal interest in sports teams was the genesis of this research topic. A significant portion of my life has been involved with sports teams—as a coach, participant or manager. More recently, I have been involved in implementing teams in business organizations. My particular interest in women’s experiences in teams is an extension of my previous involvement with women’s sport, which involved addressing gender inequities. The team metaphor is prevalent in the business world and I was curious about the potential crossover of learnings from the sport world and the business world. This idea of starting with myself is supported by the work of Hunt (1987), who advocates an inside-out approach to understanding a phenomenon. He states: “Your common sense ideas and your unexpressed theories, growing out of your personal experience, provide enormously rich sources of knowledge about human affairs” (p. 1).

The importance of this research stems both from the growing number of women in the workforce and the increasing use of teams in organizations. In this era of rapidly changing technology, market-driven decision making, growing customer sophistication and employee restlessness, leaders and managers must answer to new challenges. For corporations, small companies, educational institutions, and service organizations to become competitive and to survive, new structures must be built and new skills must be mastered. Work settings have become more complex and involve increasing numbers of interpersonal
interactions. Individual effort has less impact. In order to gain control over change by increasing efficiency and effectiveness, a group effort is required. The creation of teams to accomplish tasks and affect desired change has become a key strategy in many organizations.

As teams replace individuals as the primary unit of focus in innovative companies and organizations, learning how to build, nurture, lead, and dismantle teams becomes a critical skill. Much of the organizational development literature has championed the application of teams in organizations as a structure to solve a variety of issues in organizations. Numerous companies (e.g. Royal Dutch Shell Group, Motorola, General Electric) have documented the contribution and benefits of teams (Orsbum, 1990; Hicks and Bone, 1990; Lawler, 1990). However, there is limited research available on the experience of participants as members of teams.

Work teams may not become institutionalized, however, because there is a need for all members on the team to change. Perhaps more significantly, there may be a need for managers to change more than some are willing to accept. Wageman (1997) reported on the increasing number of organizations that were disenchanted with teams. Many teams never contributed to organization performance and adaptability because they never operated as intended. Organizations with histories of hierarchical decision-making, supported by an ethic of individual achievement, may have difficulties supporting a culture where team members rely on each other to accomplish work. Also, teams are often not properly trained to function effectively. The sample of participants in this dissertation were selected from organizations with cultures that utilized a team-based approach for accomplishing work.

Demographic changes also demonstrate the need for this research. Women now make up almost one-half of all employed Canadians. As noted in the Canadian Council on Social Development research report “Are Women Catching up in the Earnings Race?”

...Of the total labour force in 1961, 27.3 per cent were women and 72.7 per cent were men. In 1996, the percentage of women in the labour force had increased by 17.9 percentage points to 45.2 per cent. (Scott & Lochhead, 1997, p. 6).

Between 1979 and 1992 the number of women in the labour force rose at twice the rate of
According to the US Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS), 58% of women aged 16 and over are now in the workforce, compared with 76% of men. BLS projects that by 2005, between 61% and 65% of women will be in the labour force, compared with 74% to 76% of men.

Dramatic increases have occurred over the past two decades not only in the number of women in the workforce but also in the number of women pursuing professional and managerial careers. In the changing demographic makeup of the workforce, women are also obtaining the necessary education and credentials for managerial careers (Burke & McKeen, 1988). Within the broad spectrum of social change in the women's movement is the concern for equality of opportunity in society as a whole and in organizations.

Even though there have been dramatic increases in the number of women in the workforce, there continues to be a lack of women in senior positions, and this contributes to their exclusion from the decision-making process. This may be, as suggested by Foot (1996) in *Boom, Bust and Echo*, that a steady flattening of the management hierarchy simply means that fewer managerial positions are available. As management began to realize that the old organizational structure wasn’t working in the 1980s, reengineering, the rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve significant improvements in performance, began. The introduction of teams in the workplace led to the flattening of the corporations and eliminated the need for many management positions.

Studying women’s experiences as members of teams is fundamental to understanding the impact of this phenomenon on organizational forms, practices, and culture. Although women’s experiences have been documented in other fields (e.g. psychotherapy, sports, management), studies that investigate their team experiences in organizations have been lacking. Some literature (Orsburn, 1990; Gordon, 1994) has suggested that teams serve to address power differentials in bureaucratic organizations. Other literature (Sinclair, 1992; Ramsey, 1992) has suggested that teams seem to maintain power differentials in bureaucratic organizations. Do teams really even out the power differential? Are women discriminated against in teams? Can women’s perspectives contribute something new to the development and use of teams? Understanding the assumptions women have about how teams operate
may help team leaders and practitioners develop more effective structures and strategies.

1.2. The Development and Organization of the Study

The design of this qualitative research study was based on the assumption that “meaning and process are crucial in understanding human behaviour, that descriptive data are what is important to collect, and that analysis is best done inductively” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 58). I began this qualitative research study as an inquiry into women’s experiences as members of teams in organizations. To what extent has the theory of teams been lived out and experienced in mainstream organizations from the perspectives of women? The perspectives of these women were essential. During the course of the research a shift in emphasis occurred, as the inquiry expanded to encompass women’s role in organizations. It became clear that these women perceived the promise of teams as an entry to status in the organization. This thesis is the result of that inquiry.

Chapter one sets the stage for the study by providing the general research questions, purpose of the research, research design. Chapter two provides a review of literature and is presented in four sections. Section I addresses some current trends of organizational development with a focus on learning organizations. Section II offers a feminist critique of organization development literature, theory on women’s experiences, knowledge and development, and research on women’s issues in employment. Section III is a review of team theory and research. Section IV is a concluding section to the chapter addressing the relationships across the three sections to support the research question and its significance.

Chapter three outlines the methodological framework in which the specific details of the research design are articulated. Chapter four presents the findings of the participant experiences under four general themes: sense of support; exercising power; people’s relationship to work; and organizational culture and practices. Chapter five is the analysis and interpretation of the findings in relation to the literature. Chapter six addresses in conclusion the practitioner’s role in team implementation, reflections on the research methodology and research question, and future research and educational recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

In Section I, I present an introduction to the field of organizational development, issues and trends with a focus on literature about the learning organization. Section II includes a feminist critique of the organizational development literature; theory on women's experiences, knowledge and development; and research on women in management. Section III presents literature on theory and models of teams in organizations and includes definitions, team characteristics, benefits to organizations, implementation strategies, and research on teams. Section IV, a concluding section, addresses the relationships among the three sections and points to gaps across the literature leading to further research possibilities. Given the number of literatures reviewed I am not attempting a comprehensive review but rather the goal is to foreshadow the relevant literature which will be explored in more depth in the analysis section. I started to identify some of the similarities between these diverse literature, the places where they may contribute additional insights to each other and where they may co-exist in a state of tension or conflict. This review by nature is open ended and represents a creative weaving of my ideas with the literature.

2.1. Section I: Organization Development: A Perspective

2.1.1. Definition of Organization Development

Organization development (OD) refers to a diversity of theories, techniques, and views that relate to the management discipline. It is aimed at improving organizational effectiveness by means of planned, systemic interventions. According to Burke (1972), OD came from human relations training (the laboratory method of adult education and team building). It has evolved and expanded to include other areas such as management, career development, and structural changes in organizations. OD provides methodologies for systematically bringing about organization change and improvement. According to Beckhard (1969), "organization development is an effort (1) planned, (2) organization wide, (3)
managed from the top, (4) to increase organization effectiveness and health, through (5) planned interventions in the organization’s processes using behavioural science knowledge” (Beckhard, 1969, p. 9).

Warren Bennis, a leading OD practitioner, identified three factors underlying the emergence of OD. One factor is the need for new organizational forms to fit the particular time. The rate of change of technology, information, and global competition in the last decade of the twentieth century requires more adaptive forms. A second factor is a focus on cultural change. The real way to change is through altering the organizational culture, which is the system of beliefs and values held by the members of an organization. A third factor is an increase in social awareness. This relates to the changing social climate of employees and what is acceptable in terms of management styles and ways of working together.

Organizations are striving to find ways to achieve competitive advantage through enhancing organizational effectiveness. Organizational improvement techniques may be defined as process-centred or people-centred techniques. Process-centred techniques include: total quality management, quality circles, continuous improvement, business process reengineering. People-centred techniques include gainsharing, pay for skill, future search conference, empowerment, self-directed work teams, corporate culture, and the learning organization. The emphasis on a team approach as a means of increased productivity and effectiveness and the nature of the team intervention is a focus of inquiry in Section III of this literature review. I believe that it is somewhat ironic that organizational development, in its efforts to shift towards a democratic structure and flatten hierarchy through the establishment of teams, is driven by the goal of enhancing “competitive” edge because the underlying values of this team approach are non-competitive. This perhaps creates a tension whereby the organization works more effectively internally, and thus is more competitive in the marketplace. What is unknown is the degree of tension or capacity that can be tolerated by the members of the organization. I speculate that the difference in the underlying values discussed above is a contributing factor influencing the organization.
Organizations are changing rapidly due to changes in external environment and the workforce. New models are required to understand, function within, and learn in today’s organizations. These models suggest a move away from the mechanistic orientation which fostered and encouraged tightly controlled behaviouristic learning. (Marsick, 1990, p. 190)

According to Burke (1995) the design and structure of organizations today is undergoing change. The influence of globalization requires management in organizations to rethink their structure from a traditional hierarchy to at least a matrix, network, or a virtual corporation. There is a trend toward organizational structures that are flatter, with larger spans of control, and the desire for authority to rest with expertise, rather than position—thus the trend toward self-directed work groups in organizations.

Experts in the field of OD are preaching about the changes that organizations are facing. The list of approaches to help organizations is complex and not well developed or researched. Part of the dilemma regarding doing research on organizations is knowing, understanding, and defining an organization.

The principles of scientific management expounded upon by Frederick W. Taylor and the hierarchical authority structure of bureaucracy articulated by Max Weber—which have shaped modern organizations—are being challenged. Bureaucracy, a highly specialized form of organizational structure designed to provide order and guidance, is often characterized as highly restrictive and impersonal. Bureaucracy has taken on a negative meaning according to Perrow.

It suggests rigid rules and regulations... impersonality, resistance to change. Yet every organization of any significant size is bureaucratized to some degree or, to put it differently, exhibits more or less stable patterns of behaviour based upon a structure of roles and specialized tasks. (1970, p. 50)

Bureaucracy, a term coined by Weber at the turn of the century, brings together a number of concepts—division of labour, specialization, formalization of behaviour, hierarchy of authority, chain of command, regulated communication, and standardization of work processes and of skills. The main thread running through Weber’s description seems to be the extent that the organization’s behaviour is predetermined or predictable; in effect, standardized (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 86).
Human factors and systems theory became prominent in the second half of the twentieth century. The human relations movement that developed following the Second World War had a tremendous impact on our understanding of people in groups (Bradford, 1976). Systems theory had a profound effect on how we see the world. Rather than breaking everything into even smaller components in order to understand them, systems theory looks at the relationships between components (Ackoff, 1976). The potential for societal transformation that these new ways of thinking have created is evident in the work of Alvin Toffler (1980) and Marilyn Ferguson (1980), among others.

Sociotechnical systems theory (STS) is an organizational improvement technique designed to shift an organization from a bureaucratic structure to a democratic structure. Developed from the action research of Trist and Fred Emery in the 1950s, STS is an alternative way of structuring organizations through self-managed teams that jointly optimizes the social systems and the technical systems. The principles of sociotechnical systems design have been explained by Chems (1976). They have the effect of flattening hierarchies, empowering workers, and increasing productivity.

Fred and Merrelyn Emery redesigned the conventional sociotechnical systems theory in the 1970s, calling the result participative design (PD). The PD model addressed the difficulty of trying to achieve optimization of social and technical systems in a bureaucratic structure. Two critical questions that needed to be considered in PD were: (a) What decisions about control and coordination of work were necessary for effective group working? And (b) to what extent can these decisions be located with the group doing the work? (Emery, 1995, p.7). These questions identify fundamental design choices: the bureaucratic design principle, where responsibility for control and coordination is maintained at one level above the level where the work occurs; or the democratic design principle, where the responsibility for control and coordination of work is located at the level where the work occurs. As a minimum, participative design may serve as a practical bridge for organizations struggling with the industrial model but seeking structures that will see them into the future. Researchers in this field are concerned with intuition, values, relationships, collaboration, empowerment, and culture in the context of organizational design. These models and
processes are similar to the feminist ideology and values that will be discussed later in Section II.

With the introduction of the systems theory to organizational development (Trist, 1981) came a greater appreciation for the relationship between an organization and its environment. Organizations shape and are shaped by societal factors as well as by marketplace economics. Changes in the nature of the larger environment are therefore critically important to organizations. An example is the increasing number of women in all fields of endeavour. The introduction of new needs and different ideas initiated by women shows that they are affecting the larger environment.


Scientific Management, developed by Frederick Taylor, worked well for the first half of the twentieth century. This old school of thought is becoming increasingly outmoded as workers no longer are the passive extensions of production line machinery. The democratization of work has influenced management practices and necessitated the redesign of support systems. Managers must shift to becoming coaches and facilitators. The old management style of a single all powerful CEO in a hierarchical pyramid is being replaced by flattened organizational structure, shared power, and teamwork.

Organizational Development practitioners are suggesting that new rules, new boundaries and new ways of behaving must be established in an effort to accommodate change and sustain successful performance (Burke, 1995; Schein, 1997). The "Learning Organization" concept is an example of one such approach which I believe has much to contribute.

Learning in organizations is perceived as more important now than in the past due to several factors. There is an increased pace of change and competitiveness as witnessed in the number of Fortune 500 companies listed in 1970 that were still in existence in 1983—one-third have vanished. Globalization, coupled with high customer expectations, competitive pressures, and shorter cycle times, demands a different way of working. The larger question relates to reconciling the inconsistency of this different way of working, i.e.
organizations moving towards a flatter structure within a larger system of socio-economic values that remain competitive. How can organizations expect to change?

According to Drucker (1992), the primary resource in organizations today is the knowledge worker. Drucker describes three management practices required for the knowledge-based organization to attract and hold the skilled and knowledgeable people on whom its performance depends. The first practice is Kaizen, the practice of organized, continuous self-improvement. The second practice is for each organization to learn to exploit its knowledge, to develop the next generation of applications from its own successes. The third practice is to learn to innovate. Drucker (1992) believes that learning how to learn and learning faster will mark the difference between those organizations that are successful in the world economy and those that are not.

2.1.3. Towards a Conceptualization of the Learning Organization: Learning Concepts

Espoused Theory and Theory in Use

At times of organizational change, with their attendant unclear structures and new rules of operating, our ability to learn, reframe, or unlearn is vital. According to Argyris (1990), human beings live their lives based on two kinds of theories of action. The espoused theory is a set of beliefs, values, and attitudes people hold about how to manage their lives. The theory-in-use is the actual way people manage their beliefs, the way they actually behave. This issue is similar to what feminists have been saying about “theory” and “praxis.” The espoused theory is a limited guidebook towards the practical application, thus contributing to a gap and a disconnected theory. A major concept in the field of organizational learning is single-loop and double-loop learning, as defined by Chris Argyris of the Harvard Business School and Donald Schon of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. According to Argyris and Schon (1990), single-loop learning involves the detection and correction of errors (performance gaps) so that an organization can carry on its present objectives. However, the more basic problem of why the problems or errors existed in the first place is not solved. According to Argyris (1990), our theories-in-use are examples of single-loop learning. They are master programs that we use to maintain control.
“Model I theory-in-use instructs individuals to seek to be in unilateral control, to win, and not to upset people...action strategies are primarily selling and persuading and, when necessary, strategies that save their own and other’s face” (Argyris, 1990, p.13). These values and actions lead to organizational defensive routines that prevent parts of the organization and/or individuals from experiencing embarrassment or threat. This stops the identification of the causes of the threats and prevents their elimination as well. Model I will produce defensive consequences and requires defensive reasoning. “Whenever individuals or organizations are free to act as they wish and yet choose to act in ways contrary to their own interests, there is defensive reasoning going on” (Argyris, 1990, p.10).

Double-loop learning occurs when an error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization’s underlying norms, policies, and objectives—in other words, defensive theories-in-use. This approach to learning is a process of asking questions not only about objective facts but also about the reasons and motives behind those facts. Double-loop learning encourages people to examine their own behaviour, take responsibility for their own action and inaction, and bring to the surface the kind of potentially threatening or embarrassing information that can produce real change. In effect, this means learning a new theory-in-use, which Argyris refers to as Model II. The governing values of Model II theory-in-use “are valid information, informed choice, and responsibility to monitor how well the choice is implemented” (Argyris, 1990, p. 104).

A new theory for managing employees is in development and is consistent with Model II theory-in-use, according to Argyris (1990). This theory is characterised by a movement away from unilateral control and dependency toward involvement and commitment. The successful implementation requires such elements as the development of new job and work designs, new reward systems, and new educational programs.

2.1.4. Learning Organizations

An abundance of literature exists, predominantly theoretical, based on different philosophies and perspectives of learning arising from business, organizational theory, industrial economics, economic history, management and innovation studies and some
branches of psychology. However, a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding organizational learning has not yet been developed (Dodgson, 1993).

Organizational learning is popular for several reasons. There is an appreciation that learning is a key to competitiveness as organizations strive to develop structures and systems that are more adaptable and responsive to change. Rapid technological change has influenced the need for organizations to learn to do things in new and radically different ways. Learning is a dynamic concept that spans all levels of the organization: individual; group; and corporate. The breadth and depth of the literature about learning from the various academic disciplines is too vast for me to report in this review.

The idea of the learning organization is derived from Argyris's work in organizational learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978) with roots in organizational development. It is especially linked to the action research methodology. Conceptually, the learning organization is based upon systems theory (Senge, 1990). As a business application, it has evolved from strategic planning and strategic management (Fiol & Liols, 1985). Organizational learning has been recognized as the underlying source of strategic change (DeGeus, 1988). Organization-wide learning, according to Senge, will require critical masses of individuals operating in new ways in order to establish new organizational norms and habits.

The "learning organization" has been defined in several ways as cited by Urlich, Von Glinow and Jick (1993) in an article "High Impact Learning: Building and Diffusing Learning Capability." The following quotes highlight several definitions which relate to learning capability.

John Slocum and Clive Dilloway point to cultures and systems in which "employees are continually challenged to help shape their organizations future." Robert Shaw and Dennis Perkins cite "the capacity of an organization to gain insight from its own experience, the experience of others, and to modify the way it functions according to such insight." C. M. Fiol and M. H. Lyles say that "organizational learning means the process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding." Peter Senge defines the term as "an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future." Cal Wick writes about "an organization that continually improves by readily creating and refining the capabilities needed for
success.” Each of these definitions combine to frame the current image of the learning organization (1993, p.59).

The learning organization is an example of an organic model rather than a static hierarchical one. A similar model is Helgeson’s (1990) web of inclusion, which I describe later in this review. The definition and conceptualization of learning organizations that will be the primary model in my research study is that of Senge:

Organizations in which people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns or thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together. (Senge, The Fifth Discipline, 1990, p. 14)

According to Senge (1991) the essence of a learning organization includes the following characteristics: each member is committed to continual improvement; there is a suspension of judgement by members as to what is possible; there is a shared vision of greatness; the collective IQ is greater than any individual’s; and members recognize and understand the system in which they operate and how to influence it. Organizations can learn to be great through the practice of five disciplines: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning.

*Systems thinking* represents the cornerstone of how learning organizations think about their world. It refers to the ability to see patterns and interrelationships and then learn to either reinforce or change them effectively within the context of the whole system.

*Personal Mastery* refers to a high level of proficiency that develops in order to accomplish the desired results. According to Senge (1990), it is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively.

*Mental models* are the assumptions and beliefs we hold that govern our behaviours. These models represent a person’s view of the world, including explicit and implicit understandings. Our theories-in-use reveal our real mental models versus our espoused theories.

*Shared vision* refers to the shared pictures of the future that generate genuine
commitment and enrollment rather than compliance. A truly shared vision must connect with the personal visions of people throughout the organization.

*Team learning* focuses on the learning activity of the group and is based on adult learning principles: adults learn best from each other; adults learn from reflection; adults learn when they question the assumptions on which their actions are based; adults learn when they receive accurate feedback.

The team is an organizational instrument of great promise and flexibility. In effective teams, individual learning and expertise join to produce organizational learning. When a team is working well, it may serve to bring innovative solutions to productivity or customer service problems, assist in ensuring communication across organizational boundaries, hasten the implementation of proposed courses of action, and help individuals develop their communication and problem-solving skills.

A team is "any group of people who need each other to accomplish a result" (Senge, 1990, p. 354). Building on this definition, a team may include a worldwide network of specialists that communicates through electronic mail, telephone, and—from time to time—face-to-face meetings.

Team learning has a number of aspects, as described by Senge in *The Fifth Discipline* (1990). One aspect, alignment, occurs when a group of people function as a whole, when there is a commonality of direction, harmonised energies, a commonality of purpose, a shared vision that is an extension of individuals' personal visions and understanding of how to complement one another's efforts.

Senge expands on three dimensions: to think insightfully, to be innovative, and through the roles of team members, to foster other learning teams that are critical aspects of learning organizations. Mastery of the practice of dialogue and discussion are also important disciplines. Dialogue is characterized by free and creative exploration of complex and subtle issues, a deep listening to one another and suspending one's own view. Discussion involves presentation and defense of different views with a search for the best view to support at this time.

The discipline of team learning is defined as "a team's ongoing, systematic, and
systemic activity of continually increasing its ability to create its desired results” (Yanowitz, Ober, & Kanto, 1995, p. 2). A systemic map of teams identifying three levels of structure that influence teams was developed by Yanowitz, Ober, and Kanto, and can be applied as a diagnostic and planning framework to guide team learning and enhance performance. One level, social structures, includes culture, the design of the organization with respect to the people and the processes, business forces, and environmental forces. Another level is face-to-face structures, which includes the day-to-day operations of the team and relies on effective interpersonal interactions. A third level is individual structures, which is what each individual brings to the team—including mental models about the ways things should be.

According to Kofman and Senge, “building learning organizations requires basic shifts in how we think and interact” (1993, p. 5) that penetrate our basic assumptions and habits of our culture. The concept of creative tension presents a methodology for teams to improve their performance. Creative tension is the tension between a team’s vision and the current reality. The principle of creative tension requires teams to learn to clarify their vision, develop an understanding of their current reality and then collaboratively design the process of learning. The team learning cycle involves changing the underlying team structures by establishing creative tension and thus reducing the gap between the vision and current reality.

According to Senge (1990) learning organizations are built by communities of servant leaders. This means that in the Learning Organization, the conventional notion of leadership—the heroes that are great individuals by their individual will, determination, and cleverness—is replaced by the emergence of the leadership of teams and organizations and societies that can lead themselves. This collective leadership clashes with hierarchical leadership and poses a problem for learning organizations. I agree with Senge’s view and this tension is one which I explore in this work.

2.1.5. The Practice of Learning Organizations

Just as organizations are facing revolutionary changes to established principles and practices, so too is the field of organization development. Organization development practitioners need to rethink, recreate, and reinvent theories and methodologies in order to
provide meaningful assistance to individuals, groups and organizations. A limitation of OD, according to Burke (1996), is that the practice “is ahead” of the theory and conceptualization.

The learning organization concept is fast taking hold as organizations recognize the link between learning and continuous improvement. Garvin (1993) contends that effective implementation requires: a meaningful and a well grounded definition of a learning organization that is actionable and easy to apply; clear and practical guidelines and operational advice for managing a learning organization; a process for measuring organizational progress with tools for assessing the rate and level of learning. According to Garvin, the rhetoric of theory will remain elusive until these implementation aspects are addressed.

Schon (1983) also suggests that there is confusion about what kinds of change are needed to occur to create a “learning organization.” There is a relationship between “organizational learning” and the learning of each member of the organization; however it is not clear what is involved in that relationship. Individual members may have learned and their organizations may or may not have learned. In order to enhance the learning capacity of an organization, it is important to be able to understand and implement an approach for identifying the progress, a way of measuring the extent to which and the way in which an organization has learned. Schon (1983) has developed a method of research on organizational learning that involves three interrelated phenomena: organizational theory-in-use at time \( t-1 \), organizational inquiry, organizational theory-in-use at time \( t-2 \). In other words, data about the current state of organizational theory-in-use relevant to a particular focus of study at two or more stages in the life of the organization are necessary.

We will be interested in information about the espoused policies, procedures, and programs; in what members of the organization believe to be the norms, strategies, and assumptions that inform organizational behavior; and most directly and critically, in the actual patterns of practice related to our chosen themes over the duration of the learning process under study. (Schon, 1983, p. 123)

Schon’s research approach is a method to study organizational learning systems and how they shape organizational learning.
A challenge exists to develop sound research approaches because organizational learning is not separate from the behavioural phenomena of individuals or from other aspects of organizations, such as political games of control and dominance, that are part of the complexity of organizations. This tension is important from my perspective because in my research I explore women's experiences in teams, which I suggest, further on in the literature review that there may be a dissonance between women's experiences and team theory. The individual team models may be different from the organizational team models.

Miner and Mezias (1996) reviewed theoretical and research articles on learning organizations and found that more and more practitioners and consultants argue that organizational learning may be the only competitive advantage that can be sustained. However, in order for “learning” to represent a fundamental shift, they indicated that three questions need to be explored: “1) Who or what is doing the learning? 2) What are the key learning processes? 3) When is learning valuable?” (Miner & Mezias, 1996, p. 91). Further they addressed the need for more systematic empirical learning research. They emphasized the need for longitudinal studies. They attributed the lack of quantitative empirical studies to the difficulty in systematically studying learning models, since they involve nonlinear dynamic processes over time. Qualitative research needs to be included, as it also provides special insights.

Researchers at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Center for Organizational Learning have been working in partnership with major corporations (Motorola, Zytec, Toyota, Shell, Ford Motor Company) to develop and implement new theories, tools, and methods towards advancing the capabilities of the learning organization. There are many case studies that are described as successful implementations of organizational learning concepts, and many of these cases are evolutionary in nature, that is to say, a work in progress. The development of new capabilities over time is a cycle of theoretical conceptualization and practical action (Kofman & Senge, 1993). Companies are working to bring organizational learning principles into their management practice. For example, Ford has been engaged in transforming its organization into a learning organization since 1988.
Although there is an abundance of research that has provided a foundation of conceptual models about how to create a learning organization, there is a lack of development, cohesion, and integration in the field, in part presumably, because of the difficulty of bridging the gap between theory and practical applications.

"Team Learning: Processes, Interventions, and Assessment" (1997) was a study by Jeris, May and Redding. It explored the learning processes at the team level in order to provide some preliminary answers regarding the degree of external assistance necessary for teams to engage in double-loop learning. They also investigated to what degree teams were able to identify their own needs for assistance from a facilitator, factors that influenced any interventions from a facilitator, and differences in interventions employed by learning facilitators as compared to process facilitators. This was a study of organizational learning processes of three teams formed in conjunction with a graduate level university course. A grounded theory methodology was the research approach. Teams had the option to either use a learning facilitator or not. Results of the research found that only the team with full facilitation reached double-loop learning. This study suggested important preliminary insights regarding the need for active learning facilitation for double-loop learning to occur, which is regarded as essential in order for organizations to survive (Argyris, 1992). Another result suggested that organizations that choose to create an environment to increase the likelihood of double-loop learning may need to mandate the use of learning facilitators. The researchers speculated that defensive routines (Argyris, 1992) may have been adopted by team members, which may have contributed to the avoidance of asking for any external help from the learning facilitator.

The case studies reported represent the kinds of practices and the types of changes encouraged in organizations that are in pursuit of enhancing their capabilities and creating the vision of a type of organization named "learning organization." Learning organization theory and the findings reported are important to consider for this research on the experiences of women in teams. Teams in organizations need to have feedback (double-loop learning) about people's team experiences in order to check if the teams are accomplishing (from a task and a process perspective) what they were intended or promised to do.
2.1.6. Summary of Section I

In Section I, I presented an introduction to the field of organizational development and addressed some of the emerging trends and issues, including the democratization of work, the knowledge worker and the learning organization. According to Burke (1996), in order for the field of Organizational Development to remain effective and relevant, more comprehensive theories, methods, and practices must be developed. Some of the literature to follow may provide new perspectives which will help the field develop.
2.2. Section II: Women's Ways

Section II consists of a critique of the organizational literature drawing on liberal and radical feminist perspectives (Calas & Smirchich, 1996), feminist models of psychological development, research on women-in-management, and public opinion literature that represents popular "how women can succeed in business" ideas. Flatter organizational structures and high-involvement management has led to a blurring of the distinction between those managing and those being managed. There are pressures for equal opportunity, equal treatment, and increased participation of women and members of other previously excluded or disenfranchised groups (both male and female), leading to the scrutinizing of recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, and promotion decisions (Ramsey & Clavert, 1994).

Women have always been in the workforce. According to Statistics Canada, in 1995 women made up almost one-half of all employed Canadians. What has changed is that 43 per cent of all managers and administrators are female, an increase from 29 per cent in 1982. Women also make up a growing share of professionals such as lawyers, accountants, and management consultants. While more women have experienced corporate success, as CEOs of corporations and senior partners in firms, their presence is still minor in relation to the total. Women are also under represented in the board room. According to Burke (1997), women represented less than 5 per cent of the members of boards of directors of Canadian private sector organizations. Given these demographic changes I will describe some of the key bodies of related literature in support of my research question.

2.2.1. Feminist Critique of Organizational Development Literature

Dale Spender articulates the emergence of a "new paradigm," defined precisely as feminist:

The feminist paradigm is not discipline based and as such cuts across psychology, sociology and religion (to name a few) and integrates them within the framework of the personal experience of the female...feminism involves a new way of classifying the world. (Spender, 1978, p.256)

Such scholarship entails a strong critique of male-centred models of reality and the
research that has validated traditional bodies of knowledge within the humanities and the social sciences. Feminism has become a transformative force, although its effects may not always be easy to document. Tangible effects include legislative changes and an increasing number of women active in nontraditional employment. Less quantifiable, but quite pervasive, is feminism’s impact on everything from social discussions and literature to relationships and roles. Attitudes about women (and therefore about men as well) are being challenged and altered. New models of understanding women include the relational model developed out of the Stone Center and Helgeson’s (1990) leadership model. These models are explored in Section 2.2.2.

What do women’s voices mean to organizational science generally? “The work of Gilligan, Haaken and others suggests it means questioning the standards not only of moral development or perceptual processes, but of all the constructs organizational scientists use” (Calas & Smircich, 1992, p. 229).

Normal organizational issues can only be regarded as normal insofar as we don’t question the gender orientation that sustains that normality. By questioning common assumptions about organizational issues, we may reveal the absence of women’s values and concerns in those assumptions.

Feminist paradigms offer some alternative perspectives and approaches to the contradictory ones provided within today’s typical corporate organizational environment. There is a wealth of women’s writing that can enrich one’s appreciation of organizational transformation, including the possibility of new forms and structures, including teams. Feminist paradigms are not represented in the literature of organizational development or even acknowledged. It may in fact simply be unknown, for some women’s writing is outside the academic and corporate streams. Some of it, like Mary Daly’s Beyond God the Father, Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation, are powerful critiques of the patriarchal paradigm. Other writers like Ursula LeGuin, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Sherri S. Tepper use fiction to explore alternative futures, while other writers are examining women and organizations, such as Kathy Ferguson in The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy. Parallel to these works are those that explore women’s experiences to discover alternative models of
being in the world.

Gender is an important consideration in organizational settings. According to Mills and Tancred (1992), traditional approaches to organizational theory are gender blind. As a result, errors have been made in interpreting how organizations operate. Mills and Tancred (1992) suggest that organizational analysis needs to be “rethought on the basis that a fundamental gendered substructure characterizes the workplace” (p.1). A major thrust of organizational studies has been to uncover “preferably-one-but-possibly-more best ways of managing organizations” (p.2) in efforts to achieve greater efficiency. Another aspect, the absence of gender from the theory, has been noticeable and suggests a lack of concern with the female labour force (Mills & Tancred, 1992).

Ferguson (1984), in The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy, talks about how these tendencies are reinforced by the structures, norms, rituals, and standard operating procedures of hierarchical, patriarchal systems. Is it possible for us to imagine a world different from this one: not just a world that is better, but a radically different world? Kathy Ferguson argues that it is not only possible, it is essential. As a political theorist writing from a post structural perspective, Ferguson rigorously examines the pervasiveness of bureaucratic organizations. She also explores the notion that because bureaucracies are socially constructed, it follows that they can be deconstructed and replaced by alternative organizational forms.

The bureaucratization of society is not an irredeemable, inexorable fate but is rather an ongoing social and historical process, one that generates its own contradictions, that requires continuous maintenance by those in power, and that can be resisted. A radical feminist discourse can be one source of such resistance, naming alternative forms of relations and suggesting different types of organizations. (Ferguson, K. E., 1984, p. xi)

In Ferguson’s work, the term “bureaucracy” is used to describe modern organizational life. She does not confine her analysis to the workplace, rather, she considers the role of bureaucracy in many aspects of modern life, including education, the workplace, sexuality, social assistance, and the family. Essentially, Ferguson builds an argument that in all its forms, bureaucracies contribute to “the degradation of human possibility” (Ferguson,
Women’s Team Experience    Chapter 2    23

K.E., 1984, p. xi). Her argument is comprehensive and convincing. One powerful critique arises from the role of bureaucracies in masking and perpetuating social inequalities.

According to Ferguson, bureaucracies disguise inequities within our society through their claims of neutrality and objectivity.

Bureaucracy, as the “scientific organization of inequality,” serves as a filter for these other forms of domination, projecting them into an institutional arena that both rationalizes and maintains them. (1984, pp.7-8)

Much of Ferguson’s thinking is based on post structural theories and particularly the French post structurialist, Michael Foucault. Ferguson locates the power of bureaucracies to determine ways of existence at two levels: structure and discourse. It is in the interplay of organizational structure and discursive practices that “one option becomes available and others are precluded.” Ferguson explains why this is the case:

Because bureaucratic domination penetrates social life along many interrelated dimensions, it is necessary to examine it at multiple levels. In the language of the social sciences, a dual level of analysis is crucial because the dynamic of technical civilization includes both the macro-level interactions of large scale institutions and processes and the micro-level activities of individuals. Connecting these two levels of analysis are two structural links: the institutionalized sets of roles and events that bureaucracies make available to individuals and groups; and the linguistic description / justification of these roles and events and of the system that creates them, which constitute the discourse of bureaucracy. The relationship between the roles and events made available in bureaucracies and the language that expresses them is a complex one, since the dominant way of thinking and speaking is one of the factors that structures available roles and events, while the experiences one has within the roles and events shape the thinking that goes on. Together they constitute a “package”—that is, an “empirically available linkage of institutional processes and structures of consciousness.” The term “bureaucratization” refers to the invasion of disciplinary technique into both the discursive and the institutional practices of a particular realm of human relations (for example, production, education, medicine), reshaping both the roles, and the events available to people, and the language commonly used to describe those roles and events, along bureaucratic lines (1984, pp.36-37).

Ferguson’s criticisms and suggestions are in my opinion an example of double loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1990) however Ferguson limits her critique to a system which has
historically operated as a single loop named patriarchy.

2.2.2. Theoretical Models of Women’s Development

According to Calvert and Ramsey (1992), major breakthroughs in knowledge and understanding about women are coming from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and women’s studies, and, just recently, research on women in management. They attribute the difference between the research on women in management and the research on gender in other disciplines to at least three aspects: (a) whether a “deficiency model” for women is assumed, with pressure to conform to a male stereotype or male standards of behavior; (b) how readily the research embraces feminist thinking; and (c) where the findings of research are published (for example, in obscure journals) (Calvert & Ramsey, 1992, p. 80).

Researchers of women-in-management and researchers of gender have approached their work differently. Calvert and Ramsey suggest that initially the bulk of the research of women-in-management has been on the appropriate fit for women in organizations. The assumption is that it is the women who are solely responsible for achieving the fit. Females were added to samples that still used men as the standard of comparison. Calvert and Ramsey claim this is why the field has not experienced major breakthroughs.

Women’s and men’s experiences and their different ways of thinking have become the focus of discussion (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982). These writings document “women’s experience,” asserting that the differences between male and female experiences are valid forms of representing human experience. These writings are presented here.

Self-in-Relation: A Theory of Women’s Development

The characteristics of the self-in-relation model of female psychological development (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991), are presented in Women’s Growth and Connection: Writings From the Stone Center. They provide important insights into the significant differences between female and male psychological development. This model is important to organizational transformation, because women desire to live and work in a
context of mutually enhancing relationships and this desire is often in conflict with dominant male norms. Miller states that women are pressured to believe that male norms are better and that women should devalue their relational desires (p.25).

The self-in-relation model includes the perspective of an outcome of mutual learning in interactional, empathic, developmental relationships. The central theme in relational theory is mutual empathy that allows for psychological growth and learning for all participants involved. It requires the active involvement of persons in ways that embrace diversity, including that of a cultural, ethnic, or sexual nature.

The Stone Center Colloquia Series at Wellesley College provided a rich environment for the exploration of these concepts. The writers began with the observation that women's sense of self is grounded in making and maintaining relationships with others. Women develop through the experience of actively taking part in mutually created and enhancing, empathic relationships. Participation in such relationships generates a sense of energy or zest, knowledge of self and other, the capacity to act, a sense of self-worth, and the desire for further connection. Women seek such relational connections as the primary context for their psychological growth.

The Stone Center definition of relationship revolves around the experience of mutual empathy, the dynamic interaction of caring for and taking care of the relationship between two or more people. Self-in-relation also implies an experiential process characterized by openness, flexibility, and change. This is similar to a collaborative, open systems model in organizations. The emphasis is not towards autonomy or individuation but toward's "a process of growth within relationships, where both or all people involved are encouraged and challenged to maintain connections and to foster, adapt to, and to change with the growth of the other" (Surrey, p. 60).

Being in a relationship also involves the capacity to identify with a unit larger than the single self and the sense of motivation to care for this new unit (Surrey, p.61). Being in the world as part of a unit larger than the individual leads to experiencing the whole as greater than the sum of its parts. The relational model suggests that the self is not reduced or threatened by connections; rather, the self is enhanced. The self-in-relation model can be
conceived as a psychological rationale for the need to flatten hierarchical bureaucracies. The model suggests that for women to develop their health, it is a psychological imperative to work in an environment of support. Communication in the relational model is interactive and relies on dialogue rather than debate (Surrey, p.62). This notion is similar to Senge’s notion of dialogue as described in Learning Organizations. A possible difference, however, with the Learning Organization may be the lack of acknowledgement of gender as it is not explicitly taken into account.

As change agents work to heal organizations, the work at the Stone Center will provide important insights. The core values forming the cornerstones of relational theory and practice are: empowerment; learning in connection with others; and mutuality in a context of evolving, continual change. From my analysis these values are congruent with the values espoused by Senge’s Learning Organization.

Thus, I suggest that the qualities of the self-in-relation model are important concepts to be considered in the evolution of new organizational forms. The need to pay attention to our relationships, to acknowledge our differences and to find ways of reaching a common ground are challenges that will face all of us. If this capacity can be incorporated into our models of organizational forms, the quality of all those involved will be improved.

According to Devine and Markiewicz (1992):

Related themes in men’s lives include:
(1) relationships as instrumental to attaining one’s career goals or “dream”;
(2) the emphasis on succeeding in one’s career during early adulthood;
(3) the importance of work and achievements in defining male identity;
(4) men’s tendency to avoid self-disclosure and to develop few, if any close relationships with co-workers”. (p.33)

Grant (1988) believes that “women’s greater ease with the relational world could help make organizations places in which affiliation, friendship, connection, and personhood could also be valued in a more integrated manner”(p.60). In a similar way to Ferguson, Grant makes a strong criticism of organizations for creating “she-males”: women who have moved up the organization hierarchy by strongly identifying with the male model of managerial success.
**Women’s Ways of Knowing**

Belenky et al. (1986) provide a picture of different modes of knowing that has enhanced our understanding of women’s special and different ways of knowing—in particular, "connected knowing." They explored with women their experience and problems as learners and knowers. They also reviewed the research subjects’ ways for changing concepts of the self and relationships with others. The project began as an extension and critique of Perry’s scheme of personal epistemology and development. A phenomenological approach was the methodology, as the research interest was in the female experience. This was critical and was a rationale for choosing only women as research subjects as women often had been excluded from studies. A total of 135 interviews were tape recorded.

Implicitly the researchers asked “How are Western social constructions of gender and authority affecting women’s sense of self, voice, and mind” (Goldberger, 1996, p. 4). Through the analysis of women’s life stories, five knowledge perspectives emerged that captured some of the ways that women thought about themselves, truth, authorities, and options in life. The five perspectives were: silence which represented a feeling of being voiceless, powerless, and mindless; received knowing—knowledge and authority are viewed as outside the self and learning comes from others who have knowledge and power; subjective knowing—knowledge based on intuition and feeling states; procedural knowing—a position in which techniques and procedures for acquiring, validating, and evaluating knowledge claims are developed and honoured, and include separate knowing and connected knowing; constructed knowing—a recognition that the knowledge is not absolute, and truth is understood within a context.

I see several similarities between connected knowing and Senge’s learning organization. Aspects of connected knowing described women as having a capacity for empathy, and women naturally taking a nonjudgemental stance. Connected knowing in groups is a phenomenon where each individual stretches her own vision in order to share another’s vision. Through this mutual stretching and sharing the group achieves a vision richer than any individual could achieve alone. This is similar to Senge’s (1991) concept of shared vision. Connected knowing places questioning as a central aspect. "Women pose
questions more than men, they listen to others, and refrain from speaking out—these have long been considered signs of the powerlessness, subjugation, and inadequacy of women” (Belenky et al. p.188). This approach is like the practice of dialogue, which embodies a deep listening to one another and suspension of one’s own views. Senge (1991) differentiates between dialogue and discussion whereas Belenky et al. (1986) do not specifically address discussion.

The researchers of *Women’s Ways of Knowing* see the theory expanding and being rethought to encompass new questions, and involving other social sciences such as cooperative inquiry. This research is important as it continues to validate women’s experiences as separate and distinct from men’s experiences and thus provides support for my research approach.

“Voices in Dialogue: Collaborative Ways of Knowing” (Tarule & Mattuck, 1996), in *Knowledge, Difference and Power* (Goldberger, Tarule, & Clinchy, 1996), explored the metaphor of developing a voice and joining with other voices in dialogue. “The best understanding and definitions of voice seems to be drawn from inquiry based on women’s experience...because women emphasize relationships in their development, an emphasis that stresses voice, listening, and talking as the medium for connecting with others”(Tarule,1996, p. 274). Tarule identified several characteristics, qualities and aspects related to dialogue from the research on collaborative learning classrooms. Dialogue is making knowledge in conversation; dialogue is a way of knowing. Dialogue is a socially constructed process. Through dialogue there is an apprehension of new understanding and reinterpretation of thinking and ideas. The focus of Tarule’s research was learning with an emphasis on the social context of the classroom for learning. Another purpose was to understand the conditions that created a type of dialogue where exploration, experimentation, and inquiry supported construction and reconstruction of ideas. I see the importance of the connection between this notion of dialogue and that described in learning organizations.
**Gilligan on Moral Development**

Another important theory from my perspective is Carol Gilligan’s (1982) work on women’s development which is a reframing of developmental models that position women’s and girls’ voices into the centre of a new psychology. Through her analysis she shows the significance of the basic experience of connection and how it affects women’s ways of approaching relational conflicts and crises.

Carol Gilligan (1982), in her book *In a Different Voice*, looked at two paths of moral development. In Western society, moral development was generally seen as progress along a path. Gilligan defines a hierarchic morality of rights, based on equality and understanding of fairness, and the male model as a morality governed by adherence to abstract principles and rules, not the intuitive sense of fairness that women have. Women’s moral development, measured against the dominant model, appears stunted. Gilligan argues that this path is based on men’s moral development and does not reflect the different experiences of women. Women weave a web of relationships anchored to an ethic of responsibility, that is, a concept of equity and recognition of different needs. For women, Gilligan says, life is a network of connections. Thus Gilligan’s work has drawn two important images of relationships from the texts of men’s and women’s thoughts. These images exist at the same time in any mixed-gender group. The image of a web comprised of multiple interconnected strands recurs in women’s talk. The image of a hierarchy repeats in men’s talk. From these two images, Gilligan (1982, p. 62) says, “you can see what fear of success and fear of intimacy are really about—the fear of being stranded (alone at the top) and the fear of being caught (closed in, on the web).” Women’s experience reveals the world of relationships and focuses on attention and concern. As a result, women’s development delineates a less violent path to maturity defined by interdependence and care. Gilligan concludes that when woman’s voice is recognized as a complement to the dominant male voice, moral maturity becomes possible. The feminine ethic of care introduces a new aspect that assumes a messy network of connections that is different from a well-ordered hierarchy of the ethic of justice. An ethic of care recognizes the complexity of decision-making, values personal experience, and takes a systems perspective rather than individual perspective. I believe the two paths must wind
together. The importance of Gilligan’s work was based on the inclusion of women. Similarly Senge’s theories are almost humanistic but fail to include a gender analysis.

Gilligan’s research in cognitive, developmental, moral psychology was an extension of the original research paradigm, the study according to Lawrence Kohlberg’s model. Gilligan and her coworkers maintained that Kohlbergian theory was valid for measuring only one aspect of moral orientation. What is important here is that by listening to women's and girls’ voices and articulating the dissonance between their voices and previous male-dominated psychological theories, a new framework bringing women's and girls’ voices into consideration was developed.

In my opinion to adopt a new model without addressing pervasive patriarchal attitudes, beliefs and assumptions about moral development is to undermine every effort at change. It is for this reason that feminist perspectives are a critical tool for transformation and need to be considered an integral aspect of organizational development and teams.

Feminist Perspective of Power

Patriarchal values and beliefs have been the norm for so long that they are assumed to be the natural order rather than a social construct. Feminisms have named patriarchy as a problematic definition of reality. This is transformative for, as with any paradigm shift, the new view drives change. From challenging the existing notion of reality, some feminists moved to reflecting on the experiences and behaviours of women, finding value in attributes labelled feminine and therefore dismissed as lesser than those deemed masculine.

Riane Eisler, futurist and feminist, in The Chalice and The Blade, (1988) presents an outline of the distinctions between a patriarchal, dominator model and a partnership model. Eisler and Loye (1990), compare the two models across the three components: gender relations, violence, and social structure. The dominator model ranks male over female, placing a higher value on those attributes associated with socially-defined masculinity.

The partnership model values equally the feminine and the masculine traits and is based on sexually egalitarian social and ideological structures. Violence is not a structural component of the system, thereby minimizing social violence. The egalitarian nature of
gender relations also holds true for social structures. Hierarchies tend to be flatter and defined by functions, not by social definitions of who should have power over others.

Jean Baker Miller, in her work on women’s self development, defines power as “the capacity to move or produce change” (1991, p. 198). Within this definition is the notion of energy—the force required to make things happen. Miller’s definition provides for the examination of power in a more neutral way in the context of interpersonal relations and opens up an examination of ways in which power as energy can be used for learning in organizations.

Miller’s (1991) distinction between ‘power-over’ and ‘power-with’ is a starting point in my understanding of power in organizations. Power-over is the force or energy used to have control or domination over people or things. Power-with is the capacity to share power as a resource for mutual partnerships and change. Within this context, I can extend the understanding of empowerment (defined as the capacity and freedom to make choices and act in ways to create one’s destiny) in organizations and view it through a broader lens of power in relationships—through connection and growth. Power-with relationships are characterized by co-operation, trust, mutual support, and respect. This perspective has great potential to help the field see teams differently.

2.2.3. Research—Women-in-Management

Some of the studies of women-in-organizations in the 1980s and 1990s were conducted by women and are included in the following discussions. Differences in how men and women experienced the same situations have been reported. The world of women-in-management from a feminist perspective is a work-in-progress. Some of those studies that are relevant to women’s experience of teams are reported in this literature review.

Women in Management: Barriers to Advancement

Insightful research about what blocks women from advancing in organizations and the gap in perceptions between female executives and CEOs is provided in Closing the Gap: Women’s Advancement in Corporate and Professional Canada (1997), a report on female
executives’ progress in Canada. The study of the perceptions and experiences of chief executives and senior women in top Canadian corporations and professional service firms was conducted in May and June, 1997 by Catalyst and The Conference Board of Canada. The study consisted of the following methodology: a 12-page survey was mailed to women who held titles of vice-president or higher in large Canadian corporations or were partners in professional service firms; a separate seven-page survey was mailed to chief executives (mostly male) of corporations or professional service firms; in-depth telephone interviews with 19 senior women and 14 chief executives were done to supplement the survey. The greatest percentage of senior-level female respondents had the following profiles: 30% were age 40–44, 34% held professional degrees, 76% were married, 65% had children and 53% had children under 18 living with them, 86% of their partners were employed full-time and 79% of the respondents were in corporate organizations.

The key findings of the study were enlightening. Male and female executives agreed that it made good business sense to address women’s representation at the senior level. Reasons cited included the growing number of women in the labour force, and women’s leadership skills, which complement men’s. Women bring unique perspectives to decision-making and problem solving. A significant consumer base with increasing buying power is female. Companies have a social responsibility to ensure women are represented at all levels of the organization. Six in ten chief executives considered women’s advancement highly important to the continued success of their organizations.

While chief executives, female executives, and professional partners agreed on many of the obstacles reported to women’s advancement to senior levels, there were significant gaps in several areas as well. Women reported male stereotyping of their abilities as the biggest barrier, while chief executives indicated women’s lack of line experience at the top. Women’s family responsibilities were considered the second most important factor by both. Chief executives were almost three times more likely than women to name “not being in the pipeline long enough” as a barrier. Women were three times more likely to attribute “exclusion from informal networks” as a barrier. According to Catalyst President Sheila Wellington “These barriers to women’s advancement are, for the most part, not intentional.
What's holding women back are the unexamined assumptions, the outmoded practices, and the undone policies and programs.” (The Conference Board of Canada News Release, December, 1997, p. 1).

Chief executives were asked to name the three most critical areas of skill and experience required of senior executives in their organization and identify development needs specific to women. According to Judith MacBride-King, Associate Director of Research with the Conference Board’s Centre for Management Effectiveness, “women are perceived as having important interpersonal skills—being a team player, a good communicator, and demonstrating business development abilities,” and “chief executives want general management skills and experience, such as leadership, networking, and the ability to demonstrate results.” (The Conference Board of Canada News Release, December, 1997, p. 1).

This study reported a difference in perception of the progress made by women in senior positions. About three-quarters of the chief executives believed women’s opportunities had “greatly” improved or “somewhat” improved but only 56% of the women agreed. There was also a difference in the rate of that progress. The chief executives estimated that women already held 13 per cent of senior management positions and projected 24 per cent in five years, whereas executive women reported 9 per cent as the current status and projected 14 per cent in five years.

Strategies for women’s advancement were reported by executive women. Two key strategies were to consistently exceed performance expectations, and develop a style with which male managers were comfortable. Other strategies included seeking out difficult or highly visible assignments, having an influential mentor, and having line-management experience.

“The Gap” study supports the need to include a female perspective that may, in some cases, be different from a male perspective. Much of the team research has not included a reporting of female perspectives. The analysis of the research findings of my dissertation may either be aligned with the team research or uncover some missing aspect, or identify some gaps that may be similar to what was reported in “The Gap” study.
A study conducted by Mary Mattis called “Corporate initiatives for advancing women” published in *Women in Management Review* (1995) showed that the traditionally male-dominated culture in sales and food marketing tends to involve informal bonding activities with which women are less familiar or from which they are excluded (e.g. golf). As a consequence, field-based women have less access to networks and mentorships that develop around these informal business-related activities.

Further support of this finding was in the *Report of the Task Force on the Advancement of Women in the Bank* (1991). The report found that one third of female senior managers, but only two percent of male senior managers, believed that they faced restricted access to business-related networking opportunities (e.g. golf) because of their gender.

The findings of both of these studies support women’s perceptions of being restricted or excluded from networking opportunities. With respect to exploring the experiences of women in teams, these findings may be relevant, since recognition and celebration events in teams are significant events that contribute to team cohesion and member commitment. Women who are left out of the “loop” face such things as potential alienation from their team, and reduced ability to influence team members.

The *Task Force on the Advancement of Women in the Bank* (1991) found “that more women than men say they have faced gender-based assumptions about their abilities and career commitment” (p. 14). The logistical operations within organizations (i.e. scheduling of meetings) can create barriers influencing participation. This can affect women, who are often the primary caregivers, as they juggle work and family, and may contribute to a perception that women are less committed to the organization.

Research by Rozen and Korabik (1995) focused on four significant misperceptions about women managers. They examined the “fiction” that managers who are mothers are less committed to their careers and to the organization. The study found that mothers did not differ from non-mothers in how long they had been with their current employer, in their likelihood of turnover, in their job satisfaction, or in their commitment. Rosin states “In summary our data indicate that managers who are mothers are as ambitious and career-oriented as those without children” (Vol.5, No.3).
The findings of these studies support the results of the Gap Report cited earlier with respect to women's perceptions of being restricted or excluded from networking opportunities, and gender-based assumptions about women's abilities.

2.2.4. Women’s Ways of Leadership

According to Sally Helgeson’s *The Female Advantage: Women’s Ways of Leadership*, women have a tendency toward a more nurturing managing style and thus would be more likely candidates for facilitating participative environments in organizations. In Helgeson's study, she became aware that various aspects of the web tended to reinforce one another. The web structures are circular rather than pyramidal. Leaders in web structures are people who feel comfortable being in the center of things rather than at the top. They prefer building consensus to issuing orders. The symbolic perks and recognitions that define success in a hierarchy have little importance. The effect is an infusion of a collegial atmosphere that supports a focus on what needs to be done rather than who has authority to do it. Web organizations de-emphasize the importance of rank, titles, and office space. Women's nurturing style of managing would support an environment of participation, teamwork, and empowerment as operating values.

Do men and women manage differently?

Judy Rosener, in “Ways Women Lead” (1990) stated that,

The first female executives, because they were breaking new ground, adhered to many of the “rules of conduct” that spelled success for men... Now a second wave of women is making its way into top management, not by adopting the style and habits that have proved successful for men but by drawing on the skills and attitudes they developed from their shared experiences as women. (p.119)

In her study of a group of male and female business leaders, Rosener found similarities and some differences. The same amount of money was earned by the men and the women, and both experienced work-family conflicts. But with respect to leadership and how they influenced those with whom they worked, the similarities ended.

According to Rosner, the men relied on a “transactional leadership” style to deal with
subordinates. They used rewards for services rendered and punishment for inadequate performance. They drew on the power that came from their organizational position and formal authority. The women employed what Rosner called “transformational leadership.” They encouraged participation. They shared power and information with subordinates. They worked to enhance subordinates’ self-worth and to energize them to feel good about themselves and their work. This notion of leadership is aligned with both Helgson’s model and the concept described in Senge’s learning organization.

Male and female styles can be seen as two overlapping bell curves. Joline Godfrey (1992) says more women are on the left side of the curve and the right is predominantly men. She suggests that there is an overlapping segment where women and men meet. That overlap is where a new way of managing is emerging. She sees the recognition and acknowledgement of a women’s management style as healthy. Equal does not mean the same; it means the same opportunities and rights. According to Godfrey, men have recognized the value of a women’s style and have adopted it—the ability to listen, to use relationships, and to use a collaborative approach rather than authority.

However, the idea of identifying and valuing a female management style is not suggesting that women’s ways are now considered superior and that the male command-and-control style is fading. Rosner (1990) states that these female leadership attributes are not better, just different. She suggests that the context of the situation will influence the effectiveness of the type of leadership style. She notes that a woman’s leadership style is not the only way.

Bradshaw’s study (1992) compared the perceptions of the values currently reflected in a sample of men and women in a cross section of Canadian organizations and the values that would ideally be reflected if women were fully integrated. The findings suggest the ideal future is one based on a different set of values and may lead to a new reality for men and women in organizations. The kinds of values that need to be shown in the culture of organizations in the future are significantly more friendly, and are less accepting of established authority than in the current culture.

The data suggest that, on the average, current cultural values in Canadian
organizations can be described as largely consistent with a masculine ethic. The ideal future, if women are to be fully integrated, is a different world described by adjectives such as “well-balanced” and “highly integrated.” This suggests a model of androgyny that has pointed to a way to reconcile male and female principles (Marshall, 1984, p.84) and characteristics (Korabik & Ayman, 1989). In addition, adjectives such as “inspirational,” “an ideal leader,” and “many-talented” are similar to the characteristics of a transformational leader and, as argued by Rosner (1990), these may be traits that women possess naturally or are conditioned into women by their upbringing.

The movement away from accepted authority can be seen as a movement toward values that are more “expressive,” “enthusiastic,” “fun,” and “changeable” as opposed to more “business-like” and “task-oriented.” Perhaps the challenge, according to Bradshaw (1992), is not to integrate women and other groups into the status quo but to transform the dominant reality to a truly androgynous culture that includes both the male and female ethos and principles (Marshall, 1984).

McCall and Lombardo reported that “feminine” or considerate styles have better outcomes in many situations than do “masculine” or task-related approaches. The competitiveness of masculine individuals is self-defeating in problem-solving situations that call for cooperation. An interpersonal orientation can be more advantageous in bargaining and negotiation. Overall the evidence suggests that both task and personal skills are important to managerial effectiveness. The research by Korabik and Ayman (1989) suggests that “androgyny” is the ideal management style, with the capability of finding an appropriate balance between assertiveness and cooperation. Androgynous managers are more versatile because they have a more diverse range of skills. This greater flexibility is an important asset in today’s business world.

2.2.5. Women’s Language

There is a current emphasis on valuing diversity that may contribute to steering away from gender-neutral language. In Deborah Tannen’s You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation (1991), she identifies differences in male and female communication
styles. Her message is to urge people to be aware of the differences and to work within them, not that one is better than the other. Tannen’s work is important in furthering our understanding of the factors influencing women in the workplace. She approaches her work from the premise that each individual has a unique style, shaped by a personal history of many influences such as ethnicity, class, geographic region, sexual orientation, occupation, religion, age, personality, and gender. Patterns of communication are a matter of degree, of a range on a continuum. Our ability to understand the patterns of influence on our style is critical to our ability to understand what happens in our conversations.

Deborah Tannen in *Talking From 9 to 5* (1994) conducted research that focussed on a linguistic approach to understanding relationships: the conversational styles as they are influenced by their country of origin, ethnic backgrounds, age, class, and gender. Tannen observed individuals, tape-recorded conversations, and shadowed people in organizations to generate data for her research. Tannen observed that women can say something, often succinctly, that is not always adopted by the group. Then a man can say it five minutes later, elaborate on it and there’s more recognition or acknowledgement. She attributes an aspect of this to the fact that “some speakers (again, including many women) may also speak at a lower volume, and try to be succinct so as not to take up more meeting time than necessary” (p.279).

Another consideration of who gets heard relates to the position that one holds in the organization. According to Tannen, those who rank higher in the organizational hierarchy are more likely to speak up and to be listened to when they do. Tannen’s research demonstrates that “Although the ways women speak may contribute to their not being listened to, research showed that, all else being equal, women are not as likely to be listened to as men, regardless of how they speak or what they say” (p.284).

Tannen further draws attention to the distinction between women’s engagement in relational “rapport” talk and informational “report” talk in which men participate. Even though these conversational styles have different objectives, they still occur within a patriarchal society and this contributes to the devaluing of women’s talk.

Another finding of Tannen’s research showed that we tend to react differently to the
same way of speaking if the speech is from different speakers, particularly speakers of different gender.

The language spoken in the work environment is often based on metaphors from sports or from the military. These terms are foreign to many women and a lack of familiarity can lead to failure of understanding. Tannen reports that men are more likely to mix business talk with banter talk about sports or politics. For women, this small talk can get in the way of the day-to-day working relationships “that make us feel comfortable at work and keep the lines of communication open” (p.64) for those critical business discussions. Tannen suggests that women might find it useful to learn something about sports in order to avoid being left out of conversations. She states that small talk is a necessity in the daily operations of work. Tannen also states that women are using metaphors from cooking, birthing, and sewing as opposed to adapting their styles to those of men. She expressed that women do adapt their styles to those of men when interacting with men, but cautions that often this leads to a very different reaction than would be received by a man. Tannen cited an example where a female physician, when trying to be authoritative like her male colleagues with nurses, found that they would not take orders. However, when she allied herself with them and respected them as colleagues the nurses were allies.

Tannen suggests that conversation-style differences can play a role in the continuation of the glass ceiling phenomenon. She suggests that qualities for management positions include a high level of competence, decisiveness, and an ability to lead. “If it is men, or mostly men, who are making the decisions about promotions...they are likely to misinterpret women’s ways of talking as showing indecisiveness, inability to assume authority, or even competence” (p.136). Thus, these conversational-style differences can work against women. The learning organization theory acknowledges Tannen’s research and suggests that through the practice of dialogue, the different assumptions held by men and women can be surfaced and addressed (Senge, et al. 1994). This is one of the few examples I have found of where the two bodies of literature actually came together.
2.2.6. Public Opinion—Popular How-To-Books

In order to better understand the dominant organizational paradigm and its meaning for women attempting to find success within it, a number of “survival manual” books and magazines have been reviewed and critiqued (refer to Appendix A).

The popular management literature from the late 1970s and early 1980s targeted at women suggested that “women could be managers if they adopted the characteristic of effective [male] managers” (Calvert & Ramsey, 1992, p. 81). How women could change themselves in order to enter and advance within organizations was the emphasis. This view is evidenced by the popular “how to succeed” books, such as Harrigan’s (1977) *Games Your Mother Never Taught You: Corporate Gamesmanship for Women*, Williams’ (1977) *The New Executive Women: A Guide to Business Success*, Welch’s (1981) *Networking: The Great New Way for Women to Get Ahead*.

These popular self-help books, magazines and workshops giving advice to women on achieving success as managers and executives emphasize individual action in the male business game, but make gender the determining factor that gives meaning to events. In this context, success requires a woman to reconcile the negative stereotypes of women and her own femininity. For the women who hold this view of organizational life, these books and workshops present incomplete, contradictory, and debilitating advice.

The organization is portrayed as an arena for male games, games which are foreign territory to women. Women lack an understanding of the dynamics of the business environment. Why don’t women already know the rules? It is because business is a man’s game, which he developed to serve his own needs. He has been playing it a long time: so long, in fact, that the game really represents the essence of the whole male culture (Crain & Drotning, 1977, p. xii). The secret for a woman’s success lies in learning the rules. This might have worked if no one had ever critiqued the business world itself as being patriarchal.

However, while business is described as a game and a culture governed by male rules, the writers of these books do not analyse the rules of the game or the culture. Instead, the rules described for women are those concerning being a woman in a male business
environment. Within this reality, women are not encouraged to develop their managerial skills because these skills are incidental to women's success. Scenarios are largely tests of a woman's ability to handle the implications of her femaleness on the unfolding action. For example, "Deflecting a pass should be executed with an eye to protecting the fragile male ego" (Crain & Drotning, 1977, p. 148).

Publications in the 1980s and 1990s promote the advantages women bring to organizational life, such as less competitive and less hierarchical structures, and more collaborative and empowering management styles (Billard, March, 1992). There has been much discussion on the notion that, given the current status of organizations, the female style of management may be a more appropriate match with organizational needs than the male style of management. However, while there is much rhetoric about women's interactive, power-sharing styles of working within organizations, few business management writers are really challenging the overall hierarchical organizational paradigm. I have found this gap is also evident in the organizational development and the learning organization literatures, even though claims are made about challenging the hierarchical organizational paradigm.

2.2.7. Summary of Section II

The vast majority of organizational development literature and the majority of the literature on organizational change is written by men. The current material envisions a post-industrial future with organizations that reflect the transformative changes occurring now. Organizational transformation theory has a systems perspective, values collaborative, non-hierarchical structures and embodies a moral view based on honesty with and empowerment of workers (Senge, 1990; Ulrich, 1990). My analysis reveals that these views are aligned with the feminist theories of Gilligan (1982), Belenky et al. (1986), and Helgeson (1990). Transformative forces have not changed the fundamental patriarchal nature of society. Yet for organizational theory to be truly transformative, I believe it will need to include feminist and other perspectives developed on the margins of patriarchy.

A change agent informed by feminism may act as a midwife to new organizational design. This person will be committed to emergent models. Feminist perspectives also imply
a commitment to bringing into an organization an awareness of its covert processes, norms, and culture. This is not a uniquely feminist role, but without a feminist perspective, patriarchal norms may not be challenged and will instead remain to erode otherwise creative and democratic change.

The values and beliefs of the learning organization are expressed in remarkably similar language to that used in feminist writings. The values of feminist writings and the values of the learning organization are in my opinion mutually exclusive of the values of a hierarchy. Characteristics espoused by both include: dialogue that incorporates a suspension of judgement, shared vision and the notion that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, mutuality in a context of evolving and continual change, a systems approach characterized by openness, flexibility, and change. Senge’s (1991) servant leadership or collective leadership is aligned with Helgeson’s (1990) leadership model of a web. I suggest that an integration of the two could potentially generate a synergistic energy for some change in our organizations.

However, the alignment of the concepts of the learning organization and a feminist model seems to stop when considering the rationale for their existence. The learning organization is a concept that embodies capabilities for development and implementation in organizations so that the organizations can be more competitive in the global economic environment which is somewhat of a paradox because the underlying values of the learning organization noted above are counter to competition. The feminist model embodies similar capabilities as the learning organization but seeks to exist in communities such as collectives. Unlike the feminist models, the learning organization theory does not appear to address gender or assumes the theory is gender neutral. However the learning organization theory, in particular the literature on dialogue, does acknowledge differences in communication styles as cited by Tannen’s (1990) research, but does not go far enough to really learn from this material.
2.3. Section III: Teams in Organizations

Section III will include a review of a specific aspect of organizational development that has come from the classic literature on organizations—teams. The team literature that will be addressed will include definitions, characteristics, critical aspects regarding implementation, and examples of research on the application of teams in organizations. A feminist critique of teams, team theory and the application of teams will also be included.

2.3.1. Introduction

Conventional organizational theory has focussed almost exclusively on the individual as the main building block of the organization and has tended to ignore the problems of groups or teams and their development. Changes that have affected organizational life over the past twenty-five years have forced students and practitioners alike to reexamine their trends. Certainly, a strain of individualism is alive in all of us, nurtured in the spirit of democracy. However, the complexity of the environment and the goal structure of the enterprise create a situation in which it is no longer possible to comprehend or conduct the operation of the enterprise without some form of teamwork and team building. (McGregor, 1967, p. 181)

Organizations are comprised of groups of individuals who may or may not perceive themselves to be part of a "team."

A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p.45)

In general, teams play a vital role in the North American tradition. From a participant’s perspective, hockey teams, baseball teams, commando teams, or fundraising teams generate and provide outlets for our competitive spirits. From a spectator perspective, athletic teams provide drama, exhilaration, and a common cultural focal point (Bolman & Deal, 1992).

McGregor’s quotation at the beginning of this section, although written in 1967, is applicable in this last decade of the twentieth century. The team is perceived as an organizational instrument of great promise and flexibility in the North American corporation. Teams occur where individual learning and expertise first join to produce organizational
learning. When a team is working well, it may serve to bring innovative solutions to productivity or customer service problems, assist in ensuring communication across branch boundaries, hasten the implementation of proposed courses of action, and help individuals develop their communication and problem solving skills. Teams can be created for the long haul or for specific tasks. There are leadership teams, quality teams, and design teams, which are replacing the individual or lone worker.

The search for new ways of restructuring the workplace has led to the development and implementation of teams. Concurrently, greater numbers of women than in previous decades have entered the paid labour force, first on the front line, then moving into middle management, and more recently into senior management. The relationship between team structures and women’s entry into the workforce is a still somewhat unexplored area (Barrentine, 1993, p.28) and it is this gap which I address in this research.

2.3.2. Espoused Teams: The Promise of Teams

The team literature available today is extensive and addresses team definitions, team characteristics, and the organizational benefits of teams. Advice about team design considerations and implementation strategies for the development of effective teams at all levels of the organization is offered based on research findings. An overview of the reviewed team literature is presented.

Definitions and Characteristics of Teams

There is no overall, common model of teams that is accepted in the organizational development field. Organizational development experts who have written on teams and team implementation define teams and the characteristics of teams differently (Beckhard, 1969; Buchholz & Roth, 1987; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Kormanski & Mozenter, 1987; Lawler, 1990; Orsborn, 1990; Wellins & Byham & Dixon, 1994). Although the authors share many similarities in their definitions and characteristics of teams, this can lead to confusion for practitioners and members of organizations who have chosen the implementation of teams as a structure to accomplish work.
Beckhard’s idea of a team is useful as a general conceptual model. A team is a grouping of individuals organized into a work unit in order to accomplish a specific set of tasks, according to Beckhard (1969). A team exists when everyone is clear on four criteria. The goals are clear and the members are aware of what end results are required. The roles are defined; all members know who is going to be doing what and why. Any gaps and overlaps are addressed. The procedures—how the members go about doing the work (formal and informal)—are understood and agreed upon. Such things as norms, rules, and assumptions are surfaced and made explicit. The relationships are positive. There is cooperation, mutual respect, collaboration, trust, and openness among the members.

Beckhard’s description of team criteria—goals, roles, procedures and relationships—provides a broad framework within which to synthesize the multiple lists of characteristics generated by experts on teams. A composite of characteristics is described in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Team Model: a synthesis of team characteristics espoused by Beckhard (1969); Buchholz and Roth (1987); Kormanski and Mozenter (1987).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>ROLES</th>
<th>PROCEDURES</th>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- understands and is committed to group goals</td>
<td>- participative leadership (creating an interdependency by empowering others)</td>
<td>- includes others in decision-making process</td>
<td>- is friendly, concerned and interested in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- aligned on purpose</td>
<td>- shared responsibility</td>
<td>- contributes ideas and solutions</td>
<td>- acknowledges and confronts conflict openly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- future focussed</td>
<td>- rapid response (identify and act on opportunities)</td>
<td>- meeting effectiveness</td>
<td>- listens to others with understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- recognizes and respects individual differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- values ideas and contributions of others, collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- climate of trust and openness, honesty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The definition, characteristics, and team model that will be the benchmark for this research project was developed by Katzenbach and Smith (1993). Their model was based on the findings from research conducted with 47 teams in a variety of organizational settings.
in the United States. Katzenbach and Smith made a very explicit distinction between a team and a work group. They suggested that most executives in organizations shared and advocated teamwork and the set of values that it represented, such as listening, providing support, and recognizing the interests of all. Nevertheless, teamwork and teams are different. The word "team" is rarely used with much concern for its specific meaning. Any group of people working together does not constitute a team—committees, councils, and task forces are not necessarily teams. Rather, teams are "discrete units of performance" as opposed to a set of values.

A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p.45)

Figure 2 illustrates the difference between working groups and teams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK GROUP</th>
<th>TEAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong, clearly focussed leader</td>
<td>Shared leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual accountability</td>
<td>Individual and mutual accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group’s purpose is the same as the organizational mission</td>
<td>Specific and shared purpose designed and delivered by the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual work products</td>
<td>Collective work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals work separately a good part of the time</td>
<td>Team members spend a lot of time together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You” and “I” commonly used language</td>
<td>“We” commonly used term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment and trust but not essential in achieving work results</td>
<td>Commitment and trust essential elements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A common purpose builds on goals that are articulated into specific performance measures. Effective teams develop strong commitment towards a common approach.
Procedures for working together in order to accomplish their purpose are developed, and members hold themselves mutually accountable. Team accountability builds commitment and trust, which are critical characteristics of effective teams.

The Katzenbach and Smith (1993) team model is aligned with the Figure 1 Team Model; however Katzenbach and Smith have prioritized and emphasized a focus on performance first rather than chemistry, communication, or togetherness. Figure 1 does not specifically emphasize one aspect or another.

**Types of Teams**

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) describe three types of teams: teams that recommend things, teams that make or do things, and teams that run things. Characteristics of these three types of teams are described in the following paragraphs.

Teams that recommend things include task forces, project groups, quality or safety groups, problem solving groups. They have a predetermined completion date. Critical elements for management of teams that recommend things is clarifying the charter and composition of members of the team and dealing with the hand-off for the implementation of the recommendation.

Teams that make or do things involve people at or near the front line responsible for manufacturing, development, or operations of the business. There is no set completion date as activities are ongoing. Critical elements for management of teams that make or do things are to avoid appearing to promote teams for their own sake, avoiding the development of performance-focussed management practices (such as pay schemes) and training for teams responsive to real-time needs.

Examples of teams that run things include senior management teams and divisional teams. Critical aspects for managing teams that run things include the decision to work individually or as a team, which demands trust and may be risky, and defining specific purposes and goals distinct from the broad organizational mission. These aspects apply at all levels in the organization where teams exist. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) found fewer examples of executive teams as opposed to teams at other levels in organizations. They
attributed this to several factors including some misguided beliefs about the way executives are supposed to behave that influence real team formation.

An executive’s past history and behaviour of acting independently or interdependently will influence his or her ability to work in a team or in a working group. Executives may not have the time or commitment to build the relationships that are necessary for establishing a real team. Teams at the top of an organization may not always be appropriate given some of the factors noted.

Other authors of team literature use different terminology to distinguish between different types of teams, such as autonomous teams and quality circles. The term “self-directed teams” is referred to by Orsburn (1990) and Wellins, Byham, and Dixon (1994). Further, Wellins, Byham, and Dixon (1994) differentiate between permanent work teams—teams organized around a product or service—and cross-functional teams—those charged with problem solving, coordination, or decision making in the context of the whole organization (p.2). Permanent teams may be the natural work group or redesigned based on specific criteria.

I suggest that the lack of consistent terminology and meaning has contributed to confusion about the nature of teams. However, one definition or set of terms would not in any way be adequate. What is lacking is a comprehensive guidebook of definitions and terms of reference based on a collective team theory.

Benefits of Teams

Orsburn (1990) indicates that self-directed work teams are seen as a tool to reduce bureaucracy, and is in agreement with Wageman that teams can increase employee motivation and foster continuous improvement. Another payoff suggested by Orsburn (1990) includes streamlining, since many of the functions formerly the responsibility of supervisors, mid managers, and support staff are taken on by the team members.

Lawler (1990) indicates the important difference in the participative structure of work teams in the following quotation:

Overall, work teams make an important difference in the participative
structure of organizations. Individuals end up with knowledge and skills, information, rewards, and power that they do not have in traditional organizations. Thus, work teams are likely to have an important positive impact on organizational effectiveness. (p. 109)

Lawler also identifies potential areas where effective teams can provide improvement. These include areas in work methods and procedures, a gain in attraction and retention, an increase in staffing flexibility, service and product quality improvements, rate of output improvements, staff support level reduction, supervision reduction, and improvements in decision making.

Wellins, Byham, and Dixon (1991) in Empowered Teams cited the main reasons organizations moved to self-directed teams, based on data from a national survey they conducted in the United States in 1990 with Industry Week and the Association for Quality and Participation. The findings included the benefits cited by Wageman (1997), Lawler (1990), and Orsburn (1990) as well as faster response to technological change, fewer simpler job classifications, and better response to new worker values.

Generally, the team experts agree on the reported benefits that teams bring to organizations. Katzenbach and Smith in The Wisdom of Teams (1993) took a unique approach to promoting the benefits of teams by supporting the implementation of teams in hierarchical structures. They stated:

...hierarchy and teams go together almost as well as teams and performance. Teams integrate and enhance formal structures and processes. Hierarchical structures and basic processes are essential to large organizations and need not be threatened by teams. Teams, in fact, are the best way to integrate across structural boundaries and to both design and energize core processes. Those who see teams as a replacement for hierarchy are missing the true potential of teams. (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p.5)

Katzenbach and Smith reported that every change effort that they know of has depended on teams. They believe teams afford organizations flexibility, and unique performance and behavioural characteristics. They contend that teams and hierarchy work together to generate performance within the well-defined boundaries of teams.

Katzenbach and Smith are aligned with the other authors of contemporary team
literature in the view that teams do reduce bureaucracy. However, they clearly state that teams do not replace hierarchy. One tension I see is that this perspective does not seem aligned with Senge’s learning organization concept, which requires a fundamental shift in how we think about organizations and the way they are managed. It also is counter to Ferguson’s feminist theory.

Alternatively Katzenbach and Smith (1993) promote teams as the best way to integrate new visions and values into organizational behaviours, among people in the organization, and this approach is similar to Senge’s concept of the learning organization and team learning.

Strategies for Team Implementation

The experts on team literature, including Katzenbach and Smith (1993), Wellins, Byham and Wilson (1991 & 1994), Orsburn (1990), Lawler (1990), and Buchholz and Roth (1987), address the shift to team structures and stress the need to consider why and how the organizational context supports teams. Such things as structures, roles, titles to describe team positions, skills, responsibilities offered, relationships with unions, performance management and reward systems are discussed. Significant changes in critical aspects of organizational development, such as changes in the manager’s role from a command-and-control paradigm to a coach and facilitator, changes in the compensation system to reward work done by teams in addition to work done by individuals, the training system, and the selection system, are also discussed.

Team-based compensation is a difficult question, given the traditions of systems aimed at individuals. However, organizations that keep an individualistic pay system in place can threaten team cohesiveness. Also, team pay is complex due to the many different kinds of teams, as there is no general model that can be applied to all teams. Another dilemma relates to how organizations define teams, which is further compromised by a lack of clear definitions. Companies need to address exactly what they are going to measure. Team goals must be achievable and trackable. They cannot be exactly the same as corporate goals, although there must be an alignment. It is important to acknowledge that the team pay
system is not the only factor influencing people to work better in teams.

Performance management systems must be changed. Evaluation based on the tenets of a traditional individualistic pay plan will continue to support behaviours of successful individual performers, such as withholding information and undermining rivals for promotions. Organizations in a team culture have implemented an alternative competency system for evaluating workers on results and behaviours, through a 360 degree evaluation system where peers, customers, and coaches provide information about performance.

Sisco (1992) reported on the approaches to compensation of several team-based companies in the United States. Johnsonville Foods in Sheboygan Falls, WI, has 14 cross-functional teams. Employees are paid based on their jobs’ market value. Through a peer review process an employee can advance to another salary range. Additionally, bonuses based on individual or team performance are available to employees. Bonuses can be earned through performance defined as exceeding the company’s standards for quality and efficiency, and teaching other team members something new that improves a process.

An example of a combination salary plan is Motorola’s Government Electronics Group, which still has a semi-traditional merit-pay system. It has added a profit-sharing plan based on two aspects: return on net assets and a recognition program that rewards individuals or teams. An appraisal system exists in which team members provide input on an employee’s performance through the team coach.

Peter LeBlanc, director of human resources for Northern Telecom U.S. in Research Triangle Park, NC, agreed with experts on team literature that traditional reward systems do not encourage the breadth of experience upon which team-based work structures rely. Northern Telecom approached the development of a team-based compensation system by evaluating the underlying compensation structures such as job classifications, performance appraisals, and pay systems. New reward systems were designed to fit the organizational philosophy and goals. The elimination of status differences in teams was addressed at Northern Telecom’s plant near Raleigh which makes network switches. “You cannot expect people with different titles who are paid on different pay grades to operate as equal team members” (LeBlanc, 1992, p. 44). The plant now has two grade levels for assemblers instead
of four. This was accomplished by integrating fifty pay grades into 13 pay grades, and reducing 18,000 job titles to 250. Salaries are based on skill levels, with no distinction between hourly and salaried employees.

Compensation experts (Hay Group, Sibson & Company, 1995), on establishing team-based compensation, caution organizations not to go overboard in promoting teamwork to the exclusion of individual achievement, because a company still needs to differentiate between high performers and marginal employees and recognize individual achievement in a team pay system. Involving workers in the design of a plan can improve its chance of success. There is a need to carefully examine a new pay system to ensure that it will accomplish what it is intended to, prior to being implemented. A recognition that a team pay system is a work in progress that will need continual fine tuning is necessary. Overall, the experts suggest keeping a team-based pay system simple.

According to Lawler (1990), the decision-making characteristic of work teams usually involves management retaining the right to challenge the teams' decisions. However, in highly autonomous work groups, teams may make all the decisions that are required to run a small business: hiring, firing, determining pay rates, and determining quality. In less autonomous teams, the human resource decisions may remain with management while the work teams deal with issues of setting production goals, managing their own quality, and determining work methods. Unless the boundaries are clearly defined, or there is ongoing clarification between management and the team regarding who is responsible for what (team or management), the potential for ambiguity and frustration is great.

With teams, managers are being asked to share their authority instead of relying on the formal authority vested in them by the hierarchy. They are being asked to fully involve employees in information sharing and decision-making authority in teams. Shared responsibility is replacing delegation of authority, and commitment to shared goals is replacing participative management. Empowerment of employees is seen as a critical component of organizational effectiveness.

From my experience teams can be a vehicle for change in organizations. However the implementation of teams needs to be part of an overall organizational strategy. I agree
with team experts (Lawler, 1990; Orsburn, 1990) regarding other supports that need to be aligned and in place: a clear strategic direction; a consideration for the size of the organization in order to determine how and where to implement teams; leadership; and commitment, culture, and the willingness to move from a hierarchical to a collaborative structure to align with the values of teams. Conflict exists when teams are implemented in hierarchical organizations—the values are different—authoritative verses collaborative. This view is espoused in the learning organization theory (Senge, 1990) and is the critique Ferguson (1984) makes of bureaucracies but to date has not been adequately addressed in the team literature.

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) propose that any organization considering the implementation of teams needs to assess the degree to which it would be facing major change by asking four questions: 1. Does the organization have to get very good at one or more basic things it is not very good at now (e.g., skills or values)? 2. Do large numbers of people throughout the entire organization have to change specific behaviours? 3. Does the organization have a track record of success in changes of this type? 4. Do people throughout the organization understand the implications of the change for their own behaviours and urgently believe that the time to act is now? (p. 196)

Based on their research and client work, the authors suggest approaching major change efforts along three critical dimensions: top-down culture-shaping-initiatives; bottom-up goal-achievement or problem-solving initiatives; and cross-functional redesign and integration initiatives. They advocate that change efforts progress along all three dimensions simultaneously and stress that teams play a critical role in all of these aspects. Specifically, the dynamics of teams promote both performance and behavioural change.

Leadership

Six things are necessary to good team leadership, according to Katzenbach and Smith (1993): keep the purpose, goals, and approach relevant and meaningful; build commitment and confidence; strengthen the mix and level of skills; manage relationships with outsiders, including removing obstacles; create opportunities for others; and do real work. The authors
make a point of what team leaders should never do: "they do not blame or allow specific individuals to fail, and they never excuse away shortfalls in team performance" (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 144).

The capacity for self-management and the delegation of decision-making to teams requires the development of a set of leadership skills. Team literature (Lawler, 1990) suggests four critical things that leaders must do: build trust and openness; provide a vision and communicate it; move decisions to the proper location; and empower others.

Hackman and Walton (1994) developed a cognitive model that leaders could use in the design and maintenance of effective work groups in organizations. The model, based on the functional approach formulated by McGrath asserts that critical functions must be fulfilled by work groups to perform effectively: productive output meets the standards of quality, quantity, and timeliness of the people who receive, review and/or use that output; the process of carrying out the work enhances the capability of members to work together interdependently in the future; and the group experience contributes to the growth and personal well-being of team members.

Regarding conditions that enhance group effectiveness, Hackman and Walton (1994) advocate a focus on the task dimension, which then supports the social and personal dimensions. This focus is similar to that of Katzenbach and Smith (1993). Team effectiveness is based on three key conditions: a clear and engaging direction; an enabling performance situation that has a group structure that supports competent work on the task, an organizational context that supports and reinforces excellence, and available expert coaching and process assistance; and adequate material resources. The authors point out that the activities of monitoring and taking action are two leadership behaviours that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of favourable performance conditions.

Sinclair (1992) suggests that groups that ignore leadership concerns have suffered. Group theory acknowledges that groups experience phases of working through relations with authority issues. Phase 2 of Tuckman’s (1977) model of group development is referred to as "storming." This stage is characterized by two sets of issues. Task issues involve emotional responses to content demands; confrontation with leader(s) about suitability of
content; beginnings of struggle about control; and a high need for structure. Process issues include resisting group influence; handling interpersonal conflict in the group; testing level of trust; and struggle over dependence-interdependence issues with leadership.

A characteristic of some teams is the capacity of self-management (Hicks & Bone, 1990; Orsborn, 1990; Torres & Spiegel, 1990). Democratic and participative-style management through work groups was taken on as a way to motivate workers. Decision-making is delegated to teams in the flat organization. Sinclair (1992) suggests that many groups have suffered as a result of ignoring leadership concerns. Both the group as a whole and the individual members are dependent on leadership being exercised. Group process theorists are in agreement that all groups will experience phases of identifying with, rejecting and working through relations with authority (Bennis & Shepard, 1956; Mills, 1964; Slater, 1966; Laiken, 1991). It is further recognized that this process cannot be eliminated by eliminating leaders from groups. Sinclair (1992) suggests that recent research confirms that appropriate leadership is the most critical ingredient of team success. The abdication of leadership can cause paralysis of groups.

The question of what effective leadership is in a team environment is an area for further inquiry. Weick (1978) has proposed the term “medium as a metaphor for leader.” The prime function of the medium is to filter and bring the complexities of the environment to the group in a way that the group members can address them. What is needed is the further exploration of leadership as it relates to discovering new organizational forms and new ways of conceptualizing teams. I suggest that the metaphor “leader as midwife” may be the starting point in pursuing this area.

In “The Anatomy of High Performing Teams: A Leader’s Handbook” (1985), Marilyn Laiken created a framework that interfaced the Tuckman’s model of group development and Blanchard and Hersey’s (1977) situational leadership model as a way to understand group experiences from the perspective of the leader and the members. The framework is the basis for leadership behaviours for teams and incorporates the behaviours of facilitation rather than traditional leadership as a developmental approach to group leadership.
Time is a consideration in the difficulties surrounding the transfer of power and decision-making authority from managers to work teams. Transitions to work teams can take two to five years, according to Orsborn, Moran, Musselwhite, and Zenger in *Self-Directed Work Teams* (1990). During this time the team takes on increasing authority to make decisions. They describe five stages in the transfer of decision-making authority. During Stage 1, there is only a slight change. During Stage 2, teams and managers struggle to find team autonomy in relation to team capability. During Stage 3, managers learn how to delegate authority as a result of the abilities of the team. During Stage 4, team members largely take over operations and managers assist with decision-making in the context of the corporate goals. During Stage 5, self-directed teams take total responsibility, and managers function as coaches.

These authors describe several difficulties in the transfer of decision-making authority. A manager who views teams as a threat may sabotage the team by intentionally giving it more authority than it can handle. Alternatively, resistant managers may refuse to pass on authority. Both the stages of decision-making authority described by Orsborn, Moran, Musselwhite, and Zenger (1990) and Laiken’s (1985) developmental approach to group leadership through facilitation are aligned and help make sense of the perceived team experiences of the respondents.

**Leadership Styles**

Once again the team literature does not draw on the knowledge acquired in the feminist literatures and the learning organization field. I will briefly present some ideas which may have some relevance to the team literature.

The characteristics of the leadership styles described in Sally Helgeson’s (1990) study of female executives in web-style structures were: leaders who are comfortable being in the centre of things, rather than at the top; leaders who prefer building consensus to issuing orders; and leaders who develop a collegial atmosphere that supports a focus on what needs to be done rather that who has authority to do it.

According to Drucker’s *The Leader of the Future* (1996), all effective leaders know
four things: a leader is someone who has followers; an effective leader is someone whose followers do the right thing and get results; leaders are highly visible and they set examples; and leadership is responsibility.

Senge describes three types of leaders in building learning organizations that correspond generally to three organizational positions. (1) There are local line leaders who test possible new learning capabilities to determine if they will lead to improved business results. At least half of the companies in the MIT Centre for Organizational Learning that have made significant strides in improving business results, and developing internal learning capabilities had little or no executive leadership (Senge, 1996 p.49). Alternatively, there were no examples of significant progress in improving business results without leadership from local line managers and with committed CEOs. (2) Executive leaders are another type of leader who provides support for line leaders, develops learning infrastructures, and leads by example. (3) Internal networkers, or community builders are the third type of leader. Senge contends that there are three generic roles of leaders at all levels: designer; teacher; steward. The significant issues of today’s organizations and of society will not be resolved through hierarchal authority. Senge believes that changes are required in our traditional leadership models and that “the challenges of systemic change where hierarchy is inadequate will...push us to new views of leadership based on new principles” (Senge, 1996, p.57).

Helgeson (1996) states, in an article “Leading from the Grass Roots”, that studies of leadership presumed that leaders were leaders by virtue of their position. Equating leadership with positional power is an obsolete equation that also reveals assumptions about the nature and shape of organizations that are becoming obsolete. That is, they do not reflect the decentralized and organic structure of what Drucker (1996) named the knowledge organization.

Non-positional leadership, according to Ted Jenkins, a senior engineer at the Intel Corporation, requires that power is derived from: the power of expertise; the power of personal relationships and connections; and the power of personal authority or charisma. Envisioning organizational life as one interconnected web erases old hierarchical presumptions. In addition, networked technology reflects and hastens the erosion of top-
down power (Helgeson, 1996, p. 24) and allows for the leadership to begin in new places and in new ways.

Team Implementation Issues - Obstacles

Authors of the team literature report several factors that get in the way of the institutionalization of teams. As with other aspects of the team literature discussed thus far, a comprehensive list of implementation issues does not exist. Experts of the team literature, however, agreed on several obstacles that are reported herein.

Wageman (1997) reports on the increasing number of organizations that are disenchanted with teams. Many teams never contributed to organization performance and adaptability because they never operated as intended. Wageman (1997) and Lawler (1990) stated that teams implemented in organizations that have histories of hierarchical decision-making and that support an ethic of individual achievement make it difficult to shift to a culture where team members rely on each other to accomplish work. This is in part because members do not share the values that are required to function in a communal or collaborative way. Work teams may not become institutionalized because there is a need for managers to change more than they may be willing to accept. The fact that work teams affect power, knowledge, information, and rewards can be threatening, and this fact influences whether or not teams are perceived as oppressive, camouflage coercion and conflict, and are a pretense to replacing hierarchy. Greenfield sites, such as new plant start ups, have been more successful at operating with total self-direction because they are unencumbered with organizational history and culture.

Another potential obstacle has to do with the number of teams implemented and where they are implemented. Often teams are attempted in only a small portion of the organization and do not affect enough systems or enough people to have an impact on the whole organization (Lawler, 1986). Lawler (1990) describes potential problems that might occur with self-managing teams. They are: increase in salary (with skill-based pay); increase in training costs due to the fact that group process training takes time and is expensive; time-consuming meetings and slow decision-making; unmet expectations for organizational
change that can occur with resistance by middle management; resistance by staff support
groups; unmet expectations for personal growth and development; and conflict between
participants and non-participants if only a few teams are formed.

Teamwork can be very stressful due to several different factors such as ambiguous
performance standards. Lawler (1990) acknowledged that teams did not always provide
fulfilment of individual needs or contribute to individual satisfaction. Similarly, Sinclair
(1992) challenged the assumption that the team is the solution to organizational life.

Three primary sources of resistance to teams reported by Katzenbach and Smith
(1993) are: a lack of a belief that working in a team is a better approach to accomplish the
task than alternatives; teams are uncomfortable and risky to work due to different
preferences, personal styles, and individual capabilities; lack of a strong ethic of
organizational performance. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) also suggest that, although
executives in organizations share and advocate teamwork, the use of the word “team” by
executives who call for entire organizations to become a “team” has created confusion and
misunderstanding about teams. These executives are really promoting teamwork values.
Also, those who suggest that teams make people feel good confuse teamwork with teams and
miss the foundational characteristic that separates teams from non-teams, which is a
relentless focus on performance.

Approaches to helping teams move forward, as suggested by Katzenbach and Smith
(1993), included a refocus on performance by revisiting team basics and going for small
wins, bringing new information to the team and trying different approaches. Other
approaches are utilizing outside training and counseling, and reforming the team with new
members.

This literature misses some other possible explanations in my opinion. What prevents
the institutionalization of teams, what gets in the way of applying the theory of team
implementation and the practice of team implementation, may be found in some of the
feminist literature and some of the learning organization literature. Both address the need for
a fundamental shift in how we think about organizations and the way they are managed.

Feminist paradigms also provide insight into what prevents the shift to teams.
Research suggested that traditional approaches to organizational theory were gender blind, and thus contributed to misinterpreting how organizations operated. Radical feminist thinkers have explored the nature of organizations and found that problems do exist, that present-day organizations do discriminate, that they do devalue characteristics and behaviours attributed stereotypically to females, and that they tend to perpetuate inequalities.

Ferguson’s (1984) critique of bureaucracy suggests that inequalities get disguised, and barriers to creativity get created, among other things. She believes that dramatic change towards alternative structures can not manifest inside bureaucratic organizations that have a male-dominated model. Ferguson believes that it is not possible to explore alternative structures that create change inside organizations, and that the kind of dramatic change necessary to break out of a male-dominated model necessitates leaving the organization and moving to a collective where everyone shares equal power.

2.3.3. Critique of Teams

Amanda Sinclair in *The Tyranny of Team Ideology* states that “people at work have been tyrannized by a team ideology based on the use of work groups as a key to effective organizational performance” (1992, p. 661). Sinclair’s examination of elements of team ideology—how work in groups is defined, linkages between organizational performance and individual motivation, perspectives on leadership, and impact of power and conflict in work groups—has created an obsession with teams in the workplace governed by oppressive stereotypes of what teams should be like and how they should behave.

Numerous organizations document the contribution that teams make towards getting all kinds of work done (Motorola, General Electric, Hewlett Packard). However, the team ideology espouses the benefits to all and perhaps camouflages, according to Sinclair, “coercion under the pretense of maintaining cohesion, conceals conflict under the guise of consensus, converts conforming into a semblance of creativity” (1992, p. 611).

These prescriptions of contemporary management are based on a dominant ideology of team work. Sinclair says that “teams are embraced as tools of diverse models of organizational reform from Organizational Development (Dumfy, 1976) to work
restructuring (Poza & Markus, 1980), from quality management to industrial democracy, and from corporate culture and Japanese management approaches to complex contingency prescriptions” (1992, p. 611).

According to Sinclair (1992), there is a need to look at these assumptions of team models as a tool for organizational development.

The hegemony of this ideology has been supported by researchers who offer the “team” as a tantalizing, simple solution to some of the intractable problems of organizational life. Teams appear to satisfy everything at once: individual needs (for sociability, self-actualization, participative management), organizational needs (for productivity, organizational development, effectiveness) and even society’s needs for alleviating the malaise of alienation and other by-products of modern industrial society. (p. 611)

Sinclair suggests that there is evidence (Carey, 1981) that studies have been ignored because they found no obvious change in workers’ behaviour as a result of “democratic consultation.” Despite evidence that people are not so simply motivated by the sociability and self-actualization supposedly offered in work groups, Sinclair suggests that much of management theory still prescribes teams as if they are a haven for the alienated employee. Sinclair suggests the opposite, “that individuals experience substantial and continuing internal tensions as group members, and that participation in groups is usually stressful and only occasionally, for some, satisfying” (1992, pp. 615-616). To some extent the research and theory about teams has failed to incorporate the rich and complex understanding of the vital ingredients of groups, such as, an analysis of power and conflict in relation to artificial consensus. Sinclair’s questioning of the assumptions of team models is similar to Argyris and Schon. This is the same gap that I am alluding to in this dissertation—espoused theory and theory-in-action.

Ferguson’s critique of teams in a bureaucracy is in line with Emery’s critique. According to Emery (1995),

...the dominant trend now in North America is to pretend that you can have a self-managing group with a supervisor who is re-labelled as a trainer, leader, or coach when in truth responsibility hasn’t really been shifted to the team. That leads to a crisis of responsibility and a breakdown of the
effectiveness and implementation of self-managing groups. The reason for the difficulty is simple: the trainer, leader or coach is still at a higher level of the hierarchy. (p. 8)

Emery (1995) contends that the two fundamental choices of organizational design, bureaucratic or democratic, have profoundly different effects. Executives who choose to maintain a bureaucratic design are perpetuating poor quality and performance. Emery suggests that implementing teams and maintaining a hierarchy contributes to a crisis of responsibility and a breakdown of team effectiveness.

Is the “team” truly a viable alternative, truly transformative? Or is it another form of domination and control in disguise? Perhaps this depends on how a team is structured in one’s consciousness or in the organization’s consciousness. Is it possible to create feminist-alternative discourses and feminist-alternative forms of organization where power and leadership can be shared collectively? According to Ferguson (1984), we must move outside of bureaucracies to create these feminist alternatives, as she does not see the possibility of creating these alternatives within. Her solution does not seem very practical as it is unlikely that bureaucracies will disappear, at least not in the near future. But I am left with some interesting questions which challenge the field of organizational development to look in new ways at old questions.

Organizations, in their efforts to create an environment of empowerment, have opted to restructure into teams. Ferguson states:

Feminism and organizational theory need each other. In order for feminists to construct an adequate theory of domination and liberation, we must deal with bureaucratic modes of power; in order for analysts of modern organizations to develop an adequate critique of bureaucracy, they need to consider a feminist perspective (Ferguson, K. E., 1984, p. 5).

2.3.4. Alternative Structures from a Feminist Perspective

In this section I provide some background into alternative approaches and structures to organizing that can be woven into a new way of conceptualizing and implementing teams. It is here I suggest new ways of thinking about teams and reveal potential contributions one
field can make to another.

The Web of Inclusion

Sally Helgeson (1995) suggests that the web of inclusion is a process, a method, and a way of thinking about tasks. Webs are best described as principles as they vary in size, shape, and purpose. "It is the means by which webs achieve their ends that most distinguishes them from other organizational units" (p. 24). Helgeson defines webs as follows:

1. Webs operate by means of open communication across levels.
2. Webs blur distinctions between conception and execution.
3. Webs create lasting networks that redistribute power in the organization.
4. Webs serve as a vehicle for constant reorganization.
5. Webs embrace the world outside the organization.
6. Webs evolve through a process of trial and error.
(Helgeson, 1995, p. 24-31).

She differentiates a team and a web. The team is driven by ends rather than means in order to achieve a specific task and then disbands into the division of the organization. The team, as a tool for achieving a goal, has little chance for affecting the greater organizational structure. A web, on the other hand, serves as "an organic, homegrown vehicle for carving paths that enable an organization to adapt to radically different, and constantly evolving circumstances" (p. 34). The web is like Senge's (1991) discipline of team learning, as it builds on shared vision and exists within a larger system. According to Helgeson, a web is a team that goes the distance as it affects every aspect of the organization. She feels that teams have the potential to develop as webs but fail to do so due to organizational resistance and the top management preservation of power.

Webs of inclusion evolve as a grassroots means to address specific problems, to acknowledge and build upon a sense of mutual need that increasingly characterizes our interwoven world. The Twenty First Century economy is fluid, technology driven, and based on creativity and relationships. The model Helgeson presents is a fully realized vision of the information-age organization. It is natural and organic, both a structure and an evolving
process constantly changing in relation to the demands of the business environment.

Collectives

The literature of feminist organizational forms and processes provides possible alternative models to patriarchal organizational models. The collective is one form that operates on an egalitarian organizational structure, with a consensus decision-making process. There is no clear structure and accountability, pressure for conformity, and concealed leadership. Wine and Ristock (1991, p. 4) in *Women and Social Change* acknowledge there is a “controversy among feminists regarding the possibility of developing organizational models that clearly reflect feminist values of inclusion and non-hierarchical structure, that are enduring and that work, and that allow us to reach feminist goals in a reasonable time frame.” The theories and practices of feminist collectives can provide useful applications to organizational development practitioners, even though we know that collectives are not problem-free.

Further, Wine and Ristock (1991, p. 23) note “the necessity for devising organizational forms and strategies that are appropriate to particular kinds of organizations and particular purposes.” They stress the need for “creative experimentation accompanied by the recognition that there are likely a plurality of feminist organization forms.”

2.3.5. Research on Teams Implemented in Organizations

I speculate that the terms “team” and “collective” are similar because they propagate the denial of contradictions that exist but fail to be named explicitly. For example, there is a gap between the espoused vision of the collective and the real practices as cited by Wine and Ristock (1991). There may also be a gap between the espoused vision of the team and the real practices. Perhaps these gaps exist because organizational development models of “teams” have failed to incorporate personal team models—meaning ones which would be defined relative to individual’s own personal experience, and can include feminist ideals. Social psychological research looking at the internal dynamics of groups has shown that “highly cohesive groups” exert power and control over their members’ behaviour. There is
a tension between the desire of individual conformity to group norms and the threat of diversity and difference to the larger group identity. Ristock reported on Kathy Ferguson’s (1984) assertion that in order to circumvent these struggles “the maintenance of a dialectical tension between the individual and the collective is necessary” (Ristock, 1988, p.49).

Much of what has been written to date about teams and the learning organization has been based on theory and conceptualizations, not on empirical research. Research on teams and the learning organization that has been grounded in empirical research has some limitations. For example, women’s experiences have not been cited or explored as distinct from men’s experiences, so the research is gender blind. The works of Wellins, Byham, and Dixon (1991, 1994); and Katzenbach and Smith (1993) are examples of such research.

Sometimes the research has a quantitative methodology or a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Designing studies that generate fact-based data limits the range of experiences that can be explored. Also the purpose of the research aims to provide a “how to” blueprint of practical advice for implementing teams, or lessons learned about how and why teams worked or failed in organizations, and how to make teams more productive. Few researchers have focussed on the actual lived-experiences of participants with a team structure. Of the research done to date, limitations still exist. For example Wellins, and Byham, and Dixon (1991 & 1994) and Wageman (1997) are examples of research that failed to access their research subjects own lived experiences. This dissertation research is important in that the primary focus is to understand and explore research subjects’ rich personal experiences.

Although rare there are qualitative studies such—as Baugh and Graen (1997)—which are methodologically sound. Their study “Effects of Team Gender and Racial Composition on Perceptions of Team Performance in Cross-Functional Teams,” is one such example. The study tested previous work that suggested teams with slight variability on gender and race were less positively evaluated. The research was conducted in a field setting with 31 teams in a medium sized state agency in the United States. The organization was dominated by white males, in particular in the positions of power. Ratings by team members and outside raters tested team effectiveness. The terminology of cross-functional teams
matched the definition of team described by Katzenbach and Smith (1993). The results indicated that team gender composition and team racial composition affected individuals’ perceptions of team effectiveness. Members of teams that varied on gender or race perceived their teams as less effective than did members of homogeneous teams. In teams with variation on gender or race, members did not view the team as having less effective working relationships relative to homogenous teams. However, members may have felt they had to work harder at creating and maintaining working relationships. Members perceived less effective working relationships with the team leader.

Regarding the methodology, the results are limited. Generalizations cannot be extrapolated, due to the small variation on gender and race, and small sample size. A strength of the study was the application of a field setting with team members who were experienced in cross-functional teamwork. The study attempted to describe the relationship between the presence of women and minorities on teams and team process variables in organizations that use teamwork. The results suggested the need for organizations to manage diversity in the workplace.

The theory of women’s psychological development is based on research that is qualitative, phenomenological, and includes women. Examples of such research are *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, Belenky et al. (1986); *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan (1982); *Women’s Growth in Connection*, Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, and Surrey (1991). This research however is not about the implementation of teams in organizations.

Given the current status of the research on teams and learning organizations, the present study of women’s experiences in teams can make a significant contribution to team theory. The purpose of this research is to investigate and explore the extent to which the espoused values of teams in mainstream organizations were experienced. The research is an attempt to reveal the women’s subjective experiences.

2.3.6. Summary of Section III

My analysis of the conceptualization of theory and applications of teams, learning organizations, and feminist research has raised for me the following insights regarding
similarities and differences. The work of Gilligan (1982) is aligned with the characteristics described in the team model. Gilligan views women’s experience as a web of relationships with a foundation of responsibility, and encompasses the concept of equity and recognition of different needs. Also, the Self-in-Relation Model, developed out of the Stone Center, mirrors the conceptualization of relationship characteristics of teams as presented in Figure 1. These views consider the possibility that the relational world could help make organizations places in which affiliation, friendship, and connection could be valued in a more integrated way.

The core values forming the cornerstones of relational theory and practice are empowerment, learning in connection with others, and mutuality in a context of evolving, continual change. These are also congruent with the values espoused by Senge’s learning organization. The values of relational theory and the values of Senge’s theory together are perceived to be the necessary values of teams in organizations.

Generally, on the surface, there appears to be a congruence between what is espoused in Senge’s Learning Organization theory, the values of Self-in-Relation theory, and the relationship characteristics described in the composite team model of Figure 1. However, what is missing is an explicit linkage or application of the learning organization theory and relational theory with team theory. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) do not specifically make reference to learning organizations in the description of teams; however, the team theory has some similarities with Senge’s (1991) learning organization.

The work by Katzenbach and Smith (1993) reported that teams support behavioural change more effectively than individuals or larger organizational units. And teams are the most effective way “to convert embryonic visions and values into consistent actions” (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 19). There is an omission of any explicit integration or consideration of theories of women’s psychological development and the conceptualization of teams. In fact, Katzenbach and Smith present a composite list of questions about issues raised most often by senior managers, middle managers, and front-line workers, and the issue of gender is not mentioned.

The lack of comprehensive theories, definitions, and agreed-upon meanings of terms
used to describe learning organizations as well as teams has created a challenge for researchers. This has resulted in difficulties in comparing any research results of learning organizations and teams.

What is called for is a re-visioning of teams.

Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction—is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for woman, is more than a search for identity: it is part of her refusal of the self-destructiveness of the male-dominated society. (Adrienne Rich, 1972, p.18)

The question that needs to be addressed with respect to all these models and definitions of teams is: whose definition? The implicit assumption in the team models is that they are male-defined. How would the definition be different if women’s voices were considered? What prevents us from saying something different about teams? What might make it possible to say something different?

My current study addresses women’s experiences as members of organizational teams by listening to women’s voices, and exploring women’s unique perspectives, grounded in their experience. Understanding the assumptions women have about how teams operate will help practitioners develop strategies that integrate women’s perspectives. Possibly, they will discover new or alternative ways of perceiving and creating teams in organizations that would be beneficial to both women and men. Support for this approach appeared in Anne Wilson Schaefer’s Women’s Reality: An emerging female system in a white male society (1981, p. 144), “that rather than seeing the differences between men and women as threats, we have much to gain by viewing them as opportunities for growth” (Dempsey & Reynolds, June 1990).

2.4. Section IV: Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a review of literature from three topic areas relevant to the research question: organizational development and in particular the learning organization; feminist critique of OD with a focus on organizational forms, and theory on women’s
experiences, knowledge and development, and research on women in management; and teams in organizations. I have shown theoretical concepts and applied research and highlighted several areas of alignment and congruence as well as differences across the three bodies of literature. The analysis of the literature review focused on the theoretical aspects of structure or process, hierarchy and power, concepts and qualities and characteristics, and implementation. The research from the three bodies of literature was then analyzed. Some highlights of the review are presented here.

Theoretical Concepts

Structure or Process

1. A team is a single structure that exists within an organization and that has a focus on functionality. A team is a discreet unit of performance, as opposed to a positive set of values. This unit differs from an individual and an entire organization. Systems within the organization must change to support the team structure.

2. A learning organization is a process and a set of values that is independent of structure. A primary purpose of organizational learning is for companies to be more adaptive and capable of altering functions and departments as a response to weak performance or changes in the work environment. A team is one structure deemed a critical building block of a learning organization. Knowledge is the output of the process and affects the systems both inside and outside the organization. Becoming a learning organization is a journey as opposed to a destination.

3. Feminist models represent a process and a set of values of women's experiences and women's needs.

Hierarchy and Power

1. Some of the team literature states that teams coexist within hierarchy, that teams do not replace hierarchy; however the number of organizational layers of management is decreased leading to a reduction in hierarchy. The team is claimed to enhance a company’s organizational performance. Team leadership is shared, and participative, and management
still holds the power. The manager's role has changed to a facilitator and a coach.

2. The values of the learning organization clash with the values of hierarchy. Rigid hierarchies thwart learning. Senge's servant leadership or collective leadership is in opposition to hierarchical leadership. Leaders are reflective practitioners.

3. The values of feminist theories and the values of hierarchy are mutually exclusive. Power in relationship is defined as co-operation, mutual support and respect. Helgeson's leadership model of a web places leaders in the centre of the web reaching out and emphasizing relationships and inclusion.

Concepts, Qualities and Characteristics

1. Teams, the learning organization and women's theories are aligned on the qualities of empowerment, learning in connection with others, relationship, collaboration.

2. Senge's concept of shared vision and Belenky et al.'s concept of connected knowing are similar.

3. A systems perspective is part of the learning organization, and the concept of connected knowing and relational theory. A systems approach will be influenced by the team implementation strategy of the organization. Team theory—though an end in itself—necessitates a systems perspective for successful implementation as other organizational systems need to become aligned in support of team structures.

4. Characteristics espoused by learning organization and relational theory include: dialogue that incorporates a suspension of judgement; shared vision; and the notion that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. There is mutuality in a context of evolving and continual change, and a systems perspective characterized by openness, flexibility and change. Whereas in team theory, the concept of dialogue per se is not addressed; problem solving techniques, and dispute resolution models are applied to resolve concerns.

5. The team model has an emphasis on performance goals that are linked to the organizational goals. The learning organization model is congruent with the team model and embodies the development of capabilities on an individual level, a team level, and an organization wide level, so that the organization can be more competitive in the global
economic environment. The learning organization is broader in scope than the team model. The women's models hold similar capabilities as the learning organization for existence in communities such as collectives. However, the overall perspective of women's models is conceptually broader than the team model and the learning organization.

Theory and Practice

The team literature is not consolidated and consists of multiple definitions that are inconsistent and confusing. As well, there are several methodologies and prescriptions for implementing teams that are cumbersome and need to be simplified. Learning organization theory—like the team literature—also has many definitions from various fields and lacks a grounded definition. Practical guidelines to operationalize learning organizations are poorly developed. Team literature and learning organization literature do not explicitly include women's experience in the reporting of research.

The Research Question

The research topic for this study was to investigate the extent to which the espoused values of teams were actually experienced from the perspectives of women who worked in teams in mainstream organizations. The literature reviewed the team theories (and related literature) and identified research findings, some of which supported components of the theory, i.e. the theory that works in practice and the theory that doesn't work, (implementation failures). Although the team theory acknowledged that implementation efforts may fail for a number of reasons, based on the review of related literature it appears that further research is warranted. The team literature, theory and research failed to consider women's experiences in the conceptualization of the team model. Much of the research findings are focused on productivity outcomes and only in a limited capacity on the processes of teams. Research in psychology, sociology and women's studies have documented and have acknowledged women as having a separate and a distinct voice. Thus it is reasonable to consider that when women's perspectives and experiences are considered in teams, gaps in the team theory and practice will emerge.
CHAPTER THREE
Research Inquiry—Methodology

3.1. Research Approach

My objective in this study was to research, describe and analyze the personal experiences of women who worked in teams in business organizations. Phenomenology is an appropriate methodology for this study because women's experiences in teams in organizations have not been included in team research. To what extent women's experiences are similar to espoused team theory and practice is unknown. An exploration of women's team experiences can reveal the ways in which women's experiences are aligned and different from the team literature, the learning organization literature and the feminist literature.

Phenomenology is that kind of thinking that guides us back from theoretical abstractions to the reality of lived experiences. Phenomenology asks the simple question "what is it like to have a certain experience?" Researchers in the phenomenological mode attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations. Phenomenological sociology has been particularly influenced by the philosophers Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz. It is also located in the Weberian tradition, which emphasizes "verstehen," the interpretive understanding of human interaction. Phenomenologists do not assume they know what things mean to the people they are studying (Douglas, 1976). The phenomenological inquiry is noted as beginning with silence (Psathas, 1973). This "silence" is an attempt to grasp what phenomenologists are studying. What phenomenologists emphasize, then, is the subjective aspects of people's behaviour. They attempt to gain entry into the conceptual world of their subjects (Geertz, 1973) in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives. Phenomenologists believe that multiple ways of interpreting experiences are available to each of us through interacting with others, and that it is the meaning of our experiences that
constitutes reality (Greens, 1978). Reality, consequently, is “socially constructed” (Berger and Luckman, 1967, p. 34).

The phenomenological perspective is a dynamic interaction that creates an evolving process. Through experiencing reality as others experience it, the evolution of the research question can be expected. I set out to explore the application of teams in organizations from the perspective of women. Thus it is to be expected in the phenomenological approach that I must be willing to follow the research question, to be transformed by my experience with the participants and with colleagues, to reflect on that experience and interpret its meaning for me in my inquiry.

3.2. Selection of Participants

I identified a number of potential candidates to interview. Rather than using the strategy of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I elected to pre-identify all the candidates to be interviewed. The criteria given below framed or provided boundaries for sample selection, but to some extent the method of selection was arbitrary.

I began with a loosely defined homogeneous sample of the same gender, as I recognized that the experiences of each individual are unique. A small number of people were interviewed to gather data on a variety of experiences and to allow for in-depth interviews. My focus on women's experiences in teams led me to choose women who had a significant experience of working in teams in organizations.

The participants were selected from private organizations that espoused the application of teams as a way to accomplish work, as stated in company mission, vision, and value statements. The corporations from which the participants were selected were respected companies as rated by The Globe and Mail Report on Business or recognized in the field of organization development as being leading edge and innovative (progressive and considerate of people) by their presence at professional development and training events on implementing teams and learning organizations. The organizations identified ranged from mid-size (5,000 to 25,000 thousand employees) to large (30,000 to 60,000 employees). They
were for the most part historically hierarchical in structure. This team structure in hierarchical organizations provided another rationale for selecting only women for the study. According to Miller (1976) and Jordan et al. (1991) the main organizing factor in women’s lives is relational growth. Also women’s voices have not been generally heard. Asking women about their team experiences in a hierarchy which is a structure based on a patriarchal model may illustrate more dissonance for women because of their relational nature. Miller (1991) notes that many highly accomplished women “find that their desire to live and work in a context of mutually enhancing relationships conflicts with male norms.” (*Women’s Growth in Connection*, 1991, p.25).

There was no predetermination of interviewing a certain number of women from any one organization. Rather, women were contacted who fit the candidate criteria. In almost every case, I was referred to another candidate from the same organization. The participants were selected through various means, including nominations through human resource contacts in companies, companies recognized and respected in published accounts, professional contacts, and—in some cases—referrals from interviewees.

The potential candidates were screened initially by telephone to discuss the nature of the research and to determine if there was an appropriate fit among the research question, the candidate and the researcher. The screening addressed whether or not the nominee had some personal experience as a member of a team or in leading teams in organizations. The selection of participants was based on the following criteria:

1. Female.
2. A member or former member (within the past year) of a work group that fit with the following definition of team: “A team is a small group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable” (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 45).
3. Perceived that a significant amount of time was spent on meaningful teamwork.
4. Had many team experiences that included female-only teams, mixed-gender teams, and male-dominated teams. A benchmark of an accumulation of three years’ experience working
in a team environment generally fit with the other criteria, although there was an exception of this benchmark for one participant. Based on my own team experience, three years seemed an adequate amount of time to gain knowledge and skills of the dynamics of teams.

5. Employed by a private-sector organization that met the following criteria:
   a) medium to large size  
   b) embodied a team-based culture based on company mission, vision, and value statements.

3.3. Data

Interviewing was chosen as the method of data collection in order to search opinions and perceptions of the participants. One face-to-face interview was conducted between the researcher and each participant, in order to understand their perspectives of the experiences of teams as expressed in their own words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Interviewing provided the opportunity to learn and to consider alternative explanations of the research phenomenon, which “is the special strength of interviewing in qualitative inquiry” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 65).

Each participant was interviewed at her place of work. Prior to any scheduled interview, the purpose of the study was made explicit in writing and verbally to all participants. (See Appendix B for a copy of the letter received by participants.) Participants were asked to sign a consent form, which outlined the research purpose as well as indicated the participants’ freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. (See Appendix C for a copy of the consent form.) At the beginning of the interview, the purpose of the study was reviewed with the participant. Interviews were scheduled at intervals to allow for some time to reflect on the process of the interview and the content. This allowed me to consider what aspects of the dialogue I was drawn to and wanted to pay attention to in the next interview. The length of the interviews varied between one and one-half to two hours. All the initial interviews were conducted between July 1995 and October 1995.

Immediately following each interview, I recorded my impressions of the interview, personal observations, and comments on the interview process in a log. The interviews of
these women were audiotaped. It was integral to this study that the individual voices of the participants be heard and recorded accurately.

Interviews were transcribed in their entirety and then forwarded to the participants. At that time I indicated that I would like to discuss by telephone any topics in the transcripts that needed clarification and to gather some profile information. I talked again via telephone with all the participants with the exception of one participant, who was no longer at her place of employment and was not available.

3.4. Interview Guide

An interview guide was prepared that provided a list of general topic areas to cover with each participant. According to Bogdan and Taylor (1984), a guide can be used when the participants who will be involved in the research have some degree of knowledge about the phenomenon under study, as was the case in this research. The participants had significant experiences working in a team environment and had a certain degree of knowledge of team operations. Occasionally the interview veered away from the schedule and I chose to go with what the participant wanted to talk about. Eventually the interview came back to the guide.

Probing is one of the aspects of successful interviewing and critical to successfully understanding people's experiences and the meanings attached to them. Bogdan and Taylor (1984) emphasize that "The interviewer cannot take for granted common sense assumptions and understandings other people share" (p. 96). It wasn't until I was analysing the data that I understood what Bogdan and Taylor meant. I recalled conversations in some of the interviews where I had the opportunity to probe further for better understanding of the concept that was being reported. However, I did not do that. Perhaps there was some personal barrier that prevented me from hearing the participants. Maybe my own biases and preconceived ideas got in the way.

The interview questions addressed two broad categories: general questions about the organization and teams, and specific questions about individual team experiences. The
general questions explored the culture of the organization and how teams fit with the culture. The specific questions about individual team experiences involved inquiry into several aspects such as: logistics of team operations (membership, kinds of teams); procedures (decision making); roles; the nature of the relationships; experiences in mixed gender teams (ranging from all female to being the only female member). A complete interview guide is included in Appendix D.

3.5. Data Analysis

This research design was an evolving process in which the questions to be asked and the data to be collected emerged in the process of the research. It involved an initial combination of data collection and analysis—first the interview, followed by the analysis and theme development, then another interview, and more analysis. The emerging themes provided a guide to the data collection and presented slight variations on the tentative interview schedule. I continued to cover all the areas in the schedule, and probed in-depth in areas in response to where the participants focussed. According to Miles and Huberman (1984).

Analysis during data collection lets the field worker cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new—often better quality—data. (p. 49)

Although I had developed a tentative interview guide to aid in the gathering of comparable data across sites I was aware of the need to attend to Bogdan and Biklen’s words:

...in keeping with the qualitative tradition of attempting to capture the subjects’ own words and letting the analysis emerge, interview schedules and observation guides generally allow for open-ended responses and are flexible enough for the observer to note and collect data on unexpected dimensions of the topic. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 77)

The approach involved an emergent inductive design with the intent of developing insights and understandings from patterns in the data. It was expected that coding and
analysis would be ongoing, and that any concepts that emerged would guide the next step in terms of the questions that I asked. Theoretical memos were taken after each interview. This involved going over each tape meticulously and making a comprehensive list of categories or concepts from the transcripts of interviews.

From the beginning, I reflected on my experiences with the participants and wrote about issues that raised questions, as well as issues that the participants were concerned about. In order to do this I let myself simply respond to the experiences with the participants. This was an ongoing dynamic that began in the interviews and continued throughout the analysis. According to Silvers (1982), this was being "experientially receptive" and required "patiently waiting within the activities of inquiry for the very experiences that count, and for the revelations they will permit" (Silvers, 1982, p. 241).

Silvers explained that Edmund Husserl (1931), an original writer in phenomenology, referred to the phenomenon as "that which shows itself." Silvers explained further that there is a moral significance in the care with which the phenomenon is conceptualized so that the focus or intention is not violated. He stated:

Rather than seeking to find what a phenomenon announces or refers to within causality, rather than attempting to establish meaning within an error, fallacy, or myth of an other’s judgment and view of the world...the interpretive understanding of another’s experience requires that we look to the truth and wisdom expressed in that other’s view as a practical feature to which knowing may be applied...we look to the unstated foundation from which people experience and embrace the immediate world of an occasion, an unstated foundation which we locate through constructing a generous conceptualization which retains the good sense and the reasonableness of their expressed meanings. (Silvers, 1982, p. 242)

As anticipated, the participants’ experience of reality and mine was different, and it was from confronting these differences that fresh insights developed: seeing the other person’s experience in terms of my own, to scrutinize my own understandings as rigorously as I would scrutinize theirs. It was through this dynamic process that my conceptualization of what this research was about started to change.

According to Silvers (1982), the most central feature of the phenomenological
imagination is the tension between the new image of the ordinary and the typical meaning of the ordinary. My desire in this research was to perhaps achieve a new way of understanding teams.

Darroch and Silvers' (1982) *Interpretive Human Studies: An Introduction to Phenomenological Research* represents a composite approach to this methodology:

Interpretive human studies is not a system to be laid down, a series of techniques to be specified, or even a collection of closed definitions. It is, in a simplistic sense, a way of bringing individual researchers more fully into the service of their research in a tension such that what is of the individual is disciplined by the analytical and synthetic necessities of what can be shown as knowledge. (1982, p. vii)

Continuing on, they described interpretive inquiry as a “composite” of ideas from existentialism, hermeneutics (interpretive thought), and phenomenology.

Existentialism is central, because the knowledge sought is dependent on the place of the researcher within inquiry and, thus, moves the inquiry towards ontology (the nature of being). Hermeneutics is central because the inquiry seeks not only to interpret and recover the ground meaning but to produce further meaning in the very act of doing research. Phenomenology is central because the practice of the inquiry is grounded in reflective thought. (Darroch and Silvers, 1982, p. viii)

During the first phase of the data analysis, each interview was transcribed. In order to establish credibility, member-checking occurred throughout the research process. I forwarded the transcripts to the participants for review and clarification if necessary. According to Guba and Lincoln (1987), the member-check is a process “whereby data and interpretations are continually checked with members of various groups (stakeholders)... on a continuous basis throughout the study and again at the end when the full report is assembled” (1987, p. 328). In this sense member-checking was employed to ensure that I had “represented their realities appropriately” (Guba and Lincoln, 1987, p. 326).

As well, giving back the transcript to the participant initiated the process of encouraging entry into a dialogue in an attempt to carry out co-investigation. Thus, member-checking helped to ensure that there was an ongoing dynamic between the researcher and the participant.
This dynamic between the researcher and the participant continually influenced and affected my understanding of the experiences of teams (mine and the participants') and hence, the development/evolution of the research question. Preliminary thoughts that I had identified about the research may have remained in the realm of my perspective and not have been validated by the participants. Strategies for guarding against forcing the emergence of these themes were a critical aspect of the research process. Following Guba and Lincoln's "peer debriefing process" (1987, p. 327) and writing reflective field notes helped to address some of these concerns. I anticipated and experienced this as an ongoing challenge to clearly distinguish between my researcher and team facilitator roles.

3.6. Focus of the Analysis

This study focused on the issue of gender in the context of teams in organizations. There was no intention to address race, class, or age issues. Although the findings did not explicitly surface any of these issues based on what the participants reported, the profiles of the participants painted a picture of a rather homogeneous sample. This occurred through the sampling process. Future studies that address race, class, or age issues would be interesting, as the homogeneity of the sample is a limiting criteria in terms of what was uncovered from the data.

3.7. Memo-Taking

I kept three categories of memos representing different kinds of ideas. There were: (1) substantive memos, words, phrases, and quotes from the participants that seemed to contain significant ideas; (2) methodology memos, to keep a running account of operations completed or planned, reminders, and instructions to myself; and (3) theoretical memos, which represented conceptual ideas and abstractions based on the data. The latter were conjectures, and interpretations that contributed to the development of an underlying framework and to the eventual derivation of meanings. These memos became an important source of data and were especially useful at the time of writing.
In addition to memos, a journal of the process over the entire 1994—1996, two-and-a-half-year period was kept. This was a vehicle for writing about feelings, reactions, and to provide a sequential account of the journey itself.

3.8. Beginning the Analysis

I began my analysis by reading the transcripts and listening to the taped interviews. I allowed myself to be drawn to words and phrases that were of interest to me. Coding of the transcripts led to the emergence in the analysis of themes in which I clustered the data. These initial themes were: culture, leadership, roles in teams and gender differences, and language and communication. My sense was that these themes were interwoven in relation to one another and that the impact of any one created a dynamic influence in relation to the others. These broad themes were the very obvious ones on the surface of the findings. I then went through the data again with the perspective of gender and considered several issues such as: what were the things that the respondents reported as women's issues; what other issues were reported, and on which issues did the respondents hold strong positions.

Next in the analysis I sorted the data about what teams were supposed to be and examined the respondents' reports of their experience. I then identified specific examples in the literature, to see whether the data supported them or not. The characteristics of the espoused organizational team qualities as perceived by the participants served as an entry point to structure searches through the rest of the data. I analysed the team experiences and separated out what was reported without any reference to gender, to reduce the data as much as possible. Another approach involved looking at all the data through the lens of gender. Still another approach was to put team and gender in the background to see what surfaced.

In summary, this chapter described the purpose of the study and the research approach as a qualitative study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify four areas to consider appropriate to naturalistic inquiry. The integrity and believability of an inquiry is developed by how the inquiry is carried out and ensures that the findings are credible. The procedure
of "member checking" the findings with the research participants is a technique utilized in this study to establish the criterion of credibility. Purposeful sampling, relates to the criterion of transferability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the context is the critical aspect in naturalistic inquiry. Generally, including as much information as possible accommodates maximum variation of sampling. This sampling approach contributes to the uniqueness of the context. Purposeful sampling like theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) generates information upon which emergent design and grounded theory can be based. In this research, the sample was a loosely defined homogeneous sample, that included a focus on team experiences with some variations in the range of depth of experiences in teams.

Dependability and confirmability are other criteria which take into account stability and factors in the design for the research. An inquiry audit is a technique that examines the process and attests dependability, and examines the product—data, findings, interpretations, recommendations, and attests that it is supported by data. In this thesis these activities constituted an inquiry audit: (1) collecting of raw data, including transcripts of tape recorded interviews with the respondents; written field notes and organizational documents (2) data reduction and analysis products, including write-ups of field notes, theoretical notes of concepts (3) data reconstruction and synthesis products, including the structure of categories and themes of the findings; analysis and interpretation of findings with connections to literature (4) process notes, the design of literature review and rationale for research (5) materials relating to intentions and dispositions, dissertation proposal; my personal reflection notes (6) instrument development information, appendix D interview guide.

The application of some of the techniques and procedures of the four criteria of naturalistic inquiry, throughout this study, have helped produce findings and interpretations that are more credible.
CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

4.1. Introduction

The reports of the participant’s experiences have been organized into four general themes: sense of support, exercising power, people’s relationship to work and organizational culture and practices. The key aspects within each category that emerged from the interviews with the respondents will be highlighted and described.

This chapter is presented in three sections. In the first section the profiles of the participants are presented and the context in which teams existed in organizations is described. The second section provides specific illustrations of the team experiences for the themes sense of support, exercising power, and people’s relationship to work. The third section focusses on the theme organizational culture and includes descriptions of some of the participants’ stories.

4.2. Section I: Participant Profiles and Context

All of the women interviewed, with one exception, are described in this section. I collected the demographic data after the interviews, and one participant had left the organization and was unavailable by the time the data were collected.

The research participants have been given pseudonyms. The profiles present demographic information, work experience, and information on the organizational setting. Specific information collected included the respondents’ age, marital status, dependents, and education at the time of the interviews. Organizational data included the type of organization (service, manufacturing, financial), the number of employees, the number of years teams had been implemented in that organization, the participants’ position level in their organization, their length of service in years, and their perceived percentage of time spent in teams.
Demographic Information

The participants for this study were 11 Caucasian females (demographic data was unavailable for one participant) ranging in age from 38 to 46 years of age at the time of the interviews. Seven were 43 years or younger and three were between 45 years and 46 years. Two women were single, two were divorced, and six were married. Six of the participants had care-giving responsibilities for children. Postsecondary degrees were held by all but one participant. Four women had masters degrees, two had MBAs, one had a Chartered Accountant designation and one had a Law degree.

Organizational Setting

The participants came from financial institutions, manufacturing, and service organizations. The companies were large—25,000 to 60,000 employees—with the exception of two companies. One financial organization and one service organization had between 300 and 1000 employees. All participants were in management positions.

Five participants were in senior management positions. Four of these women were married and had two children each, while one woman was single and had no children. Of the six women in middle management positions, two were married (one had one child and one had no children), two women were divorced (one had one child and one had no children), and one woman was single and had no children. The participants were long-term employees—10 - 23 years of service—with the exception of one participant (less than 5 years).

All these organizations espoused the implementation of teams as an important way of doing business. Seven of the organizations had been implementing teams for at least five years. The other four organizations had been implementing teams from one-and-one-half to four years.

The participants assessed what percentage of their time was spent in teams and team-related activities as defined by their job responsibilities. Six candidates indicated 80 to 100%, three indicated 50%, and two indicated 25 to 30% of their time was spent in teams and team-related activities.
Table 1 and Table 2 summarize the participant profiles.

Table 1. Participant Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age, Marital Status</th>
<th>Dependents, Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>45, married</td>
<td>2 children, MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry</td>
<td>43, married</td>
<td>2 children and elder care, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>40, married</td>
<td>2 children and elder care, MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>40, married</td>
<td>2 children and elder care, B.A. &amp; C.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen</td>
<td>46, married</td>
<td>no children, elder care, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>data unknown</td>
<td>data unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleanor</td>
<td>45, divorced</td>
<td>2 children and elder care, Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>39, married</td>
<td>child, B.A. in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>41, divorced</td>
<td>no children and elder care, B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>38, single</td>
<td>no children, LLB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>42, single</td>
<td>no children, B.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Participant and Organizational Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization: Type, Size, Years Teams Implemented</th>
<th>Management Level, Years of Service, Percent of Time in Teams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>service, 50,000, 5 years</td>
<td>senior, 23 years, 80 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry</td>
<td>service, 45,000, 10+ years</td>
<td>senior, 20 years, 25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>service, 50,000, 1.5 years</td>
<td>senior, 17 years, 50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>service, 35,000, 5 years</td>
<td>senior, 10 years, 90 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen</td>
<td>service, 60,000, 4-5 years</td>
<td>middle, 10 years, 80 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>service, 320, 4 years</td>
<td>middle, 3.5 years, 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleanor</td>
<td>financial, 55,000, 5 years</td>
<td>middle, 15 years, 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>financial, 50,000, 5-6 years</td>
<td>middle, 21 years, 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>financial, 4800, long time</td>
<td>middle, 19 years, 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>financial, 1000, unknown</td>
<td>middle, 22 years, 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>manufacturing, 2800, 5 years</td>
<td>senior, 16 years, 30 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3. The Context: Teams in the Organizational Culture

An organizational culture is a powerful influence affecting language, decision making, dress codes and social functions, and reward and recognition structures of organizations. The organizational cultures and structures shaped and influenced the perceptions of the meaning of teams held by the participants.

I initially encountered the organizational cultures when I was screening the participants during the telephone interviews. One criterion used in determining potential candidates addressed the presence of company mission, vision, and value statements that espoused the value of teams in accomplishing the organization’s business. This criterion for selection helped focus the context from which participants were selected. Examples of mission statements were:

We share one vision, we are one team. (Gwen)

To be Canada’s best provider of financial services, at home and abroad, an enterprise with satisfied customers, valued products and service, created and delivered by committed people working together as a team, to achieve sustainable quality earnings. (Sharon)

Team spirit means wholeheartedly committing myself and my abilities to achieving the goals my team has set for itself. It means working in harmony with others to achieve our common goal. (Terry)

The participants conveyed an enthusiasm towards talking about their team experiences. In all but two cases the initial meeting time established was kept. The personal interview was held at the participant’s workplace. The workplace marked the first visible signs of organizational culture. Field notes made at the time of the interviews were a record of impressions of the organizational architectures. Most were overpowering and impressive; many were located near the top floors of skyscrapers with landscaped vistas. There was tight security access requiring telephone entry or personal escort at the door, and spacious reception areas were covered in carpet or marble. The symbolism of such architecture represented monuments to the power and wealth contained inside.

The interviews started with descriptions of the culture and structure of their
organizations, the way people relate to each other and do their work. The participants described their team experiences surrounding several elements such as: commitment to a team-based culture; team operations and logistics; mixed gender composition of teams; communication experiences; work and family balance; equal treatment in teams; rewards and recognition; performance management; and social functions in teams.

4.3.1 Organizational Structure

The organizational structures in all but one organization were hierarchical with multiple layers. The senior management positions were overwhelmingly dominated by men at the upper management levels.

Most of the organizations had recently restructured or were doing so currently. This had reduced the number of managers. Vice presidents had a greater span of control, and decision making was moved to the locus of work. The introduction of teams in most of the organizations had occurred in the past four or five years, except for one organization where teams had been in operation for about ten years, and another, where teams had only been implemented for a year and a half. The types of teams implemented were typical of descriptions in the literature, such as project teams, reengineering, and work redesign teams.

4.3.2 The Espoused Approach Towards The Implementation of Teams

The following examples illustrate the respondents' perceptions of organizational approaches to the implementation of teams.

Mary described the implementation of teams in her organization as an attempt "to bring teamwork into an organization that's still very much structured in a vertical fashion. We're trying to put horizontal teams together in a vertical structure."

Another example illustrates the implementation as described by Gwen in her organization’s vision. “We share one vision, we are one team, we have only one standard: excellence...” This vision starts to become operationalized through the development of a corporate profile and an advertising byline called “a world of networks.” She says that “the whole idea of networking and networks is yet another interpretation, I think, of teamwork.”
There are networks within, between, and all around businesses and the community with the overall idea of people working together. The overriding structure is still the existence of product silos. Silos are imaginary structures built around departments that can prevent interdepartmental issues from being resolved between peers at the front line and middle management levels. According to Rummler and Brache “the silo culture forces managers to resolve lower-level issues, taking their time away from higher-priority customer and competitors’ concerns” (Rummler & Brache, 1990, p.6). However, the idea is that everyone has to work together to show a solution to the customer. Gwen felt that “in a real broad sense” teamwork was being embraced in the day-to-day job demands that “we work in teams because we’re working across so many different borders and job functions.”

Terry felt that there had always been a pro-team culture as a result of the company’s history and tradition of service. For Terry the concept of team has its roots in the service dimension of the company. The team concept “got a big boost through the quality movement that happened ten years ago where there was a lot more understanding of the value of a team and the combination or pooling of ideas could come out with a stronger end product than if individuals worked on their own on something.”

One of the fundamentals of a team according to Mary is:

a good team...is that the individual member of a team has an equal ability to contribute, which isn’t the premise of a hierarchy. The premise of a hierarchy is the lower you go, the less you have to say. So I think we have fundamentally changed that even within the structure of a hierarchy. It’s the proportion of decision that you allow to be made by the team that is increasing every year.

These quotations described the implementation of teams in organizations that maintained a hierarchical structure, with the exception of one organization that did not have a hierarchial structure. The implementation of teams was characterized by: explicit vision, value, and mission statements; people who worked together and represented different borders and job functions; and recognition of the value of pooling of ideas from many people.
4.3.3. Respondents' Perceptions of the Organizational Team

This section provides an entry into an understanding of the participants' perception of teams. The descriptions form the qualities and characteristics of teams that reflect the respondents' perceptions of the vision of team as espoused in their organization: consensus decision making, people working together, a sense of equality, democracy, sharing contribution, a place where voices are heard by all, trust, respect, dedication, and collaboration.

Heather’s description of a team was “a group of people getting together with a mandate to work on a particular task.” This could include a project or a process “with a sense of developing a shared mandate and a shared agenda and a shared time line and vision, and a shared accountability... A sense of equality... or democracy—not 100% but a sense overall of shared contribution, shared input, shared views being recognized.”

Eleanor talked about a team as “A group of people working, committed to the same objective.” The qualities of the team include “trust, respect and dedication towards the objective, with reliance on each other and both an awareness and a practice of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

Sharon expressed the notion of a team as working together “to come to either a solution or commitment or consensus.”

The feeling of team was emphasized by Donna as the ability to “rely on” others and captured a sense of individuals “who would be there for me.”

Perceptions of teams ranged from concise descriptions like the one given by Kathy, “A close group of individuals working together toward a common goal,” to a more elaborate explanation of team in an organization that no longer used the terminology “task force” or “committee.”

Terry conveyed that “You see much more the sense of team around here, in anything we do... Much more a move to almost everything we’ve done... is called the team.” What was this sense of team and how is it different from committee or task force? Terry described it as a different way of thinking.
There's much more thinking of working together, whereas a task force was more a collection of people who were given a job to do. The sense of the team is much more a collaborative effort to accomplish goals than the older terminology was, and I think both committee and task force, probably more committee than task force, has the sense in our culture now that they're non-action descriptive, whereas a team somehow has a sense in our company now that they're together to accomplish something.

4.3.4. The Language of Teams: Teams, Committees, Task Forces

As another entry point into understanding the concept of team I took into consideration the words used to define groups of people. I explored how participants differentiated the meaning of the words team, committee and task force. Several participants did not make any differentiation in terms and used them interchangeably while others saw a clear distinction.

Eleanor experienced a team as very different from a committee. She saw a committee as "very transient, temporal, ad hoc" and a team as something that's "sustained."

Heather thought a committee was used in a "far more structured, traditional type of organization," an organization that could be described as more top-down, with a stronger sense of hierarchy and roles and less democracy in the process.

Donna felt that a task force or a committee is "for a definitive purpose."

Gwen felt that a task force has one specific task usually, whereas committees are fairly similar to teams.

The quotation reported previously by Terry, that "committee" or "task force" was terminology no longer used in her organization, raised an issue of whether or not the notion of teams in organizations is just another fad—the same as committees or task force, but repackaged and renamed. The implementation of teams in organizations is viewed by some experts (Wellins, Byham & Dixon, 1994) in the literature as a path towards fundamental change and a necessary approach to organizational work given the complexity of the environment. Other literature suggests that all the team prescriptions is just rhetoric.
4.3.5. Summary of Section I

Section I presented the profiles of the participants and the organizational context of the study. The context addressed culture, structure, and the nature of teams as perceived and understood by the participants. Generally, the respondents came from organizations that had implemented teams within the past four or five years (with the exception of one organization) in traditional hierarchical structures.

The respondents' perceptions of the vision of team as espoused by their organization reflected the characteristics and qualities of: consensus decision making, people working together, a sense of equality, democracy, sharing contribution, a place where voices are heard by all, trust, respect, dedication, and collaboration. Respondents had a range of responses regarding the language they used to conceptualize teams. Some made a clear distinction between team, committee, and task force, while others used the terms interchangeably.
4.4. Section II: Team Experiences

The descriptions of the team experiences of the respondents are organized into the following major themes: *sense of support*, *exercising power*, and *people’s relationship to work*. Another category, *sense of being heard*, is embedded in each theme. *Sense of being heard* addresses the following aspects of communication: listening, interruptions, differences in being heard due to gender and skill levels, and directness of communication. Rather than separate these qualities of communication from the other themes, I have included those aspects of communication that are related to the findings of each theme. There are overlaps in some circumstances. Most respondents felt that their experience of teams differed based on gender composition. The composition of the teams ranged from being the only female on a team, to a somewhat balanced gender mix, to female-only teams. The macro team experience of all participants was so varied that it presented no clear, overall single experience in relation to the various possible gender mixtures. The core themes identified above did emerge across the participant experiences. The pages that follow present an account of the core themes, all of which are supported with quotations from the transcripts. The team experiences are depicted in Figure 3. A description of the team experiences as perceived by the participants, on the following page.
Figure 3. Findings: A description of the team experiences as perceived by the respondents.

**ORGANIZATIONS' PROMISE OF TEAMS:**
Perceived Team Characteristics; Perceived Organizational Culture and Expected Organizational Changes

**TEAMS IN PRACTICE:**
Sense of Support; Exercising Power; People's Relationship to Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ORGANIZATIONS’ PROMISE OF TEAMS:</strong></th>
<th><strong>TEAMS IN PRACTICE:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Team Characteristics</td>
<td>Sense of Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• consensus decision making</td>
<td>• bonding (female only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• people working together</td>
<td>• team formation takes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• democracy</td>
<td>• opportunity to explore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sharing contributions</td>
<td>• acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• directness of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• communication (the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• more direct the less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• relationships &amp; bonding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• intimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• alignment (mostly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• female teams)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Organizational Culture</th>
<th>Exercising Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• a place where voice is heard by</td>
<td>• Domination related to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• all</td>
<td>• gender and position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• trust, respect, dedication,</td>
<td>• in organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• collaboration</td>
<td>• influences Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Stereotyping, Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• of Treatment,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ROLE STEREOTYPING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hierarchy a determinant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of role assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role stereotyping of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>secretarial functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>related to more women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at bottom of hierarchy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EQUALITY OF TREATMENT**
Men discredit women's value or participation. Men have more perceived potential based on their position. Men and women adopt a male model of operating. Power maintained by withholding information.

**COMMUNICATION**
Difference in being heard due to skills - women have to earn that; position level (not gender) key factor; the higher you go in organization women behave like men (nature of business).
Difference in being heard due to gender - women are heard with peers and in situations where they have credibility. Interruptions - women interrupted by men; women learn to interrupt "elbows out".

**THE GAP**

**NETWORKING, CELEBRATIONS, SOCIAL FUNCTIONS**
Teams create opportunities for members to socialize, celebrate accomplishments, develop team spirit and supportive relationships.

**COMPENSATION, REWARDS, RECOGNITION**
Organizations espoused team value; expectation that work done in teams would be compensated.

**ORGANIZATIONS BELIEVED IN**
Promoting women into senior roles. A lack of women in management contributed to their exclusion from decision making. Teams would contribute to inclusion in decision making.

**ORGANIZATIONS WERE HIERARCHICAL**
Power was at the top promoting women into senior roles. A lack of women in management contributed to their exclusion from decision making. Teams would contribute to inclusion in decision making.

**TEAMS IMPLEMENTED IN POSITIONS. A LACK OF WOMEN IN ORGANIZATIONS ENSURES TEAM MEMBERS TO SOCIALIZE, CELEBRATE**
Due to expectation that work members to socialize, celebrate, and network. A lack of women in organizations ensures that women move towards less hierarchy; their exclusion from decision making.

**Females in Teams**
- Bonding (female only team/no report in mixed or male team)
- Team formation takes time
- Opportunity to explore ideas & risk taking (female only team)
- Acceptance
- Belonging
- Respect
- Identity
- Directness of communication (the more direct the less emphasis on relationships & bonding)
- Intimacy
- Alignment (mostly female teams)
4.4.1. Team Experiences—Theme: Sense of Support

The sense of being supported theme was described by the following characteristics: bonding (small talk, vulnerability, kinder/gentler/friendlier), respect, alignment, intimacy, team formation (length of time to come together), exploration of ideas, no reservations or holding back, risk taking, acceptance, belonging, identity, and directness of communication. Generally the sense of being supported was a positive experience for most of the respondents.

Some of the respondents indicated that the implementation of teams emphasized the process of being on a team and provided all the tools one might use to get input on the table, develop consensus, and build alignment. There was a sense that more women believed in the value of the team approach than men. Women were perceived as more sensitive to human needs, taking time to socialize, to understand one another, and respect differences. These aspects were considered important by the respondents and contributed to an outcome that was worth it. Some of the women used support as a positive strategy to overcome barriers they experienced in the teams. The support involved building relationships and provided an opportunity to dialogue about what the women had experienced.

Specific characteristics of the theme sense of support are further defined in the following paragraphs.

**Bonding**

Three women in female-only teams talked about bonding as a positive experience, with the qualities of intimacy, vulnerability, and personal information sharing. Heather reported “that perhaps women are kinder and gentler and friendlier to each other than sometimes all males or a predominantly male type of team...more polite, anyway.” There were no reports of bonding from women in mixed or male-dominated teams.

**Belonging**

Two reports of belonging were illustrated by phrases such as “we talk about ourselves as a family, with each district or region fits into the total team.” Women were perceived as getting team members together for some social activity that would bond the team and be all-
inclusive as opposed to including part of the group. Terry’s comment emphasised her experience—"I’m part of this team and the team needs me.”

Risk Taking
Two women described their experience of risk taking as positive in that there was more conversation and dialogue. Donna reported “the team environment is more creative and more innovative...you can build on other people’s thoughts and opinions.” There was a safe feeling about the ability to express any frustrations with the team. These experiences occurred in female-only and mixed teams. These same women also had the experience of observing some women overshadowed by men and unwilling to take as many risks when in mixed-gender teams. The exploration of ideas was curtailed. According to Donna, “Men always wanted to give you the answer.”

Respect
Respect was described by three women. There were reports by two respondents of women being “put down” by men, “dismissed” in gender-mixed teams. Another reported that she experienced respect when working with peers and that gender was not a factor.

Alignment
There were three reports of alignment that described experiences with teams composed of all or mostly women. The respondents reported that, on teams made up mostly of women, there was more of a common understanding—a comfort level—that women were more consensus-oriented and had a desire to have everyone on the same wavelength. One respondent reported a mixed-team experience where there was a loss of potential synergy.

Sense of Being Heard: Directness of Communication
Sense of being heard refers to the perceived style differences between how men in teams communicate with team members and how women communicate. The directness of communication refers to the language used by men and women in teams. The women reported,
in their efforts to be heard, that they modified their style of communicating with men to be more direct. This style mirrored their perception of male style. The respondents described the female style when communicating with other women as different, and intertwined with the characteristics of relationship building and bonding.

Six respondents reported on their experiences with directness of communication. The respondents perceived that the more direct the communication, the less emphasis on building relationships and bonding. Most of these reports described how they had to modify their communication style so that men could understand their messages.

Kathy perceived that her communication skills with men lacked a directness. She perceived that she needed to change her communication style, because she was “not giving the message that a man could best understand.” Kathy wanted “to be much more direct, bottom line, outcome-oriented,” which she perceived as the male style. She didn’t think of that when she was in a group of only women. Kathy perceived men as very action-oriented, less in dialogue for relationship building and for bonding, which she perceived as a more traditional female role.

Mary reported that she had to learn how to “be very, very concise” and present whatever she had to say as an idea: “what about this idea?” She felt that with that approach she seemed to get heard. She has “learned a technique for getting people to actually stop and listen” to her. The approach involved less dialogue for relationship-building and bonding, and being more concise in the presentation of ideas. The respondents reported how they experienced the men in teams and used the phrase “male style” to describe men as more direct, bottom line, and output-oriented. This male style was experienced by Kathy in the following statements made by men: “What’s the bottom line that we’re trying to get to?,” “What do we have to come out of here with? What do I have to do when I leave here?” The opposite experience to the “male style” was also reported by Gwen. Some of the men were quick to get to the point, but there were other men who weighed the pros and cons and spent time dwelling on certain issues, rather than making a decision. This male experience was similar to that of a couple of women who indicated that women took longer initially to come to a conclusion. It was not clear to Gwen if these differences were gender related. What was once considered
a typical female characteristic seems to have changed.

Summary

The theme *sense of support* is a composite of the characteristics of bonding, belonging, risk taking, respect, alignment, communication, and consensus building. Most respondents experienced *sense of support* as a positive experience. Differences were experienced depending on the gender composition of the teams, but there was no overall homogeneous experience.

4.4.2. Team Experiences—Theme: *Exercising Power*

*Exercising power* is another major theme. It is characterized by the following: domination related to gender, position in the organization, roles, access to information, differences in being heard due to gender, differences in being heard due to skills, and interruptions. *Exercising power* was described by most of the respondents as an experience of power over or domination. Exceptions to this are noted in specific characteristics of this theme.

Difference in Being Heard Due to Gender

Four respondents reported their experiences of not being heard by men in team meetings. They recounted their experiences of putting their ideas forward in meetings without being acknowledged. Then, several minutes later, a male team member—through a slightly different response—provided the same idea that was suddenly perceived as a great idea. Gwen reported the dynamics of “body language that is geared to...men talking to men, and then you feel a little bit left out and you think, okay, now how can I work on that without literally jumping up and down, going ‘see me, hear me’!” These experiences occurred in teams where some of the women were in junior positions to the men in the room.

The opposite experience—of being heard—was reported by some of the women, some who also reported not being heard. This occurred when they were in a peer situation in their team, and they perceived that they had more credibility and they didn’t feel rushed in conveying their ideas.

There were also experiences of no difference, as illustrated by Terry. She reported that
she was not aware of being treated differently in how she was listened to or heard in team meetings.

**Difference in Being Heard Due to Skills**

The experience of being listened to and being heard in meetings was not seen by Terry as gender-specific; rather the establishment of credibility was the issue. She commented on the aspect that women “have to earn that...and before you earn that and before you have enough experience to be able to have people listen, men are more readily willing to listen to men.” She felt that “once you have developed that then you are on equal ground, but you have to earn that, whereas with men it’s more of a given.” Terry also reported a barrier in her company of “an old boys’ network” that was well-connected. She expressed “there’s more for women to do to reach that equal playing field.” Circumstances under which women would not have to prove themselves would require “a lot more women on the playing field...”

**Interruptions**

There were four respondents who reported circumstances where they were interrupted by men. They described that they felt cut off by men even though they had not finished making their point, and they felt men were aggressive in how they interrupted. Alternatively, Mary described how she had learned to interrupt in meetings, otherwise “no one gave her any room in line.” She learned a technique for getting people to stop and listen to her. “Elbows out” was the terminology she used to describe an assertive approach towards working with men in the organization. This approach involved “interrupting in meetings, disagreeing with senior people, and generally being more exuberant.” Mary noted that “over the past five years the women in the organization who had their elbows out had gone further than the women who had remained very elegant and less assertive.”

**Domination Related to Gender and Position in the Organization**

Four respondents described a sense of power around male-occupied positions in their organizations as differing from that associated with positions filled by women. This perception
influenced other factors such as role stereotyping, equality of treatment, and communication.

An example of role stereotyping described by Heather was the amount of leg work—or “grunt” work—done by women. She felt this was related “to the position that people are in, or the authority...Or it may be related to the fact that the women in the end have difficulty saying no or are more willing to do the work too.” Women volunteering and feeling subservient was reported by Kathy. She felt that role stereotyping of secretarial functions was related to the fact that there are more women at the bottom of the hierarchy and that hierarchy was a determinant of role assignment.

There were four reports of position power as an element in considering equality of treatment. This was experienced by the respondents in several ways—such as feeling that men discredited their value or participation, that men have more perceived potential than women based on their position, and that men and women adopted what Sharon called a “male model” of operating. Another source of power within this “male model” was information. Power was maintained by withholding information, through secrecy and silence.

One respondent, Kathy, reported that equal treatment:

...depends on the team and on the individuals. I think it’s more a factor of the particular personalities of the people on the team more so than whether or not they are male or female.

Ann reported that, more than gender, the position level of an individual in the organization was a key factor influencing communication and language. In her experience “the higher the level of the women in this organization, the more direct, blunt, to the point I hear this person being.” The very senior women “have learned to be succinct in what they say — and direct and want to get to the point.” Ann also acknowledged that “a number of men who have got successful careers have gone on and on expressing and analyzing...I don’t know if I see a typical pattern of a male reaction or female reaction.” She felt that perhaps “you need to be like that actually to be successful in business generally.”

The characteristic difference in not being heard due to gender occurred in teams where some of the women were in junior positions relative to the men in the room.
Summary

*Exercising power* was influenced by the factors of gender, position in the organization, roles, and differences in being heard due to skills and interruptions. These factors were also intertwined with one another. For example, the experience of not being heard in team meetings composed of mostly men was also complicated by the fact that the women in the meeting were in junior positions to the men. Generally, the respondents experienced being dominated by men, although there were exceptions.

4.4.3. Team Experiences—Theme: *People's Relationship to Work*

*People's relationship to work* is characterized by productivity—action and inaction, decision-making, delegation, follow through, establishing relationships, and building relationships. Most respondents reported that the women shared a more similar experience of these characteristics in their team than they did with the men. The experiences of these characteristics are described below and gender differences are noted.

**Productivity: Action, Inaction**

Four respondents experienced males as more action-and output-oriented, rather than process-oriented. Donna experienced the male approach as described in the following comments:

...not as inviting for exploration as it was focussed on an end result...Let's do what we need to do for this task and move on to the next task...We're together for this purpose, for this period of time in order to accomplish this.

Kathy experienced similar comments made by men: “What's the bottom line that we're trying to get to?” and “What do we have to come out of here with?” Pat’s experience was with men “interfering and controlling the situation as opposed to letting it evolve, cutting people off.”

Another factor of action was the time it took to get to where the members wanted to go. Two respondents described the decision-making process as having a tendency to be slow, which contributed to getting bogged down. The individual accountability was reduced in the team environment. The approach to problem-solving was different for men and women. Men
were perceived as solving problems too soon, whereas women tended to approach problem solving with more analysis and more mediation to draw conclusions. These approaches took more time. In order to reach decisions in a more timely manner, Gwen reported that she changed her approach “to be more directive.”

An alternate experience of Terry’s occurred in a mixed group of peers in which the group worked well in terms of understanding what a common goal was and how to get there.

**Decision Making**

There were five reports of respondents who described their approach to decision-making as consensus-seeking, inclusive, people-oriented, and collaborative. An example of this approach was illustrated by Donna’s comments:

...we share equally in terms of how well the team operates...we need to work collectively to operate effectively as a team...we share responsibility not only for the task but also for the relationship.

Alternatively, two respondents described the approach that men took towards decision making as command and control, with a sense that they had the right answer.

**Delegation**

Delegation was described in relation to several factors: taking charge, hands on, not sharing responsibility, position in the hierarchy, decision making approach, follow through, leading, and controlling. Overall, the experience of delegation was perceived as different for women and men.

Five respondents reported taking a hands-on approach, and being very involved. Kathy described herself as “giving too much direction or assuming too much control.” Pat indicated that it was easier to run the committee all by herself and not share the responsibility. She ended up “with a fair bit of the burden of responsibility of teams and getting things done.” Alice had a similar experience to Pat: “when I was responsible for a certain element of the work, I had to see it through all the way...I just couldn’t come up with the theory and not care about proving it.”
Two respondents described men as more effective at delegating. Alice experienced,

...a tendency on the part of men on the team to go so far and then turn it over
to someone else, to expect them to do the rest of the work...men can lead...they
don’t have to sort of finish it all off.

This distinction in delegation and follow-through was attributed by some respondents to a
difference in how responsibilities were perceived by men, and men’s understanding of what
was involved in the complete job.

Establishing Relationships and Building Relationships

Several respondents reported that establishing and building relationships in teams were
exhibited more by women than men. This involved taking on the maintenance aspects of the
team, such as inclusion, participation, resolving conflict, and bonding. The importance of
building relationships was seen as a requirement in business today. Ann reported “if you have
a huge ego, maybe a lack of confidence, or you don’t feel you should lean on people, then you
have a problem these days.”

Another quality reported by Alice was the value of networking exhibited by men. She
described how “men sometimes get things done faster or differently by virtue of the fact that
they are out hobnobbing.”

Alice noted another difference in how men addressed conflict versus how women
addressed conflict. In her experience, men could leave conflict on the table and forget it,
whereas women wanted to get to consensus so that conflict wasn’t left unresolved, and thus,
would not interfere in the future.

Summary

The theme people’s relationship to work is a composite of the characteristics of
productivity, decision making, delegation, and establishing and building relationships.
Generally the respondents reported that in their mixed-gender experiences of teams they shared
similar experiences of these characteristics. They perceived men taking a different approach
than women.
4.4.4. Team Experiences—No Gender Differences in Experiences

There were several reports of experiences where there were no differences due to gender. Some of those experiences were reported in the themes. Other experiences have been organized together as a composite rather than integrated into the major themes.

In two reports, differences in how men and women operated were attributed to the personalities of the people rather than to gender. Terry stated, “I’m not aware of any [differences] due to gender mix of team; that’s what some people are like so they bring that to the team.” Sharon’s experience was “there is a pretty standard way of providing services to clients.”

No difference in communication was reported by two respondents. Gwen reported that “some of the men I deal with are quick, let’s get to the point, let’s move on, but there are a whole host of other men that talk and kind of weigh the pros and cons and are just so detailed that we seem to spend a long time dwelling on certain issues.” Gwen felt that there was a real mix of styles and what used to be typically female in the past seems to have changed. Ann also reported that with respect to communication, “I don’t know if I see a typical pattern of a male reaction or female reaction...you need to be like that actually to be successful in business.” Ann perceived that the nature of business was the primary condition that determined or influenced the characteristics.

4.4.5. Balance: Work and Family

The Logistics of Team Operations—Meeting Times / Career Commitment

This sub-section points to the issues experienced by working women and the challenges that they face due to to their choices. These challenges are not particular to women, but I have chosen to focus only on women’s perspectives for the purposes of this research. Organizational practices and the culture have a significant impact, either positively or negatively, in supporting women in their work setting.

In some instances, the women I interviewed experienced that the scheduling of team meetings created a barrier to their participation and their perceived commitment to the team. Sharon strongly expressed that this was an issue for women. Meetings consistently called at
Women's Team Experience  Chapter 4  104

7:00 a.m. conflicted with care-giving responsibilities, as “nannies don’t arrive typically till 8.” Women who have children to manage found it difficult working in teams with men who didn't share similar commitments. Sharon noted “the men will say, and they are, that fathers are taking more of a role in child-rearing and that a 7:00 a.m. meeting doesn’t work for a 35-year-old father of two any more than it does for a 35-year-old mother of two, rightly or wrongly.” There was a sense, however, that “it’s much more dramatic for women.”

These issues contributed to behaviours exhibited by women. Women were much more task oriented. “They have a defined period in which they want to get the thing done, because they have to go home. They don’t want to be working until midnight, eating jujubes and chocolate bars and turning on the radio to hear the sports report,” reported Sharon.

Donna raised another aspect of team dynamics relating to family issues. She noted that “as the only parent of a young child on this team, that sets up a different dynamic in terms of how the team operates, in terms of scheduling, in terms of hours spent, in terms of ‘perceived commitment’ to the team or to the end goal.” Donna felt that these perceptions were not related to gender, but rather to being a parent.

Terry described her experience of often being the only female in a male environment. One of the biggest differences for her was what she was able to contribute to the team given the other aspects of her life. “So maybe the only difference is the sense that the share of mind that particular team’s work might get in your head is probably a smaller slice than some of the men can contribute”. Terry’s perception was that men in similar positions to hers, “didn’t have as many things that they were trying to balance.” Probably the biggest difference was that what the men balanced in their lives versus what she balanced were completely different.

Occasionally Terry felt an acknowledgement of what she had to balance when she heard comments from men like “You’d have to think about that too, someone else in my life thinks about that.” There was some recognition that women were better organized than many of their male counterparts because they had a need to be. This recognition occurred more so with younger senior managers than with the older managers, many of whom were used to having somebody at home who dealt with all domestic issues.

Mary felt that, generally, women in our society had more complex problems to solve
than men: “The men run out, they kill the antelope, they haul it back, and sit around the campfire for a month, and then a month later, they run out, they kill the antelope, they come back. Women have to figure out, ‘Okay, if I want to have corn at the end of the year I’ve got to plant it now and then I’ve got to weed it every day’.” She felt that the time frame of human culture contributed to women being more organized about how they dealt with problems. She clarified that she was not suggesting that you can’t have an analytical man or an impulsive woman, but she thought society had “trained women to solve things in a more thought-provoking fashion.”

4.4.6. Summary of Section II

This section presented the team experiences as perceived by the respondents. Overall the experiences were varied. Three themes emerged from the findings: *sense of support, exercising power, and people’s relationship to work*. The findings attempted to illustrate the primary experience and the breadth of the experience of the participants. The influence of criteria such as gender, position in the organization, and gender mix of team composition were reported.
4.5. Section III: Culture

4.5.1. Introduction

Well, the organization supports teams in theory but not in practice. So again all of our corporate philosophies say we want teams for these reasons, but so many of the practices undermine that sense of team...executives still get promoted who were counter to the model and philosophy that we’re trying to achieve, so individuals who encourage competition within the work group, who are authoritarian, who are demanding and so on still end up in executive positions, so what kind of message does that send? (Eleanor)

This section addresses characteristics and qualities that further our understanding of the team culture in organizations. This involves a further exploration of how the team concept is lived out in the organizational setting from the perspectives of rewards and recognition, rituals, and power. Attention is focussed on the paradoxical nature of teams and the gap between the perceived, espoused team and reality of teams as they were experienced and implemented. Areas addressed include: rewards and recognition and the concept of being a team player; networking; social functions; women in management; teams and organizational change; and closing the gender gap.

4.5.2. Rewards and Recognition

There are lots of contradictory messages in our organization about teams. While we espouse team as a corporate value, people still get rewarded for individual contributions. (Eleanor)

A criterion for participant selection in the study related to the commitment made by organizations to the implementation of teams as a way of doing business. The data from the interviews suggested that the level of support for teams varied across organizations with respect to how far this was implemented and integrated into the fabric of the organization.

In most cases, with respect to compensation and rewards, the organizations from which the participants came still rewarded people for their individual effort, and often the highest rewards were for individual behaviour. An example given by Eleanor illustrates this point:

We have a cruise that is the epitome of achievement in the organization...you get to go on this cruise with the president and all of the executives—there’s
enormous resentment about that because one individual is sent for a particular accomplishment that may have involved ten other people behind them. So there’s still a fairly individualistic way of looking at the world and way of doing things that’s still very powerful.

Other respondents reported similar experiences of reward systems that favoured the individual as opposed to the team, which widened the gap between the ideal organization team and the real team experience. Comments such as those made by Eleanor—“While we espouse team as a corporate value, people still get rewarded for individual contributions,”—and by Donna “We have not truly moved to a culture where the ‘team’ is rewarded for the results directly, in terms of monetary compensation”—illustrate this. Often within the represented organizations there existed rewards for teams. However, it was perceived by several participants that in many cases the highest rewards were for individual behaviour.

Some of the organizations represented have designed team-based reward and compensation systems. Organizations that do have team-based rewards have implemented structural changes to their compensation system as opposed to making only cosmetic attempts, such as dinner gifts to team members.

According to Mary, it has taken her organization five years to develop a culture that valued teams. Support and rewards for teamwork were just starting to be implemented: “In the beginning of our new fiscal year, we will have team incentive-based pay everywhere in the organization, which is important, you know. What gets rewarded gets done.”

Eleanor described how pay incentive for work done in teams exists in her organization:

But again, what’s laid down and what actually happens are two different things. We’ve got something called ‘quality performance incentive,’ which is an end-of-the-year bonus, and one of the components that determines how much that is, is contributions to teams. But there is extraordinarily wide leeway for the manager’s interpretation of that. So in some areas people will be rewarded for working and contributing to a sense of team and working together, and others that will be the lone rangers who continue to be rewarded.

Kathy reported on the progress of her organization from the old compensation structure to a new structure.

We hire a new team member where 85% of the compensation is in a fixed pay
which is the individual component for their assignment. 15% of the total...is in a variable pay component called ‘goal and reward pay’...that is tied to goals set by...teams and the company as a whole...The teams work towards these goals’ attainment and at the end of each quarter, whatever goals were aligned in that quarter would be measured and paid out to team members if they were achieved and they are paid out on the basis of the team; either everyone on the team will get paid out for the team meeting those goals or no one will.

Even with these changes there is still the sense that many organizations are not very good at rewards. Mary indicated that “It’s the lowest score that we ever get on our employee opinion surveys. which is ‘I’m fairly compensated if I do extra work’.”

4.5.3. Being a Team Player

Another example of the paradox between what is said and what gets lived out is the organizational belief in the importance of “being a team player.”

“Being a team player” was expressed by several participants as a critical component in their organizations. More frequently this characteristic was being included in the performance review process. However, difficulty occurred in the integration of the characteristic of team player and the organizational work achieved through teams into the compensation system as noted previously. The necessity of “being a team player” in some instances appeared to be also linked to position in an organization, as noted by Sharon’s comments: “one of the factors that they take into account is whether or not you’re a team player, that is, are you perceived to be, whether or not you are, because perception is more important.” The surface indicators of being a team player seem to be that you answer calls promptly and you’re nice to people. The reality seemed to be the more senior you get it seems to me, the less important it is whether you’re a team player. Because if you bring in work and you bring in clients, then if you’re not a particularly nice person it really doesn’t matter because the clients like you; that’s what’s important. For junior people, it’s really important that people want to work with you and that you’re perceived to be somebody who contributes...

Gwen stated that it is probably the death knell on your performance review if they say “not a good team player.” In the personal assessment profiles of Terry’s organization “being
a team player is one of the skills that all of our management team is assessed on in terms of where are they on the scale of 1 to 5...it’s considered to be one of our fundamental management requirements.”

Summary

The respondents experienced a perceived gap in their organizations in what was deemed important in performance management and what was accepted, practised, and rewarded by their organizations. Most organizations had started to implement reward and compensation systems that rewarded teamwork, however the respondents perceived that those systems still favoured individuals. The performance management systems included the characteristic of being a team player as a critical component. However, there was a perception that in some instances position level in the organization was more important. There were no specific reports regarding how being a team player was measured.

4.5.4. Networking, Celebrations and Social Functions

This section described the perception of team social functions and their contribution towards the creation of a sense of team spirit and the development of supportive relationships. Organizations typically create forums for teams to socialize and celebrate accomplishments. These forums have the potential to be inclusive or exclusive of the team members. Throughout the interviews, several respondents reported a perception of exclusion, of being left out of social functions and celebrations.

These celebrations often involved some kind of sporting activity (such as watching baseball and hockey games, or playing golf). What became apparent is that for many of the women that I interviewed, the “golf” celebration was not accomplishing what it was intended to from their perspective. Rather, the activity was perceived as unfair to women not interested in sports, uncomfortable if you were not skilled at golf, and generally not fun. There was acknowledgement that there might be a similar experience for some men.

How did these kind of experiences impact the inside functioning, the relationships of teams? Sharon found that the golf experience “really is damaging for a team, because when
you’re in there doing the work, that’s one thing and that works okay, but it’s all the other stuff that goes into making a team that really functions in a healthy way.” Sharon expressed the importance of the team members really feeling “comfortable as part of the team in the broader context” and how that would enhance an individual’s contribution to the team.

Alice felt the amount of time spent together golfing by some team members to the exclusion of herself left her with the perception that “there’s still very much of an old boys’ network in place that does this kind of networking and you just don’t feel part of it, mostly by virtue of the fact that I don’t golf...It’s just one of those things that you’re kind of not part of, sort of a little network that obviously nurtures a lot of contacts and a lot of, you know, camaraderie, if you want to put it that way, between people.” Alice was a primary caregiver for her children and could not justify spending the time developing the skills to golf. She felt that she has “already sacrificed enough in terms of the travel and the late evenings in terms of the time with the family.”

Alice reported her experience with a sadness, a feeling of missing something. In her words “And if you think of being part of the team...I think that women are a little bit left out in that...It’s just that you’re not part of that network; you’re not part of that core little group of people.” There seems to be a lack of sensitivity on the part of organizations to these issues of inclusion.

Terry reported that she still perceived a barrier in her company, “still an old boys’ network that’s well-connected. They golf a lot, you know; they do those sorts of things.” She expressed that she felt “a little bit resentful that a lot of my peers around here golf every Saturday, which is fine for them because they don’t have responsibilities or their families are grown up because they’re older.”

Terry described how she had arranged with her female peers to go golfing, enjoyed it very much, and was aware that they all struggled with whether or not they had the time to golf. “Most of us are balancing careers and families. So I don’t have three hours to go golfing once a week, because if I had those three hours my kids would get them and not golfing.” Terry perceived that “men don’t seem to have the same kind of pressures women have on them relative to balancing responsibilities, so they seem to have more time to do that sort of thing.”
She acknowledged that the golf course “would be a good place to do business—we took customers with us too, which was fun as well...and to build relationships with people.” However, the time investment to play and practise so that you are good enough and comfortable is not available.

4.5.5. The Game You Have to Play

This section describes some of the conditions that influenced power and decision-making and the implementation of teams as perceived by the respondents.

Because one of the fundamentals of a team, I think, a good team, and we've certainly worked on it that way, is that the individual member of a team has an equal ability to contribute, which isn't the premise of a hierarchy. I mean, the premise of a hierarchy is the lower you go, the less you have to say. So I think we have fundamentally changed that even within the structure of a hierarchy. It’s the proportion of decisions that you allow to be made by the team is increasing every year. So that’s the good part of it. (Mary)

Women in Management

The Cultural Context

Several respondents reported a lack of women in management positions in comparison to the number of men in their organizations. Most notably this was presented as the lack of women in senior positions and their exclusion from the decision-making process. The claim that organizations espoused the value of more women in senior positions but have failed to execute this direction was reported by most of the respondents.

The female participants of the study came from organizations that had hierarchical structures dominated by men at the senior levels. It was not unusual for these women to be in a gender minority in their positions. Did this situation create a problem for women, or exclude them to a degree from the decision-making process? The implementation of teams suggested and was perceived to facilitate an equality amongst its members as illustrated in Mary’s quotation. The respondents described a range of perceptions regarding the influence of teams on decision-making and equality. A number of respondents felt that circumstances existed in
their organizations that prevented or excluded women from significantly influencing decision-making. One such circumstance was the proportion or ratio of men and women in middle and senior positions in these organizations as reported by the participants.

The situation in Sharon’s company was that the decision makers were all over 50 and there were only two or three women in their early 40s and no women partners over 50. At the present time, “there aren’t enough women yet who have gone through this system to see whether or not, when we have a critical mass of women between 45 and 55, whether they’re part of the decision-making process or not...And it’s hard to say whether women are included in the decision-making process appropriately.”

In another interview, Heather noted that “at the very senior levels there’s one female—then you tend to have a male-dominated type of culture.” Heather thought that there was probably some systemic bias towards women in her company. Overall the organizational hierarchy was predominantly male—80% male at her level, at the next highest level it would be one woman on a base of ten, and then one woman at the senior vice president level. She said “that males carry a sense of more authority, more rightness, more not having to prove themselves...I don’t think it’s huge; I don’t think it’s terribly, terribly cumbersome today, but I think it’s there.”

Terry indicated that the president of the organization was quoted as saying “that he thinks it’s important to have women in senior positions in the company, but there still aren’t very many.” The rationale of downsizing in the organization was given as the reason why more women were not in senior positions. Terry felt that there just hasn’t been a lot of indication that the company really wants to promote women.

Another perceived circumstance was the cultural resistance to change. While the work of Eleanor “is to lead the leadership culture to a more egalitarian, team-oriented, less hierarchical model” she perceived that the culture was very entrenched in a traditional, top down, male-oriented, power-based paradigm, exhibiting lots of resistance to change, and lots of reliance on how things had been done before and always have been done that way, with little reason to change them.

These circumstances were influenced by power (who holds the power, how decisions
are made), as was the case with Eleanor, who said “that men have the power in this institution; there’s no question of that to me. And to varying degrees that’s how they want it to be.” Challenging the male power-base was not well received by men. This situation was complicated for Eleanor, as she was the only female. She perceived that she had a real struggle to establish credibility, and an occasional question when she left the group: “have I been taken seriously?”

**Teams and Organizational Change**

Some participants indicated that there is organizational evidence demonstrating a change towards less hierarchical structures. In one instance an old (125 years), very large organization that had been “primarily a male-dominated organization, very paternalistic, very hierarchical” according to Donna, was changing towards a matrix type of an organization, with decentralization of authority and people operating more as individual business units.

In another case, Kathy indicated that her organization was “organizing decision-making to be much stronger and to be less linked with the organization structure, with the hierarchy.” In her opinion the new organization structure of teams supports less hierarchical decision making.

Mary described how her organization redesigned itself into five committees, each of which had generally more junior people in it, so there were more VPs and senior vice presidents, rather than just vice chairmen. The result has been twofold: more opinion is brought to the table, and automatically there are more women in the decision-making. She perceives that has also changed behaviour patterns in that “there are a lot more human factors taken into consideration in the decisions that we make now.”

The desire for team structures influencing and facilitating equality in organizations continued to surface in the voices of the participants in the interviews. Mary expressed the view that the way her organization felt they could achieve gender equality was through teams. In a hierarchy, the power feels focussed near the top of the organization and junior people don’t have much to contribute. In her organization most of the junior people were women and most of the seniors were men.
We needed to introduce team-based structures because in a team the premise is that everyone is equal and that the leader is only a facilitator, so therefore in a team where women are participating the women have an equal opportunity to contribute to the decision-making. And it’s really a matter of taking a look at the triangular material or structure of the organization and starting to see that the bottom of it is fraying because we’re starting to experiment with teams instead of hierarchy. So people will go in and out of teams and they will be led by facilitators rather than a boss, and that we see it even at the top end of the bank in terms of a shift of how we’re governing. (Mary)

Mary described how she saw this shift for her organization. In 1990 she saw an image of a triangular piece of material with the chairman at the top and everybody in the typical hierarchical structure. What she is seeing now,

is a loosening of that material such that we’re starting to fray at the bottom and you can see the threads loosening in the middle and at the top as people give power to more junior people in return to get productivity which they benefit from. such that the triangle is starting to spread out and...if you looked at it from a high level view, would become a circle of intersecting lines rather than the pyramid.

She experienced this related to the perceived shift of power from men at the top to women at junior levels. While traditionally men have resisted that, achievement of the business plan every year resulted in bigger bonuses due to more productivity “because everyone is contributing instead of sabotaging it.”

**Closing the Gender Gap**

The gender gap can be considered the gap between: the status of men and women in the organization; the organization’s policies and practices on workplace equality; the myths and the reality of workplace equality; and the way things were and the way they could be. In an effort to “close the gender gap,” companies have implemented such things as mentoring programs, gender sensitivity training and awareness, and coaching on “gender issues” in the workplace for senior managers (most of whom are men). According to Mary,

her organization had introduced initiatives to close the gender gap such as, increased flexibility in terms of acknowledging what people need to be satisfied as employees and increased flexibility in terms of what we offer to
customers...flexible work arrangements, leaves of absence, policies, career information network.

The interviews revealed a perception that these initiatives were positively influencing some organizations. People were becoming increasingly aware and beginning to understand that sometimes the methods of communication, the behaviours, the way members operate, either provided a more synergistic kind of environment or created barriers.

Although companies had policies and systems that were gender neutral in some instances, there was a perceived gap still in existence, with the size of the gap varying within each organization.

4.5.6. Summary of Section III

Section III discussed the organization culture. It illustrates the visible ways in which teams were experienced by the respondents in their organizations. Some of the examples demonstrate that there were inconsistencies between what was espoused about teams and what the respondents perceived actually occurred. Perceived gaps or inconsistencies existed in the following areas: the fit of team player characteristics in performance management, team reward and recognition systems, social functions and celebrations, and involvement in decision-making.

4.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the stories of the participants' experiences in teams. These experiences were clustered around four general themes: sense of support, exercising power, people's relationship to work, and organizational culture. These themes and their related threads from the findings chapter are summarized in Figure 3 and are listed below.

General Descriptions about the Espoused Teams in Organizations—the Promise of Teams

The characteristics of the espoused organizational team as perceived by the respondents were: consensus decision making, people working together, a sense of equality, democracy, sharing contributions, a place where voices are heard by all, trust, respect, dedication, and
collaboration. Teams were implemented in hierarchical organizations. The company mission, vision, and value statements espoused the value of teams in accomplishing business.

**Descriptions of Teams in Relation to Organizational Culture and Structure**

Teams were implemented in organizations that were hierarchical in most cases. This had the effect of reducing the organizational hierarchy in comparison to the situations before teams. The organizational reward and recognition system was variable across the organizations regarding the emphasis on teams as opposed to the individual. The women perceived that a male model with implicit rules was operating. They reported that team social functions had a tendency to exclude women and work against team cohesion. There was a perceived gender gap for women in management positions in the organization; and fewer women in management influenced the opportunity for women to be involved in decision making at the senior levels.

**Experiences that Described the Theme: Sense of Being Supported**

The characteristics reported by the respondents that described a sense of being supported were: bonding (small talk, vulnerability, kinder/gentler/friendlier), respect, alignment, intimacy, team formation (length of time to come together), exploration of ideas, no reservations or holding back, risk taking, acceptance, belonging, identity, consensus building, and directness of communication. Generally, the sense of being supported was a positive experience for most of the respondents. Differences were experienced depending on the gender composition of the teams. However, there was no overall homogeneous experience.

**Experiences that Described the Theme: Exercising Power**

The characteristics reported by the respondents that described exercising power were: domination related to gender, position in the organization, roles, access to information, differences in being heard due to gender, differences in being heard due to skills, and interruptions. Exercising power was described by most of the respondents as an experience of power over or domination by men, although there were exceptions of not being dominated. The respondents perceived that the power and hierarchical structures influenced the equal treatment
of the genders and gave the power base to men. The respondents reported that women in the same position as men did not start out the same, rather they had to earn this equality.

There were gender differences in the sense of being heard and this experience varied depending on the gender composition of the teams. Women’s voices were not heard, or acknowledged in teams that were composed of a higher proportion of men than women. There were differences in being heard due to skills. Women needed to change to be like men in order to get ahead.

Experiences that Described the Theme: People’s Relationship to Work

People’s relationship to work was characterized by productivity—action and inaction, decision-making, delegation, follow-through, and establishing and building relationships. Most respondents reported that the women shared a more similar experience of these characteristics with other women in their teams than they did with the men.

The next chapter is a discussion and integration of the key findings of the research study. The main areas to be discussed in the analysis are: the perception of the espoused or the organizations’ promise of teams, which included the perceived team characteristics and expected organizational changes, and the respondents’ experiences in teams or teams-in-practice. These team experiences are discussed in relation to the themes: sense of support, exercising power, and people’s relationship to work and organizational culture.
CHAPTER FIVE
Analysis of Findings and Interpretation

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter the analysis of the findings of the study are discussed within a conceptual framework of espoused theory—or set of beliefs—and theory-in-action—or lived experiences (Argyris, 1990). The team experiences described in Chapter Four were clustered around four general themes: sense of support; exercising power; people's relationship to work; and organizational culture practices. As a result of reviewing the data I adopted the Argyris framework to organize the presentation of the analysis.

The findings that represented the espoused theory were the organizations' promise of teams, which included the perceived team characteristics and expected organizational changes. The findings that represented the theories-in-use were the teams-in-practice: women's experiences. In this analysis, the experiences that were addressed included compensation, rewards, and recognition; networking, celebrations and social functions; sense of support experiences; exercising power experiences; peoples' relationship to work experiences; and barriers to team implementation.

The findings are discussed in relation to relevant theories and research presented in the literature review in Chapter Two. The relationships and gaps between the respondents' perceptions of the organizations' promise of teams and the respondents' experiences of teams in practice are addressed in the analysis. Summary remarks and recommendations are included.

5.2. The Organizations' Promise of Teams: The Perceived Team Characteristics and Expected (Perceived) Organizational Changes

A criterion for selection in this study was a stated commitment by the organization to team structures as an approach to enhancing company performance. The organizations' belief in team implementation was evident in the mission, vision, and value statements of the organizations. In this study, respondents reported that "teams" were implemented into their
organizations however the organizations as a whole continued to be structured hierarchically. The promise of teams was a description of what the respondents perceived their organization believed about teams. The respondents reported team characteristics and expectations about organizational support for changes that were supposed to be made as teams were being implemented into their organizations.

The Perceived Organizational Team Characteristics

The team characteristics perceived by the respondents were characterized by: consensus decision making; people working together; a sense of equality; democracy; sharing contributions; a place where voices are heard by all; trust; respect; dedication; and collaboration.

These characteristics matched the team literature (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; and Buchholz & Roth, 1987; Kormanski & Mozenter, 1987; and Beckhard, 1969—Figure 1 Team Model). Heather’s team included,

a sense of developing a shared mandate, a shared agenda, a shared vision and accountability...a sense of equality, or democracy...not 100 per cent but a sense overall of shared contribution, shared input, shared views being recognized.

Most evident is the similarity in the relational qualities, including openness, respect of individual differences, valuing ideas and contributions of others, and listening to each other. Eleanor’s description of team qualities included “trust, respect, and dedication towards the objective, with reliance on each other and both an awareness and a practice of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

These promises of teams were aligned with the characteristics and qualities of Senge’s (1991) learning organization and the women’s literature (Belenky, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Helgeson, 1990; Jordan, et al., 1991).

Aspects of literature depicted in Figure 1 (clear goals, accountability, role clarification, rewards and recognition) were not explicitly reported by the respondents in their description of team characteristics. These characteristics surfaced in the themes when
the respondents reported their team experiences. Participants’ stories which illustrated what was missing or what wasn’t working in the team are addressed later in this analysis in Section 5.3. Teams in Practice: Women’s Experiences.

The organizations’ team characteristics do not emphasize goals or productivity and this is similar to Figure 1, which does not prioritize one characteristic over another. However, Katzenbach and Smith’s (1993) model emphasizes productivity and performance. Goals, productivity, and performance may not have surfaced to the same degree because the questions posed during the data collection did not probe these characteristics. Perhaps the respondents reported only some qualities that were the most critical or important to them at the time of the interviews and neglected to talk about these other characteristics, even though they may be included in their definition of a team. The focus on relationship qualities may be connected to the Self-in-Relation theory that suggests women seek relational connection for psychological growth, thus implying that healthy team environments need to provide these connections for women.

In summary, there is an alignment of characteristics across the team theory, organizational learning theory, the theoretical concepts of Belenky et al. (1986), Gilligan (1982), Helgeson, (1990), Jordan et al., (1991), and the respondents’ perceptions of organizations’ team characteristics. However, the team theory and learning organization theory does not include gender or assumes that the theory is gender-neutral. An area for future research, then, would include men in the research sample to investigate their experiences and conceptualization of teams. Another possible question to explore is whether or not there is a perceived priority of characteristics of teams as is defined in the Katzenbach and Smith (1993) team model. Also, the participants in this study were not asked about their personal models and definitions of teams. Whether or not participants’ individual mental models of teams would have matched the perceived organizations’ model of team, or team theory, is another area for research for women and men. The self-in-relation model (Jordan et al., 1991) identifies the primary experience of self for women is relational, that the self is organized and developed in the context of relationships. This is different from male development which stresses separation. Thus it would seem reasonable to assume that there
would be a gap between the women and the men in their individual team models. Also, the fact that the literature is gender-blind may contribute to the theory being more representative of men’s conceptualization of teams than women’s conceptualization of teams.

The Expected (Perceived) Organizational Changes

This research indicates that the promise of teams created an expectation for the respondents about changes that would occur in their organizations as a result of team implementation. These expectations, as reported in the findings were: a perception that the introduction of teams would contribute to a shift towards less hierarchy, that there would be an increased involvement in decision making, and that gender equality could be achieved through teams. The perception of gender equality is illustrated in Mary’s team description:

a good team...is that the individual member of a team has an equal ability to contribute, which isn’t the premise of a hierarchy. The premise of a hierarchy is the lower you go, the less you have to say. So I think we have fundamentally changed that even within the structure of a hierarchy. It’s the proportion of decision that you allow to be made by the team that is increasing every year.

There was also an expectation that changes in the compensation and reward systems would reflect work done in teams.

These expectations matched the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Orsburn, 1990; Buchholz & Roth, 1987; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Wellins, Byham & Dixon, 1991; Lawler, 1990; Wageman, 1997). In this study the teams existed in organizations that maintained some degree of hierarchy and thus matches with the team literature. Heather made the distinction between a team and a committee and reported that a committee was used in a “far more structured, traditional type of organization...an organization described as top-down, with a stronger sense of hierarchy and less democracy in the process.” This comment implies that teams contributed to less hierarchy and more democracy in Heather’s organization.

However the values of the Learning Organization (Senge, 1991) and Ferguson’s (1984) critique of bureaucracy contradicts the team theory and advocates that teams and
hierarchy cannot exist together. Also, Emery (1995) contended that the two fundamental choices of organizational design—bureaucratic and democratic—have profoundly different effects. These contradictions in theory suggest a gap between theory and practice and will be explored further in section 5.3.

Feminist literature offers a perspective largely aligned with the learning organization about implementation. Helgeson’s (1990) organic web of inclusion emphasizes process and structure, and this is different than the team approach, which is more mechanistic and had an emphasis on goals first. The criticism that organizational theory is gender blind (Mills & Tancred, 1992) and that there is a lack of research on women’s experiences added to the difficulty of determining if some of the expectations raised by the women in this study were in fact even considered by those responsible in the organization for the team implementation. We don’t really know what may be left out of the team theory. It is important to consider what might have been some implicit assumptions held by the respondents regarding how team structures would affect and influence their role in the larger system. To some degree the respondents may have hoped for the promise of teams to lead to gender equality, not only inside the team but outside the team and in the larger organization, thus creating an expectation of an opportunity for more women in management.

An irony with respect to hierarchy that appears in the theory in the literature review is the overriding purpose of the learning organization. How can that purpose—for the organization to recreate itself to exist within a competitive global economy—be reconciled with the espoused values of the learning organization—such as servant leadership, that run counter to the values of hierarchy? Perhaps the perceived promise of teams existing in hierarchies, as believed by the women, is a continual work in progress. The values of teams and hierarchies are oppositional, resulting in tension. Perhaps the team was never actually achieved as it was espoused. The lived experiences of the respondents illustrated several gaps or discrepancies between espoused and actual teams. This will be addressed further in this analysis.
5.3. Teams in Practice: Women’s Experiences

The literature points to a gap between theory and practice. This study corroborates the gap, which will be explored in this analysis. The findings *teams in practice* described women’s experiences of the *organizations’ promised team*. The analysis compares and contrasts team and related literature with the respondents’ lived experience, as well as with their *organizations’ promised team* and illustrates some of the gaps between the espoused team and teams in reality. The specific aspects that are addressed are:

5.3.1. Compensation, rewards, and recognition
5.3.2. Networking, celebrations and social functions
5.3.3. Sense of support experiences
5.3.4. Exercising power experiences
5.3.5. People’s relationship to work experiences
5.3.6. Barriers to team implementation

An illustration of this analysis is depicted in Figure 4. Gap Analysis between the *Organizations’ Promise of Teams* and the *Teams in Practice*. 
Figure 4. GAP Analysis between the Organizations' Promise of Teams and the Teams in Practice

**ORGANIZATIONS' PROMISE OF TEAMS:**
Perceived Team Characteristics; Perceived Organizational Culture and Expected Organizational Changes

**TEAMS IN PRACTICE:**
Sense of Support; Exercising Power; People's Relationship to Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS' PROMISE OF TEAMS</th>
<th>TEAMS IN PRACTICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATIONS' PROMISE OF TEAMS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>TEAMS IN PRACTICE:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Team Characteristics</td>
<td>Sense of Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• consensus decision making</td>
<td>• bonding (female only team/no report in mixed or male team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• people working together</td>
<td>• team formation takes time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• democracy</td>
<td>• opportunity to explore ideas &amp; risk taking (female only team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sharing contributions</td>
<td>• acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• directness of communication (the more direct the less emphasis on relationships &amp; bonding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• intimacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• alignment (mostly female teams)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS' PROMISE OF TEAMS</th>
<th>TEAMS IN PRACTICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Culture and Expected Organizational Changes</td>
<td>Exercising Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organizations were hierarchical and power was at the top</td>
<td>Domination related to gender and position in organization influences Role Stereotyping, Equality of Treatment, Communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams implemented in hierarchies were expected to move towards less hierarchy; gender equality could be facilitated through teams.</td>
<td>ROLE STEREOTYPING: Hierarchy a determinant of role assignment. Role stereotyping of secretarial functions related to more women at bottom of hierarchy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EQUALITY OF TREATMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men discredit women's value or participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men have more perceived potential based on their position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men and women adopt a male model of operating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power maintained by withholding information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference in being heard due to skills - women have to earn that; position level (not gender) key factor: the higher you go in organization women behave like men (nature of business).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference in being heard due to gender - women are heard with peers and in situations where they have credibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interruptions - women interrupted by men; women learn to interrupt &quot;elbows out&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONS' PROMISE OF TEAMS</th>
<th>TEAMS IN PRACTICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People's Relationship to Work</td>
<td>Networking, Celebrations, Social Functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teams create opportunities for members to socialize, celebrate accomplishments, develop team spirit and supportive relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| THE GAP |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 5.3.1. Compensation, rewards, and recognition | 5.3.4. Exercising power experiences |
| 5.3.2. Networking, celebrations and social functions | 5.3.5. People's relationship to work experiences |
| 5.3.3. Sense of support | 5.3.6. Barriers to team implementation |
5.3.1. Compensation, Rewards and Recognition

There was a mixture of participant experiences regarding how organizations supported teams through changes in compensation, rewards, and recognition. Some of the organizations attempted to reward teamwork. However, often the highest rewards offered continued to be for individual behaviour, as illustrated by Eleanor’s quotation:

There are lots of contradictory messages in our organization about teams. While we espouse team as a corporate value, people still get rewarded for individual contributions.

Some respondents reported changes that had been started to incorporate team-based pay; however, they perceived that the reward structures did not adequately support team structures. Mary reported that it had taken five years for her organization to develop a culture that valued teams and rewarded teamwork. “The beginning of our new fiscal year will have team incentive-based pay everywhere in the organization.”

Being a team player was reported by some organizations as a critical component of their performance review process, but was not applied universally across the organization. Sharon reported that in theory in her organization,

one of the factors that is taken into account is whether or not you are perceived to be a team player, not whether or not you are, because perception is more important. In reality the more senior you get it seems to me, the less important it is whether you’re a team player…For junior people, it’s really important that people want to work with you and that you are perceived to be somebody who contributes.

Literature on successful team implementation stressed the reward and recognition of teamwork (Lawler, 1990; Hay Group, Sibson & Company, 1995). Advice by compensation experts on establishing team-based compensation may provide a rationale for the experiences of some of the participants in this study specifically related to a perception of being dominated. It is difficult to shift the compensation approach in a traditional system aimed at individual achievement or status in the hierarchy. The compensation experts also drew attention to the dilemma of multiple team definitions leading to overly complex team pay systems. Their advice was to consider a team-based pay system as a work in progress. By
considering it a work in progress, the managers of the organizations, including those represented in this study, are allowed flexibility and feedback from team members. The approach implemented at Northern Telecom’s plant near Raleigh, North Carolina, is an example of an attempt to eliminate meaningful status differences. Reduction of the number of salary grades and elimination of distinctions between hourly and salaried employees, and introducing skill-based pay, has facilitated a working environment of equality (Sisco, 1992, p. 44).

The respondents perceived that the compensation systems were inadequate with respect to rewarding teamwork. Many of the reported team experiences were of mixed gender or the female participants were in the minority. Data from the respondents also reported that there was a lack of women in management positions. The participants did not explicitly report team meetings where they experienced a status difference with respect to pay. However, it is conceivable that they had some of these team experiences—in particular, where the women were in the gender minority or they were the only female on the team. This could have contributed to a feeling of disempowerment and a disappointment in what could be expected from the implementation of teams.

In summary, what is needed is a review of the reward and recognition policies and practices in the organizations. This could include checking the perceptions of the respondents, determining the consistency of application of the practices across the organizations, clarifying what has actually been happening and determining what needs to be changed. Strategies to address inconsistencies may be developed based on the findings. Whatever is done, the organizations’ actions will indicate to the employees whether or not teams are an important, viable structure in the organization and the actions taken will influence employees’ commitment to teams.

5.3.2. Networking, Celebrations and Social Functions

Several respondents perceived that they were excluded from team recognition events and celebrations. Using golf as a team celebration was a problem for many respondents and is reported in Sharon’s description.
The golf experience was really damaging for a team, because when you are in there doing the work, that's one thing and that works okay, but it's all the other stuff that goes into making a team so that it really functions in a healthy way, and the team members feel comfortable as part of the team in the broader context.

According to Katzenbach and Smith (1993) real teams have more fun and the kind of fun experienced is integral to their performance. They suggested that the fun of teams is distinguished from groups by how the fun both sustains and is sustained by team performance. Fun was achieved through such events as celebrations and luncheons, and were important contributors to the achievement of organizational goals.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 dealt with research conducted on women in management and is relevant to revisit in light of the findings of this study.

*Closing the Gap: Women's Advancement in Corporate and Professional Canada* (1997), a report on female executives' progress in Canada, provides some insightful research about what blocks women from advancing in organizations and the gap in perceptions between female executives and CEOs. One of the findings was that the women were three times more likely than the men to attribute exclusion from informal networks of communication as a barrier to advancement in the organization.

*The Report of the Task Force on the Advancement of Women in the Bank* (1991) also cites a gap. The report found that one-third of female senior managers, but only 2% of male senior managers, believed that women faced restricted access to business-related networking opportunities, including activities like golf, because of their gender.

Research conducted by Mary Mattis, “Corporate initiatives for advancing women,” (1995), also reported on the feelings of women being excluded, which was contributed to by less access to networks and mentorships.

The research studies cited above report similar feelings as those reported by the participants in this dissertation. Some women will take action to counter these feelings, as evidenced by some of the respondents who arranged to golf with their female peers. *The Globe and Mail* (August 10, 1996) reported a women's golf wave is continuing in the United
States and in Canada with an increase in corporate-sponsored tournaments for women. This growth was perceived as a response to the increase in the number of women executives and that more decision makers in corporations were women. Golf is seen as providing opportunities for fun, companionship, competition, and networking.

In conclusion, networking, celebration, and social events influence the human component of teams that contribute to the development of team unity and cohesion. The golf example seems to demonstrate what some women will undertake to be accepted in organizations. The necessity to establish credibility perhaps carries over to the golf course where the “old boys network” continues to be lived out to the detriment of some females.

Solutions to the issue of social functions and inclusion in this research involved selecting events that women and men would enjoy, such as theatre nights and dinners that include spouses and partners. Events that are gender-neutral, fun, and light, as opposed to activity-oriented events, seem to have worked in some of the organizations. Since organizations are driven by performance measures, it would seem imperative that decision makers in the organizations select team recognition and celebration activities that support the achievement of organizational goals and contribute to the enjoyment and satisfaction of all team members.

5.3.3. Experiences that Described the Theme Sense of Support

The participant stories surfaced several characteristics that together described a sense of being supported and included: bonding (small talk, vulnerability, kinder/gentler/friendlier); respect; alignment; intimacy; team formation (length of time to come together); exploration of ideas; no reservations or holding back; risk taking; acceptance; belonging; identity; consensus building; and directness of communication.

There was a perception that women, more than men, believed in the value of the team approach. Eleanor’s own perception of team represented an example of this perception.

People connected together, connected by a value system, working towards a cause, whereas many people would define team as a group of people organized around a specific task or project.
The sense of being supported was a positive experience for most of the respondents. Differences in feeling positively or negatively supported were experienced depending on the gender composition of the teams. Kathy perceived qualities of a traditional female that were "much more of a passive, accommodating, supportive, listening, nurturing, bonding nature" as creating this sense of support and a traditional male "as much more aggressive, action-oriented—with a tendency to be more authoritarian over women" and thus not as supportive. However there was no overall homogeneous experience.

Some of the team literature reviewed in Chapter 2 is appropriate to bring forward in this analysis. Figure 1 Team Model, a synthesis of characteristics espoused by Bucholz and Roth (1987), Kormanski and Mozenter (1987), and Beckhard (1969) cited several characteristics within the category "relationships," including trust and openness, respect, collaboration, feedback, and managing conflict, that were similar qualities to the respondents’ description of sense of support. What appears to be absent from Figure 1 Team Model are the qualities of intimacy and bonding. It is interesting to note that reports of bonding in the findings came from female-only team experiences. Alice commented that, it often would be a woman who might take on the role of the consensus builder or the arbitrator...it would more likely be a women who would try to get the team together for some social activity that would bond the team, that would be all-inclusive as opposed to including part of the group.

Donna also experienced bonding in female-only teams and attributed this to "the small talk, the things that typically are close to the person’s heart, or something that they’re divulging that will make them vulnerable." She perceived the bonding experience as less likely to occur in a mixed team. A possible explanation for these omissions is that the team model may fail to include women’s perspectives or perhaps assumes that the team model is gender neutral.

With respect to other literature, the work of Gilligan (1982) and the Self-In-Relation theory (Jordan, et al. 1991) perhaps mirrors the conceptualization of the sense of support theme and suggest that these relational connections are important for women's psychological growth. Some team environments are not perceived as conducive to this growth. One
respondent reported she experienced “less willingness to be vulnerable in mixed teams as opposed to gender exclusive teams...as there are probably more issues of positional power [for men],” alluding to the idea that, for a lot of men, identity is related to “what their status is as a member of the team.” Understanding a healthy team environment for women and men is a potential area for further research that can contribute to the development of team implementation plans and ongoing nurturance to maintain such environments.

Further literature from aspects of the learning organization (Senge, 1991) were also similar to the sense of support characteristics. Central to the learning organization concept was a definition of learning as the expansion of one’s capability to create and produce results, grounded in a culture based on transcendent human values of love, wonder, humility, and compassion. There is a valuing of innovation and risk taking, with a provision of a supportive climate for skill building (Kofman & Senge 1993; Woolner 1992; Management Board, 1992). One of the research participants, Terry, reported an experience in a mixed gender team that was representative of this concept.

There was a balance from building on each other’s ideas,...a contribution of both male and female ideas, and female listening which is stronger, male contribution which sometimes tends to be louder.

A counter example, in a mixed team with more senior people, contributed to Donna “feeling intimidated and unwilling to take as many risks.”

Reflecting on the team theory and the learning organization theory provides some potential explanations for these different experiences. The values of the learning organization and the concept of dialogue, along with the use of a facilitator would suggest that feeling of intimidation would be addressed and risk taking would be nurtured. In team theory, Katzenbach and Smith (1993) cite three sources for people’s reluctance about teams. A lack of conviction that teams can perform better than individuals was one source. Another source was personal discomfort with teams and a view that teams were too risky, particularly for managers who had difficulty being part of a team where they were not the leader. They were holding onto the overriding operational rule of individual responsibility and self-preservation as opposed to shared responsibility based on trust. There remains a reluctance to take risks
and rely on the performance of the team. A third source of resistance to teams was a weak organizational performance with more concern on internal politics and external public relations. A reasonable recommendation to address people’s reluctance regarding teams is to have facilitators in team meetings. Through feedback and reflection, participants can check how risk taking is valued and rewarded in the organization. To do this, “risk taking” would have to be defined for a particular organization.

The finding directness of communication—a perceived style difference in communication between men and women—referred to the language the respondents used when communicating with men. The respondents described how they changed their approach when communicating with men. They used different words and different language, so that the men could better understand them. Respondents named this a “male style.” Sharon described the male style as directness, “Here’s what needs to be done, this is how we are going to do it.” An example of this male style for Kathy is “What’s the bottom line that we are trying to get to?” Kathy reported that the male style was much more direct, bottom line, and outcome oriented. Kathy did not think of that when in a group of just women. Several respondents felt that in order to gain a sense of support with men they needed to adjust their communication style.

Mary described her assertive approach for getting ahead and being listened to in her organization as “elbows out.” “Assertive women in the organization are considered rough....inelegant, whereas when a man is assertive he is just perceived as being normal.” This direct style of communicating also necessitated less emphasis on building relationships and bonding, which seemed integral in the sense of being supported theme. How does this affect the respondents if they are changing their way of communicating in order to be heard by men? This change in style requires behaviours that are counter to what is nurturing for women and possibly contributes to group dynamics that negatively affect the functioning of the teams.

Another characteristic of language in the work environment that Tannen’s (1994) research addressed was the use of metaphors. In this study there were some reports that “sports analogies were famous around here...get the puck in the net, get the puck out of the
net.” If sporting terms are foreign to many women (or men), then a lack of familiarity with the terms can lead to failure of understanding as well as contribute to a feeling of exclusion. Tannen’s approach is for women to learn something about sports in order to avoid being left out of conversations, as small talk is a necessity in the daily operations of work. This suggestion may be perceived as support for the notion that women need to change in order to fit into the organization, similar to the popular self-help books of the 1970s and early 1980s. This is counter to some of the feminist literature that states organizations must change to be more inclusive of women (Cava, 1988; Calvert & Ramsey, 1992).

Tannen is really pointing out that the different styles of men and women lead to different reactions and that it is helpful to have some awareness of that when trying to understand what has transpired in a situation. According to Tannen’s (1994) findings, women who adopt a male style may experience a different reaction than would be received by a man, and this may not be desirable. She also noted that women are using metaphors from cooking, birthing, and sewing as opposed to adapting their styles to those of men.

In summary, there is a congruence between the learning organization theory, feminist theory, and the characteristics of the sense of support theme. What is needed is the application of relational theory and learning organization theory to the organization development intervention of teams. For example, one can speculate how the application of the skill of dialogue may influence women’s perception that they have to adjust their communication style to be more like men in order to be heard. A facilitator could help the development of a safe environment where all voices contribute towards finding common ground, rather than women needing to adopt a “male style.” Additionally, a facilitator could support individual team members in their skill development specifically around creating and presenting an argument and advocating ideas.

5.3.4. Experiences that Described the Theme Exercising Power

The characteristics reported by the respondents that described exercising power included: domination related to gender; position in the organization; roles; access to information; differences in being heard due to gender; differences in being heard due to
skills; and interruptions. *Exercising power* was described by most of the respondents as an experience of power over or domination by men, although there were exceptions of not being dominated. The respondents perceived that the hierarchical structures influenced the unequal treatment of the genders and gave the power base to men. The analysis is focussed on the findings: equality of treatment—factors influencing differences in being heard; logistics of team operations; a level playing field; and women in management.

**Factors Influencing Differences in Being Heard**

The findings reported there were gender differences in the sense of being heard and this experience varied depending on the gender composition of the teams. Women’s voices were not heard or acknowledged in teams that were composed of a higher proportion of men than women. There were differences in being heard due to skills and position level in the organization. The respondents perceived that they needed to change communication style to be like men in order to get ahead.

For some respondents the critical factor of who gets heard related to the position one holds in the organization. The higher the ranking in the organizational hierarchy, the more likely one will be listened to when one speaks. The findings in this study illustrated this circumstance, regardless of gender. The organizations from which the respondents came were dominated by men in senior positions. In situations where Mary was a junior team member she was not heard and “found it often very difficult to break into the conversation.” Another example illustrated Ann’s perception of what a woman needed to do in order to get ahead.

The higher the level of the women in this organization, the more direct, blunt, to the point I hear this person being...the very senior women have learnt to be succinct in what they say and direct and want to get to the point... perhaps you need to be like that actually to be successful in business generally.

Tannen’s (1994) research is relevant in analysing the experience of the respondents. Tannen described a phenomenon whereby some speakers, many of whom are women, try to be succinct to not take up meeting time, and this was described by some respondents. What
is unknown is when the respondents tried to be succinct, does part of their dialogue get left out that would have made an important contribution to the ideas they wanted to convey?

Even though Tannen’s research demonstrates that ways that women speak may contribute to their not being listened to, she suggests that, all else being equal, women are not as likely to be listened to as men, regardless of how they speak or what they say. Some of the findings in this study do not support Tannen’s statement. Some respondents reported being heard in teams with their peers, where they perceived they had more credibility, as illustrated by Mary’s story.

I have such a good reputation. It’s a much more comfortable environment for me and the things that I tend to say have more credibility...when I started to speak people were willing to listen and I didn’t feel rushed in trying to say what I had to say. There was feedback on my idea,...and it was integrated.

The circumstance of not being heard can become a problem when decisions are made in teams and there is an assumption that everyone has equal access to the decision-making process, which was the case in this study. The team literature does not directly address communication, rather the theory promotes a climate of openness that recognizes differences, and values ideas and contributions of others. The application of problem solving techniques and dispute resolution models to resolve conflicts are suggested. Given the respondents’ experiences, it seems evident that there is a gap between what is espoused and the reality. Speculation on the causes of the gap suggested several possibilities as cited in the team literature about barriers to implementation (Wagéman, 1997; Lawler, 1990), including lack of skill development in presenting and advocating ideas, organizational resistance to shifting to teamwork, unwillingness to give up power, and a culture that supports an ethic of the individual.

Drawing on the value placed on communication in the learning organization and feminist theories is useful in considering strategies to address issues raised by the respondent’s team experiences. Communication can be iterative and rely on dialogue, which has a quality of suspension of judgement (Senge, 1990). As well, learning organizations advocate having an external facilitator for building reflection and inquiry skills. Tarule’s
(1996) research on dialogue and collaborative learning investigated conditions that created a type of dialogue where exploration, experimentation, and inquiry supported construction and reconstruction of ideas.

A strategy to ensure the recognition of everyone’s contribution involves team leaders and group members becoming skilled at observing group process and noticing the roles that are taken on by group members. Other strategies to facilitate individual contribution such as nominal group technique, which is an idea generation technique, could be implemented. As mentioned previously, skill development in presenting and advocating ideas would be an asset. In order to assess the effectiveness of any particular strategy and the relationship to gender and position in the organization, further research is needed.

**Are Women and Men Treated Equally**

Central to the participants’ perceptions of the espoused team is the notion of equality, of equal voice. In response to the direct question “Are women and men treated equally in teams?” there was a mixture of answers ranging from “generally yes” to several variations influenced by the complex factors of roles, expertise, position, and personality.

**The Logistics of Team Operations.**

The findings pertaining to the logistics of team operations brought attention to the barriers experienced by the respondents, which included juggling work and family responsibilities, and having their level of commitment to work questioned. For example the scheduling of team meetings created a barrier to some respondents’ participation in meetings consistently called at 7:00 in the morning. These meeting times conflicted with care giving responsibilities as “nannies don’t arrive typically until 8:00 a.m,” as was reported by Sharon.

The experience of the respondents is supported by related literature on women in management. *The Task Force on the Advancement of Women in the Bank* (1991) reported women more than men perceived they faced gender-based assumptions about their abilities and career commitment. Research by Rozen and Korabik (1995) found that managers who are mothers are as ambitious and career-oriented as those without children. *Closing the Gap:*
Women's Advancement in Corporate and Professional Canada (1997) reported mostly male chief executives and senior women both perceived women’s family responsibilities the second most important factor that blocks women’s advancement in organizations.

The reported research cited above, along with the findings in this study, suggests that in some instances there is still the need to dispel these fictions of women’s commitment by an audit of organizational policies and practices to ensure that organizations do not sustain them. Team literature acknowledges perceived barriers can affect performance. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) stated “real” teams develop when the members work hard to overcome barriers that stand in the way of collective performance. In this study, the practice of scheduling team meetings at times that caused problems for team members needed to be addressed. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) suggested a number of ways to deal with team roadblocks such as team logistics. Revisiting team basics to uncover hidden assumptions and differences of opinions, and using facilitators to surface interpersonal issues and refocus the team members’ attention to the team’s purpose and performance challenge are possible approaches. Learning organization theory also recommended the use of a facilitator to build reflection and inquiry skills. Other possibilities include regular team and organizational surveys that allow for feedback on the current experiences of team members followed by the development of actions plans to implement and thus address issues.

A Level Playing Field.

The desire for the promise of teams influencing and facilitating equality in organizations continued to surface in the voices of the participants in the interviews. Although some respondents stated they felt there was equal treatment, others had a different experience. Equal treatment for Mary was influenced by other factors, since “there is still very much a power structure in the organization that gives more power to men...based on position, based on perceived potential.”

Some respondents held a perception that a level playing field did not exist for women when they started in the same position as a man, and that getting to the same starting place had to be earned. Terry thought women had to establish a credibility that men did not have
to establish. She felt that she had to earn that credibility.

And in the beginning, before you earn that and before you have enough experience to be able to listen, men are more willing to listen to men...I think it’s harder if you’re a woman [to develop that credibility]. Once you’ve developed that then you’re on equal ground, but you have to earn that, whereas with men, it’s more of a given.

Terry experienced a barrier in her company of “an old boys’ network that’s well-connected...you’ve got to prove that you have something to contribute and that it is grounded before people listen as easily.”

Some of the findings pertaining to role assignment illustrated the expectation created by the promise of team and the gap in the experience. Kathy interpreted in her organization, which is team-based, that role assignment “should rotate or find another way, a more consensus-based way of distributing the work” than role stereotyping. Kathy reported that women were stereotyped for secretarial functions because she perceived that hierarchy “determined role assignment” and there were more women at the bottom of the hierarchy in her organization.

The research report *Closing the Gap: Women’s Advancement in Corporate and Professional Canada* (1997) provides some insight to the respondents’ experiences in this study. With respect to perceived potential difference that favours men, the Gap report cited that woman identified inhospitable working environments and attitudes (male stereotyping) and preconceptions of women’s roles and abilities as the reasons for women not advancing in organizations. Chief executives said that lack of line experience and inadequate time in the leadership pipeline were the major barriers. There were differing opinions regarding the impact of exclusion from informal networks.

Approaches to solving some of these issues of power differentials can be found in the Gap research report. Strategies that the senior women felt influenced their success included performing beyond expectations, developing a style that male managers find comfortable, and proactively finding visible and difficult jobs. Other organizational recommendations were also cited in the report and are applicable.

The Gap study findings about why women leave organizations are relevant to this
discussion of the implementation of teams. Several reasons were reported and areas where
the senior women and chief executives disagreed were:

- lack of compatible values—33 per cent of women and 17 per cent of chief
  executives; family responsibilities that required leaving workforce—5 per
  cent of women and 31 per cent of chief executives; and work environment
  more supportive of family and personal commitments—21 per cent of women and
  14 percent of men. (*Closing the Gap: Women's Advancement in Corporate
  and Professional Canada*, 1997, p. 10)

The finding pertaining to the desire for compatible organizational values as a rationale for
leaving an organization is important to this study. A point of contention in team theory and
the learning organization and feminist literature, this has to do with whether or not it is
feasible to implement teams in hierarchical organizations, or to what degree it is possible.
Ferguson’s (1987) position is that it is not possible. The work of Miller (1991) presented the
dilemma faced often by women who feel pressured to advance in their careers—the conflict
between wanting to live and work in an environment of mutually enhancing relationships and
one of male norms. The pressure is to value the career and to devalue the relational desires.
Leaving the organization has been one solution for many women, but this may not be viable
or desirable for other women. Another solution for leaders of organizations committed to
advancing women involves developing strategies to retain women such as those cited in the
Gap study. This means addressing stereotypes and misperceptions about women’s family
commitments and women’s work performance. It means implementing career development
and advancement policies and programs so that women’s talent can be maximized to benefit
the organization. Research in proactive organizations that are implementing policies and
programs is needed to assess what difference such approaches make.

*Women in Management.*

The *promise of team* created an expectation that teams would facilitate gender
equality through increased involvement in decision making. An implicit assumption held by
the respondents may have been that team structures would affect and influence their role in
the whole organization. An example is the expectation that there would be an opportunity
for more women in management. Many of the respondents reported that there was lack of
women in senior positions and that women were excluded from the decision-making process.

An interpretation of the finding—lack of women in management—is that leaders of
some organizations are just not promoting women *per se*. The Conference Board of Canada
study, *Closing the Gap: Women's Advancement in Corporate and Professional Canada*
(1997), found that senior women were much more likely than chief executives to identify
attitudes and behaviour related to male-dominated work environments as barriers to
advancement in corporations. The study found that 44% of senior women and only 30% of
CEOs perceived male stereotyping and preconceptions of women’s roles and abilities as a
barrier to advancement.

Another interpretation is that there are just fewer or no senior positions available.
Foot (1996) presents important demographic considerations that provide a broader context
for understanding the situation. The progression up the corporate ladder came to a standstill
in the mid-1980s when management realized the organizations' structures no longer served
their purpose. The introduction of teams led to flattened corporations and the reduction of
management positions. There just were not enough openings at the top to meet the large
numbers of baby boomers in the workforce.

Some of the organizations represented in the findings have been particularly proactive
in establishing organizational policies and practices to support the promotion of women into
management positions. The real experiences of the respondents suggested that some women
still took on the responsibility to change themselves to be like men in order to get ahead. Ann
reported that there were times when she had been working on a team and felt “intimidated
just because I’m a woman, I figure this is my problem here, I have to figure out how to get
past it.” Kathy felt that she needed to change her communication style, because she was “not
giving the message that a man could best understand.” She wanted “to be much more direct,
bottom line, outcome oriented,” which she perceived as the male style. Kathy had been
consciously taking the responsibility on herself to change her style and not saying “Men, you
should change to be like me or what I perceive perhaps to be more like women.” Kathy felt
that the male style may even be more closely focussed on the business outcome than the
traditional female style.

Specific strategies identified in the Gap study for increasing the number of women in management included changes in communication style, and creating support networks for women. Some findings suggested that a more significant factor that will influence the equality of women and men will be time—the necessary time required for circumstances to facilitate a critical mass of women in senior positions. According to The Conference Board of Canada study, the chief executive officers felt time would take care of the problem, but the female executives did not agree. With respect to the factor of time, data from one respondent supported the finding of the chief executive officers. Sharon reported that in her organization the decision makers were all over fifty and there were only two or three women in their early forties and no female partners over fifty.

At the present time there are not yet enough women who have gone through the system to see whether or not when we have a critical mass of women between 45 and 55, whether they’re part of the decision-making process or not...it is hard to say whether women are included in the decision-making process appropriately.

The Gap study cited two key factors of women who succeeded: doing more than people expected and developing a style with which male managers were comfortable. An example of the latter was taking up golf. These two factors were similar to reports in the findings in this study. The strategies adopted by some of the respondents were also similar to the literature of the late 1970s and early 1980s, which was based on the assumption that women could enter and advance within organizations by taking on the characteristics of effective male managers in order to fit (Calvert & Ramsey, 1992).

The more current women-in-management literature (Helgeson, 1990; Peters, 1982; Rosner, 1990) discusses women’s strengths (influencing, collaborating, empowering, nurturing) as being valued in organizations today. These qualities are similar in the current study to the organizations’ promise of teams and perceived organizational team characteristics. And these are congruent across team theory, learning organization theory and feminist theory.

The feminist literature is important in that it provides the possibilities to consider...
alternative “team” structures. Feminist consciousness with its relational thinking is, by
definition, team spirited, and can potentially contribute to the creation of organizations that
foster collaboration, caring, and flexibility. Other feminist theorists (Ferguson, 1984) also
acknowledge this, but reject the idea that it can be done because they believe patriarchy and
egalitarian systems are mutually exclusive.

Précis

The exercising power experiences of the participants do not generally support the
organizations’ promise of teams: the perceived team characteristics and expected
organizational changes. Specifically, they did not support the concept of democracy, the
expectation that gender equality could be achieved through teams, and that men and women
started on a level playing field. The findings also are not aligned with the team theory, the
relational model, and the learning organization theory, all of which espouse empowerment,
cooperation, and equality of power in teams. Team experts (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993)
believe that teams and hierarchy can co-exist together. They suggested taking the working
approach of breaking up hierarchical patterns by assigning work tasks based on skills rather
than positions. The findings of this study did not report how roles were assigned in teams,
so the results of this approach are unknown.

There is some feminist literature (Ferguson, 1984) that supports some of the
respondents’ predominant experience, a perception of being dominated. This literature
contends that we live in systems embedded in the power-over model. The bureaucratic
system in the organizations represented in this study is an example of such a system.

Eisler and Loye’s (1990) partnership model, which valued equally the feminine and
masculine traits, is operationalized in organizations through flatter hierarchies defined by
functions, as opposed to social definitions of who should have power over others. This model
is aligned with the organizations’ promise of teams or espoused organizational team and
much of the team literature (and learning organization and feminist models—self-in- relation
theory, Helgeson’s web of inclusion); however, it is counter to the experiences reported by
the respondents. The dominator model fits the findings of the research.
Yanowitz, Ober, and Kantor (1995) described a systemic map of teams that identified three levels of structural influence on teams: social, face-to-face, and individual structures. The principle of creative tension presents a possible methodology for addressing the power issues experienced by the participants in this research. The principle requires teams to learn to clarify their vision, develop an understanding of their current reality and then collaboratively design the process of learning. The team learning cycle involves changing the underlying team structure by establishing creative tension and thus reducing the gap between the vision and current reality.

Reflecting on this team learning approach in light of this research study, it appears that on the face-to-face level of structure the respondents in this study did not confront the team members with their perception of inequality; at least this was not reported. Applying the team learning cycle to this research would necessitate dialogue sessions, and individual conversations to start to uncover perceptions of the current reality. According to the team learning approach this would lead to a clarification of the team vision and the development of new operating rules and norms for interpersonal interactions. Determining the steps to achieve what’s desired and establishing an ongoing learning process to check the teams’ progress would complete the team learning cycle.

The respondents’ experience of being dominated may also relate to possible team implementation barriers as cited by team authorities (Wageman, 1997; Lawler, 1990; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Although the team structure attempted to create a power-with model or a partnership model, the bureaucratic system of domination may have supported maintaining a paradigm that promoted an ethic of the individual. Perhaps employees were resistant because they felt forced to work in teams. There may have been no real difference in the managerial roles and responsibilities even though the title changed from manager to team coach or team leader. There were not enough visible structural changes in the system that affected enough people to shift the culture. These issues may have contributed to maintaining a gap between the espoused team and the lived team experiences. The learning organization theory suggested a similar rationale to team authorities about implementation barriers. Helgeson’s (1995) research also cites organizational resistance and top management
preservation of power as factors preventing implementation of a web structure.

Another interpretation of the respondents' experience of being dominated may be linked to the theory and models of phases of group development and situational leadership. Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey (1977) developed a situational leadership model that suggests the most appropriate style: directing; coaching; supporting; or delegating, based on the situation. In *The Anatomy of High Performing Teams: A Leader's Handbook* (1985), Marilyn Laiken created a framework that interfaced these theories as a way to understand group experiences from the perspective of the leader and the members. The framework is the basis for leadership behaviours for teams and incorporates the behaviours of facilitation rather than traditional leadership as a developmental approach to group leadership. The application of this leadership framework to the respondents' experiences may suggest that the leadership of some of the teams was not matched with the needs of some of the team members at that particular time.

Participants described how they perceived their leadership styles. A synthesis of their leadership styles included the qualities: transparent; participative; encouraging differences; consensus seeking; inclusive; coach; mentor; and supportive. These characteristics are representative of the relational qualities of leadership described by team experts (Buchholz & Roth, 1987; Kormanski & Mozenter, 1987; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). These team experts also identified other things that a leader must do such as keep the purpose and goals of the team relevant, remove team obstacles, do real team work, and move decisions to appropriate locations. The participants also reported on gender differences in leadership styles. Perceptions of a male leadership style included an ability to delegate, and a command-and-control style.

Effective leadership in a team environment requires further exploration as it relates to discovering new organizational forms and new ways of conceptualizing teams. The term "medium as a metaphor for leader" proposed by Weick (1978) may be the starting point in pursuing this area. The research by Bradshaw (1992), Marshall (1984), and Korabik and Ayman (1989), suggested androgyny as a possible alternative style.

The characteristics of the leadership styles of the respondents in this study have
similarities with those in Sally Helgeson’s study of female executives, their organizations, and web-style structures. The leaders in web structures are comfortable being in the centre of things, rather than at the top; they prefer building consensus to issuing orders, and develop a collegial atmosphere that supports a focus on what needs to be done rather than who has authority to do it. According to Sally Helgeson, women tend to have a more nurturing style of managing, which supports and creates an environment of participation, teamwork and empowerment. Terry described her style of leading a team as believing that,

> the best outcome from the team will be one where the leader clearly has the team understand what their task is going to be, and is supportive, and will ask ‘how can I help?’ rather than saying to the team ‘You will do this.’...a supportive role...I listen to what they say,...help them understand what their task is, to put them on the right track, and then let them go to get there by helping them whenever I can.

Research by Wageman (1997) on the critical success factors for creating successful self-managing teams offered an alternative insight into role role of leadership. Wageman suggested that consulting practices, skill assessment instruments, and training courses on the changing role of leadership in teams from directing and controlling to coaching have misplaced the emphasis on leader behaviour in teams. Rather, Wageman’s findings suggested that the seven critical elements of team design, while seemingly invisible, need to be addressed first, for hands on coaching to make a difference in team performance. One factor “rewards for team excellence” was reported by some of the respondents in the research in this dissertation as still rewarding individuals and not rewarding the work in teams enough. This illustrates a common error that Wageman (1997) found in reward system design—mixed rewards that send mixed signals that undermine a teams’ ability to operate effectively. It is difficult to know in what ways the other design factors may have influenced the respondents’ perceptions of being dominated and would necessitate further research.

Mills and Tancred’s (1992) criticism of organizational theory as gender blind is applicable here. We don’t really know about womens’ experiences because they are not reported in any of the research on teams and learning organizations. Research on women (Gilligan 1982; Miller 1976; Belenky et. al, 1986; Tannen, 1991) have documented womens’
experiences and perceptions as different from men's experiences. This current study, in a preliminary way, has surfaced a perceived gap in team theory and practice and suggests some interpretations of the gap in relationship to the conceptualization of team theory. Further research on teams investigating women's experiences is needed. Establishing ongoing processes for checking team effectiveness would help address gaps and differences experienced by individual team members. Examples of approaches include having a facilitator at team meetings to address issues as they occur, scheduling focus groups, holding dialogue sessions, and individual conversations.

5.3.5. Experiences that Described the Theme People’s Relationship to Work

People's relationship to work was characterized by productivity—action and inaction, decision-making, delegation, follow through, the role of leadership, establishing relationships, and building relationships. Most respondents reported that the women shared a more similar experience of these characteristics with other women in their team than they did with other men in their team.

Productivity

As discussed previously, there was not a great emphasis on productivity per se reported by the respondents regarding organizations' promise of teams: perceived team characteristics. Even though the participants in the study did not report very much about productivity, it is critical to business results and improving organizational effectiveness. Much of the team literature (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Beckhard, 1990, Lawler, 1990) emphasizes task-orientation and includes accountability for results in their definition of team performance. According to Katzenbach and Smith (1993), a team is committed to a common purpose and performance goals.

The data that surfaced about productivity described gender differences, with men being perceived as more action or output oriented and women as more process-oriented. One way of understanding this finding was discussed earlier under the perceived organizational team characteristics. The emphasis for many participants in describing the
characteristics was on relational aspects of a team rather than on productivity. Other factors relate to the broad nature of inquiry of this study. As this was a preliminary study investigating women’s experiences in teams it is unclear to what degree the findings were a factor linked to gender. Further research is needed with female and male participants that is more focused on specific team characteristics of productivity and performance. Wageman’s (1997) research indicated that a “clear, engaging direction” was one of the critical success factors for a team. Failure to set any direction and setting a direction that has excessive specifications for operating were common errors in setting direction in Wageman’s study. A possibility to consider is that poorly defined team goals and poorly defined organizational goals were factors in the respondents’ experiences in teams and thus influenced the reporting of those aspects in this research.

Decision-making

Some respondents described the “female” approach to decision-making as consensus seeking, inclusive, people oriented, and collaborative. Donna described her experience of decision-making.

We all equally contribute to the ideas. Our ideas are equally valued. I believe that we share equally in terms of how well that team operates...that we need to work collectively to operate effectively as a team. And so we share responsibility not only for the task but also for the relationship.

Other participants described a decision-making approach taken by some men as “command and control.”

The perception of the respondents’ experience of consensus decision making by women was in most cases aligned with the approach described in the literature on teams, learning organizations, and Helgeson’s (1990) leadership model. This experience also matched the organizations’ promise of teams: perceived team characteristics. Alternately, the command-and-control approach to decision making reportedly taken by some of the men was opposite to the decision making approaches described in the bodies of literature named above and the espoused organizational team.
The perceived difference reported by the respondents in female and male approaches to decision-making may be related to some other significant changes in the organization that are needed in order to institutionalize teams. Given that teams affect power, knowledge, and information and compensation systems, those team members who were managers prior to teams (both men and women), may resist changing their behaviours to be aligned with the values of the team approach. Heather perceived men “as more command and control in their approach, and perhaps are less comfortable in a team environment than women.”

Pitfalls of teams as identified in the team literature (Gordon, 1994; Lawler, 1990) may account for other explanations of these different approaches. For example, decision-making by consensus takes longer, and a compromise solution will be a second-rate answer as illustrated by Heather and Mary. “The time to get where you want to go...A sense overall that the decision-making process has a tendency to slow and then sometimes gets bogged down” (Heather). Mary reported on the negative aspects of teams.

So it’s slower, you get management by committee which reduces individual accountability and which ends up with bad decisions because nobody cares.
And it is frustrating because you can’t get to consensus.

Sinclair’s (1992) contention is that team ideology conceals conflict under the guise of consensus. Perhaps an underlying issue for the participants in this study was the dissonance between their relational values and their experience of opposite styles of decision-making approaches between the men and the women.

**Delegation**

Some respondents reported that they took a hands-on approach and were very involved, not letting go of the work. They did not delegate. Others reported that men delegated more effectively; men only took on so much responsibility and then turned the work over or let it go. The experience of delegation generally was perceived as different for women and men.

Laiken’s (1985) framework provided a perspective for interpreting the differences in delegation. Group theory acknowledges that groups experience phases of identifying with,
rejecting, and working through relations with authority issues. Perhaps the teams in this study were exhibiting some of the characteristics of Tuckman's (1997) storming phase of group development. Issues such as confrontation with the leader(s); struggles about control; resisting group influence; or, struggling over dependence-interdependence issues with leadership. Failure to address these task and process issues may have affected the development of the teams that the respondents worked in and thus affected the degree of delegation.

Time is required to accomplish team transition. Difficulties surrounding the transfer of power and decision-making authority from managers to work teams may explain the different experiences of delegation reported by the respondents. Orsburn, Moran, Musselwhite, & Zenger, in *Self-Directed Work Teams* (1990), described a five stage model outlining how a team takes on increasing authority to make decisions within a two to five year period. The organizations from which the respondents for this study were selected had, in most of the cases, implemented teams for four or five years, and therefore should have evolved to Stage 5 where self-directed teams take total responsibility, and managers function as coaches. However, just as the team literature reviewed in Chapter 2 identified a lack of a common definition of a team, the respondents' perceptions of their organizations' definition of team and their understanding of how teams would operate suggested some ambiguity. The model outlining the transfer of power and decision making authority applies to self-directed teams and it is not clear from the findings in this study to what degree self-directed teams were implemented.

Both the model of stages of transfer of power and decision-making authority described by Orsburn, Moran, Musselwhite, and Zenger (1990) and Laiken's (1985) developmental approach to group leadership through facilitation are aligned and provide a way of understanding the perceived team experiences of the respondents.

The behaviour of staying involved, or holding onto work was experienced by some of the respondents as illustrated by Kathy "I think I confuse team members by giving too much direction or assuming too much control...sometimes being a bit controlling." These behaviours may be connected to the degree of a feeling of support. The less support that is
felt, the stronger may be the need to hold on to the work and to be in control.

The findings of establishing and building relationships that were exhibited by women may also be linked to these behaviours. Women perceived themselves exhibiting these roles; however they did not report men exhibiting them. These maintenance roles involved attending to inclusion, participation, resolving conflict, and bonding. Women in mixed gender teams may not have felt supported by men, and therefore contributed to the behaviour of holding on in order to maintain a sense of power and equality.

A number of possible explanations for the respondents' experiences of delegation have been briefly presented; however more specific research is needed with teams that have clear definitions and guidelines for operating.

5.4. Conclusion—Barriers to Implementation

This chapter has been a discussion and interpretation of the team experiences of women in organizations. The analysis was presented within a conceptual framework of espoused theory: the organizations' promise of teams and theory-in-action: teams-in-practice: women's experiences. This design facilitated communicating the dissonance of the experiences of teams as perceived by the participants. There was a perceived gap between the promise of team and the teams in practice.

The mission, vision, and value statements of the organizations in this research implied team structures as a way of accomplishing work and enhancing organizational performance. There were reports by respondents that in a broad sense, teamwork was embraced in the cultures of their organizations.

The findings suggested that the organizations in this study had been attempting to make some of the structural changes determined necessary by the literature to support the successful implementation of teams. However, some of the respondents, in describing their experiences, reported that the changes made and experienced were not significant enough, that they did not go far enough. The expectations created by the organizations' promise of teams and the mixed team experiences contributed to a perception held by some of the respondents that questioned the intention behind the implementation of teams in the first
place and that contributed to disappointment.

Why the necessary changes were not made or completed is unknown. And what degree of hierarchical structure was maintained as teams were implemented in the organizations was also not clear. One possibility for understanding this gap between the perceived promise and the teams-in-practice may be linked to the theme people's relationship to work and specifically the characteristic of productivity, which was discussed previously. Perhaps there was a perception that the hierarchical structure was important to ensure productivity in the organization.

Wageman's (1997) argument of the increasing number of organizations that are disenchanted with teams is applicable to some of the organizations represented in this study. The respondents' teams had been implemented from a minimum of one and one half years to a maximum of ten years, yet two of the organizations had been in existence for over 100 years. Eleanor perceived a cultural resistance to change in her work in her organization. While her work was

to lead the culture to a more egalitarian, team-oriented, less hierarchical model...the culture is entrenched in a traditional top down, male-oriented power-based paradigm, exhibiting lots of resistance to change, and lots of reliance on how things have been done before and always have been done that way.

Team authors (Buchholz & Roth, 1987; Lawler, 1986) cite that successful team implementation can often occur more frequently in greenfield sites, which are organizations or divisions that are starting from scratch in their design of structures and practices as well as the recruitment and hiring of employees. These organizations or divisions are unencumbered by organizational history and culture.

Another factor affecting team implementation may relate to the team definitions. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) suggested that although executives in organizations share and advocate teamwork, the use of “team” by executives who call for entire organizations to become a “team” has created confusion and misunderstanding about teams. They are really promoting teamwork values. Such may have been the case in Gwen's organization as she described how the vision of team was operationalized by a name “a world of networks.” This
symbolized "in a real broad sense" teamwork for Gwen, but the extent to which team was operationalized is questionable. Contributing to the ambiguity of team definitions is the fact that the language used to describe a team varied across the organizations. Some respondents did not differentiate between the terms “team,” “committee,” and “task force,” while others saw a clear distinction.

Other possible explanations for what contributed to preventing the as yet successful institutionalization of teams may be found in some of the feminist literature and some of the learning organization literature. Both bodies of literature address the need for a fundamental shift in how we think about organizations and the way they are managed. The values of the learning organization and feminist models are incompatibility with hierarchies.

Feminist paradigms provide insight into what prevents the shift to teams. Research by Mills and Tancred (1992) suggested that traditional approaches to organizational theory are gender blind, and thus contribute to misinterpreting how organizations operate. Radical feminist thinkers have explored the nature of organizations and found that problems do exist, that present-day organizations do discriminate, that they do devalue characteristics and behaviours attributed stereotypically to females, and that they tend to perpetuate inequalities.

According to Ferguson (1984), in her critique of bureaucracy, we must move outside of bureaucracies to create these feminist alternatives—organizations where power and leadership can be shared collectively—as she does not see the possibility of creating these alternatives from within. Organizations, in their efforts to create an environment of empowerment, have opted to restructure into teams. Ferguson states:

Feminism and organizational theory need each other. In order for feminists to construct an adequate theory of domination and liberation, we must deal with bureaucratic modes of power; in order for analysts of modern organizations to develop an adequate critique of bureaucracy, they need to consider a feminist perspective (1984, p.5).

If the foundation of a team, its structure, its mode of operating, and its boundaries are just a mini organization within a bureaucracy, then the ability to thrive and significantly influence the rest of the organization and to have the freedom to emerge and change itself is limited. Bureaucracies are not likely to disappear. The foundation of religious institutions,
the family, the educational system, as well as the workplace in western society are bureaucratic. To deconstruct these systems “en masse” would probably lead to a collapse of the economy. What this points to is a contradiction within the whole intention for the creation of teams in the first place.

Helgeson’s (1995) differentiation of a team from a web addresses this contradiction. Like team learning (Senge, 1991), webs help transform the organization. Teams, if only driven by ends, cannot affect the organizational structure. However, a challenge presents itself about what difference would exist if teams embodied the characteristics of women-centred approaches and the qualities of the learning organization. Perhaps the emergence of new organizational forms could be possible.

With a starting point that began with listening to women’s voices, women’s unique perspectives, grounded in their experience, this study aimed to understand women’s experiences as members of organizational teams. Understanding the assumptions women have about teams can help practitioners develop strategies that integrate women’s perspectives, and possibly lead to new and alternative ways of perceiving and creating teams in organizations that are beneficial to both women and men. (These are reported in Chapter 6). Support for this approach appeared in the work by Anne Wilson Schaef in the writing of Women’s Reality: An emerging female system in a white male society, (1981, p. 144), “that rather than seeing the differences between men and women as threats, we have much to gain by viewing them as opportunities for growth” (Dempsey & Reynolds, June 1990).
CHAPTER SIX
Conclusions

This chapter reviews the purpose and the findings of this dissertation. An outline of practical implications of this study are presented as an outcome of understanding women’s experience in teams and organizations. Consideration for the practitioner’s role in the implementation of teams is addressed. Reflections on the implications of the research methodology and reflections on the research questions are reported. Areas for future research and educational recommendations are suggested.

6.1. Purpose and Findings of the Dissertation

The objective of this dissertation was to understand women’s experiences as members of teams in organizations. The goals included an exploration of the perceptions of women’s experiences in relation to the teams, to gender, and to organizational culture. The issues were studied from a qualitative perspective with an underlying rationale based on the theoretical perspective of phenomenology. There were a small number of female research participants, who were in either middle or senior management positions and who worked in organizations that espoused a team-based approach towards accomplishing work. The research subjects, working in a total of six research sites, participated in face-to-face interviews that were open-ended and semi-structured in order to help the participants reveal their lived experience of working in teams. The analysis was conducted manually and involved coding the participants’ words to discover meaning about their understanding of teams. The primary objective was to capture the reality of team experiences as perceived by the participants.

The findings of the study were discussed in the context of the relationships and gaps between women’s perceptions of the espoused organizational idea of teams in their organization, and the real experiences of teams. A review of the team experiences described in chapter four were clustered around four general themes: sense of support; exercising
power; people's relationship to work; and organizational culture. These themes and their related threads from the findings chapter are displayed in Figure 3 located on page 93.

6.2. Reflections on the Research Methodology and the Research Question

The research applied the qualitative inquiry method to understand, in a preliminary way, how women perceived team experiences in organizations that espoused a team-based approach. I synthesized the respondents' perceptions and investigated what the experience meant to them. In the process of investigating women's experiences of teams in hierarchical organizations, I now realize that much of the research was actually exploring ways in which the participants were confronting the promise(s) of the “team” experience as espoused by their organizations.

The research question evolved as a parallel process with the change in my understanding and comprehension of this study. As reported in Chapter 1, this research initially began with my focus on teams in hierarchical organizations, as perceived by the respondents. This study was important due to several factors. Previous team research had been limited or had not included women's experiences and perspectives. Management has popularized the implementation of team structures in their attempts to maintain or gain a competitive advantage in a global economy. There is an increasing number of women in the workforce whose voice deserves to be acknowledged, accepted, and incorporated into organizational ways and practices. My initial investigative position was to explore the experiences of women in teams. This encompassed an attempt to better understand the extent to which the espoused theory of team, or the promise of team, was lived out, and was actually experienced in mainstream organizations from the perspectives of women.

Within my own process of trying to understand this study, a reconceptualization of the more critical issue as reported by the respondents caused me to reflect on the thesis question. As the women talked and I was able to listen, it became clearer that the issues of meaning for the respondents in this study were situated in the larger organizational system. My understanding of what this thesis was really about changed to the broader issue about women's expectations and their role in organizations. The team as a structure was important,
and will contribute to the understanding of women’s experience in the organization. Disentangling the participants’ expectations created by the organizations’ promise of teams, necessitated understanding the significance, scope, and meaning of that promise. Listening to their positive experiences and to their disappointments, and hearing stories of unmet expectations in the team as an intervention surfaced the greater issues of the role of women in organizations in the 1990s.

I started out in Chapter 1 by asking the question about how women experienced teams, and now in Chapter 6 it has become clear, based on what I have learned through my research, that one of the questions that I would now ask is an expansion of women’s experience in the context of membership, roles, power, for example, in the organization. A future research question, a restatement of the research question now, is in the broader context “what is the experience of women in organizations in the 1990s.” This refocussing is to be expected given the nature of qualitative research and a phenomenological methodology.

The original research question was to understand women’s experiences as members of teams as they are applied in organizations. The goals included an exploration of the perceptions of their experiences in relation to the teams, to gender, and to organizational culture.

Another conclusion of this research relates to our understanding and conceptualization of teams, and how people talk about teams. What was espoused in theory about teams was different than what was experienced (to a degree) in this research study. Teams may be theoretically designed, however the utopian theory which seems relational or humanistic may not be able to be implemented in a hierarchical organization. It is more appropriate to conceptualize the theory as a sports model as opposed to a humanistic theory or relational model. As teams are implemented into organizations the promise of teams needs to be dispelled, cast off, or, at least the premise that the team will not be actualized as it is envisioned needs to be conveyed. As is the case with learning organizations perhaps a “team” is something to strive toward but never achieved.

In reflecting on the findings of this study I have conceptualized a team model based on my own experiences in sport which provides another interpretation of the findings in this
study. A definition of this sport model is "a group of individuals who come together to complete a task or a competition." Elements of this sport model includes the following aspects and characteristics: goal-oriented—above all else performance matters; collaborative within the team and competitive with other teams; a designated leader; members have clearly defined roles; hierarchy exists within the team as well as in the external larger system.

Power and control rests with the coach(es) and occasionally the team captain(s). A critical element for high performance sport teams is practice which includes a number of components: fitness, sport specific activity training and skill development, cross training of elements with other sports, modified games or activities, and mental training and visualization.

Prior to the start of the game, the strategy to be implemented, and the structure or system to be played outlining the positions and roles assigned, are clearly defined. During the game the execution of roles is understood by the players. Tactical and strategic adjustments are made throughout the competition and particularly at designated time outs. Post game evaluation and analysis of performance occurs immediately following the competition and often for days following. Elaborate tools and techniques for generating feedback, such as video taping, are utilized to enhance performance.

Various sports reflect elements of these characteristics. Baseball reflects: members playing fixed roles for themselves; leaders are defined in a hierarchy and are called "coaches", who have defined authority and decision making responsibilities. Soccer: everyone plays together; dynamic; roles are fixed and includes specialty roles.

The reality for many of the participants in this study was that their team experiences were more closely matched with this "sport model" or perhaps some combination of what may be considered as the difference between the espoused team theory and theory in action. The participants seemed to have agreed with the organizations' espoused team, which matched the team theory, but their experiences in many ways did not match the theory. One conclusion, then, is to acknowledge that, yes, it is difficult to implement teams in hierarchies according to the definitions of the team theory and organization literature. According to the literature, teams should be a vehicle for empowering women and others. Many of the
findings in this research suggested that teams were not structures that were empowering. Future action research needs to address this lack of clarity about definitions of teams. Theoretical team definitions may be different from the practice. Reducing the gap between the idea of team and the experience of team will contribute to establishing the team as a viable and credible unit.

6.3. The Organization Development Practitioner’s Role in the Implementation of Teams

The organization development practitioner specializes in OD as a profession and may be either an internal or external consultant who offers professional services to organizational clients. The “practitioner” may also apply to people with expertise in fields related to OD such as reward systems, career planning and development. The term can also be applied to managers and administrators who have competence in OD and who apply it in their work. As a practitioner in the field of organizational development, I have been reflecting on some of the following considerations regarding the implementation of teams. The consultant needs to bring a mixture of knowledge, skills, and tools to help an organization and its members who are considering implementing team structures. These may include team-building activities, an understanding of what makes an effective team, skill in facilitation and/or the ability to teach facilitation.

The determination of the definition of “team” provides important contexting for an organization. Adopting a definition of team from the theory can serve as a starting point for each organization. The team definition and model can be further developed and reconceptualized to specifically support the organization. For example including personal definitions of teams. The underlying values of the team definition and the fit with the organizational culture needs to be defined. The practice of teams - what teams will look like needs to closely match the definition.

A systemic understanding of the implications of teams and what needs to change, such as reward and compensation systems, recruiting practices, and technology, is needed. Further, the consultant can help the decision makers of the organization understand what “buying in” to teams really implies. Awareness of the potential damage that could result,
without the necessary commitment and the resources to support all the system changes needs to be developed. The establishment of organizational benchmarks, and ways to measure the success of teams are important considerations as part of the overall planning phase for the team implementation strategy.

Team Implementation—a “Work in Progress” can be a helpful message to communicate to the members of the organization. For example the transition from traditional hierarchical organizational structures to teams is a journey—probably one that never ends.

As a consultant working with an organization, there is value in developing an ongoing relationship with the client to periodically audit and take stock of the progress of the team implementation. This means examining what is working, what is not working, and determining what needs to change. Then, the development of strategies and action steps to successfully achieve those changes is required. One example of such a strategy is auditing organizational practices and policies to ensure they are aligned with the team vision, to produce a reflective progress report that considers not only the teams, but also the organizational context and the external environment. This reflective report could be the basis for determining appropriate interventions to support and facilitate the implementation of teams. This would also serve as visible signs of commitment by senior management.

In order to create a team environment in which female members feel supported this study implies several interventions at an individual level, a team level and an organizational level:

- A thorough orientation to team concepts to establish a common ground for understanding the meaning and the function of what a team means in the new organization. This could be achieved in several ways, one of which is an experiential simulation involving the whole organization working in teams, taking on new roles in a team culture. The objective of orientation activities is to help organizational members start to understand the implications of implementing teams;
- Just-in-time training to learn and practise group process skills;
- Training in facilitation skills for team members;
A change in the environment. The environment in the organization must reinforce behaviours the organization wants to encourage, and create new systems and modify existing systems to help sustain the team structures;

Creation of support systems and training to help with role changes from traditional manager to team facilitator.

6.4. Recommendations for Future Research and Educational Recommendations

Suggested areas of focus for further research and educational recommendations include:

- Organizational change and structure: the influence of gender composition, and organizational position of team members on organizational change and structure.

- Team implementation and the “manager”. Future team research needs to address the validity of the role of the “manager” in a team structure. The particular team model, a sport model or a model based on feminist principles, and the associated expectations and assumptions, will influence the “manager’s” role.

- Women in power: Influence of the number of women in senior decision-making positions—could be tracked through the case study method.

- Team-building activities: Informal bonding activities in teams and how they are experienced from a gender perspective (ie. golf and its increased popularity with women) could be explored.

- Men on teams: Case Studies on the experiences of men on teams in organizations using specific samples such as men who have major care-giving responsibilities, could be explored.

- Further research on women’s voices and being heard in the context of teams or organizations in order to determine if a gender bias exists, or if a lack of skill exists in advocating ideas.
6.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the purpose of the study and summarized the findings of the dissertation. The role of the practitioner was addressed in response to the findings of the study. Reflections on the research were also addressed, and suggestions for further research were listed.
References


Books on GETTING AHEAD IN A MAN'S WORLD


Letter of Introduction

234 Cottingham Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4V 1C6
Phone: 416-922-6452

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about research that I will be conducting with some members of your organization.

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. My Supervisor is Professor Lynn Davie at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and can be reached at (416) 923-6641 ext. 2355.

I have been studying the Development of Human Resources and am particularly interested in the nature and application of teams in organizations. My research purpose is to describe the experiences of women who work in teams in organizations, and how teams might be different if women's experiences and perceptions are acknowledged and fully incorporated into the teams in organizations. A number of women will be involved in this research project, selected from private organizations that utilize a team based approach towards accomplishing work. I will be interviewing some participants from your organization. The name of the organization will not be used and the participants will remain anonymous.

If you wish further information about this research please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Nancy Thomson
Letter of Introduction and Consent Form

234 Cottingham Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4V 1C6
Phone: 416-922-6452

Dear

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. My Supervisor is Professor Lynn Davie at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and can be reached at (416) 923-6641 ext. 2355.

I have been studying the Development of Human Resources and am particularly interested in the nature and application of teams in organizations. My research purpose is to describe the experiences of women who work in teams in organizations, and how teams might be different if women's experiences and perceptions are acknowledged and fully incorporated into the teams in organizations. A number of women will be involved in this research project, selected from private organizations that utilize a team based approach towards accomplishing work.

I would like your consent to be interviewed as one of the participants. Your involvement would mean agreeing to a taped interview (1-2 hours) which would be transcribed, coded and analysed.

The topics that will be covered in the interview include general questions about the organization culture and the kinds of teams that exist; and specific questions about individual team experiences - your perceptions about how teams operate, your experience of being a women on a team, empowerment on teams, learning in teams, team roles, satisfaction with team work, team roles.

You will have an opportunity to read the transcript from your interview so that we could clarify your meaning.

The benefits of your involvement in this study will be the opportunity to reflect and share these experiences. Both the participants and organizations will be anonymous.

I don't foresee any risk involved to the participants but to protect your privacy, your name will be anonymous in all of the data. It is understood that, should you participate in this project, you would be free to withdraw from it at any time. If you were to withdraw, all data collected from you would be destroyed.
At the conclusion of this project all tapes will be erased. Tapes and transcripts from interviews will be kept secure at all times to ensure confidentiality. Transcripts and data analysis will be kept yet confidentiality will be maintained for a period of one year following acceptance of the thesis.

If you are willing to participate, please read and sign the consent form in the space provided below and return the signed copy of this letter to me.

Sincerely,

Nancy Thomson

Dear Nancy:

I have read the attached letter which describes the research project you intend to implement and I agree to participate. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

Date: ___________ \ Signature: ___________
Interview Guide

Interview Questions:

A. General questions about the organization and teams.
Tell me about the culture of the organization in which you work?
Describe it.
Do you have a mission/vision/values statement or credo?
Are teams referred to in these documents?
Tell me about the teams that exist in your organization.
Describe them.
Why were teams chosen -- what was the rationale for implementation?
How were teams started?
Who led the organization through this change?
How was work reorganized?
How long have teams been in existence?

B. Specific questions about individual team experiences.
Think of an experience in which you were a member of a team in an organization.
- Recall what kind of team it is/was.
- how did you become a member (selection criteria, volunteer, mandatory)?
- was it ongoing, or constructed for special purposes (time lined)?
- rewards?

If I were to observe this team in action, what kinds of things would I see?
- meetings or individual work?
- number of people, female/male make-up?
- how does work get accomplished?
- is there a designated leader or is leadership shared? how is leadership determined?
- who controls the agenda? how is it constructed?
- are there assigned roles, and how they determined? what roles?
- what do you experience when you speak in the team -- how are your ideas received?
listened to? what do you notice when other team members speak -- do you perceive any
differences in yourself or how you are perceived by others, depending on the gender mix?
- describe the atmosphere, the climate of the team.
- describe what the relationships are like amongst the team members.
- team name?
- is there a way of measuring your accomplishments?
- how are decisions made?
- is there conflict amongst the team members -- how are they resolved?
- rewards and recognition:
  - how do team members reward and recognize each other?
  - how does the organization reward and recognize team members?
  - is there a difference in how men and women are rewarded and recognized?

Describe your experience of being a woman on a team.
Do you feel empowered on the team? (Definition of Empowerment: capacity to affect or influence change in some way; being in touch with and accessing internal resources to create your own destiny; self determination.)
What factors contribute to you either feeling empowered or disempowered?

What have you learned about yourself about being on a team:
of all women?,
or of mixed men and women?

What do you think others have learned about being on a team:
of all women?,
or of mixed men and women?

Do you think that men and women are treated equally as team members?
In what ways are they treated the same? differently?

Are there special roles that you see women taking on in teams? (relationship vs. task)
If yes, what contributes to taking on these special roles?
What does it feel like to work in a team?
(I want to get at women's socialization issues -- feelings of being connected, cooperation vs competition.)

Think about one specific or many team experience(s).
What factors contribute to your satisfaction or dissatisfaction as it relates to being a woman on a team? (not at all/very little satisfaction/somewhat/extremely satisfying)
Comment on what contributes to your ranking. (Is the work assigned appropriate to a team environment?) (Are sufficient resources allocated to support the work?) (Are the right people assigned?)
Ranked from highly satisfying to dissatisfying, how much did your ranking have to do with gender? Other things? Explain.

How does the culture support or drive team behaviour?
- look at behaviours in teams.
- are there differences between men and women (around relationship vs task)?
- core elements in teams: roles, influence, decision making, influence as leadership, disclosure, climate setting, norms, relationship skills, analytical & problem solving skills
Questions about learning and reflection:
Is learning part of the goal of your team?
Is reflection an agenda item?
How does the environment facilitate/support learning?
(Need to look at external focus -- the culture, sponsorship: formal vs informal as team experiences may vary widely in an organization.)