Rationalizing values: global diffusion, global professionals, and truth commissions

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Dissertation

RATIONALIZING VALUES: GLOBAL DIFFUSION, GLOBAL PROFESSIONALS, AND TRUTH COMMISSIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I explore global diffusion, rationalization, and the role global professionals play within both these processes. The main question I explore in this dissertation is: What role do global professionals play in the global diffusion and rationalization of formal structures? Within global diffusion studies, professions and professionals feature prominently. However, the literature says little about how formal structures become rationalized or, in other words, the process by which organizations, principles, and practices are rationalized. In addition, the specific, concrete ways that global professionals contribute to and partake in this diffusion is left relatively vague. My dissertation fills this gap in the literature.

To do this, I focus on the new global professional field of transitional justice and, specifically, the diffusion and rationalization of truth commissions, a main mechanism of transitional justice. I draw on ethnographic and archival data derived from a year of internship within a leading transitional justice organization that works on truth commissions. I discuss the unintentional role that values play in provoking global professionals to rationalize and the consequences this rationalization has had on the
diffusion of truth commissions, the values and culture of the organization, and the identity of the professionals.

Theoretically, the dissertation contributes to scholarship on global diffusion and global professionals, specifically world polity theory. Empirically, the dissertation illuminates possible pitfalls non-profit organizations may fall into that subvert their foundational values and therefore offer a different approach to understanding organizational 'failures' and their potential fixes. Throughout the dissertation, I hope to highlight the import of values, both in being a driving force behind social action and within organizations, particularly those with humanitarian objectives. I also aim to make clear the precariousness of values and thus the critical need to think seriously about how they can be maintained as organizations grow, mature, and diffuse principles and practices.
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>DME</td>
<td>Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOP</td>
<td>Standard Operating Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCC</td>
<td>Truth Commission Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRC</td>
<td>Truth and Reconciliation Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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CHAPTER 1
TRUTH COMMISSIONS IN SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: CONTEXT, CASE, AND THEORY

I. Introduction

...ideas are definitely unstable, they not only can be misused, they invite misuse – and the better the idea the more volatile it is. That’s because only the better ideas turn into dogma, and it is this process whereby a fresh, stimulating, humanly helpful idea is changed into robot dogma that is deadly. The problem starts at the secondary level, not with the originator or developer of the idea but with the people who are attracted by it, who adopt it, who cling to it until their last nail breaks, and who invariably lack the overview, flexibility, imagination, and, most importantly, sense of humor, to maintain it in the spirit in which it was hatched. Ideas made by masters, dogma by disciples, and the Buddha is always killed on the road.
Still Life with Woodpecker - Tom Robbins

On my first day of work at the Truth Commission Center (TCC), I arrived at 9:05am, very anxious that I was late for the beginning of a workday in one of the most business-oriented cities in the world. But then, I couldn’t get into the building. The security guard on the first floor told me I needed an electronic pass. I told him it was my first day, so he gave me a nametag that said: “Hello, My name is,” I wrote my name on it, and he allowed me to go through the turnstiles to the elevators. I went to the 11th floor where the TCC is located. But, again, I needed the electronic pass to get in. There was a doorbell-looking button outside the two large glass doors that had “Truth Commission Center” etched into them. I pressed it but no one came. I peered through the glass and saw a formal front desk area but no one was there. The office was dark. I noticed a sign
saying that there was a receptionist on the floor above. I took the stairs up. Again, the
locked glass doors created a barrier between the hallway and a front desk area and, again,
no one was there and the lights were off. However, I could see bookshelves filled with
transitional justice literature - much of which I had read: “Truth, Justice and
Reconciliation,” “Unspeakable Truths,” “The Road to Freedom.” I also saw framed
posters that had words like “Justice” and “Truth and Reconciliation.” Truth commission,
transitional justice, and reparation reports and pamphlets were fanned out on a table in
front of a couch and two chairs - like in a doctor’s waiting room. But there was no sign of
any people. It was now 9:30am. I was surprised. Where was everyone at 9:30am on a
Monday?

At 10:15am, after I had gone down for coffee, emailed my supervisor from the
cafe to let me know when he arrived, and returned to the glass doors, I was able to get in
to the TCC when someone went to the bathroom. My supervisor arrived shortly after that
and told me that no one arrives really until 10ish, that a 'late start' was acceptable at the
TCC. Initially, this confounded me: how could such a prominent organization, nestled in
a fancy building within a city where it was not uncommon for people to begin their work
day at 7am and end at 9pm, endorse a casual "late start?"

Although this detail of a "late start" may seem unimportant, I later came to
understand it as one of the last surviving features of a dying culture, but one that TCC
professionals were desperately trying to hold on to - a culture where rules were sparse so
that ideals and innovation could flourish without restraint, where passion and
perseverance were nurtured and not micromanaged, and where the "right" thing to do was
not limited by the bottom-line or donor interests. I understand this to be a "culture of charisma," drawing on Weber's concept of charisma as characterized by a prophetic, creative spirit that dislodges traditional rules and stands in opposition to bureaucracy. A "late start" symbolized this culture and yet by the time I arrived at the TCC, almost 10 years after the professional field of transitional justice was established and the TCC had been founded, it was one of the only aspects of this culture that remained. The TCC had undergone a rationalized transition.

In this dissertation I probe the question: How does global rationalization happen? Specifically, I examine one aspect of global rationalization - the role global professionals play in the global diffusion of rationalized structures. Although rationalization as an outcome has featured prominently in global diffusion studies, the literature says little about how formal structures become rationalized; or, in other words, the process by which organizations, principles, and practices are rationalized. In addition, within global diffusion studies, professions and professionals are understood to play a key role in the diffusion of rationalized structures. However, the specific and concrete ways that global professionals contribute to and partake in this diffusion are left relatively vague. I find that global professionals unintentionally provoke and expedite processes of rationalization. In an attempt to fight decoupling (the disconnecting of principles and practices) and the loss of their foundational beliefs, objectives, and mission - problems that arise when organizational structures or innovations are globally diffused and adopted, global professionals develop techniques to secure the integrity and maintain the "coupling" of their principles and practices. However, these techniques ultimately
standardize the organization and its work in ways that, ironically, undermine the very mission and objective the professionals are trying to preserve. In this sense, I find that global professionals are not driven by norms or self-interest, as the literature proposes, but rather they are driven by value-rational action. It is precisely because global professionals are so committed to their professional ideals that they work so hard to develop ways to maintain them throughout the diffusion process. And yet, it is this very effort that provokes rationalization and the subversion of their ideals.

For organizations and professions with philanthropic missions and humanitarian objectives, this insight is particularly critical and dire; thus, I argue that more research is required concerning how organizations may be able to expand and grow, and therein diffuse their principles and practices, without recourse to rationalizing techniques so that their ideals can be upheld and implemented.

II. Culture and Context

The initial culture of the TCC was created as the professional field of transitional justice solidified, the TCC opened its doors, and truth commissions became a dominant approach to transitional justice. The culture’s creation was a product of the proponents of the field and the founding members of the TCC - a group of young, smart activists with abundant funding and a strong mission. It was also a product of the time - almost two decades worth of serious organizing around human rights initiatives had not managed to eradicate injustice - it wasn’t that human rights were passé but rather that the U.N’s bureaucratic and universalist model was. A new way of approaching human rights and
peace was needed, and rules, regulations, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) were not on the agenda.

The mission of the burgeoning professional field, the TCC and, ultimately, of all truth commissions was to help countries transition from repressive regimes to democratic ones and to redress human rights violations under these regimes in culturally sensitive and context specific ways. The creed was not “truth commissions for all” or “one size fits all” - truth commissions were understood as one way to help a country transition, but not the only way, and there was not just one way to have a truth commission. This was the field’s organizing principle - the axiomatic truth that governed the environment and the culture of the TCC (Gusterson 1996). In other words, if culture is, following Geertz, the “webs of significance that humans are suspended in and which they themselves spun,” (1973, 5) then their culture was the belief that mechanisms could be established that promoted justice and restored dignity to victims and that assistance did not have to be entirely home grown or imperialistic, but it had to context specific. At the dawn of the 21st Century, it was clear that conflicts were not results of entirely national problems but, rather, the products of complex sets of global and local issues, and therefore a complex set of both local and global solutions was required. This was not top down development or bottom up development; transitional justice and the TCC offered a new, third way. And these professionals’ ability to help establish those mechanisms and assist those countries was not based on academic credentials, a formal, institutionalized professional path, or national or local roots. It was based on their own personal experience as activists
within different conflict contexts, before the professional field of transitional justice emerged. What brought this group of people together were their shared ideals.

By the time I left the TCC, almost 10 years after the professional field was established and the TCC had been founded, this culture had undergone a rationalized transition and truth commissions themselves had taken on an almost formulaic structure and their use had become a taken-for-granted step in post-conflict reconstruction. The very bureaucratic culture that the TCC had been created in opposition to was precisely what characterized the environment. In fact, the first assignment I was given at the TCC was to do research on mandates that created “successful” truth commissions versus ones that created “unsuccessful” truth commissions. The final objective of this research was to create a “best practices” manual for governments and stakeholders involved in peace agreements to follow when establishing a peace agreement. Clearly, some definitional understandings, norms, and rules had been established. In other words, the TCC was creating SOPs. Why and how did this shift occur? And in what ways was it being negotiated?

In the year I was there, much of what I worked on was the consolidation of information (past experiences, best practices, values, clear principles) into standards that were easily distributable, teachable, reproducible, and diffusible. I was part of the process by which an idea (truth commissions) was objectified, i.e. developed and embedded into solid and durable social artifacts - the procedures essential to rationalization (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000, 699). However, at the same time, almost in the same breath, I was told that there was no “one recipe” for a good truth commission and that a “successful
truth commission” couldn’t really be defined or wasn’t one thing. How could these both simultaneously be true? I came to realize that it wasn’t that people were lying or that one was true and the other wasn’t. Rather, the institutional logic was shifting in ways that they had not intended and which did not make sense within the initial value system, so it could not be made sense of or be accounted for yet. I understand this shift to be the result of rationalization, which these professionals played an unintended (and unwanted) but integral role in, ironically, through trying to preserve the foundational values of the field.

Truth commissions are a clear case of rationalization, as understood from the world polity perspective. Since the first officially recognized truth commission in 1974 (Uganda) there have been 44 Truth Commissions; 37 of these have been since 1990, and 25 of these have been since 2000. Truth commissions have become internationally diffused, endorsed, and adopted at lightning speed, and have quickly changed from being an innovative ideal for dealing with atrocities and redressing human rights violations to a standard, normative mechanism of transitional justice complete with best practice manuals, codes of conduct, and sanctioned operating procedures. Their global diffusion and adoption is not because they have been proven particularly effective and/or efficient at meeting their mandated objectives but, rather, because they have come to symbolically embody global and cultural scripts and norms, so their adoption signals international legitimacy (Boli and Thomas 1997; 1999; Drori, Meyer, and Hwang 2006; Meyer, 1980; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Meyer et al. 1991). However, literature on global culture, global diffusion, and global norms has tended to focus more on the motivations (norms and/or self-interest) and outcomes (isomorphism and/or accumulation of power) of
rationalization rather than the process by which rationalization occurs. As a result, the actual social construction of rationalization is bypassed, as are a number of insights gained when you look at the process. By “social construction of rationalization” I mean here to highlight the very social nature of rationalization. Rationalization is a social process - propelled by and rooted in social action, which over time becomes taken for granted. Rather than a natural or inevitable phenomenon that occurs outside of human conduct.

In this dissertation, I look at the specific role TCC professionals played in the rationalization of truth commissions. The rationalization of truth commissions is inextricably linked to the professionals who helped to establish the professional field of transitional justice and the TCC, one of the leading organizations within this professional field. Therefore, I examine one aspect of the process by which the rationalization of truth commissions was socially constructed. If we are to address the fundamental issue in all constructive social analysis, i.e. how social reality in general, and institutions in particular, come into being due to various forms and practices of objectification, then we need to be able to capture the forms and mechanisms by which original ideas, ideals, or haphazard modes of action gradually become embedded in social contexts (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000, 704). I understand rationalization to be a form of institutionalization in which the particular characteristics of predictability, efficiency, objectivity, and control (the “form”) become so imbedded into various social spaces that they are taken for granted and become normative (the “institutionalization”). I trace the on-the-ground mechanisms and practices by which TCC professionals assisted in developing truth
commissions from a new, innovative ideal to a normative rationalized standard. By taking a micro perspective, I am able to "come closer to the social and cognitive means and procedures underlying the rationalized beliefs and schemes of action" (Hasselblad and Kallinikos 2000, 700).

In many ways, the story I am about to tell is an old one, one that is well known to any sociologist and one that has been retold many times within different empirical contexts. It is Weber’s tale of the rationalization of charisma as told in The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism, yet I believe the story still has significant import today. In particular, by telling the story within the framework of today’s globalized world and specifically within the context of human rights as a professional enterprise, I believe critical theoretical and empirical insights are gained. My research shows that, contrary to the expectations of much global organizational literature, truth commission professionals are not simple norm carriers with similar education and training backgrounds, hoping to advance their careers through promoting truth commissions. Rather I find that TCC professionals are, what I call, First Generation True Believers. I call them this because they are the first group of professionals involved in transitional justice work as it came together as a professional field - they weren’t trained or schooled in a particular way but, rather, they all were motivated by deeply held values that, in Weber’s words, “called” them to this particular work. These same values - the values of redressing human rights violations, victims’ rights, and context specificity - were the foundational values of truth commissions and therein informed the mandates and objectives. Their diverse backgrounds of nationality, education, political participation, and career trajectory mean
that they do not share a common, institutionalized professional path, as the scholarship on
global professionals would predict, namely world polity theory and conflict theory. They
do, however, share a fervent commitment to redressing human rights violations in
contextually specific ways.

As truth commissions diffused and became increasingly popular, for a number of
reasons, it became evident that adopting nations were not always establishing truth
commissions in ways that upheld these foundational values and so practices were
disconnected, or "decoupled" from the principles. In organizational terms, truth
commissions were being adopted ceremonially. I argue that First Generation True
Believers, frustrated and saddened by this breakdown of principles and practices, tried to
preemptively couple and recouple the values and the practices. Yet, the techniques and
strategies used to resist decoupling worked to standardize, codify, and ultimately
rationalize truth commissions. Actions that ultimately, and ironically, worked to
undermine the very values and meaning system they were trying to uphold, costing them
their own personal spirit as well as the original spirit of the TCC. In the end, First
Generation True Believers have had to try to personally manage the shift in institutional
logic and organizational culture that was caused by these strategies. Moreover, the new
professionals and interns within the organizations, whom I call Second Generation
Believers, look more like what the literature predicts, driven by norms of the “good” of
truth commissions and trained in transitional justice. I thus trace the process by which a
spirited set of values turned into discourse, techniques of control, and a rationalized
object, which was then internalized by future generations.
The question is begged, why care about rationalization? Why does it matter if truth commissions became rationalized? Is rationalization necessarily bad? In some ways, the answer now is not so dissimilar to Weber’s warning about rationalization in 1922. Weber warned of the “Iron Cage” of rationalization in which individuals were trapped by calculation, efficiency, and control - a place where the Spirit couldn’t survive. However, I am a little more hopeful than Weber. I believe by looking closely at the conditions that support the values, or spirit, in which these organizations are conceived and, on the flip side, the conditions that undermine them, we can learn better how to preserve the values of humanitarian initiatives even as organizations grow and change (Kraatz, Ventresca, and Deng 2010). To do this is to remember that institutions come together precisely out of shared meaning and values (Suddaby et al. 2010). As Selznick (1992, 244) reminds us, 'values are always at risk,' but I believe more research could be done bringing to light the mundane administrative duties and decisions that subvert values in the process of trying to improve operating effectiveness (Kraatz, Ventresca, and Deng 2010). Given that many rationalizing processes are put in place precisely to make organizations more efficient at meeting their goals (formed in light of their values) and to solve organizational problems, it seems particularly useful to start thinking about alternative methods and to find ways of resisting rationalizing tendencies. Although Weber warned that the unbridled, creative and idealistic spirit of charisma could not be sustained over time, I hope this dissertation illuminates possible pitfalls non-profit organizations may fall into that subvert their foundational values and therefore offer a different approach to understanding organizational 'failures' and their potential fixes. In this sense, despite the warnings, I
think it is necessary to continue to explore ways that organizations can maintain and institutionalize their ideals even as they expand, grow, and diffuse their principles and practices.

More generally, and following Kraatz, Ventresca, and Deng (2010, 1541), I hope to encourage a "basic respect for values and the individuals and organizations that exist to serve them." In highlighting the role TCC professionals played in the rationalization of truth commissions, I aim to foreground "the tremendous internal complexity of organizations and to recognize the persistent and ineradicable threats to value realization" that exist within even the most well-intentioned organizations (Kraatz, Ventresca, and Deng, 2010, 1541). Kraatz, Ventresca, and Deng (2010, 1541) argue that in order to look at how values can be preserved in organizations, we need to think differently about organizations:

This respectful and empathetic orientation is very difficult to maintain if one chooses to portray organizations (or people) as units of larger institutional systems and to reinterpret their espoused values as arbitrary social constructions, covers for narrow self-interest, or mere shadow of hidden power relationships. Integrity, leadership, responsibility, commitment, character, and mission dissolve in the latter perspective.

It is this perspective that has been dominant in the literature on global professionals and to which I provide an alternative.

II. The Creation Story: Transitional Justice, Truth Commissions, and the TCC

_Transitional Justice_
Mapping the conception of any new social or professional field is no small task. Fields do not become fields in one moment – there is no single event or declaration in which a field is then born. Rather, fields emerge after a series of moments, events, actions, and statements bind together in such a way that a shared set of particular knowledges, practices, discourses, and people culminate into a field. At the time, these parts usually seem disparate, but upon reflection they can be understood as the very initial building blocks, from which a field then rises.

Recent scholarship in the sociology of professions has focused on how globalization has impacted professions and professionalization processes. By examining current professions, scholars have had to acknowledge that traditional understandings and definitions of professions no longer suffice (Fourcade 2006). Traditional professions such as law, economics and medicine have "gone global," and the qualification processes, regulations, and actual occupational practices have transformed to remain relevant within this new global context. In addition, new professions have emerged to attend to new global needs; in some cases, such as International Humanitarian Law, these are corollaries of older ones, but in others, completely new fields have emerged. Thus, the blurring of national boundaries has led to the blurring of professional boundaries.

Not surprisingly, globalization has had an intense impact on areas of work concerned with human rights, justice, and humanitarianism. As Mark Duffield (2001) argues, globalization has created a new era of humanitarianism, characterized by a proliferation of “humanitarian” professionals, academics, disciplines, and institutions concerned with alleviating poverty and violence, particularly in Third World countries.
This proliferation can be understood as part of a broader, global trend, namely the “worldwide explosion of organizations and organizing” that has resulted from globalization (Drori and Hwang 2006, 2). For humanitarian initiatives, this organizing explosion has ultimately created a dramatic increase in international attention to and involvement in programs promoting development, complex emergency relief, and peace building; and it has facilitated a dynamic cross-cultural dialogue concerning appropriate approaches to eradicate injustice. Within this “era of humanitarianism,” the field of transitional justice has emerged and gained credence, endorsement, and increasing popularity.

As a professional field, transitional justice moved from the margins to the mainstream of global politics relatively quickly (Brahm, Dancy, Kim 2010, 45). Not surprisingly, the causal reasons for this rapid growth and solidification of the field are manifold. For the purposes here, it is important to acknowledge both the structural and normative landscape that experts have pointed out as contributing factors to the field's ascension. Broadly speaking, in the late - and post- Cold War periods, within a number of countries around the world, civil wars and regime instability were on the rise and a number of organizations working to help these countries stabilize and "transition" to peace and democracy. Normatively, the human rights movement alongside a "rule of law" movement had greatly expanded since WWII (Pistor 2005). The expansion increased awareness of the plight of victims of repression regimes and pushed for more accountable domestic governance. Together, the structural and normative context created, as Brahm, Dancy, and Kim (2010, 45) put it "an increase in both the supply of transitions and the demand for justice."
In the beginning, as the field was coming together and emerging in the 1970s and early 1980s, the focus was on criminal justice and legal prosecution in relation to human rights abuses, gaining momentum with the trials of former members of the military juntas in Greece (1975) and Argentina (Trial of the Juntas 1983) and culminating in the establishment of the international human rights laws and conventions. The universal conceptions of justice became the platform on which transitional justice was premised. The initial literature on transitional justice was thus predominantly written by lawyers and discussed legal rights, definitions, and procedural guidance as to how to deal with human rights abuses and prosecute those accountable for the abuses. The field assumed jurisprudence of human rights.

By the 1990s, mainly in response to political changes in Latin America and Eastern Europe and demands in these regions for justice after long periods of oppressive rule, the field began to solidify. At the time, human rights activists and others wanted to address the systematic abuses by former regimes without endangering the political transformations that were underway. Since these changes were popularly called “transitions to democracy,” people began calling this new multidisciplinary field “transitional justice” (Arthur 2009). Governments of these countries adopted many of what became the mechanisms of transitional justice, namely criminal prosecutions, reparation programs, memorialization efforts, institutional reform, and truth commissions.

During this time, there was also a shift in the focus of transitional justice. The scope broadened from more narrow questions of jurisprudence to developing stable,
democratic institutions and civil society. Informed by the worldwide wave of
democratization, transitional justice reemerged as a new field of study. At the Aspen
Institute conference in 1988, José Zalaquett, a future commissioner of the Chilean
National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, reflected on the situation human
rights activists faced in Latin American countries where repressive regimes had recently
crumbled (Arthur 2009). “Experience has shown,” he said, “that dealing with transitional
political situations is a new area of human rights practice that poses some complex
ethical, legal and practical questions”—questions that no one was yet in a good position
to answer (Zalaquett 1989 quoted in Arthur 2009). Six years later, at a conference on
“Dealing with the Past” in post-Apartheid South Africa, he came to the conclusion that
“[a] pool of world experiences is contributing to an understanding of the lessons to be
learned about justice in the process of transition” (Zalaquett 1989 quoted in Kritz 1995).
It is this time - a period in which there is a recognition of new practical dilemmas to the
development of a knowledge-base - that marks the shift to the new focus and the true
emergence of transitional justice as a field. These conferences optimized the possibility
for comparative analysis of transitional dilemmas, a strategy that has become central to
the field, and establish a new discourse, set of practices, and knowledge-base, which now
constitute the field.

More recent literature on transitional justice reflects this broader and comparative
focus. These studies focus on the many different challenges of democratization in
transitional periods, such as issues of impunity, redressing cultural loss, healing
traumatized victims. It is clear that elements of transitional justice have broken the initial
mold of post-war jurisprudence (Brahm, Daney, and Kim 2010) and yet the roots of transitional of justice have always been, and remain today, grounded in human rights and redressing the human rights violations, making it always self-consciously victim-centric. Today, transitional justice is commonly understood as referring to a set of judicial and non-judicial measures that have been implemented by different countries in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses. These measures include criminal prosecutions, reparation programs, various types of institutional reform, and truth commissions. Truth commissions, then, are one organizational form, or measure, that emerged within the field of transitional justice.

*What is a Truth Commission?*

Truth commissions, in particular, have become extremely prevalent and have proliferated rapidly over the past 20 years. As noted earlier, since the first truth commission, commonly understood as taking place in Uganda in 1974, there has been approximately 44; 35 of these since 1990; and 22 since 2000 (Brahms et al., 2007; Hayner 2001). Figure 1 (see below) illustrates this trend - one can see, based on the increase of truth commissions in each decade(s) the proliferation of the establishment of truth commissions over time. Table 1 (see below) provides a comprehensive list of the number of truth commissions established to date.
Figure 1: Map of Truth Commissions
### Table 1. List of Truth Commissions by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year Created/ Duration</th>
<th>Created By</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Commission of Inquiry</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nepal</td>
<td>Commission of Inquiry to Locate the Persons Disappeared during the Panchayet Period</td>
<td>1990-1991</td>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Chile</td>
<td>National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation</td>
<td>1990-1991</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Chad</td>
<td>Commission of Inquiry on the Crimes and Misappropriations Committed by the Ex-President Habré, His Accomplices and/or Accessories</td>
<td>1990-1992</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ethiopia</td>
<td>Ethiopian Inquiry Commission</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Ecuador</td>
<td>Truth and Justice Committee</td>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>Ministry</td>
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<td>International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda</td>
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<td>23. Uruguay</td>
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<td>2000-2001</td>
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<td>24. South Korea</td>
<td>National Committee for Investigation of the Truth about the Jeju April 3rd Event</td>
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<td>25. South Korea</td>
<td>Presidential Truth Commission on Suspicious Deaths</td>
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<td>27. Panama</td>
<td>Truth Commission</td>
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<td>29. Timor Leste</td>
<td>Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation</td>
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<td>30. Serbia Montenegro</td>
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<td>Sierra Leone</td>
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<td>Central African Republican</td>
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<td>Solomon Island</td>
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<td>Honduras</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Philippines Truth Commission</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Cote D'Ivoire</td>
<td>Truth, Reconciliation and Dialogue Commission</td>
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The Latin American cases of Argentina (1983) and Chile (1990) tipped the first domino in an increasing pattern of adoption and popularity, but it was the South African case in 1995 that fully launched the international recognition of truth commissions.
Today, within the international community, truth commissions have become the symbol of transitional justice in countries as diverse as Sierra Leone, Canada, and the former Yugoslavia.

The numbers given above are approximate because recently there has been some debate concerning what defines a truth commission. As a result, different studies as well as organizations have produced differing lists of truth commissions. These definitional and jurisdictional ambiguities reflect the making of a new profession and the process by which decisions are made as to what constitutes the field. Nonetheless, researchers and practitioners commonly understand the following characteristics to be shared by all truth commissions: they research and report on human rights abuses over a certain period of time in a particular conflict within a particular country; they are organized after civil conflict or systematic mass murder; they, in contrast to legal tribunals, collect accounts of harm from victims, their relatives, and perpetrators; people give evidence of human rights abuses, with the commission providing an official forum for their accounts (Hayner 2000). This model is premised on the idea that finding and telling the truth about the past will heal the nation, build trust in the new state, redress human rights abuses, and thereby help establish long-term peace. Thus, the main intended purpose of any truth commission is to establish the truth about the particular atrocity.

The impetus to establish a truth commission varies from country to country. However, after a country decides to establish one, the president or governing body sanctions the establishment publicly. After this, the non-governmental and governmental organizations involved begin to search for commissioners. The commissioners are
predominantly local actors with high social status within the relevant nation or communities, such as priests, community leaders, and teachers. International actors who are chosen as commissioners are usually lawyers, sociologists, or human rights advocates. After the commissioners are chosen, the staff and the commissioners write the mandate for the commission, including what years it will cover, how long it will take place for, how it will collect the truth (testimonials), how it will obtain a representative sample of testimonials, etc. After the mandate is written, the “truth seeking” process begins, the information is then analyzed and put into a final report that is made public. The process can take anywhere from a year to five years depending on the size, funding, and comprehensiveness of the investigation.

Although there is variation among specific truth commission cases, it can be said that a truth commission model has emerged. The truth commission model, as described above, is not without its critics who voice not just definitional concerns, but also concerns about it as an effective mechanism to redress human rights violations. Criticism from diverse groups, including academics, policy officials, human rights advocates, and affected peoples have been lodged against the use of truth commissions. These critiques raise empirical questions of effectiveness in relation to a commission’s ability to meet its mandated objectives: find the truth of the atrocity, heal and reconcile individuals and the nation, and assist in the establishment of peace.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) can be illustrated to address these concerns. While the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission is heralded as one of the best practice model within the international community, many
have questioned its effectiveness. TRC staff members have publicly conveyed their frustration with the manner in which their research was edited to fit into the final report, arguing that this resulted in an oversimplified and distorted analysis of the data. This problem raises questions regarding how the process allows a selective, partial truth to represent the whole. This may create problems for rebuilding the nation since the particular narrative selected may be both narrow and inaccurate. In addition, it became clear from the hearings that there were many different notions of truth that existed: the truth of the security police, the truth of the African National Congress (ANC), and the truth of the public and those involved in the Congress of South African Students who were not part of any military actions. Clearly, the final report could not possibly represent everyone’s truth, in which case the question is raised as to how the commission could heal all individuals and the nation in general through finding and representing the truth as it was supposed to do. More recently, the criticism has been raised that the TRC failed to address racism and structural inequality, since it focused too much on the civil war, rather than the history of the policy of apartheid that precipitated the violence and the civil war. The result: many Black South Africans are still not living in peace but rather are facing continued deprivation, extreme unemployment, and poverty.

Despite the criticisms, the legitimacy of the truth commission model as an instrument of transitional justice has continued to increase and its importance has grown exponentially. The international community endorses truth commissions as a legitimate and effective means of promoting peace.
Truth Commission Center (TCC)

The TCC is one of the main organizations that work on truth commissions. To some degree, TCC’s relationship to the field is genetic: transitional justice and TCC gained significant popularity and endorsement at the same time, and the TCC took deliberate steps to define and develop the field (Arthur 2009). In many ways, the success of transitional justice and the truth commission model originated from the missionary zeal of the initial founders of the TCC.

Broadly, the TCC’s mission is to redress and prevent human rights violations by promoting accountability and justice through transitional justice research and practices. The TCC firmly believes that the rights of the victims must be made central in transitional justice processes and that local sensitivity and cultural context is of utmost importance. While the TCC pursues its mission through various transitional justice mechanisms, truth commissions are its main focus. The TCC has supported governments, civil society, and the international community, in carrying out the work of truth commissions in 12 countries, as well as in several unofficial truth projects. The TCC provides feedback on the framework necessary for the establishment of a commission, in the form of memoranda and expert testimony to policymakers. Its engagement is most often composed of running workshops and advising on truth commissions, and the staff serve as consultants for governments interested in establishing truth commissions.

The TCC has a head office in the US and eight regional offices around the world. In addition to country specific programs, the head office houses Program Directors for the following departments: Criminal Justice, North Africa, Reparative Justice, Research,
Truth and Memory, Design Monitoring and Evaluation, Communications, Development, Children and Youth, Gender Justice, Technology, and Policy Relations. Within each of these programs there are a number of staff and interns. Although programs pursue their own agendas, cooperation amongst programs is common as are joint projects, since overall the TCC focuses on the overarching themes of institutional reform, truth seeking, justice, and peace. Funding for the TCC comes from a number of foundations including the Ford and MacArthur Foundations. In addition, program directors are hired as consultants and paid to speak at conferences, run workshops, and teach courses. This revenue is not paid directly to the staff but is paid to the center. This money is counted on and, based on past years, calculated into the annual budget.

To summarize, the TCC was founded with the objective of helping societies in transition address legacies of massive human rights violations and build civic trust in state institutions as protectors of human rights. In particular, in the aftermath of mass atrocity and repression, the TCC aims to assist institutions and civil society groups—the people who are driving and shaping change in their societies—in considering measures to provide truth, accountability, and redress for past abuses and they do this by drawing on the expertise and knowledge they have gained from comparative experiences in transitional justice processes from across the globe. The work is implemented through a number of regional offices around the world and funded by various public and private sector donors.

III. Method
For this study, I use ethnographic data collected in 2009 and 2010 while I worked as a research fellow at the TCC. The fieldwork activities included observation, interviewing, surveying, and document collection and analysis. My position as an insider granted me access to memos, emails, research documents, and meetings within the organization. I also participated in two in-house conferences and one extra-organizational conference run, in part, by the TCC.

I observed the daily activities of the center, both informal and formal, as well as meetings and conferences. My written observations constituted close to 100 pages of field notes. I took notes daily, both during and after my workday. I also wrote notes reflecting on my thoughts concerning my experience and the culture of the TCC.

To gather interview participants and create a point of contact, I sent out surveys to 40 TCC professionals who had had direct experience with at least one truth commission. By 'direct experience,' I mean that they had worked either as a consultant or as a commissioner on a truth commission. I asked participants to rate, on a scale of 1-5, their agreement with statements concerning issues of “success.” For example: “the Truth Commission (TC) of country X contributed effectively to the empowerment of victims’ organizations;” “the TC of Country X contributed effectively to the well-being and healing of individual victims;” and “the TC of Country X contributed effectively to national reconciliation.” While the questions themselves did not provide much information for my project, the survey taking enabled me to make contact with 26 TCC
professionals and set up interviews to further discuss the answer to the survey questions as well as other questions.

I interviewed 30 TCC professionals. 26 interviewees were TCC professionals who had responded to the survey and four were TCC professionals that the other interviewees suggested I contact. All the 30 TCC professionals were leadership staff. That is, they were either directors of regional offices or program directors of specific units, such as ‘Truth and Memory” or “Reparative Justice.” Administrative, financial, technological, legal, communications, and development staff as well as the President, were not included in the sample set because they never directly worked on a truth commission.

The interviews were open ended but questions centered on participants' work and relationship to truth commissions, such as how they entered into truth commission work; their professional and educational background; their understandings of what made truth commissions effective’ or “successful,” and the effects of their involvement with the truth commissions on their lives.

I also surveyed the 10 interns I worked with during the year of my own internship. These surveys were opened ended and consisted of basic background questions such as where they attended college and graduate school, why they were interning at the TCC, and why they were interested in transitional justice and truth commissions specifically.

The documents I analyzed included all emails I received during my time at the TCC as well as memos, manuals, promotional materials, and research papers written by TCC professionals. The observational notes, transcribed interviews, surveys, and
documents were read and then coded using Atlas.ti. I used an inductive approach to analyze the field notes, interviews, and documents collected.

**IV: Theoretical Groundings and Applied Context**

In this dissertation, I contribute to scholarship on global professionals as addressed by world polity theory and conflict theory\(^1\). I take world polity's cultural perspective as a departure point for this dissertation and, like conflict theory, I write with concern for power dynamics, inequalities, and social change. In addition, I add to both of these theories' perspective on global professionals by drawing on Weber as well as other organizational and institutional scholarship throughout the dissertation. I also situate the story of TCC professionals within the applied context of human rights work, hoping to add insight into some of the problems that may be subverting the efforts of this social justice project.

Below, I briefly summarize Weber's understandings of rationalization, bureaucracy and charisma, as they are fundamental to comprehending the TCC story, my contribution to the theoretical literature on global professionals, and how human rights organizations might be able to approach internal issues differently. However, I flesh out these concepts in more depth throughout the chapters. Next, I outline world polity theory's and conflict theory's main theoretical premises and each of their understandings, generally, of global professionals. Lastly, I discuss some of the current ideas and

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\(^1\) While conflict theory is a broad grouping, I use it here to refer to those theorists that discuss professions
contentions within human rights scholarship that provided the impetus for this dissertation.

Weber: Rationalization, Bureaucracy and Charisma

Rationalization means a historical drive towards a world in which “one can, in principle, master all things by calculation” (Weber 1919/1946, 139 quoted in Kim 2012). According to Weber, rationalization can impact all areas of human life and will do so increasingly over time. The main characteristics of rationalization are most clearly epitomized in Weber’s ideal type of bureaucracy, which include:

- Hierarchy of authority
- Impersonality
- Written rules of conduct
- Promotion based on achievement
- Specialized division of labor
- Efficiency

Bureaucracy can be considered to be a particular case of rationalization, or rationalization applied to human organization (Kim 2012). Bureaucratic coordination of human action, Weber believed, is the distinctive mark of modern social structures and rationalization, more generally, is the hallmark of modernity. More recently, George Ritzer has put forth an updated version of bureaucracy as an ideal type in his renowned book The Modernization of Society (1993). Ritzer, basing his ideal type on the restaurant chain McDonald’s, states that the modern characteristics of bureaucracy are calculability,
predictability (i.e. standardized and uniform services), control, and efficiency. These characteristics, although not enumerated explicitly, are still clear in Weber's work.

From a more analytical perspective, and drawing somewhat on Ritzer's work, rationalization can be described as increasing knowledge, growing impersonality, and enhanced control (Brubaker 1991, 32–35). Kim (2012) succinctly summarizes rational action in relation to knowledge:

Rational action, in a very general sense, presupposes knowledge. It requires some knowledge of the ideational and material circumstances in which our action is embedded, since to act rationally is to act on the basis of conscious reflection about the probable consequences of action. As such, the knowledge that underpins rational action is of a causal nature, conceived in terms of means-ends relationships aspiring towards a systematic, logically interconnected whole.

In this sense, the growth of rationalization is more than just the expansion of particular practices and forms of organizing, although it is certainly that as well. The growth of rationalization it is also the expansion, and domination, of a particular form of knowledge and way of thinking, analyzing, and ultimately being. This form of knowledge is epitomized in modern scientific and technological knowledge. Over time, scientific knowledge has pushed religion, theology, and metaphysics out of the realm of what is considered legitimate knowledge or rational knowledge so that these are regarded as irrational (Kim 2012).

Rationalization, also, according to Weber, entails impersonality. For Weber, the impersonal nature of rationalization is rooted in the Puritan vocational ethic, which was predicated upon a particular, "disenchanted monotheistic theodicy that reduced humans to mere tools of God's providence" (Kim 2012). The Puritan ethic demanded rigorous self-
discipline and self-control or what Weber called "innerworldly asceticism" in order to serve God on earth. In this way, the calculable disciplined control over humans was an unintended consequence of the Puritanism, in which humans became objectified and the production of labor increasingly more impersonal and therein easier to control. Rationalization, through scientific and technical knowledge and objectification, has greatly improved the human capacity control nature and people.

In opposition to rationalization and bureaucracy, is charisma. The concept of charisma is a conflicted one within the social sciences (Turner 2003; Adair-Toteff 2005). In fact, much of what we know about charisma is more that which it is NOT rather than that which it is (Turner 2003, 7). We do know it stands in opposition to rationality, bureaucracy, and rules. We also know that charisma is understood as a prophetic, creative, and revolutionary spirit that breaks with tradition and dislodges taken for granted rules and boundaries. Charisma is most discussed as an ideal-type of authority, that is - 'charismatic authority.' However, Weber also discussed charisma in relation to culture, institutions, and something in general more diffuse then just a personality trait of a leader (Turner, 2003). Yet, how the two relate, the notion of charisma as a personal, extraordinary characteristic of a particular leader and the notion of charisma as a general spirit and creativity that characterizes a culture or institution, is unclear in Weber's writing and cause for much contemporary debate (Turner 2003). Nevertheless, I draw on what we know about charisma from Weber's work and use it more in this latter sense - as a trait of some cultures.
I understand the culture of the TCC to be one characterized by charisma - that is, to be characterized by creativity, a lack of rules, a break with tradition, and a spiritual sensibility that draws a type of professional devotion. In addition, I think this concept's ambiguity within social science actually reflects its essential nature and therein the culture of charisma: if charisma could be pinned down, defined, delimited, than it is no longer charisma - it is no longer 'free' and its freedom is what defines it against the rules and boundaries of rationality, tradition, and bureaucracy. This ambiguity around precise professional practices was apparent in the culture of the TCC as well as in the reflections and actions of TCC professionals despite a solid, shared set of values. I propose, more generally, that this culture of charisma - this ambiguity around professional practices, the creative and prophetic sensibility, and the solidarity around shared values and ideals, likely characterizes many new professional contexts.

For Weber, the process of rationalization had a number of undesirable and fearful consequences, namely the loss of charisma. It is this process that I understand to have taken place at the TCC: despite the spirited and value-driven origins of the TCC, in the end, a more rationalized, bureaucratic and spirit-less culture characterized the organization, the professionals, as well as truth commissions. By drawing on Weber, I am able to capture the original values that motivated First Generational True Believers and characterized the TCC 'culture of charisma,' and I am able to trace their demise through the rationalization practice.

*Global Professionals: World Polity Theory and Conflict Theory*
Although the precise definition of a "profession" and its related terms – professionalization, professionals, professionalism - has been disputed over the years, scholars have agreed that what distinguishes professions from other occupations is that they constitute the knowledge-based category of public service occupations and require a period of tertiary education, vocational training and field experience (Evetts 2011, 5-6). Typically, nation-states have regulated the rights of entry to professions and thus the "boundaries of the ecologies" within which professions emerge, are structured, and interact with each other (Fourcade 2006, 147). However, globalization has, at the very least, changed, if not undermined, the role of the nation-state in general. This has forced the sociology of professions to reconceptualize traditional professional boundaries and definitions, as well as recognize the different and new credential requirements for professionals.

Recent scholarship has examined the impact of globalization on traditional professions, such as law or medicine. Scholars have documented how "going global" has impacted the profession in terms of the work it does, its jurisdictional boundaries, and its knowledge domain (Fourcade 2006). Scholars have also noted that new global professions have risen within this context. Transitional justice can thus be understood as a new, global professional field. While, initially, there was not a standardized educational or professional trajectory for becoming a transitional justice professional, today those interested in entering the field need to have studied, at the graduate level, human rights and/or specifically transitional justice, either within a law, social science, or specialized program. In addition, field experience is required, which means that individuals must
have interned at a transitional justice organization, worked within a governmental or inter-governmental office that works on transitional justice issues, or participated in some capacity in a transitional justice process in a country that was undergoing such a change. Most recently, it is becoming common for individuals to acquire transitional justice certificates through specialized training courses that focus only on transitional justice. In addition, a number of transitional justice degree and training programs have been developed at variety of university institutes. While these developments and criteria may not be as strict as older, traditional professions, in today's global professional context, they certainly qualify transitional justice as a profession.

Although not plentiful, some research has been done on the professionals that constitute global professions. World polity theorists and conflict theorists have written most extensively on global professionals and the role they play in a number of both local and global processes. It is these literatures I draw upon and speak to in order to understand the role of TCC professionals in the diffusion and rationalization of truth commissions.

The world polity perspective places culture as its central focal point, arguing that professions are given their definition and structure by the over-arching cultural scripts or norms that are deeply internalized into the cognitive schema of people in those professions. As a result, individuals’ actions are normatively motivated. Global professionals, through their international work, diffuse professional norms around the world, creating and consolidating a global culture that is increasingly homogenous, a process referred to as institutional isomorphism. The perspective is premised upon the
understanding that culture governs both organizational structure and individuals’ actions. Organizational structure reflects and is shaped by culturally legitimated models and theories, rather than technical demands; and individuals are socially constructed enactors of cultural rules and scripts that are absorbed and cognitively embedded (Dierkes and Koenig 2006). Individuals are thus largely constituted by social context, which by and large defines their identities and their goals.

World polity theory discusses the implications of this cultural perspective for the study of global or transnational processes (Meyer 1980; Meyer et al. 1991; 1991; Boli and Thomas 1997; 1999). The theory posits that globalization has constructed an overarching global culture, or "world polity," which ultimately determines organizational structure at both the global and national level (Dierkes and Koenig 2006). Increasing global isomorphism is thus explained as conformity to dominant, legitimated, "taken for granted" views established by this global culture. Global professionals play a key role in diffusing, transmitting and carrying the global models around the world. Professionals spread the cultural norms of world polity through their work of consulting, theorizing, advising, speaking, and writing (Rowan and Meyer 1997). As professionals diffuse the norms of their particular professions, organizations in a variety of different sectors become increasingly more rationalized and isomorphic (Meyer and Rowan 1997; Strang and Meyer 1993). In this way, professionals are critical carriers of institutionalized cultural models, and thus the key players in the normative mechanism of diffusion accounting for global isomorphism.
Conflict theorists who currently discuss professions and professionals bring together two different perspectives on power, individuals and structures. First, they understand professionals as being driven by a means-end perspective on action. This perspective, the rational-choice model theory on human behavior and the most dominant in most social sciences, understands individuals' actions to be a cost/benefit analysis in which individuals weigh their options and decide which serves them the best. From this perspective, global professionals are motivated by self-interest and the accumulation of power. Conflict theorists add a structural analysis of power to this perspective, building upon the work of Karl Marx, Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. This analysis discusses the role of global professionals in producing, reproducing, consolidating, and maintaining particular forms of professional "power/knowledge" (Foucault, 1980). Overall then, this particular strand of conflict theory views professions and professionals within a general frame of competition, self-interest, and structural inequality, in which they both actively and passively, or consciously and not consciously, create and solidify power dynamics that work to their professional and personal benefit.

Yves Dezalay and Bryant G. Garth (1996; 2002; 2010) have been especially prolific in promulgating this particular, combined perspective in relation to the field of international law. International lawyers tend to come from upper class families and, regardless of their nationality, are educated in specific, elite, American law schools. Thus, they argue, international lawyers share a particular “habitus,” meaning they share a common lifestyle as well as common values, dispositions, and expectations, which are acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life (Bourdieu and Wacquant
1992). It includes the totality of learned habits, bodily skills, styles, tastes, and other non-discursive knowledges that might be said to “go without saying” for a specific group (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 66-67). Because of this, certain types of knowledge and corresponding practices become hegemonic.

Conflict theorists have also focused on other professionals, such as economists and educators, tracking the way their shared education in the West has worked to spread and legitimize particular norms to the South (Fourcade 2006; Resnik 2006). In other words, as certain groups of professionals, who share a particular educational and training habitus, work around the world, their shared norms, ideas, and practices become diffused, institutionalized, and eventually taken for granted. They then try to spread these in order to advance their careers and overall share of power. These studies show that professionals engage in symbolic turf battles (Abott 1988) that have high stakes in terms of securing their global legitimation and ultimately their professional success. As Dezalay and Garth state (2010, 116):

What is at stake in these often hidden turf battles is the social credibility of the professionals who produce and use normative knowledge in order to promote, expand (and constantly redefine) transnational processes while seeking at the same time to impose themselves as the legitimate agents of these processes. Success in the turf battles equips these professionals to sell a symbolic good that they succeeded in legitimating.

For these professionals, "winning" a turf battle means delineating a domain of social action in which their power is consolidated. The hegemonic consolidation of their knowledge raises their social status to that of “expert” and swiftly moves them up the job ladder. As a result, conflict theory argues, other knowledges are eclipsed, most often
those of the people from the local area in which these professionals are working at the time.

While both world polity theory and conflict theory offer invaluable insight into global dynamics and the role professionals play in them, they both fail to address certain components. In general, critiques have argued that world polity theory places too much emphasis on the diffusion of similar structural patterns (structural isomorphism) as an explanatory mechanism of rationalization and has not paid enough attention to the competitive and contested processes that produce rationality (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000, 700; Dezalay and Garth 2010, 116). The spread and adoption of these structures is depicted by world polity theory as, more or less, seamless and unproblematic so that, as Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000: 700) point out, "questions such as how some ideas or techniques achieve a remarkable visibility while others fail to do so, or why some administrative patterns or objects diffuse relatively unchanged while others are renegotiated and reinterpreted to a degree that makes them hardly recognizable" remain unanswered. Ultimately, the critiques suggest that the social processes that construct and produce rationality are unexamined within world polity theory and that more attention needs to be paid to the micro processes (practices, beliefs, contestations and negotiations) that constitute the macro outcomes world polity theory discusses.

While Dezalay and Garth's conflict theory goes a long way towards tracing the contested and conflicting processes involved in the construction of new global norms within the legal profession, the legal field itself is an old profession and thought it has “gone global,” the professional pathways and even the so-called turf on which these
battles are fought, are well institutionalized. In other words, the social fields being
examined are those of the old professions. Although new practices and new narratives are
always emerging within these old professions, by and large basic ideas and schemes of
action have already been made normative over time so that what it means and takes to be
'successful' is well established. Thus, within these older fields, while professionals may
still be involved in turf battles for symbolic goods and legitimacy (Dezalay and Garth
2010, 116), they are not creating the field, establishing anew the norms, or constructing
the professional pathways. To me, this then tells only part of the story of professionals
and what motivates them. To look only at older, traditional professions forecloses
insights about formation and change within professionals fields and professionals who in
them.

Today’s global context provides us with an opportunity to study professions from
their conception since it has not only changed nationally bounded professions to global
ones but it has produced completely new professional fields, like that of transitional
justice. Although, as was described earlier, the very early roots of transitional justice
came from the legal field, its current incarnation is very much a mix of many different
expertise and types of work. To focus on the entire field of transitional justice is beyond
the reach of this dissertation. But in looking at one organization during a time of
transition, we can trace cultural change and institutional shifts in logic. I am able to look
at the role a particular organization and set of professionals play in the rationalization of a
particular organizational form, truth commissions. I draw on both of the above theory but
add a different dimension understanding to the understanding of global professionals.
The departure point for this dissertation was the question: why, despite much critique and little empirical evidence that they meet their objectives, do truth commissions persist and proliferate? This question arose from within a large debate concerning the "failure" of human rights initiatives, development programs, humanitarian aid relief and, now, transitional justice. Since the early 1990s, scholars and practitioners alike have been critiquing these social justice projects on a number of different grounds, some technical and many ideological. More specifically, the projects had been accused of failing to meet their objectives as well as being yet another imperial ploy. The response was to become more "efficient, effective and transparent" by creating more standards, more international codes of conduct, more humanitarian laws, and more evaluation metrics. However, it seemed, by the mid 1990s and early 2000s that the approach to fixing the problem and finding the answer wasn't helping. In fact, as Mark Duffield (2001) and Hugo Slim (1995) argued, the 'solutions' seemed to be exacerbating the problem. Moreover, something else was being lost in the process - the humanitarian ideal.

I contribute to this growing body of literature that has examined how, over time, the values of philanthropic organizations get lost within organizations (Duffield 2001; Slim 2005; Hwang and Powell 2009; Slim 1998; Kraatz, Ventresca, Deng 2010). This literature provides critical information as to why and how organizations meant to fulfill humanitarian and social justice objectives often do not, despite genuinely good intentions. I believe a sociological analysis, with a focus on global, cultural and organizational processes, provides a different and useful understanding of some of the rationalizing
pitfalls organizations slip into and thus points the way towards further research that examines how organizations can grow, improve and maintain their prophetic spirit.

V. Chapter Outline

The following chapters trace the stages of rationalization - beginning before the rationalization process began, to the work and techniques that unintentionally kick-started the process, and ending with the effects of rationalization on truth commissions, the TCC, and TCC professionals.

In the following chapter, I describe the initial culture of the TCC, the culture of charisma, and the professionals at the TCC upon whom this study focuses, whom I call First Generation True Believers. I show that what tied them together and what brought them to work at the TCC was a set of shared values. Drawing on Weber's framework of social action, I show how these professionals were motivated by value-rational action, and I show how this approach challenges the current literature on global professionals.

In Chapter Three, I discuss decoupling. Specifically, I show how TCC professionals understood that the values of truth commissions were being decoupled from their implementation. In response to this, a massive organizational effort was launched at recoupling and preemptively coupling these values with the appropriate practices. I draw on organizational literature that discusses both decoupling and the responses to and effects of decoupling. I argue that the organizational response to decoupling ultimately contributed to rationalizing truth commissions as well as the TCC. The techniques used to
recouple and preemptively couple were rationalizing techniques that standardized and codified truth commissions, creating a discourse and techniques of control.

Chapter Four focuses on the impact that this rationalization had on truth commissions, the culture of the TCC, and the identity of First Generation True Believers. I argue that the organizational response or the rationalizing "solutions" to decoupling only exacerbated the problem of decoupling. In addition, I show that rationalization changed the culture and institutional logic of the TCC in ways that subverted the very values they were trying to uphold. Lastly, I note the way rationalization created challenges for First Generation True Believers because the new beliefs and social roles it required did not seamlessly fit with the old ones. I try to make clear the subjective experience of these professionals in order to show how this process deeply affects these value driven professionals. I also show the new identity created for Second Generation Believers.

In the conclusion, I summarize the conclusions my research produced both specifically in terms of the TCC, TCC professionals, and truth commissions as well as in terms of the broader theoretical and applied implications. I suggest directions for future research as well. Lastly, I discuss some of the limitations of the project.
CHAPTER 2
THE SPIRIT UNTouched: FIRST GENERATION TRUE BELIEVERS AND THEIR VALUES

I. Introduction:

It is 1pm my time, in New York, and 5pm in Monrovia, Liberia, where Eric\(^2\) is working as Program Associate for the TCC Liberia Program. I ask Eric how he got involved in the Liberian Truth Commission and came to work for the TCC.

Well, I’m Liberian. After the conflict, I felt I had to get involved in civil society in some way - I just had to. Help rebuild the country, help find out what happened. I joined a coalition that was working on democratic empowerment. I felt that the return to violence was very possible if we didn’t set up a democratic structure. I began reading about the TRC process and I began to be very self-conscious about the mandate of the TRC and that I believed it could help liberate Liberia from all the hate and injustice. It represented my beliefs of what was needed to take Liberia beyond the conflict. So it was that level of enlightenment. I became very self-conscious about the role of the TRC and the possible effect and outcome and so I got involved. And then three years later I started working for the TCC, helping with the ongoing transitional adjustments determined by the TRC – like reparations and that type of stuff. (Eric)

Because Eric was my first interview, the notions of “having to get involved,” “having to help redress human rights violations” and “enlightenment” did not register as anything particularly important at the time. Only later did I come to understand this as a shared sensibility and motivation amongst First Generation True Believers. At the time, I was more surprised that Eric did not have a law degree or any specific human rights training – either academically or in the field. And I was surprised that, later in the interview, he was

\(^2\) All names of persons are pseudonyms to protect respondents’ confidentiality
critical of truth commissions. Even though he believed that they could help fight injustice; he did not believe that they were always the right transitional justice mechanism. “It depends on the local context,” he told me. At the time, I was caught off guard by Eric’s overall demeanor. Eric was curious and analytical throughout the interview. He asked me questions about my work and myself, and after I explained the premise of my research, he told me he was writing his masters thesis in political science, and so we commiserated over the graduate school process. He went on tangents - ruminating on something he or I said and trying to see different points of view in almost all of his own answers. He spoke seriously and passionately about Liberia and the truth commission that took place there, its failures as well as what he thinks it did well in relation to the victims, the political culture, and democracy. At the time, I was impressed by the way his answers were thoughtful but not rehearsed, and the way his comments were reflective and analytical rather than serious, to the point, and curt. And I was taken aback by the ways his voice raised in anger when he discussed some political aspects of the truth commission but softened and even cracked a bit when he talked about the conflict and the victims. I was surprised because I had expected something different. I had expected a party line, so to speak, a polished story of the inherent good of truth commissions and the success of his and the TCC’s work.

Current literature on global professionals had shaped my expectations, providing what proved to be a too-narrow understanding of why they do what they do. While global professionals feature prominently in world polity theory argument concerning the global spread of rationalization, detailed accounts of the exact role they play, over time, in this
rationalization process is lacking. In part, this is because world polity theory has tended to focus on the macro level (cross-national data sets) and on outcomes, rather than processes (Suddaby, et al. 2010, 1236). Organizations and professionals are studied when rationalization has already taken place, at which point their main role is to diffuse the already objectified ideas or practices. As a result, global professionals are seen as reflections and reifications of the broader rationalized environment and their actions are viewed as driven by an internalized, unconscious set of global norms, which they diffuse through their work around the world.

Recently, global professionals have also featured prominently in a stand of conflict theory (Dezalay and Garth 2002; 2010; Fourcade 2006). Although conflict theory takes a much more micro perspective on global professionals, their focus on older professions as well as their theoretical underpinnings lead to an understanding of global professionals as motivated entirely by self-interest. In this picture, global professionals are eager to move up the already well-established professional ladder and strategically gain global, expert status by 'selling' their particular understandings and practices. Thus, global professionals act based on explicit drives for power.

I suggest that these two understandings of global professionals can be understood from a traditional sociological understanding of action as painting a picture of professionals as being either normatively motivated - “traditional action” in Weberian terms, or motivated by self-interest - “means-end rational action” in Weberian terms. Recognizing the older theoretical roots that these perspectives extend from is important because it makes visible that values have been omitted as a cause of action, since in
Weber's social action typology, values-rational action plays prominently. Such an omission, undermines a deeper and more thorough analysis of the role professionals play in the institutionalizing process since, as Stinchcombe (1997, 8) argued, "values are at the causal core of institutions," and warned that institutional theory has lost sight of the “guts of institutions, that is to say, lost its primary focus on values.”

In order to understand the role TCC professionals played in the rationalization of truth commissions, it is necessary to understand who these professionals are, how they conceptualized truth commissions, why they got involved, the organizational culture they created, and the values they believe in. In recovering the original organizational culture of the TCC, a different picture of professionals as well as the organization emerges. I argue that contrary to the literature, the initial formal structure of the TCC was not simply a reified and reflected image of the broader rationalized environment but rather a "culture of charisma." Specifically, while the principles of truth commissions and of the TCC reflect many of the values within the broader global culture, such as the overall universal human rights framework, the organization was not formally structured like most international organizations. That is, it did not look like or function like a bureaucracy. Rather, the organizational culture of TCC was premised upon a non-standardized approach to transitional justice, and specifically truth commissions. There was only a very loose hierarchy, and most director positions were held because the incumbent had been a founder of the organization and had been working with truth commissions or some other transitional justice mechanism. There were no SOPs and few rules in general. The
initial institutional logic of TCC was one that housed the values of victim’s rights and context specificity without a formal structure.

In addition, TCC professionals did not fit the description sketched by the literature. Rather than being simple norm carriers with similar education and training backgrounds hoping to advance their careers through promoting truth commissions, I found TCC professionals to be First Generation True Believers who are motivated by an unadulterated spirit - deeply ethical values that, in Weber’s words, “called” them to this particular work. In other words, First Generation True Believers personally and professionally identify with, and are motivated by, a set of values that during the early days of the organization had not been normalized or standardized yet. Their diverse backgrounds of nationality, education, political participation, and career trajectory mean that they do not share a common, institutionalized, professional path as the literature would predict. But they do share a fervent commitment to redressing human rights violations in contextually specific ways. I draw on our Weberian sociological roots to show that values and ideals play a prominent role in calling these First Generation True Believers to the work of truth commissions.

In this chapter, I try to recapture what has been somewhat lost or missed in both world polity theory and conflict theory studies. That is, I describe the free-floating ideals and values that are ultimately at the causal core of institutions and that are present in the pre-rationalized stage but which, once rationalized, are taken-for-granted norms and therein often only seen as such. In Weberian terms, this process is described as the "routinization of charisma." The chapter begins by outlining the literature on global
professionals in relation to action and places it within Weber's framework of social action. I then draw on Weber to explain value-rational action and make the argument that it was in fact values that initially motivated TCC professionals. In the second part, I bring to life the organizational culture of the TCC “in the beginning,” a phrase often used by TCC professionals while reminiscing about these early days, and argue that it was a "culture of charisma" in the Weberian sense. Thirdly, I highlight three distinct themes present in the reflections and practices of TCC professionals that demonstrate this culture of charisma and value-rational action. In the fourth section, I analyze the data making the connection between these themes, the "unsettled" nature of the new profession (Swidler 1986), and the distinction between norms and values. In the conclusion, I suggest some areas for future research and relate my findings to scholarship on humanitarian aid that have made similar observations.

While my time at the TCC came after this initial stage, the newness of the organization, as compared to the other transitional justice and human rights organizations, allowed for relatively fresh reflection and reminiscing on the part of TCC professionals and practices that were very much still rooted in this initial institutional logic. In addition, access to historical data both public and private allows me to reconstruct this early time.

II. Global Professionals and Social Action: Bringing Values back to Global Professionals

While traditional theories within the sociology of professions discussed the role of
values in motivating professionals’ actions (Friedson 1970; Dingwal and Lewis 1983; Macdonald 1995), both in choosing particular career paths and within their professional practice, current scholarship of global professionals seems to have forgotten values. This is indicative of a more general trend in sociology, in which values have gone out of fashion (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004, 359). However, the concept of values motivating action has a long and rich history in sociology beginning with Weber. Weber’s argument in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) and specifically his understanding of being “called” to a vocation makes clear his view that action is not always driven by means-end rational action or traditional action. Rather, Weber uncovers the role that deeply held personal beliefs and values play in motivating individuals’ actions, which, I argue, is the case for TCC professionals.

Within the current literature, global professionals are not motivated by values, rather they are understood as driven by norms or by self-interest. These understandings can be placed within Weber’s typology of social action. Weber distinguishes four types of orientation of social conduct: means-end rational action, value rational action, affective action, and traditional action. Means-end rational action, or sometimes referred to as "purposive rational conduct," can be defined as action in which the means to attain a particular goal are rationally chosen (Elwell 1999) or in which "the individual rationally assesses the probable result of a given act in terms of the calculation of a means to an end" (Giddens 1971, 152). Weber's term for it "zweckrational" roughly translates as "technocratic thinking." Value-rational action, by contrast, is characterized by striving for a goal; the goal itself may not be rational - deriving from an ethical, religious, or
philosophical context - but it is pursued through rational means (Elwell 1999). Value-rational action is directed towards an overriding ideal, and takes no account of any other considerations. It is, however, rational because it involves the setting of coherent objectives to which the individual channels his or her activity (Giddens 1971, 152).

A third type of social action in Weber's typology is affective action. Affective action is based on the emotional rather than on the rational weighing of means and ends (Coser 1977). Giddens (1971, 152) explains the difference between value rational action and affective action in the following way:

A primary distinction between a value rational action and affective action is that value rational action presupposes that the individual holds a clearly defined ideal which dominates his or her activity, in the latter case this characteristic is absent. Affective action is that which is carried out under the sway of an emotive state, and as such is on the borderline of meaningful and non-meaningful action.

Therefore, although both value rational action and affective share the characteristic of 'passion' or fervor, they differ greatly in the deliberate, goal-oriented nature that characterizes value-rational action. The fourth type of action, traditional action, is guided by "custom or habit" (Giddens 1971, 153). People engage in this type of action often unthinkingly, because it is simply "always done." In this sense, traditional action can be understood as normative, the meaning of this type of action is derived from taken for granted, cognitively embedded ideals or symbols that do not have the coherent, purposeful, and defined form of those pursued in value rational action (Giddens 1971, 153).

I suggest here that world polity theorists' perspective on global professionals'
action as being normatively motivated can be likened to Weber's notion of traditional action. Like traditional action, world polity theorists understand the action of global professionals to be performed in a taken for granted, rote way because they have deeply internalized the broader culture. More specifically, global professionals are understood to be motivated by an internalized and unconscious set of global norms that originate from “core” countries, and through their work around the world, they diffuse these norms to “periphery” countries. Thus their primary role is as norm carriers and diffusers but this action is done without rational, purposeful choice, rather it is done normatively. Although Weber's notion of traditional action is generally understood to refer to the more mundane, taken for granted, and rote actions of every day life, such as how one eats, the concept is premised upon an understanding of institutionalization. That is, this type of action only becomes traditional by people doing it over and over again over a period of time so that it becomes habitual and normative and performing the action isn't questioned or calculated. In this sense, I argue that traditional action corresponds with world polity's perspective. In both cases, particular understandings and practices of the social world are internalized in unconscious ways so that a corresponding set of beliefs and actions become taken for granted.

In world polity theory, the empirical result of the institutionalization, internalization and subsequent diffusion of these norms is global institutional homogeneity (Boli and Thomas 1997; 1999; Drori, Meyer, and Hwang, 2006; Meyer 1980; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Meyer et al. 1991). In 1983, Dimaggio and Powell termed this tendency toward homogeneity “isomorphism” and identified three mechanisms that
account for it - coercive, mimetic, and normative. Ultimately, Dimaggio and Powell argued that these three mechanisms, which may occur simultaneously or vary over time, account for diffusion and isomorphism in practices and structures across organizations. Normative isomorphism is specifically connected to professions and professionals: as groups of professionals diffuse particular knowledge and practices, organizations feel pressured to adopt these same ideas and practices resulting in more and more organizations around the world looking the same. However, what is critical to the world polity perspective is that global professionals' diffusion of norms is not means-end action or value rational action in so much that it is not deliberately chosen. Global professionals, within this perspective, are cultural conduits motivated by an internalized set of ideas, cognitive schema.

I also suggest that conflict theory's understanding of global professionals as being predominantly motivated by self-interest can be likened to Weber's notion of means-end rational action. Conflict theory posits that global professionals also spread norms in a similar way that world polity theory describes. However, for conflict theorists, the diffusion is purposeful, aimed at strategically advancing their professional status, consolidating their power/knowledge, and elevating their role to that of global expert. These professionals, having been educated and trained similarly, work to have their understandings appear superior and eventually normative. For conflict theorists, then, hegemony is the result of explicit, and conscious, drives for power by groups of people who have a personal interest in having particular understandings and practices become the accepted perspective. Thus, it is clear that conflict theorists understanding of global
professionals in relation to social action fits within Weber's definition of means-end rational action.

However, as noted, Weber showed that values also motivate people and professionals in ways that are conscious and deliberate not just habitual or emotional. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber empirically shows that people’s belief in a particular form of Protestantism, which conflated hard work with religious salvation, provoked the unprecedented "capitalist spirit" and the development of capitalism. It was not people’s material interest or needs that propelled social development toward modern capitalism, but rather people’s religious values and devotion. In general then, Weber showed that people were not always means-end driven but that values can drive human action. Less well known, however, is Weber’s work on the "calling" and vocation.

Weber argued that the Protestants who created capitalism or, as he calls them, the "first great entrepreneurs," had a “calling.” The calling is understood as a feeling of impulsion, need, and love towards a certain activity or work. Weber argues, that the first great entrepreneurs were called to their work from a devotion to God (Goldman 1988). Work is thus a form of selfless service and submission to a higher ideal rather than the need to earn a living. Weber calls this type of work a vocation. For Protestants of the reformation this calling was from God but Weber believed that this notion could be applied in a secular context as well.

Weber believed that although capitalism had continued, the spirit that had initially motivated the first great entrepreneurs had not. Rationalization, or bureaucratization,
created a situation in which people worked relentlessly but not for a higher ideal, creating a sense of purposelessness and meaninglessness. With the loss of tradition, religion and cultural ideals, Weber was convinced that the only way to give meaning back to life was for secular men to listen for their calling and pursue their vocation (Goldman 1988). The notion of the calling in Weber’s later work (1919) was a secular revival and reappropriation of the notion originally rooted in the reformation. Weber specifically wrote about “Science as Vocation” and “Politics as Vocation” (1919) and argued that the first great entrepreneur is essentially the same as the figures who reappear as charismatic politicians, scientists, artists and entrepreneurs of today who have been called to their work and devoted themselves to it. In this sense, he believed that people could be “called” by values, or a spirit, that were not necessarily religious in nature. The notion of charisma, also features prominently in Weber's vision for a revival of spirit, passion and creativity. Although Weber discussed charisma predominantly within the realm of types of authority, charisma more generally can be understood to refer to a prophetic spirit and therein a break with tradition, a dislodging of traditional rules and boundaries, and a passionate, revolutionary and creative voice. Charisma therein stands in opposition to bureaucracy.

I argue that the global professionals at TCC were called to a vocation – they felt a need to fight injustice and although this was not understood as a duty to God, it was and is understood as an ethical responsibility to humanity. In this sense, TCC professionals were motivated by value-rational action. In addition, I argue that the passion that
characterizes these professionals and the belief which drives and guides them, created an initial organizational culture of charisma.

III. In the Beginning: The Origins of the TCC and the Culture of Charisma

In the beginning, it was different. There wasn’t like an overarching framework or set of guidelines that we all had to follow. We all came from different places, we had different experience and expertise, but we were all working on truth commissions and some of us came together to form this organization, and we just continued to do the work we had already been doing, in the way we were doing it. It was pretty amazing. There was a lot of freedom, no rules. And a lot of money! (Michael)

The words “amazing” and “freedom” don’t usually arise when talking with professionals within an organization, so when Michael used them to describe the organization when it first opened, I took notice. Michael volunteered this information just a few days after my arrival at the TCC. We had been having a casual conversation in his office and I had remarked how fancy I thought the building had looked when I first arrived at the center. The center was located in high-rise building in the financial district and the foyer seemed to be floor to ceiling marble. There was a security guard at a desk. To get to the elevators, you had to have a swipe card. The building housed a number of different agencies and centers, not all non-profit and the actual center was more modest then the building suggested. The center was split between two floors, with three walls covered in windows. The directors’ offices were all along the periphery, so that each office had a magnificent view of the city through their floor to ceiling windows on the 12th and 13th floor. The research fellows worked in the middle of the office space in cubicles. When I remarked to Michael about the building being fancy, he laughed and
said “oh you should’ve seen us in the beginning.” At the time, I didn’t understand what he meant, so he elaborated on what the TCC was like in the beginning:

Well I don’t mean that the building looked fancier but we had just had a lot of funding when the organization first opened its doors and there was a particular ethos - to be creative, to be innovative. So we all got gym memberships and there were a lot of free lunches and a lot of brain storming and there was just a lot of everything it seemed and a lot excitement. (Michael)

After this elaboration, I asked him: “So, how is it different now?” “Well, you know. It’s almost 10 years now. We are all a bit older.” He laughed and then continued:

I mean, as an organization, we’ve had to develop, figure out some standards, we are in the process of doing this, so that we are all on the same page; so that we consult and advise on the same page. I mean we are an organization, right? Plus, the recession has hit the whole non-profit world really hard. No one’s getting gym memberships! (Michael)

A few days later, I was sitting with Michael in his office, after a conference call we had been on with Tina, one of the overseas Program Directors. During the conversation I had been surprised at Tina’s informality, her graciousness, and her overall “chillness” despite her obvious breadth of knowledge and intelligence. Tina is a huge name in the field; she is internationally recognized as a leading expert on transitional justice, and I have long admired her work, so I expected the phone call conversation to be more formal and academic. While I didn’t mention all of this to Michael, in a moment of unbridled excitement and gushing when we got off the phone, I did say that she seemed “so young and cool and so real!” “We are all young!” he exclaimed back to me. He was referring to the program directors like himself and those who helped conceive and establish the TCC. “I know!” I responded. “But I’ve been reading her work for five years and to me she’s
like a veteran so I just thought she’d be older or sound older or something.” Michael understood and provided me with a little more background:

Basically, she wrote her PhD and it became the bible for the field. She wasn’t even 30 yet. And then we all got together – we were all really young – and we started this organization. And we wanted to change the culture of geriatric presidents and boards of organizations. Why does someone have to be 60 to be the president? We wanted to maintain a fresh, youthful, creative culture. New ideas, new ways of thinking. (Michael).

Throughout my time at the TCC, this “in the beginning” time was often mentioned, usually in a nostalgic, reminiscent manner. The stories were always chock full of words like creativity, fresh, and rule-free, creating an image of an organizational culture that was bounded only by a commitment to uphold particular values, and which prided itself on its vigilante-like human rights professionals who were unfettered by organizational demands. The organization was meant only to house these professionals so their ideas and work could be supported. It was not meant to structure, standardize, or construct ideological boundaries or professional guidelines. These people were not meant to be, or look like, UN bureaucrats or tribunal lawyers. These First Generation True Believers understood themselves to be untethered by organizational constraints, and they felt that this lack of constraint, this freedom, was precisely what allowed them to think and act creatively in ways that reflected their values and the commitments that had brought them together.

These “in the beginning” tales were passed down to us interns - the Second Generation - like folklore. As we each got closer to our supervisors, we would hear, and then share with each other, these stories. There was an implicit understanding among us
that knowing the genesis story of the TCC was important - a story that taught us our roots, where we came from, who we are, and what we believed in. However, part of the reason these stories had to be told was precisely because the “good old days” had passed.

The primary, daily tasks for many of the interns and myself consisted of helping to synthesize information in order to create various standards, manuals, and best practices. We knew about the old culture, but it was not present in our daily duties or discourse. In addition, funding was scarce; as has been mentioned earlier, the recession had hit the entire non-profit world hard and the tightening of belts seemingly meant also a cinching of freedoms as well as staff - gym memberships were the least of the problems. Besides, the novelty of the TCC had worn off. It was not the new kid on the non-profit block anymore, and it wasn’t regarded with the same level of enthusiasm from the international community as before. This left the TCC open to more critique, both local and global. During the time I was there the response to these critiques, overtly and politically, was to make clear what the TCC stood for and, correspondingly, what they believed truth commissions needed to prioritize. In other to words, there was a rallying around the proverbial flag. They were the organization dedicated to the rights of victims and to contextual specificity and cultural sensitivity.

As Michael indicated, there was a difference between then and now, and by the tone of the stories, it was obvious that something had been loss and that it was missed. I understand this to be the loss of the culture of charisma that initially characterized the TCC. That is, drawing on Weber, I understand the initial culture of the TCC to be characterized by creativity, freedom from rules, a break with tradition, and a creative and
spiritual sensibility that draws a type of professional devotion that moves far beyond the
notion of work as the performance of obligatory, routine tasks but rather work as the duty
to a vocation. The stories passed down to us, the continuous reminiscing of “in the
beginning,” as well as the organizational structure in the beginning, indicate a culture of
charisma: a lack of formal structure and hierarchy, broad guidelines and few rules, no
SOPs or best practice models, and a creative, dynamic, innovative, passionate atmosphere
developed by young, spirited and committed human rights activists.

Moreover, precisely because charisma is defined by a lack of rules and tradition
and by a high degree of freedom and creativity, the culture it produces does not have
clear boundaries, normative understandings, or guidelines. As a result, TCC professionals
lack a clearly articulated understanding about the work they do and how it should be
done. Rather they have diverse interpretations, differing standards, and ambiguous
feelings concerning truth commissions. Thus, as I will show in the next section, part of
what defines the initial professional culture of the TCC, the culture of charisma, is
ambiguity and diversity, which is represented through the reflections and actions of TCC
professionals in specific and thematic ways. However, what is not ambiguous is their
shared value of redressing human rights violations. In this way, a broad sense of “right”
and “wrong” guides them personally but, over time, as the organization expanded, this
"broadness" was not sufficient and more specific guidelines were required, as I will show
in the following chapter.
IV. The Ties that Bind: Ambiguous Standards, Diverse Understandings, Clear Values

I ask Jesse to tell me about himself, to tell me his story.

“Well…I’m an activist. I have a tradition of personal activism. I’m a lawyer too but a regretful lawyer.” He laughs.

“What does that mean?” I ask.

I tried to get out of the legalist cause and move more towards the real world. Use law to serve human rights. So I ended up working for a human rights organizations but then when I could see my country was undergoing change, after the conflict, and I heard talks of the truth commission, I really thought it [truth commission] could be a way forward. So I got involved in the ministry of justice and then I became a member of the commission. (Jesse)

For Jesse, having grown up in Peru during a time of conflict, he feels that the need to fight injustice was just part of his psyche. He can’t remember a time when defending human rights wasn’t guiding his life. Like many lawyers, he became one in order to uphold justice and to help people and society. But, unlike many lawyers who often end up working for large corporate firms, he left the profession and began working for local human rights NGOs after finishing his degree abroad. When the truth commission began to be discussed among NGOs, he saw it as an opportunity to serve his country in a way that could make a real difference.

Although, he tells me later, he will never work on a truth commission again:

“Nunca Mas! Never again the truth commission!” I ask him why.

We gave our hearts and souls to write that report and we believed in it so dearly. And so we cannot avoid to be very...sentimental...about it. It was a very intense experience, a very very intense experience to see those things in your country. I mean, my most valuable moment in my life, but never again (laughs)! (Jesse)
But when I ask him if this means that he doesn’t believe in truth commissions now, he says:

No, it’s not so simple. It’s not really about truth commissions. It’s about what will help the country. It’s not really about believing in truth commissions. It’s about finding the best way to deal with the injustice of the past and help victims.

Jen was born and raised in the US. She came from a middle class background and went to a decent college but not an elite one. When I ask Jen to tell me how she got involved with truth commissions, she says:

Well, I’ll put it this way: when I told my mom that I was going into conflict resolution, she said, “You cry when people fight! Why would you do that?!” But I think that’s sort of exactly why. I think that because I’m sensitive to people’s feeling that going into conflict resolution was a way to channel that sensitivity from being a liability to being a strength in the work that I do. I think I’ve just always felt really strongly about injustice and conflict. That people had rights and they needed to be upheld and that for conflicts to be resolved voices needed to be heard. (Jen)

“You believe truth commissions do that?” I ask.

I believe they can. But they don’t always. I think different situations require different mechanisms. I think knowing the history of what happened is important for victims. And it’s important to deal with the past. And truth commissions can be very good at fact finding and then disseminating that report. (Jen)

Jesse and Jen come from very different places. They have different nationalities and different education backgrounds. Although they both work with truth commissions, Jen works primarily in North America and Jesse works primarily in Latin America. They live on separate continents and the ways they articulate their work with truth commissions and their understanding of the value of truth commissions differ. Their
ideas of a "successful" truth commission and how to achieve one are ambiguous and diverse and they are self-reflexive and skeptical about their roles in the process. But they still believe in redressing human rights violations and they share this commitment and value.

These characteristics of Jesse and Jen – the differences in their backgrounds, their thoughtful, skeptical and diverse understandings of truth commissions and their own work, and their very personal commitment to and belief in redressing human rights violations, prioritizing victims, context specificity and cultural sensitivity are exemplary of what I saw among the professionals in my study in general.

Below, I highlight three distinct themes amongst First Generation True Believers to show the way they characterize the “in the beginning” culture of charisma, its ambiguous and “unsettled” but ideal-laden professional environment (Swidler 1986). I show that First Generation True Believers: 1. Did not share similar national, educational or professional backgrounds. But their career paths do show a shared commitment to public service, reflecting their commitment to human rights; 2. Exhibit a high degree of self-doubt and self-reflexivity concerning how to run and establish a truth commission and self-consciously lack a clear definition of what success looks like because they don't believe there is a “recipe” for how to achieve it; and 3. Lack self-interest in relation to professional or material gain. All these ambiguous and diverse understandings and practices are juxtaposed, however, against a solidified and shared belief in the value of victims' rights.

First Generation True Believers' Backgrounds
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<td>Foreign-born/raised</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in conflict zones</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-born/raised</td>
<td>71</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>11</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Study of Foreign Born</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home country</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad West (e.g. U.S/ Europe)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad West - Elite (e.g. Harvard)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Experience</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-Legal capacity</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign born in conflict zones</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grassroots/ NGO</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign born in conflict zones</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign born in conflict zones</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 demonstrates the diversity of this group of professionals as well as their similarities. TCC professionals come from all over the world. And since less than half of the professionals come from conflict areas, we can see that it is not only the experience of conflict that draws people to this profession or this value system. TCC professionals all have college degrees, but only just over half of those born outside of the US studied abroad, and less than that studied at elite schools. There was no dominant subject area that they studied – majors range from philosophy, to comparative literature, to political science. Overall, Table 2 makes clear that First Generation True Believers did not share a well-honed and required educational or professional training path in order to achieve their current position in the TCC or which constructed and shaped their current beliefs and ideals. Given the 'newness' of the profession at the time that they established the TCC, this lack of clear and shared professional trajectory makes sense since no standardized credentials had been developed or required. However, as I will show, this has since changed.

However, First Generation True Believers were all activists in civil society, either locally, internationally or both; they worked for governments, for the UN, for different universities and most, at some point, for different non-profits with a social justice agenda. This shared work of public service reflects their commitment to a value of service to human kind, which seemed to drive them from very early on in their lives, regardless of nationality, education level or field. While this work does not reflect a formally organized professional path, it does, again, make clear a common sensibility concerning human rights.
Diverse understandings, Self-Doubt and Reflexivity, Common Commitment

The professionals in my study also had a variety of understandings of whether truth commissions in general were useful or “good” and what made specific commissions “successful.” Yet, the commitment to problematizing these very notions and to the reflexivity of their own actions was another shared value. First Generation True Believers were aware of how other organizations had become dogmatic in their work or had failed to remain skeptical and questioning as to whether their work is useful, helpful, or even “good.” In interview after interview, TCC professionals wondered out loud to me whether truth commissions could achieve their broad, mandated objectives or if they are even the right mechanism in many situations. They often told me that they were trying to be realistic or pragmatic about what a truth commission could or could not accomplish, but that this was a hard lesson learned from their experience working within one. Lastly, they were extremely reflective about their own work and were very obviously personally impacted by the process. All of these reactions - their problematizing, their questioning, their reflexivity, their personal turmoil - made clear to me that their commitment to this work, the driving force behind their actions, was a commitment to helping victims of human rights violations and, this was also critical, to helping them in a way that wasn’t imperialist and therein was context specific and culturally sensitive.

For Aaron, a Liberian working in the Liberian regional office and who had worked on the Liberian truth Commission, truth commissions are mainly useful for historical truth seeking and reporting. In our interview, I asked him to tell me about a time when he felt good about the work he did with the Liberian truth commissions. He
discussed the experience of gathering information to write the report and determining the history of the conflict. When I then asked him what it means to him to have a successful truth commission in general, his response reflected this personal experience:

Truth commissions provide a functional history. They try to purify the truth by narrowing down the political lies that mount during transition. These lies attempt to rewrite history. In every way, they [truth commissions] have been systematic on putting a lid on these violations. So, the function of truth commissions will not be able to create reconciliation. What it does do effectively is go more than 50% to capture the facts of history, which is very important. (Aaron)

Aaron continued to explain how truth commissions that attempt to do too much usually fail. By fail, he explained, he meant that they don’t help the victims. He was wary of truth commissions that promised and tried to do too much. In a similar vein, Mark reflected sadly upon the mistake he and the other commissioners made in creating too broad a mandate:

If I could turn the clock back perhaps I would have recommended the mandate to be more modest and more focused but the demands and the expectations were so huge, we couldn’t resist the temptation to try to do something for those who were mistreated, for the orphans, for the damages that the villages and cities had. So yes we were too ambitious. And I think that we failed to transmit to the victims that the truth commission was only a temporary mechanism. And that the solutions to the problems were not in the hands of the truth commission. (Mark)

Mark expresses here what he understands as not only the failure of the truth commission but also his own failures as commissioner. Like Aaron, his understanding of success and failure are determined by the ability of the truth commission to redress injustice for victims. And also, like Aaron, he believes the commission’s ability to do this is limited and yet he believes what can be done is something he feels was a personal responsibility.
Tom, a former commissioner, is also reflexive about his experience with the commission. Similar to Jesse, Tom describes how very difficult and painful the experience was for him. He explains that he felt very responsible for the lives of the victims, for their justice, and for their future. Even if he knew that the truth commission could not be an all-encompassing solution, he personally felt a need to help. He tells me that, in retrospect, there are so many things he would have done differently even though he feels he “gave his heart” to the process. When I ask him what he thinks truth commissions do best, he answers, “they allow victims to tell their story and be heard but how that is done and organized and anything beyond that is questionable.” He elaborates in the context of Peru:

My interpretation of the afterlife of the commission is that it has been very important in order to empower victims and help victims’ organizations to demand their rights and this is very important. It is part of an overall social democratization process in Peru. It should be mentioned that people that were victims in Peru are mostly voiceless people, and rural people who speak a different language and are very hardly heard by the official power so do we have a better society after the commission? Not exactly, but we have more contentions in society in a constructive way – we have people who are more vocal today and who are more able to ask and organize and demand about their lives. But on the other side there is a problem with the commission and with truth telling and justice in Peru that exceeds very much the problem of commissions, which is something particular to Peruvian society which is that we do not have a proper established system – we have had a decision making system that has been broken and collapsed for the past 15 years and so the process of governance and democratic demand and post-democratic contention is very very weak in Peru so that the fight against poverty as well as the demand for human rights and reparations are very weakened. (Tom)

Tom’s narrative is complex like the truth commission process. Other professionals emphasized the role of creativity in truth commissions. They said they felt that a truth commission had more chance of being helpful to victims when it was being
designed creatively and not just following a standardized approach. Jonathon, who has been a consultant on multiple truth commissions, is adamant about an approach that is tailored to the particular situation:

For me, personally, I have the sensation that the truth commission is a good, proactive initiative when I first see creativity; when I see that stakeholders speak creatively, reflecting on the circumstances so that they know they are signing and implementing an initiative that responds uniquely to their issues. I like initiatives where people are not slavish-ly following a cookie-cutter approach and when they are actually adapting principles to their own reality. I think that has the hallmark to a good initiative. (Jonathon)

Jonathon tells me that he doesn’t think there is a recipe for a good truth commission because no two conflicts are alike. He tells me how he tries to work with commissioners to tap into the needs of the victims rather than just to arbitrarily apply models from other truth commissions. When I ask him how he knows a truth commission is “successful,” he tells me that a truth commission “works” when it prioritizes the victims.

Truth commissions are helpful when they take seriously victims and the desire of victims to be recognized. So I appreciate commissions that are not just about establishing a forensic investigation or establishing facts, but commissions that recognize the inner reality of experiences. Commissions that recognize that people suffered. Therefore, a commission that dignifies the experience of every individual, and every victim for me is a commission that bears the hallmark of success. Commissions that victims deal with their own memories and deal with their own personal processes, I think that those are commissions that have been very successful. (Jonathon)

Thus, Jonathon’s understanding of what truth commissions do best is different from Tom, Mark and Aaron. However, despite the variation in understandings, they all share a belief that at the core of their work is helping victims.
Because of this shared belief, they are wary of when, how, and if truth commissions should be used and the ways in which they can be used for the wrong reasons. Fran tells me:

Sometimes I come across situations where people are saying something is a truth commission when it is clearly designed to either be a white wash or to be an arrangement between politicians or just a second rate poor person consolation prize, I don’t support it. And then the TCC doesn’t support it. We do not support it just cause it has the name “truth commission.”

Fran makes clear here that she and the TCC are not promoting truth commissions wherever they go or wherever the opportunity arises. Conversely, she tells me, what she and others at the TCC are looking for before they provide support is evidence that the country is focused on the best way to help victims and on changing the culture of injustice in the country.

The understandings these professionals have concerning truth commissions as effective mechanisms for transitioning a country from conflict to peace are very diverse. They are also skeptical as to the use of truth commissions, and are extremely reflexive about their own participation in the process.

Lack of Self-Interest

Despite the professionals’ narratives about being more committed to redressing injustice than the advancement of truth commissions per se, I was curious and admittedly skeptical that this would translate into practice. Would they discourage implementation of a truth commission, given that their having a job was premised upon consulting on truth commissions? Although their daily work involved much standardizing and rationalizing which, as I will show in the next chapter, undermined the value of cultural sensitivity,
they did in fact match their practice with their shared value of prioritizing victims, even at the expense of their professional self-interest. In other words, they did not always push for, suggest, or think a truth commission should be established. In this sense, it appeared that these professionals were not normatively or instrumentally oriented.

As one of the leading organizations consulting on truth commissions, the TCC is often contacted when a country is thinking about establishing a truth commission, sponsored either by the adopting government or the UN. The TCC reviews the situation, and discussions with the relevant governments and agencies are held. If at the beginning or at any time later in the process, the TCC thinks that the government is not genuine in its objective to have a truth commission that prioritizes victims’ rights and redressing human rights violations, it will pull out of the process or threaten to leave unless changes are made. If the TCC determines that the government is sincere, it will work with the commissioners to create a truth commission in which victims’ rights are made the main concern.

For example, one day my supervisor Jonathon called me into his office to discuss a situation that had come to his attention, and to prep me for a conference call that I would sit in on with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the National Security Council (NSC) the following evening. Honduras had recently ended a civil conflict and signed a peace agreement. A truth commission had been written into the peace agreement and Honduras had started establishing the commission without consulting the TCC. However, since the peace agreement, the situation had turned violent again and civil society groups were saying that the peace agreement and the truth
commission were shams. Nonetheless, the government wanted to persevere with the commission – it had already gone so far as to picked commission members and had written a mandate. Both UNDP and the NSC also wanted to go ahead with the commission in hopes that it would help calm the growing, violent unrest.

After reviewing the situation, the TCC determined that this was not the right move. They believed that a truth commission was not meant to stop a conflict; before a truth commission could be implemented violence needed to end and security needed to be established. Only then could the proper steps be taken to establish a truth commission since victims’ rights could not be redressed if they were still being violated. The TCC believed that otherwise the truth commission would be a hoax; it would be adopted only ceremonially to appease the international community and to maintain strategic economic and political relationships. In this sense, First Generation True Believers try actively to resist the very type of “ceremonial adoption” caused by diffusion, and isomorphic mechanisms, in this case mimetic adoption of an organizational form unsuited to the situation. The TCC believed that the truth commission needed to be stopped until peace was established. Afterwards, the entire process would have to start from scratch in order to be successful. My supervisor summarized the situation for me more generally:

Not everything is positive in terms of establishing a truth commission. Some people, governments, think it’s an easy way out. Some people hope that the truth commission will automatically reconcile former parties and the truth commission will be some sort of penicillin, for all of the county’s ailments. Political elites think if a truth commission is adopted, they don’t have to do their homework and they can just use the truth commission as a consolation prize for victims who have been left behind by the conflict. So, on the one side, there is one set of very ambitious expectations of truth commissions relates to the idea of human rights; on the other side is very strategic thinking by political elites who are basically
focused on political convenience. But both things coalesce in terms of pushing for a truth commission and we have to be careful to understand which is happening. (Michael)

In the days following this phone conversation, the TCC sent a seven-page memo to all the relevant actors. The memo stated that the TCC would not support the truth commission, and it listed the reasons. It also provided historical information concerning previous commissions that had suffered and ultimately failed due to similar types of problems. The TCC recommended a number of steps that could be taken to rectify the issues and ultimately lay the foundation for a successful truth commission. If these steps were taken, the TCC would join the conversation again. Ultimately, because the truth commission was not premised upon the needs of the victims, the TCC would not support it. An excerpt from the memorandum makes these recommendations clear:

**Memorandum 05/2010:**

Following the Honduran coup d’état of June 28th 2009, and the governance crisis that both caused it and escalated in its aftermath, the newly elected government of President Porfirio Lobo has taken steps to create a truth commission with the stated purpose of contributing to reconciliation, as stipulated in the San Jose-Tegucigalpa Accords of July and October 2009. However, it is unclear what the mandate of the commission will be, whether there will be appropriate political and social consensus around it, and whether it will comply with well-established international standards on the rights of victims of serious human rights violations.

The TCC recommends that the Honduran government engages with civil society in a genuine process of consultation to determine whether a truth commission is both feasible and appropriate for clarifying the events relating to the coup and for redressing the related human right violations. The TCC is concerned that without this consultation process the creation of a truth commission could result in a flawed and ineffective effort that will not contribute to solving, and may even exacerbate, the on-going situation of dangerous polarization that has been undermining the country’s political and social stability.
Some concerns around the announced establishment of a truth commission in Honduras:

In general, truth commissions have historically emerged in the midst of complex situations and volatile conditions. While naturally these situations differ from country to country and parties to the transitional negotiation must engage in political agreements and face legal demands that are very specific to the region, some fundamental elements have been identified as basic preconditions for truth commissions to be fair and effective within such situations and conditions. Those elements seem to be either absent or disputable in the case of Honduras.

Recommendations:

The current process should be reconsidered and a wide process of genuine consultation should commence, consistent with the following principles below, and taking account of related issues:

a. A holistic conception of transitional justice, focused on the victims and their integral rights to truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-repetition and consistent with applicable law, including the jurisprudence of the Inter American Court of Human Rights.

b. A democratic commitment to transparency and inclusion of all sectors to discuss the problem of impunity and the best forms to fight it, including the functions of a truth commission.

c. A clear mandate assigning functions, parameters of investigation and powers to the commission, as well as determining the method of appointment for members of the commission. Such a mandate should be clearly stated in an effective legal instrument, either a law passed by parliament or a presidential decree extensively consulted with civil society.

d. Strong guarantees of impartiality and independence for the commission, starting with a robust process of nomination, vetting and appointment of commissioners that inspire confidence to all sectors of Honduran society. Commissioners should be clearly empowered to control their resources, conduct their own investigations, build partnerships, reach out to the public and propose policy.

e. A victim-centered initiative, recognizing the dignity of victims and their rights. A truth commission, or any other form of inquiry over crimes should empower victims to share their stories, raise their demands and educate the citizenry. Particular attention should be given to sectors in specific situations of vulnerability and who have suffered specific forms of violence, such as women, children and indigenous peoples.

f. The personal safety of those who would provide information and testimony to the truth commission, as well as appropriate immunities for the
commissioners. Honduras must put an effective end to harassment and attacks against political opponents and human rights defenders.

The TCC will remain vigilant of developments in Honduras and stands ready to contribute to a genuine process of consultation and dialogue based on international standards and best practices.

The excerpt makes clear the TCC’s position on the Honduras case. This example was one of many in which the paramount concern for TCC professionals was not their professional advancement via the establishment of truth commissions but rather the redressing of human rights violations and the needs of the victims.

In addition, it could be argued that their refusal to be involved with a truth commission that didn’t adhere to these principles had more to do with their interest in not promoting a truth commission that they saw would probably fail - why invest in a bad investment, as doing so would only hurt their careers? In this sense, their choice would reflect self-interest rather than a commitment to values. However, I understand their decision as a clear demonstration of value-rational action, precisely because of the professional and material loss they incurred as a result. The UN didn’t agree with the TCC nor did other key stakeholders - they were willing to see the truth commission as a start in the right direction. It was not that the truth commission would have been internationally recognized as “bad” or illegitimate and that, therefore, the TCC would’ve lost international credibility if they had supported it. In fact, they may have lost credibility for choosing the path they did; they certainly did not please the international community in creating the ultimatum they did. Also, by not being involved, they lost the job, so to speak. A large portion of incoming funds for the TCC consists of payments
they procure through consulting on truth commissions. If they don’t take on the consulting job, at least until certain requirements are met, as in the case above, they do not get paid. At a time when funding was low, contracted work was even more critical, however apparently not at the expense of their values. Not being involved in this and other similar truth commission projects was a political and ethical statement - they were willing to take a hit, professionally and financially, for their values.

VI. Unsettled Times, Vocation, and Value-Rational Action

In her seminal article "Culture in Action," Swidler distinguishes between “unsettled” cultural periods (times of social transformation) and “settled” cultural periods (the time between social transformations). She argues that during unsettled periods, traditions and normative social action is uprooted and new styles and strategies of action come into play that are established by new ideologies (Swidler 1986, 278). She states that unsettled periods move to settled period along a continuum from ideology to tradition to common sense and people's actions also move along this continuum, first “learning new ways of organizing individual and collective action, practicing unfamiliar habits until they become familiar” and then to “doctrine, symbol, and ritual directly shape action” (Swidler 1986, 278). Although Swidler actually by and large argues against the Weberian notion of values directly motivating action, she does concede that during unsettled times, “culture may indeed be said to directly shape action” and have ”independent causal influence,” making people act in specific ways “because their beliefs tell them to” (1986, 279).
Swidler's concept of unsettled cultural periods can be liken to the “in the beginning” period of a new profession in which, as I have argued, tradition and common sense are uprooted and ideals and “ideological activism,” in Swidler's words, are prominent. Or, in other words, unsettled periods provide an opening for charismatic leaders and cultures. The TCC was developed during just such a time in which there was a crisis in the human rights field - a decade of human rights organizing had not yielded the results of alleviating poverty and conflict that everyone had hoped for, and transitional justice, and the TCC in particular, were meant to provide a new, fresh, and different approach to the field at large. The professionals that emerged were “called” to this vocation from a passionate devotion to the ideal of a just world, not truth commissions per se and not a formal structure of human rights. The reason their discourse and practices are somewhat vague or ambiguous as well as diverse is not because their motivating values are unclear but rather it is the result of the unsettled character of the time and the absence of formal organizing and rationality. In fact, it is the diversity and ambiguity that makes transparent the fact that what they share are values, not a taken-for-granted organizational creed; they do not have a polished party line, rather they articulate something that seems much more personal and therefore comes out sounding a little clunky and emotional. To hear these people speak of their failures, and to take so personally the perceived failures of different truth commissions, alerted me that their stake in this was not simply professional but something much more personal. What binds these professionals together in both discourse and practice is a fundamental belief
in redressing injustice done to victims. What they are struggling to establish is a way to use truth commissions toward that end.

Transitional justice became their chosen professional field because it very explicitly works to redress injustice. For these professionals, the work they do is in service of a higher ideal, and they are what Gunningham and Kagan call “true believers” (Gunningham and Kagan, 2003). In their study of the very secular context of corporations who actually abide by environmental standards, Gunningham and Kagan argue that “true believers” are those people or organizations that make decisions based on what they believe is the “right thing to do” given their moral framework, not because of the bottom line. This explains the difference between those who will implement environmental standards and those who won’t, even if they initially incur a financial loss and lose legitimacy. “True believers” feel/believe that the best professional decision will always be the decision that honors their moral principles, and this will always provide the most beneficial outcome in the long run (Gunningham and Kagan 2003, 101).

Stephen Vaisey provides a less religious or spiritual way to think about a calling. Vaisey argues, “there is mounting evidence that moral judgment occurs primarily through intuitions and emotions rather than through conscious reasoning” (Vaisey 2008, 607). In this sense, Vaisey merges Weber's notion of “affective action” and “value-rational action.” More specifically, Vaisey argues that people have “moral intuitions,” which cause us to make decisions based on strong moral judgments even when we are unable to provide coherent (or any) reasons for those judgments (2008, 607). He argues that moral intuitions help us to understand that people’s actions can be shaped by substantive moral
values to which they do not have conscious access, and that this is different then drawing on cultural repertoires, scripts, and norms. I draw on Vaisey here to make sense of the TCC professionals’ vague articulations that they just had to get involved. While they are clear that they were drawn to the work of redressing human rights and that they believe in “victims’ rights,” they do not have the well-versed justifications we would expect from people using cultural scripts or codes to justify their actions. In this sense, Vaisey somewhat modernizes the notion of the “calling,” although Vaisey speaks more generally about being drawn to certain action not just to a vocation. The general principle is that our deeply held values guide us, sometimes consciously and sometimes not, and that there is a distinction between being guided by deeply held values and being almost robotically driven by taken for granted forms of conduct, as world polity would have us believe. To see TCC professionals as true believers who were called to their vocation and motivated by deeply internalized moral intuition is to see a very different picture than one of them as self-interested neo-colonialists or norm carriers.

What is made clear by returning to Weber’s notion of the calling and vocation, Vaisey’s concept of moral intuition, and Swidler's connection between “unsettled” periods and ideological activism, is the distinction between values and norms. Values are not unintentionally absorbed; rather they are deep, personal ideals, which one devotes oneself to living by. This is not to say that values are outside of culture. Values, like norms, are part of our social reality and culture. But, as Durkheim (1965) as well as Berger and Luckmann (1966) have argued, this social reality is itself a social product – an externalizing of social action that is felt as a real force outside oneself, whether that force
is understood as God or as a commitment to injustice. Norms, on the other hand, are created when values are internalized and habitualized – when they lose their spirit and the calling.

VI. Conclusion

It’s a combination of things, on one side, I used to be an activist when I was in college and I have always had a motivation, an interest in social issues, always always. I don’t know why - maybe being from Peru but certainly not all my friends were into social issues, which was why I mostly expressed this motivation outside of school. Then, in university and my theoretical work, I started to focus more on issues of political science and I was mostly interested in questions of democratic theory that was my main focus, inside and outside of school. In the 1990s, when I was working towards a doctorate, one of the most pressing issues was one about the so-called theory of democratic transitions and I became very focused on that because I was very interested in what was going on in my country, in Peru, which at that point, was dealing with the last events of the war between the insurgent groups and the state, that was under an authoritarian regime. I became very intrigued about the question on what to do about the past. I realized it was sort of a gray area, a blank spot in the theory. The literature said very little about that. There was not, I think, a theoretical framework to deal with it. Democratic theory and transitional was not at all based on the logic of moral grievances, on moral demands, about victims. So I was very interested in that and I started to read and think about my country - the specific situation and the victims. So I sort of discovered the field of transitional theory, of transitional justice, when it was just emerging. Then I wrote a couple of things, which I took to Peru in 2000 when the regime of Fujimori was struggling to survive. When issues of truth and reconciliation were starting to be discussed. So I became involved in that and in truth commissions. That’s how I came specifically to the world of transitional governments. (Michael)

The quote above encapsulates the key features of the First Generation True Believers: the feeling that they always had to get involved coupled with only a vague understanding as to why they felt this way. Michael articulates their commitment to victims’ rights, context specificity, and cultural sensitivity, and their informed introspection, analytical
orientation, and thoughtfulness. But to fully understand this narrative, and TCC professionals in general, values must be brought back into the conversation on action. For this project, what is key in this discussion is that if we are to understand the social construction of rationalization - the process by which rationalized structures come into being, we need to have a more expansive and complex understanding of people, organizations, their actions and their roles. As Vaisey has recently pointed out, action is not determined by one motivation, rather action is simultaneously influenced by multiple, and often competing, motivations as well as habits, traditions, and norms (2008). In this chapter, I tried to bring back value-rational action to the literature on global professionals and global organizations. I want to conclude by positing some hypotheses concerning my findings.

One of the key distinctions between the global professionals I studied and those previously studied is the age of the profession, meaning that earlier perspectives have primarily or exclusively focused on traditional professions that have gone global, e.g. law, economics, medicine, etc. These are older professions that have been made to expand, adapt, and sometimes transform almost entirely to remain relevant within the current global context. Transitional justice, on the other hand, is a nascent profession born out of the globalized world. I suggest that this issue of age is critical because it is over time that professions rationalize, or bureaucratize, which, according to Weber is precisely what routinizes charisma and kills the spirit that initially called individuals to come together, create a profession, and practice it. As previously noted, hallmark scholarship within the sociology of professions has long argued for the role values play in
motivating professionals in these older professions. However, when these professions and professionals were examined at the global level, it appears that as they had developed, standardized, and rationalized, the values that initially motivated them have become normative and taken for granted, enabling less critical, reflexive action and more self-interested practices. In the case of transitional justice, I was able to look at a profession in its infancy and examine professionals whose spirit has not yet been routinized (although it was on the way to being). The values that called them are still accessible and visible, even though at the time of my field work the rationalization process was underway. This is why, just as Weber argued that the Protestants of the reformation were the first great entrepreneurs that created capitalism as a result of their calling, I have referred to these professionals as First Generation True Believers who created this profession out of their calling. But also, like Weber who argued that over time rationalization eventually killed the spirit, we can predict that over time these professionals may not carry on this spirit in its same purity. As I will show later, this is what I saw happening within the organization as well as with the Second Generation interns.

Mark Duffield and Hugo Slim, in their separate but overlapping discussions of humanitarian relief programs make similar arguments. Slim (1998) compares early humanitarian aid to prophecy, and today’s humanitarian aid to priesthood. The prophet confronts society with a truth and is concerned with personal, social and political transformation, and the priesthood is concerned with maintaining truth as enshrined and institutionalized in rituals and standards of purity and worship. The distinction lies in the tension between faith and organization. Duffield (2001) adds that although humanitarian
relief was once premised upon the prophetic concern of saving lives, a new humanitarianism has emerged that bases actions or inactions on the assumed good or bad consequences of given intervention in relation to wider, rationalized, and institutionalized development goals. In other words, over time humanitarian relief has become rationalized and this has changed its fundamental spirit. For now, in these early years of the professional field, TCC professionals maintain their faith and are prophets or First Generation True Believers. However, it remains to be seen whether the consequences of time will eventually create an organization of priests, and it is this organizational aspect that I hope my analysis provides insight. In providing an in depth look at the organizational dynamics of this prophetic spirit in relation to action, I hope to begin to illuminate some of the pitfalls that organizations fall into as they grow.

The new global context gives us an opportunity to look at professions as they are developing, and to examine their aging. I suggest, then, that future research focus on these new professions over time, tracking how they change and how this change impacts organizational dynamics, professional practices, and professionals themselves. Since global professionals play a key role in constructing and structuring our current world order, it is critical that we take a closer look at who they are, what they do, and why they do it.

In the next chapter, I will examine the organizational mechanisms by which culture of charisma is routinized. I focus on the process by which values and ideals are developed into ways of defining reality and trace the way they are transformed into discourse and then eventually techniques of control. I argue that it is these values that
unintentionally kick started the process of rationalization by these professionals and this organization. In this way, I try to follow Selznick (1992; 1996; 2000; 2008) and others (Kraatz, Ventresca and Deng 2010; Suddaby et al. 2010) who have evinced a renewed interest in organizational values and a parallel concern with processes of value change and subversion. I try to look at the conditions and processes that frustrated the ideals of these professionals instead of giving them life and hope.
CHAPTER 3

TRYING TO KEEP THE FAITH: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SOLUTIONS

I. Introduction

...Successful peace talks or democratic transitions receive the incentive of nearly universal applause and prestige for the negotiators. Ending violence ensures attention, channels cooperation and political support. However, it is difficult to avoid the sensation that there is something missing in the picture of two powerful men shaking hands and exchanging smiles in front of the flashes.

The victims are nowhere to be found.

The promise of ending violence in the future seems to justify putting them aside, asking them to wait in silence. The probably correct moral calculation that any peace is better than no peace becomes too easily a veil of silence that falls over the presumable spoilers: civilians who paid the price of conflict, those who buried their dead and have little to win in the power-sharing deal of the elites.

The TCC cannot presume to make recommendations to the stakeholders in the treatment of the legacy of the residential schools. The wisdom of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis; the decisions taken by the truth commission; the attitude taken by the government and by the churches respond to challenges they are in the best position to identify successfully. Our role, if that is considered appropriate, is merely to share information and lessons learned in other processes; to mobilize expertise; to serve as a sounding board for creative thinking. Our perspective is based in a human rights perspective and our commitment to reconciliation is clear, but also consistent with our conviction that impunity must not be tolerated.

(Michael)

The excerpt from the above speech, given by Michael to a large group of stakeholders and members of the Canadian Truth commission, reflects the foundational values of truth commissions as well as First Generation True Believers. However, by the mid-2000s truth commissions had already become extremely popular. Truth commissions had
globally diffused and governments around the world were adopting them albeit "ceremonially" (Meyer and Rowan 1977). As a result, the foundational values that truth commissions were premised upon were being decoupled from the practices.

In organizational studies, and particularly in world polity theory, the term decoupling refers to the creation of gaps between formal structures and actual practices (Meyers and Rowan 1977). Structures can be different institutional forms of formal objectives such as policies, regulations, models, standards, or principles. Decoupling can occur anywhere that new structures are being adopted, including the implementation of national laws, like those connected to affirmative action, into corporations (Dobbin et al. 2006), the adoption of global principles, like human rights treaties, by nations (Boli and Thomas 1999), or new environmental safety standards adopted by academic institutions for science departments (Silbey 2009). In all these examples research has shown that decoupling occurs between the adopted structure and the subsequent practice or implementation. While the primary assumption has been that new structures are adopted to meet functional requirements and increase efficiency, world polity theorists contend that adoption is often driven by prevailing rationalized concepts in the environment or, what they refer to as, “institutional myths.” By adopting structures that reflect these myths, organizations help to ensure legitimacy and longevity. However, because these structures are often inefficient, and adopted only ceremonially, they are frequently decoupled from practices.

Moreover, world polity theorists argue that decoupling has increased as ideas, models, and institutional structures have diffused as a result of globalization (Boli and
Thomas 1997; Meyer 1980; Meyer 1997). More specifically, one of the core theoretical contentions of world polity theory is that worldwide models define and legitimate agendas for local action in all domains of social life (Meyer et al. 1977, 251). However, these worldwide models, adopted by nations and international organizations, do not always fit and are not always easily absorbed or accepted into local settings. World polity theory has empirically outlined the processes of diffusion, adoption, and decoupling of local practices from those worldwide models. For example, world polity theorists have shown that despite extremely different political, social, and economic contexts, nations across the world have adopted the same formal education model. But because this global model does not meet the functional requirements of each particular nation, informal education practices are decoupled from the formal adopted model (Meyer et al. 1977; Meyer and Ramirez 1981).

In the case of truth commissions, I posit that, at the least, one point of decoupling occurred between truth commission principles and practices, as the result of governments adopting them ceremonially. That is, governments were adopting truth commissions for reasons other than to redress human rights violations, such as to boost their state's international legitimacy. For TCC professionals, who are personally and professionally committed to human rights principles, decoupling was heartbreaking and infuriating, and they took it upon themselves to try to prevent this. Decoupling thus provoked a major organizational response, in which a serious effort at preventing decoupling, “preemptive coupling,” or “recoupling,” was launched. This effort consisted of multiple techniques ranging from writing best practice manuals, to holding “how to run a truth commission”
workshops. Ultimately, this work began the transition from the TCC having free-floating values or ideals to discourses and then to techniques of control and kick-started the organization’s contribution to the rationalization of truth commissions.

In the previous chapter, I showed how values and ideals motivated First Generation professionals, brought them together and created a particular culture and institutional logic at TCC. In this chapter I show how, in their attempt to uphold these values which decoupling has put at risk, First Generation True Believers created a narrative concerning the problem (decoupling) and its required solutions (preemptive coupling and recoupling) and, through writing and various codification methods formed a discourse accompanied by techniques of control. Ultimately, this worked to rationalize the truth commission model. I argue in this chapter that discourse, as a means of defining reality and having that definition be accepted, is closely associated with processes of rationalization. Moreover, as Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000, 703) suggest: "particular discourses, and the techniques and operations associated with them, must be analyzed in considerable detail and in their capacity to define and constitute the building blocks of formal organizing."

It is important to remember that rationalization is a form of institutionalization, so its defining attributes of efficiency, calculability, predictability, and objectivity do not just characterize the environment that gets rationalized, but also become taken for granted and institutionalized themselves, so that they are understood as “reality.” Thus, as Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000, 703) point out, "rationalization cannot be adequately understood as simply the establishment and diffusion of regulative structures and
instrumental schemes that are adopted by various organizations or carried over from one context to another," which is where world polity begins and ends its discussion. This chapter tries to recapture the forms and mechanisms by which original ideas, values, ideals, and haphazard modes of action within the TCC gradually became embedded in social contexts and accepted as standard ways, and the “right” way, of acting upon reality (Hasselbladh and Kallinokos 2000).

The first part of the chapter outlines the literature on diffusion and decoupling in order to make clear how these processes work as explicated by world polity theory. I also briefly look at some of the new work that has arisen that looks at the institutional effects of decoupling. Secondly, I discuss First Generation True Believers' response to decoupling. I describe their frustration and sadness and make clear, in their own words, how they understand decoupling. The third part of the chapter, outlines their response to decoupling, namely their preemptive coupling and recoupling techniques and how these techniques worked to transition values to a discourse and techniques of control. Lastly, I show how these techniques can be understood as rationalizing techniques.

II. Global Diffusion, Decoupling and the Role of Global Professionals

Processes of diffusion – diffusion of ideas, policies, standards and models – have long interested sociologists within a variety of different subfields, especially Science and

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3 In the following chapter, I discuss Second Generation believers and note how their frustration has become normative and an institutionalized part of the culture, making their response less of an emotional one and more of a taken-for-granted part of understanding how a truth commission can be done 'wrong.'
Technology Studies (STS), political sociology, and the sociology of organizations. In relation to the study of global diffusion, world polity theory has dominated the analysis. The theory offers a cultural argument; as opposed to previously accepted arguments concerning efficiency, competition, and exposure, regarding how particular models diffuse around the world and, thus, why the world is beginning to look so homogenous.

More specifically, in their seminal article “Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony,” Meyer and Rowan (1977) propose that the adoption of formal organizational structures is often not the result of technical demands, resource dependencies, or self-interest, as rational choice realist theories contend, but of institutional forces or “myths.” By institutional myths, Meyer means cultural scripts, symbolic systems, and knowledge legitimated through the educational system and by the professions, public opinion, and the law. The core idea that organizations are deeply embedded in social and political environments suggests that organizational structures are often either reflections of, or responses to, cultural rules, beliefs, and conventions built into the wider environment, rather than being based on functional requirements and efficiency. Institutionalization was defined in terms of the processes by which such patterns achieve normative and cognitive fixity and become taken for granted (Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987, 13). In terms of diffusion, then, they argue that institutional structural innovations may spread at first for performance reasons and organizational desire to be seen as being in the vanguard, but over time new structures are apt to be adopted for reasons of legitimacy and reducing uncertainty, rather than reasons of promoting actual performance. Early differentiation by leading edge innovating agencies
gives way over time to the homogeneity of organizational structures across agencies (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 340). Thus, in any field, organizations tend to become homogenous in structure over time.

However, in spite of cultural persistence and increasing homogeneity, organizations may implement any given structure in different ways depending on the contexts in which the organization is embedded. That is, institutionalization is not a deterministic process. As Meyer and Rowan (1977, 343) state:

Structural elements are only loosely linked to each other and to activities, rules are often violated, decisions are often unimplemented, or if implemented have uncertain consequences, technologies are of problematic efficiency, and evaluation and inspection systems are subverted or rendered so vague as to provide little coordination.

Meyer and Rowan termed this process decoupling. By decoupling structures and policies from actual work and practices, organizations buffer against inefficiency or other negative effects resulting from adopting a model for reasons other than efficiency. Meyer refers to this move as “ceremonial adoption” — whereby organizations symbolically adopt structures and practices that are consistent with institutional requirements but that are decoupled from actual organizational operations (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Meyer and Scott 1983)

The implications of this theoretical move for the study of global or transnational processes are spelled out in great detail in Meyer and colleagues’ later world polity work (Meyer 1980; 2005; Boli and Thomas 1997; Boli, Ramirez, and Meyer 1985). The neo-institutional perspective on world polity builds on the assumption that nation-states, formal organizations and individual actors are embedded in an overarching institutional
structure ("world polity") that is characterized by rationality, progress, universalism and individualism (Boli and Thomas 1997).

Neo-institutional world polity theory offers an important alternative perspective to realist explanations of global processes and offers insight as to the diffusion of the truth commission model. As noted, truth commissions have proliferated exponentially in the past 20 years and have become increasingly internationally endorsed. However, a large body of work, both empirical and theoretical, has suggested that the reason for such rapid diffusion is not because it is efficient and effective in terms of meeting its mandated objectives, as a realist explanation would predict (Ross 2003; Wilson 2001; Nesiah 2006). The question remains then as to why and how the model has diffused?

According to neo-institutionalism, the explanation is cultural. The truth commission model can be understood as a cultural myth, embodying the values and principles of world polity, namely rationality, individualism, and universalism. More specifically, truth commissions are founded on the principles of human rights, namely that individuals have a right to know the truth and redress violations through an impartial and transparent process. These rights are both universal, insofar as one is afforded them on the basis of being a human, as well as individual, in that every person has recourse to them. In addition, the incorporation of human rights into the body of international law has situated them squarely within the principle of rationality (Boyle and Meyer 1998, 215). As Matthias Koenig (2008, 99) argues:

Given its inherent formalism and universalism, law is a particularly well-suited medium for constructing frames of rationality. Law constitutes both individual and corporative actors (‘legal subjects’) and regulates their relationships through
rights and obligations. International law, moreover, encompasses highly elaborated and reflexive visions of world order from which more specific constitutive and regulative ground rules of interaction are deduced.

In this way, human rights can be understood as a cultural myth of world polity and truth commissions, being rooted in the human rights framework, can also be understood as part of this cultural order. Moreover, the diffusion and increasing isomorphism of truth commissions can be largely attributed to the normative mechanism. In this aspect, TCC plays an important role. TCC’s relationship to the field of transitional justice and truth commissions specifically has positioned them as experts within the field. As professional experts, they carry and thus diffuse particular norms. A normative pressure is thus exerted towards particular practices and discourses in the structure and activity of truth commissions. As a result, the way truth commissions are established and run has become increasingly isomorphic.

As predicted by Meyer and Rowan (1977), this diffusion is not entirely straightforward. Rather there is often a decoupling effect that takes place: countries adopt truth commissions ceremonially because it secures legitimacy within the international community and/ or because it has now become the taken-for-granted thing to do after a conflict but not implement the practices associated with it. As a result, the actual establishment and operating of the truth commission does not follow international standards and principles, and decoupling occurs.

While world polity theory has produced much work detailing processes of diffusion and examples of worldwide models being decoupled from national or organizational practices, less work has empirically explored the moment after decoupling
occurs: how is decoupling reacted to, if at all? What are the institutional effects of decoupling? Some recent work in organizational studies has focused on how decoupling is understood and reacted to within organizations (Huisings and Silbey 2011; Kellogg 2012). Those studies make clear that decoupling does not go unnoticed, get taken for granted, or dismissed. Rather, decoupling is discussed, reacted to, and managed.

For example, Huisings and Silbey (2011) show that in laboratories at a university, lab practices were decoupled from new environmental safety regulations. One effect of this decoupling was that front-line managers were motivated to minimize decoupling through relational regulation, generating relationships and information that facilitated pragmatic accommodation of the regulations (Huisings and Silbey 2011, 2). Other literature shows that managing decoupling has become its own professional field. For example, to achieve better coupling between regulation and compliance, or design and implementation, organizations have been subjected to checks and reviews by an external agency set up specifically to ensure that adopted policies are actually practiced. In this case, non-compliant organizations suffer consequences (Huisings and Silbey 2011). More recently, the adopting organization has itself been made responsible for creating internal systems that promote and ensure that policy translates better into the organization so that it can practiced. Here, compliance is monitored by middle managers who understand the organizational practices and culture, and who are often paid to take on this extra role (Huisings and Silbey 2011).

In addition to this professionalized management of compliance, many professionals themselves want to close the gap between policy and practice and eliminate
decoupling because they believe the new policy is better (Silbey and Huisings 2011; Gunningham and Kagan 2003; Kellogg 2012). These professionals feel they have a personal and moral commitment to seeing that structure and practice are not decoupled. In fact, one of the major effects of decoupling is a significant amount of energy put towards eliminating decoupling.

Although this work is primarily focused on the organizational level, rather than the global, many of their findings resonate with how First Generation True Believers respond to decoupling. My research at the TCC confirmed that organizing to respond to decoupling is, in fact, a significant reality of globalized organizational life, and I draw on the insights of these theorists in order to help understand the effects of decoupling. I argue that decoupling creates a massive organizational effort to eliminate what they understand to be the disconnect between truth commission principles and the practices that uphold these principles. In the case of the TCC, these efforts were ultimately rationalizing techniques that caused a number of unintended consequences, which I will examine more closely in the following chapter. Below, I look at how First Generation True Believers responded to decoupling and how their specific responses can be understood as rationalizing techniques.

III. The Problem: the breakdown between principles and practices as decoupling

Jonathon was frustrated. Angry even. It was my second day of work and we had been discussing my work on compiling information for a ‘best practices’ manual. I was
asking him why we were doing this and in his attempt to explain he got passionately upset.

They really don’t know what they’re doing. Or what a truth commission is. It’s just put into a peace agreement because it’s the thing to do now and it looks good and then it’s a mess but there’s no accountability and governments know that. They [Governments] think that a truth commission will just white wash everything. And that helps no one. It’s so frustrating. We won’t have anything to do with a truth commission like that. I mean if they want to try to fix it, genuinely, and they want help and we believe that they really do, then of course we will help. But we are not going to legitimize a truth commission that’s put together for political convenience and not for victims. These types of truth commissions fail. They don’t address or centralize the victim ’cause they’re not really doing it for the right reason. (Jonathon)

His answer made clear that what was frustrating for him was the misuse or, even, hijacking of truth commissions as understood by him and the TCC more generally. When I asked Jonathon how this happened - the “misuse,” the “white washing,” the “doing it for wrong reasons,” and what had actually happened so that they knew it was a misuse, he explained to me that it was a very obvious breakdown between principles and practices.

“You have to look how the truth commission tries to align, or not align, the practices with the principles. There is a difference between principles and practices. And we have to hold them [governments] to very stringent analysis as to whether they are trying to align these.” (Jonathon)

“What are the principles? And what are the practices that align with them?” I asked.

Jonathon elaborated:

The principles are concepts and are fairly normative. You know, it’s our belief that victims come first. That at the center of everything has to be the victims and the redressing of human rights. This is the main principle of a truth commission. So, for example, the mandate - you don’t want a mandate that’s so narrow that
nothing can be done. The victims need to be represented in the mandate and the mandate needs to be clear that it will have a representative commission and will speak with local organizations and all the different factions so it is not biased. That takes a lot work. So the mandate helps to show if they are committed to the practices that will make the truth commission be something genuine. (Jonathon)

I understand the disconnection between principles and practices, as described by Jonathon, to be a form of decoupling as described in organizational literature. As truth commissions began to gain popularity, and globally diffuse as accepted and endorsed mechanisms for transitional justice, their adoption became increasingly symbolic and ceremonial, rather than being established to actually serve their principled objectives (to redress human rights violations, restore dignity to victims and victims’ families, create a truthful historical account, and help establish peace). Instead, the truth commission is used just for show, ceremonially adopted to give the country international legitimacy or to appease international donors and garner foreign aid. Jonathon’s description of white washing and misuse highlights this ceremonial adoption. He explains to me how truth commissions are often adopted for reasons other than helping victims and, as a result, the implementation and practices of the truth commissions do not do much to meet the objectives the TCC understand to be the principle concern of truth commissions.

As we know from the previous chapter, Jonathon and the other First Generation True Believers believe adamantly in the principles of the truth commission, and they hold these values very close to their hearts. Thus, this decoupling has not been taken lightly. First Generation True Believers understand this breakdown between practices and principles as a crime against humanity, a heartbreaking problem that must be fixed immediately. This understanding was expressed frequently during my time at the TCC in
various formal and informal articulations, which ranged in character from frustration to sarcasm to sadness. It is through these articulations that, over time, decoupling became a known "problem," solidified first in spoken narrative and later in written discourse, which needed to be addressed and technically solved.

Informally, remarks were made around the coffee station, at casual lunches, and over drinks, as well as during quick chats before and after staff meetings. For example, one afternoon while I was waiting for the water to boil in the staff kitchen, a member of the research team came in. She asked me how my work was going. I explained that I was working on a booklet that would help governments and international actors who were beginning a peace agreement process that included a truth commission, outlining how to do it so it reflected international principles. She smiled and said “oh god, thank goodness this is getting done” and then rolled her eyes and said “its so annoying and makes so much more work for us when they just go do it without consulting us.”

In another instance, I was out for lunch with four other interns. We were all talking about the various projects we were working on. One intern reflected

Before I came here, I thought that it was just good to have a truth commission. Like always a good thing. But after being here. I realize that that’s not necessarily true. It’s confusing for me. It’s really challenging what I believed, for my country too. But they can be done badly and they can be done for the wrong reasons and that can exacerbate the problem. (Kelly)

In response, another intern sympathized and acknowledged a similar feeling. Another one said jokingly, “I know! If only everybody would just listen to us then they might always be a good thing!” This generated laughter and nods of agreement. The frustration of decoupling had been passed down to us. As we worked at the TCC, we too had begun to
believe in the principles and the practices that were understood to be necessary for their enactment. However, we were Second Generation True Believers, a difference that I discuss in the next chapter and which I think is critical within the rationalization process.

Formally, many TCC members discussed the problem of “white washing,” “soft justice,” and the perceived “easiness” of truth commissions adopted for the wrong reasons. In fact, many members understood these problems as the very reason that truth commission had become so popular:

Truth commissions have become popular for a number of different reasons. I mean, generously, the answer is cause they do something that needs to be done and it’s important. Not generously, governments do it because it’s soft justice, it’s a compromise, there’s no real accountability really and it looks good. But if a country does it for this reason it’s not going to work and this happens a lot. (Tim)

I was told that a “sound methodology of a truth commissions has to do with morality and with the political integrity of the commission” and that without this morality and integrity a truth commission would fail. When people said things like this, it was not that someone was just stating problem or complaint. Rather, this was said in the context of not only frustration but of also wanting to fix the problem, which was precisely what the TCC was deeply involved in while I was there. For First Generation True Believers, solving the problem of decoupling was the highest priority.

IV. Solving the Problem: Pre-emptive Coupling and Recoupling

A lot of government officials and policy makers think establishing and running a truth commission is easy cause there is nothing written in stone the way running a tribunal is. They don’t realize it’s not just about saying or writing that you will have one. It’s a whole standardized process that can be done better or worse if certain principles and practices aren’t adhered to. So, then, a truth commission
gets written into a peace agreement or a decree or something, without anyone really knowing or understanding what it entails. And then a lot of mistakes are made – it gets established in ways that are wrong or ways that undermine its ability to succeed. It would be great if we could create a document that could be distributed to stakeholders or policy makers or government officials that would make them realize that there are some best practices and standards that need to be followed if they are going to set up a successful truth commission. Basically, the document should make them realize that they should call us! (Sandra)

The conversation from which the quote above was taken focused on creating a "how to" booklet on establishing and running truth commissions that would be distributed to key international actors, such as the UN, as well as governments involved in transitioning a country from conflict to peace. The idea behind the booklet was to pre-emptively stop truth commissions from being established and run in a way that didn’t reflect their foundational principles. In other words, the booklet was hoping to minimize decoupling. This booklet was one of many strategies developed by TCC professionals to avoid decoupling. In addition, TCC professionals over time have developed a whole repertoire of strategies for when decoupling did occur, which I call “recoupling strategies.” The booklet represents one example of the institutionalization of these types of strategies; strategies that initially formed in response to specific breakdowns over time became routinized into standard operating procedures. Examining these organizational recoupling strategies can give us a window on how preemptive coupling and recoupling became institutionalized and standardized. Four primary strategies were observed, often in combination: holding workshops or conferences, writing memos, consulting, and designing manuals and promotional material.

*Conferences, Courses, and “How To” Workshops*
Holding and attending conferences, courses, and “How To” Workshops is the predominant preemptive coupling strategy and is a big part of the work TCC professionals do. Because they are trusted and recognized experts, TCC members are flown all over the world to speak about how to properly run a truth commission – their travel, expenses, and time are paid for, sometimes by the host government, sometimes by the UN, and sometimes by other key actors. The TCC also takes the initiative to design and hold workshops of its own. In locations around the world, they teach “proper” procedure and practice for establishing a “successful” truth commission based on the model they have now developed.

The model for the workshops begins with a simulated negotiating table. A make believe country and conflict is created, and participants are divided into different stakeholders with different sets of interests, demands, needs. Here, by teaching participants, some of whom are other international transitional justice professionals and some of whom are involved in a brand new truth commission, the “right” way to establish a truth commission, the simulated workshops work to pre-emptively couple practices and principles.

Over the past five years, in addition to workshops, the TCC has been involved in a number of annual courses, such as the Caux, Switzerland Scholars Program in Conflict Resolution and Transitional Justice; the Hague’s Human Rights, Fact-Finding, and International Crimes Training; Essex’s Summer Program for Economic and Social Dimensions of Justice; and the Annual Intensive Course on Truth Commissions. To
provide a brief sense of what these courses teach, a summary of this last program, as advertised by the TCC, is below:

The course will prepare practitioners directly involved in human rights, peacebuilding, rule of law, and transitional justice with the necessary tools to assess the propriety of creating a truth commission in the wake of protracted conflict or dictatorship, and ensuring that the design and implementation of truth commissions are sensitive to contextual realities. The course provides participants with the knowledge required to conceive, implement, and engage with truth commissions, in accordance with the best international practices and principles.

Similar to workshops, these conferences teach practitioners how to design and implement a truth commission. The materials for these courses often draw on a number of past truth commissions, ones that have either failed (exemplifying the problem of decoupling and its many negative outcomes) and ones that have been successful. Participants develop a general understanding of which practices align and uphold the principles of truth commissions, what the problems are with failed truth commissions, and what the "right way" is to ensure a successful one. Workshops provide opportunities to restate the general principles and teach preferred practices.

Transitional justice conferences or conferences arranged around a specific truth commission are opportunities for professionals to share ideas, best practices, innovations, and brainstorm solutions to problems. While some workshops and courses are held at conferences, more often TCC professionals give speeches or participate in round table discussions in which they discuss, based on their experience, the problems that arise for truth commissions, predominantly this issue of decoupling and the ways they have determined to solve this problem. Conferences provide TCC professionals with a space to publicly voice their values and stipulate the ways that the international community can
help to uphold them. In this sense, conferences enable TCC professionals to disseminate the problem and the solution. This works to both diffuse a particular normative understanding and as a preemptive coupling strategy.

Memos

Memorandum writing, to commissioners, stakeholders, and other relevant actors, is a key strategy for both preemptive coupling and recoupling, and is also a dominant feature of the work of TCC professionals. TCC memos involve outlining how to bring principles and practices into alignment (or back in to alignment in the case of recoupling). It is through memos that TCC tries to map out specific mechanisms designed to help the key actors couple or re-couple. Like consulting, over time memos have become increasingly more formulaic and standardized. They follow a format that identifies truth commission principles, discusses the issues they have with the particular truth commission, offers suggestions to rectify these issues by referring to the principles, and provides examples from previous commissions -- both unsuccessful ones that have ignored key principles and practices and successful ones that have followed the model.

Consulting

The TCC professionals are called on as truth commission consultants because of their breadth of knowledge and experience. Most TCC professionals have served on a truth commission and have been involved in numerous post-conflict situations and can, therefore, generalize from multiple cases. The TCC’s regional offices mean that many of the professionals have specific local knowledge and know the people of the area and regions.
Consulting provides TCC professionals an opportunity for preemptive coupling as well as for recoupling. In the case of preemptive coupling, TCC professionals are often called on as consultants to advise in the process of establishment in the moments after a country’s government has adopted a truth commission. As consultants, their primary work and recommendations involve helping the truth commission principles become coupled with the practices. While initially the specific preemptive coupling strategy was based on the particular context, country, and conflict, over time these strategies became more and more standardized, eventually evolving into a protocol to follow when consulting. In the case of recoupling, TCC professionals are asked to consult because the adoption, and initial terms had already taken place and decoupling had begun to occur.

Manuals

On a more broad and ongoing level, the TCC puts a lot of effort into creating manuals and reports to help guide mediators (policy makers, UN officials, etc.) through the process of establishing a good truth commission, including what to look for in negotiations, what makes a good mandate, how to choose commissioners, how to gain civil society support, etc. These materials are all over the TCC office. They are glossy and polished. Often they focus on a particular country’s past experience to highlight lessons learned and how to avoid particular issues in the future. While the memos described above are tailored to specific countries’ needs, because they are based generally on the truth commission principles, they often inform and provide specific substance for the manuals. The manuals can be understood as institutionalized preemptive strategies. Some of the manuals published include “Truth Seeking: Elements
of Creating an Effective Truth Commission” and “Strengthening Indigenous Rights through Truth Commissions: A Practitioner’s Resources.”

*Design, Monitoring and Evaluation*

Formal codification was not fully underway during my time at the TCC. However, follow up research since my departure shows that it is in full swing now. A new program, Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation (DME), was recently developed to create "objective" metrics to measure the impact of TCC Programming and to provide clear indicators of success. As part of this new program the TCC has developed monitoring systems to “identify and capture consistent, rigorous data” and the new monitoring policy will “mandate and provide minimum standards for data collection for all programs.” Based on this new program and its objectives, it is clear that the very qualitative work the TCC is doing is being made quantitative in order to better monitor and evaluate its success.

All of the above strategies are often employed together. Below are two examples in which despite the preemptive coupling work that had been done, decoupling was occurring and the TCC used recoupling strategies to address this. However, based on the TCC’s assessment of how sincere the governments were in terms of aligning the principles and practices and genuinely wanting to establish a truth commission for the right reasons, very different outcomes occurred.

The case of Canada provides a good example of both preemptive coupling and recoupling. The TCC had been working with Canada on establishing a truth commission
since a federal court settlement required Canada to establish one\(^4\). However, when the mandate was written and shown to the TCC, TCC professionals were frustrated because it was very narrow in its testimonial taking. The mandate stipulated that all testimonials be completely anonymous, and that they would only be taken for very particular types of violations. For TCC professionals, this meant that the mandate was not victim-centered, since it is through testimonials that victims are given recognition, which is understood as a key aspect of recovering dignity and redressing human rights violations. In this way, the mandate did not follow truth commission principles in practice. Hence, this was a case of the beginnings of decoupling.

In this situation, the TCC professionals did not think that the government was trying to white wash the situation. Rather they surmised that the government didn’t know enough or have enough information, particularly in regards to how other truth commissions had handled such situations and practices that were more likely to be successful. An effort at recoupling followed. I met with my supervisor, and he asked me to draft a memo to the commissioners that would suggest reforming the mandate. I would use a memo template, which highlighted the appropriate principles and practices required for a successful truth commission. I would also suggest that the commissioners reinterpret their mandate in a way that expanded it to be more comprehensive and victim-

\(^4\) With the support of the Assembly of First Nations and Inuit organizations, former residential school students took the federal government and the churches to court. Their cases led to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class action settlement in Canadian history. The agreement sought to begin repairing the harm caused by residential schools. Aside from providing compensation to former students, the agreement called for the establishment of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=4).
oriented. My supervisor explained to me the belief behind this type of memo-writing work

I think that what we do in the TCC is to try to align the different initiatives of people in all truth commissions with these theoretically previous step of the right to truth and human rights more generally and principles of the UN Resolution. So what we have done in the TCC is when we come in contact with good will initiatives to comply with the rights of victims, we support them, and encourage them, and help them get in touch with the appropriate standards of international communities developing. And also when we find situations where people are calling truth commissions for truth commissions for initiatives that are clearly designed to either be a white wash or to be an arrangement between politicians or just a second rate poor person consolation prize, we pretty much call it for what it is, so we do not support truth commissions or initiatives just because they have the name truth commission. We are very encouraging to them to follow these standards…to align themselves with these standards. (Michael)

I wrote the memo as asked. My supervisor checked to make sure I had followed protocol relating to the principles and practices and then sent it to the directors of the commission. The memo was well received and my supervisor was asked to attend the first planning meeting with the commissioners, administrative staff, and research team in order to ensure that the truth commission was established along these principles. In this case, the work of recoupling was successful, and principles and practices were aligned.

In a different example, in the case of Honduras, the TCC was called on specifically to consult in order to help “save the truth commission” as the country became more unstable and violence escalated. In this case their expert advice was to stop the truth commission until peace and security were established and then to start a brand new one following appropriate procedures. Ultimately the recommendations in the form of consultations and the memo worked as a preemptive coupling strategy for the new truth commission, and a recoupling strategy based on the old commission’s decoupling
problems. The recommendations outlined the ways in which the truth commission could be fixed by linking specific values with specific practices. The TCC followed the now developed SOPs. However, the TCC refused to take part in the situation further, because it did not believe Honduras’ government was genuinely committed to redressing human rights violations, and because the government would not agree to stopping the current truth commission and starting over.

In both of these examples, a lot of work was put into framing advice in ways that were specific for the country, and yet ultimately the advice followed the, by then well established, standard operating procedures of how to run a truth commission effectively. Despite the massive differences between the countries, their histories, their present, and the conflict they were addressing, in the end the same treatment was administered.

V. The Problem and the Solution as Rationalizing Processes

Over time, and together, the problem and the solution formed a series of rationalizing steps and techniques. More specifically, in this section, I argue that rationalization involves two main operations: as we know, rationalization can be understood as a form of institutionalization, in which one of the main operations involved in rationalizing something involves having the ideas and understandings associated with this thing be taken for granted. Institutionalization, and therefore rationalization, is closely associated with defining reality in such a way that the ideas, knowledge, power arrangement, practices, etc. connected to this particular definition go unquestioned and become normative. It is during the process of institutionalizing, or rationalizing, that
values become norms. The second operation involved in rationalization concerns the form of institutionalization. The characteristics of this form, including efficiency, calculability, control, and objectivity have been well theorized and documented from Weber onward. It is these characteristics that distinguish rationalization from other forms of institutionalization.

By closely examining the decoupling problem and the preemptive coupling and recoupling solutions, one can see that these were rationalizing techniques: over time each of these strategies worked to make the beliefs and activities of the TCC both taken for granted, i.e. institutionalized, as well as more efficient, calculable, controllable and objective. The strategies move through a spectrum of forms of objectification that result in an increasingly rationalized product, a standardized and formulaic truth commission model. Drawing on Hasselbladh and Kallinikos, we can see that the TCC worked from oral language (narrative), to written form (discourse), to codification and measurement (techniques of control). More specifically, Hasselbladh and Kallinikos in their article “The Project of Rationalization” (2000) outline a method for studying the process of the social construction of rationalization, they argue that “the development and social embeddedness of rationalized beliefs and standardized schemes of action entail several practices that need to be studied in detail” (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000, 700). They analytically distinguish between social states (ideals, discourses, and techniques of control) as well as forms of objectification (oral language, written language, formal codification). In terms of social states, Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000, 704) argue:
Ideals differ from discourses, and both differ from techniques of control in the degree to which they describe the social items and relations to which they refer. At one extreme, ideals express themselves vaguely and in wholesale fashion, while at the other, control techniques specify rather precisely the relationships that they seek to regulate.

In this typology, institutions are first conceived as consisting of basic ideals that are developed into distinctive ways of defining and acting upon reality (i.e. discourses) supported by elaborate systems of measurement and documentation for controlling outcomes (i.e. techniques of control). Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000, 705) define ideals as ideals as "stable, pervading, and valorized ideas that delineate social expectations" that are expressed primarily through oral language. These narratives work to define reality in a way that stabilizes the meaning of the ideals so that they can be repeatedly communicated (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000, 705). Over time, narratives become more formalized and become written, and it is written language that makes it possible to elaborate ideals into discourses or systems of power/knowledge that act upon the world in ways that can be reliably diffused and replicated into different contexts. Discourses "achieve both a kind of closure in the significative content or meaning of ideals and the specification of the relations and items involved in that ideal" (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000,706). Discourses are the distinctive means by which people define reality, and they work to delimit specific domains of action (Foucault 1980; 1988). Lastly, Hasselbladh and Kallinikos argue that techniques of control are expressed "numerically or in other forms of codification (software packages, systems of measurement)" and are therefore the easiest to diffuse and replicate (2000, 704).
Hasselbladh and Kallinikos demonstrate that the shift from one to the other is occasioned by "three major forms of framing and constituting social reality: a) intersubjectivity through speech and oral communication; b) textualization by written language and c) countability by formal codification" (2000, 705). As one moves from oral to written to codified language, a trade-off of semantic richness with precision is involved. The relationship between ideals, discourses, and techniques of control and the three major forms of objectification of social reality is summarized in their figure represented below:

Figure 2. Social States and Forms of Objectification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Objectification</th>
<th>Social States</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Language</td>
<td>Ideals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Language</td>
<td>Discourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Codification</td>
<td>Techniques of Control</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To go back to the TCC, it is easy to see these social states and forms of objectification. Through informal and formal discussions concerning the breakdown between principles and practices, as discussed above, a narrative was constructed. More specifically, as First Generation True Believers informally and formally expressed their concern, frustration, and sadness around the problem of decoupling and proposed the
solution to the problem a narrative was formed. The creation of this narrative is critical to
the rationalizing process because it is the point at which a particular reality is defined.

Ewick and Silbey argue that narratives are defined by having three elements
(Ewick and Silbey 1995, 200). First, a narrative relies on some form of selective
appropriation of past events and characters (Ewick and Silbey 1995, 200). For TCC, this
is shown in its framing of the “problem,” in which governments, in particular, are the bad
guys and the TCC is positioned as the hero, solving the problems that ceremonial
adoption creates, namely the decoupling of principles and practices. In addition, the
narrative assumes that the problem can be fixed, failing to acknowledge the way that the
solutions could still be (and often are) hijacked or ignored and therein fail. Second,
narratives order events temporally. Or, in other words, the selected events must be
presented with a beginning, middle and an end (Ewick and Silbey 1995, 200). This
requirement is demonstrated in the problem/solution narrative in which the story is told
in typical fairytale fashion: victims needs saving and their dignity needs to be upheld (the
beginning), a war amongst different stake holders takes place over how to save it (the
middle), and finally, the hero, the TCC, rides in and rescues the victims (the end). Lastly,
the events and characters in a narrative must “relate to one another and to some
overarching structure, often in the context of an opposition or struggle” (Ewick and
Silbey, 1995, 200). The overarching struggle is normative, global, and historical - it is the
struggle over who gets to define human rights in principle and in practice.

In this sense, part of the way narratives work, and precisely why they are so
powerful, is by presenting themselves as truths and obscuring the process by which they
were produced. This is not to say that the narrative is false – I am not challenging, factually or morally, the validity of the claims of the TCC narrative, nor am I arguing that having victims’ needs, as a primary objective is bad. I am not claiming that First Generation True Believers are somehow inauthentic or delusional in believing it. Rather, I am stating that the construction of a narrative, and the features of narratives, necessitate the selective representation of a particular aspect of the social world and it is precisely the ability of narratives to make this representation appear true or appear to be the only version of the story, that makes them able to affect social practices, shape social lives, constitute identities, and mediate action. Thus, it is through this selection that a problem can be framed and rational solutions administered.

As narratives are recorded and become increasingly more structured, they formalize into discourses (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000, 705). Over time, informal discussions around the coffee machine about the problem and its solutions turned into organizational planning meetings and eventually into the writing of formal and distributable manuals and templates for “how to run a successful truth commission.” As Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000, 706) explain:

The stability of written text and formulations helps to transcend the context-bound character of oral interaction and provides the means of constructing a system of knowledge from the dense supply of meanings underlying the narrative constitution of ideals (Goodman 1976; Kallinikos 1996). Discourses can thus be said to coincide with the elaboration of ideals to knowledge: they single out roles involved, spell out the criteria of truth, and designate causal theories and schemes of action and interpretation.
It is in this way that the project of rationalization is so closely associated with discourse and its ability to define reality and sustain this definition through minute operations and techniques. It is also in this way that discourse is so closely related to power and power/knowledge.

As is well established, discourse and its relationship to power/knowledge is complex. However, for my purpose here it is sufficient to say that the relationship between discourse and power, similar to narrative, concerns the ability of discourse to create a particular understanding of reality (knowledge) that is understood as truth (Foucault 1977; 1980). What it eclipsed, however, is that the discourse itself is constructed, not a universal truth, and therefore it is only one version or perspective of reality. Moreover, who defines this reality or constructs the discourse is always a matter of power, and is used to legitimate, and make invisible, this power.

Within organizations, it is by means of discourses, and the elaborate systems of operations and techniques associated with them, that organizational goals and tasks are constructed (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000). Different professional groups use discourse to produce a representation of social issues that fits their own beliefs. Moreover, through the construction of the discourse, professionals assert themselves as the legitimate agents and voice of whichever social issue is at stake. Within the international arena, those professionals whose versions become global discourses have won a professional turf battle. We can see how, in many ways, what the TCC was fighting for was their version of truth commissions and their understanding of the problem and the solution to become so accepted that they’d be taken for
granted/institutionalized. While within the international community, the principles and practices as developed by the TCC became institutionalized, they were not institutionalized within every country and hence more efforts were launched to ensure that the principles and practices were aligned.

As shown above, these efforts resulted in increasing attempts to standardize and codify the principles and practices of truth commissions. The initial written work was not sufficient in terms of ensuring that the problems were being solved, so more polished and systematic manuals and templates were designed, as was a metric - the Design, Monitoring and Evaluation approach (DME). The DME worked to more comprehensively measure the impact, effectiveness, and efficiency of the TCC’s work to make it more predictable and calculable. This metric can be understood as a technique of control, as the most objectified and impersonal form of the three processes. Techniques of control use codification systems, like the DME, to turn complex meanings into an object that can be a target of calculation, reflection, comparison, and manipulation, which contributes to the social embeddedness of categories of the discourse (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000, 706). Control techniques are usually communicated by written or even oral language, but are not constructed by them. The standardization that characterizes techniques of control allows them to be used in a variety of location and times Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000).

At the TCC, the combined strategies of preemptive coupling and recoupling as attempts to solve the problem of decoupling, resulted in a very refined, well packaged, and well-advertised product; the problem and the solutions worked together to rationalize
the ideal of truth commissions into a formulaic truth commission model that very specifically spelled out how a truth commission should be practiced in relation to specific principles, as understood by the TCC. Over time and self-consciously, these techniques have become more streamlined and refined so that there is consensus across the TCC as to how to consult and advise based on the principles. Using and refining these techniques have created both a “recipe” for a truth commission and a standardized set of practices for intervening in commission processes that threaten to go awry. With each new workshop and memo, the particularities of many situations are generalized into best practices.

Combined, the above work ultimately turns the values and principles that drew these professionals together into a discourse and a series of techniques of control that rationalized their ideals. Their effort at keeping principles and practices coupled worked to delimit specialized domains of actions. While previously, truth commissions and the TCC work associated with them were loosely held together by values, today there is a distinctively TCC way of understanding truth commissions and the way they should be established, implemented, and run. While the initial culture rejected the idea of standards and guidelines in response to what they understood was a failure of this type of work to be contextually specific, historically aware, and culturally sensitive, the culture which I walked into was very much in the process of creating SOPs, governing procedures, and rules to follow for successful truth commissions. It is through these methods that the TCC contributed to the rationalization of truth commissions.
IV. Conclusion

What I have hoped to show in this chapter is how TCC members turned their values, their heartfelt ideals, into rationalized forms. More specifically, I show how governments’ ceremonial adoption of truth commissions caused an outcry at the TCC, which provoked a large scale organizational response that first named and defined the problem, the decoupling of the values that First Generation True Believers passionately believe in from the practices they believe uphold them, and then named and defined the solution. The organizational practices that followed this naming and defining worked to rationalize a particular approach and model of truth commissions.

If we recall a line from the speech quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the ironic, unintended consequence of recoupling strategies is highlighted: “The TCC cannot presume to make recommendations to the stakeholders in the treatment of the legacy of the residential schools.” And yet, manual after manual, memo after memo, and workshop after workshop did just this. We can also recall the various personal understandings of truth commissions that First Generation True Believers spoke of in the previous chapter, in which their understandings of “failure” and “success” were diverse; they challenged these very terms and metrics, and were wary of the danger in them. Yet by the time I left the TCC, the understanding of what failure, and therein success, meant was normative amongst them. Failure meant principles and practices had been disconnected. But the nuances of this disconnection, the context-specificity, had been lost and what remained was the every day work and activity involved in 'coupling' principles and practices
through standardizing techniques, most obviously seen in the DME program. Clearly, an organizational shift had occurred.

To recommend fixed principles and practices and to define the failure of truth commissions as occurring when particular principles and practices are not being upheld, is to have a particular understanding not just of truth commissions but of the world concerning what is “right” and what is “wrong.” Even if many of us can agree on these same rights and wrongs, it cannot be denied that it is still a particular way of defining reality, which inevitably forecloses other understandings, solutions, and differences, and it is this tension that lies at the heart of universalism and the human rights paradigm. Whether intentionally or not, the TCC wanted everyone - the organization, the international community, and the world over - to accept, and believe in, a particular understanding of the world. To accept one understanding as “right” is always to, simultaneously, dismiss, silence, or condemn other understandings, perspectives, and interpretations as wrong. This also occurs in rationalization processes: diversity, difference, and alternative understandings are bypassed, eclipsed, or appropriated in lieu of what is perceived to be the most efficient and effective means of solving the problem as understood by those defining reality.

However, what is interesting about the case of TCC is that the motivation to get their version of reality accepted and the motivation behind the rationalization process was not self interest or professional advancement; rather, it was very clearly their deep and authentic commitment to a particular set of values. Moreover, their role in spreading and diffusing these values, with the very hope that they would become increasingly normative
around the world, was a self-conscious, strategic and agentic choice to uphold their values. They were not, and are not, conduits or cultural dopes, simply and rotely carrying norms from one place to the other around the world. In other words, we are reminded again of the role of value-rational action here and of how very powerful values can be as a motivating force.

Two critical questions remain: 1. Did pre-emptive coupling and recoupling solve the problem? 2. If yes, then why does it matter, or why is it bad, if the work rationalized truth commission ideals? If rationalization enabled them to solve the problem of decoupling and therein maintain the main principles of truth commissions, principles which many of us share, then isn’t that a good thing? While I have begun to allude to some of the problems above, in the next chapter I systematically address the effects of this work, including how it failed to solve the problem, as well as its unintended consequences.
CHAPTER 4

LOSING ONE’S RELIGION: THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF RATIONALIZATION

I. Introduction

It is horrible to think that the world could one day be filled with nothing but those little cogs, little men clinging to little jobs and striving toward bigger ones—a state of affairs which is to be seen once more, as in the Egyptian records, playing an ever increasing part in the spirit of our present administrative systems, and especially of its offspring, the students. This passion for bureaucracy ... is enough to drive one to despair. It is as if in politics... we were to deliberately to become men who need “order” and nothing but order, become nervous and cowardly if for one moment this order wavers, and helpless if they are torn away from their total incorporation in it. That the world should know no men but these: it is in such an evolution that we are already caught up, and the great question is, therefore, not how we can promote and hasten it, but what can we oppose to this machinery in order to keep a portion of mankind free from this parceling-out of the soul, from this supreme mastery of the bureaucratic way of life. (Weber quoted in Bendix, 1980: 464)

For Weber, rationalization was not a grand accomplishment of modern society. Rather, he believed that over time the spirit of capitalism had died and what remained were people working endlessly but driven by no real passion, duty, or vocation. They were cogs in the wheel of the capitalist machine. Thus, for Weber, rationalization has a number of serious consequences: a loss of spirit, human values, and autonomy, to name only a few. Since Weber, other scholars have noted the consequences of rationalization on society at large as well as within particular areas. In particular, world polity theorists have noted the effects of rationalization on global processes; organizational scholars have studied the way rationalization changes non-profit, organizational culture and
humanitarian work; and the impact of rationalization on identity has been examined within very recent institutional studies. In this chapter, I draw on Weber as well as this varying body of work, to show the consequences of rationalization on the TCC.

More specifically, I look at three aspects of the impact of rationalization. First, I examine whether the rationalizing techniques employed by TCC professionals, meant to keep values coupled with practices, were successful. I draw on Strang and Meyer (1993) to argue that, in fact, these techniques worked to increase decoupling and therein exacerbated the very problem they were trying to solve. Second, I look at the way rationalization changed the culture of the organization. I argue that this change puts the very values that they so adamantly believe in at risk. To show this, I look at the way rationalization undermined one of the core values of the TCC and TCC professionals, namely context specificity. Lastly, I look at how rationalization challenges the identity of First Generation True Believers and at the identity work they perform in order to manage the new social roles required of them. Lastly, I look at Second Generation interns and the ways in which rationalization has changed the nature of the identity between the first and second generations.

Although TCC and TCC professionals are only a small part of the larger global processes surrounding truth commissions, I hope to emphasize here the way that micro dynamics can create larger scale impact. The rationalization of the TCC's work contributed to the rationalization of truth commissions and yet it is, at best, unclear as to the rationalized version has made truth commissions any better at helping victims and redressing human rights violations. In this sense, I argue alongside Slim (1998), Duffield
(2001), as well as Hwang and Powell (2009), that when organizations employ techniques to be more efficient and effective, they need to be very wary of how these strategies undermine the very values and objectives they hope to uphold.

II. The Disenchantment of Rationalization: From Weber to Today

Weber argued that although the process of rationalization began at different in different places at different times and occurred at different paces, it is always characterized by a process of gradual disenchantment (Entzauberung) (Kalberg 1980). Particularly frightening for him were the losses of individual autonomy, creativity, and value-rational action. For Weber, the type of knowledge present in rationalization - technical, means-end knowledge - represses ultimate human values such as social justice, peace, and human happiness while exalting the principles of efficiency, calculability, and objectivity (Bendix 1960). Weber associated these principles with depersonalization and oppressive routine, as well as being destructive of individual freedom. The rise of this form of knowledge had particularly fateful consequences "because it threatened to pull values out of the arena of belief and place them in the realm of calculation: with the advent of the scientific world view, even values could become subject to empirical observation, mathematical measurement and testing (Weber 1946 quoted in Kalberg 1980, 1174). The victory of efficiency meant the defeat of many other human values.

Weber also discussed this as the “routinization of charisma.” As noted earlier, Weber was concerned with the loss of action motivated by any other than means-end
rational motivation and worried that the world would become an iron cage - spiritless, valueless, and emotionless and how that would affect the state of society.

No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals or, if neither, mechanized petrifaction embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: “Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has obtained a level of civilization never before achieved” (Weber 1904/1930, 181).

Weber's words describe the routinization of charisma, which he believed usually occurred over time, as an attempt to organize and increase the longevity of a particular charismatic figure. Yet, in this attempt, charisma became increasingly bureaucratic and inevitably spirit, 'heart,' and creativity were lost.

Many social theorists have drawn on Weber’s thesis of rationalization and noted the way many of his predictions came true. More specifically, literature has looked at rationalization within the modern world and within specific aspects of modern society and examined the consequences. In particular, recent work has looked at the way rationalization processes have impacted global social organization, the non-profit organizational sector, and, most specifically, the identities of professionals within these organizations.

World polity theorists argue that rationalization, and rationalizing techniques, increase diffusion and therefore also increase ceremonial adoption and decoupling. The absence of a global state leads to the increasingly important role of international organizations, transnational NGOs, the professions of science and economics, and the professionals that constitute all of these institutions (Strang and Meyer 1993). These
organizations, professions, and professionals emerge as social carriers of globalization within the world polity (Dierkes and Koenig 2011). International organizations constitute public stages on which states gain legitimacy through the ritualistic enactment of institutionalized models (Finnemore 1993). The United Nations and its various organizations have come to play a role of particular importance, as have transnational NGOs (Dierkes and Koenig 2011). Together they facilitate the diffusion of models of behavior. As they have grown exponentially in the second half of the 20th century, they increasingly link local movements into a global network (Boli and Thomas 1999).

In addition, Strang and Meyer (1993) focused on the way professionals theorize and standardize their ideas and principles so that other professionals, transnational organizations, and the international community can adopt them. When ideas or principles are theorized, they are more easily solidified into standardized models or recipes. This greatly increases the rate of diffusion because it becomes easier for the models to be adopted at least in symbolic or rote ways into a variety of local settings (Strang and Meyer 1993, 495) and thus global professionals play an intricate role in normative diffusion. By theorization, Strang and Meyer mean “the self-conscious development and specification of abstract categories and the formulation of patterned relationships such as chains of cause and effect” (1993, 492). In other words, theorizing is not just creating hypotheses about particular workings of the world, but rather a way of making sense of the world - grouping, specifying, and expanding on ideas so that information is organized into categories. These categories can eventually be taken for granted, being used and passed on as a coherent package rather than a jumble of various facts and principles.
These theoretical formulations range from simple concepts to typologies to highly abstract, complex and rich models, and the more complexity and abstraction, the more rapid the diffusion (Strang and Meyer, 1993).

Moreover, it is this standardized and theoretical process that leads to the increasing rationalization that Strang and Meyer (1993) argue characterizes the modern world. Professionals become central conduits of diffusion, and theorization can be understood as a diffusion mechanism leading to normative isomorphism and rationalization (Strang and Meyer 1993, 499; Soule and Strang 1998). Others have remarked that this notion of theorization is similar to understandings of discourse in which discourse is considered a way of defining reality (Dezalay and Garth 2010). Foucault and others have made clear that discourses also range from abstract to more specific techniques of control. The more specific a discourse is, the easier it is to diffuse and replicate. I draw on this literature later to analyze and demonstrate that one of the consequences of TCC’s rationalizing work was the exacerbation of the very problem they were trying to solve. By standardizing, theorizing, and creating a discourse, they increased diffusion and decoupling.

Organizational scholarship on the non-profit sector has looked at the effects of rationalizing techniques on the principles and practices of philanthropic work. This literature, whether discussing the rationalization of charity within a small non-profit (Hwang and Powell 2009), the rationalization of international humanitarian aid (Barnett and Weiss 2008; Duffield 2001), or the global development paradigm (Goldman 2006; Slim 1995) all discuss the risks and dangers at play when organizations that aim to save
lives or help humanity try to become more efficient, calculable, and objective. Hwang and Powell (2009, 291) raise some of their concerns as follows:

The growing use of more calculable, rational tools and procedures opens nonprofit organizations up to broader society. But this transparency is not necessarily more democratic or accountable in a political sense. The criteria and stands by which nonprofits are assessed are not determined by clients or customers or through participatory debate. In many non-profit domains, those who receive the service - be it elder care or day care, psychiatric treatment, shelters for the homeless or battered women, or drug treatment - are not able to evaluate the quality of the care directly and hence rely on nonprofit status as a signal of greater reliability and trust (Hansmann, 1980; Weisbrod, 1988). But when the evaluative standards become procedural, trust can be lost, and the new criteria may bring scrutiny and the possibility of lawsuits as well as contestation around whether clients’ interests are being properly served.

Hwang and Powell question whether the standards and procedures being instituted in non-profits are actually serving the people they hope to provide help for and whether the values of the organization, its mandates and objectives, are really being met through these rationalizing strategies. They caution us to pause and see what is lost when “love and money and passion and procedure are invoked in the same organization” (Hwang and Powell 2009, 294). Similarly, Duffield (2001), Slim (1998) as well as Barnett and Weiss (2008) all account for the ways that rationalizing strategies have actually failed to solve the problems that they were supposed to fix and, importantly, how the instituting of such standards and techniques have ultimately undermined some of the core principles of humanitarian work.

Mark Duffield has looked at how the politicization of the international development discourse in the late 1990s, rationalized the field, tying the work closer to donor interests and Western global, liberal agendas. In the late 1990s, and in response to
a series of failures, international development turned away from its apolitical stance and acknowledged that development itself was a political project. Duffield argues that in doing this, even though it was a sincere attempt to make the programs better and more efficient and effective, the humanitarian ideal was lost - namely principles of philanthropy and neutrality in relation to an unquestioned value in preserving human life. Humanitarian work was born from a commitment to practice these principles, to help even those “to whom we are unrelated by birth or citizenship, race or geographic proximity”, and to make “no distinction between good and bad wars, between just and unjust war causes, or even between aggressors and innocents” (Ignatieff 1998, 12). In politicizing and rationalizing international development, these principles were undermined.

Hugo Slim makes a very similar argument in relation to humanitarian emergency aid. He argues that over time humanitarianism has become increasingly rationalized and, as a result, it has lost its transformative spirit and some of its core values. To describe this change in the field of humanitarian aid, he makes the analogy between prophets and priests:

In religious terms, this paradox is the tension between prophecy and priesthood, between faith and organization. The prophet confronts society with a truth and is concerned with personal, social and political transformation. The priest seeks to enshrine and enact that truth in ritual and to sustain standards of purity, membership and worship. The prophet gives offence and so melts or hardens hearts. The priest gives structure and codes of practice (Slim 1995, 29).

Slim goes on to argue that the growth of any religious or quasi-religious movement, like human rights, results in the more conservative priesthood usually wining out over the
more radical prophets so that the process of expansion is almost always a process of rationalization. He believes that this is a mistake and that a prophetic spirit needs to be recovered:

As the standard bearer of the principle of humanity, contemporary humanitarianism, as it has become increasingly institutionalized in the modern era, has become excessively priestly and needs to recover some of its prophetic power if it is to extend its first principle to others (Slim 1995, 35).

What both Duffield and Slim point out is the way that rationalization has fundamentally changed the very values and principles that these initiatives are meant to uphold. And yet, is it possible for a social group or organization, religious or secular, to exist for any length of time without some kind of organization? The question then is, does the form of organization necessarily have to be rationalization? Or what would a bureaucracy look like which continues to serve its initial principled objectives?

In judging a church, the question cannot be whether it has connected with it a certain apparatus of bureaucrats, but whether this bureaucratic apparatus has completely overlaid and stifled the life, which it was supposed to assist and to preserve. Only where the latter contingency has become a reality can we speak of a routinization of charisma (Stark 1965, 206).

Together, I believe this literature suggests we need to look more closely at the ways in which organizations can maintain their initial core values in their everyday activities and in their more grand overhauls to solve their problems.

Institutional theorists have recently begun to focus on the impact of rationalization on organizational cultures, social roles, and identities of professionals. “Identity” is a sticky term, but, following Lok (2010, 1308), I define it broadly here as the "institutional notions of who or what any social actor might or should be in a particular
institutional context, and—by implication—how the actor should act." This definition includes both what are known as "social identities based on social categories such as class, gender, nationality, or sexuality (e.g., Creed et al. 2002)," and "role identities linked to particular social positions (e.g., Rao et al. 2003)" (Lok 2010, 1308). Self-identity is an actor’s own notion of who and what they are (Watson 2008). Within organizations, it is important to remember that the often mundane and unacknowledged tasks of constructing a discourse and techniques of control have a subjectifying impact—that is, they effect the subjects of the organization, which is critical to the durability and diffusability of the institution or rationalized packaged (Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000). In other words, rationalization does not end with the diffusion of rationalized beliefs and practices, but rather, as Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000, 701) state: "it is "sustained and given meaning and direction through its capacity to constitute distinct forms of actorhood, social roles, and identities." Thus, it is necessary to understand how the constructed object, or rationalized package, comes to shape the way actors understand themselves and their roles.

More specifically, recent institutional theory studies have refocused their traditional structural lens on agency and actors and the means by which objects or patterns of formal organizing constitute action and actors (Lok 2010; Hwang and Powell year; Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000; Pratt, Rockmann, and Kaufmann 2010). These studies look at the subjectifying effects that emerge from the stabilization of ideals though oral language, textualization, and formal codification. Subjectification refers to the construction of recognizable and recurrent social and organizational roles (Foucault
1980; 1988; Hasselbladh and Kallinikos 2000, 701). The literature shows that distinctive forms of identity, or actorhood, are inextricably bound up with the methods and techniques necessary for the objectifying process. The internalization, on the part of organizational actors, of everyday work tasks shows why approaches that define institutions as mere rationalized beliefs or cognitive frameworks fail to account adequately for the process of rationalization. The notion that we internalize our social roles is not new, but, as Jaco Lok (2010, 1306) argues: "the interiorization of the cognitive technologies presupposed by formal organizing appears as a much more complex and ongoing accomplishment."

By bringing the role of internalization and subjectification to the forefront of institutional theory, a focus is placed on the actors within organizations that are involved in institutionalization and shifts in organizational culture and institutional logic. In this way, organizations are not seen as some homogenous entity, as they are depicted in the more macro world polity perspective, but as heterogeneous - constituted by actors with agency. This depiction provides a much more nuanced picture, and more variation is made evident than has been the trend in institutional scholarship (Suddaby, et al. 2010). Recent literature identifies a range of individuals and their role in influencing institutions (Suddaby, et al. 2010; Hwang and Powell 2005; 2009; Lok 2010; Kraatz, Ventresca, and Deng 2010). Elaborating on this process in relation to institutional change, organizational institutionalist scholars have argued that each step of institutionalization involves various actors, such as “proselytizers/proselytes,” “explorers/settlers,” “creators/enforcers,” and “institutional entrepreneurs/institutional targets” (Hwang and
Powell 2005). These actors, if successful, contribute collectively to the wide diffusion and eventual institutionalization of a standard or model. In general, each of these binaries captures two distinct roles. On one side are roles that are not institutionalized or professionalized thoroughly and so are less encumbered by rules and norms and take on the role of creating, producing, and theorizing the new ideals at the beginning of the process (Hwang and Powell 2005). On the other side are those that come later in the process and therefore are socialized into the new logic. They have the task of enforcing or settling the institution as they perform their socialized roles and practices, and they are sometime resistant to change when a new logic is again introduced (Hwang and Powell 2005). In this sense, institutionalization is conceptualized as a sequential process in which agents occupy different positions at different steps in the creation of an organizational field and have different stakes in the outcome (Hwang and Powell 2005). They control different discursive resources and commit themselves to a given practice only at certain stages of the process.

Jaco Lok’s work looks more specifically at how these actors experience the different stages of institutional change and argues that the ways in which they deal with shifts in social roles is central to understanding the role of actors within rationalizing processes. Lok argues that institutional change presents new identities that do not necessarily fit the actors’ self-identity, which was in part developed in relation to the old institutional logic and organizational culture. Lok (2010, 1308) states that actors thus have to manage this discrepancy by doing “identity work,” which is “the process of continuously forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising self-constructions
that are productive of a precarious sense of coherence and distinctiveness." Identity work manifests in multiple ways. Lok shows that actors may resist new institutional logics, identify with them in seemingly unproblematic ways, or adopt hybrid identities that draw on different logics simultaneously. Lok elaborates on these diverse responses by outlining how and why they are linked to the ways in which new logics are translated into practices.

Lok’s work extends theory on identity construction to institutionalization processes. He shows the relationship between identity construction, institutional logic, and rationalization by demonstrating how identity can be contested and reconstructed, and suggests that total, unproblematic identification with new social roles is not a necessary requirement for the rise of a new logic. More often, identifications are problematic and paradoxical and even contrary to the new institutionalized practices. However, over time these social roles become less problematic, as new actors are socialized into the new institutional logic, the discrepancy between the old self-identity and the new identity disappears as new actors form their self-identity within the new logics framework. At this point the new logics, the rationalized packages, are made more durable and stable.

III. Failing to Solve the Problem and Its Unintended consequence

The end result of the work involved in attempting to solve the decoupling problem was a very refined, well packaged, and well-advertised product; in other words, together, the problem and the solutions worked to rationalize the ideal of truth
commissions into a formulaic truth commission model. This created a series of unintended, and unwanted, consequences: 1. The rationalization failed to solve the problem of decoupling. In fact, it ironically increased decoupling so that a never-ending, cyclical process now occurs in which more problem solving, i.e. rationalization efforts, results in more decoupling, which results in more problem solving, which leads to more decoupling, and so on. 2. The increasingly formulaic model of the truth commission that was created as a result of the problem solving work undermined one of the core values of the TCC, namely the importance of context specificity and cultural sensitivity. 3. In attempting to solve the problem, the organization rationalized not only the ideal of truth commissions into a model, but also the organization itself. The work required to solve the problem changed the nature of the work within the organization and, ultimately, changed the organizational culture. 4. Rationalization had a profound impact on the identities of the First Generation True Believers, requiring them to do identity work. In the following section, I elaborate on each of these unintended consequences.

*Increase in Decoupling*

If the goal of all the preemptive coupling and recoupling practices was to solve the problem of decoupling, i.e. the breakdown between principles and practices, then the results are, at best, mixed. It is of course impossible to know if future results may improve. Even in a review of past and current evidence, categorical answers are difficult, especially in situations as complex as the ones in which truth commissions are implemented. However, in a number of situations, it is clear that the large-scale effort of the TCC to solve the problem, and the overall rationalization of the truth commission
model, failed to end or even inhibit decoupling. Despite the well-honed narrative, diffused discourse, and many manuals, workshops, conferences, and monitoring systems created by the TCC, governments are still not always adopting and/or implementing truth commissions in ways that uphold the principles.

In the cases of Honduras and Canada, although they were very different and had very different outcomes, recoupling techniques were required for both truth commissions to be “successful.” Preemptive coupling work (manuals, workshops, conferences) had already been well underway by the time both of these commissions were established, and yet both commissions still failed to reflect or implement the foundational principles in their mandate. The preemptive recoupling techniques failed to solve the problem.

In the case of Canada, specific meetings and instruction had been completed with the truth commission officials and commissioners and, still, many decoupling problems occurred. Of course, in Canada, TCC professionals had concluded that despite the decoupling they saw occurring the government was sincere in wanting to prioritize the victims. Thus, they continued to work with the government and in the end, the TCC seemed pleased with the practices of the truth commission. However, the Canadian truth commission has come under serious attack since it ended, precisely for the reason that it didn’t serve the victims. Actual practice was decoupled from principles after all. It could, therein, be argued that both preemptive coupling and recoupling techniques failed.

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In the case of Honduras, the suggestions for recoupling given by the TCC were ignored, and the truth commission continued without their help. While this shows how they maintained their principles despite losing the job, it also shows that the work of preemptive coupling and recoupling both failed. Other cases, since I left, have shown similar trends, including truth commissions in the Solomon Islands and Kenya\textsuperscript{6}. Therefore, despite a global effort to disseminate coupling practices, decoupling still seems rampant; and, despite efforts to recouple, truth commissions still seem to be criticized for the same problem that the TCC’s solutions were supposedly solving.

What explains this failure? Of course, the answer to this cannot be singular in such a globally complicated and complex situation. However, world polity theory does help to provide a clue as to why the problem persisted. As already noted, preemptive coupling and recoupling techniques worked to theorize, standardize and, ultimately, rationalize the truth commission ideal into a rationalized model. According to Meyers and Strang (1993), theorization, standardization, and rationalization work to increase diffusion as well as create the type of symbolic and rote adoption that causes decoupling. In this sense, the normative and theorization mechanism, in which the TCC has played a vital role, has played a causal role in the significant rise in truth commission diffusion, isomorphism, and decoupling of principles and practices. As we have seen, the arduous work TCC professionals engage in to couple and recouple principles and practices has

resulted in an increasingly rationalized model, and rationalized models not only diffuse but also increase the rate of decoupling, as predicted (and described above) by Meyer and Strang (1993).

Thus the solution seemed to exacerbate the problem. Preemptive coupling and recoupling techniques have, in fact, worked to increase the problem of decoupling. After every acknowledgement that decoupling has increased, or persists, TCC amps up its efforts again, increasing their coupling and recoupling work by further standardizing practices and principles into, for example, a 'best practice' template for distribution to governments, which then again increases diffusion, as well as isomorphism, and then decoupling. Over the same period of time that diffusion has increased and the formal structures of truth commissions have come to look increasingly similar, coupling and recoupling techniques have become increasingly more standardized, initially outlining broad principles and practices, and later manifesting in manuals that provide a specific, step by step method for running a truth commission while the same issues of decoupling persist. For Meyers and other world polity theorists, this is precisely how the global culture has become one increasingly characterized by rationality.

Organizational Cultural Change

The process of rationalizing the truth commission ideal into a formulaic model worked to change the organizational culture and institutional logic of the TCC, itself becoming more rationalized and bureaucratic. In chapter one, I described the culture of the TCC as it was nostalgically described to me by various First Generation True Believers or by other interns who had also been told tales of yesteryear. To recall, the
culture had a free-spirit feeling. With no standard operating procedures, no rules (as I was told by many first generation professionals), and abundant funds, the professionals worked with countries based on a common understanding of their shared values as well as on their diverse experience but without much oversight or overarching organizational protocols to regulate their work. They were explicitly not a bureaucracy and “not the UN.” However, by the time I arrived and even more so by the time I left, a different culture was at play in the organization. Actually, what alerted me to the new culture was the very fact that so much reminiscing about old culture occurred, leading me to the question if that’s what it used to be like, then what is the culture now? And what caused the shift?

To address the first question, the culture I walked into at the TCC was anxious and dreary. I was told explicitly on my first day that the organization was undergoing a massive transformation and that this transformation involved “getting everyone on the same page.” Upon elaboration, this meant that standard operating procedures were being written so that all directors were consulting, advising, and speaking from the same organizational perspective, rather than from their own personal experiences like before. In addition, the organizational perspective itself was in the process of being refined, consolidated, streamlined, and clarified. Ultimately, this process was about coming to an increasingly clear understanding of how truth commissions should be run across the organization - the principles and practices that this entailed, and the ways that the TCC would promote and push for this understanding. There was a very tangible adamancy concerning the creation and consolidation of this organizational perspective. In part, this
may have been because it was framed as a way of maintaining their core values and of solving the problem of decoupling that was compromising and subverting these values, but it was also due to structural constraints. Money was tight - there was much less funding than there had been at the beginning, and the organization needed quickly to remain relevant and necessary within a much different global, transitional justice context than had been present at its conception 10 years earlier.

During this time, a restructuring of the organization took place, which included appointing a new president, adding new board members, closing regional offices, consolidating departments and letting people go, and creating a number of materials that expressed this understanding and could be drawn on at any moment. Needless to say, the “vibe” of the organization was not as free-spirited as it once had been. As a close colleague of mine, who'd been working at the TCC for over 5 years, said to me:

It used to be fun here. It didn't feel like a business or a typical organization. It felt fresh. Innovative. There wasn't this sense of making sure you followed protocol or procedure. It was just like - good ideas and good intentions. (Mary)

No longer were free gym memberships handed out or long lunches endorsed. First Generation True Believers were also no longer free to consult, advise, or speak as they chose but were expected to work in ways that reflected and reaffirmed the SOPs and the organizations mandate. Moreover, these changes created a much more “UN” look than they had previously or, in other words, a much more bureaucratic look (Barnett and Finnemore 1999)

In fact, the new president was an American who came straight from the UN, in contrast to the previous two who had come from South Africa and Argentina,
respectively. New board members were also brought on, most of whom were either CEOs of major corporations or prominent lawyers from top firms with a history of international work. This was a change from previous board members who predominantly had work experience in foundations like the Ford Foundation or other non-profits. Overall these changes amounted to a different type of culture and institutional logic. The new way was much more bureaucratic and rationalized - the organization was meant to meet its objectives through efficient and effective standards so that instead of working with each truth commission as an individual, different case, there was a model that each case would be advised based upon.

As with all change, rarely is there just one causal mechanism. The shift in the organizational culture and logic certainly was brought on by multiple factors including the recession, and an overall professionalization of the transitional justice field. However, I argue that one of the major causes of this change was the heart-wrenching breakdown of the organization's core values when they were imperfectly implemented by adopting governments. Bringing those efforts into alignment with the First Generation True Believers' passionate commitment to the rights of victims precipitated enormous efforts to provide procedures that would place those values back at the center. Instead, all the effort to theorize and standardize practices ultimately changed the nature of the organization.

Change is not necessarily bad. However, many scholars have noted that change towards rationalization, particularly on humanitarian and non-profit work, has less than desirable consequences on the values the work is premised upon (Duffield 2001; Hwang
and Powell 2000; Slim 1995; Kraatz, Ventresca, and Deng 2010; Marquis and Huang 2010). At the TCC it greatly affected the value of context specificity. As I discussed earlier, part of what characterizes rationalization and rationalization processes is both a unifying discourse that defines reality, and a rise in efficiency, calculability, objectivity, and standardization. Defining reality in a particular way, and attempting to get buy-in to this particular perspective, requires eclipsing other understandings, as I discussed in the previous chapter. In addition, a standardized model with specific practice prescriptions undermines the notion of context specificity. It leaves little room for issues within that specific moment - context, culture, and conflict - to dictate the appropriate practices. In other words, a detailed outline of how to run a truth commission cannot easily accommodate understandings and practices that arise in the context of a particular country and its particular history. The very values TCC professionals want to uphold prioritize the rights and empowerment of the victim and the importance of local culture, but the particulars of each conflict end up getting increasingly limited space due to the confines of a formulaic model.

To review the Honduras example again - the TCC did not believe that the principles were being upheld, and they refused to assist in the commission. The UN, on the other hand, believed that although the truth commission, as mandated by the Honduras government, was not ideal in its structure, it could still be considered progress that would in fact still uphold victims' rights. The UN believed that the international community should respect Honduras’s efforts and work with Honduras, even if it looked somewhat different than the TCC’s ideal. This is precisely the ongoing and relentless
issue that arises with the human rights framework. It is impossible to know whether refusing to help Honduras because it didn't abide by the TCC practices and principles was in fact culturally sensitive because a truth commission that does not uphold victims' rights could not be culturally sensitive. Universal principles, when put into practice in specific contexts and cultures, will always elide alternative understandings, meaning systems, and practices and it will always be a gamble as to which way is right or wrong.

Multiple examples in a variety of contexts illustrate similar dilemmas faced by development and humanitarian aid organizations. Human rights principles began broadly, allowing room for variation on instantiation within specific contexts in order to uphold the values of cultural sensitivity and context specificity. But, over time, these principles became more and more prescriptive and standardized, in response to a belief that the work of the organization is failing as well as an increased global consensus that there are in fact inalienable human rights (of course, the increase in global consensus may also be a result of the techniques and strategies - like discourse - used to respond to the failure, as discussed above, rather than a deep, prophetic moral belief in human rights).

Standardization and rationalization as a response to failure can have much to do with notions, definitions, and metrics for success. Hugo Slim (1995) discusses this within the Humanitarian Aid paradigm, and Mark Duffield (2001) reflects upon the standardization and rationalization of the development field. In both cases, the authors suggest that new understandings of “success” in professional fields created a surge of effort to improve the effectiveness of the fields’ work according to the new standards.
Over time, these improvements resulted in an increasingly standardized approach - international benchmarks were established, metrics formulated to accurately assess effectiveness and efficiency, and formulas were derived in order to be able to calculate, in advance, whether more harm than good would come of particular initiatives.

In all the cases, including transitional justice, the result is consequentialist ethics based on a belief in a normative framework. The decision to be involved in an initiative is based on whether it adheres to principles even if, for example, the cost is more lives lost.

Rather than saving lives as its overriding and prophetic concern, a new humanitarianism has emerged that bases action (or inaction) on the assumed good or bad consequences of a given intervention in relation to wider developmental aims. This new or principled humanitarianism complements the radicalization of development, which now sees the role of aid as altering the balance of power between social groups in the interest of peace and stability. . . From saving lives, the shift in humanitarian policy has been towards analyzing consequences and supporting social processes. (Duffield 2001)

As noted earlier, Hwang and Powell found similar problems within the national, non-profit sector. The point here is that rationalizing techniques not only seem unable to solve the problems they are intended to solve, but they also create a number of other consequences that often undermine their core values and commitments.  

First Generation Identity Work: Maintenance and Integration

In this last section, I examine the subjective experience of First Generation True Believers in relation to the rationalization process; I look at how they understood, experienced, and narrated this shift in institutional culture and the corresponding shift in social roles, and show that the process of rationalization posed a profound challenge to their original self-identity. The absorption of these new roles and identities was not
seamless and, as Lok describes, in fact required a fair amount of identity work. As with any cultural shift, social roles are upended or reformed, and this creates much unrest; the transition is not usually smooth. People deal with role change in multiple ways and feel differently about it. For TCC professionals, the organizational cultural shift produced new social roles and required, ultimately, a different type of identity. The original culture of TCC produced a professional identity that I have described as a True Believer, characterized by a creative and un-structured sensibility. The new culture was producing something different, and was less autonomous, less free, and more bureaucratic, which was problematic. Standards, models, recipes, protocols, organizational restraint, and institutional pressures were not part of their self or professional conceptualizations. Therefore, they had to work with this new identity - they could not just adopt it. For new TCC members and interns, whom I call Second Generation Believers, this new identity was not problematic, as it was the only one available to them when they began their work.

The identity work I saw can be divided into two broad categories: maintenance and integration. By maintenance, I mean the process by which individuals actively work to preserve a self-identity, typically when that identity is challenged, or when an individual has limited discretion in behaving as that purported identity would suggest. The techniques TCC professionals employed to maintain their old identities, despite performing daily the practices of the new institutional logic, were silence and “role distance” (Goffman 1961). Broadly, role distance describes the degree to which individuals separate themselves from the roles they play; in this sense, identity is neither
preconceived nor presupposed but constructed, allowing for manipulation and
detachment. Through both silence and role distance actors were able to distance their
self-identification from the new logic’s practice and identity implications to preserve a
more favorable, autonomous identity, while fully adopting practices associated with the
new logic. These techniques were apparent in everyday conversation as well as in
interviews.

By integration I mean the process by which individuals integrate a new identity
into their old self-identity. The techniques I saw used to do this were saving and
compromising. In saving, TCC professionals justify their standardizing work by
understanding it as a way of “saving” the truth commission from being “messed up.” In
this sense, there is a level of acceptance that although maybe something is being lost
through these new practices, it is for a greater cause because they are avoiding larger
problems. In compromising, TCC professionals consciously accept, although not happily,
that the techniques they've employed may be undermining some of their core values,
which they understand as unfortunate, albeit necessary.

**First Generation Identity Maintenance: Silence and Role Dissonance**

Silence was one way in which TCC professionals managed the challenge to their
identity as a result of the shifting social roles caused by rationalization. I argue that the
professionals at TCC could not yet narrate or even make sense of this organizational
cultural change because it didn’t make sense within their meaning system. And yet they
were actively participating in it, in part, and ironically, because of their commitment to
maintain the values that drew them to this work and to the organization. Silence is an
important social construct. As opposed to the common understanding of silence as being “nothing” or “devoid of meaning,” Foucault (1976, 27) has made clear to us that what is not said is just as meaningful as what is said:

Silence itself—the thing one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers—is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.

Foucault challenges us to pay attention to what is not said as signs of social boundaries, social structure, and social roles as well as shifts in social relations, subjectivities, and power. It is necessary to make visible what is made invisible and to make what is not possible or able to be articulated heard. I heard silence both in my interviews and in my everyday conversations when the value of non-standardization and contextual specificity conflicted with the need to preemptively couple and recouple, which manifested as SOPs.

When I first started noticing silence, it was because it was awkward. At the very beginning, after the first meeting I had about the manual I was to help create, I very innocently asked “So, we are trying to standardize the practices?” No one said anything. Because it was my first day, and I had thought I said something wrong or hadn’t understood the instructions, I quickly covered up the quiet by saying back to them what I thought they were asking me to do. Even though I was, by anyone’s understanding, working to create a “top ten ways to do a truth commission” - in other words, creating
standards - I realized right then that I could not say what I was doing in those terms. This was not how it was understood. It was understood as a way of “saving” truth commissions from not being established based on principles, and thus the word standardized registered as nonsensical or even possibly offensive. I will discuss saving in more detail below.

In another instance, I was interviewing someone and asked what he understood a “successful truth commission to be,” in part because I wanted to see if they would argue that there is no recipe, which many did (see below in the “role rejection” section). However, in this case a different response was given. First there was a long pause. Then, “I don’t understand what you mean by that.”

I explained that I meant that there are certain objectives of truth commissions and asked “what do you think helps make some meet those objectives and some not?” I asked “when you work on a truth commission, what makes you feel good about the work, what are the signs of that?”

“Well they [truth commissions] are all different, so how can I say that?”

“Well yes, OK. But it seems that at the TCC there is some consensus that some practices are important in order for the rights of victims to be upheld, for example. Right?”

“You’re saying is there a recipe to a successful truth commission?”

“Do you think that? Is there?”

Silence. (Tom)
I tried a few more times to pick up this thread, to try to get him to discuss what made a truth commission successful and each time I was met with questions or silence. He wasn’t angry with me. I believe he just could not make sense of the fact that he believed there was no recipe, and that there shouldn’t be, and yet he knew that he and the TCC at large were often involved in putting forth best practices - something that could be considered a recipe to a successful truth commission.

During my last week at the center, when I had finished all my open-ended interviews and more or less completed my field work in which, as per grounded theory, I had tried to maintain an open mind to different understandings of what I was seeing, hearing, and experiencing, I decided to confront the professionals on this disconnect that I had witnessed. I wanted to see if, asked point blank, they could narrate through the disjuncture between, what seemed to me to be, the old culture and the developing new culture. Instead, I found silence again:

Matthew: I think we try to be very conscious of what might be the best practice in country A may not be the best practice in country B. Practices have more to do with implementation of principles, implementation of the right to truth, and we are very strong about encouraging some of those practices, for example always encouraging people to do extensive consultation, but we know that you cannot completely generalize on a pragmatic issue and practices are pragmatic issues. So we kind of encourage people to come up with their best practices in terms of which practices are better for their particular contexts.

Me: “But how then can we create a best practice manual? How can they be so different and yet we can suggest the same practices to all?”

Silence.

I mean, I guess I’m just a bit confused. Sorry. I know you’ve said how wary you are of “recipes,” because of course we think that every context and history and culture and conflict is different. But it does seem like what you have to spend a lot
of time doing is trying to make sure people don’t mess up truth commissions, like practice them wrongly, or fix them when they’ve done them badly. But isn’t that like telling them what practices to do; standardizing practices for truth commissions?

Matthew: Yep.

And more silence.

The silences I “heard” in my interviews and various conversations marked a refusal to integrate or even narrate through the discrepancy in identity and institutional logics that these First Generation professionals were experiencing. In doing this, in being silent, these professionals maintained their self-identity even when, in practice, they performed the new logic’s duties.

Another means by which First Generation True Believers maintained their self-identity was through role dissonance. The values of these professionals were near and dear to their hearts, but the wave of rationalization had carried the organization in a direction in which some of these values were compromised, especially the value of cultural specificity. But this was heresy for them. It didn’t seem possible to absorb that they were creating uniform standards. This simply wasn’t their original professional identity, and it clearly conflicted with the notion of cultural specificity. Therefore, far from falling silent, professionals interested in maintaining their self-identity participated in role dissonance or “talk and walk” disconnect. All day long, they created memos, manuals, and conducted how to workshops; and all day long, they reiterated how there was no one right way, and “no recipe,” and that each truth commission had to be contextually specific. It wasn’t that they were lying; it was simply not possible for them
to integrate their new routine actions into their existing professional identity. In one context, these professionals would adamantly discuss the need for cultural specificity and, in another; they would be frustrated when a country didn’t follow their directions about how to run a truth commission.

For example, I was invited by a different institute to attend a small workshop on transitional justice. When I arrived, to my surprise, one of the three speakers for the workshop was a member of the TCC, whom I worked with. Thomas’s presentation, his answers to questions, and his discussion with other workshop members were passionate and heartfelt, particularly on the subject of historical and cultural specificity; it was also highly theoretical and intellectual. But it did strike me as interesting considering what Thomas and I had been working on just the day before. That is, we were working on clarifying/standardizing definitions concerning truth commissions (reconciliation; the right to truth, etc.) so that best principles and practices could be better understood and easier to follow. It seemed like a professional split personality. How could he hold the belief and the action simultaneously? One day we are talking about standards and the next we are talking about cultural specificity. How can these coexist?

As I’ve said, the reason they were able to do this was because of role distance: within the meaning system of First Generational True Believers, the new practices and institutional logics did not make sense so they cognitively distanced themselves from it while simultaneously enacting the new practice or performing the new role. In this sense, they didn't believe they were standardizing, or at least they didn’t articulate it like that because they couldn’t. Time and time again, I was told that there was “no recipe” and no
“one way” to do a truth commission, and they truly believed this, but, as I have shown,
there was indeed a recipe or, at the least, there was one very much in the making.

First Generation Identity Integration: Saving and Compromising

While many people had a complete disconnect between what they were doing and
what they believed, as described above, a few were starting to be able to narrate through
the distance by providing justifications through the lens of 'saving' the truth commission:

There isn’t one right way because it depends on the country. But we do have to
think about the principles we want to uphold. We do have to do things that will
meet the victims’ needs. So I think that the most important outcome should be
found in what we could call the culture – recommendations, institutional reforms,
the trials are not taking place – but it is important for the success of the
commission is the quality of the public discourse and the quality of the public
political discussion and the quality of the public agenda. If after a commission has
ended its work, you can say that there is more public awareness about human
rights and human rights violations and you find that the state language is not any
more comfortable with the discourse of force and if you find that some sectors of
society now have a say in public dialogue who didn’t used to, then you can say
that something is going on as a result of the commission work. But in order to do
this we have to make sure we don’t let truth commissions get hijacked or messed
up. The public discourse for me is very important than – the principle of the
commission should be about changing the culture. But we have to make sure a
number of mistakes aren’t made and that the government or other people with
particular interests don’t coopt the commission. In order to create a truth
commission that does these things, there are certain practices that need to be in
place and we have to make sure they get done. (Jonathon)

Here, saving is understood as making sure the truth commission follows the standardized
practices so that it doesn’t get “messed up.” Pre-emptive coupling strategies were thus
understood as saving. Saving could also happen after a truth commission has been
“messed up.”

Much of the discourse on saving was spoken more casually or informally.
Comments such as commissions “needing” their help, or having to be “saved” from
disaster, or being too “messed” up to work with were common. Usually, “saving”
comments came out of frustration or even sadness and disappointment when a country
was not taking the right steps to ensure a “good” truth commission. This happened often,
as discussed earlier, when decoupling had occurred. It was also articulated when they
were explaining pre-emptive coupling and recoupling projects to me. It seemed that it
wasn’t possible in that moment to maintain the distance or the silence. Rather, because
they were telling me precisely how to start constructing standards or how to create a
manual or memo or conference, they had to overcome the disconnection in order to be
coherent in roles and beliefs. But, because they weren’t ready to fully adopt the new
roles, the projects needed to be justified in some way that still framed the work as part of
their belief system and that didn’t fully negate, undermine, or do away with their old
roles. The narrative of saving (or even just helping) enabled the TCC professional to deal
with the conflicting identities.

Other professionals were a little more compromising, which felt to me - when
they were talking - like they were surrendering. Over coffee one day I was told

You know, when we started this work, it was different. We just all did our own
thing. And it was good. But as truth commissions got more popular and people
started adopting them for the wrong reasons we had to start getting more
organized. We had to decide as an organization what our principles were and how
were going to ensure that the work we were involved in met these principles or
practiced these principles. We had to get more demonstratively political. I think
we’ve done a pretty good job at keeping the practices broad so that once they are
adopted they can be interpreted in various ways within the local context. But it’s a
catch 22. On the one hand, you don’t want to write these manuals or memos so
specifically that there’s no room for specific, creative interpretation. I mean that’s
at the heart of everything we believe! But on the other hand, the more broad you
leave it, the more room there is for cooption. (David)
David and I were not in an interview. We had come from a mini-conference run by the TCC on Aboriginals and reconciliation. It had been a heavy day. Many chief Aboriginals from diverse countries had been sitting around the table and had spoken of the ways that their countries’ peace agreements never recognized the harms done specifically to Aboriginals and the ways in which the specificity of the culture and the violations done to their people are so seldom included in transitional justice discussions. In so many ways, it felt like their stories told of the continual failure of human rights work in general and its unintentional, but lingering, imperial tendencies. This prompted a discussion between David and me about the old debate on the tensions between universalism and cultural specificity. It was in the context of that painful discussion, at the end of a difficult day that David named this "catch 22." This was not easy for them. Losing their values and compromising their identities was painful and confusing.

In the period of time between winter holidays and early spring, the center became extremely dismal. The interns and I would arrive and the lights would be out, and barely anyone would be in their offices. After a couple of strange weeks like this each of the interns, each from our different supervisors, received pieces of information which we began to piece together, in hushed tones by our desks. People were being let go, financial issues had arisen, and the fate of the center or at least that of most of the personnel was at risk. The organization was restructuring, jobs were being streamlined, and titles were being merged. Some of my fellow interns’ supervisors did in fact lose their jobs - the details of which we were not privy to. But some time in the spring the mood shifted
again, and people, although not everyone, came back in. I met with my supervisor and he confirmed the rumors but said “we were safe.” He then elaborated:

The organization is changing. Has to change. The funding landscape is just not the same as it used to be and the whole transitional justice environment is different. We have to adjust for these things. We have to be more efficient and we have to be very clear about what we do and how we do it and what we expect others to do. And we have to be held accountable. (Michael)

In the face of both external and internal pressures, compromises had to be made, even if they were made begrudgingly or unwillingly. Similar comments were made around the coffee shop and in the hallways. There was a sense of “we have to do what has to be done.” This narrative spoke to a different form of integration than saving, although not entirely distinct. In this, however, I also heard resignation and a loss of the passion and zeal and spirit that I had heard when the professionals discussed why they got involved and the values that inspired them.

V. Second Generation Believers and Identity

I refer to the interns I worked with as “Second Generation Believers” because they, like myself, entered the TCC while this transition was taking place, and so the new social and professional roles were available to them, even if they were only loosely defined, and remnants of the old roles lingered at the edges through the tales that were passed down to us. It wasn’t so much that we were being trained in a particular way but, rather, that we entered a different culture, at a different time. In addition, many of the interns had been “trained,” professionalized through the schools they went to, and the TCC internship was one further step on their professionalization path to enter the field of
transitional justice. In this sense, these Second Generation Believers resembled the description of professionals put forth by Dezalay and Garth as well as by world polity.

More specifically, since the time the TCC opened, and truth commissions had become institutionalized and transitional justice professionalized. The professional and education background of these interns did not have the diversity of First Generation True Believers. The path of a transitional justice career was now clearly paved. Importantly, this rationalizing and professionalizing change also shifted the motivating force of action from values to norms, and it changed the self-identity and the social roles of the Second Generation so that they did not experience identity discrepancy as the culture of the organization shifted.

Of the 10 interns I worked with all had gone to elite schools including Harvard, Columbia, Yale, London School of Economics, Oxford, and New York University. These interns did come from different countries but they were all Western educated. In addition, more than half of the interns were lawyers. All of the interns were in their 20s and none of them, despite their credentials and degrees, were being paid. Most of them were interning for six months to a year. When I asked the interns why they were interning when they could easily get jobs, they all told me that it was such great experience and that the TCC’s name on their resume would carry them far in terms of securing jobs within the field of transitional justice.

Interning at a reputable organization had become a requisite credential for participation in the field of transitional justice, as it had for previous human rights fields. Without field experience, young professionals are not being considered for “good” jobs.
One day, while discussing this internship process, Matt, a recent graduate of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy said “It shouldn’t be so hard to help save the world! We shouldn’t have to go broke trying to help people.” Anna, a young lawyer from Eastern Europe, who had also just finished a Master’s at LSE, responded: “Well, it’s not so much about the money. But I do want a job. And I do want to help. I mean I’m really worried that I won’t get enough field experience and I won’t be able to work on truth commissions.”

I asked her, “Do you think truth commissions necessarily help?” Anna looked confused and surprised. And then even a little hurt.

In my country, I thought it was good. Or parts of it were good. I don’t know. Honestly, I guess I never really thought about it before that they could be something “bad.” I mean I know they don’t fix everything, but I just thought that something needs to be done after a conflict and beyond tribunals, which are complicated and cost a lot, this is what we have - truth commissions. And they are good - they try to restore democracy, redress human rights violations, I mean - why would that be bad? It’s just so hard now to be able to get into the field. It’s so competitive. (Ref)

Both Brian’s and Anna’s comments highlight the critical shifts from First Generation to Second Generation: First, transitional justice was normatively understood as a “good” and an irrefutably good way to “save the world.” This understanding ran in stark contrast to First Generation professionals who were skeptical, cautious, critical, and reflexive about transitional justice and truth commissions. To recall Chapter Two, First Generation True Believers did not take for granted that truth commissions were necessarily “good.” They thought they had elements that could be helpful and that, at times, they were able to do certain things well, but they saw them as often problematic
and easily coopted. What was more important to them were the values that truth commissions were supposed to help uphold and which motivated these professionals to do this work in the first place. Although Anna and Brian also wanted to help, they were significantly less critical about what helping meant, and took for granted the inherent goodness of transitional justice work. Rather than being motivated predominantly by values, these professionals, as predicted by world polity theory, were normatively motivated. Personal values had become global norms.

Secondly, Brian and Anna’s comments made clear that “helping” was a career that required particular degrees, internships, and training. Transitional justice is a professional career now and there are clear steps that they must take, and be successful at, if they were to become transitional justice professionals. So far, they have gone to the “right” schools with the “right” programs and have been “trained” in transitional justice. The next step was to get field experience at organizations like the TCC or the International Criminal Court at the Hague (where Anna went next). These credentials are now pre-requisites for entry into the type of jobs that First Generation True Believers with less formal “training” now hold. Other positions would include working on transitional justice issues within the UN, IMF, World Bank (all of whom have taken a much bigger interest in transitional justice over the past 5 years) and, eventually, potentially working on a truth commission or tribunal although, for the time being, commissioners are still predominantly chosen from within the country in which the conflict took place. None of the interns were from conflict zones.
A quick search on the Internet also confirms the rationalization and professionalization of transitional justice. The Fletcher school has a whole degree devoted to transitional justice. On the web page a slogan in a bright yellow box states “A Multidisciplinary Approach to Global Solutions” and just below, “Your Career: Transitional Justice. Fletcher courses can help you launch or advance your career in transitional justice through a rigorous and flexible curriculum that lets you tailor your curriculum to the international career of your choice.” NYU, Columbia, Harvard’s Kennedy School, Brown’s Watson Institute, and LSE have similar programs. Clearly, there is a specific, standardized, “right” way to learn and do transitional justice. In addition, on the UN website’s transitional justice page, there is a link to both trainings and jobs. The TCC has a similar page of training opportunities. These trainings, new to the TCC in the past 5 years, represent a consolidation of a discourse, techniques of control, a professional field, and particular identities or professional subjects.

VI. Conclusion: From Priests to Prophets and Questions of Consequence

As has already been noted, who and what qualifies as a professional has expanded and changed in the era of globalization as well as the number of professions and professionals. In other words, as Hwang and Powell argue (2009: 268), there is growing number of individuals who derive "legitimacy and authority from their formal education and claims to specialized expertise," a "burgeoning number of jurisdictional domains for which advanced qualifications are deemed necessary" and, lastly, a 'more diffuse notion of professionalism." This overall expansion of professionalism has impacted all sectors of
society so that even those areas of work that were 'formerly a world of amateurs and volunteers' (Hwang and Powell 2009, 269), like that of the non-profit sector, are now characterized by well educated, trained, and credentialed experts.

This is clearly the case for transitional justice and truth commission work, and it begs the question, “what is at stake when occupations and organizations built to ‘help’ become professionalized and rationalized?” Is it bad that Anna and Brian take for granted the goodness of truth commissions or want to be paid well for “saving the world?” Is it a problem that the interns seamlessly slip into the new institutional logic’s roles, not only because they know no other roles at the organization but because the roles themselves align with the ones they have been trained for and trained to expect? As many have noted, professional training is a form of socialization in which certain social and personal roles and identities are solidified and the norms and beliefs of the professional field are taken for granted. But, particularly within the fields of human rights, shouldn’t we be even more rigorously managing the types of taken for granted assumptions and power/knowledge constructs that are being internalized?

I have showed in this chapter that while there may be benefits to the formal organizing and rationalizing of humanitarian efforts, there are also costs (Kraatz, Ventresca, Deng 2010; Hwang and Powell 2009). The nonprofit sector’s professionalization may have significant implications for its core identity as well as for its future development and role in society at large, especially given the ubiquitous presence of nonprofits in the daily lives of many citizens (Hwang and Powell 2009, 270). As we have seen in these pages, this has certainly been the case for transitional justice
and Second Generation Believers. And while the vitality of these nonprofits may reflect the spirit of humanitarianism, the sector has also become an important economic engine that provides employment to people interested in “doing good” as a primary source of livelihood. Hwang and Powell (2009) make an important distinction between “grassroots amateurs” (whom I liken to First Generation True Believers) and “career-minded professionals” (Second Generation Believers). They argue that the difference in these two sets of actors is of particular importance as it raises issues that are at the heart of nonprofits’ identity and culture. The original meaning of amateur was someone who engages in an activity for joy and love, but as nonprofits transition from a group of amateurs to professionals, the role becomes more formalized and the missions of these organizations are remade to be less expressive of values and more instrumental (Hwang and Powell 2009, 294). In organizations that are in the business of improving and saving lives, it becomes important to understand the consequences of this professionalizing and rationalizing process, on individuals, organizations, and global processes.

The standards First Generation True Believers created were precisely because they wanted to uphold the values of human rights and victims’ rights. In this way, the conflict they face does seem to echo the very long-debated conflict between universalism and cultural relativism. Context specificity and cultural sensitivity are the middle ground TCC and other organizations try to occupy to avoid the imperial tendencies of universal rules. While, TCC members would not have discussed the debate in these terms, at the root of this conflict is the question of whether cultural sensitivity and upholding universal values of human rights can coexist? While I don’t intend or pretend to try to answer this
question, it is important to acknowledge that this organizational problem has roots in a much larger debate.
CHAPTER 5
THE RATIONALIZATION OF TRUTH COMMISSIONS: CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

I. Introduction:
In this dissertation, I have used ethnographic methods to look at a particular organization and group of professionals and examine their role in a larger and more general global process. In this sense, I have tried to connect micro and macro processes. To summarize, I have looked at: 1. The process by which an organization, the TCC, became rationalized; or, more specifically, how the TCC transitioned from a 'culture of charisma' to a bureaucracy; 2. How the rationalization of the TCC, and the particular techniques and strategies that caused and constituted the rationalization, contributed to the creation and diffusion of a standardized truth commission model; 3. The role that TCC professionals played in the rationalization process and, in particular, the way their passionate commitment to the value of redressing human rights violations unintentionally expedited the rationalization process, ironically resulting in the subversion of these very values; and, lastly; 4. How TCC professionals negotiate the shift in organizational culture in relation to their identity and subjective experience.

Although my research provides insight into a specific case, it also has more generalizable, broader theoretical and applied contributions. It attempts to both fill a gap
in the literature concerning global diffusion and global professionals and to provide insight into some of the practical problems faced by organizations, and non-profit and humanitarian organizations in particular, as they grow and expand. Below, I summarize the theoretical and applied implications.

II. Broader Implications

In the past 20 years much scholarship within the social sciences has focused on globalization: the processes that constitute it and the outcomes these processes produce. Within sociology specifically, much has been made of the overarching global culture that’s been created and the increasing homogeneity of our world. The global diffusion of ideas, policies, and practices has thus been a main area of research with particular interest being paid to the increasingly rational character of our world. Within global diffusion studies, professions and professionals play a key role in the diffusion of rationalized structures. However, the literature says little about how formal structures become rationalized or, in other words, the process by which organizations, principles, and practices are rationalized. In addition, the specific, concrete ways that global professionals contribute to and partake in this diffusion is left relatively vague. In other words, that while it is empirically clear that the global diffusion of rationalized structures is well underway, and the literature has been helpful in working out the mechanisms by which this occurs (mimetic, coercive, normative), but it does not do a satisfactory job in fleshing out the organizational dynamics, professional practices, and every day social interaction that constitute these mechanisms.
Thus, in this dissertation, I explored how global rationalization occurs by fleshing out the on-the-ground, micro processes that create and normatively diffuse rationalized structures. I focused on the process not just the outcome. I find that global rationalization often happens unintentionally. More specifically, in exploring the 'how,' I found that while global professionals do play an important role in the rationalization of formal structures and the diffusion of these structures, rationalization is an unintended and, importantly, unwanted consequence of practices that had other objectives. In an attempt to fight decoupling and the loss of their foundational beliefs, objectives, and mission - problems that arise when organizational structures or innovations are globally diffused and adopted, global professionals develop techniques to secure the integrity and maintain the coupling of their principles and practices. However, these techniques ultimately standardize the organization and its work in ways that, ironically, undermine the very mission and objective the professionals are trying to preserve.

The implications of this finding do not just tell us more about the process by which rationalization takes place but also about social action. Much of the literature has focused precisely on the intentionality of the diffusion of particular ideas and practices on the part global professionals. That is, as I have shown, conflict theorists have argued that global professionals self-interestedly and deliberately diffuse these structures in order to raise their professional status and gain power by solidifying a particular understanding of reality. On the opposite end, the other bulk of literature on global professionals argues that rationalization may be unintentional but not as consequence of action aimed at a
different goal but because global professionals are cultural dopes, slavishly following internalized cultural schemas, and spreading norms unconsciously. I find instead that global professionals are not driven by norms or self-interest, as the literature proposes, but rather they are driven by value-rational action; it is precisely because global professionals are so committed to their professional ideals that they work so hard to develop ways for them to be maintained throughout the diffusion process. And yet, it is this very effort that provokes rationalization and the subversion of their ideals.

In this sense, in this dissertation, I also aimed to bring values back into the conversation on action. Or, more specifically, to suggest again, as Weber did, that values can influence action in deliberate and conscious ways - a suggestion that has been out of fashion as of late. I contend that being motivated by values is quite different from being normatively motivated. Thus, I hope that a more refined and nuanced understanding of the distinction between norms and values could be explored in future research in relation to action. I think Weber's typology of social action and the differences he outlines between traditional action and value-rational action serves as a good departure point for thinking through this distinction.

The debate concerning values and action or, more broadly, culture and action is too large to go into here. However, following a few recent works (Vaisey 2008; 2009; Suddaby et al. 2010; Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Kraatz, Ventresca, and Deng, 2010), I argue against the understanding of culture and values that has become dominant since the 'cultural turn' in sociology. That is, since the 'cultural turn,' the primary role of culture and values is understood to be that of justifying or ‘make sense of’ constraints and pressures
imposed by situations, social networks, and institutions. The claim is that internalized values or beliefs do not motivate behavior, as Swidler (2001, 86–87) states: ‘‘values are not the reason why a person develops one strategy of action rather than another.’’ Jason Kaufman (2004, 340), summarizing this view, concludes that cultural values are simply ‘‘rationales for predetermined ends’’ and ‘‘a repertoire [people] use to make sense of their thoughts and actions.’’ While I think culture most likely plays multiple roles in relation action, I do hope that this dissertation has added to the body of work that is reviving the understanding of values as a motivator of action. In this sense, I do not believe that the inability of people to clearly account or justify the motivations governing their actions is an argument against value-rational action. Conversely, I argue in the dissertation that vague and ambiguous articulations concerning why one does what one does demonstrates precisely that one is not following a culture script. Rather, it demonstrates that one is motivated by deeply held values that they consciously choose to let govern their actions even if they can't articulate exactly why.

This argument connects to the last implication regarding Weber's notion of charisma in relation to 'new' professions. In order to understand values as something that can 'call' someone - motivate them towards particular work, practices, and decisions, I suggest for future research that it is beneficial to observe social action within periods of time that are 'unsettled' - periods in which the traditions, rituals, habits, and rote beliefs that normally characterize well established, long standing environments are disrupted. It is in these periods that charisma flourishes and peoples' actions are not constrained by the normative expectations and can thus be guided by their values, ideals, and passions. I
have tried to make clear throughout this dissertation the need to examine 'new'
professions, organizations, or environments and to look at them over time, in order to see
how culture functions and changes as unbridled spirits become rooted, organized, and
most often rationalized.

III. Applied Contributions

I became interested in human rights work and research 15 years ago - I was a
sophomore in college and the millennium was looming. It had already been over 10 years
since the UN had added the "Right to Development" to the International Charter of
Human Rights, declaring that safety, food, and water were an unalienable human right.
The human rights movement was well underway, reframing development, relief, and
post-conflict programs and solidifying an international initiative that would aim to
substantially reduce, if not eradicate, poverty and conflict. Yet, these goals had been far
from met by the time I was a sophomore.

In the 15 years since then, the initiative has continued to fail to meet its objectives,
and throughout these years, as I have continued to research the human rights field as well
as work within it, I have noted a trend in how this failure is staged. Along with others
(Duffield 2001; Nesiah 2001; Slim 1998), I have observed that the failure of human
rights programs is staged, over and over again, as an relentless series of oppositions: Is
humanitarian relief good or bad? Is the human rights paradigm imperialistic or
universally applicable? Should the "developed" countries provide aid or not to
"developing" countries? Should development be impartial or political? While the
questions are important to ponder, they set up the issue as a binary, essentializing the complexity of the situation, and narrowing the options to address it as an either/or, yes/no answer. What is ignored in this staging is the fact that there is no answer to these questions because they are moral dilemmas. Hugo Slim has defined moral dilemmas as "a choice between wrongs...situations in which each possible course of action breeches some otherwise binding moral principle..whatever one does will be wrong and will continue to be troubling rather than liberating (1998: 6)." However, while such dilemmas are inevitable in contexts in which one is present in the worst human tragedies, it should not preclude one from attempting to act ethically. For those who are 'called' to this work, acting responsibility means to find a way to contain in each decision the principle of philanthropy within the specificity of its political application. Yet, instead of recognizing this dilemma and incommensurable position, the knee jerk 'solution' to the 'failure' of human rights is always a series of technical strategies: clarify standards, create best practices, develop metrics, quantify results.

It was this set of binary 'problems' and their technical 'solutions' in which this dissertation departed. I have hoped to demonstrate that rationalizing techniques aren't necessarily the answer to the failures of human rights work and, moreover, they incur consequences that may undermine and obscure the very values and ethical responsibilities that the work is founded upon. Instead of adding to the debate and staging of oppositions, I have focused on the organizational dynamics, subjective experiences, and personal ideals that constitute human rights work and which may, unintentionally, be exacerbating the very issues the initiative is hoping to resolve. In this I wanted to
highlight how fragile values are, how easily they lend to rationalization, and thus to bring awareness to how they might be maintained. I also wanted to complicate, or deconstruct, the binaries and assumptions. I wanted to recognize human rights work for the possibility of both its good and bad potential and, more specifically, it being philanthropic and political, and often imperial, at the same moment. The principles of human rights as altruistic and neutral are constantly being negotiated with ‘the concrete conditions of its implementation, the determined limits of its representation, and the abuses of or inequalities in its application as a result of certain interests, monopolies, or existing hegemonies’ (Edkins 2000: 149). For professionals working within the field, this is the recognition that their job consists of a relentless encountering of moral dilemmas (Slim 1997), but the answer to these dilemmas does not have to be rationalization. In this sense, I hope this research can help organizations think about how they can grow and expand without recourse to rationalizing techniques and how, more generally, the values and ideals of philanthropic initiatives can be institutionalized with alternative techniques. I hope future research will explore these alternatives.

V. Limitations

One limitation of this project is a result of my ‘insider’ role within the TCC. While of course this position provided for many benefits in terms of understanding the TCC, its culture, and the professionals themselves, the generalizations I make regarding global professionals may be biased because the interviews are all from TCC professionals. In this sense, I recognize that cross-organizational comparative work would be fruitful. In
drawing on studies based on other professionals and organizations, I tried to buffer this limitation.

Another limitation of this project is that it explicitly looks at an organization over time and the key finding suggests a change over time, painting a before and after picture, which I attempt to explain. However, as I noted in the introduction, by the time I arrived at the TCC the rationalization process was already underway and the culture of the TCC shifting as a result. Therefore, my description of the TCC "in the beginning" and the culture of charisma that I argue characterized it at that time, is based on the "stories" passed down to us interns about this time period, the narratives about it as told by TCC professionals, and documents describing the organizational structure at that time as opposed to observing it first hand. In this sense, I have reconstructed this time based on this form of data but I did not get to fully observe it, although I observed remnants. Therefore, it is possible that the picture I draw of this time period is not completely accurate or is biased. However, once again, the "newness" of this profession helped lend to very fresh memory and reflection.

Lastly, although this dissertation is not a cross-cultural comparative work, interviewees came from a number of different countries. Such research always runs the risk of glossing over cultural specificity and difference in order to find trends and commonalities. Close and faithful adherence to the data, as is mandated by grounded theory, helped to work against this limitation and to highlight differences and particularities that needed to be recognized and honored. In a similar vein, issues of equivalence also raise some limitations within the project. More specifically, contextual
and conceptual equivalence all play a significant role in historical research that is culturally diverse even if not comparative, in which differences in language, social norms and roles, and ideas between different cultures, nations, and regions must be taken seriously in order to derive theoretical conclusions that have meaning cross-culturally.

The limitations noted here make clear that it is important to maintain the understanding that the goal of the research is to shed light on, and begin to understand, how truth commissions became rationalized and the role TCC professionals played in this process - not to provide a definitive answer that will hold impeccably across all time and contexts. The research thus aimed to look for trends in relation to how humanitarian initiatives operate to produce particular meanings and practices that legitimate particular institutions and social arrangements in order to point to future research directions in relation to humanitarian organizing.
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EDUCATION

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PUBLICATIONS


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


2013. “Bringing Values Back to Global Professions: Truth Commissions Professionals as True Believers” Boston University International Relations Annual Meeting in Boston, MA


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