

Dynastic Cycle: A Resource Allocation Theme For Addressing Dissent In Universities

Abstract

This paper will utilize the dynastic cycle, known as Farmers, Bandits, Soldiers, resource allocation structure in political economies, markets, and firms (K. Saeed & Pavlov, 2008) to represent the organizational composition, and the dissent expression framework (Kassing, 2011) to construct a generic model for dissent in organizations and universities in particular. The work is rooted in the literature of organizational communication, research and development, and higher education management. It attempts to illustrate the dynamic interaction of the organizational climate with the organization composition and performance to understand how organizations would evolve over time from the dissent perspective using system dynamics methodology. Attention is given to growth and capabilities change in the organization. It provides a platform for experimentation with different policy scenarios. It suggests that as universities attempt to improve their performance through growth, even with high tolerance to dissent, they could evolve into a low performance institutions characterized by low management responsiveness and low organizational productivity and dominated by control and silence climates despite initial short term performance improvements. This behavior could change into a more favorable state when the organization invests into cultivating a dissent aware climate, and into improving its dissent processing capability and its members productivity.

Keywords : *organizational behavior, organizational communication, voice, silence, collegial systems, higher education management, research and development, system dynamics, computer simulation, , governance.*

Introduction

Management tolerance towards dissent affects their organizational composition, climate, and performance. This can be explored by looking into the dynamic interactions between management capability to handle dissent, organizational composition, the manifestation of different dissent expression mechanisms, and the organizational performance. The impact of organizational growth on its climate and performance over time from the dissent expression and handling capability perspective will be also looked at. The change of the volume of voice expression and the perception of voice climate over time were described as areas worthy of research (Cooper & Burke, 2013). Kassing (2011) also pointed out to the accumulation of unprocessed dissent as an unexplored area in the organizational communication field. Both issues and their influence on the dynamic interactions within the organization will be investigated in this paper. System dynamics methodology excels at unraveling the role of accumulation process and the role of inflows and outflows (Perlow & Repenning, 2009) which distinguishes the contribution of this research. The research aspires to contribute to the body of knowledge of the organizational behavior in general and the dissent literature in particular by constructing

a generic dynamic framework using both the dynastic cycle generic structure (K. Saeed & Pavlov, 2008) and the dissent expression mechanisms framework (Kassing, 2011) to show the causal relationships between the dissenters, administrators, the dissent mechanisms, and the consequence of all that on the organizational performance in the higher education context. The core structure could in the future include other envisioned influences that might add to the richness of the issue.

In the following sections the dissent expression mechanisms will be introduced followed by a brief introduction of the dynastic cycle microstructure. Then a dynamic hypothesis that relates both will be suggested. Then the case for the dissent in the university context will be presented followed by the model construction and policy experiments, and conclusion.

Dissent expression mechanisms in Organizations

Dissent is ubiquitous in organizations (Kassing, 1997). It encompasses any form of expressing discontent with management constraints or expectations that are not met (Kassing, 2011) or simply surfacing differences in opinion, perceptions, goals, and beliefs about certain issues in the organization (Perlow & Repenning, 2009). It often comes to challenge the status quo (Garner, 2013). It is an important factor for the growth of both the individual, the organization and it can ensure sound decisions leading to improved decision quality (Perlow & Repenning, 2009) and innovation by giving an opportunity to honest and contemplative consideration for alternative viewpoints (Rachal, 2011). It is often times expressed by those who will implement the decisions (Garner, 2013). This social phenomena is not limited to the corporate world but extends to government agencies, non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, schools, and universities (Cooper & Burke, 2013). Lack of dissent in the organization could spread groupthink behavior which may well lead to disastrous accidents like the Challenger space shuttle explosion in 1986 (Elmes & Gemmill, 1990).

Limiting dissent to conflict or adversarial actions like whistleblowing, and simultaneously linking it to organizational inefficiency (Landier, Sraer, & Thesmar, 2009) created a negative management attitude towards it that deprived organizations from its vital benefits. Dissent can take place within the organization or outside its borders and can be expressed in three forms; Upward dissent, Latent dissent, and Displaced dissent. Upward dissent is articulated and expressed directly to management when it is expected to be viewed as constructive. Latent dissent is antagonistic in nature and is expressed to coworkers inside the workplace to minimize the risk of punishment or embarrassment. It is very likely that when an employee is rejected by others would withhold to their ideas (Garner, 2013) or engage in latent dissent. Displaced dissent, on the other hand, is expressed outside the workplace when it is expected to be viewed as adversarial action that may results in retaliation to the employee. (Kassing, 2011)

Empirical research data suggests that the presence of a dissent welcoming environment in the organization promotes pro-social forms of expressing upward dissent. However,

delays in management response could lead to repetition of dissent which might be faced by negligence or suppression. Retaliation causes fear and when people are afraid to talk, management assumes that everything is fine and any dissent will be viewed as resistance that needs to be suppressed promptly. This rigidity can grow and become a norm with more interactions to establish a culture that ousts dissent even more. Unfair management treatment was also correlated with the threat to exist the organization. Both the unfair management treatment and response delay could lead to circumvention of chain of command which might finally lead to displaced dissent. (Kassing & Kava, 2013)

Part of management actions is the urge to control and fight dissent in a dissent intolerant administrations by allocating more resources for control activities. This view is inspired by the work of Saeed (1990) about authoritative governments allocating more resources to control while affecting peoples civil rights resulting in censure, more governmental control to silence dissent and fight insurgency leading to performance decline in the economic development regardless of the government commitment to that agenda.

Organizational climate represents here the attitude towards dissent by the management and also the organizational members' perception of management tolerance and responsiveness towards dissent. Receptiveness to dissent, in a school environment for instance, was reported to enhance school climate and teacher morale while creating opportunities for school administrators to monitor decisions, adjust strategic planning initiatives, and redirect ineffective practices (Burns & Wagner, 2013).

Dynastic Cycle generic structure

Saeed and Pavlov (2008) suggested a metaphorical model that is claimed to fit a wide range of resource allocation problems characterized by the competition on a limited resource. The competing populations are the Farmers who represent production in a society or a firm, the Soldiers who exercise control like government or administration by the same previous analogy, and the Bandits represent looting or forbidden production in a society and those who sabotage the firm by exploiting its members, customers or stakeholders. Figure 1 delineates the generic feedback structure of the model where the (+) sign means an increase in a variable leads to an increase in the linked variable and vice versa, and the (-) sign means an increase in one variable leads to a decrease in the linked variable and vice versa.

The limited resource here is the Land where farmers grow their produce and earn their income according to their productivity. Tax is collected from the farmers' disposable income to support soldiers. Bandits appropriations also deduct from the farmers' income. Depending on the relative income per farmer to the income per bandit, either farmers move into banditry to improve their income or bandits become farmers if the income from farming is higher than theirs. Soldiers enforce state control and their numbers grow depending on the threat of the society but limited by the collected taxes and the cost of hiring soldiers. State control serves the purpose of deterring farmers from becoming bandits and encourages bandits to become farmers. No bandits can leave banditry to

become soldiers. The model assumes that soldiers and bandits both come from the farmers population and vice versa. However, there are also external sources to recruit farmers, soldiers, and bandits.

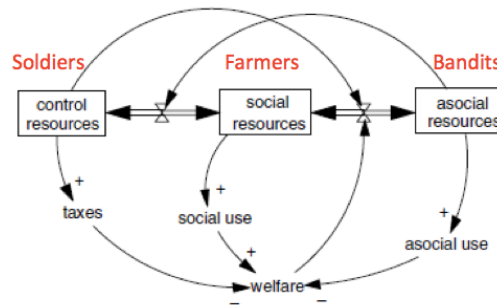


Figure 1: Generic resource allocation microstructure source: (K. Saeed & Pavlov, 2008)

They suggest two performance indices for the society; freedoms and economic legitimacy. The relative political powers of the three populations determine levels of freedom whereas the relative incomes of farmers and bandits define economic legitimacy.

They represent these indices in a state space diagram made of four quadrants (

Figure 2) to help in classifying the state of a society and describes its evolutionary path from one state to another.

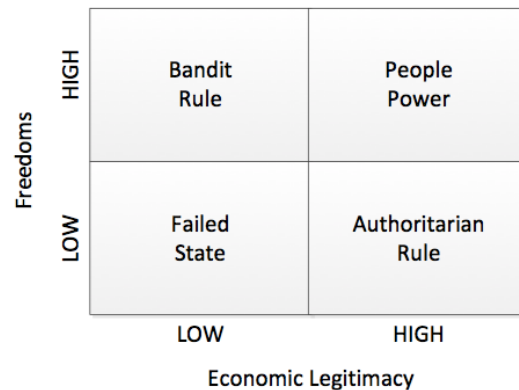


Figure 2: State space representation for the performance indices in a political system, source: (Kahlid Saeed, Pavlov, Skorinko, & Smith, 2014).

For more details, the paper (K. Saeed & Pavlov, 2008) offers a through description of the relationships between each population and the factors affecting its growth and decline. Next, both the dissent expression mechanisms and the dynastic microstructure will be combined in a dynamic hypothesis explaining their interactions.

Dynastic Cycle structure and dissent expression combined framework

Formulating an aggregate hypothesis for the issue came after exploring several seminal works in different domains. The work of Saeed and Pavlov (2008) on dynastic cycles is thought to provide a suitable core module for the organizational composition (Farmers, Bandits, Soldiers “FBS”). The work of Kassing (1997) and (2011) provides the framework for dissent expression mechanisms. Our focus remains within the organizational boundaries which means the organizational members remain within the organization and they are only assumed to make status changes between the populations. We will borrow the metaphor for farmers, bandits, soldiers (FBS) and use it to identify the main actors in the organization who either exercise dissent or are influenced by dissent.

The above provided the basic elements needed to formulate an aggregate level dynamic hypothesis for addressing dissent in organizations as shown in Figure 3.

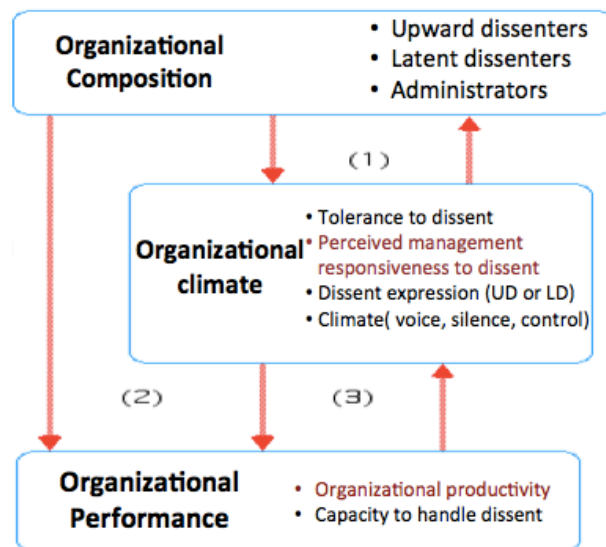


Figure 3 : Aggregate dynamic hypothesis of dissent in organizations

The hypothesis suggests that the composition of members in an organization is one of the major elements that forms its climate while climate influences the composition of the organization in terms of which group tends to be dominant (loop 1). Organizational climate here includes how the organization expresses dissent, handles it, the prevailing climate, and the perceptions of its members towards management responsiveness towards dissent. Performance is what the organization is established to accomplish and it is a resultant of the organizational composition which influences the capacity of the organization to handle dissent and come up with tangible actions the members can witness. This in turn influences the climate and accordingly the composition of the organization (loop 2). The manifestation of dissent and how much is actually processed influences the overall performance. Organizational climate (voice, silence, control) impacts performance positively or negatively and in return performance influences how

the members (especially the management) internalize and prioritize their value system in the organization by periodically evaluating the return of their dissent tolerant policies on the productive output of the members (loop 3). For example if the management did not find a return form accepting and acting on dissent, it could simply dismiss it or accept it then ignore it so employees suggestions could either end in the office shredders bins (dismissed dissent) or remain shelved (ignored) to occupy the office shelves. This attitude typically starts at the top management level and trickles down through the whole organization to shape its culture.

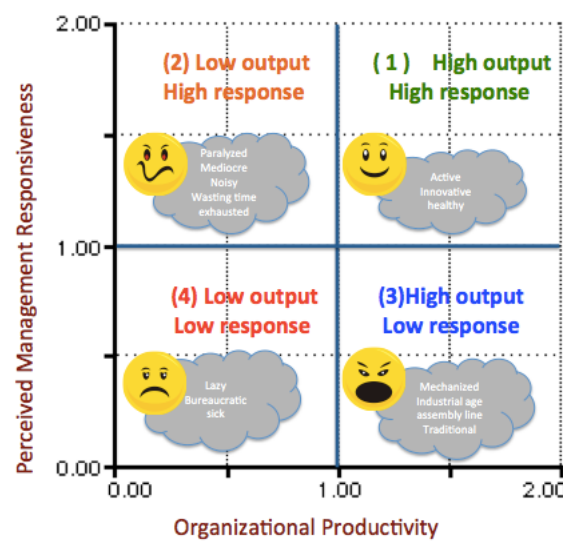


Figure 4: State space representation for the performance indices in an organization.

We similarly introduce two indicators for the organizational dissent and performance. They are ; the perceived management responsiveness to dissent to asses the organizational tolerance and efficiency in handling it. The second is the organizational productivity that monitors the return on management processing of dissent as a productive output. The detailed definition for these two indices will be introduced when we discuss the model construction. They are presented in a state space diagram that has 4 quadrants. Quadrant 1 is for high organizational productivity and high management responsiveness to dissent. An organization in that quadrant might be described as active, healthy or innovative. The second quadrant with low productivity and high responsiveness may describe a paralyzed or trapped organization in too much dissent without return. Quadrant 3 with high productivity and low responsiveness is close to an industrial age, machine like, organization where attention is geared towards outcomes only. Quadrant 4 is a low output and low responsiveness which could be described as highly dysfunctional bureaucracy lacking initiatives and response.

In the next section, an overview from the literature for the dissent in universities will be introduced focusing on faculty governance, the evolution of the faculty and administration relationship, and the performance measures of both the faculty and the

university and how this hypothesis could relate to a university context.

Dissent in universities

Dissent is not uncommon in the western academic life. Its roots stem from faculty academic freedom. Freedom to think, inquire, express views, and control over their own time. It is a right that faculty struggled to earn and continue to protect over the years. It is very much in need where academics could have very strong views that often times contradict with their fellow scholars (Bok, 2013) or the predominant beliefs and norms in the society at large. Compromise on academic freedom turned universities to caricatures in many parts of the world (Rosovsky, 1990). Tenure is the mechanism that helps faculty exercise this right and protects them from external pressures. As Henry Rosovsky, dean of the faculty of arts and sciences at Harvard, puts it; the “two crown jewels possessed by any tenured professor at a top school : independence and security” [(1990), 179] . Both tenure and freedom enhanced faculty independence (Hodgkinson & Meeth, 1976). Absence of tenure would in the long run deteriorate the quality of faculty, the foundation of university life (Rosovsky, 1990).

Faculty Governance

Faculty governance in the non-profit universities is the formal channel for expressing upward dissent where faculty shares in governing their academic institutions. Shared governance is “a collaborative process that includes the input of an independent board, an administration that leads through delegated authority, and an engaged faculty” (Legon, Lombardi, & Rhoades, 2013). Good governance does not come from conformists unwilling to debate, offer different ideas, or dissent which provides collegial checks and balances to the university governance (Legon et al., 2013). Typically, faculty governance’s area of influence may include curriculum design, academic programs creation, faculty appointments, and no confidence votes (Ginsberg, 2011). In addition, they also have a stake in decisions that affect the academic content and the needed facilities for delivering quality education. The faculty hold the greatest power in research universities where the reputation and the quality of the institution depend on the distinction of its professors. This authority is slightly overseen by the administration including the president, the provost and the deans (Bok, 2013).

Although past university presidents committed to shared governance often complain about the delays and lost opportunities by having to consult with faculty committees to reach a consensus, shared participation of the faculty and academic leaders can improve university governance rather than impede it. It can also raise morale and help mobilize support for the programs despite the time and effort taken in the debate and the deliberation processes. For example, it took around 5 years of deliberation to approve the changes in Harvard’s undergraduate program initiated by Henry Rosovsky in 1973. However, it took only two years afterward to generate almost 100 courses which were newly prepared or completely overhauled enthusiastically by the faculty which increased the enrollment by 50% than the required number. The process got the faculty involved

and they gradually came to feel that the curriculum was their curriculum, which they had played a large part in making, rather than “the product of a small blue-ribbon committee to which they had dutifully given their assent”. This doesn’t mean that mistakes are totally eliminated but they are less likely to happen when the decision makers are willing to listen to the people with interest and experience in the subject matter to improve the outcome. In fact, it is the unilateral decisions by the administrators that resulted disastrous outcomes like athletics scandals or failed expensive ventures. (Bok, 2013)

Shared governance is a major factor in explaining the high quality of the American university as it permits leadership to be effective and at the same time makes the implementation of new ideas possible. (Rosovsky, 1990)

It might be necessary to look into how governance and the exercise of academic freedom and their implications on the relationship with the university administration has evolved over time.

Faculty and administration roles and relationship change over time

Professors, by training, advocate their ideas vocally and passionately which can easily reach a boiling point [(Rosovsky, 1990), 180]. Despite the tension-by-design between faculty and administration and their continued questioning for the need for the administration function altogether, it is not uncommon to have world renowned tenured professors occupying top administrative positions in their respective institutions. The two famed physicists, Robert Oppenheimer and Oswald Veblen, are just two examples of many scientists who lead prominent research institutions like the institute of advanced study (Jain, Triandis, & Weick, 2010). Some worked hard to preserve freedom on campus, as in the case of Harvard university president Derek Bok, who did not succumb to pressure to impose a code of speech tighter than the first amendment as has been done in other universities (Christensen & Eyring, 2011).

With the change in the economic landscape and the decline of public funding, calls to dismantle the collegial control of the university administration that made the university less manageable and replace it with strong, corporate like administration were on the rise (Mills, 2012). Contrary to the view that universities cannot be run by cost accountants or as a commercial enterprise responding only to changing markets (Rosovsky, 1990), focus on growth and marketization have lead the boards to search and appoint presidents from the business world with great fund raising capabilities and with little or no prior academic background (Bok, 2013).

Professional managers accustomed to efficiency, hierarchy, and high and immediate return on investment norms (Mills, 2012) did not feel comfortable being dragged in seemingly never ending discussions and deliberations in the decision making process which lead them to make many unilateral decision resulting in their failure to gain the faculty trust (Bok, 2013). Faced with tough competition and difficult economic times, they want also to grow the revenues and cut costs to be able to stay a float. With more focus on growth, financial health, and rankings, emphasis became on tangible

objectives and performance measures like fund raising and the ability to attract more research grants compared to the more subtle and harder to measure indicators like the education quality. This trend was reinforced by the outside environment's focus on ranking and accreditation which did not prove to have a link to the quality of education. Such measures would obsess administrators when their performance would be judged by them. They could do unethical moves to fit the criteria (Bok, 2013). A recent scandal that leaked to the media when a faculty member discovered a tampering in the records of the incoming students that boosted their GPA's and test scores and a high rank administrator admitted the wrong doing which was done to improve the college ranking (Shumski, 2014).

Administrators started shaping their universities to be similar to their business organizations. Tasks were divided and assigned to different people to help them focus and be more efficient at tackling the issues at hand. This has led to the creation of new administrative positions with different levels of power and authority. Initially, some of their positions were filled by faculty but slowly drifted towards more full time administrators as faculty have the tendency to avoid too much administrative work, which started to escalate, and would rather retreat to their academic havens doing what they love to do; teaching, advising, and conducting research. Hierarchy grew and grew with it the number of administrative staff and the organizations got more complex with many levels of hierarchy and reporting relationships. More and more tenure faculty remain in their academic sphere and more and more of their part time administrative duties were shifted to the professional managers (Ginsberg, 2011). A recent study found that administrative headcount growth in New England colleges reached a maximum of 900% whereas top universities like Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard either put tough controls to curtail that growth (Marcus, 2013).

Cost cutting measures were enforced by filling more faculty positions by non tenure track faculty mainly comprised of part time or full time teaching faculty hired with annual contracts or on an on demand basis. Full time tenure track faculty constitute no more than 30% of the faculty compared to 67% in the 1970's (Mills, 2012). They typically receive neither the same pay, compensation, nor the voice rights compared to their tenure or tenure track counterparts. They may not have the same personal stake in the institution or the same concern in shaping its educational program or policies since they are often times either teaching courses at other institutions or busy doing day jobs. This shift is feared to degrade academic values to such a level that might impede the functions of the university. (Bok, 2013)

Recently, new issues with respect to freedom of expression are being experienced on campuses and started showing up in the media. For example, the university of Kansas new social media policy gives the administration the power to fire faculty or staff who improperly use social media in a way that is contrary to the best interests of the university. This change was triggered by an anti National Rifle Association tweet which got the faculty to call for a repeal as this move might be just the first step to stifle faculties freedom of speech which might be followed by a series of actions (Rothschild, 2013) indicating how universities might surrender to the pressures of donors, corporate

partners, political entities, and external performance measures leading to gradual academic values over time (Bok, 2013; Rothschild, 2013).

Faculty governance had also its share of issues with regard to dissent expression. Faculty governance, over the years, developed its own hierarchy that became, especially at the top, more aligned with the administration which reduced collegiality by limiting the membership of faculty with dissent voices (Hodgkinson & Meeth, 1976) and accepting more moderate and politically correct voices. To some extent, it became the formal channel for communication through layers of committees dealing, most of the time, with trivial issues and giving less attention to issues related to the direction of the institution. Hence, respected faculty with bold views and deep concern about important issues became less interested to join. This view was corroborated with a recent survey for the rank-and-file professors and found that the faculty have limited influence in campus issues which reflects either communication issues or lack of interest (Bok, 2013). In both cases, this could be interpreted as a decline of upward dissent and a rise of latent dissent.

With strong administration acting at its own well, a dysfunctional faculty governance, and silent faculty, the performance might then suffer. But how performance is defined and measured in the university context? This is the topic for the next section.

Faculty and university performance

University faculty teach, conduct research, publish papers, advice students, write research grants and student recommendations, serve on university committees host visitors, and respond to inquiries (Jain et al., 2010). Their activities, as cosmopolitans (Gouldner, 1957, 1958), extend beyond the boundaries of their local organizations to reach their academic community. They participate in conferences and colloquia, set on journals editorial boards, or occupy leadership positions in their respective field societies. When evaluating their output both quantity and quality come into the picture to determine the effectiveness of the organization. Quantity refers to the number of reports, publications, or new products while quality of the work refers to the number of patents obtained, number of times publications of faculty members are quoted, or number of refereed publications per members. Other measures could relate to the size like obtaining more research funds. Feeling the pride by being a part of the institution is another measure. Direct profits or return on investment from implementation of research products are other factors too (Jain et al., 2010).

It is perhaps also necessary to review few organizational output measures for research and development organizations of which universities are a subset. These measures are eloquently presented by Jain et al. (2010). Output measures could be associated with (1) *process measures*, (2) *results measures*, or (3) *strategic indicators*. *Results measures* are related to the activities carried out by the institution like the number of assistance provided to other department or to outside organizations, or the number of responses to enquires from external scientific or internal departments. It also could include the number of visitors to the institution and the number of administrative types of actions handled. *Results measures* refers to tangible, measurable outputs expressed in terms of the

organization goals and objectives which would include number of published technical reports, published refereed papers, generated patents, developed and commercialized innovations, and obtained external grants. *Strategic indicators* are related to the long term performance and would include the reputation, ability to attract to quality faculty, students, funding, and the job satisfaction of all the members.

The criteria for university output measures seem to be influenced by external entities including ranking publications and accreditation boards which tend to give more focus on short term *results measures* rather than *process or strategic* long term indicators. Such focus would define organizational productivity as the ratio of output to input (Jain et al., 2010) over a short period of time where inputs can be determined by the allocated resources including the effort invested in processing dissent. Failure to reach high ratio would influence the operating policies of the organization which on the long term could influence its climate as described earlier in the hypothesis.

At the faculty level, they are typically evaluated for four categories namely; *teaching, research, impact, and service*. The teaching category would include students' input, syllabi, and written textbooks. Research would cover current problems, the progress, and finished or in progress papers. Impact may comprise reviewers comments, citation of publications, and invitations for major lectures or conferences. Service includes membership on journal editorial boards, national or international committees, and university committees. It is also important to realize that faculty have goals that go beyond the boundaries of the institution extending to their academic community at large. They tend to measure their performance against the professional standards of their scientific community. Accordingly, it becomes difficult to evaluate their performance based on solely internal standards. (Jain et al., 2010)

Faculty members, in principle, are free to utilize their time as guaranteed by the values of academic freedom. Their inquiry is supposed to be driven by curiosity not just be mere economic value. This is not necessarily the case nowadays. Caltech is an illustrative example for few universities resisting governments and funders pressure to place more emphasis on the application of research for tangible economic impact, at the expense of fundamental, curiosity-driven exploration (Baty, 2014).

With many universities designing clear-cut, results focused, performance measures for faculty performance that stem from criteria set for the institution performance, different perceptions about the faculty performance as viewed by the faculty themselves and the administration could evolve which result in tension between them. Nonetheless, distinguished universities like Caltech did not succumb to such measures like the number of published papers or the numbers in citation indices and went beyond that to look for what is new and different. Paying less attention to external judgment takes a certain level of self confidence (Baty, 2014).

As shown before, output can also be subjective or objective, qualitative or quantitative and could include a measure for quality. Although quality might need and extra effort but human judgment in this area should not be ignored. In R&D organizations and

universities in particular, due to their multiple objectives, their outputs are typically subjective and qualitative where the units of measure resist accurate comparison between different outputs. Therefore, combining a suite of multidimensional indicators into an aggregate would create general trends and patterns for both the individual and organizational output measures (Jain et al., 2010). Therefore, we will adapt an aggregate parameter for faculty productivity as judged by the administration who have direct influence of the organizational policies.

In the next section, we will unfold the model structure that combines the dynastic cycle and dissent expression framework in the university context, explain the causal relationships, show the driving factors and their mathematical formulations, and select the organizational performance indicators that would help us draw some insights from the modeling effort.

A model for dissent in universities utilizing the combined Dynastic Cycle structure and dissent expression framework

With the clear distinction between the administrative and academic roles, and the pressure to establish tangible, short term results focused performance measures for both the faculty and the university performance as described earlier, the structure for Farmers, Bandits, Soldiers shown in Figure 5 becomes more relevant for representing the organizational composition of a generic academic institution. Instead, we will designate a new terminology here. Admins represent administrators, and Upward Dissenters (UD) or Latent Dissenters (LD) represent the faculty. Upward dissenters can become latent dissenters and vice versa. At the same time, upward dissenters can also become administrators and vice versa. The flow between these different states and the impact of the composition on dissent expression and performance will follow.

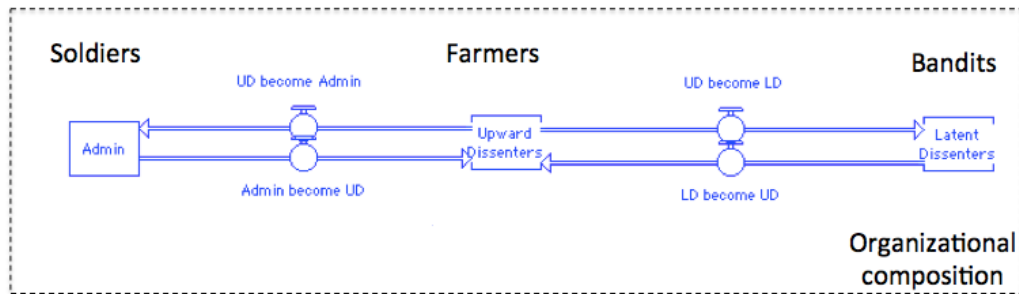


Figure 5: Organizational composition representation analogous to the FBS structure

As mentioned earlier, our focus remains within the organizational boundaries so the organizational members remain within the organization and they are only assumed to make status changes. Including the possibility of exiting the organization is not modeled here as it calls for adding displaced dissent or whistleblowing which brings issues like loyalty (Hirschman, 1970) that adds more complexity to the problem in hand but could be

addressed in future work.

It is important to consider how the composition of the organizational members affects the climate of the organization which reflects back on the composition as shown by loop 1 in Figure 3. The ratio of upward dissenters to the admins and latent dissenters is an indicator for the voice climate. The ratio of admins to the upward and the latent dissenters is an indicator for a control climate. The ratio of the latent dissenters to the admins and the upper dissenters is an indicator of a silence climate. This construct goes along the same line of thinking of Saeed (2008) and Pavlov in representing freedoms, threat to society, and state control. Climate indicators influence the change in status between the three categories shown in Figure 6. To explain their influence on each population, one needs to understand their impact on performance first.

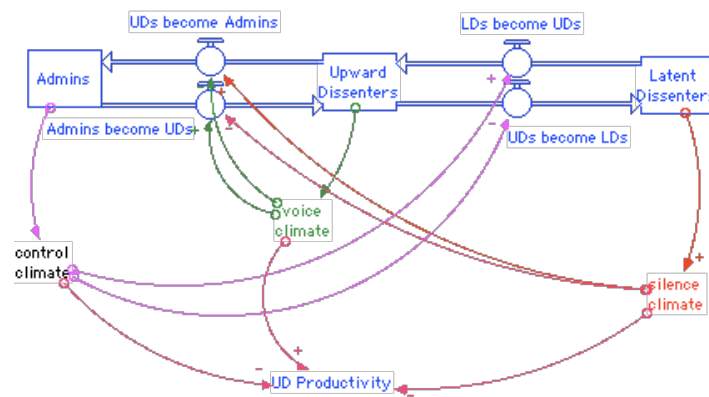


Figure 6: organizational climate and its impact on organizational composition and performance

In a university context, faculty members are the productive work force fulfilling its mission “education and research”. Through their multitude of engagements they are expected to voice their opinions either formally in faculty governance committees or informally by communicating directly with department heads, deans, and other administrators in the echelon. They exercise upward dissent which increases the stock of upward dissent (Figure 7). They represent the voice climate in the organization that enhances productivity (Kassing, 2011) and makes the voice climate a standard norm. Voice climate associated with collegiality through power sharing does not call for larger administration (Figure 6). Non tenure track faculty, on the other hand, are expected to focus on doing their jobs; mostly teaching and advising. Dissent is not in the cards, however, they might as well voice their discontent to their peers which may or may not reach to the executive ears for processing. They could be inclined towards expressing latent dissent leading the rise of stock of latent dissent (Figure 7) and the silence climate which, in general, contributes negatively to productivity (Figure 6) through distractions and waste of time (Senor & Singer, 2011).

Administrators actively monitor the performance of the institution through many dashboard indicators and actively controlling resources to meet the institution’s aspired goals. While attempting to improve their institutions’ performance through growth or

compliance to external, many activities are generated that requires more administrators and the relative rise of control climate. For example, the quest for obtaining programs accreditation have lead to the need for more time and effort devoted to comply with the requirements of the accreditation boards. This could result in occupying faculty time with more administrative tasks thus distracting them from performing their main mission (see reduction in productivity, Figure 6) , or offering the faculty more supervisory roles leading to more hierarchical layers (UD become admins flow in Figure 6). Another approach is to hire more professional administrators from the business world. Administration growth could lead to a rise in the control climate and the organizational complexity which overburdens the organization with more administrative tasks (Baty, 2014).

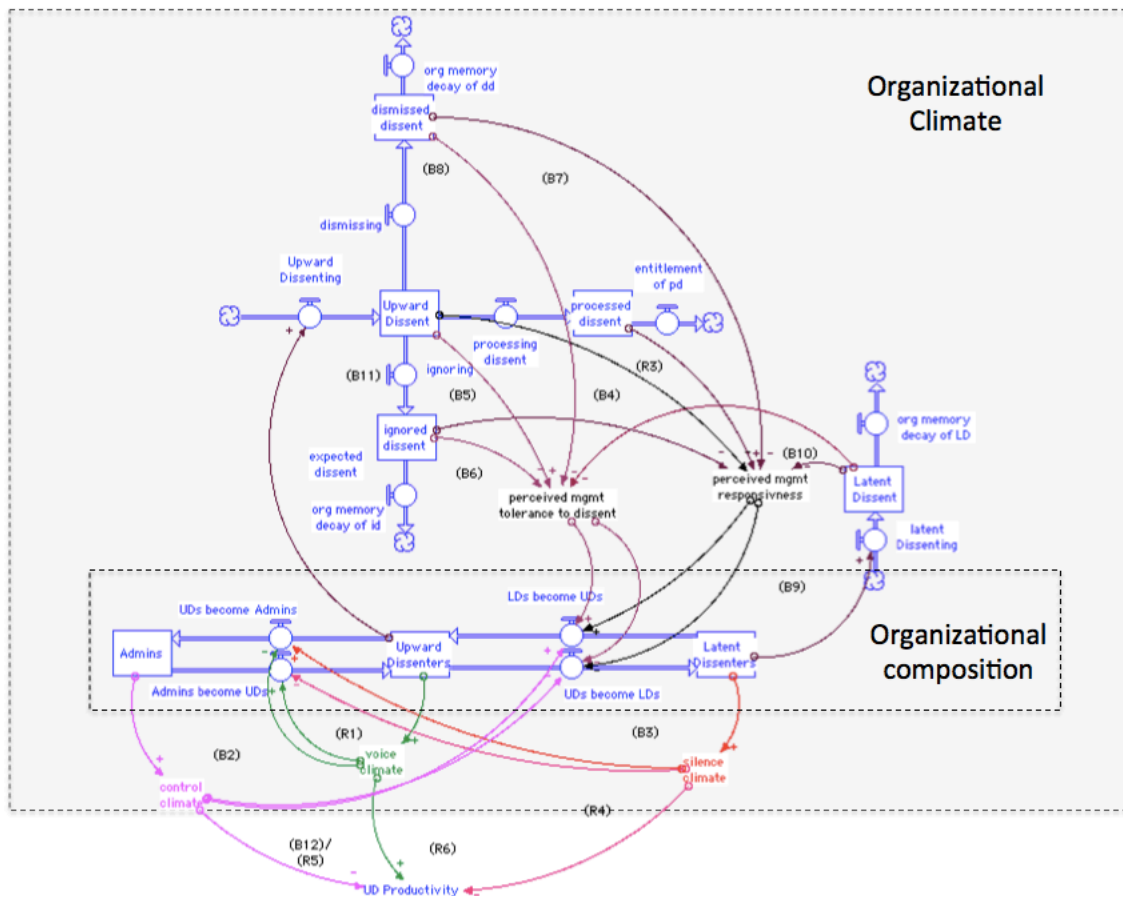


Figure 7: organizational composition influence on organizational climate through dissent expression and how it influences the composition back

To elaborate further, detailed performance measures as defined by the best practice standards implemented by the administrators for faculty performance and the organizational performance as a whole would call for more stringent control that need to be administered by departments heads and deans. As the load on department heads and deans increases, more assistant positions would be created through the initiation of academic leadership programs that could cut from the faculty teaching and research time

by as high as 25%¹. The advantage of such initiatives, though, is creating leadership from within. On the other hands, it shows where the institution focus is as a result of the growth attitude. On the ground, this is decline in the voice climate because it was found that people who go into higher positions of power are less inclined to dissent (Cooper & Burke, 2013) and become more aligned to the administration views (Hodgkinson & Meeth, 1976). It is worth noting that world renowned research universities like Caltech that remained on the top of its game for years thinks that remaining small with flat and flexible management system has enabled it to be fast and responsive to innovative initiatives as any administrator can be reached with a phone call (Baty, 2014). It values this characteristic as its most competitive advantage among its rivals like Harvard. Small size reduces complexity and helps avoid administration growth and the resulting bureaucracy. Caltech even boast that its administrators remain active researchers to keep getting the respect from their peers and loading them with more administrative tasks would just divert their attention from their main mission, the promotion of outstanding education and research.

Administrators growth, the division of tasks, and exercise of control would , to a certain degree, help administrators allocate more resources and device means to meet with the faculty and attend to their views which may encourage them to speak up and participate (Jain et al., 2010) (latent dissenters become upward dissenters, Figure 6) to improve decision quality (Bok, 2013). This could, over time, lead to a decline in silence climate and a growth in voice climate and hence productivity. This view is corroborated by an empirical study for 1300 scientists in different research organizations including 7 major university departments, where it was found that the most effective scientists are those who pursued their own ideas, valued their freedom, and influenced decision makers (Jain et al., 2010).

Administrators can pursue a host of formal or informal dissent encouragement programs (Kassing, 2011, p. 189) to help latent dissenters become upward dissenters. They can directly consult with their organizational members (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014) or go and hold town hall meeting, roundtable discussions, create focus groups, to solicit feedback about different topics (Burns & Wagner, 2013). The efficacy of such programs depends highly on the administration consistency to protect the safety and confidentiality of the employees (Kassing, 2011, p. 190). Such approaches consume time and resources. There exist other approaches to know what the organizational members are thinking about and not sharing with the administration. Some are ethical like online discussion forums, moderated or not moderated that allow faculty to raise and talk about sensitive issues but they falter when they perceived as censored platforms even if they are intended to avoid hate speeches or eruption of uncontrolled conflict (Postma & Blignaut, 2013). Unethical interventions, like invading the privacy through monitoring

¹ Academic leadership programs in some universities provide a mechanism for members of the faculty to serve in supportive roles to the deans as assistant or associate deans on a part time basis. Academic year appointments may require up to 25% time commitment, and are renewable based on need and performance.

emails or wire tapping employee conversations. At any case, it will consume time and effort from those responsible to develop, implement, operate, and maintain information technology systems in the organization. Their effort may better be utilized in a more productive manner to further other overlooked causes like building and maintaining high instructional platforms, knowledge sharing systems or the like.

There are two major factors also control the organizational composition and in particular the shift of latent dissenters to become upward dissenters. They are the *perceived management tolerance to dissent* and the *perceived management responsiveness* shown in Figure 7. High management tolerance and responsiveness encourage latent dissenters to go public and low management tolerance and responsiveness to dissent forces people out of fear or cynicism to go behind doors. To define them, we need to go through the life cycle of dissent. Figure 7 shows that upward dissent expressed vocally by upward dissenters while latent dissent is expressed by latent dissenters. Management response to upward dissent expression, may include processing it effectively by, for instance, engaging in dialogue or revising policies and procedures creating what could be termed as processed dissent. They might as well consider dissent as a low priority issue and ignore it resulting in a stock of ignored dissent. They could also just dismiss it all together creating a stock of dismissed dissent. Dismissal of dissent could be for the content or the people as in the case of a manager replying to a suggestion of a faculty member by saying : “Who are you any way? “ (Örtenblad & Koris, 2014).

Some organizations have long memories especially when the turnover is low (Perlow & Repenning, 2009) like the case of tenure faculty in universities. Organizational members, most likely excluding the administration, would keep track of all the dissent in the organization be it upward, dismissed, ignored, and even the latent dissent leading to what Perlow and Repenning (2009) call high “issue permanence” that increases dysfunctional silence . The ratio of upward dissent to the ignored, dismissed, and latent dissent creates the perceived management tolerance to dissent. Its low value indicates more ignored, dismissed, and latent dissent and drives upward dissenters to become latent dissenters as shown in Figure 7. Management view to their tolerance to dissent considers only what they received and dismissed but not what they ignored or what goes behind doors.

The second factor is the *perception of management responsiveness to dissent* which comes from comparing processed dissent to the upward, dismissed, ignored, and the latent dissent. This could used be an indicator of the organizational performance with respect to dissent acceptance and processing as can be seen in the equations below.

$$pcvd \text{ management responsiveness} = \frac{\text{processed dissent}}{(\text{upward dissent} + \text{ignored dissent} + \text{dismissed dissent} + \text{latent dissent})}$$

Higher levels of processed dissent when compared to the total dissent perceived by the employees improves perceived management responsiveness. However, processed dissent stock decays over time since it is considered as a sort of entitlement. For example when the faculty negotiate a better healthcare plan and the administration approves it, it is considered as a processed dissent but over time it becomes as an earned right that is

rarely recognized by the new faculty as management responsiveness to dissent. Part of the challenge to improve the perceived management responsiveness is the fact that processing dissent takes time and patience (Kassing, 1997) and not every organization is willing to pay. Few organizations recognize the impact of responsiveness to dissent on their organizations by replying to any sort of voice action in a maximum of 10 days (Ferguson & Sypher, 1998, p. 259).

Perceived management responsiveness, therefore, indicates whether the organizations is just open for talk or willing to walk the talk. For example, in the presence of open communication channels (high perceived management tolerance to dissent) while major decisions concerning the faculty well being or the direction of the institution continue to be made without their consultation or if their concerns were not respectfully addressed, some faculty will remain quite and more faculty might disengage and join the latent dissenters leaving the floor for administrators to act unilaterally. This could weaken the commitment and productivity of the faculty as they might either engage in peer to peer cynical conversations or direct their creative energy towards job hunting which would ultimately impact both the short term and long term performance of the institution.

Management might see things differently though as they judge their responsiveness by how much they processed with respect to how much dissent they received only. It is interesting to know that a recent survey that Bok (2013) reported found that 97% of administrators characterized their relationship with the faculty as “ cooperative” and “mostly collegial” while the remaining 3% thought it is “ suspicious and adversarial”. On the other hand, only 47% of faculty representatives thought the relationship is collegial and the remaining thought it is either “ suspicious and adversarial” or “ conflictual but mostly collegial”. This difference between the administration views and faculty views was explained by the fact that as universities grew and so does the number of faculty with a shrinking percentage of faculty being involved in governance. Another explanation might be due to the difference in perception of management responsiveness to dissent as viewed by the administrators and by the faculty.

To close the loop, we need to look at how organizational productivity , as defined earlier, impacts policies regarding tolerance to dissent. Figure 8 shows a complete top level hybrid representation of the model showing its key stocks, flows, and the feedback loops indicating the dynamic interaction between the organizational composition, climate, and performance. Since most of the most of the major feedback loops go through multiple stocks and end up influencing different parameters, it is rather difficult to label and describe all the active loops but they will be introduced as needed during the simulation experiments.

Since performance is a priority, management carefully assesses the efficacy of the dissent tolerant policy. Administrators would view their processing of dissent as an input that needs to bring higher output to justify the tolerance and the resources invested in processing dissent. Accordingly, organizational productivity would be defined as the ratio of producing outcomes to processing dissent . Hence, when producing outcomes go lower than processing of dissent, this would indicate a failure of the dissent tolerance

policy leading to a reduced tolerance and higher dismissing rates which leads to less voice and more silence and control. It is known from the literature that when the organization is more focused on short term performance it will be more prone to developing norms of silence that are difficult to change in the future (Perlow & Repenning, 2009).

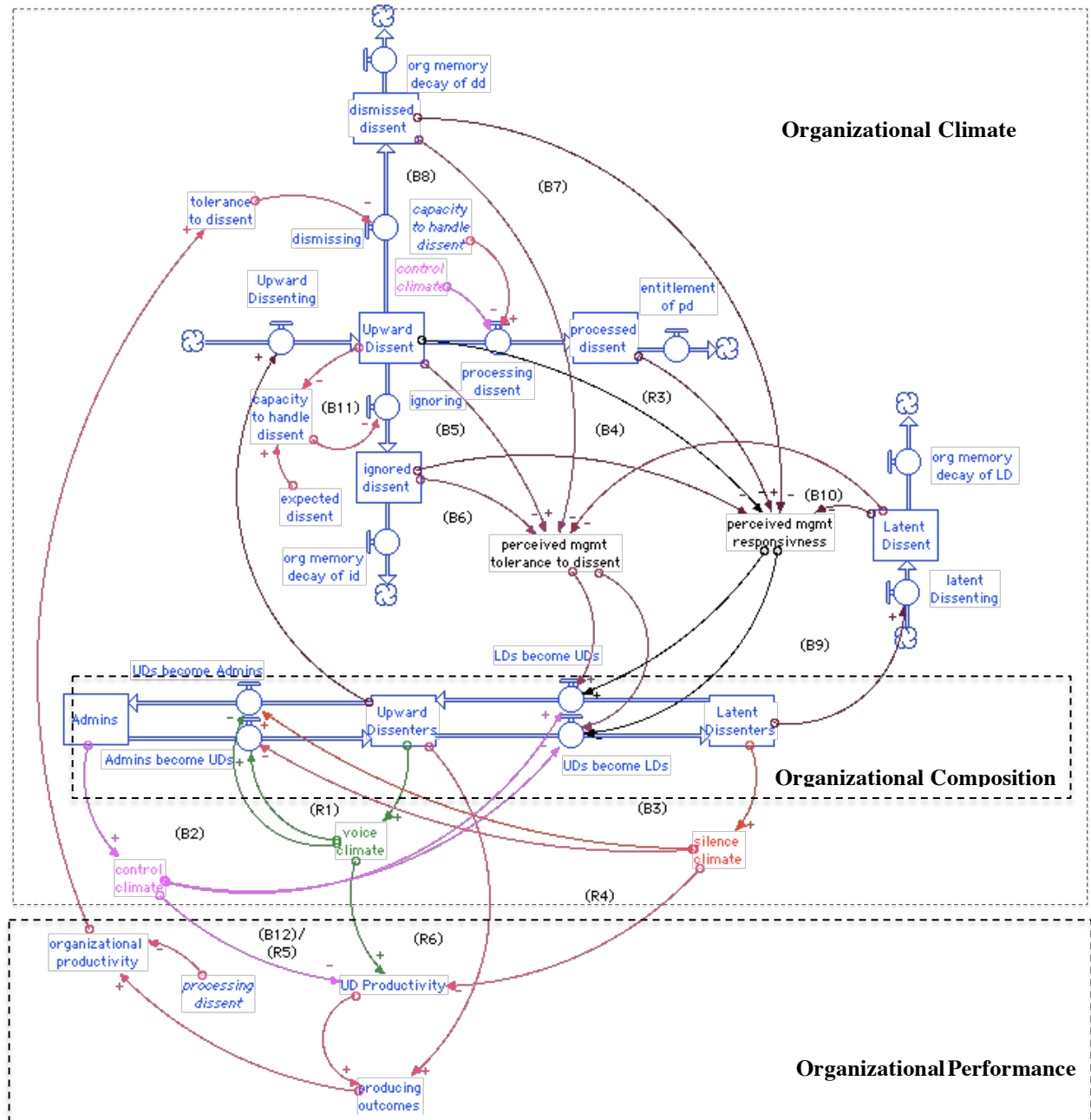


Figure 8: An aggregate level model showing keys stocks and flows and feedback loops between the organizational composition, climate, and performance

But what happens when there is too much upward dissent? If it exceeds the dissent expected by the organization, processing capacity drops leading to higher rate of ignoring

dissent and a lower rate of processing dissent (loop B11 in Figure 8). Another factor that impacts processing of dissent is the control climate. Control climate introduces many delays in processing, as the issue has to go through much red tape for checking and approval.

The issue in all the above accumulation and depletion processes in the key stocks is that they take time to happen. Some happen at higher rates than others. For instance, dissenting might be fast and so does dismissal but processing dissent takes longer time and requires patience from both the faculty and the administrators. It might be fast to change the perception about the management tolerance to dissent but it takes longer to change the perceived management responsiveness since it involves the processing part. This could lead to oscillations in organizational composition, climate, and performance over time. This could be even exacerbated when there is a close monitoring of performance driven by short term focus and fast action in changing the management policies towards dissent. What this study offers is the ability to observe how organizations climate and performance change over time heading sometimes from more favorable to less favorable states or vice versa. This will be demonstrated when conducting policy experiments in the following sections.

The complete model with its equations is provided as an appendix in an attached file.

Model calibration:

Our generic model is about theory development. Accordingly, it does not represent a particular case in a particular academic institution but rather than several scenarios that could take place in many different institutions.

The model is initialized in hypothetical equilibrium to provide a reference state to start from when exploring different what-if scenarios. Figure 9 shows the two organizational performance indicators in equilibrium represented as a dot in the cross section of the four quadrants.

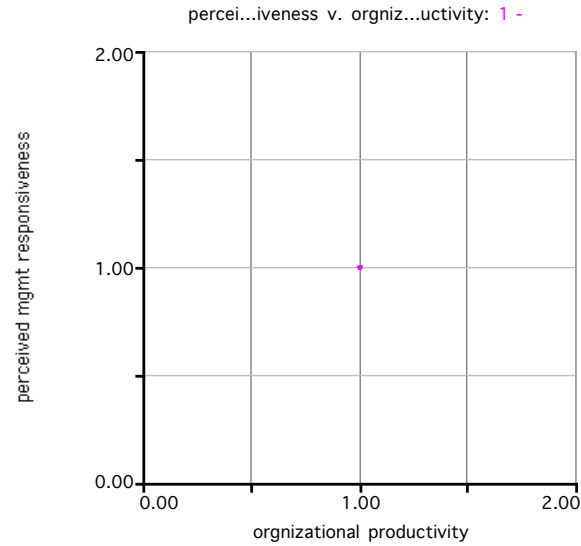


Figure 9: phase plot showing the two indicators (perceived management responsiveness) and (organizational productivity) in equilibrium at the cross section of the four quadrants.

Figure 10 shows the model stocks representing the organizational composition, organizational climate, and dissent manifestations in equilibrium.

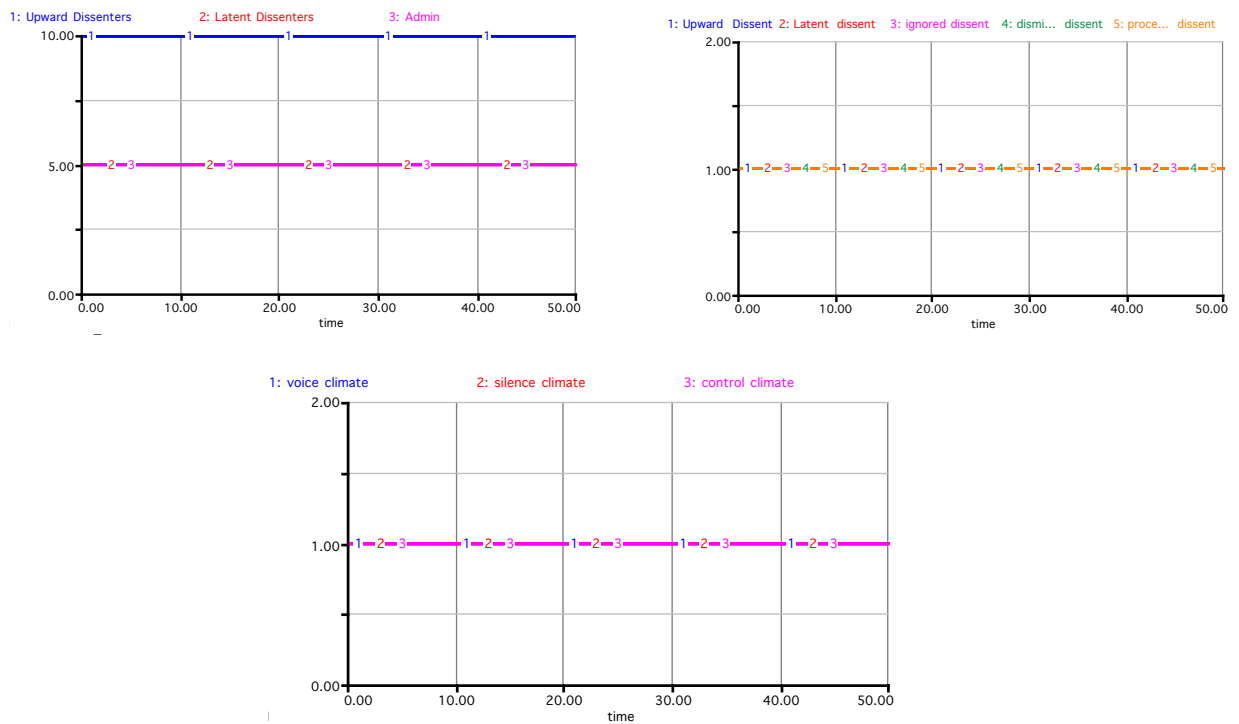


Figure 10: organizational composition, organizational climate, and dissent in equilibrium

Equilibrium values are provided in Table 1

Table 1: Equilibrium values

Parameters and variables	Values
Upward dissenters	10
Latent dissenters	5
Administrators	5
Upward dissenter productivity	0.05
tolerance to dissent	0.25
processing of dissent	0.5
Fraction ignored	0.25
Upward dissent	1
Ignored dissent	1
Dismissed dissent	1
Processed dissent	1
Latent dissent	1
Dissent per dissenter	0.1

The two indicators of organizational performance (organizational productivity) and (perceived management responsiveness) in a state space representation will be used to assess the effectiveness of intervention policies in the next section with few reference to time series plots.

Policy experiments

Disturbing the model from equilibrium to simulate the resulting dynamics could be accomplished either by population growth scenarios, changing single organizational capabilities related to dissent handling policies and productivities, or a combination of different interventions seeking the improvement of both performance indicators. The growth simulations are primarily intended at understanding the internal dynamics of the combined resource allocation system with the dissent expression framework, the latter experiments provide insights into the key interventions for change.

1. Growth scenarios

Three growth scenarios will be explored. An infusion with administrators resembles an effort by the organization to put more order and efficiency through proper distribution and supervision of tasks to improve performance. An infusion with upward dissenters resembles a growth in the institution productive force (the faculty) with long term commitment. An infusion with latent dissenters, could take place when the university hires more non tenure track or temporary faculty with no voice rights and with less privileges. The initial growth in each group equals 20% of its initial units. The phase plot of the performance indicators and their behavior over time graphs simulating the infusion of each populations is shown in Figure 11 below.

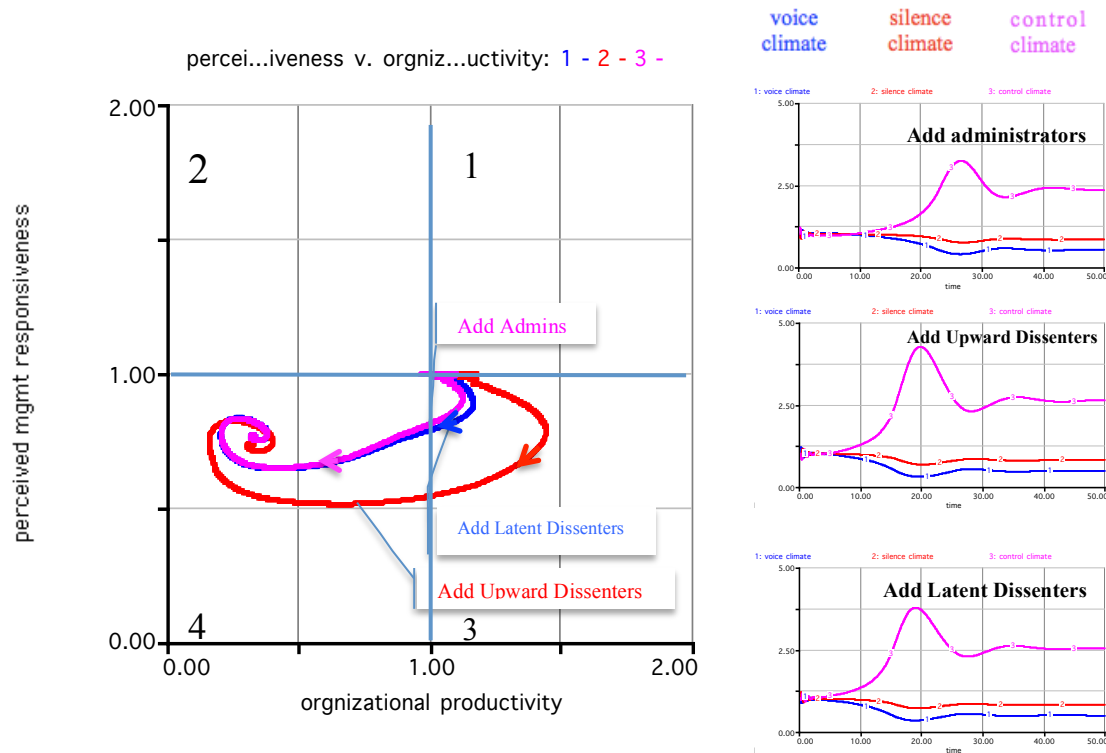


Figure 11: Growth scenarios simulation results showing the phase plot of each policy and the corresponding time series graphs for the organizational climates on the side (1. Voice climate, 2. Silence climate, 3. Control climate)

Adding administrators, upward dissenters, or latent dissenters results in a final equilibrium at lower organizational productivity and perceived management responsiveness despite the initial improvement in organizational productivity. For example when administrators are added control climate grew leading to less latent dissenters and an increase in upward dissenters. Silence would be reduced by having more latent dissenters become upward dissenters leading to an improvement in voice climate and a reduction in administration growth rate and the control climate (loop B3) which improves the productive output, hence, the organizational productivity. However, more upward dissenters increases upward dissent which accumulates as a result of the drop in dissent processing as the organization reaches its capacity to handle dissent (loop B11) leading to higher dismissal and ignoring rates, and less processing of dissent influenced also by the initial increase in control climate. This would reduce both the perceived management tolerance (loops B5,6,8) and the perceived management responsiveness (loop B4,7 and R3) leading to an increase in latent dissenters and a decrease in upward dissenters. The increase in latent dissenters would lead to an increase in silence climate that fosters the growth of the administrators and the associated control climate that reduces the voice and silence climates in return (loop B2). This fluctuation in climates affects UD productivity both positively and negatively. Another contributor to reaching this state is the increase in latent dissenters and latent dissent that would also

reduce both the perceived tolerance (loop B9) and responsiveness (loop B10) which increases silence climate and causes a drop in productivity that calls for more control. When the organizational productivity drops as a result of higher control and silence climate, tolerance to dissent decreases leading to higher dissent dismissal rate which decreases the accumulation of upward dissent but increases dismissed dissent which reduces both the perceived tolerance to dissent and the management responsiveness that increases latent dissenters and call for more admins to exercise control (loop R12). The cyclic behavior continues until it equilibrate at a composition comprised of high control climate followed by silence and voice climate leading to an organizational state in quadrant 4 at low levels of organizational productivity and perceived management responsiveness. The remaining two scenarios reach to the same result as the organization would always hit its capacity to handle dissent and get trapped in an efficiency mode trying to control every aspect of its environment.

The summary of the growth policies and their equilibrium quadrant in the phase plot is given in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Simulations summary of population growth scenarios.

Simulation (figure)	Policy instrument (curve)	Change (value)	Organizational productivity (quadrant)	Perceived management responsiveness(quadrant)
Growth of population by external infusion (Figure 11)	Administrators population (curve 1)	+20% (1)	4	4
	Upward Dissenters (UD) population (curve 2)	+20% (2)	4	4
	Latent Dissenters (LD) population (curve 3)	+20% (1)	4	4

II. Changes in single organizational capabilities

Another set of simulations comprises changes to a number of organizational capabilities intended to improve the two performance indicators. They include changing the organization's tolerance to dissent either by becoming a more dissent accepting organization or less dissent accepting organization. Along that line, the organization might have high or low volume of dissent issues raised by its members. High dissent volume might reflect a tendency for personal centered dissent while lower dissent volume might reflect a more principled type focused on important issues (Kassing, 2011). The institution might also try to improve the productivity of its members by concentrating on training to improve their teaching and research related skills. Another avenue for performance improvement is to become more efficient at processing of dissent hence reducing red tape that might cause unnecessary time delay.

This type of policies is implemented by changing few model parameters by $\pm 20\%$ to disturb the model from equilibrium. The simulations for the above parameters are shown in Figure 12.

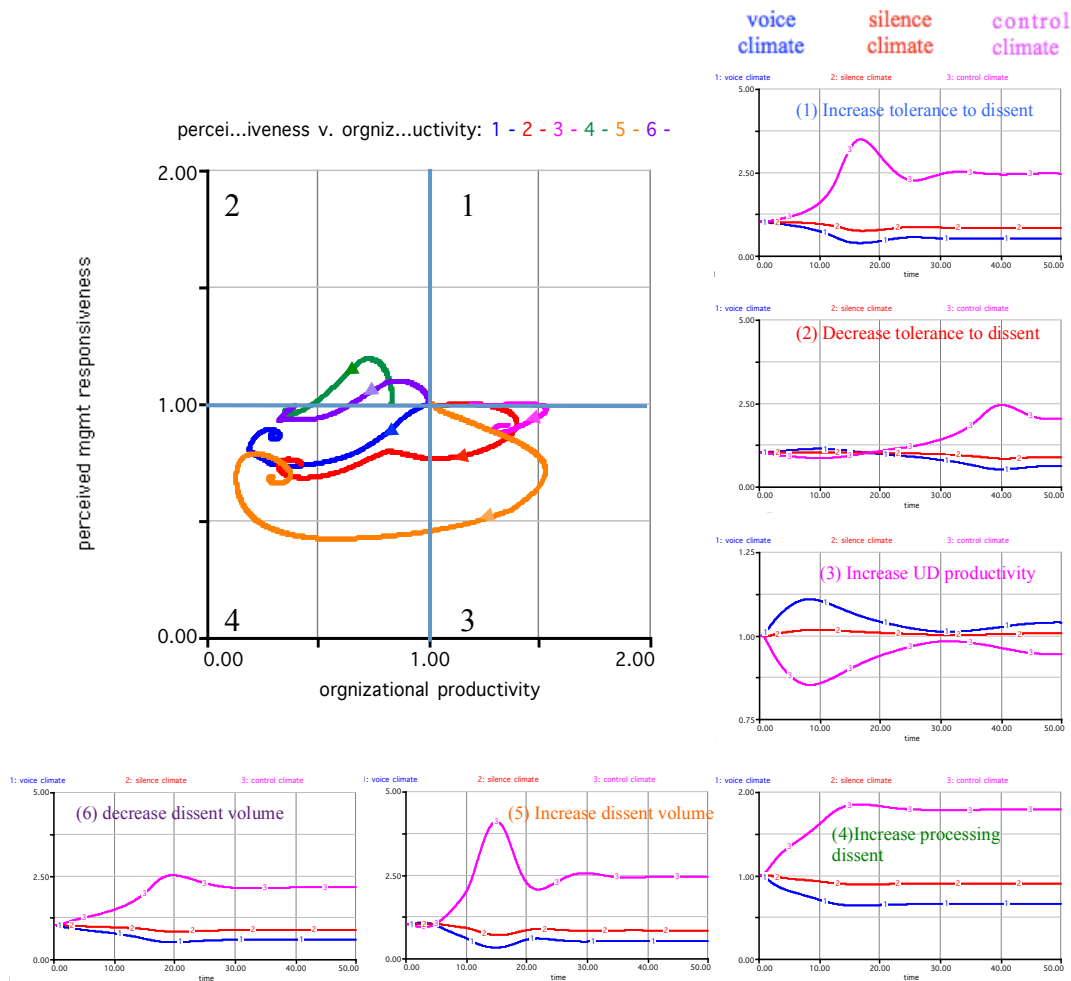


Figure 12: changes in single capabilities simulation results showing the phase plot of each policy and the corresponding time series for the organizational climates on the side (1. Voice climate, 2. Silence climate, 3. Control climate).

All the policies lead to the same final state in quadrant 4 (low organizational productivity and perceived management responsiveness) despite their different paths towards reaching that final state. Only the UD productivity improvement policy (curve 3) showed a different outcome by finishing in quadrant 3 (improved organizational productivity and low perceived management responsiveness). Initially it showed an increase in productivity while the responsiveness remained unchanged. This improvement in organizational productivity makes the organization more tolerant to dissent and hence improves the voice climate (Loop R6) . However, as more upward dissenters express their dissent, processing it hits a limit leading to a decline in both the organizational productivity and responsiveness to dissent (Loop B5). As can also be seen from the time series charts in Figure 12, control climate dominates the equilibrium state except for the

productivity improvement policy where the voice climate is at a slightly higher level than both the voice and control climates which explain the relative improvement in organizational productivity. A summary of the results is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Simulations summary of single capabilities changes.

Simulation (figure)	Policy instrument (curve)	Change (value)	Organizational productivity (quadrant)	Perceived management responsiveness (quadrant)
Changes in capabilities (Figure 12)	Increase tolerance to dissent (curve 1)	+20% (0.3)	4	4
	Decrease tolerance to dissent (curve 2)	-20% (0.2)	4	4
	Increase productivity of UD (curve 3)	+20% (0.06)	3	3
	Increase processing of dissent (curve4)	+ 20% (0.6)	4	4
	Increase dissent per dissenter (curve 5)	+20% (0.12)	4	4
	Reduce dissent per dissenter (curve 6)	-20% (0.08)	4	4

III. Changes in multiple organizational capabilities

The policies here aim at changing a combination of organizational capabilities to improve performance and land in quadrant 1 (high organizational productivity and perceived management responsiveness). The simulation results are shown in Figure 13 and in Table 4. In general they all improve both indicators with different degrees.

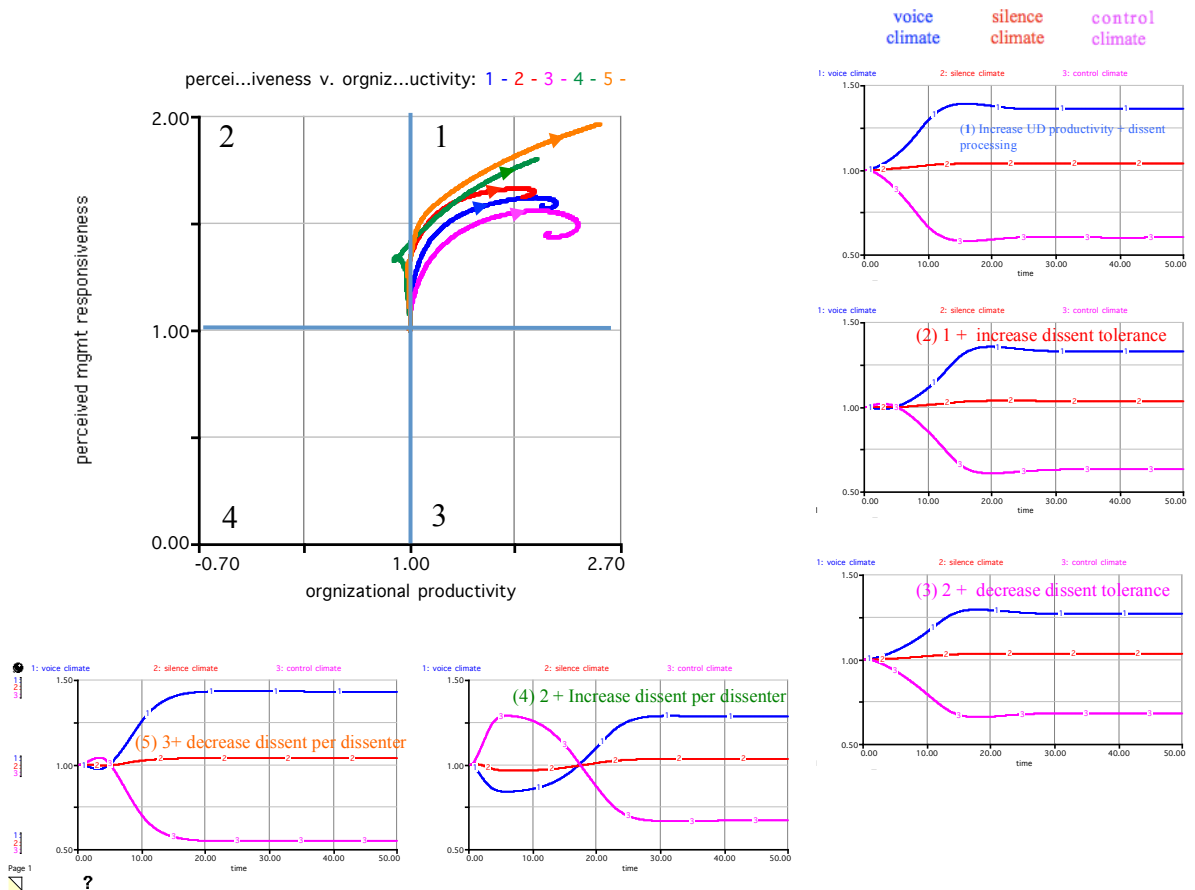


Figure 13: simulation results for changes in multiple organizational capabilities showing the phase plot of each policy and the corresponding time series for the organizational climates on the side (1. Voice climate, 2. Silence climate, 3. Control climate)

Curve 1 illustrates the increase of upward dissenters productivity and the processing of dissent which indicates that the institution is working on both fronts of skill building and maintenance plus the capability to process dissent. This would lead to less accumulated upward dissent that helps maintain a productive voice climate. A second policy (curve 2) adds to the first one by increasing the tolerance to dissent which shows a slight improvement in responsiveness due to the decline of dismissed dissent (Loop B7 and 8) and slight reduction in productivity as more effort is put into processing of dissent relative to the production of outcomes. A variation to the second policy is by decreasing dissent tolerance which could take place in an institution serious about dissent quality by focusing on critical issues yet it acts proactively to process whatever dissent it acknowledges. This may result in a slight decline in perceived management tolerance but higher gains in responsiveness but higher gains in organizational productivity. The forth policy adds to the second policy the element of increasing dissent volume (dissent per dissenter) which could take place when the organization encourages its members to speak up about any issue in their mind and make it easy to do so. Curve 4 shows an improvement in both indicators with a slight decline in productivity early on which could

deter the organization from following through with this policy. The fifth policy (curve 5) combines the third policy with reduced dissent volume which could take place when the organization has high dissent quality expectations and could decrease the volume of dissent in the presence of high productivity and high dissent processing. It results in even better performance than the 4th policy as the accumulation of dissent is reduced which creates a favorable condition for the improvement of perceived management tolerance and responsiveness leading to high voice climate and higher organizational productivity.

The outcomes from the above policies show that a policy suite could lead to improvements that are close to each other which may suit one organization but not the other. There is also a common theme in the behavior which is at the beginning of the implementation, productivity does not improve and sometime even slightly declines (policy 3, curve 3) but it pays dividends over a long time. This makes it more challenging to stick to such policies especially when the focus is on short term results or when the institution goes through a leadership change.

Table 4: Summary of policies for changing in multiple organizational capabilities

Simulation (figure)	Policy instrument (curve)	Change (value)	Organizational productivity (quadrant)	Perceived management responsiveness (quadrant)
Combined policies (Figure 13)	Increase UD productivity + dissent processing (curve 1)	+20% (0.06,0.6)	1	1
	1 + increase dissent tolerance (curve 2)	+20% (0.3)	1	1
	1+ decrease dissent tolerance (curve 3)	+20% (0.2)	1	1
	2+ decrease dissent per dissenter (curve 4)	-20% (0.08)	1	1
	3 + decrease dissent per dissenter (curve 5)	-20% (0.08)	1	1

Conclusion

We successfully explored the utility of combining the dynastic cycle generic structure and the dissent expression framework to understand the effect of management handling of dissent and the organizational composition on its climate and performance. We built a generic model that represents the organizational composition using the Farmers, Bandits,

Soldiers (FBS) resource allocation structure proposed by Saeed and Pavlov (2008) in firms and the dissent expression and handling framework suggested by (Kassing, 2011). We tied their interactions by factors representing the organizational climate and performance. We introduced two performance indices namely; the *perceived management responsiveness to dissent* and the *organizational productivity*. They are presented in phase plots with quadrants that reflect different organizational performance states. We then argued then that the changes taking place in the American higher education institutions makes our generic dissent model applicable to a university context.

We simulate the model with different policy sets. The first set relates to the growth of each organizational group under the same dissent tolerance and processing conditions. They all exhibited different degrees of initial improvements only in organizational productivity and the same long term steady state performance at low perceived management responsiveness and organizational productivity (quadrant 4) and dominated by a control climate. Then we change single model parameters that reflect different organizational capabilities and they show a mix of performance profiles with a different climate composition leaning more towards the prevalence of control climate. Finally, we change a combination of parameters resulting in a policy suite that brings the performance to quadrant 1 (high perceived management responsiveness and productivity) with a prevalent voice climate.

The simulations with successful outcomes suggest that performance improves when the university invests in improving its dissent processing capability and at the same time enhances its faculty productivity. When combined with higher standards for accepting dissent and a lower volume of dissent by focusing on critical issues, performance is further improved. However, the simulation shows that these policies take time and effort and fast returns are not to be expected. Failure to recognize that might results in abandoning such policies just before their favorable outcomes are realized. With the short term focus on performance improvement in universities driven by external measures like national and international ranking and accreditation, implementing such policies could be very challenging.

The generic model contribution to dissent literature in the organization communication field comes from showing the impact of dissent accumulation and depletion in different forms on the organizational climate and productivity that keep on changing at different rates over the organization's life time. It also helps in realizing a certain set of conditions or policies will not generate the espoused outcome instantaneously but contrary to the expectations it might go into the opposite direction. This dynamic phenomena is best studied using the capability of system dynamics methodology. The insights from the research have a practical side to the research and development and the higher education management professionals. It provides a platform for experimentation with different policy tools available to the administrators in these institutions.

The model theoretical findings could be further supported by exploring empirical cases for higher education institutions and how they evolved over time from the dissent perspective. Additionally, this framework at the organizational level is successful and

opens the opportunity for a more rich exploration by including the third type of dissent manifestation, displaced dissent, and its impact on organizational performance as it adds an interesting element which is the possibility for both the faculty and administrators to exit.

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