University Systems in a Time of Punctuated Equilibrium: Understanding Adaptations to Rapid and Unpredictable Change

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Our Team



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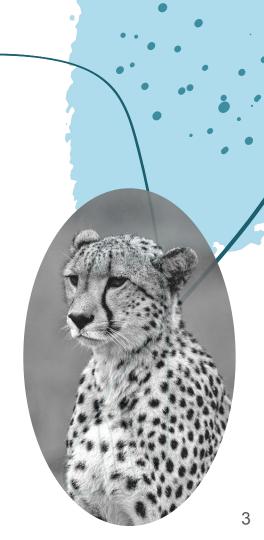


Katherine Ryker



Punctuated Equilibrium is a period of sudden, rapid, and unexpected evolutionary change.

We expected the COVID-19 pandemic (and other crises of 2020) would result in a period of rapid and unpredictable change for universities.

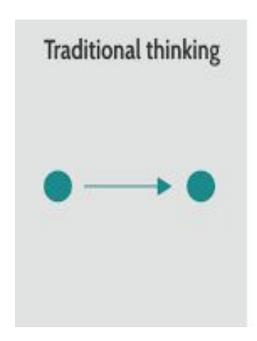


Rationale

2020 was a year of sudden and unexpected change for universities.

What did universities do to support their instructors? Who was giving this support? How was it communicated?

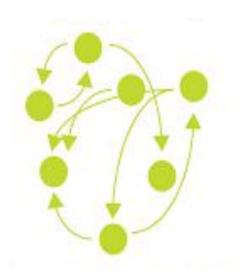
We knew different theoretical lenses would tell us something different about the relationships within a system's response.



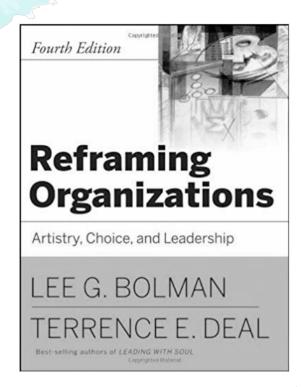
"Four Frames Model"

Structures Power

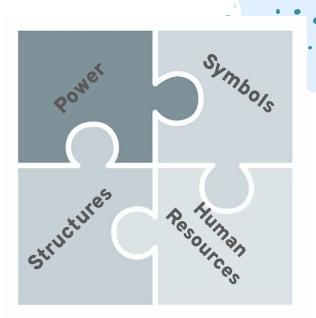




People Symbols



Four Frames
Model
Bolman & Deal
(2008)





Four Frames Model

Bolman & Deal (2008)



Symbols

Inspiring People
University Mission
Distinctive to
University



Power/Political

Coalitions
Power-Base Building
Conflict Resolution
Negotiation



Structures

Incentives
Metrics
Deadlines
Goals
Strategy
Systems
Procedures



People/HR

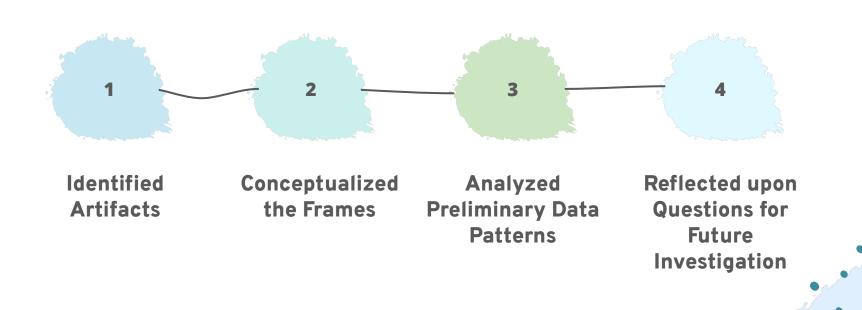
People's Needs Giving Employees Power



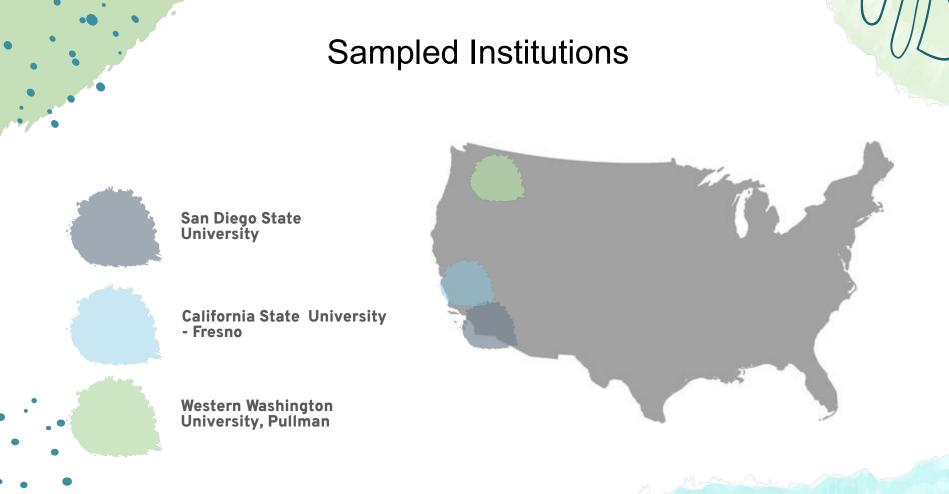


How did the university react to crises in 2020 to support instructors in their **job related to teaching and learning**?

In this exploratory work we describe how we...







Defining Our Artifact Space



Specified Event or Decision Process

A broad span of time was too vague.

Had to choose **specific event or decision-making process**



Selected Instructors as Stakeholders

We had to define what CHANGE was tied to the event; that is, instruction and messaging to instructors as stakeholders.

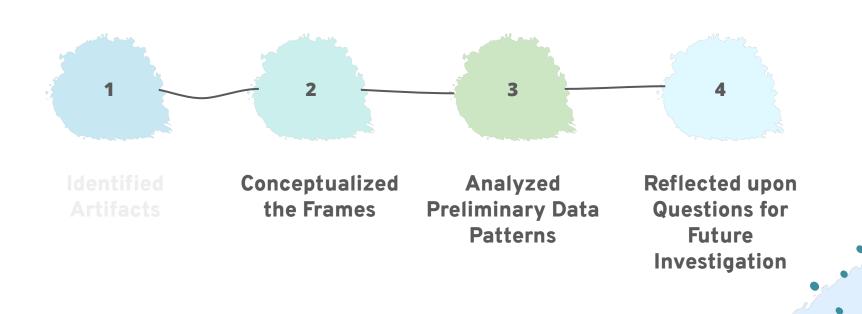


Public Communications
Only

Because we were using 4-Frames, the system, we excluded individual emails.

We chose artifacts that were communications to broad groups of stakeholders.

In this exploratory work we describe how we...



Conceptualizing the Frames

Symbols

"Fresno State will emerge stronger and **bolder** than ever."

"Flex is being designed with our campus culture in mind, informed by our strengths in offering high-touch and high-interaction experiences among and between faculty and students."

"First and foremost, I want to reiterate that protecting the health and safety of our **Cougar family** is of paramount concern."

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Take home: Identifying symbols requires a researcher to be embedded in the institutional context.

Power / Political

"I have created a number of ad-hoc bodies to address planning around every matter of business with repopulating campus and support student success."

"... in full accordance with guidance from the CSU Chancellor's Office and local and state public-health experts."

"In Washington, we are working closely with the governor's office, other state officials, and community leaders in all of our WSU locations as part of the quest to protect every member of our Coug community."

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Take Home: It must be evident who the **power brokers** are and who the target **stakeholders** are in the artifact to code for power. Structures and policies emerge from bargaining and negotiation from a power broker.

People / HR

"SDSU ... was preparing to give **older faculty** the option of teaching online only until the pandemic eases."

"Given the complexity of the issues and considerations for the two scenarios listed above, I have provided the following **Guiding Principles** to the task force..."

"Protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff will be of paramount concern as we plan for in-person operations."

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Take home: This frame had to be about recognizing the agency of the individuals in the system

Structures

"Faculty will earn a \$1,200 taxable stipend upon successfully completing the training this summer and reflections in the fall semester."

"For faculty teaching in the Fall 2020 Semester and who are new to hybrid-flexible/online teaching, the SDSU Flexible Course Design Summer Institute offers customizable experiences..."

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Take home: This frame was one of the easiest to code for, we found the definition from Reinholz & Apkarian (2018) very helpful.

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Exploring Layers of Analysis

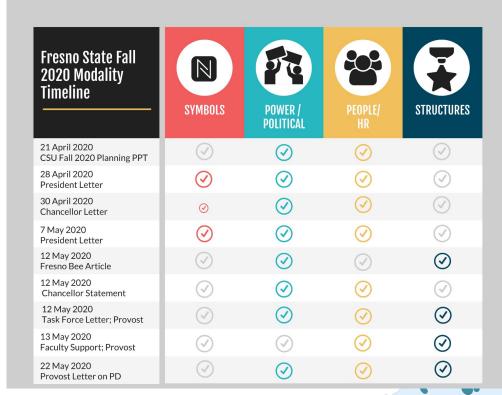
All Institutions across Frames over Time



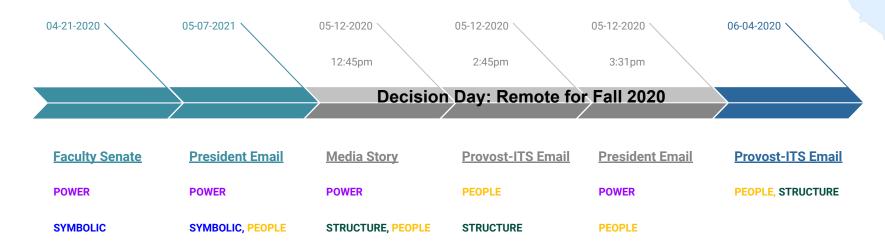
- Grey: Structures
- Blue: Symbol
- Purple: Power
- Yellow/Orange: People/HR

Artifacts Over Time at Single Institution

- Presence/absence of all 4-frames in artifact as a whole
- Examine over time at given institution and across multiple institutions



All Artifacts at Single Institution over Time, Primary and Secondary frames



Additional Take Homes

Symbols tend to be wielded by folks like the university President.

People/HR may be more likely to be addressed by Centers for Teaching and Learning and Provosts over Presidents. Needs in this frame are best assessed by interviews.

Structures may be established later or post-decision more so than in early communications.

Questions that have Emerged

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- What is the knowledge on the table versus what is communicated?
- As a change agent, what can you do? What should you do? What do you want to do?
- Can a researcher easily get data from their provost? President? These individuals broker the artifacts, be can we trust talking to them without posing risk to ourselves?
- What is the reaction from a stakeholder to these communications? From where do they get their information and why?

Potential Future Work





In-Depth Coding of Artifacts



Consideration of other Punctuated Equilibrium Events



Advocacy Work for Change Agents



Changing bookend dates for range of data collection

THANK YOU

We welcome your questions.











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