The nomadic organization: The postmodern organization of becoming

Abstract (Article Summary)

From contingency theory, resource-dependency theory, evolutionary theory, and institutional theory, it is learned that organizations respond to their external environment. In a postmodern, fluid, and continuously changing capitalism, there are few stable, fixed, and determined positions that can be taken by an organization.

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[Headnote]
ABSTRACT

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From contingency theory, resource-dependency theory, evolutionary theory, and institutional theory, we learn that organizations respond to their external environment. In a postmodern, fluid, and continuously changing capitalism, there are few stable, fixed, and determined positions that can be taken by an organization. Thus, the modernist image of the organization as being a hierarchical, formal, and rule-governed coherent entity ceases to serve as a,meaningful model, a useful image of organization. This paper suggests the idea of a nomadic organization as being a loosely coupled, fluid, and transient form of organization that better corresponds to an external environment characterized by highspeed creative destruction. Drawing on process philosophy, feminist theory, post-structuralism, and the nomad thought of Deleuze, the paper suggests that the idea of organization is still subject to discussion.

INTRODUCTION

From contingency theory (Burns and Stalker, 1961; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967), resource-dependency theory (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978), evolutionary theory (Nelson and Winter, 1982; Aldrich, 1999), and institutional theory (Scott, 1995; DiMaggio and Powell, 1991), we learn that organizations are dependent on, interrelated with, and continuously interacting with their surrounding environment. When the organization's environment becomes more turbulent, elusive, unpredictable, or complex, the organization's activities, structures, and processes are affected. Modernity is characterized by the belief in the qualities of stability, homogeneity, predictability, and control. In contemporary society, these qualities are no longer taken for granted. Postmodernity is characterized by heterogeneity, change, ruptures, fluxes, breaks, bifurcations and turns (Best and Kellner, 1997, 2001). The recently awakened interest in complexity theory models underscores the differences between, on the one hand, the small and somewhat overrated realm of predictability and control and, on the other hand, the vast domains of complex, chaotic, unpredictable, and elusive processes and changes (e.g. Brown and

Eisenhardt, 1998; Stacey, 1992; Anderson, 1999). Complexity theory has, if not anything else, redirected attention to qualities of reality that have been substantially marginalized in the modernist epistemology (Prigorgine and Stengers, 1984; Cillier, 1998). Reality is no longer the safe and well-ordered place wherein organizations serve a specific purpose, but reality becomes the totality of what is within the control of human beings and what is still outside of our full understanding and control (Serves, 1982/1995).

Postmodernity has brought a skepticism toward the meta-narratives of truth, progress, univocal understanding, and finality (Lyotard, 197911984; Best and Kellner, 1997). Rather than assuming stability and control, postmodern writers emphasize movement, change, dissolution of boundaries between entities, and processes, fluxes and breaks, bifurcations, and novelty. The master narratives of modernity have been fruitfully problematized by feminists - some would call them post-feminists - (Butler, 1993; Grosz, 1994), postcolonial thinkers (Fanon, 1952/ 1986; Spivak, 1996), and "anti-humanists" such as Foucault, Heidegger and Nietzsche (e.g. Foucault, 1966/1970). In addition, the rise of a complexity theory that adds insights from the sciences to the postmodern critique of modernity enables for a radical critique of the notion of the organization. Best and Kellner (1997) write: "[P]ostmodern science turns more toward probability and statistical regularities and away from absolute certainty; it rejects notions of fixed, immutable orders and absolute truths in favor of conceptions of evolving complexity and probability; it breaks away from mechanism and machine metaphors and affirms organism and biological models, and thus shifts from a selfcontained and immutable universe to an open, self-organizing, dynamic cosmos that is constantly changing and evolving" (Best and Kellner, 1997: 224).

The very idea of organizing is deeply embedded in a modernist project (Reed, 1992; Perrow, 1986). Prior to modernity, the organization of social formations was fragmentary, partial, temporal, indeed selforganizing. For instance, Clastres (1994) suggests that war serves in tribal societies to uproot and eliminate the tendencies to establish a more rigorous and comprehensive organization of specific social formations. War implies an upheaval and a deterritorialization of the tribe, and thus represents an institutionalized escape from formal, rule-governed organization. Thus, tribal society developed mechanisms that prevented its own petrification, its establishment at a certain place. Therefore, the tribal society remained nomadic, it was always on the move, always ready to settle for a new territory or a new domain. This paper suggests that the postmodern society, with its emphasis on continuous, ongoing change and its inability to provide stable, predictable meaning-creating structures of necessity, creates nomadic organizations. The nomadic organization is an organization that is always on the move, that always is linking itself with other organizations through alliances, joint ventures, mergers, and acquisitions; an organization whose boundaries disappear when it becomes complicated to distinguish between inside and outside, between employee and temporal workers and consultants; an organization whose output is merely one component in the entire product chain, and is thus interrelated with other organization in networks. In brief, the nomadic organization is the organization that transgresses the market-- hierarchy framework formulated by transaction costs theorists (e.g. Williamson, 1975), the organization theory doctrine par excellence in a modernist epistemology of bounded rationality. In postmodernity, organizations can no longer be simply understood through the market-hierarchy axis (with a few intermediating stages such as the notion of the clan [Ouchi, 1980]), but can only be examined through a new set of views, a new perspective, and a new epistemology. The nomadic organization represents an organization model that stretches beyond the notion of the bounded rationality, that is, into the domain where there is neither a clear idea of what a boundary as such might be, nor where the notion of rationality is conceived of as being based on specific ontological and epistemological assumptions (cf. Bataille, 1943/1988: 101; Serres, 1969-198011982: 83). The nomadic organization is an ideal type model of the postmodern organization; it affirms the loss of meta-narratives, acknowledges the impossibility of foundational views and primary favoured positions and worldviews, recognizes the suggestions on ongoing change and novelty from complexity theory, and listens carefully to the polyphonic voices of the feminist/postcolonial/ anti-humanist discourses.

This paper is structured as follows: First, some of the characteristics of the postmodern capitalist regime are sketched. Then, the idea of what Deleuze and Guattari call "nomadology" is discussed on basis of Rosi Braidotti's (1994, 2002) notion of the nomadic subject. Third, the notion of the nomadic organization is introduced. Finally, some implications are examined and discussed.

COMMODIFICATION AND SPEED: POSTMODERN CAPITALISM

Marx (1867/1995: 42-50) predicted that commodification (under the label "commodity fetishism") would be one of the most prominent features of capitalism. The remarkable capacity of capitalism to commodity all sorts of resources and competencies has managed to produce considerable wealth and affluence in certain areas of the world (Galbraith, 1958). The other major tendency in contemporary capitalism is the, to use Boisot's (1998: 14) term, abstraction of commodities. In contemporary society, capitalist economies are not only providing consumer goods and products, but a never-ending number of services, counseling activities, professional help, experiences, signs and symbols. The commodification of symbols and signs is perhaps the most prominent tendency today (Debord, 1967/1977; Baudrillard, 1976/1993). These trends in capitalism, paired with the emergence of new forms of media of communication, new forms of commerce and logistics such as the Internet. high-speed communication and information technologies, and a growing number of biomedical and biotechnical devices and apparatuses such as nano-technologies and high-tech prosthesis such as the pacemaker, have enabled for what Armitage (1999) calls hypercapitalism and Best and Kellner (2001) refer to as technocapitalism. In hypercapitalism or technocapitalism, the producer-consumer relation is established in real-time and the delivery of the good or service is undertaken in a short time perspective and with minimal costs evolved (D'Aveni, 1994). Taken together, contemporary capitalism provides opportunities for great wealth to be accumulated in short times if desirable products are offered. Thus, the emergence of new companies is much faster and their impact on the market can be far greater than during previous technical-administrative regimes in the history of capitalism. A small change in the system (e.g. a new competitor, a new company), can produce, as suggested by complexity theory (see e.g. Holland, 1998), considerable effects in the market with dramatic consequences for the competitors. As a consequence from the new theories of non-linearity, we are seeing a growing interest in research various topics such as networks (Gulati, Nohria, and Zaheer, 2000, Dyer and Nobeoka, 2000; Seufert, von Krogh, and Bach. 1999), the use of temporary workers to maintain flexibility (Garsten, 1999), outsourcing and downsizing (Jones and Womack, 1994; Grey, 1999; Du Gay, 2000), e-trading and a-business (Amit and Zott, 2001), and a change in the perception on the individual's career (Adamson, Doherty and Viney, 1998). In the 1940s, von Hayek (1944) outlined his ideas of a selforganizing, liberal capitalism with minimal governmental ("social") interventions. The selforganizing capitalism advocated by von Hayek shared in various respects the ideas of autopoesis discussed within complexity theory (Luhmann, 1990; Tsoukas, 1998). Organizations and firms construct themselves on basis of the opportunity to make money. In postmodern capitalism, the technoscientific, high-speed capitalism of contemporary society, organizations emerge, develop, grow, decline, and disappear at a higher rate. Creativity (or entrepreneurialism as some speak about, see Du Gay, 2000), novelty, and change are praised as being an indication (or rather an "index" in the meaning of C.S. Pierce, i.e. as a causal marker) of a well functioning capitalism capable of transforming individual ambitions into social organization.

The difference between modernist capitalism and postmodern hypercapitalism or technocapitalism is based on the notion of speed (Virilio, 1989/1991). Whereas modernist capitalism was slow and inert, postmodern capitalism is swift and fickle (Gleick, 1999). Today, firms emerge, make fortunes for founders and stockholders, or are merged with competitors at an increasingly higher speed. When the activities of the economy, the communication, new product development processes, and logistics are speeded up, the possibilities for reflection and sense making disappear. As a consequence, the very notion of rationality becomes problematic. The traditional meaning of rationality in the PlatoKantian tradition of thinking is to make use of one's reason, one's intellectual and emotional capabilities, to make a satisfying (or, to speak with Cyert and March [1963] a satisficing) decision. Using one's reason takes time; rationality is always

temporal, and thus demands a certain time to be used meaningfully. When the possibilities of allocating time to use one's reason are few, it is problematic to speak about reason and rationality. Instead, faculties such as intuition (Bergson, 1906/1998, 1912/1999), the capacity to think in continuous series, are emphasized. The cardinal principle of the modem organization, that of bounded rationality (Simon, 1957), is therefore no longer meaningful to speak about in a postmodern capitalism wherein time is favoured over reason and rationality. If we can no longer separate rationality from non-rationality or irrationality (cf. Brunsson, 1985) and the very idea of boundaries ceases to be meaningful, the basic principles of organizing must be sought elsewhere than within a modern ist-rationalist paradigm.

NOMADOLOGY AND THE THINKING OF BECOMING

The nomadic organization is a conceptualization of the organization that is based on a process ontology formulated by Bergson (1906/1998, 1912/1999) and Whitehead (1925, 1978). Lucas (1989) writes on process philosophy:

The philosophy of Deleuze shares some of the main ideas of process philosophy (see for instance, Deleuze, 1968/1994; 1966/1988). Ansell Pearson (1998) writes that for Deleuze, mail systems from the 'biological' to the 'social' and economic are made up of assemblages, complex foldings, and movements of deterritorialization that serve to cut across and derange their stratifications" (Ansell Pearson, 1998: 183). Reality is an ongoing process that creates new connections and new opportunities establishing new relations. To Deleuze, there is no such a thing as a genealogy, since there are neither arche, nor telos, in systems (Ansell-- Pearson, 1999: 158). In addition, systems are always radically open, always carrying the potential of connecting with other systems (Patton, 1996: 257). Deleuze's philosophy is a most idiosyncratic multiplicity comprising classical philosophy (Kant, Hume, Spinoza, Leibniz), process philosophy (Bergson, Whitehead), literature (Kafka, Melville, Miller, C.S. Lewis), film theory, anthropology, political economy, and so forth, and it is complicated to see any clear-cut, fixed relationships between process philosophy, Deleuze's thought, and complexity theory. However, Massumi (1996) insists on the notion of emergence as being a unifying theme across complexity theory, Spinoza, Bergson, and Deleuze. The idea of emergence underlines that small changes can have great, unanticipated, and unpredictable consequences. In process ontology and nomad thought, there is an affirmative attitude towards the idea that seemingly stable systems can be reversed by small, initial events. Thus, there is a shared ontological and epistemological ground for complexity theory, process philosophy, and Deleuze's nomad thought.

Braidotti (1994, 2002) talks of the nomadic subject. The notion of the nomadic organization is borrowed from Braidotti that in turn adopted the notion of the nomad from Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus (1980/1988: 351ff). To Braidotti, the notion of the nomad subject is employed to escape the hegemonic and exclusionary views of subjectivity offered by phallogocentric thinking, the masculinity-centered dominant doctrines of the modern episteme. Braidotti (1994:100) writes: "Deleuze shares with feminism the concern for the urgency, the necessity to re-define, re-figure, and re-invent theoretical practice, and philosophy with it, in a reactive/sedentary mode." Following Derrida's (1972/1981) claim that language is never neutral, nor innocent, but always reproduces certain favoured ontological positions and epistemological programmes, Braidotti aims at overcoming the worn-out vocabulary, the 'monologism of phallogocentrism," that cannot formulate new, radical thought (Braidotti, 1994: 30). Braidotti writes:

When thinking of the subject as a nomad, a continuously transgressing, creative, interconnecting, and changing human subject, it is possible to depart from the logocentric thinking that assumes an unambiguous, essential, and final subject, once and for all endowed with certain capabilities and resources. For Braidotti, as being a feminist thinker, such a position would only fix the female subject in a subjugated or inferior position based on a set of ideas and assumptions of what a woman is or what a woman can do. In short, it would imply an essentialist view on the subject. As opposed to the essentialist ontology, the nomadic thought underscores movement, change, and novelty. There is no subject as such, but only a set of relations, ambitions, activities, and beliefs adjacent to the human body, the corporeal, carnal body. In a similar vein, Donna Haraway (1991; 149 has suggested the cyborg as a model that escapes the doctrines of essentialism. In an age of impressive but cumbersome leaps of technoscience, producing new possibilities of intervening with scientific methods and technological devices into the human body, the very idea of the body becomes problematic (Shilling, 1993). We can no longer tell for sure where the human body and its possibilities begin or end; the human body becomes a project, a fluid entity that can be molded and shaped through various techniques and media of inscription (Grosz, 1995; Haraway, 1997). Weiss (1999) writes: "Almost daily, we are bombarded with news of innovative technologies capable of repairing bodily injuries (e.g. laser surgery), replacing body parts (e.g. prostheses), and now cloning animals to create genetically identical but anatomically distinct being (Weiss, 1999). To Haraway (1991: 152), the cyborg is an intermediate form of being between human and machine. The cyborg resists essentialism, categorizations such as that of feminine and nonfeminine, and the taken-for-granted genealogy of womanhood. The cyborg is thus an ideal type that serves as a model for an entity that is outside of the realm of essentialism, the master idea of phallogocentric humanism. To Haraway, feminism should enable for a thinking of women, a "gynologism" that stretches beyond the ready-made concepts of hegemonic philogocentrism. In both cases, Braidotti's nomad subject and Haraway's cyborg, these models of the female subject seek to break with the existing order of things through subscribing to "new ways of thinking." Discarding the essentialism that haunts feminist thought implies, to some extent, to discard the logos, the speech and writing of the predominant culture. A radical critique of what is always presupposes a new way of talking of things, a new vocabulary. Without a new vocabulary, thinking proceeds along taken for granted categories and commonplace formulations. What is the case for feminism and its rejection of phallogocentric thought and its lexicon of concepts and analytical tools, go for organization theory and its need to defamiliarize the image of the formal, unified, rule-governed, and rational organization. In order to think in new terms, organization theory needs to be conceptually developed: "Being forced to work with concepts for an industrial economy is one of the most significant handicaps that scholars face in building theories of postbureaucratic organizing" (Barley and Kunda 2001: 86).

THE NOMADIC ORGANIZATION

The non-essentialist, process-based, nomadic view offered by Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1988) and Braidotti (1994, 2001) is applicable in organization theory. There is no fixed and unambiguous organization (the organization of charts and formal presentations), but only a multiplicity of activities, processes, relations, connections, and changes that we refer to as "organization." In an unstable and unpredictable environment, there can never be any fixed configurations, but only images of such configurations. The image of a stable configuration enables for an understanding of what an organization is or should be, and to make sense out of the organizational experience, but the everyday functioning of the organization is something different. Even the most rigid, rulegoverned, and purpose-directed organization is made up by a multiplicity of individual activities and processes.

The nomadic organization is a becoming-- organization, an organization that never is, in the essentialist sense, i.e. is based solely on its own identity, on basis of what the formal organization should be a priori, but is always in a state of change, or creation, of novelty. The becoming-- organization continuously adapts to, and responds to, a transient reality that can never fully be determined nor fully understood or anticipated. While the notion of the nomadic organization implies a certain position and regime of functioning within the existing postmodern capitalist framework, the notion of the becoming-- organization is here used to position this organizational configuration in an ontological and epistemological framework within the Western metaphysical canon. The difference between being and becoming is of ancient origin and separates the doctrines of metaphysics in a binary mode (Hayden, 1998). The ontology of becoming of Heracleitus serves as the basis for the more recent process metaphysics, while the transcendental tradition of thought (Luhmann, 1990) is the dominant doctrine of thought in Western metaphysics (Chia, 1999:226). The idea of a nomadic organization underscores the need for new images of organizations that enables for a sense making of complex realities, and the notion of the becoming-organization places the idea of the nomadic organization within the metaphysics of Western thought To Chia (1999), organization theorists are not trained in thinking movement - the thinking of change, fluxes and novelty. Chia says that Others has been little attempt to understand the nature of change in its own terms and to treat stability, order, and organization as exceptional states" Chia, 1999: 210). Rather than affirming that the world is continuously changing, organization theory operates to establish typologies, concepts, and taxonomies that fix and label continuous processes and events. Chia argues that "despite recent attempts to reconceptualize organizational change in processual terms, contemporary models of organizational change remain, for the most part, trapped in a Parmenidean intellectual legacy which implicitly elevates permanence over change, discreteness over immanent interconnectedness, linear progress over heterogeneous becoming, and equilibrium over flux and transformation" (Chia, 1999: 226). Thus, we do not have adequate theories that enable for an analysis of change per se, but merely, as Chia puts it, the "outcomes of change" (Chia, 1999: 212). When taking a process metaphysics view, affirming the image of the becoming-- organization, the notion of organization is reconceptualized. Chia contends that `organization .. is not a 'thing' or `entity with established patterns, but the repetitive actuality of ordering and patterning itself" (Chia, 1999: 224).

The characteristic of the nomadic organization is sketched in table 1.

The modern organization served as a rational solution to a number of productivity, governance, and control problems and formal demands and regulations within, to speak with Aglietta (1976/1979) a certain regime of regulation and made of accumulation, namely the modernist socio-political and economic regime. In an age of de-regulation, globalization, "network-ification," and so forth, provoking a problematization of the modernist capitalist system (Castells, 1996), the mechanisms of the modernist organization are no longer the selfevident optimal solutions to these perceived problems. In an abstract economy based primarily on exchange-values embedded in the circulation of capital in the form of stocks and derivate instruments on the world's stock exchanges, organizations do primarily handle intangible resources such as knowledge, competencies. patents, etc. It is then not only the nature of the external environment that has changed, but also the very nature of organizational resources, capabilities, and competencies as such. Following writers such as Spender (19,98), this implies a need for a reconceptualization of our taken-for-granted ideas about organizations, leadership, careers, communication, and so forth.

It is noteworthy that the notion of the nomadic organization does not correspond to the emerging discourse on postmodern organizations and a postmodern organization theory (Clegg, 1990; Hassard and Parker, 1993; Boje, Gerphart, and Thatchenkery, 1996; Kilduff and Mehra, 1997). According to these contributions, the postmodern turn outlined by Best and Kellner (1997, 2001) implies that we need to study, problematize, and examine existing organizations through a new perspective, through the new ideas deconstructing the notions of subjectivity, truth, power, and

progress, acclaimed in modernist thought. It is, in short, suggested that we would benefit from adopting a postmodernist gaze on contemporary organization. No matter how constructive or meaningful such a project may be, a postmodern organization theory still operates from within the grids of the modern organization - its images, its vocabulary, its techniques and tools, its entire Weltanschauung - that assumes stability, predictability, bounded rationality, efficiency. The writers suggesting a postmodern organization theory tell us it is beneficial for organization theory to adapt the thought of Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard, and so forth, since their thinking enables for new ideas on organizations to emerge. The postmodern organization theorists, however, do not intend, as some of the most creative feminist writers do with phallogocentric thought, at reversing the entire logos of the paradigm of the rational, rulegoverned organization in order to open up for new images, thought, and ideas on organizations. Braidotti (2002) writes: "To attack linearity and binary thinking in a style that remains linear and binary itself would indeed be a contradiction in terms. This is why the poststructuralist generation has worked so hard to innovate the form and style, as well as the content, of their philosophy" (Braidotti, 2002: 8). The notion of the nomadic organization rests on the postmodern theory advocated by, for instance, Hassard and Parker (1993), but it also seeks to contribute with a new view on the organization. It does not only say, for instance, that we,an learn a lot from adopting some of Derrida's thought when examining an organization or a firm (cf. Kilduff, 1993), but also that we can make use of certain thoughts Derrida's or someone else's - to create new possibilities for speaking of, and speaking about, organizations.

Table 1.

DISCUSSION

Modernity is characterized by its axial principles of rationality, linearity (in time, in progress, in forms of thinking), and "purification" (cf. Latour, 1993: 10-11). The modem society is a society that is organized, governed, administered, and evaluated along a rather limited set of principles and ideas (Marcuse, 1964). The defenders of the modern virtues and the modern project (e.g. Habermas, 1985; Callinicos, 1989; Cummings, 1996; Feldman, 1998) reject most form of attempts to unconceal or problematize the implications of modernity, and commonly refer to such an ambition as a detrimental relativism (or worse, such as nihilism, defaitism, and the like). For instance, Callinicos (1989) writes on the writings of Deleuze, Foucault, and Derrida, that "despite their many disagreement, all three stressed the fragmentary, heterogeneous, and plural character of reality, denied human thought the ability to arrive at any objective account of that reality, and reduced the bearer of this thought, the subject, to an incoherent welter of sub-and trans-individual drives and desires" (Callinicos, 1989: 2). In a similar vein, Lyotard and Baudrillard are dismissed as being "the epigoni of post structuralism." These two quotes raise a few questions. First, one can ask what qualities Callinicos wants to denote with the notion of "objectivity"? Second, one could ponder why Callinicos so strongly rejects the writings of Lyotard and Baudrillard, if he, as it appears in the text, actually acknowledges some of the relevance of Deleuze, Foucault, and Derrida? And finally, one might wonder what Callinicos believes is at stake in the poststructuralist discourse. The philosophy of science in the tradition of Kuhn, Popper, Lakatos, and Feyerabend suggests that science is, with Haraway's (1991) formulation, always situational; it is embedded in the worldview and takes for granted ideas of certain communities of practice within a scientific society. These insights seem to be rather well received within the academic, scientific society. Still, the possibilities of relativ-ism/perspec-tiv-ism/ situationalism and other forms of nonfoundationalist thought (Rorty, 1998) seem to invoke a feeling that this implies a potential loss of something important. Thinking outside of what Bergson (1912/1999) calls ready-made concepts and "cinemato-graphic concepts" always implies that something else may be lost on the way (Best and Kellner, 1997). Novelty, change, and movement always demand a loss of something (at the very least, energy), but the wins from such a process may also be

considerable. However, the notion of the nomadic organization does not imply a rejection en bloc of the modernism technical-administra-tive apparatus, i.e. the totality of routines, practices, traditions, modes of organizing, technical and social systems, etc. that constitute the very core of con-temporary organizational life. The nomadic organization is rather an attempt to conceptualize the more fluid, ambiguous, continuously changing, loosely coupled forms of organizing that emerge in a postmodern capitalist context characterized by, inter aia, speed, change, and emergence. A nomadic view on the organization opens up for transient, temporal forms of organizing that are increasingly used, e.g., project management practices, temporal joint ventures, and the use of consultants on short term basis. In an economy characterized by more abstract, more fluid, and more complex organizational activities, the modernist conceptualizations of organizations such as, to use Mintzberg's (1983) concepts, machine bureaucracies, divisionalized forms, and so forth, cease to be meaningful images of organization. The nomadic organization is something different, an organizational form that shares a few characteristics with Mintzberg's adhocracy, but also embodies other qualities, skills, and capabilities. Taken together, the nomad organization is an organization form of the present and the future. It is an organization form that not just responds and adapts to external demands, but makes up and constructs reality through its activities and processes.

Nevertheless, it is important to be aware of the backside of the nomadic organization. To break down boundaries and open up territories are not always pleasant experiences since the structures of everyday life not only give us a perceived possibility for prediction, but are also serving as a foundation for working life (see e.g. Sennett, 1998). If organization is turned into amorphous configurations, numerous sense making mechanisms will disappear or be altered. Although the notion of the nomadic organization is formulated in positive terms, it is important to keep in mind that the epistemology of becoming will imply that some dominant ideas may be questioned. The nomadic organization is offering new opportunities, but it will also imply a loss of some of the bureaucratic virtues. In Deleuze and Guattari's thinking (1980/1988), there is an emphasis on the formulation of new concepts; new concepts enable for new thinking. The nomadic organization is one such new concept. It may be used in various ways and may be associated with various practices. It is tool for thinking of administrative and organizational practices. The nomadic organization is formulated from within a specific epistemological tradition representing a critical view on essentialism. Therefore, the nomadic organization is not based on a fixed fundament, but emerges and develops through associations, connections, and alignment. It is an organization of becoming.

CONCLUSION

In times of change and novelty, there is a considerable need for collective sense making of what is happening. In a postmodern capitalism, there are nothing but fluxes, breaks, changes, and bifurcations; the organization thus becomes an open system with close relations with the environment. The boundaries between inside and outside are continuously transgressed. As a consequence, a pluralist epistemology of becoming is needed (Spender, 1998; Chia, 1998), an epistemology that acknowledges a polyvocal and a polysemiotic view on the organization (Czarniawska, 1999). As complexity grows, as it will in a pluralist society, the need to reflect and make sense of this complexity emerges. Boje (1991) points out that storytelling in organizations is an important managerial competence that needs to be used: "As organizational boundaries become more permeable and the organization structure flattens, requiring more networking and communication skills, storytelling can be a useful tool for managers trying to cope with rapid change" (Boje, 1991: 125). In the nomadic organization, storytelling is not only what makes sense out of complex experiences, but what is making the very organization. The nomad has, as Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1988) point out, no history, no genealogy, nothing but geography, the domains and territories that the nomad roams. In a nomadic organization, there are only the stories of the past. This paper aimed at defamiliarizing the modernist, hierarchical, rulegoverned, and rational, formal organization as being the dominant image of the organization. This specific, highly successful image of the organization is situational inasmuch as it is based on a set of

socio-economic and cultural assumptions and conditions that today, after the suggested postmodern turn, is no longer unproblematic or taken for granted. Thus, the image of the formal organization, the hierarchical box chart that is always present in the organization theory textbook, is less representative, less meaningful, and less useful than it used to be. Given the immense changes in the organization's environment and in the attitudes, hopes, and beliefs among human being in postmodern, contemporary social formations, we are in need of a new model, and new vocabulary, a new image of the organization. The nomadic organization enables for an affirmative attitude towards open-system models, change, creativity, and novelty. The nomadic organization is - to paraphrase Nietzsche's formulation on his thinking as being a "philosophy of the morning" (see Vattimo, 1992: 169) - an "organization model of the morning".

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