Growing New Roots: Institutionalizing Community Engagement

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Problem

- Many higher education institutions use community engagement as a way to partner with communities to collaboratively address pressing societal needs.

- Institutionalizing community engagement in a higher education institution is complex.

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Study Purpose

To describe and understand how leaders at a selected university enacted the institutionalization of community engagement

The Study Aimed to…

Examined how one university progressed toward incorporating community engagement into their

- norms
- values
- day-to-day work

Drawing from the field: Theoretical Base

- Individual Level = Weerts and Sandmann's (2010) boundary-spanning framework

- Organizational Level = Holland's (2006) assessment matrix for institutionalizing community

- Interplay between levels: Adaptive Challenge (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001)

| Concept	Literature Review Topics	Design
The purpose of this study was to explored leaders' perceptions	• University leaders	• Participants
of the nature of boundary-spanning activities	• Boundary spanning	• Lens to analyze data for research question two
and the complexity	• Adaptive challenges	• Lens to analyze data for research question three
of how the university		• Context for case study
operationalized the institutionalization	• Institutionalization theory	• Lens to analyze data for research question one
of community engagement	• Community engagement	• Lens to analyze data for research question two

Gap in the literature:

A new conceptual model was needed to represent the interplay of individual and organizational factors in the institutionalization of community engagement in higher education institutions.

Adaptive Challenges

- Do not have straightforward solutions

- Systematic

- Involve multiple stakeholders

(Heifetz & Laurie, 2001)
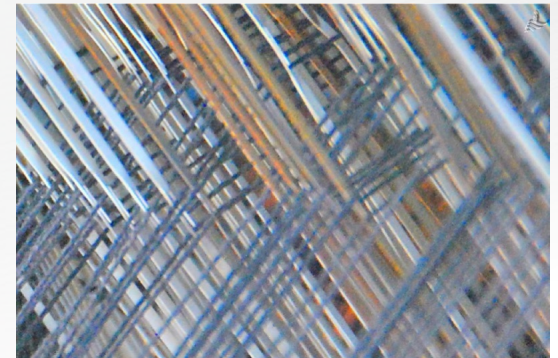
Change Agents

Consider the change agents needed to influence this change.

Individuals who can negotiate:
- Power
- Information
- Relationships

(Torres et al., 2013)

Institutionalization

Transforming the change from a peripheral activity to a fully integrated method of strategy and practice.

(Holland, 2009)

Research Questions

1. What are key characteristics of the institutionalization of community engagement?

2. According to university leaders, what qualities do community engagement boundary spanners possess?

3. In what ways do university leaders address the institutionalization of community engagement as an adaptive challenge?

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Methodology

- Qualitative, single-case study

- Selection criteria:
  - Held the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Community Engagement Classification
  - Participants continually attend the Engagement Academy for University Leaders

Data Sources

- University artifacts

- open-ended survey questions

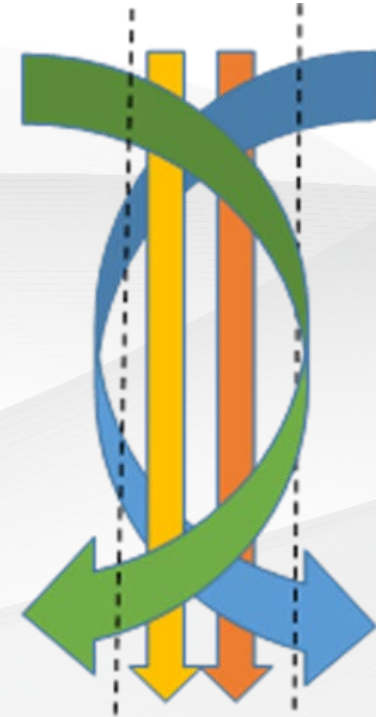- transcripts from focus groups and semi-structured interviews
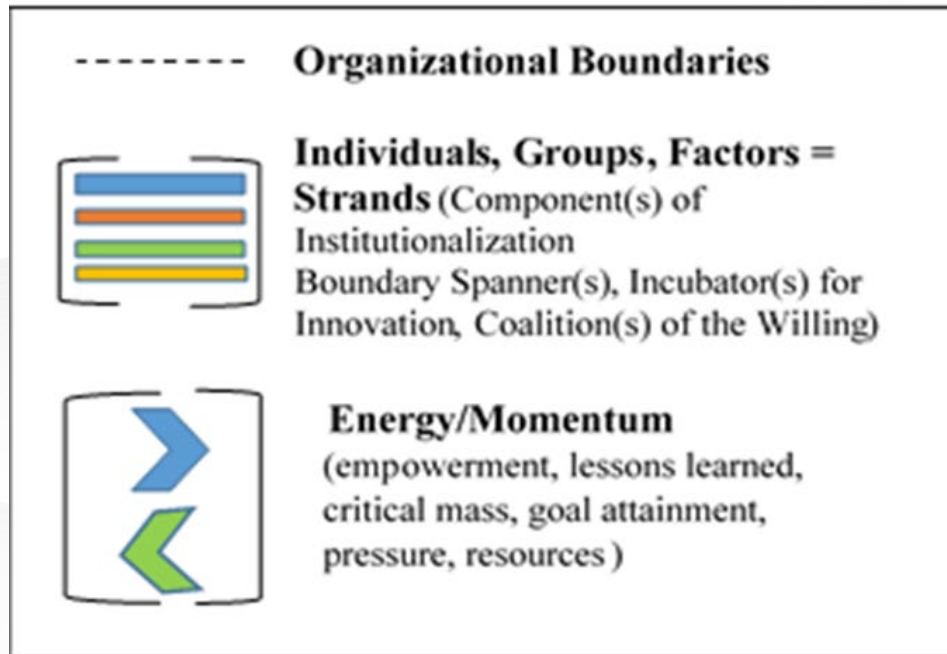
Findings

- Organizational Level
  - Incubator for innovation in community engagement
  - Building a coalition of the willing

- Individual Level
  - Action over rhetoric
  - Building a coalition of the willing

- Address adaptive challenges
  - Empowering others to stretch beyond routines and question norms
  - Shaping institutional norms
  - Role complexity and leadership

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Adaptive Braid of Institutionalization

- - - - - - **Organizational Boundaries**

**Individuals, Groups, Factors =
Strands** (Component(s) of
Institutionalization
Boundary Spanner(s), Incubator(s) for
Innovation, Coalition(s) of the Willing)

Energy/Momentum
(empowerment, lessons learned,
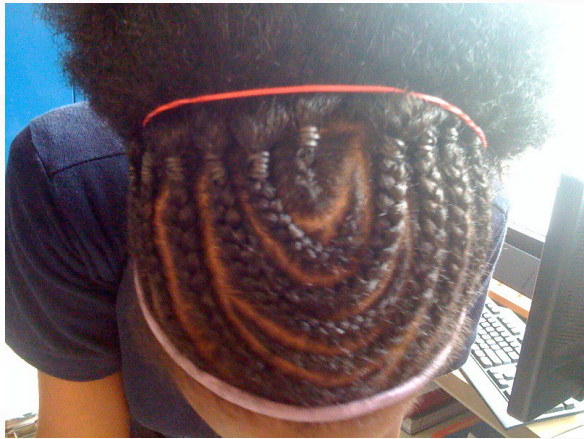critical mass, goal attainment,
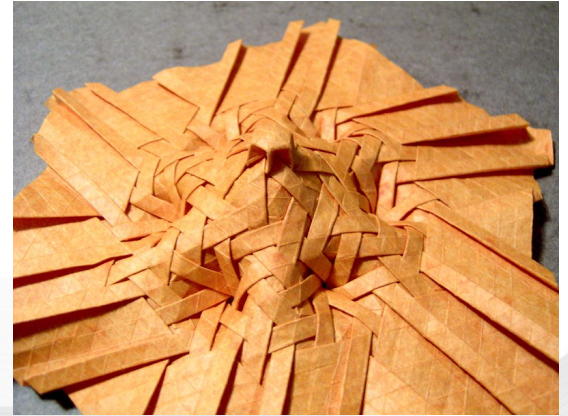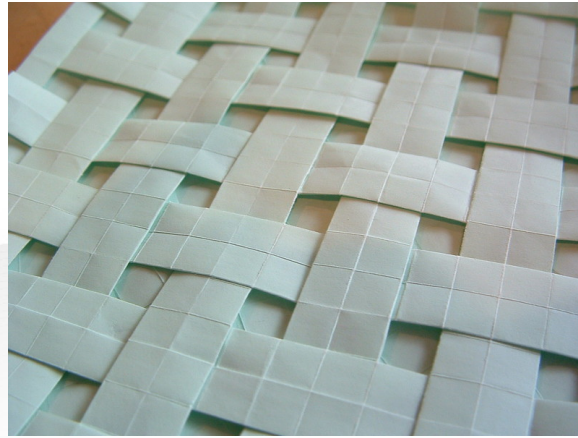pressure, resources)
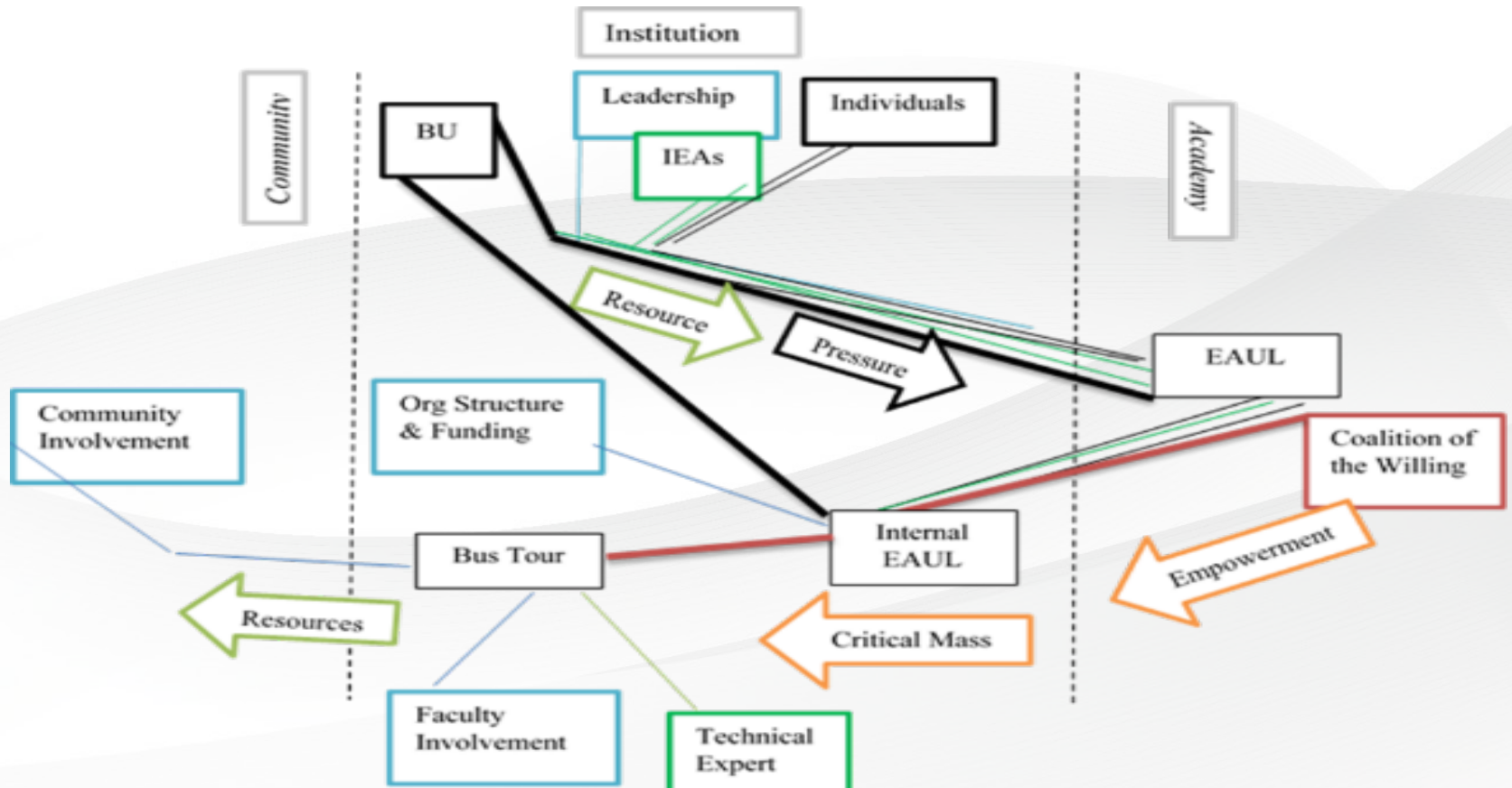
Institutional Factors

- Mission
- Leadership
- Promotion, Tenure, Hiring
- Organizational Structure & Funding
- Student Involvement
- Faculty Involvement
- Community Involvement
- External Communications& Fundraising

(Holland, 2006)

Example

References

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Holland, B. A. (2009). Will it last? Evidence of institutionalization at Carnegie classified community engagement institutions. New Directions for Higher Education, 2009(147), 47-54.

Heifetz, R. A., & Laurie, D. L. (2001). The work of leadership. Harvard Business Review, 79(11), 5-15.

Torres, V., Viterito, A., Heeter, A., Hernandez, E., Santiague, L., & Johnson, S. (2013). Sustaining Opportunity in Rural Community Colleges. Community College Journal of Research and Practice. 37: 3–17.

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Questions?

Want more information?

Farner, K. (2019). Institutionalizing Community Engagement in Higher Education: A Case Study of Processes Toward Engagement. *Journal of Higher Education, Outreach, and Engagement* 23(2): 147 – 152.

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