In the Making

System Sensing and Systemic Constellations for Organizational Transformation:

Building Collective Capacity for Navigating Complexity

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Abstract

This paper examines how a systems sensing—or felt-sense—approach and orientation to inquiry and systemic constellation practice might help social change organizations cultivate capacities to better navigate complexity, both in their outer-facing work and internal dynamics as teams and as individuals. We present a pilot study of systemic constellation practice, sharing the experience of participants during and after the practice, as well as our own reflexive process. Currently an undertheorized and underutilized approach within systems thinking work, systems sensing and systemic constellation, can reveal less visible but nevertheless foundational dynamics at play in an organizational body, and can help create more awareness through widening ways of knowing in the

organizational playground. We explore how the facilitated collective sense-making process of systemic constellation engages subtle ways of knowing specifically energetic, relational, and embodied knowing, building on what Heron and Reason (2008) have called an "extended epistemology." As we suggest, these more subtle ways of knowing warrant further study, particularly as they may contribute to action research methods and foster a more participatory culture of transformation at both an organizational and societal level.

Keywords

systems thinking; systems sensing; systemic constellations; social change; organizational development; complexity

Introduction

As practitioners concerned about making a difference on complex and high-stake societal issues, we are curious how small organizations with ambitious social change agendas can make progress on their immediate problems in ways that strike at the root of large-scale societal issues—while at the same time fostering a more refined, regenerative, and life-affirming organizational culture. We designed our professional practice, Collective Transitions, as a process and innovation catalyst, dedicated to building shared capacity for transformational shifts in organizations, movements, and networks, specifically in the social change sector. Working with a diversity of organizations, we frequently incorporate systems sensing, or an embodied and "felt-sense" approach to engaging with the deeper wisdom of a system that is often hidden from view. In this paper, we detail a pilot study dedicated to the question: "How might systems sensing and systemic constellations enable organizations to widen their collective capacities for navigating complexity?"

Context

Social change organizations, many of them small and untraditional, aim to tackle large-scope missions and complex issues, while navigating organizational complexity, often "in the absence of any blueprint, program or plan" (Stacey & Mowles, 1993, p. 22). There is growing recognition that a sole reliance on linear thought processes, cognitive reasoning, and behavioral protocols is inadequate for addressing the complex, interrelated challenges we face today. We need radically new approaches that are responsive, adaptive, and participatory and that can help us evolve in how we relate to and care for each other, the natural world, and all forms and expressions of life.

We see navigating in complexity as artistry. Complexity is a way to describe that everything is alive and "interacting in multiple ways" (Johnson, 2001, p. 19). It may exceed our ability to process it mentally because, as Cynefin theory suggests, the "causal relationships [of components] are entangled and dynamic and the only way to understand the system is to interact" (Snowden & Zhen,

2021, p. 16). Like wayfinding, the ability to orient or navigate in complexity requires refined ways to understand the current context and artistry in pulling "all the information together to know where you are supposed to be" (Spiller, Barclay-Kerr & Panoho, 2015, p. 33). Bolman and Teal (2017, p. xi) suggest that this type of artistry is not about precision, but about how experience is interpreted and expressed "in forms that can be felt, understood, and appreciated."

We orient our inquiry within the field of complexity science (Benham-Hutchins & Clancy, 2010; Paley & Gail, 2011), which is concerned with complex systems and with dynamic and unpredictable challenges (Marion, 1999). Within complexity science, the "complex adaptive systems" approach—with its qualities of emergence, adaptation, and self-organization (Holland, 2006)—and "complex responsive systems" with its focus on "the paradox of stability (continuity), and instability (change)" (Stacey, 2012, p. 3) are especially relevant as we strive to better respond to, interact with, and transform the societal challenges we face today.

Thriving in complexity requires shared leadership. Proponents of complexity leadership theory propose that "leadership should be seen not only as position and authority, but also as an emergent, interactive dynamic—a complex interplay … that produces new patterns of behavior or new modes of operating" (Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey, 2007, pp. 298, 318). Our work is dedicated to exploring how to show up together and relate in ways that produce emergent coherent patterns of interaction toward cultivating a life-affirming culture. This inspires our research on building collective capacities to navigate complexity.

Purpose

What is possible when we foster collective capacities among us? Our interest in exploring the realm of collective capacities is rooted in what we see as the potential to contribute to the conceptualization of complexity leadership theory. It is also rooted in our curiosity about collective processes and practices that:

- experience a specific situation from different perspectives and draw upon wider ways of knowing;

- value the yet unknown, including systemic blind spots, hidden interpersonal and cultural dynamics, and the influence of unacknowledged past events;

- generate collective awareness and the preconditions for relating to the dynamics of systems "in artful ways;" and

- develop practical tools for application and learning for social change work.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce and reflect on the use of systemic constellations and systems sensing as a participatory and inquiry-based action research approach to building collective capacity, including accessing a wider

range of ways of knowing (Heron & Reason, 2008), and acknowledging that there are diverse ways to relate with life beyond our mental capabilities. When leaning into the unknown and meeting complexity, we see value from drawing upon a diverse range of information and experiences to cross-reference, gain clarity, and make meaning of a given situation together.

To address the question: "How might systems sensing and systemic constellations enable organizations to widen their collective capacities for navigating complexity?", we brought together nine co-researchers[1] from four organizations to participate in a pilot study of the systemic constellations practice. Each of the participating organizations works to bring about meaningful systemic change within complex and challenging contexts, through a focus on building a regenerative culture and social innovation across multiple sectors within translocal or global communities. Organizations A and B work with global farmers and local leaders, Organization C focuses on research and applied tools that support caregivers, and Organization D is developing a platform for civil society to create a transboundary "community of communities" across a watershed.

In what follows, we report on a three-phase pilot study including a systemic constellation and group reflection process involving participation from all four organizations. After introducing key concepts, we provide a description of our methodology and then detail a systemic constellation practice focusing on a case example from one organization. Through a collective practice and reflection process, we aimed to make subjective experiences both visible and observable, and then generalized these experiences into patterns and dynamics—or what a system is "making together." We reflect further on learnings in the study and conclude by highlighting three areas of value.

Key Concepts

Key concepts used in this paper include: 1) capacities, 2) systems sensing and system thinking, and 3) systemic constellations.

Capacities

A capacity speaks to the ability to perceive, feel, and receive, and from there enter into a relationship with the world, including both tangible and subtle aspects. Capacity can be described as an interface that can take many shapes, forms, and expressions. Capacities are built and evolve over time and through experiences in individuals and collectives, in order to relate and respond to given situations.

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[1] To protect the confidentiality of our co-researchers, we refer to the four organizations as A, B, C, and D.

Like a learning organism, collective capacities function as an interconnected ecosystem of capacities, each having the ability to adapt, build upon, and reinforce one another and to evolve together based on shared experiences. In the context of complexity, collective capacities such as the capacity to be with what is, work through tension consciously, and welcome emergence can be seen as the preconditions necessary for building a shared leadership culture—a way of being in relationship with each other, the greater context, and the task at hand.

Systems Sensing and Systems Thinking

Systems sensing is informed by the interdisciplinary field of systems thinking (Meadows, 2008; Senge et al., 2004), which involves mapping how a system's parts interrelate and how a system functions over time and within the context of larger systems. Meadows (2008, pp. 178, 181) provides hints that there might be more to systems than we can see, highlighting the value of "listening to the wisdom of the system" as well as "celebrating complexity." Systems thinking, and its application in organizational and leadership development (Senge et al., 2004; Wheatley, 2006; Zohar, 2016), have been sources for our conceptualization of a systems sensing approach. Meadows' (2008) emphasis on leverage points inspires our exploration of ways to shift preconceived assumptions, mindsets, and ingrained patterns.

Systems sensing adds a dimensionality of the felt senses to a visual map of diverse elements and interactive relationships. If we compare systems thinking and systems sensing using the body as a metaphor, systems thinking might be understood as the connective tissues that define space and give structure to the system and how it moves overall. Systems sensing might be understood as the quality and resonance of the connective tissue, inclusive of the spaces between the structural elements, which inform and galvanize the body.

Systems sensing can be understood as a visceral aptitude that draws on innate human capacities for being in relation with, listening deeply to, and momentarily embodying the elements of a system. In other words, it is an "embodied dialogue" with the social field or "the entirety of the social system with an emphasis on the source conditions" (Scharmer et al., 2021, p. 5). We also take a cue from Scharmer's (2016, p. 142) articulation of "sensing" as "thinking and feeling together", and Heron's (1992) conceptualization that experiential learning, including feelings, emotion, intuition, and imagery, forms the basis of other ways of knowing (Kasl & Yorks, 2002, p. 183).

Systemic Constellations

Systemic constellations is a collective practice of creating a dynamic model of a particular system using individuals who represent and embody different elements of the system in order to reveal and transform its hidden patterns and underlying dynamics. Systemic constellations work is inspired by the therapeutic approach known as family constellations (Hellinger et al., 1998), which includes

trans-generational and phenomenological aspects with connection to family systems therapy; it is also inspired by the ancestor reverence of South Africa's Zulu people (Cohen, 2006). Many practitioners and researchers have contributed to this developmental practice and literature, and systemic constellations has further evolved from family constellations, organizational constellations (Weber, 2000), and structural constellations (Sparrer & Varga von Kibéd, 2000). Our work is situated in a niche oriented toward societal transformation contexts, multi-stakeholder issues, and the discovery of interrelated patterns across organizations.

Systemic constellations uses a systems sensing or felt-sense approach to inquiry to explore relational patterns. During a constellation session, participants are invited to represent different "elements" of the challenge being tackled by the group; these may include people, places, emotions, qualities, or essential details of a system. As representative elements, participants respond somatically and spontaneously to each other through a facilitated process, making each felt experience visible. Through this process, a systemic constellation can help identify and release embedded (including trauma-informed) patterns and reveal new ways of connecting with a certain situation or context (Cohen, 2006). Such transformation can bring about "positive" as well as "negative" outcomes.

The systemic constellations process typically includes the following five steps:

1. Co-design a guiding inquiry or "calling question" which aims to focus attention and intention on a particular challenge during the systemic constellation. The question should be powerful, generative, and life-affirming, and its scope and aim must be reasonable and realistic.

2. Decide on the essential "elements" to be included that are relevant to the "calling question."

3. Invite each participant to represent or embody an element to which they feel drawn. Participants then sense into the qualities of the element and embody it, not as a form of role play but rather to become present and available to any somatic sensations, images, or thoughts of that element.

4. To begin, representatives take time to find their position in a given space in relation to the other elements, forming an "interactive constellation."

5. The facilitator then invites each participant in turn to speak from his or her position, inquiring deeper into the current felt-sense experience, the perceived relation to other elements, and any desire to shift position. The process unfolds slowly so any subtle shifts can be better perceived and incorporated by everyone present.

Methodology

To explore how systems sensing and, in particular, systemic constellations can contribute to complexity leadership, we initiated a pilot study dedicated to exploring how the approach can expand one's perspective and cultivate collective capacities for navigating complexity. As the convening organization, and in line with our dedication to co-creating and refining shared knowledge and practice, we adapted a cooperative inquiry method (Heron & Reason, 2001, 2008). Our iteration of the method, which involves systemic constellations practice, aligns with Lessem & Schieffer's (2010) conceptualization of cooperative inquiry as "feeling the Presence of some Energy, Person, or Place, [wherein] you intuitively grasp Patterns" (p. 231). We combined the four-stage process of cooperative inquiry with a focus group format, designing a small pilot study consisting of three group sessions over 90 days. We adapted the flow of cooperative inquiry to meet the circumstances of our group: each call (held virtually using Zoom and Google Slides) was two hours long and required minimal pre-work from the co-researchers in their communities.

Phase 1 was a preparation phase dedicated to understanding the current challenges of the organizations and their perceptions of complexity. Phase 2 was the constellation exercise, an opportunity to practice together, testing systemic constellations as an embodied approach to building capacities for navigating complexity (using Organization A as the case study). Phase 3 offered a space for reflection and learning, including a large-group discussion on the systemic constellation experience as a whole and an open-ended journaling reflection. We solicited further feedback from the participants on the usefulness of the practice shortly after Phase 3 and again six months later to glean longer-term insights.

Systems Sensing Pilot Study

Phase One: Preparing the Ground

Phase 1 provided a space for the co-researchers to get to know each other and for us to set the stage for the research process. The co-researchers engaged in a mapping exercise to understand how each person viewed complexity, and then shared how they navigated a challenge in the context of their work. We then provided background on systemic constellations and invited participants to offer a *case*—that is, a topic or issue relevant to the organization that could serve as the focus for the systemic constellation.

After this group call, we invited the founder of Organization A and his consultant (a fellow co-researcher) to serve as *case givers* for the systemic constellation that we would conduct in Phase 2 with all co-researchers present. To prepare for Phase 2, we had a preparatory call with Organization A to co-design a *calling question* and the *elements* for the upcoming group practice.

During this preparatory call, we learned about the desire of Organization A's founder to make the organization more decentralized and resilient through shared ownership and shared power, and by calling on diverse skill sets. Organization A was at a growth threshold, expanding in capabilities, audience, and brand recognition, yet it lacked the resources (i.e., funding and team support) to fully implement the work. The founder shared his mounting anxiety about how to navigate sensitive topics with a range of stakeholders, including funders: "More and more, I find myself in situations where anxiety prevents me from speaking up." During this facilitated call, we asked him if these dynamics are somehow familiar or remind him of previous experiences either in his personal or professional life. After some reflection, he revealed a story from his childhood: "My biggest trauma is not the times I've almost died, but being attacked and feeling voiceless at the dinner table, jumped on by my siblings. The inability to communicate still haunts me." He described his own journey to regain power and a command of language through his organization, which gives voice to farmers who are often marginalized, disempowered, and voiceless: "Every day I fight for people that were not invited to sit at a table with those with resources and power."

As this founder's organization grew, like many social change organizations it faced a tension between capacity and resources, with a small team tackling a large-scope mission and complex issues. This disparity led to inquiry around what capacities the organization might cultivate to shift toward a more thriving, decentralized structure and further its mission.

We reflected with the case giver on how his inner (personal) struggles could translate to the capacity of the organization more broadly, specifically its ability to attract and secure the resources it needed to grow. From that insight, we landed on the calling question for Phase 2: "What is Organization A invited to cultivate as capacities for shifting toward a more thriving, decentralized organization?"

Based on the themes that arose in the reflection and in relationship with the calling question, we then selected the specific "elements" that were part of the playground and relational map of this inquiry: Organization A, Founder, Team, Three Sisters[2], Capacities, and Resources that a system can acknowledge and start to access for supportive qualities.

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[2] Three Sisters—referring to the beans, squash, and maize of Native American polyculture farming—is used by the organization to conceptualize how its programs work as "a dynamic and cyclic living system."

Phase Two: Systemic Constellation Experience

In Phase 2, we introduced our systemic constellations method, with the goal of surfacing implicit relational dynamics and patterns. We gave co-researchers a brief training in the practice, introducing the case, the calling question, and the elements that we had co-designed with the case giver (Organization A). Typically, a systemic constellation is done in-person, using the body to sense in relationship to others. Adapting for our COVID-19 era, we used Google Slides to display a visual map of colored icons, serving as elements (figure 1). One of the co-authors, Luea, served as the facilitator for the systemic constellation. Co-researchers could enroll in the following roles: case giver, representative for an element, or witness—an active observer of the systemic constellation who contributes by holding space (Plett, 2020).

Co-researchers enrolled as representatives for elements in the constellation (as they felt called to do so), and began positioning that element's icon on the screen in relation to the others. Once representing an element, co-researchers were to "sense into" that element, using their physical body and felt senses. The facilitator guided co-researchers to: "Allow your body to become an instrument and pick up the energetic patterns, resonance, how the element feels or how it moves. You might feel: tiredness, a lot of energy, heat, cold, leaning to one side, or get an image. All of this is information." The co-researchers were then invited to use the sensed information to reorient their element (icon) on the screen in relation to the others.

Four of the elements (Organization A, the Founder, Three Sisters, and Capacities) received representation immediately, while the remaining two (Team and Resources) did not. The facilitator began the constellation with the four represented elements. When the representative for the Founder was asked how she was doing with her positioning, she said, "I struggle with where to look: forward, or toward the organization." She noted a desire to shift her icon's point or nose "forward," facing upward on the screen, but sensed a reliance on the Organization, as well as Resources, which was not yet present. When asked if she needed anything to help shift her position, the Founder indicated "the team," and a co-researcher enrolled to represent Team.

The facilitator checked in with the rest of the elements in turn, asking how they felt and how they wanted to shift their positions on the screen. The representative for Capacities explained that he was "waiting to be discovered and activated," since "capacities are conceptual—one has no proof that capacities are real." Meanwhile, the representative for Team reported a sense of waiting for something, and that it could not yet fully take action: "I'm observing and curious. I like being here."

The facilitator asked whether this resonated with the two case givers, whose role in the exercise was to observe, inviting their feedback during the process. One member of Organization A replied, "A few of you have said that you don't know why you're saying [these sentences], but what you're saying and even the expression of how things have been said have resonated so much."

The facilitator asked if anyone felt called to represent Resources. A co-researcher volunteered, taking a position beneath and to the left of Capacities. When the Founder[3] moved forward, Resources expressed a desire to follow the Founder, yet admitted he felt too dependent on Capacities, so did not move. As the systemic constellation unfolded, there seemed to be an ongoing tension between Capacities and Resources. Co-researchers began to interpret these tensions symbolically as representations of dynamics within the organization. At one point, Capacities stated, "I think resources are capacities made manifest."

The facilitator invited each representative to share his or her current experience and to shift positions if they felt called to do so. As each of the elements took new positions in relation to each other, they shared insights and reported how they felt (see the evolution of movements in Figure 1). For instance, the representative for Organization A remarked to Capacities: "It's your time to show up and shine. Take some space." After other elements made their final moves, Organization A took what she called a "leap of faith" and moved behind the Team and Founder. She said: "As the Organization, I feel I can be very clear and powerful, yet also caring and humble about things."
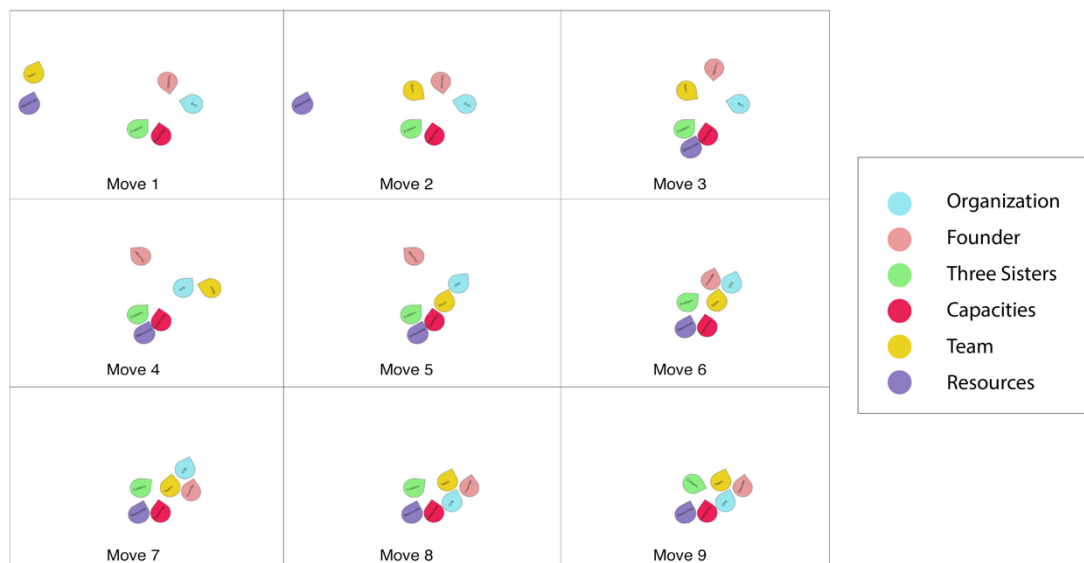

Figure 1: Systemic Constellation Map and Movements, highlighting 9 major moves of elements that were made during the systemic constellation. These screens were created and displayed via Google Slides online. Each icon of an element was represented by a co-researcher and the point indicates "a nose" and where the element is facing.

The constellation then concluded and the group took a moment to debrief and address lingering questions. Debriefing helps transform an experiential learning activity into knowledge (Kolb, 2014). The facilitator asked the case

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[3] "Founder" refers to the person embodying the founder role during the systemic constellation.

givers: "How is it now for you? Is there anything that feels unresolved?" A case giver reflected on the patterns that emerged over the course of the systemic constellation: "It was interesting to see the struggle between Capacities and Resources play out…. I like where all the elements landed…. it felt unified and together and felt really powerful to me." A witness reflected on the mental and physical responses she observed during the exercise: "I was moved by [Organization A's] discomfort in certain moments…. the leap of faith at the end…felt like the right thing to do." Another co-researcher noted in response to the dynamic positioning of the elements on the screen: "Organization A adopting and modeling a different way of leading and being in community…is part of our collective responsibility…. I found it very humbling to see Organization A moving behind the Team and the Founder, and the Three Sisters arm in arm, almost like the container to shepherd them."

Phase Three: Reflection and Learning

The following week, we began Phase 3 with a large-group discussion on the systemic constellation experience, and asked the witnesses and case-givers to share what stood out or resonated with them. By reflecting on systemic constellations as a collective practice and what was "being made" from the individual responses over time, we aimed to provide an opportunity to reveal ingrained patterns and dynamics and any noticeable shifts in capacity to navigate new or unknown situations.

Overall, the group expressed genuine curiosity and was intrigued by the systemic constellation experience. The representative for Organization A shared that what she "found fascinating in this practice was that we were all able to step into the different elements and embody things that seemed to be specific to the organization's actual experience, even though we didn't know much about it or its context." She added: "The qualities I felt were quite specific and are not things I usually feel present in me. I was intrigued that I could discern… feelings, intuitions, ways of dealing with things that are not in line with what I would probably do in a similar situation." A case giver noted, "I was surprised by how the comments made by representatives were congruent to my personal feelings about the element represented."

During the preparatory call prior to the group systemic constellation, the case giver had shared his desire to cultivate a team and to design an organizational growth model to attract funders. The systemic constellation allowed him to witness this possibility and transition: "What felt really good in this experience was an understanding that I had a Team and could see the journey of all the elements and that struggle of Capacities and Resources, because…we are under-resourced. It was important for me to see Capacities and Resources as separate elements and the fuller expression of how they were represented. My limited mind would never have seen that. It was beautiful to see those boundaries broken and pushed."

The tension and confusion between Capacities and Resources was a prominent pattern in the systemic constellation and noted in several reflections. The Founder representative observed that "the back and forth between Capacities and Resources was interesting…. Do you go after resources in order to expand capacity? I also felt like you needed capacity to be able to go after those resources." Metaphorizing capacity and resources in the constellation helped differentiate them and illuminate the patterns that were playing out internally. We asked the founder how he made sense of the delayed entry of Resources in the systemic constellation. He reported the organization's perseverance despite a dearth of resources:

> Last month [after Phase 2], we did a huge event in less than two weeks…. over 30,000 people from around the world for food justice talks. We did this with no funding and no grant. I think the reason we accomplished this was because of that collective team and our capacity. It was not driven by resources, but too often we are thinking in that framework…. Witnessing the constellation mapping, it was nice to see that transition…looking away and forward, versus on Resources. I believe that movement between Capacities and Resources was what helped cultivate capacities and the team, and that is leading to funding coming into the organization. This is the shift.

When asked if anything had shifted in the moment when Organization A said to Capacities, "It's your time to show up and to shine. Take some space," the case giver noted the inner shift that had occurred since Phase 1: "Trust. I've started to trust myself more." He also reflected that the sudden interruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis became an opportunity to "flourish and shine": "We knew how to navigate in a world of uncertainty and scarcity. I made a commitment to myself to not wake up every day and think about chasing funders. Instead, we did what we needed to do, centered on that integrity." From this point, "resources...started to flow" as the organization began to secure needed funding.

Further Reflections after the Pilot Study

Shortly after the final gathering, to understand whether systems sensing and systemic constellations had any influence on the organization's capacity to navigate complexity, we asked the founder of Organization A—the case giver—if the experience gave him insight into the calling question ("What is Organization A invited to cultivate as capacities for shifting toward a more thriving, decentralized organization?"). He shared what he felt was the greatest direct value created through the experience: "The process helped me to become a better leader, namely it helped me understand my own vulnerability…. within the organization, within my own placement within the organization, and how to exist in that context in the world at large." We wondered whether this inner shift also led to outer manifestations.

Six months later, the founder noted several changes in the organization. First, the organization grew in capacity and resources while building toward decentralization, as the founder expanded from a team of contractors to six full-time staff to support communications, systems management, program direction, and design. Secondly, as the founder explained, the organization clarified its messaging and voice: "Food sovereignty is the language we use because the communities that grow our food are the ones that have been oppressed and objectified." At the end of the conversation, he suggested doing a systemic constellation with his new team, which signaled to us that he found merit in the approach.

Discussion and Conclusion

So what does this pilot study tell us about the value of systems sensing and the systemic constellations approach to enable organizations to widen their collective capacities for navigating complexity?

Systems sensing practices can stimulate another way of being with and relating to each other in order to share responsibility, explore possibilities, and relate to unknown and unnamed factors. By exploring the case from different angles and perspectives, the co-researchers gained new ways of looking at an issue and supported an internal shift for the founder while disrupting current assumptions and cognitive storylines. The experience highlighted how events in the past, including personal ones, may be influencing the current situation.

Based on the findings of this study, we propose that systems sensing and systemic constellations can contribute to organizational change practice and complexity leadership theory in three key areas:

- the important role of expanding one's perspective by calling upon and engaging with wider ways of knowing, including sharing vulnerable aspects, systemic blind spots, and personal dynamics that might influence and be mirrored in the "outer" organizational work;

- the significance of building and cultivating collective capacity—such as being with what is, listening through engaging with wider ways of knowing, and daring to not know—in order to be able to enter into dialogue with the more hidden, subtle, and implicit dynamics as a group; and

- the relevance of cross-organizational spaces for practice and engaging with collective awareness and their ability to strengthen the artistry for navigating complexity.

The practice of systemic constellation enlivens the artistry of navigating complex terrains collectively. Systems sensing and systemic constellations are processes that can help practitioners slow down to tune into signals from the felt senses and wider ways of knowing more explicitly as individuals and collectives.

This enables them to somatically experience a specific issue or challenge from different angles and make sense of these signals together as the practice unfolds. These processes can cultivate shared awareness and capacities for relating to and understanding the interrelated dynamics of systems, including subtle interpersonal and collective dynamics informed by past events that may be unacknowledged or unresolved. This can inform the way individuals and teams relate and interact with one another or influence how issues are addressed. In summary, the practice of systemic constellations contributes to the concept of shared leadership, as described by Uhl-Bien, Mario & McKelvey (2007), by illuminating unnamed, unconscious, or unknown dynamics and patterns operating in complex adaptive systems, including relationality and interdependence across topic, place, scale, and time.

This research brings up vital questions for future action-oriented research: for instance, what is informing how we perceive, and how is that informing how we make meaning of situations and contexts, and the unfolding of our behaviors and actions?

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