

**Bounded and Unbounded Organisation**  
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**Abstract:** A distinction between bounded organisation and unbounded organisation is proposed and the latter is recommended. Bounded organisation is auto-centric; unbounded organisation is not. An initial definition of “unbounded organisation” is given, and then clarified and elaborate throughout the article. The application of Kurt Lewin’s social psychology to organisational development illustrates bounded organisation. The United Democratic Front of 1983-1991 is an (admittedly imperfect) example of unbounded organisation. The distinction is defended against criticisms commonly levelled against comprehensive progressive ideas.

**Keywords:** Bounded, Unbounded, Organisation, Development, Kurt Lewin, Civil Society, Management.

What has come to be known as “civil society” has assumed today an importance that could not have been predicted a hundred years ago.<sup>1</sup> In 1912 political parties were already important. Trade unions were growing. The state was already a fundamental institution, even though millions were non-citizens of non-states because of colonialism. But the enormous role attributed to civil society in 2012, including but not limited to constituting a global civil society parallel to a global economy was still beyond the horizon, not only not expected to come to pass, but not thinkable, not imaginable.

There is a growing literature offering explanations and theoretical frameworks for this historical surprise.<sup>2</sup> It is common today to redefine society<sup>3</sup> (“redefine” instead of “define” because it is a matter of formulating a successor to older ways of dividing society into elements or sectors) distinguishing three sectors: the market sector, the public sector, civil society.<sup>4</sup> While there is a large literature expressing virtually unrestrained praise of the idea of civil society, lamenting only its insufficient implementation,<sup>5</sup> there is also a literature questioning it as a conceptual framework and casting doubt on that framework’s contributions to social development.

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This article contributes to this growing literature by elaborating on a different conceptual distinction: that between bounded and unbounded organisation. This is a cross-cutting distinction. Although it grows out of reflection on civil society and particularly out of reflection on organisational development (OD) in civil society, it applies across the board. It is intended to augment and amend the idea of “civil society” and the related idea of a three-sector society.

The core thesis informing this article is an assertion that humanity has not yet apprehended an appropriate systems alignment that fully restores and is nurturing of the nearly seven billion people on this planet, and in fact that we are prevented from doing so by deeply etched patterns of bounded organisation. The concept of “unbounded organisation” thus comes into play as a candidate for being recognised as a superior approach, one that can overcome the limitations of what we are calling deeply etched patterns of bounded organisation. As a new candidate for the role of comprehensive framework for social development, it will inevitably be suspected of having the vices attributed to older candidates for comprehensive framework for progressive social change. A number of objections are likely to be raised, and by replying briefly to some of them we will both defend our proposal and clarify it. Much of twentieth century conservative and post-structuralist thought was devoted to attacking progressive philosophies, and several of our defences will show that the concept of unbounded organisation is immune to typical objections made against progressive and radical ideas for allegedly being a threat to liberty tending toward “serfdom,”<sup>7</sup> or for being an ideology for a “closed society,”<sup>8</sup> or for being an intellectually indefensible “metanarrative,”<sup>9</sup> or “totalising.”<sup>10</sup>

What we mean by “unbounded organisation” is, as a first approximation, inter-sectoral collaboration, individuals linking among their “own” organisations, coalition building, cross-cultural activities and involvement by all segments of society. Organisations see themselves as part of a family of organisations and interlinked.

Our strategy will be to analyse first the theories of Kurt Lewin, who has been a seminal figure in the construction of the concepts we will identify with “bounded organisation.” A “bounded organisation” sees itself as the centre of the world and all its strategic plans are formulated in an auto-centric fashion. It has implicit boundaries on activity created by the organisation’s identity.

We do not say that Lewin’s work is the historical cause of the pervasive tendency for present-day organisations --whether private, public, or belonging to some ‘third sector’— to regard themselves and to constitute themselves as (in our terms) bounded. We do not say that Lewin and his school have been the only thinkers to articulate the ideas we call those of bounded organisation. We do say that their ideas provide an extremely influential central case, a paradigm<sup>11</sup> showing what we mean by “bounded.”

Lewin provides us with a negative resource for elaborating on the first approximation we have already given to the meaning and use of the phrase “unbounded organisation.” The

negative example taken from Lewin will help us to continue to elaborate the concept of UO. We then consider an historical case of “unbounded organisation,” namely the United Democratic Front (UDF) movement against apartheid in pre-1994 South Africa.

### Lewinian Roots of Organisational Development Theory and Practice

We seek to show that “Lewinian social psychology” – for all its remarkable insight, versatility in application across widely differing organisational contexts, and indubitable achievements – can entrap us within a limited “organising universe” of our own making which in turn generates its own language and manner of thinking.<sup>12</sup> We will call that language and manner of thinking “bounded,” and we will treat it as an exemplar of a broader category we will call “bounded organisation.”

Any book on organisational theory published in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century acknowledges its linkage to behavioural science broadly, and to social psychology more specifically. Previously, in the period before the Second World War, management and organisation thought borrowed eclectically from several sources, including hugely influential figures such as Frederick Taylor and the sociologist Max Weber. But increasingly – and most notably in the United States of America – it was the emerging discipline of social psychology that came to influence thinking about organisation. In showing the consonance of this emergent social psychology with the dominant political and ideological thought in the United States at this time, Peter Franks<sup>13</sup> traces the development of the discipline from the first publications in 1908 by Ross and McDougall of books with this title, through the early work of Floyd Allport (who published his book Social Psychology in 1924) to the contributions of key influences such as John Dewey, G.W.Allport, Carl Rogers, Gardner Murphy, Muzafer Sherif, Kurt Lewin and others. We shall rely on some of Franks’ insights.<sup>14</sup>

With the emergence of the field of organisational development (OD) early in the 1950s, behavioural science’s contributions to organisation theory found increasing coherence and application in interventions for organisation improvement. Any standard textbook on OD, such as French and Bell’s (1999) classic text Organisation Development: Behavioural Science Interventions for Organisation Improvement is studded with references to social psychologists and other behavioural scientists and practitioners. Most descriptions (of the genesis and history of this new field, which emerged only from the early 1950s, mention the seminal event of a workshop on Inter-

Group Relations held in New Britain, Connecticut in 1946 under the direction of Kurt Lewin, and the subsequent role played by the National Training Laboratories (NTL), founded by Lewin's collaborators at New Britain after his death, in pioneering T-groups.<sup>15</sup> T-groups were instrumental to the emergence of organisational development as a field. French and Bell use an analogy of a mangrove tree<sup>16</sup> to classify systematic organisational development activities into four important trunk stems: innovations in applying laboratory training insights to complex organisations; survey research and feedback methodology; action research; and the socio-technical and socio-clinical approaches pioneered by the Tavistock Institute. In reviewing the literature about the precepts and applications of each one of these "trunk stems", it becomes clear that each of them is indebted to the discipline of social psychology. In all four we find consistently the (greater or lesser) influence of Kurt Lewin.<sup>17</sup> Lewin's social psychology is thus of no small consequence when we consider organisational development theory and practice.

Bill Cooke's invaluable contributions<sup>18</sup> – looking at the relevance of process consultation for development practice, and looking at issues around participation and the history of the application of behavioural science to change management – draw on extensive scholarly research and a fluent understanding of social psychology texts and writing about organisational development (as well as on his personal experience as an OD practitioner). In the light of what we have seen above, it is clear that it is no coincidence that Cooke pays special attention to the work of Kurt Lewin.

Cooke shows that "the relationship between development and OD is patchy".<sup>19</sup> He mentions bodies of work around participatory social intervention or development management, as well as forms of development activity with an overtly organisational focus – including the omnipresent organisational "capacity building" – which make limited or no reference to "the management discipline of OD". However, Cooke also discusses attempts that have been made to integrate OD and development practice. Srinivas makes one of those attempts at integration.<sup>20</sup> Srinivas' notes the tendency to apply American social psychology wherever one might be in the world and calls for "indigenous culture specific adaptations, which would make OD more effective."

Cooke shows that in the customary presentation of social psychology as applied to management and OD "technique has been abstracted from [societal] context", troubling issues (like racism) are ducked, and change methods are applied supposedly free from context.<sup>21</sup>

Cooke says:

“...OD is ahistorical and acontextual (Pettigrew, 1985: 23), being wholly about the management of change and hardly about the analysis of any of the historical and immediate contexts of change (Wilson, 1992:120)... [The] implication is that even overt attempts to ground change agent practice in analyses of structural forces – which, it can be argued is an important defining component of Thomas’ development management – are subject to a powerful excluding dynamic. That dynamic is sustained... by the immediacy, indeed the here and now, of the ‘here and now’. Priority is likely to be given to means of addressing present, observable and supposedly addressable individual, group and organisational behaviour rather than to understanding those equally present, but less evidently observable and addressable extra-organisational societal forces. Moreover this is true of management generally as it is of change management”<sup>22</sup>

Cooke draws implications for formation processes of development practitioners, and to reflect on the position of the change agent, with pressures to create a “here and now, instrumental justification of their own role” given an immediate managerial or change agent task. He also reflects that practitioners play a part in “creating and sustaining a particular managerialist discourse”<sup>23</sup> The concerns expressed here accord with an earlier assertion by the same author: “The weakness is that OD emphasises micro-levels of analysis and action, that is individual, group, and organisational behaviour, to the exclusion of any consideration of broader perspectives, for example those at a societal or policy level.”<sup>24</sup>

We suggest that in these paragraphs Cooke gets at the nub of the difficulties facing development practitioners; in many cases their very methods of work, their “mediational means”, limit and constrain their organisational imagination and that of those with whom they work. . Taken in concert with the pressures to “deliver” - to effect changes adjudged as beneficial by individual organisations as well as development funders - this amounts to a veritable straightjacket to innovation and creativity. We further suggest that these crucial difficulties faced in practice can best be understood in the light of the pervasive influence of Lewinian social psychology in the field of organisational development. We would describe the “problem” with OD, and much of the “problem” with managerial discourse generally as derivative of a more fundamental problem with Lewinian social psychology. We propose to look at Lewinian theory – and specifically the group

dynamics method – to show how this affects the dominant social psychology and, out of this, organisation theory.

It would be interesting to discover to what extent the models, process and language of organisation that emerge from the United States' mid-twentieth century organisational flourishing of commerce, industry and armed forces organisation affect our instinctive approaches to development. How does the “bounded enterprise” paradigm that proved so competent in that epoch and milieu - and which was moulded and honed through the experimentation of an emerging “small groups” social psychology – shape our ways of organising for development, so that we may not at times see clearly what is required of us? Do we suffer from “learned incapacities” so that we “instinctively” create inappropriate organisational forms, or even misconceive entirely the kind of organisation required to address our societal challenges?

We do not mean to assert that there is a lack of OD development practitioners who argue for a holistic approach. Allan Kaplan is known to embrace the wider social space and consistently argue for a holistic appreciation of organisations in their ecological setting,<sup>25</sup> as are other practitioners within the stream of OD with which he is associated, and whose most famous proponent is probably Bernard Lievegoed.<sup>26</sup> Several theorists hold an open systems understanding of organisation.<sup>27</sup> There has been an increasing focus through the 1990s and into this century on inter-sectoral collaboration.<sup>28</sup> A good example of an OD outfit that seeks to put emphasis on the way that the external environment affects organisations is EASUN – the East African Support Unit for NGOs. EASUN has recognised<sup>29</sup> that a weakness in much conventional OD is that it tends to look at the organisation's internal systems only. The need to consider the external environment and the institutional context is particularly evident when considering the situation of a small community organisation: within its local environment there are other structures and organisations that have varying degrees of power and influence; conscious OD has then to consider not only the “felt needs” of the local members (as many development courses assume) but also the ways in which they must negotiate these realities and build relationships with a range of actors.<sup>30</sup>

The issue is then rather subtle: theory is available to help to look at organisations (or organisation) in different ways.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, practitioners' own “learned disability” born of continual reinforcement of dominant views and practices, cages them in an imagination of the

bounded organisation. Practitioners' own mindsets – or external pressures that come to be encoded in the terms of reference for an assignment – invariably tend to constrain the wider investigation of the organisational ecology and consequent macro-management considerations, in favour of a narrow focus on internal dynamics.

The problem of the dominant OD theory and practice is not that it totally ignores the outside world. It would be totally ineffective if this were the case. The nature of the conceptual constraint it imposes is that the approach is auto-centric. It situates the organisation at the centre of the organising universe. Rather than seeing itself in perspective as one element of a system or family of organisations contributing towards a certain social practice, it is encouraged to look for its unique competence and the competitive advantage through which it would make its individual way through the world. Strategic thinking in this paradigm implies in the first place understanding the special role of the organisation within its social context and given its capabilities. If in this process it is recognised that other tasks need to be taken up (which are outside the organisation's capacity), there is no responsibility, and certainly no encouragement from the theory, to think through the mechanism by which another organisation or grouping of organisations can take up this challenge. If the epithet "individualistic" can be applied to organisations, then the dominant OD practice is individualistic rather than social. Bounded development organisations abound, and not only may they not align their societal or policy contributions, but their funding and accountability patterns can lock them into antagonistic competition.

### Roots of Lewinian Social Psychology

There can be little doubt that the practice derived from group dynamics theory pervades all layers of our working lives. At the colloquial level we only have to describe the conferences industry and especially that part of its landscape where there is activity in learning about the world of work to see a "small groups" social practice (derived from American social psychology) in full flow. Here we see how a technique that originated in a laboratory setting can become part of a popular organising vernacular. Millions travel by foot, car, truck, bus, train or plane to become participants in it. Millions of people know the language and the practice of this modern organisation method. Its continual application has indeed been a feature of the last twenty years of accelerated globalisation, through countless seminars, conventions, meetings, workshops, leadership development forays, training courses, capacity-building initiatives and consultations, and in

gatherings of researchers, politicians, practitioners of varying hues, professionals and mass activists. It is perhaps only common thieves who choose to eschew it altogether and yet continue to engage systemically with society-in-motion. Common thieves and a certain dream variety of social movements.

The method is employed so naturally that it may never even occur to us that anything other than this can happen, or ever happened otherwise in humanity's chronicles. A large group<sup>32</sup> assembles around a theme. Within this "plenary" is a variety of smaller working groups. Some are self-identifying as from the same organisation, or country, or discipline, or stake-holder grouping. One small group plays the role of organiser-facilitator. Some are put in the same group for reasons they are unaware of or at best partially aware (for example from similar strata or in commensurable working roles across contrasting socio-cultural milieus). Some are grouped together because they possess similar passions or predilections around issues of power – whether emanating from gender, age, phenotype etc. The learning, or work-direction asserting, method begins thus: the large group entertains discussions or engages in a process to establish a narrative. It forges awareness of what is in the "public realm": what we know about this topic, and what we are now seeking to learn about it. Commonly of course the narrative forged is about "what we are teaching about, what training/instruction you will be getting". There may be speakers around a topic, or some form of presentations that either assert "what we know"; or offer a way to look at "it" so it can be known, or a way to question it. Or there may simply be a method to "discover what we all know". At any rate, and in pace with the amount of time available, this plenary is divided at intervals into small groups, often called "breakaway groups", with assigned tasks. The smaller breakaway groups if left without expert facilitation work in haphazard fashion. Hence they are differentially enjoyable and interesting; they are variably expressive of the participants' knowledge of or potential creativity within the theme area. Later there is the "report-back", the re-integration of insights to the extent that is possible given the limitations of time constraints and the limitations of the abilities of the rapporteurs.<sup>33</sup>

In the detail woven into this humdrum pattern, in the sub-set of events that are really well planned, we find the core methodological insights of the Lewinian social psychology finding expression. Here we may find the unfreeze – cognitive restructuring – refreeze model developed by Schein building on Lewin's original (1947) model of social change, within the structure of a five-day or even one-day event. In individual sessions we may encounter some of the techniques



emerging from group dynamics, the most common being the creation and debriefing of plays and role-plays. Some of the jargon that was originally associated with these techniques has entered everyday speech.

We see then that not only is OD founded in the work of the Lewinian school of social psychology, but that this school's tools, techniques and methods have been taken into daily use, to a degree that there is hardly conscious thought about this. They are regarded as part of a "universal toolbox". The principles enacted in these techniques and the worldview that they express are therefore of more than academic interest.

It should be noted that the Lewinian school is in crucial respects similar to behaviourist and psycho-dynamic (Freudian) approaches to psychology. Lewinian social psychology turned out to be foundational for management, for OD, and for development practice; but this is not to say that the mainstream approach would have been less individualistic if instead of Lewinian field theory behaviourism or Freudianism had become dominant. In their book The Social Psychology of Organisations Katz and Kahn write: "The modesty of social psychologists in halting their study with the individual in the small group setting is due in great measure to the lack of conceptual tools for venturing into more complex areas... Behaviourism, Freudianism and field theory have been too individual in orientation and hence of very limited usefulness in dealing with social-structural problems. Nor have the older societal theories of the other social sciences provided the answers"<sup>34</sup> Indeed, Lewin's field theory is sometimes regarded as a "left wing of the Gestalt movement" that corrected some of the excesses of behaviourism. The same authors (Katz and Kahn) write: "Field theory, the left wing of the Gestalt movement, did correct the elementaristic assumptions of behaviourism, but only at the individual level. The psychological field of the Lewinians is an individual field. Though field theory does utilise the dynamics of relationship and emphasizes the properties of a given structure no matter what its phenotypic history, it is still addressed to the problems of organisation within the individual rather than within the collectivity"<sup>35</sup>

What then are the bases of Lewin's group dynamics? Peter Franks examines Lewin's work in terms of its socio-historical context.<sup>36</sup> He places the rise of totalitarian thinking as backdrop to the development of Gestalt psychology in Germany and behaviourism in the United States of America, each of which "embodied the mechanistic and deterministic view of the individual, making the objective determinants of behaviour explicit and thereby available for manipulation...

The gestalt psychologists following Max Wertheimer discovered the determinants of perception and illusion in the properties of the gestalt or whole, and gave rise to the principle that the whole determines the parts.”<sup>37</sup> Most gestalt psychologists limited their attention to individual psychological processes, but soon after arriving in the United States in 1935, Lewin “took the principles of perception and illusion [i.e. the principles of Gestalt psychology] and applied them to the context of social organisation.”<sup>38</sup> Lewin placed emphasis on the role of the group in the determination of individual behaviour:

We quote Lewin: “During most of his life the adult acts not purely as an individual but as a member of a social group. However, the different groups a person belongs to are not all equally important at a given moment. Sometimes his belonging to one group is dominant, sometimes his belonging to the other. He may, for instance, in one situation feel and act as a member of his political group and at other times as a member of his family, religious or business group. Generally, in every situation the person seems to know what group he belongs to and to what group he does not belong. He knows more or less clearly where he stands, and this position largely determines his behaviour.”<sup>39</sup>

Lewin limited his enquiry to the question of “Why, in a given situation, that is, with a person (P) in a certain state and in a certain environment (E), does precisely this behaviour (B) result? The problem is thus to represent the behaviour (event) as a function of the momentary total situation.”<sup>40</sup> We have added italics for emphasis. Lewin’s effort to represent behaviour as a function of a momentary total situation can be represented mathematically thus:  $B = f(P, E)$ .

Lewin also specifically argued against dealing with the question of: “Why at this moment, does the situation have precisely this structure and the person precisely this condition or state?”<sup>41</sup> By neglecting any deeper contextual or historical referents, Lewin thus created a bounded gestalt or a situational gestalt. To cite Peter Franks again: “Lewin restricted himself to dealing with the abstracted moment, out of history; a moment without meaning for the person, except that meaning provided by the particular situation, allowing the social institutions to provide the meaning for the person.”<sup>42</sup>

Franks’ citation of Barbu is also helpful: “Lewin works out his (situational) conception in constant opposition to that of Freud, which he describes as an ‘historical’ conception of

personality. In contrast to Freud and his followers, who tend to explain any specific reaction by reference to a mental structure formed in the early history of the individual, hence pre-existing the situation in which it occurs, Lewin aims to explain it entirely in terms of the situation, defined as sheer contemporaneity.”<sup>43</sup>

Lewin’s “situational conception” of course neglects people’s histories, cultures, formative processes and longer-term dreams. Franks argues that by excluding the question about structure, and the state or condition of the person at this moment, Lewin “took the viewpoint of the planner for others and not the participant.”<sup>44</sup> Franks points out that in Lewin’s later experiments on group climate (out of which came the distinctions among democratic, authoritarian and laissez faire “leadership styles” still covered in textbook accounts of group dynamics process today) this “viewpoint of the planner” was the role played by his “leaders.” The “leaders” are conceived as adults “leading” groups of carefully selected boys who had limited choice about a set task. Hence Franks suggests that the distinctions among leadership styles in these first Lewinian experiments are merely among different types of authoritarian leaders. Franks suggests further that it was the prestige inherent in the adult role rather than leadership that influenced the boys’ behaviour.<sup>45</sup>

His decision to limit the boundaries of the gestalt, to “the ahistorical abstract moment” became the characteristic leitmotiv of Lewin’s work. It set him apart from others in the gestalt movement like Wertheimer who argued that establishing the boundaries of a gestalt is not a matter of choice. It set him apart even more from activity theory psychology pioneered by Lev Vygotsky, which intentionally and deliberately does not understand psychological phenomena inside the “a historical abstract moment’ but instead in the context of historical concrete activity.”<sup>46</sup> Vygotsky saw behaviour as mediated through signs and other cultural artefacts. Vygotsky’s insertion of the cultural artefact/ tool into psychological explanation became the cornerstone of activity theory, since “the basic unit of analysis now overcame the split between the Cartesian individual and the untouchable societal structure.”<sup>47</sup> For Vygotsky, in contrast to Lewin, the individual needed to be understood in relation to her/his cultural means, and “the society could no longer be understood without the agency of individuals who use and produce artefacts... objects became cultural entities and the object-orientedness of action became the key to understanding human psyche.”<sup>48</sup>

Lewin’s refusal to place human consciousness in historical/cultural context drew the fire of Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre called Lewin’s bounded gestalt a “fetishism of totalities,”<sup>49</sup> and suggested

that it could only appear justified from a deterministic point of view. Peter Frank, comments on Sartre's suggestion: "But, then again this was in accordance with the *Zeitgeist* of the developing social science, and with the overall thrust of Gestalt psychology."<sup>50</sup>

Lewin's construction of a "situational gestalt" in the "here and now" was fundamental for the relationship between mainstream social psychology and organisational development we referred to earlier when discussing Bill Cooke's contributions. Those who have participated in OD employing any group process in the tradition of the T-groups, or within the Training for Transformation movement<sup>51</sup> will recognize from their own experience some of the practical principles that are derived from Lewinian theory: Only that which can be brought into the group and shared is valid; it is not adequate to talk about something external; what is presented must be accessible for common experience by the group; or else must reflect the participant's own feelings and perceptions.

In an obituary to Lewin in 1948, E.C. Tolman wrote: "He felt that, if we could but correctly conceptualize the a-historical, situational factors determinative of behaviour, then we could manipulate these contemporaneous situational factors and produce the sort of behaviour which all persons of good will would desire. If we can discover the 'systematic laws', the laws of the 'pure case', i.e. those laws whereby a given 'life space' inevitably produces a given behaviour, then we can know how to change persons and groups to remake their behaviour according to our hearts' desires. In short it was his humanity, I believe, which would not allow him to dwell for long on any consideration other than the manipulable present. His emphasis on the a-historical was a humanitarian as much as an intellectual need."<sup>52</sup>

Here in Tolman's obituary of Lewin we see the accuracy of Franks' remark about the "social scientific *Zeitgeist*." Manipulation of situational factors, and ultimately of people is passed off as being for their own good, and the social scientist – the expert, the manipulator – is understood to serve the interests which "all persons of good will would desire". The quest to "know how to change persons and groups and remake their behaviour according to our hearts' desire", is evidently quite acceptable for the social psychologist of the 1940s. Franks adds, "This assumption that the expert knows better is fraught with the dangers of totalitarianism."<sup>53</sup> And: "[E]xtant social psychology aids in the domination of the 'common man' both by rationalizing the

status quo as natural and unchangeable, and by the production and refinement of techniques of domination.”<sup>54</sup>

It is clear that Lewin has had a seminal effect on social psychology, and that his situational, or in our conception “bounded” gestalt, has had an effect far beyond the laboratory situations he designed. The Lewinian notion of group dynamics has come to affect all of our organisational theory and OD practice. It plays a part in reducing our organisational imagination to that of the individual bounded enterprise, and so constraining appropriate systems alignment.

### Further Elaboration of the Concept of “Unbounded” Organisation in the Light of the Critique of Lewin

As a first approximation we defined “unbounded organisation” as “inter-sectoral collaboration, individuals linking among their ‘own’ organisations, coalition building, cross-cultural activities and involvement by all segments of society.”

Now, taking Lewin’s social psychology as a paradigm for “bounded organisation,” we can make explicit three of the points we implicitly had in mind when offering a first approximation. One such point is that seeing the need for inter-sectoral collaboration goes together with seeing one’s work in historical context. A “bounded organisation” is bounded in two dimensions. In one dimension it brings into focus the objectives of one’s own organisation (one’s own institution or group), tending to allow fading out of focus the objectives of the larger society. In another dimension it tends to see the social structures of its time and place as natural and eternal (or rather it does not ask whether they are or are not they are natural and eternal, but simply accepts them), rather than as changing and evolving and reconstituting themselves over time. The two dimensions are related, since achieving the structural transformation needed to achieve the objectives of the larger society (such as eradicating poverty) requires both inter-sectoral collaboration and historical vision.

Second, in the light of our analysis of Lewin’s work, we can now express more clearly the relationship between our proposal to make a two-way distinction between bounded and unbounded organisation and the common practice of making a three-way distinction among state, market, and civil society. We regard our contribution as part of ongoing conversations around the role of civil society in social development. Nevertheless we have declined to accept the usual framework of those conversations. Now we can better explain why. As we mentioned at the

beginning of this article, civil society as it is currently conceived and on its current scale, is the product of recent historical evolution. Viewed diachronically, its rise can be seen as a companion and consequence of neoliberal globalisation, which has tended to disempower trade unions, political parties, and states, and to assign more social functions to civil society organisations.<sup>55</sup> Viewed synchronically, the members of the triad state-market-civil society can be seen, as Louise Amoore and Paul Langley see them, as “interrelated and mutually constitutive.”<sup>56</sup> The three parts of the triad form a neat conceptual package. Human conduct can be conceived to be organised in three possible ways: by force, by contract, and voluntarily. The state monopolizes the legitimate use of force. The market organises transactions with the legal force of contracts among buyers and sellers. Civil society consists of voluntary organisation to achieve common purposes.<sup>57</sup> In the light of our discussion of Lewin we can recognize this trichotomy as an historical/cultural artefact produced at a certain point in the history of society and in the history of ideas. It can be compared to another such artefact: Lewin’s abstracted moment when  $B = f(P,E)$ . It is a bounded concept. It limits what is thinkable. It thus constrains imagination in social development.

Our reflections on Lewin also pave the way for making explicit a non-obvious way that the concept of “unbounded organisation” is consciousness-raising.<sup>58</sup> Obviously, the concept calls for coalition-building, and for the other elements of the definition we gave as a first approximation. Almost as obviously it calls for whatever structural transformations are necessary to achieve major societal-level objectives like eradicating poverty. Coming as it does out of the traditions of grassroots development practice it can be taken for granted that it assumes that grassroots participation is essential. But a hypothetical objector might say that s/he already believes in coalition-building, in structural transformation, and in participation, and does not need a new concept to become convinced of what s/he already believes. We suggest, nevertheless, a point less obvious: that because of the pervasive influence of an individualistic, a-historical, and a-cultural version of social psychology in organisation development, inappropriate methods are frequently uncritically regarded as best practices even by many people whose critical principles are those of our hypothetical objector. If this is the case, then our hypothetical objector may have unconscious or taken-for-granted beliefs and habits that are not consistent with what s/he believes at a conscious level. Our reflections on Lewin thus pave the way for making explicit a non-obvious way that the concept of “unbounded organisation” can be consciousness-raising

We therefore add to our definition of “unbounded organisation” that it incorporates by reference, as if set out in full, the critique of “bounded organisation” that is exemplified (but not exhausted) by our discussion of Lewinian social psychology.

We will elaborate further on how it illuminates UO while replying to objections that can be raised against UO regarded as an overall concept capable of guiding the construction of an appropriate systems alignment. But first we will mention some features of the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front of the 1980s in South Africa. It was in some respects an “unbounded organisation.”

### Comments on the United Democratic Front and its Aftermath

The United Democratic Front (UDF) existed from its founding in 1983 until its formal dissolution in 1991.<sup>59</sup> It was a concrete historical example showing several characteristics of unbounded organisation. It was a loose coalition embracing at a given moment as many as 565 organisations. It maintained inter-sectoral collaboration with the COSATU, the federation of trade unions of South Africa, and with the African National Congress (ANC).<sup>60</sup> It involved many although not all segments of society.<sup>61</sup>

The UDF grouped its many affiliates in the categories of students, youth, civics, women, religious, political, and other. Each affiliate retained its autonomy and had complete independence insofar as its actions and policies were not inconsistent with the principles of the UDF.<sup>62</sup> The UDF principles included building a non-racial society, and (at least nominally) adhering to the ideals of the Freedom Charter. In practice the affiliated organisations often took action regarding their specific and/or local concerns which the UDF leadership did not coordinate and in many cases did not even know about.<sup>63</sup> The central leadership was in any case inefficient and understaffed.<sup>64</sup> Thus both because local autonomy was in principle agreed upon and because in practice the affiliated organisations had to act autonomously if they were to act at all, the UDF was less a movement welded together by hierarchy and structure and more an interlinked family of organisations.<sup>65</sup> Each affiliate had its local agenda, but on the whole it is fair to say that to a great extent the affiliates were not auto-centric. They were aligned with the societal objective of ending apartheid. There was alignment to a shared purpose, namely to make the country ungovernable by the apartheid regime, and alignment to a shared value, namely the construction of a non-racial society.

Although we propose the UDF as a valuable experience showing that unbounded organisation is not merely an untried idea, we do not propose it as a model. In important ways, as the leading historian of the movement Jeremy Seekings can be read as suggesting, UDF was a case of practice being ahead of theory.<sup>66</sup> To put unbounded organisation effectively into practice, we must first transform our thinking so that organisations see themselves as part of a family of organisations and interlinked. Then we must find new methodologies to facilitate inter-organisational dialogue and agreed activity.

Unfortunately it was the formal model of a representative hierarchy, and not the grassroots practice of the UDF manifesting important aspects of unbounded organisation, that was carried over into the post-apartheid era. Immediately after 1994 people tried to organise for development as they imagined they had organised mass movements for liberation. A burst of energy went into the creation of “development forums” or Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) Committees, or Community Forums. These post-apartheid forums and committees reproduced many of the formal rules of organisation (but not the spirit of autonomous organisations aligned with a common purpose and with common values) of the UDF. The new forums were seen as responsible for raising funds, organising technical support and interfacing with policy makers on the basis of “business plans.” This promoted an image of development as primarily an externally-stimulated process<sup>67</sup>, rather than fostering an asset-based developmental culture.<sup>68</sup> As is typical of what we call “bounded organisation,” the organisation itself became the focus of people’s organising efforts. The best people at local level were skimmed off to higher representative levels.

### A Reply to a Possible Objection

Our idea that society as a whole has or should have objectives (like eradicating poverty and living in sustainable harmony with the environment), and that the numerous organisations that compose society should not be auto-centric but instead aligned to cooperate to achieve society’s objectives, may sound to some not too radical but too conservative. In a moment we will reply to possible objections that it is too radical, but first we will clarify that it is not an echo of any of the versions of social science that can be charged with an excessive optimism, for example those that allegedly presuppose a “Durkheimian”<sup>69</sup> consensus model of society.

Claude Meillassoux or one of his followers might make such an objection. He has written extensive and sophisticated critiques of the older generations of anthropologists who have characterized African lineage-based traditional societies as functioning to meet needs. Where



others see kinship structures that work in their ecological contexts to favour individual and group survival, Meillassoux sees the political control of the elders who manage production and regulate marriage. For E.E. Evans-Pritchard, for example, in his classic study of the Nuer, one cannot speak of an “economy” of the Nuer because Nuer kinship systems and belief systems organize social relationships in ways to which western ideas of economics simply do not apply.<sup>70</sup> For Meillassoux and for many if not all Marxist social scientists this view is naïve. They argue that kinship is *part* of the political economy, and that even in traditional egalitarian communities there are groups that exploit others, and that much of the traditional ideology and symbolism beloved of anthropologists serves to justify and hide this exploitation.<sup>71</sup> Women in particular are exploited as producers and reproducers, whether by matriliney, patriliney, or bilaterality. With the coming of colonialism capitalist exploitation is “articulated” with the older forms of exploitation.<sup>72</sup> Different forms of exploitation coexist and complement one another. It is sometimes convenient for capitalism to encourage traditional lineage-based social forms as a source of cheap labour. Meillassoux’s empirical field work in Africa is meant to support a theoretical case that a Marxian conflict model of society, which assumes that dominant and powerful groups will pursue their own class interests, is scientifically valid, while versions of social science that fail to utilise that key assumption, ranging from Claude Levi-Strauss to Talcott Parsons, are not.

In reply to the possible (or probable) objection that the concept of “unbounded organisation” classes the writers among the naïve, we call attention to two related key limitations of the negative paradigm that helps us to define “unbounded organisation.” The ahistorical moment of Lewinian field theory is equally frustrating to functionalists and to Marxists. It deliberately refuses to address larger structural issues concerning how society as a whole functions. It also deliberately refuses to study the realities of power. Surely the two (how society functions and the realities of power) are connected, and surely a call for thinking in terms of unbounded organisation is correct to call for taking both into account.

However, the implications of the concept of stop there. It implies that the great theoretical questions in social science that Meillassoux and others address are relevant and important, but it does not imply their answers. We have our own views, including the view that the only plausible answers to these questions are nuanced and complex,<sup>73</sup> and the view that at this point in history it is not in the class interest of anybody to perpetuate poverty and the destruction of the biosphere. But our personal views are not strictly relevant to the issue whether the concept of unbounded organisation implies a commitment to an optimistic functionalism. The decision to transform our

thinking from “bounded organisation” to “unbounded organisation” is immune to the charge that it favours a consensus model over a conflict model because it does not favour either one. Although UO implies that we should be thinking about these questions, it does not commit us in advance to any particular way of answering them.

### “Unbounded Organisation” does not imply or lead to a totalitarian state

It is a standard conservative argument that any growth in the power of the state, for whatever reason and whatever may be the intentions of the interveners, is (in Friedrich von Hayek’s phrase) a “road to serfdom” inevitably fattening a “Leviathan” that sooner or later will gobble up the freedoms of the people.<sup>74</sup> This standard argument does not apply to our proposal for unbounded organisation. Unbounded organisation is a call for the voluntary alignment of values and voluntary agreement on activities among organisations of all kinds.<sup>75</sup> It is about thinking more comprehensively and acting more responsibly. It is not a call for increasing the power of anyone at the expense of anyone else’s liberty, and *a fortiori* it is not a call for increasing the power of the state at the expense of the liberty of its citizens.

### Unbounded Organisation is not a closed theory (it is not a theory at all)

In The Open Society and its Enemies<sup>76</sup>: Karl Popper agrees with his friend von Hayek that there is “...danger inherent in a policy of increasing the power of the state,”<sup>77</sup> but then he goes on to make a powerful additional argument that has become widely accepted.<sup>78</sup> Popper makes a case for what he calls “an open society” using arguments based on his philosophy of scientific method. The alleged enemies of an open society –Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, Freud, and others-- are said to propose untestable self-justifying “closed” theories that cannot be refuted by any possible evidence. Since there might be some danger that the present authors could be identified with the alleged sins of the “historicists” who in Popper’s book play the role of illustrious villains, it is worth taking a brief look at how Popper ties their alleged epistemological errors to their alleged political errors.

The linchpin of Popper’s scientific philosophy is a logical point. A proposition of the form “if p then q” is true whenever “q” is true. It does not matter in modern logic whether “p” is true or false; whenever “q” is true, “if p then q” is true. Similarly, if you already know what the facts are,

you can spin any number of theories predicting them, and you can (if you make the bogus claims Popper attributes to his villains) count the observed facts as evidence for the truth of your theory. Symbolically, “p” could be any number of assertions, and any number of stories could be told to link “p” to the coming-into-existence of “q.”

Legitimate science, according to Popper, deduces from the current state of scientific theory hypotheses that are falsifiable. They predict what “q” will be when “p” is not known. They make predictions that might be false.

Legitimate science for Popper does not consist of proven truths. It consists of falsifiable hypotheses which have been submitted to the risk of falsification and have survived. They have passed tests. So far they have not been refuted by the evidence, but in principle they might be refuted some time in the future.

The historicists, Popper claims, spin grand woolly theories that cannot possibly be refuted.<sup>79</sup> Their “closed” theories are more recent versions of the older tribal cosmic myths that claimed to explain what was, what is, what will be, and what should be. Their adherents see proofs of their beliefs all around them. They never see evidence contradicting their beliefs. Whatever the facts are, the facts are interpreted to fit the theory. Closed theories have been framed in ways that make it impossible for any conceivable evidence to refute them.

Theory corrupts practice. Comprehensive theories that can in principle never be refuted support authoritarian regimes whose decrees can in principle never be questioned. Proper science, modestly testing hypotheses framed to be falsifiable and never claiming to have the final truth, supports free, democratic, “open” societies.

Admittedly, unbounded organisation is a comprehensive idea. It is about aligning an organisation’s goals and practices with those of the larger society, and indeed with the aims of humanity as a whole. But whatever the merits of Popper’s views on science and society might and might not be,<sup>80</sup> the characteristic popperian arguments against comprehensive theories are not relevant critiques of unbounded organisation. Unbounded organisation is not a theory. It does not try to explain anything. It is not science. It is a recommendation for practice. Hence the proposition that “closed” theories supported by mistaken research methodologies lead to bad politics (to whatever extent it may be true and to whatever extent it may be false) is not relevant.

Regarded as a recommendation for practice, going beyond bounded organisation to unbounded organisation would seem to be a move that any advocate of open-minded science and democratic politics would welcome.

### Unbounded organisation is not a metanarrative

“God having been killed off in the nineteenth century, the entire thrust of twentieth century philosophy from Heidegger to the postmodernists has been to kill God’s secular replacement, enlightenment rationalism, as well. Modern thought has sought to undermine the very notions of metaphysics, nature, natural right, and the like, on which any philosophical concept of ‘the good’ could be built.”<sup>81</sup> These words from Francis Fukuyama echo J-F Lyotard’s synopsis of post-modernity as a time when “the grand narrative has lost its credibility” in which neither religious, nor Marxist, nor liberal stories, nor any other grand story giving meaning to life, can be believed.<sup>82</sup>

But unbounded organisation is not a story. It is not a general narrative. It is a proposal for action. It is a recommendation suggesting that we as a society and as humanity are more likely to solve our principal problems if our organisations link up to work with common purposes and values, than we are if each organisation remains auto-centric. It is therefore immune to the charge of being just one more unbelievable ideology that could be deconstructed as others have been. Arguments unmasking fallacies in the arguments that legitimated the great metanarratives of the past do not apply.

### Unbounded Organization is a kind of organization

Although we have already elaborated on what we say “unbounded organization” is, now that we have made some further remarks on what it is not (not a theory, not a narrative, not a methodological commitment for or against functionalism, historical materialism, or Popperism) we would like to add some further remarks on what it is.

The sources from which we have derived the idea of “unbounded organization” are to be found less in political philosophy and in economics,<sup>83</sup> and more in management science and in organization theory.<sup>84</sup> Negatively, we have elaborated an idea of “bounded organisation” from OD (organisational development) understood as applied Lewinian social psychology. The noun that the adjectives “bounded” and “unbounded” modifies is “organization.” “Unbounded organisation” refers to an activity, an organising process across society.

There is an abundant literature on organization theory, devoted in large part to advising Organisations (public, private, or third sector) on how to be more effective at what they do. We concur to a large extent with Peter Drucker when he says, “For modern society has become a

society of Organisations. The overwhelming majority of all people in all developed societies are employees of an organization, see their opportunities for career and success primarily as opportunities within an organization, and define their social status largely through their position within the ranks of an organization. ... In a society of Organisations *managing* becomes a social function and management the constitutive, the determining, the differential organ of society.”<sup>85</sup>

The idea of “organisation” and the vast literature reporting research and reflection on “organisations” includes studies of organisations and organising in all sectors. Organisations and the activity of organising can be classified in various ways, such as for example public, private, and civil ; or governmental, business, educational, health, charitable, recreational; or formal and informal; or pre-bureaucratic, bureaucratic, post-bureaucratic; or hierarchical and democratic. We are proposing to classify organising activity across the board as bounded or unbounded, recognizing of course that most organising will fall somewhere on a continuum between one and the other.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of this article we pointed out that human institutions have been reconfigured over the past one hundred years.<sup>86</sup> Some have declined in relative importance; others have increased in relative importance. In particular, civil society organisations have increased in numbers and in influence. Transformations that were not anticipated, and probably could not have been anticipated, have occurred. We are proposing to look at the history and present-day reality of organisations (in which these transformations in the past hundred years form a short segment) from a distinctive viewpoint: that of autonomous organisations aligning to work together for common purposes. Although it is a viewpoint that previously has been adumbrated in practice, as in the case of the UDF (United Democratic Front), it has not to our knowledge been one that has been theoretically articulated. The distinction bounded/unbounded does not track whether organisation is private, public, or in some third sector; nor does it track power, size, social class, profitability, market share, place in a formal hierarchy, place in a horizontal field, ideology, technology, ethnicity, or cultural identity. It tracks whether and how much an organisation looks beyond itself to think and act as part of its larger context. We are suggesting that the reconfigurations of the future (insofar as they may be capable of being shaped by human agency) be deliberately oriented toward unbounded organisation.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See for example V. Finn Heinrich (Ed), CIVICUS Global Survey of the State of Civil Society. Bloomfield CT: Kumarian Press, 2007; For an extensive history and critique of the idea of civil society see Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, Civil Society and Political Theory. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> For examples Jackie Smith and Dawn Wiest, "The Uneven Geography of Global Civil Society," Social Forces Volume 84 (2005) pp. 621-52; John Guidry et al, Globalisations and Social Movements. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000; Helmut K. Anheier, "Reflections on the Concept and Measurement of Global Civil Society," Voluntas. Volume 18 (2007) pp. 1-15.

<sup>3</sup> Thinking of human groups as "societies" is itself a way of conceptualizing the phenomena observed that dates only from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Raymond Williams, Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society. London: Flamingo/Fontana, 1983.

<sup>4</sup> "Most writers on civil society agree, however, that civil society has an institutional core composed by voluntary associations outside the sphere of the state and the economy." Bent Flyvbjerg, "Habermas and Foucault: Thinkers for Civil Society?" British Journal of Sociology. Volume 49 (1998) pp. 210-33. p. 210

<sup>5</sup> For example the articles in the fall 1997 (No. 4 of Volume 15) special issue of The Brookings Review devoted to civil society, introduced by E.J. Dionne's "Why Civil Society? Why Now?" pp. 4-8; Michael Walzer, "A Better Vision: The Idea of Civil Society," Dissent. Vol. 293 (1991) pp. 293-304.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Louise Amoore and Paul Langley, "Ambiguities of Global Civil Society," Review of International Studies. Volume 30 (2004) pp. 89-110; Neera Chandhoke, "Civil Society," Development in Practice. Volume 17 (2007) pp. 607-14.

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich von Hayek, The Road to Serfdom. London: Routledge, 1944.

<sup>8</sup> Karl Popper, The Open Society and its Enemies. London: Routledge, 1945.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Frank Scott, "Can a Social Vision be Compelling without being Oppressive?" Administrative Theory and Practice. Volume 26 (2004) pp. 27-45.

<sup>11</sup> We use the word "paradigm" to refer to Lewin's work in the sense Thomas Kuhn clarified in the second edition of his The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970, where Kuhn wrote that a paradigm is a concrete scientific achievement that becomes a model of how to do science for a scientific community.

<sup>12</sup> D. Katz and R.L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations. New York, Wiley 1966. p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Franks, A Social History of American Social Psychology Up To The Second World War. PhD Dissertation at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1975. pp. 66 – 265.

<sup>14</sup> Ivan and Isabel Labra's 1992 book covers similar terrain. Psicologia Social: Responsabilidad y Necesidad. Santiago de Chile: Ediciones LOM, 1992. (English translation 1999 by M. Cloete, unpublished and titled "Social Psychology in Large Groups.")

<sup>15</sup> Wendell French and Cecil H Bell, Organization Development: Behavioral Science Interventions for Organization Improvement. Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1999. pp. 32–61, p. 33)

<sup>16</sup> Op cit. p. 32

<sup>17</sup> French and Bell Op. cit. adequately signpost these connections.

<sup>18</sup> Bill Cooke, "From process consultation to a clinical model of development practice," Public Administration and Development. Vol 17 (1997). Pp. 325-340; "Participation, Process, and Management: Lessons for Development in the History of Organization Development," Journal of

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International Development. Vol. 10 (1998) pp. 35-54; "The Social Psychological Limits of Participation?" IPDM Paper # 53. Manchester: IPDM, 1999 (1999a); "Writing the Left out of Management Theory: the Historiography of the Management of Change," Organization Vol. 6 (1999). Pp. 81-105. (1999b)

<sup>19</sup> Cooke Op. cit. 1998. p. 35.

<sup>20</sup> K. Srinivas, "Organization development for national development: a review of evidence," in R.H. Kanungo (ed) New Approaches to Employee Management –Employee Management in Developing Countries. London: JAI, 1995.

<sup>21</sup> Cooke Op. cit. 1998. p. 38.

<sup>22</sup> Cooke Op. cit. 1998. p. 50.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Cooke Op. cit. 1997. p. 326.

<sup>25</sup> Allen Kaplan, Development Practitioners and Social Process. London: Pluto Press, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Bernard Lievegoed, Managing the Development Organization. London: Tavistock, 1991

<sup>27</sup> For examples Richard W. Scott, Organizations: Rational, Natural and Open Systems. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981; Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik, The External Control of Organizations: a Resource Dependence Perspective. New York: Harper & Row, 1978; Katz and Kahn Op.cit.

<sup>28</sup> See for examples Jane Nelson, Business as Partners in Development: Creating Wealth for Countries, Companies, and Communities. London: Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum, 1996; Nicanor Perlas, Shaping Globalization: Civil Society, Cultural Power and Threefolding. Manila, Phillipines: CADI, 2000;

<sup>29</sup> Interview with M. Kisare, June 2004.

<sup>30</sup> See EASUN's report of a workshop in Uganda in May 2003: *The Strategic Value of CBOs as Development Organisations in Local Communities*. (Mimeo). [eamun@habari.co.tz](mailto:eamun@habari.co.tz).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Gareth Morgan, Images of Organization. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 1998.

<sup>32</sup> By "large" here we should say that for "learning" and "strategic thinking" events it would in most cases be unusual to operate with more than around 25-30 people; "training" events might aspire to 50 or more and in the vast majority of cases seldom approach 100; conventions might bring together several hundred individuals.

<sup>33</sup> The following refers to Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Psychology. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988.

<sup>34</sup> Katz and Kahn Op. cit. p.2. We will see below that although Katz and Kahn (with whom we agree) regard both Lewin and Freud as too individual in orientation, Lewin thought of Freud's approach as more historical than his own.

<sup>35</sup> Katz and Kahn Op. cit: p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Franks Op. cit. 1975. See also Peter Franks, Kurt Lewin and the Foundations of Participative Management. Johannesburg: HSRC, 1993.

<sup>37</sup> Franks Op. cit 1993. p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Franks Op. cit. 1993. p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> Kurt Lewin, A Dynamic Theory of Personality: Selected Papers. New York: McGraw Hill, 1935. p. 46.

<sup>40</sup> Lewin Op. cit. p 241. Italics added.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Franks Op. cit 1993. p 7.

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<sup>43</sup> Franks, *ibid* - citing Z. Barbu, Society, Culture and Personality: an Introduction to Social Science. Bristol: Basil Blackwell, 1971. pp. 129 –130.

<sup>44</sup> Franks *Op. cit.* 1993, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> Franks *Op. cit.* 1993, pp. 9 –15.

<sup>46</sup> Lev S. Vygotsky, Thought and Language. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1962. Mind in Society: the Development of Higher Psychological Processes Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1978. See also J.V. Wertsch (Ed), The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology. Amonk NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1981

<sup>47</sup> Yrjö Engeström, Learning by Expanding: Ten Years After. (Translated from German by Falk Seeger). Marburg: BdWi-Verlag, 1999. p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> (*Ibid.*).

<sup>49</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre cited by Peter Franks, *Op. cit.* 1993, p. 23

<sup>50</sup> Franks, *Op. cit.* 1993, p. 8

<sup>51</sup> See Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, Training for Transformation. Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984.

<sup>52</sup> E.C. Tolman, “Kurt Lewin – 1890-1947,” Psychological Review. Vol. 55 (1948), pp. 1-2.

<sup>53</sup> Franks, *Op. cit.* 1975. p. 284

<sup>54</sup> Franks, *Op. cit.* 1975 p. iv.

<sup>55</sup> See Guidry *Op. cit.*; John Keane, Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives. Cambridge: Polity, 1988; Martin Hewson and Timothy Sinclair (Eds) Approaches to Global Governance Theory. New York: SUNY Press, 1999.

<sup>56</sup> Amoore and Langley *op. cit.* p. 93.

<sup>57</sup> This formulation is virtually the same as the definition of civil society used in the surveys reported by Heinrich *op. cit.*

<sup>58</sup> Although our point here is to deepen consciousness-raising, it should be clear that unbounded organisation is more than consciousness-raising because it is organisation. Following Clodomir Santos de Morais we call for moving beyond “critical consciousness” to “organisational consciousness.” See Raff Carmen and Miguel Sobrado (Eds.) A Future for the Excluded. London: Zed Books, 2000.

<sup>59</sup> The story of the UDF is told by Jeremy Seekings in his The UDF: a History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983-1991. Claremont: David Philip, 2000. Ineke van Kessel did case studies of the activities of three local affiliates of the UDF reported in her Beyond our Wildest Dreams: the United Democratic Front and the Transformation of South Africa. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000. See also Gregory F. Houston, The National Liberation Struggle in South Africa: a Case Study of the United Democratic Front 1983-1987. Brookfield VT: Ashgate, 1999.

<sup>60</sup> The precise relationship of the UDF and the ANC is disputed. The apartheid regime treated the UDF as an above-ground surrogate fronting for the banned ANC, whose cadres were either underground or in exile. Seekings and other scholars show that the two organisations were in fact independent of each other, aligned in their purposes and in their values, but not organically or structurally connected.

<sup>61</sup> The Azanian People’s Organisation and others with a black consciousness ideology were on Seekings’ account self-excluded because they disagreed with the non-racial principle of the UDF.

<sup>62</sup> Seekings *op.cit.* p. 55

<sup>63</sup> See also Jeremy Seekings, “Trailing behind the Masses: the United Democratic Front and Township Politics in the Pretoria-Witwatersand-Vaal Region 1983-84,” Journal of Southern African Studies. Volume 18 (1992) pp. 93-114; and the case studies in van Kessel *op. cit.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*



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<sup>65</sup> “In part through design, but in part through organisational weakness, the UDF ‘remained a loose structure.’” Seekings 1992 op. cit. p. 97. Seekings goes on to quote Moss Cokane, the secretary of the Transvaal regional UDF office: “We did not have competent people who were manning the office... we only had one filing cabinet in which we had to keep the records. As a result some of the records were ... left in boxes in the office.”

<sup>66</sup> See Seekings 1992 op. cit. as well as Seekings 2000 op cit.

<sup>67</sup> See Bill Freund and Vishnu Padayachee, “Post-Apartheid South Africa: the Key Patterns Emerge,” Economic and Political Weekly. Volume 33 (1998) pp. 1173-1180; Howard Richards and Joanna Swanger, “Power and Principle in South Africa,” Chapter Ten of their Dilemmas of Social Democracies. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.

<sup>68</sup> On asset-based development see Alison Mathie and Gord Cunningham, “From Clients to Citizens: Asset-Based Community Development as a Strategy for Community-Driven Development,” Development in Practice. Volume 13 (2003) pp. 474-486.

<sup>69</sup> We use scare quotes because it is open to question whether Emile Durkheim himself favours the “consensus model” (as opposed to a conflict model) often attributed to him. There are, of course, conservative theorists like Carl Schmitt who are thoroughly anti-Durkheimian and every bit as conflict-oriented as the most conflict-oriented Marxist-Leninist.

<sup>70</sup> E.E. Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Wilk and Lisa Cliggett, Economies and Cultures. Boulder: Westview, 2007. p. 105.

<sup>72</sup> Claude Meillassoux, Maidens, Meal and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981. For a recent discussion see Bonnie Campbell and Bernard Schlemmer, “Tribute to Claude Meillassoux,” Review of African Political Economy. Volume 32 (2005), pp. 197-201.

<sup>73</sup> See the symposium Allen H. Berger et al., “Structural and Eclectic Revisions of Marxist Strategy” Current Anthropology Volume 17 (1976) pp. 290-305.

<sup>74</sup> Perhaps the most famous and most seminal argument of this type is that of Friedrich van Hayek in The Road to Serfdom. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944. His main assertion is that central planning and public ownership lead slowly but inevitably to totalitarianism. Another key book is The Rebel by Albert Camus. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1954. Camus purports to write about “all modern revolutions.” They have all been for just causes but they have all gone wrong by using force to impose one or another version of justice on others, thus becoming themselves the tyrannies they started out to oppose. Isaiah Berlin’s The Hedgehog and the Fox New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953, at one level an essay on Tolstoy, was an early member of an innumerable set of writings praising thinkers (“foxes” for Berlin) who see everywhere flux, variety, and uniqueness; while disparaging thinkers whom they read as seeing one great truth (“hedgehogs”) for example Marxists. Raymond Aron is among those who have warned against the danger to democracy of totalizing doctrines in principle incompatible with it. For example, “The Situation of Democracy,” Daedalus. Vol. 90 (1961) pp. 350-70. Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida are among the famous writers who have said or implied in many works that any idea that functions at a high level of generality is necessarily false (although the word “false” is itself suspect for expressing too general an idea) and potentially dangerous. In The Human Condition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, The Origins of Totalitarianism New York: Meridian Books, 1958, and other works Hannah Arendt has stressed the importance of respecting the boundary between the private sphere and the public sphere. She has condemned intellectual trends that lend themselves to pursuing justice in ways that collapse the boundaries between private and public, thus creating tyrannies where nobody is secure and anything can happen. Although the word “unbounded” might be read to mean obliterating the boundaries that protect persons from each other and from the violence of arbitrary rule in a police state, that is not what we mean. We have explained what we mean by “unbounded.” Our proposal is immune from the charge that disastrous consequences follow from giving to the phrase “unbounded” a meaning different from the meanings and uses we assign to it.

<sup>75</sup> This is not to say, of course, that all human behaviour should be voluntary. There are good reasons for making some behaviour forbidden and some behaviour compulsory.

<sup>76</sup> Karl Popper 1945 op. cit.

<sup>77</sup> Op. cit. volume I, p. 121.

<sup>78</sup> For example, by 1970 all three major political parties in Germany the Social Democrats, the Christian Democrats, and the Liberals had officially declared themselves to be adherents of Karl Popper’s philosophy. Helmut Spinner, Popper und die Politik. Berlin: Dietz, 1987. pp. 44-72.

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- <sup>79</sup> In a review of The Open Society and its Enemies written when it was first published, Henry David Aiken pointed out that Popper's claims about the errors of historicism do not really follow from the premises of Popper's philosophy of scientific method. Journal of Philosophy. Volume 44 (1947) pp. 459-473. Popper tried again in The Poverty of Historicism. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957.
- <sup>80</sup> See the assessment of Popper in Chapter Nine of Richards and Swanger Op. cit.
- <sup>81</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "Reflections on the End of History, Five Years Later," History and Theory. Volume 34 (1995) pp. 27-43. p. 35.
- <sup>82</sup> Jean-Francois Lyotard, Op. cit. p. 37.
- <sup>83</sup> "Unbounded organization" has some affinity with the economic idea of "internalizing" the "externalities" that are costs imposed on third parties by one's actions, and with the idea of "responsibility" understood as Amartya Sen understands it as accepting responsibility for the effects of which one is a cause. Amartya Sen, The Idea of Justice. Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 2009. pp. 208-21 and *passim*. However, these ideas are more about damage control while ours is more about proactive alignment.
- <sup>84</sup> In addition to the management and organisation theory works mentioned elsewhere in these notes, especially important source for us are Notes on a Theory of Organization by Clodomir de Morais. (Translated by Ian Cherrett). Newcastle UK. ETC., 1986; Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline: the Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
- <sup>85</sup> Peter Drucker, "Management: the Problems of Success," The Academy of Management Executive. Volume 1 (1987) pp. 13-19. p. 14.
- <sup>86</sup> Of course if we went back farther in time and if we considered the diversity of institutions at different places we would find any number of configurations and reconfigurations.

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