ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

IDENTITY AS BARRIER TO AND FACILITATOR OF CHANGE

A CANADIAN PUBLIC SECTOR CASE STUDY

BY

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A THESIS/DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE STUDIES
ATHABASCA, ALBERTA
AUGUST 1, 2025

Athabasca University
Faculty of Graduate Studies

Approval of Dissertation

The undersigned certify that they have read the dissertation entitled

IDENTITY AS BARRIER TO AND FACILITATOR OF CHANGE A CANADIAN PUBLIC SECTOR CASE STUDY

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my family for unwavering support.

Acknowledgement

I owe unlimited thanks to my supervisors for their time and patience through my research development. They allowed me to make sense of and maintain sanity through the process.

Abstract

Increasing disruptions due to technological advancement, regulatory changes, and global competition imply that organizational change is likely to increase in both volume and velocity. This dissertation answers questions and provides insight for organizational leaders tasked with managing change. The proposed research takes a balanced perspective about two views on organizational identity; one that argues organizational identity is defined as that which is enduring, and a second one that says organizational identity is alterable, fluid and can be constructed, deconstructed, reconstructed, and maintained. A case study approach is used to research identity change at Shared Services Canada from the perspective of those that have lived through that change as internal members and as external clients. My goal is to examine the role of legacy identity in a public sector/government organization's transition to a shared services business model. It addresses the question how does legacy identity help with a public sector/government organization's transition and/or impair transition to a hybrid organizational form?

Keywords: Imprinting, inertia, identity regulation, legacy identity, organizational change, government, organizational identity image, sensemaking, identity ambiguity.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Increasing technological advancement, regulatory changes and increased global competition imply that change is likely to increase in both volume and velocity, making organizational change management a central research topic (Gioia, 2013). Many organizations struggle with changing identities, and this is one of several reasons why organizational change is challenging (Corley and Gioia, 2004). There are two views about organizational identity; one that argues organizational identity is defined as that which is enduring (Albert and Whetten, 1985), and a second one that says organizational identity is alterable, fluid and can be constructed, deconstructed, reconstructed, and maintained (Chreim, 2005; Corley and Gioia, 2004). This research takes a balanced view, looking at how an organization's legacy identity can positively influence organizational change and alternatively, how it may also limit new interests and impair transition. Legacy identity is defined by Walsh and Glynn (2008) as the shared claims of the organization's former internal stakeholders who often draw on central elements from their past to the present through collective shared activities and artifacts. By exploring one specific ongoing change in the Canadian public sector, this research explores the unique role of longstanding public sector identity in both encouraging and discouraging change and the adoption of private sector best practices. It addresses the question how does legacy identity help with a public sector/government organization's transition and/or impair transition to a hybrid organizational form?

In 2011, the Government of Canada initiated a major organizational change by passing a Parliamentary Order in Council (OIC) to create Shared Services Canada (SSC), as a spin off from the Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC). The new SSC organization

was created under the leadership of a Conservative majority government awarded in the May 2, 2011, Canadian federal election (Elections Canada). Their primary objective was to transform how the Federal Government procures and manages its $1.4 Billion IT annual spend (SSC 2012-2013 Report on Plans and Priorities). SSC's purpose, mandate and structure were created by senior government managers, and it was staffed by transferring existing public sector personnel from other government organizations to create a new organization that combined different, and sometimes competing, institutional logics in unprecedented ways. Institutional logics are defined as the underlying, deeply held, and often unexamined assumptions, which form a framework where reasoning takes place (Horn, 1983). Ultimately this change was expected to take 5 years and to ultimately drive significant efficiency and cost savings. It was designed to develop a more efficient procurement and execution process for Canadian government IT implementations. The government continues to invest in this change initiative, over 12 years later, but even as early as 2016 recognized (according to their own internal audits – Report of the Auditor General of Canada, 2016) that they have spent more than they wanted to, have continually redefined objectives, and are not achieving desired goals and objectives.

During SSC's formation the newly created senior management leadership team indicated the desire to blend lessons from its governmental past with industry best practices to create an effective and modernized hybrid organization identity. In the Minister's Message announcing the new SSC, Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P., then Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for Status of Women, indicated that the "establishment of SSC signalled a new approach to the management of IT", and that SSC would "leverage public and private sector best practices" (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012, Pg. 1). SSC had the opportunity to create a new hybrid organizational identity by adopting the best of public and private sector

practices. Of interest to me is how history influenced the endurance of organizational identity for the internal stakeholders who were transferred to SSC from other government departments, and how SSC management used narrative and history to influence organizational identity fluidity.

History can lead to the enduringness of organizational identity as organizational goals are limited by historical norms and traditions that are resistant to change (Suddaby & Foster, 2010). An organization's history can limit its ability for identity change as it creates a place and norm for the organization, making shifts in direction for large bureaucratic organizations difficult (Suddaby & Foster, 2017). The choice by government to create a hybrid organization identity may have made it difficult for internal stakeholders to relate to how they were supposed to be categorized (Whetten, 2006). Did the stakeholders joining SSC see themselves as part of a private sector organization, where they were required to make sense of and understand what that looked like? Or did they see themselves remaining categorized as part of a public sector organization? Or were they expected to create an understanding of something in between? Did political ideology and party play a critical role in the organization's inception? During this uncertain period, the long-held, bureaucratic nature of government may have added to the legacy identity (Walsh and Glynn, 2008), creating barriers, and limiting the new organization's ability to adopt innovation, efficiency, and shift to new ways of doing things. In addition to the internal uncertainty and ambiguity caused by change, history and legacy identity can cause stakeholders to become comfortable with consistency and conformity attributable to legitimacy from external stakeholders' expectations about how the organization will and should act (Gioia et al., 2013).

While the senior management leadership team may have had a clear vision of the future for SSC, there was also a requirement for them to communicate it in a way that members could understand and relate to. Without an understanding, and therefore an acceptance of the vision,

seemingly simple labels (Chreim, 2005), like the common meaning of "innovation" or "best practices", can be misinterpreted, and organizations like SSC may find it difficult to achieve change and create a new organization identity. Attempts by the SSC senior management to achieve shifts in the meanings of labels, while retaining core beliefs and values, may have created ambiguity for stakeholders, as labels within organizations may have different meanings to different levels of stakeholders (Corley, 2004). At a micro level, the changes communicated by leaders can create discomfort, anxiety, conflict, and overall loss of self-esteem for the impacted staff, resulting in a loss of their own social identity and misalignment with the sector categorization (Whetton, 2006). This may cause stakeholders to employ various tactics to preserve the previous organization's identity (Gioia et al., 2013). At a macro level, the failure to involve the stakeholders in the new organizations design, and thus gain their buy in, may create an apathetic response which reduces the likelihood of success (Chreim, 2005).

An organization's reality is based on how stakeholders interpret and make sense of their collective experience (Weick, 1995), and the opportunity exists for management to leverage the organization's unique history to establish identity and brand by developing an authentic and evocative vocabulary, imagery, and emotional memory using compelling stories (Carroll, 2002; Suddaby et al., 2010). Organization identity can be fluid and recreated through the leaders' strategic use of narrative (Chreim, 2005), the positioning of a new strategic vision (Kondra and Hurst, 2009), the development of a communication plan (Walsh and Glynn, 2008) and by providing direction to assist internal stakeholders to align with, and make sense (Weick, 1995) of, the new identity. Leaders can create a shift in understanding and identity for internal stakeholders by linking the desired interpretation of the past with aligned goals for the present, and an understanding built around how and why the new identity is suitable for the new

organization (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Therefore, managers can use history as a tool to achieve successful organizational change.

While governments are often viewed as a large ship unable to shift direction, change is possible. Leaders must create the strategic direction for change, while recognizing that organizational change initiatives often experience gaps, setbacks and conflicts create the strategic direction for change (Stensaker & Falkenberg, 2007). Leaders can influence the use of labels, and their meaning, within organizations which in turn influences the construction, destruction, reconstruction, and maintenance of organizational identity (Chreim, 2005). However, leaders must remain aware that internal organizational stakeholders may experience ambiguity when there are: changes in social referents and categorization (the loss of having their previous organization as the social referent and as the category); temporal identity discrepancies (the inconsistency between their predecessor's identity and claims of what the new organization would be or what internal stakeholders would like it to be in the future); and changes to construed external image (the discrepancies between how internal stakeholders see their organizational identity and their perceptions of how external stakeholders see their organization) (Corley and Gioia, 2004). To assist organizations with change, leaders must address and present both the organizational and personal needs and benefits to increase each stakeholder's organizational identification and attachment attitudes (Sung et al., 2017). Stakeholders need to feel involved in the organizational change initiative and recognize a plausible vision of the future. To properly investigate issues of identity fluidity and change requires an understanding of some conceptual ideas that include both hybrid identity and legacy identity which will be explored later.

This study of the SSC change journey represents a unique and rare opportunity to look at a major organizational change within a government organization. The SSC case represents a scenario where the change involved a divesture from government, combining multiple organizational identities together resulting in a new hybrid organizational identity (Greenwood et al., 2011). It provides the opportunity to look at whether SSC was simply stacked on the old government structure and to assess the impact of legacy identity and the role it might have played in the change initiative. I focussed on how legacy identity helps with an organization's transition and/or impairs transition to a hybrid organizational form. This research helps us to understand how people experience organizational change through the examination of SSC's attempt to integrate different approaches for organizing government IT procurement into a single hybrid organization.

Exploring how legacy identity influenced the SSC change initiative helps us to understand how lessons from this case study may assist future government change initiatives. In addition, the response to the Covid 19 pandemic has caused many organizations, including government, to rethink and change internal structure, processes, and policies, and in some cases, reinvent themselves. This research also contributes to the work of organizational theorists, political scientists, and sociologists by exploring how theories of organizational identity can be used to understand and drive greater success and lower risk in future changes. This research provides critical insight to enable senior government officials at the Director, Director General and Assistant Deputy Minister levels to manage limited resources when undertaking future change initiatives. These insights will help to ensure the Canadian public obtains the best value for their investments.

A review of existing literature identified very limited research involving the consolidation and amalgamation of public and private sector employees during the creation of a new organization in the Canadian public sector. Thus, a public sector opportunity like that of the creation of SSC offers a rare chance to both contribute to academic research and help practitioners. In the next chapter I review the limited research on public sector change initiatives and the foundational literature on organizational change and identity that provide the foundation for this study.

Research Question

Through the research process, I investigated the enduring nature of organizational identity, the ability for organizations to reinvent their identity and the impact of history on organizational identity. It answers the following research question.

How does legacy identity help with a public sector/government organization's transition and/or impair transition to a hybrid organizational form?

Research Design

My research approach used a single case study, focused on SSC's change initiative, using qualitative research methods. I investigated the differences between an organizational identity being central and enduring (Albert and Whetten, 1985) versus an organization's ability to move from an existing understanding of who they are, through a period of doubt, to a renewed clarity in an altered form (Corley and Gioia, 2004). Further details on this design are provided in Chapter 3.

Personal Connection

To assist me, and the reader, to recognize potential bias and enable reflexivity, I acknowledge my personal connection with the Government of Canada over the last 30 years as a private sector provider of information technology solutions. Through the years, I have been involved in multiple attempts by government to introduce new approaches to procurement. In addition, during the creation of the SSC organization, I chaired the SSC Working Group at Industry Technology Association of Canada (ITAC) between 2010 and 2013.

My history with Government provides unique insight and an understanding of the pressures facing the change initiative from a vendor's perspective. It has allowed me to establish relationships at the executive, middle management, and front-line worker level, enabling access to appropriate resources necessary to complete my research. At the same time, I hold no formal or official power over any of the stakeholders. The information I gathered was at the organizational level and not related to any specific procurement or opportunity that might be perceived as a conflict of interest. Appropriate ethical processes were followed, and approvals obtained. In addition, supervisors and others not sharing this experience, were enlisted to help me recognize and deal with any biases that creep into my analysis.

Conclusion

Change is the only constant in life (Heraclitus, Greek philosopher 535 to 475 BC). In a post Covid world, it is critically important that we understand how to change organizations including federal government departments and agencies. Having witnessed the attempted transformation of the SSC, it is both personally and professionally important to me to understand what we can learn from this specific case.

My research contributes to our understanding of the impact that history and legacy has on organizational identity and change in government. My finding also identifies tools used in

practice to address increasing demand on limited resources, offers insight on how to manage future initiatives more effectively, and helps maximise the effectiveness of public spending. Future research may continue to build on these findings and provide areas for improving the efficiency and performance. Practitioners may use these findings to further develop “how to” and “self-help” approaches for organizations.

In chapter 2 I will provide the findings from my literature review that highlights relevant findings from previous research. In chapter 3 I will outline the methodologies used for the research, the background on the research subject, the reasons for choosing the and the relevance to the research question. In chapter 4 I will present the research findings and present the results. In chapter 5 I will provide a discussion of the discussion and relevance to the research question and in chapter 6 I will offer conclusion based on the research findings and I will offer the implication for future research.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Organizational identity is an important concept to help us understand change initiatives. Organizational identity research begins with discussion of the central and distinctive components of an organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Pratt et al., 2016). Today it includes discussion of how categories play a role in creating and sustaining organization identity (Whetten and MacKay, 2002; Whetten, 2006) establishing the foundation for further review of the concept of hybrid organizational identity (Greenwood et al., 2011; Hampel & Dalpiaz, 2023) where multiple categories and logics are combined with a view of both internal organizational identity and external image (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Glynn & Navis, 2013). This literature review addresses enduring identity attributes (Albert & Whetten, 1985) and their relationship to resistance to change and the independent constructs of legacy identity (Walsh & Glynn, 2008), rhetorical history (Suddaby & Foster, 2017) and illustrates how narrative, introduced as expressed stories, can connect the present and the past to create fluidity of organizational identity (Chreim, 2005; Foster et al, 2016). Specifically, the literature review provides insight into the key concepts necessary to understand organizational change, including how the past is applied to the present through sensemaking (Gioia et al., 2013; Rerup, Gioia & Corley, 2022); how management can leverage history (Suddaby & Foster, 2017; Hampel & Dalpiaz, 2023) in organizational change initiatives; the ways leadership might use narrative (Chreim, 2005; Foster et al., 2016) to position the organizations identity; and how stakeholders make sense of identity and change (Weick, 2001; Oliver & Vough, 2020). A more detailed description of each of these concepts and definitions is provided in the respective sections.

Organizational Identity

Organizational identity is defined by some (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Brewer, 1991; Walsh & Glynn, 2008; Rerup, Gioia & Corley, 2022) as being that which is most central, enduring, and distinctive (CED) about the organization and which answers the question "who we are as an organization". The common theme in this research stream is the ultimate balance between being the same (finding the proper category) and uniqueness (finding the attributes that differentiate the organization). However, organizational identity, including legacy identity (Walsh and Glynn, 2008; Glynn & Navis, 2013) can also be viewed as fluid and able to move from an existing clarity of understanding to doubt, uncertainty, and/or ambiguity, and ultimately to a state of renewed clarity that resolves into an altered form (Corley and Gioia, 2004; Alvarez & Sachs, 2023). These two definitions are both important to this study as they provide insight as to how legacy identity can positively influence organizational change and how it may also deny new interests and impair transition, in exploring ongoing change.

Organizational identity claims signify an organization's self-determined, self-defined uniqueness and social place and is reflected in their patterns of commitments. A key element of organizational identity rests with being properly classified and recognized as belonging to a central and distinct social category (Whetten, 2006; Robert, Jones & Croidieu, 2020). Much like we readily understand the differences between a financial institution being recognized as either a Bank or a Credit Union (Whetten, 2006), in the case of organizations combining public and private sector units, management is required to decide how they want stakeholders to relate to it as being in either a public sector category, a private sector category or something else. Categorization is also used to assist external stakeholders make sense of identity change, establishing the basis for organizational identity claims and for legitimization (Glynn & Navis, 2013; Rerup, Gioia & Corley, 2022), with management playing a key role in providing clarity

and helping stakeholders make sense of the organization's inclusion in (and exclusion from) certain categories. Organizational identity emerges out of claims from stakeholders at all levels regarding who they are or who they are becoming as an organization, and the labels and associated meanings used in those claims are often described in strategy, branding, and organizational design.

Organizational identity provides guidance for organizational strategy, activity and decision making. It influences how issues are interpreted, how strategic decisions are made, how organizations approach relationships with stakeholders (Gioia et al., 2010; Rerup, Gioia & Corley, 2022) and provides the baseline for stakeholders to make decisions and act in character. The choice of appropriate organizational actions is influenced by two bases including comparative and historical (Whetten, 2006). The comparative basis establishes the foundations for how organizations in the respective categories (Glynn & Navis, 2013) and business sector are expected to operate providing both legitimacy and accountability. The historical basis aligns the decisions along the lines of the company history of strategic choices (Suddaby, 2017; Suddaby et al., 2023) protecting the organizational identity and integrity. Identity claims can involve organizational categorization, to establish a central and distinctive character, and organizational retrospective, to establish continuation or transition.

Once the senior management leadership have established a sense of "who they are as an organization" and communicated it to internal and external stakeholders they are then open to feedback and judgement through both internal and external channels, highlighting the key role external stakeholders play in establishing and maintaining legitimacy (Glynn & Navis, 2013; Hameduddin & Lee, 2021; Lee et al., 2023). The reason external feedback, referred to an organizational image (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Hameduddin & Lee, 2021; Lee et al., 2023), is

important during change initiatives is because the reaction of internal organization stakeholders during a change initiative is influenced by how they perceive their external stakeholders view them. Organizational image becomes part of, but is also independent of, what and how internal organizational stakeholders think other see them and is therefore based on the set of views held by the external stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). What people see as their organizations' distinctive attributes (its identity) and what they believe others see as distinctive about the organization (its image) constrain, mold, and fuel interpretations that helps link individual cognitions and behaviors to organizational actions (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). In situations where internal stakeholders of an organization feel external stakeholders see the organization positively, they tend to embrace the new organizational identity, however when they receive negative and unfavourable feedback, they can experience stress and depression leading them to disengage and pull away from the change (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). As a result, in the creation of new organizations, management requires the new organizational identity to be both understood by internal stakeholders and reinforced through a demonstrated understanding by external stakeholders (Gioia et al., 2000). The significance of external image is especially relevant because, if the internal narrative provided by leaders in the creation and maintenance of the identity is in conflict with external audits and reports, the interplay between identity and image can have an impact on how identity is stabilized (Gioia et al., 2000).

Change to organizational identity and image is not always positive and can also results in organizational stigma (Tracey & Phillips, 2016). Ashforth & Reingen (2014) indicated stigmatized, or hybrid organizations experience member disidentification and infighting. Sutton and Callahan (1987) researched bankruptcies to understand the influence that performance can have on both organizations and individuals, arguing that top management's reputation and

organizational image can be spoiled by a variety of organizational problems, creating further barriers to change. The images of organizations and their leaders are intertwined, with the leaders' success or failure being linked to the success or failure of the organization. This is relevant to the current research because during change initiatives, leaders may be conscious of the impact of possible failure and therefore take a cautious approach. Stigma is not limited to the private sector and government also comes with a degree of stigma. Lee et al. (2023) indicate that public organizations and employees have long grappled with a reputational problem. Regardless of their level of performance or effectiveness, public organizations and employees are often viewed by the general public as ineffective and ill-performing entities. Public administration research has, to some extent, documented a long history of negative organizational reputation viewed by external constituents of public organizations, so-called bureau-bashing, and cautioned its negative effects on the public workforce (Gilad et al., 2018; Kettl, 2019; Hameduddin & Lee, 2021).

My research of existing literature presented above provides a foundation for understanding organizational identity. It illustrates the central, enduring, and distinct elements of organizational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Brewer, 1991; Walsh & Glynn, 2008; Rerup, Gioia & Corley, 2022) and the ability for organizational identity fluidity (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Alvarez & Sachs, 2023). Existing research expands on this foundation, presenting a deeper understanding of central and distinctive identity elements (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Gioia & Corley, 2023); how categories play a role in organization identity (Whetten & MacKay, 2002; Whetten, 2006); and the concept of hybrid organizational identity. These concepts are presented in the following sections.

Identity as Central and Distinctive

As highlighted by Albert and Whetten (1985), two key defining attributes of organizational identity are those that are central and distinctive (the other being enduring which will be discussed later). Categories establish expectations of how the organization should behave and establishes the minimum standards for valid categorical membership (Glynn & Navis, 2013; Robert, Jones & Croidieu, 2020). As part of categorization, organizations actively craft links to other organizations to legitimize organizational form and to support the organization's supporting strategic visions (Oertel & Thommes, 2018). These claims are not deployed randomly but are derived from a given toolbox, allowing the organization to gain legitimacy by adhering to social norms and regulations (Oertel & Thommes, 2018). Distinctiveness within a category is a key element of organizational identity, and while aligning with those in a category is necessary for both individual and organizational identity, finding uniqueness is critical for organizational survival, as it differentiates the organization from others in that category (Whetten and MacKay, 2002; Whetten, 2006; Lo et al., 2020). During the uncertain times of organization formation, identity claims are used as categorical imperatives providing guidance and direction on what the organization must do to avoid acting out of character. Categorical organizational identity provides strategic guidance for the consistency of decision making (Whetten, 2006). In the development of identity, it is key that leaders give thought when working through the process and new organizations need to take the necessary time to decide whether to create new identities or mimic existing organizations. How organizations present themselves to both their internal and external stakeholders is critical, not only to the formation of their identities but also to their survival (Gioia et al., 2010; Oliver & Vough, 2020). In the case of hybrid organizations, the

challenge is compounded as the ability to mimic an existing organization may be relevant to some stakeholders but not others.

While optimal distinctiveness is often the key objective of management, organizations often experience conflicting stakeholder expectations and perceptions resulting in stakeholders finding themselves placed between competing identities (Buffat, 2014). Leaders need to ensure internal stakeholders can relate to the new organization in two key areas, the extent to which individuals define themselves in terms of membership in the organization and the attitudes and behaviors related to organizational attachment (Sung et al., 2017). To ensure long term sustainability, organizations need to create a common organizational identity creating a balance between the logics of the broader organization combined (Reissner, 2019). Stakeholders draw on institutional logics to ensure their understanding of the organization matches its purpose and external expectations and once negotiated organizational identity shapes how internal stakeholders act within the organization (Reissner, 2019). Leadership needs to be clear what the labels mean when they introduce the desire for things, such as “innovation” and “new culture”. The risk of not providing the required clarity or assisting internal stakeholders to make sense of the new direction leaves internal stakeholders to their own interpretations; with some holding on to the past and others embracing the future (Reissner, 2019). An organizational identity can be characterized as ambiguous when members ascribe multiple, inconsistent meanings to one or more of its labels (Lyle, Walsh & Coraiola, 2022). This creates the risk of the formation of subgroup identities within the organization that can cause tension and establish a basis for failure (Battilana & Dorado, 2010). Rising uncertainties about what is central to, and distinctive about, the organization requires organizational leaders to fill a void of meaning and to continually reconstruct a credible and consistent narrative for both internal and external stakeholders,

helping internal stakeholders rebuild their sense of who they are as an organization (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006).

Establishing and maintaining organizational identity, where stakeholders clearly understand their categorical membership (Glynn & Navis, 2013) with distinctiveness within that category (Whetten and MacKay, 2002; Whetten, 2006), is challenging. This challenge is compounded during periods of change and creation of hybrid organization identities. The following section reviews research in the area of hybrid identity.

Hybrid Identity

A hybrid organization identity bridges between the organizational identities and logics of two or more predecessors or multiple identity categories or logics (Greenwood et al., 2011). Institutional logics are defined as the deeply embedded assumptions that are often unconsciously held but that influence how reasoning occurs (Horn, 1983). Hybrid organizations require an alignment of organizational demands and goals in a manner that allows stakeholders to understand the specifics of what is expected (Goodrick and Salancik, 1996) because failure to do so may result in greater discretion being taken by internal organizational stakeholders, possibly leading to misalignment and unexpected consequences.

The combining of institutional logics is often subject to tension as differing logics can be incompatible with one another (Greenwood et al., 2011). Balancing conflicting positions during the creation of a hybrid identity presents a challenge in identifying with a specific category and while distinctiveness is often the key objective of management, organizations often experience conflicting stakeholder expectations and perceptions resulting in internal stakeholders finding themselves placed between competing identities (Buffat, 2014). Managing a hybrid organization's identity creation is challenging, especially in the public sector, because doing so

combines multiple institutional logics, overarching principles, values, beliefs and assumptions that prescribe what is legitimate and meaningful (Mongelli et al., 2017; Ramus et al., 2017). As a result, hybrid organizations are often considered 'fragile organizations' (Santos et al., 2015) that risk failure, breakup or 'organizational paralysis' due to their need to effectively balance a shift in identity while continuing to fulfill the business requirements of stakeholders (Zolo et al., 2023). The decision by an organizations leadership to create a new hybrid organization identity involves more than a choice of management styles and must be reflected in who the internal stakeholders feel they are for example, a civil servant or private sector employee? What organizational category do they identify with? And how do they demonstrate their belonging to this category through actions, behaviours, and practices (Whetten, 2006)? In the civil service, for instance, some individuals may agree with the introduction of private sector principles and practices, while others disagree (Reissner, 2019).

During hybrid organization identity creation when goals and priorities are not clear, there is a tendency for stakeholders to revert to the dominant behaviour often associated with the legacy identity. In large organizations, the situation may at times be too complex for the stakeholders to understand, causing internal stakeholders to focus on limited areas and letting the rest fall through the cracks (Hannan, Pólos & Carroll, 2002). In situations involving government hybrids internal stakeholders can often draw on more than one logic to make sense of their organization, however their public sector heritage may be more important for both internal stakeholders and external stakeholders (Reissner, 2019). The key for management during the creation of a hybrid organization identity, is how they manage the change to allow internal stakeholders to align and identify with a new categorization while finding distinctiveness in the context of conflicting stakeholder expectations and perceptions.

In hybrid organizations, incompatibility between common understandings of the organization's identity can create challenges for stakeholders to make sense of change initiatives and to gain alignment of roles, skills, competences, practices, protocols, and performance criteria (Greenwood et al., 2011). As an example of differences between the private and public sectors, the private sector assigns more experienced portfolio managers to prime their strategic procurements while the public sector typically does not discriminate in assigning contracts based on experience or capability (Hawkins et al., 2011). While this may appear fair from a human resource opportunity perspective, it can have an impact on the overall value and outcome of the procurements (Hawkins et al., 2011). The contractual nature of public sector procurement reduces the flexibility that characterizes most relational exchanges and undermines the value of relational commitments (Uzzi, 1996). Furthermore, government procurement's rigidity devalues and, in many cases, explicitly prohibits the principal tenets of buyer–supplier relations in the private sector, such as durability, consistency, expansion, trust, and commitment (Hawkins et al., 2011). The difference in public and private sector procurement may be rationalized by the fact that civil servants or frontline public sector stakeholders are answerable only to internal organizational procedures, and public sector buyers seem to respond well to stated rules and regulations, while private sector buyers succumb to the short-term gains of opportunism, perhaps due to a profit motive (Hawkins et al., 2011).

During hybrid identity creation there are pros and cons for organizations to combine logics. The pro arguments include the emergence of best practices and policies; operational efficiencies; and combining capital and knowledge. However, at the same time, organizations often face competing demands, confusion and instability caused by power struggles between proponents of competing logics perceived from different perspectives creating parallel structures

(Jay, 2013). The literature shows that attempts to combine state and market logics can lead to an action being regarded as a success under the former but a failure under the latter, and vice versa. Moreover, the introduction of a new logic may be incompatible with the organization's history and purpose, which is pertinent in efforts to hybridize the public sector organizations (Jay, 2013). While organizational leadership strives to create a new "hybrid identity" combining the best practices of the former organization with industry best practices, complications can arise through stakeholders clinging to their long-held legacy past. Leaders face the challenge of creating the new identity while assisting internal stakeholders to unlearn legacy elements that have may existed (Drucker, 1996). The success of organizational change initiatives is highly influenced by stakeholders' perceptions of how they will benefit from enhanced organizational status, performance, and prosperity due to the merger, which improves stakeholder social identification with, and attachment to, the newly merged organization (Terry, 2003).

Hybrid organizations seldom have proven models to replicate and, in most situations, face conflict and tension between the options, with one organizational form often taking precedence over the other (Battilana and Dorado, 2010). Despite the popularity and importance of hybrid organization identity creation, most mergers and acquisitions fail to increase profitability, produce shareholder value, or meet desired financial and strategic goals (Sung et al., 2017). As organizations go through organizational changes, such as merger, strategic change, adversity, and spin-offs, organizational members often seek to change aspects of organizational identity (Chreim, 2005; Foster et al, 2016). Crisis, threats, and stigmatization (Coupland and Brown, 2004; Patvardhan et al., 2015; Tracey and Phillips, 2016) and even positive organizational events, such as intense positive media coverage, can have implications for organizational identity, as it may render certain identity claims overly fixed and difficult to

change (Oliver & Vough, 2020). While the concept of hybrid organization's identity is not new, there is no single cookie cutter solution available and no manual to follow (Scott and Meyer, 1991).

A hybrid organization identity bridges between organizational identities and logics of two or more predecessors (Greenwood et al., 2011) requiring stakeholders to understand the specifics of what is expected (Goodrick and Salancik, 1996). It involves a more complex approach to managing central and distinctive identity elements (Albert &Whetten, 1985) and the role categories play in organization identity formation (Whetten & MacKay, 2002; Whetten, 2006) is equally complex because during a hybrid creation multiple categories and logics are combined with a view of both internal organizational identity and external image (Gioia & Thomas, 1996, Glynn & Navis, 2013). To begin the discussion of enduring identity versus fluidity the research allows me to look at the enduring attributes (Albert & Whetten, 1985) of organizational identity exploring resistance to change and the independent constructs of legacy identity (Walsh & Glynn, 2008).

Enduring Identity

The third element of Albert and Whetten (1985) definition of identity is the claim that organizational identity is enduring. To understand the nature of enduringness requires a deeper look at the literature involving change, resistance to change, and legacy identity.

Legacy Identity

Legacy, as a sense of an organization's historical heritage, has long been considered a part of an organization's identity (Walsh and Glynn, 2008). Walsh and Glynn (2008) define legacy organizational identity as the shared claims of the organization's stakeholders who often draw on central elements from their past, regularly bringing them to the present through

collective shared activities and artifacts during change initiatives. A simple example showing how legacy identity is reflected can be seen in cities that have hosted Olympic Games and how they memorialize those Games in their identity, including Paris (2024, 1924 and 1900), Beijing (2022 and 2008); Vancouver 2010, Sydney 2000 and Atlanta 1996. These types of achievements can either be forgotten by stakeholders or simply remembered as a positive happening that only existed in the "good old days" that do not reflect the current identity. However, when used strategically, these types of historical achievements can be leveraged by management in the change narrative to define the organization's identity as a world leader that continues to represent the organization in the present.

The long-standing brand and legacy identity (Walsh and Glynn, 2008), described in the following section, that exists within an organization prior to the creation of a spin off and the historical stability it represents may be appealing to its stakeholders; both internal and external (Balmer and Hudson, 2013). This historical legacy identity may contribute to, or impede, the chances of successful organizational and influence other factors including imprinting (Selznick, 1957; Stinchcombe, 1965) and inertia (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). The impact of these elements contributes to the stability and persistence or the fluidity depending on how management deployed narrative (Chreim, 2005; Foster et al, 2016) and sense-making (Weick, 1991, 1993; Suddaby et al., 2023). Legacy identity is covered in the following section and imprinting and inertia are discussed in more detail in the Impact of History section contrasting how each can contribute to both enduringness and fluidity.

A legacy identity differs from a living identity, as living identities are temporally continuous, considering both the organizations past and desired future, involving the entire intact organization, functioning as a social actor or entity (Walsh and Glynn, 2008). Legacy identities

are rooted in the past, temporally fixed, retrospective, and enacted by former stakeholder's reconstruction of the past (Walsh and Glynn, 2008). As a result, the focus on the legacy identity preserves an important part of the organizations past in the present-day environment but does not necessarily link this past to tangible benefit for the future of the organization.

An amalgamation, or the creation of a new hybrid organization, requires the demise of the old organizations. Its survivors face an ambiguous environment where they may try to recreate their lost systems of meaning (Walsh and Glynn, 2008) and re-evaluate their organizational identity, preserving what they value and hold as central (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Walsh and Glynn, 2006). Walsh and Glynn (2008) looked at the acquisition of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) by Compaq Computer Corporation researching the elements of DEC's legacy organizational identity that remained long after the DEC corporation ceased to exist. The legacy nature of identity tends to fix it temporally, locating it within a historical period while drawing it into the present supporting the argument that some central and distinctive attributes persist over time, some are amplified, and others are forgotten (Walsh and Glynn, 2008). In the case of Compaq, leaders used sense breaking (Weick, 2005) to assist internal stakeholders to detach from the old DEC identity by being clear that the old ways and procedures would not continue. Management went to the extent that they disbanded with real estate and other tangible holdings that were symbolically linked with the legacy brand and changed policies and processes to create distance from DEC's past, replacing the past with symbols associated with the new identity. This disbanding created a loss for stakeholders, followed by ambiguity requiring further support from leaders to allow internal stakeholders to make sense of the loss of the past and begin to understand the future. Leaders established a scenario where internal stakeholders could relate to the benefit of the new organizational identity, because, without a

recognized benefit or direction, the fear was internal stakeholders would create their own. Leaders are the carriers of organizational identity and play significant roles in creating and sustaining legacy organizational identities, highlighting the importance a leader plays in creating organizational identity, assisting stakeholder to understand and work through a sensemaking period of the changes being proposed.

During change initiatives, organizations face unclear organizational structures, processes, and outcomes. Internal stakeholders draw on their legacy by bringing with them what they are familiar with, causing them to mimic what they understand, as this assists internal stakeholders to develop solutions to deal with what may have been unknown, poorly understood or highly ambiguous environmental problems (Kondra and Hurst, 2009). For an organization to successfully create a new identity, it needs to reconstruct its legacy (Hudson and Balmer, 2013), through a process that considers and interprets the relationship to the past while encouraging that the organization's stakeholders' understanding of prior events be enhanced through contemplation. Organizations are required to work through a process of interactive reconstruction involving not only re-classification of the past, resulting from comparison to the present, but also a re-conceptualisation of the present through comparison to a reconstructed past (Hudson and Balmer, 2013).

Legacy identity can be influenced by any organizational stakeholder through guardianship employed to promote and stabilize threatened institutional values (Walsh and Glynn, 2008). Legacy identity may be represented by symbols that evoke or communicate the meaning of an identity that can include tangibles, such as heirloom gifts, artifacts and real property, or intangibles, such as traditions of practice, cultural norms, ideological beliefs or claims of identity. Legacy can affect the direction taken by leaders who are sensitive to adopting

influences from their external environment, especially during founding (Kondra and Hurst, 2009).

History plays a role in establishing legitimate identity claims through the organizational elements that have withstood the test of time (Whetten, 2006). Internal stakeholders commit to their deepest memory the things they dare not forget. Legacy identity claims are depicted as morals embedded in well-told stories of the defining moments in an organization's history, as the central themes highlighted in an organization's autobiographical accounts, or as a distinctive set of organizing principles authored by formative organizational leaders (Feldman and Rafaeli, 2002). Corporate communications and corporate design strategies of long-established companies like the government may refer to their organizational provenance and history in their communication as organizational identity is often used as a touchstone for internal stakeholders' personal and social identity (Walsh and Glynn, 2008).

There is a distinction between a legacy heritage brand and legacy identity, with branding also having a material influence on change initiatives. The Government of Canada uses a central branding strategy that serves the dual function of enforcing conformity within the organization while also projecting a cohesive outward-facing image that contributes to centralization (Marland et al., 2017). This may add to the complexity of creating and maintaining organizational identity in a hybrid organization as both legacy identity and heritage brand may add to increased enduringness (Marland et al., 2017).

This literature review has described the central, enduring, and distinctive elements of organizational and hybrid identity and explained how enduringness and legacy identity may create barriers for successful organizational identity change. Research also supports the argument that organizational identity can be fluid and illustrates how rhetorical history (Suddaby & Foster,

2017) and the strategic use of narrative, expressed as stories, can be used to connect the present and the past, to assist stakeholder in the sense-breaking, sense-giving and sensemaking (Gioia et al., 2013) process enabling organizational identity change. The following sections present the arguments on organizational identity fluidity.

Identity Fluidity

While Albert and Whetten (1985) discuss organizational identity as enduring, there is also significant research that supports the argument that organizational identity is not enduring and can move from an existing clarity of understanding to doubt, uncertainty, and/or ambiguity, and ultimately to a state of renewed clarity that resolves into an altered form (Corley and Gioia, 2004; Alvarez & Sachs, 2023). Legacy may exist, but fluidity is still possible (Walsh and Glynn, 2008; Glynn & Navis, 2013; Alvarez & Sachs, 2023).

The fluidity of organizational identity can be developed based on categorical perspectives that define an organization's identity in terms of its membership in one or more groupings or categories (Glynn & Navis, 2013). However, as organizations face challenges, changing goals and objectives, categorization can be constructed and reconstructed making organization identity more fluid and less enduring. Organizational identity involves an ongoing process of organizational decision making, which is influenced by organizational members' continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of the past and present social space in which the organization operates (Oertel & Thommes, 2018). Referencing categorization allows stakeholders going through organizational change to establish a foundation of who they are, what they are expected to be and to make sense of the shift from what they were to what they are to become. Cultural and institutional meanings affixed to categories prime both audience sensemaking and judgments of venture plausibility (Navis and Glynn, 2011).

The fluidity of organizational identity is achieved through proper communication and understanding by stakeholders of labels and the meaning behind them. Labels in an organization may often appear enduring, however the underlying meanings may change (Gioia et al., 2013; Gioia et al., 2000; Lyle, Walsh & Coraiola, 2022) and therefore identity is not a stable core but one that allows for the construction, destruction, reconstruction, and maintenance of identity using narrative (Chreim, 2005; Foster et al, 2016). Although either a change in a label or the meaning of a label could lead to a revision in the organization's identity, a change in identity through a shift in label is likely to be more visible and obvious as compared with a shift in meanings only (Gioia et al., 2013; Gioia et al., 2000). The effect of changing the meaning of retained labels during spin offs and the transition from one set of meanings to another is often characterized by a state of individual and collective apprehension and "identity ambiguity" among organizational stakeholders (Corley and Gioia, 2004; Alvarez & Sachs, 2023).

To achieve successful organizational identity change, management needs to go beyond simply labelling an organization as being part of a category (Whetten, 2006) as identities do not exist independently of the language used to tell the story of an organization (Chreim, 2005; Foster et al, 2016). In the creation of a hybrid organization identity that is neither public nor private, the internal stakeholders may have few, if any, benchmarks against which to sort, classify and assign meaning. Situations like this, with the lack of clarity in both the target and boundaries of categories, do not offer easy or simplified answers to the key question of categorization, 'What kind of organization is it?' or an understanding of the relational opposition to other categories that undergirds the process (Glynn & Navis, 2013). As a result, there is an opportunity for the strategic use of narrative, language, and communication (Chreim, 2005; Hampel & Dalpiaz, 2023) to assist organizational internal stakeholders through the sensemaking

process (Weick, 1993, 1995, 2001) and help them understand, and make sense of the new direction, vision, categorization, and to identify with the organization. History as it is used in organizational narratives has several layers (their own history, the history of their organizational field, or histories beyond the organizational field, for example, national histories) which may be actively used or discarded in narratives to craft an organizational identity and organizations may highlight or suppress aspects from each to rhetorically construct the past and in turn an organizations identity determines how the past is utilized and interpreted by organizations and their members and subsequently influences the claims from which the organizational identity is crafted (Oertel & Thommes, 2018).

The process to achieve fluidity can be broken into two key areas; sense-breaking and sense-giving by management, followed by sense-making of the individuals impacted. The narrative used by management is a mechanism of persuasion to change identity while sense-breaking and sense-giving are also used as mechanisms of enacting new identity.

Sense-Breaking and Sense-Giving

In situations where resources are merged from diverse groups into a new hybrid organization, internal stakeholders are likely to have divergent ideas about what the new organization is and should become, and as a result it is managements' role to seek cooperation and convergence of these views (Chreim, 2007). An organization's ability to achieve fluidity in organizational identity depends on management's ability to strategically use narrative to influence both internal and external stakeholders during the change process through sense-breaking and sense-giving (Chreim, 2005; Suddaby et al., 2023). The narrative used by management provides a way for management to distance their vision from stakeholders' conservative impulse to preserve the thread of continuity represented by the previous

organization's identity (Marris, 1986). A key task for leadership is establishing a communication plan that addresses issues such as: identity enhancement or threat (do internal stakeholders see the new organization as providing opportunity and benefit or not); identity ambiguity or stability (is there a clear vision and direction or an unclear path); and identity continuity or discontinuity (is the change viewed as an evolution or a revolution) (Chreim, 2007). It is important to maintain consistency between the top down and bottom-up processes in identity creation and leaders are required to focus on the interplay between each because if the top-down attempts to convey certain attributes conflict with the attributes that emerge via bottom-up processes it creates uncertainty and ambiguity. Research has shown that when this happens members will put more stock in their own experience of reality than in the leader's narrative (Ashforth et al., 2020). The cultural values that individuals perceive an organization as enacting have a greater influence on their affective commitment than the narrative provided by leadership. Without alignment between espoused and enacted values individuals may perceive espoused values as insincere or instrumental (Ashforth et al., 2020). Narrative is strategically used by management to assist internal stakeholders to break with the past, to overcome the enduring attributes of legacy identity, to de-legitimize highly institutionalized organizations and to persuade stakeholders through sense giving that deviating from institutional practices is both proper and acceptable (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005).

Sense breaking and sense giving using strategic narrative is used to influence individual identity uncertainty caused by differences in temporal orientation. Because the future is unknown, potential stakeholders typically supplement their objective rationality in assessing the future with subjective predispositions about the degree to which the future can be predicted, presenting a challenge for leaders to convince stakeholders including investors, employees,

regulators, customers, each of whom have different emotional assumptions about the past, present, and future, that the projected identity and organizational goals are less uncertain than their temporal orientation might suggest (Suddaby et al., 2023). Leaders address this challenge by making the future seem less uncertain by embedding their visions in stories that evoke a familiar, shared past and by using narratives that incorporate broadly held myths to unite shareholders with different temporal orientations by creating a "common ground" narrative among potential stakeholders (Alvarez & Sachs, 2023). Leaders embed stories of the future in collective memories of the past to allow sensemaking and overcome differences in individual temporal orientation and motivate collective action (Suddaby et al., 2023). Credibility of the narrative is important and largely a function of consistency among the organizational sense givers (agents), sense makers (members), and broader organizational context (Schinoff et al., 2016). Specifically, the more an espoused top-down identity is consistent with managerial actions and the organization's design, including structure, culture, climate, strategy, and other key elements, the more likely members are to view that identity as credible (Ashforth et al., 2020).

Organizational leaders are in a unique position to persuade others to adopt specific understandings and encourage desired action and the leaders who can identify, interpret, and appropriate history are better able to manage the identity creation process by directing organizational sense-giving (Weick, 1993), thus leading to a greater understanding of labels and their meaning by organizational stakeholders (Foster et al., 2013; Schultz and Hernes, 2013). Management has the options to use identity texts, themes, and strategies in the sense-giving process to either establish continuity or to evoke change. Management's ability to provide sense-giving activities like communicating opportunities for internal stakeholders of the new

organization can reduce the risk that internal stakeholders might react to what they see as attempts at erasure by protecting their previous identity, particularly if internal stakeholders viewed the new identity as inferior (Chreim, 2007; Suddaby et al., 2023).

During the sense-breaking and sense-giving process leadership can use strategic narratives to connect the past, present, and future of the organization (Chreim, 2005; Suddaby et al., 2023). By doing so they allow internal stakeholders to make sense of what was done in the past and to identify links between the past and the present/future. The strategic use of history in the narrative is often a delicate balance because, even though an organization's past is a rich source of knowledge and experience that can be appropriated and recycled allowing leaders to avoid harmful directions and trajectories, the past can also be a liability limiting identity change by offering familiarity to those facing an ambiguous period (Foster et al., 2016).

Sense-Making

Immediately following the creation of a new organization, stakeholders will begin to experience meaning and start defining what they are, and what they are not, through sense-making processes during their daily routines (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2001). During periods of change, internal stakeholders begin the sense-making process and fill in the identity blanks through a combination of personal experience and history, allowing them to establish where they fit (Gioia et al., 2013). Founders work to construct organizational identity early in organizations' life cycles and at the very beginning implement practices such as business planning explicitly geared toward assisting them to think through identity-related issues that had perhaps not previously occurred to them due to the newness of the organization (Oliver & Vough, 2020). As such, practices help make apparent the existence of identity voids where there are unanswered questions about the nature of the organizational identity (Gioia et al., 2010). The sensemaking

process following the identification of an identity void enable founders to generate new identity claims and incorporate them into their previously existing organizational identity claims through a continuation of sensemaking (Oliver & Vough, 2020). Sense-making allows stakeholders to interpret what their organization is about and creates shared understanding as a result of internal stakeholders reflecting on central and distinctive features of their organization (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006).

Narrative influences the sense-breaking, sense-giving and sense-making processes and is used by leaders in organizations to help with the establishment and maintenance of organizational identity (Chreim, 2005; Suddaby et al., 2023). The use of narrative provided by management in a consistent manner during the creation of a new organization can drive increased attention to events, actions, issues, provides explanation and gives reasons for the change that allows the stakeholders to let go of the past and to make sense of change initiatives (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006).

The literature review has provided an understanding of organizational and hybrid identity, the central, enduring, and distinctive elements (Albert & Whetten, 1985) and how enduringness and legacy identity may create barriers for successful organizational identity change. It has also provided an understanding of how identity change can also be fluid and change through strategic use of rhetoric (Suddaby & Foster, 2017) and narrative (Chreim, 2005) to trigger sense-breaking, sense-giving and sensemaking (Gioia et al., 2013; Suddaby et al., 2023). The literature review concludes with a review of how organizations can leverage history (Suddaby & Foster, 2017) in organizational change initiatives, the ways leadership might use narrative (Chreim, 2005; Hampel & Dalpiaz, 2023) to make enduring elements more fluid, to position and maintain both new organizational identity and how stakeholders make sense of it.

Identity Regulation

Organizations can use identity regulation as a form of organizational control (Alvesson and Wilmott, 2002). Alvesson and Willmott (2002) outlined the relationship between 1) identity regulation, 2) self-identity work and 3) self identity. They defined 1) identity regulation as the discursive practices concerned with identity definition that condition processes of identity formation and transformation, 2) identity work as the interpretive activity involved in reproducing and transforming self-identity and 3) self identity as the outcome of the identity work comprising the narratives of self. They propose that 1) prompts 2 while 2) informs 1) and that 3) is responsive or resistant to 1) but 1) is accomplished through 3). They also propose that 3) induces 2) and that 2) reworks 3). As a result, the use of identity regulation allows organization leadership to control the identity process, policies and narratives to direct the sensemaking and sense giving process and thus influence the organizational identity outcome.

Impact of History on Identity Enduringness and Fluidity

This section will present some of the enduring influences imprinting (Selznick, 1957; Stinchcombe, 1965) and inertia (Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Zuzul & Tripsas, 2020), and political factors including identity regulation (Alverson & Wilmott 2002) and look at how history can be used by leadership to achieve organizational identity fluidity.

Organizations are in a continuous state of creation, emergence, and becoming while being shaped by a changing past and future ambitions and an organization's past may have created barriers difficult to overcome (Schultz and Hernes, 2013). Looking at it through this lens, history is different from the past. Foster (2017) indicated that a managerial approach to constructing historical narratives is more constructivist where the historical narrative is open to multiple interpretations and in some cases, is a matter of invention. History can be constructed based on a set of sources and remains from the past, however the meanings acquired by the historical sources are malleable and change over time and each historical narrative is considered to be only

one version of the past and even then, is simply only a partial account of the totality of what once occurred. (Foster, 2017). In this sense historical evidence emerges from the vested interests of the leader that is telling the story and how they use the remnants of the past for their strategic benefit. History is therefore important, not because it provides an objective view of what happened, but instead because of the interpreted and mobilized efforts by leaders to create a view that aligns with the strategic direction leaders hope to shape the future. Leaders play less of a role as historian and more of a role as storytellers (part fact, part fiction), and the stories they generate lead to and enact important organisational outcomes (Chreim, 2005). As the historical narratives become a core part of stakeholders understanding they become essential and strategic in establishing the organization's new organizational identity. An organization's unique history offers leaders the opportunity to strategically use specific and familiar vocabulary, imagery and emotional memory using compelling stories to unlock the historical value in its brand, allowing leaders to enhance the change initiative (Suddaby et al., 2010).

Suddaby, Schultz & Israelsen (2020) expand on Freemans (1993) categories of time; historical, mythic and narrative. They describe 1) historical time as linear, rational and amenable to scientific measurement and standardization that is consistent with the objective use of the past as described in traditional notions of organizational memory and 2) mythical time as cyclical where the past is repeated in the present and the future as myths that give meaning and structure to individuals and mythic time being like historical time following a chronological flow from past, present to future and is constructed by the intrusion of the past on the present and in the future. However, Suddaby, Schultz & Israelsen (2020) identify that narrative time (often used by leaders in the sense making process) is different and is distinctly non-linear with the narrator travelling backward and forward in time for strategic purposes. Narrative time is characterized

by deviations from the temporal order, through a use of flash forwards and flash backs, temporal leaps all of which sacrifice temporal and historical accuracy in the interests of creating continuity of the entity through time. Leaders use narrative time to create meaning and identity not by referencing the original event but, rather by the sensemaking created by retelling the original event in the present with implicit reference to the future. Therefore, time in the narrative is disjointed and fluid.

Rhetorical history, in an organizational context, is the act of interpreting the past, motivated by an interest in constructing an identity of the organization as either continuous or discontinuous with an imagined future (Suddaby & Foster, 2017). Identity formation is influenced by historical forms of memory that includes three elements: 1) written communications, rules and records that allows comparisons between the past, present, and desired future identity; 2) material, including artifacts, physical spaces, emblems, that allows for imaging experiences of past stakeholders and positioning of future projects; and 3) communications, which includes stories and narratives, presentations, and conversations (Schultz and Hernes, 2013). While each of these can contribute to the enduring nature of organizational identity, research also shows that each can assist with the fluidity of organizational identity depending upon how it is used and managed. Rhetorical history is the key construct through which leaders persuade potential stakeholders with different temporal orientations to view the future as less uncertain than it may be (Suddaby et al., 2021). Defined by Suddaby et al, (2010) as the strategic use of the past as a persuasive strategy for managing key stakeholders, rhetorical history has been used to demonstrate how selective narrations of the past can be used to make the future seem less risky and thereby facilitate processes of innovative change (Suddaby et. al, 2020).

As discussed earlier, an organization's history can contribute to the enduringness of an organization's legacy identity and reluctance to invest in new learning and approaches (Oliver, 1997). An organization's past success and history can cause barriers for change because in an ambiguous time of change, internal stakeholders may fight to repeat past action to recreate past success (Miller, 1992). Once an organization has made a public claim to mobilize resources, has convinced individuals to cede some control in return for specific inducements, has invested in physical and human capital of specific types, and has designed a product or service to appeal to a certain audience, it has greatly limited its range of feasible transformations (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). Institutional activities, like those within government procurement, maintained over long periods of time without further justification or elaboration, become highly resistant to change (Zucker, 1987), and institutional practices come to be seen by organizational stakeholders as the only natural or obvious way to conduct an activity. Resistance of such practices to change is explained by the influence of history and habit in sustaining organizational behaviour and by tendencies for continually reproduced behaviours to be self-reinforcing over time (Oliver, 1992). Legacy identity encourage escalation of commitment to a failing course of action (Staw & Ross, 1989) where individuals, groups or organizations continue with a course of action despite accumulating negative outcomes (Suddaby & Foster, 2017) and in the case of complex organizations, large "sunk costs" may irrationally constrain human agency so that stakeholders continue to commit resources to an unproven or failed strategy (Suddaby & Foster, 2017). Past events and behaviors create serious constraints for future action and broad social norms of appropriate behavior dictate that leaders should be consistent over time (Suddaby & Foster, 2017). As a result, in change initiatives, leaders tend to stick with decisions once made because that is what leaders are assumed to do.

Leaders address the enduring influence of legacy and history by leveraging the past to achieve successful organizational change (Suddaby & Foster, 2015). An organization's history has an influence on its past, current, and future identity and the ability to achieve successful change is influenced on the ability to understand and manage its future direction in connection with its historical roots (Suddaby & Foster, 2015). The preservation of an organization's past enables internal stakeholders to construct, or preserve, a firm's identity over time by making visible and accessible the core characteristics, values, accomplishments and defining events of the organization (Walsh & Glynn, 2008). To address history, legacy identity and dysfunctional processes that may develop over time, leaders in these organizations must be able to lead the team through their anxiety associated with unlearning key processes that may have existed in the past and must be able to understand not only the organizational aspects of the change but also the shift in dynamics of the culture (Drucker, 1996). Organizations can change or maintain their culture by enhancing and developing historical narratives because historical narratives resonate within organizations precisely because they are developed to enhance or change the espoused values of the organization (Foster et al., 2016). Civil servants can alter their representation decisions when they are presented with new environmental stimuli that are inconsistent with the traditional beliefs and broadly held views that have been previously held (Murdoch et al, 2020). Major events can induce uncertainty and prompt stakeholders to construct and interpret new features of the environment and the disruption can cause organizations and staff to step back, evaluate it and attempt to make sense of the change this causing bureaucrats to begin questioning dominant roles, and practices (Murdoch et al., 2020) The counterpoint is that important events can also disrupt the structural framework of the organization including its hierarchy, control mechanisms and stability. Both present a mechanism for profound change in the decision and

sensemaking of civil servants (Murdoch et al., 2020). The challenge for leadership in new organizations is creating the new organizational identity because to do so they must recognize that people cannot be reengineered or forced to change and the choice to make meaningful change must be a choice of the impacted internal stakeholders (Drucker, 1996). Hatch & Schultz (2017) argue stakeholders temporal bracketing of historicizing acknowledges the possibility that stakeholders resonate with history before it occurs to them to use it and further argue that manipulating history risks failure because it undermines the immediacy, intensity, and emotionality that history inspires in others. This opens the door for management to carefully consider the organization's history and how they use this history in their strategic approach to change. The key is not to manipulate history to legitimate strategy already formulated but to determine how to authentically use history to align their strategic choices with knowledge of and wisdom extracted from the past.

Imprinting (Stinchcombe, 1965) can be defined as a process that occurs during the susceptible period of an organization's founding when the organization develops characteristics that reflect the environment in which it operates. Imprinting defines the historical origins of the organization posing potential barriers to successful identity change if not understood and managed by leaders. An organization's commitments are made "irreversible" by the degree to which they are made central to an organization's policies, procedures, and practices (Selznick, 1957; Foster et al., 2017). Once internal stakeholders identify with a specific category, such as public government organization or private industry organization, and achieve what they feel to be distinctiveness in that category, creating a shift and gaining acceptance of membership in a new category is difficult. The conditions that exist at an organization founding have significant influence on the organization and establishes pressures that restrict the ability to achieve future

change (Stinchcombe, 1965). Imprinting causes characteristics to continue to persist in the organization regardless of organizational change effort undertaken in the future (Feldman and Romanelli, 2006; Burton and Beckman, 2007).

To address the enduring impact of imprinting, the leaders can interpret history through story telling to assist with organizational changes. By using storytelling (Chreim, 2005), leaders provide a temporal structure to which individuals and groups can identify to make sense of their own personal and collective histories. Strategically using history in the narrative, leaders can strive to achieve planned outcomes and change in both the internal and external environments. Changes can be directed to various elements of the organizational change initiative including the organisation's culture, building identity, promoting authenticity, and/or enhancing legitimacy (Foster et al., 2017). The strategic use of historical narratives allows leaders to achieve a variety of goals including establishing grounds for strategic orientation, building continuity for stakeholders, establishing similarity or differences within a categorical structure, and engaging a broad set of stakeholders in the discussions needed to make sense of the desired change (Foster et al., 2017).

This imprinting effect (Stinchcombe, 1965) can have a material influence on the values and direction of the organization with long held institutionalized practices that reproduce goals, rules, coordination mechanisms and communication channels causing leaders to be restricted in their ability to think strategically (Suddaby & Foster, 2017). Comparable legacy imprints are often made by company founders or leaders when they articulate managerial objectives, vision or philosophies that can affect entire organizations (Burton & Beckman, 2007). Founder identities, roles, and values influence initial formulations of organizational identity, and they tend to overlook the role of action in identity creation, yet organizational identity construction is an

ongoing process of sensemaking, and a central tenet of sensemaking is that action both shapes and is shaped by identity and the actions include the day-to-day practices (Oliver & Vough, 2020). The view of the founders gains a disproportionate importance in the firms' survival (Oliver & Vough, 2020) and their actions can have an imprinting effect in the early stages of a firm's existence because there is a limited time for identity beliefs to become well-established and shared the firms and these are guided by founders with future vision and organization goals.

Organizational identity can be further influenced by the historical impact of inertia (Hannan & Freeman, 1984; Zuzul & Tripsas, 2020), which may introduce conflict. As organizations age, they develop policies, traditions and practices that make change difficult, and organizational success is dependent upon an organization's ability to consistently reproduce routines and structures that initially made the organization successful (Hannan & Freeman, 1977, 1984). Zuzul and Tripsas (2020) argued that inertia can arise from a firm's established routines and proven capabilities and that a firm's history of success and failure can entrench managerial beliefs and routines such that decision makers invest only in activities that led to prior successes and become blind to the need for change. As firms grow age and mature, they develop cumbersome structural constraints, including complex communication channels and lengthy decision-making procedures that discourage rapid, potentially risky changes. Inertia can be compounded by a firm's existing resources (staff and other resource such as tools etc.) and established resources can result in path dependence, since firms tend to invest in and acquire the kinds of resources they already own, rather than searching for new types (Zuzul and Tripsas, 2020). Imprinting and inertia are sometime influenced by similar factors, as highlighted by the role founders carry as their individual histories, beliefs, visions, backgrounds, experiences, and personalities can shape a new firm's earliest choices, including its initial mission, choice of

market, reliance on particular resources, and level of exploration and exploitation (Zuzul & Tripsas, 2020).

During organizational change, there is a period during which existing rules and structures are dismantled or successfully challenged, and the new ones are created to replace them. Such times increase the likelihood of conflicts within an organization as different groups of stakeholders (both those championing change and those accountable to keep the lights on) will try to shape the rules and direction to benefit their self-interests. To overcome inertial pressures management can deploy the strategic use of narrative establishing clear vision for the goals and objectives for the new hybrid organization identity and establishing the context in which its historical legacy identity is positioned (Chreim, 2005). By assisting internal stakeholders through the sense-making (Weick, 1993, 1995) process management can create continuity between the past and present allowing elements of the past to be let go to make room for the new.

Political factors can also add to the enduring nature of organization identity. Identity regulation refers to the effects of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction and can be used to help shape organizational identity (Alverson and Wilmott 2002). However organizational regulation of identity is often a contested process with organization members not being reduced to passive consumers of managerially designed and designated identities and it is recognized that organizations are often not the most influential and skilled in defining and managing identity (Alverson and Wilmott 2002). Organizational identity change may pose more of a challenge in the public sector than in the private sector because frequent shifts in political leadership and short tenures for political appointees can cause commitment for change to wane (Fernandez & Rainey 2006). In addition, participation of stakeholders presents an important role requiring attention by senior management as career civil

servants, who may be averse to change, display caution and focus on security, can use the frequent turnover among top political appointees to their advantage by simply resisting new initiatives until a new administration comes into power (Fernandez & Rainey 2006). Public sector organizations are also often challenged to attain the necessary support from governmental authorities and in many instances have multiple political masters pursuing different objectives (Fernandez & Rainey 2006). In addition, politically appointed executives often have very weak relationships with career civil servants making the sensemaking and sense giving process more difficult. (Fernandez & Rainey 2006). Each of these factors that are unique to the public sector can cause resistance to change initiatives.

Political influences can be overcome and used to enable change initiatives. Alverson and Wilmott 2002 (2002) indicated that identity regulation involves the effects of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction and can be used to help shape organizational identity (Alv Alverson and Wilmott 2002). Organizations can deploy training and promotional procedures to have a direct impact on shaping identity. As the organization becomes a significant source of identification for individuals then the corporate identity (the perceived core characteristics of the organization) then informs self identity work (Alv Alverson and Wilmott 2002). The degree of success for changes in the public sector change initiatives are often directly proportional to the level of support from political overseers and other key external stakeholders as these stakeholders impact the change outcomes through their ability to impose statutory changes and their ability to control the flow of vital resources within public organizations (Fernandez & Rainey 2006). Top political stakeholders can influence the outcome of the change by creating and conveying a vision and message that creates the need for change and by appointing the proper senior management who support the change initiative and have the

necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to assist with the change (Fernandez & Rainey 2006). Therefore, properly managed and communicated vision and messaging can assist with the change initiative.

Imprinting, inertia, and political factors can be argued to contribute to the enduringness of organizational identity. However, research illustrates that each of these can be strategically managed by leadership, as described above. Research suggests that identity is not enduring and can be fluid and managed by leadership using sense giving (Weick, 1993, 1995, 2001, Weick et al., 2005) and narrative (Chreim, 2005).

It is important to understand that identity is not only dependent on history alone, as the past, present, and future vision all influence identity. Temporality (Schultz and Hernes, 2013) defines the ongoing relationships between past, present, and future, making history a relevant element when internal stakeholders in organizations make claims about who they are or who they are becoming as an organization.

Temporal changes in government organizations can impact stakeholder identity and introduce ambiguity in the understanding of the distinct representative roles at the individual level. Events causing a disruption in bureaucrats' environment trigger a process through which interpretations and discrepancies are developed, causing emotional activation and sense making by the stakeholders (Murdock et. al., 2020). Even though a bureaucrat's tasks and responsibilities are formally specified by mandates set out in legislation, stakeholders also retain significant discretion in day-to-day decision-making activities. The level to which discretion is allowed is influenced by the presence or absence of institutional constraints and is therefore determined more at the organizational level and not the individual level (Murdoch et. al., 2020).

Temporal identity continuity is challenging for organization leaders. While leaders can address threats and reaffirm the organizational identity by construing a sense of temporal identity continuity across the past, present and the future, this becomes difficult where members are recruited from diverse organizations in the case of hybrid organization identity as individual perspectives may conflict with each other (Hampel & Dalpiaz, 2023). In these situations, the ability for identity continuity that works for one group may alienate the other. Therefore, the process to reaffirm identity claims requires leaders to invoke the past selectively by omitting or rationalizing memory cues that would either undermine identity claims or connecting identity claims with organization history and tradition (Foster et al, 2017; Suddaby et al, 2016).

Conclusion

This literature review permitted me to look at the research finding involving organizational identity focused on answering the question; "How does legacy identity help with a public sector/government organization's transition and/or impair transition to a hybrid organizational form?" It discussed organization identity, the concepts of central and distinctive (Albert & Whetten, 1985), how categories play a role in organization identity (Whetten and MacKay, 2002; Whetten, 2006) and how hybrid organizational identity (Greenwood et al., 2011) combine multiple categories and logics with a view of both internal organizational identity and external image (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Glynn & Navis, 2013). The literature review explored enduring attributes (Albert & Whetten, 1985) that included areas of resistance to change and the independent constructs of legacy identity (Walsh and Glynn, 2008) and rhetorical history (Suddaby & Foster, 2017) illustrating how narrative can be introduced as expressed stories to connect the present and the past to create fluidity of organizational identity (Chreim, 2005) using sense-breaking, sense-giving and sensemaking (Gioia et al., 2013). It concluded by providing

insight on how management can leverage history (Suddaby & Foster, 2017) in organizational change initiatives, through the use of narrative (Chreim, 2005) to shift enduring attributes elements to fluid.

From the exploration of legacy identity, we see the need to look across these components for the shared claims of the organization's former stakeholders who often draw on central elements from their past, regularly bringing them to the present through collective shared activities and artifacts. Regardless of the strength of the organization, its internal stakeholders, or leadership, there is always likely to be conflict between leadership and other parts of the organization going through an identity transformation (Gioia et al., 2013). As Flyvbjerg (2001) states; "In real social and political life, self-interest and conflict will not give way to some all-embracing communal ideal. Indeed, the more democratic a society, the more it allows groups to define their own specific ways of life and legitimizes the inevitable conflicts of life that arise between them. Political consensus cannot be expected to neutralise group obligation, commitments, and interests" (p. 108). Therefore, the role of legacy identity must be recognized and understood by management as a key influencer in organizational change.

The literature reviewed identified the key elements of organizational identity and their use as barriers to and enablers of identity change by sophisticated leaders at all levels of the organization. From this review, I explored the central, enduring, and distinctive elements of the past (legacy), present and desired (prospective) organizational identity, as well as the use of history, rhetoric, imprinting and stories to influence identify fluidity in the case of SSC to answer. The following section describes my research design.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

I selected a qualitative approach because this method was best suited to investigate the impact legacy identity had on the SSC change initiative. A qualitative approach using a case study allowed me to give voice to the interpretations of event in a first-order analysis of the people experiencing the events allowing for a foundation based on insider's experience. This enabled me to collect data in the form of words and observations as opposed to numbers. I was able to see the situation from the point of view of interviewees, to become immersed in the detail and get close to the areas of interest. From this base I was then able to formulate deeper more theoretical second order interpretations.

Social constructivists argue that stable social institutions emerge from highly flexible possibilities at the individual and interactional level, which become externalized and objectivated, eventually being taken for granted as realities (Lynch, 2016). Lynch (2016) further argues that new cohorts are socialized into (and through) such institutions, and deviance is managed through social control processes, so that individuals internalize and identify with the institutional norms and roles that circumscribe their actions. For social constructivists, reality is created through human activity and organizational members create the organizational properties and identity together (Kulka, 2000). Social constructivism is an approach to social analysis that asserts the following: (a) human interaction is shaped primarily by ideational factors, not simply material ones; (b) the most important ideational factors are widely shared or "intersubjective" beliefs, which are not reducible to individuals; and (c) these shared beliefs construct the interests and identities of purposive actors (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001). In essence the organizational identity is not discovered but instead it is created through social interaction and social invention.

Knowledge is exchanged from the individual to the organization and back and as a result the organization is a human construct and not a predefined external reality.

I conducted research and looked at how individual understandings of legacy identity interacted and impacted sensemaking over the course of a change and whether this supported or inhibited the implementation of a new organizational identity. I assessed the evolving perception of identity over time – uncovering the ways that individuals and groups participated in the construction of their shared social reality, or understanding of the SSC organization's identity, which formed the basis for shared assumptions about reality and how meanings were developed jointly. I analyzed sense making practices utilized by SSC management and the groups understanding to identify why identity changed or why it did not change.

My analysis looks at identity change at SSC from the perspective of those that have lived through that change with a research goal to look at whether legacy identity helps with a public sector/government organization's transition and/or impairs transition to a hybrid organizational form. I used the strengths of a case study to place specific focus on SSC in the broader context of the Government of Canada. Wilson (2014) positions a case study as an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear.

My involvement with previous federal government change projects positioned me as someone who can successfully engage with the stakeholders and archival data. I realized the need to stay reflective, being mindful of alternative interpretations, when I suspected my own bias may colour interpretation. I was conscious of the potential bias that my values and experience with SSC may have on my research and took steps to minimize the bias by recognizing this possible bias proactively, working with external advisors and reflecting on my

activity. However, I also felt my personal bias and subjectivity could be leveraged to help me bring coherent meaning to my interpretations because of my experience with the organization and the context.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Methodology

I followed proven approaches for qualitative case study research. It offered insight into a new area of research (hybrid identity creation in a public sector environment) that drives value to practitioners and researchers. The case was relevant to me and the stakeholders involved in the study. In the case of SSC, the case study provides insight into the role legacy plays when spinning off an organizational area into a newly formed organization. The cost associated with conducting the research was low and even in times of pandemic much of the research was conducted remotely.

This study provides a baseline for future researchers to build upon with future study. The study is relevant to broader organizations and industry. The isomorphism theory DiMaggio and Powell's (1983, 1991) argues the research may be relevant beyond the public sector and have applicability across other public sector and bureaucratic organizations.

There were potential issues and weaknesses that occasionally arise as part of any research project. The individuals required for interviews may not be openly available, leaving a major hole in the research however this was not the case with all the candidates being openly available. While I was concerned that individuals may be reluctant to be open and transparent, while other individuals may be prone to a positive response this was addressed by ensuring the interviewees felt comfortable, and that I confirmed the anonymity associated with the research design. There was the risk that the results contain bias, and my research used triangulation using document review from internal and external sources coupled with interviews with internal and external

sources. There was the risk of my personal bias in the research and that the case study may include errors, or I may focus on the elements that I choose to see, prejudicing the results. This was addressed through academic advisor oversight and coaching. Rigour was addressed through the recording and transcribing of the research providing a chain of evidence and pulling research from document review and interviews. There was the risk of a case study being too general in nature and this was minimized as the intent of the case study is to focus on SSC. The intent with a single case study is to focus the results on the SSC experience as an example that can be used for future research.

Individuals may not have been with SSC in the early years and did not have a view of the full history while others may have been there in early years and have left between 2012 and now. This was addressed by meeting with a cross section of interviewees.

Case Study Context - Shared Services Canada Contextual Background

The following provides context of the organization being studied in this research.

Impact of Context

Understanding the context around Shared Services Canada is important as context has an impact on organizational behaviour and is often a major factor for study-to-study. Context is defined by Johns (2006) as situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behaviour as well as functional relationships between variables. The following offers insight into the omnibus level context areas that considers the who, where when and why questions and the discrete level context areas including task (autonomy, uncertainty, accountability, resources), social and physical aspects (Johns, 2006).

Shared Services Canada Purpose

In the 2012-2013 SSC Report on Plans and Priorities SSC defined its mandate to simultaneously operate and transform the government's IT infrastructure and to be responsible

for providing the 43 other Federal government departments with modern, dependable, and secure IT infrastructure services in a cost effective and environmentally responsible manner. SSC indicated that the process would involve "building a new organization from the ground up" (SSC report on Plans and Priorities 2012-2013). SSC recognized in its executive messaging that the partner departments and agencies had developed several innovative processes, principles and tools over the years and committed SSC to mining that expertise and to explore and leverage best practices across both the public and private sector. SSC also committed to maintaining a fair, open, and transparent dialogue with industry on the IT transformation including a sustainable and substantive relationship with the private sector.

Shared Services Canada Scope, and Timeline

The following are key milestones leading up to the formation of SSC.

- In Budget 2010 (March 4, 2010), managed by a minority Conservative government elected on October 14, 2008, a comprehensive review of government administrative functions and cost was mandated to identify opportunities for additional savings, to improve service delivery and to return to a balanced budget.
- Budget 2011 (June 6, 2011) managed by a majority Conservative government elected on May 2, 2011, continued to examine government-wide solutions to standardize, consolidate and re-engineer the way the government does business. Efficiencies that enabled shared services arrangements and the transfer of functions from departments and agencies were identified as key considerations. During this review, examples were examined from other jurisdictions and private-sector organizations with respect to their own information technology (IT) platforms. The decision to create Shared Services Canada (SSC) was an outcome of this review.

- On August 4, 2011, the creation of SSC was announced. IT infrastructure services and related funding and personnel were transferred from Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) to SSC through an Order-in-Council (OIC) (approximately 1,500 positions). The new organization was mandated to provide 43 government departments with IT infrastructure services – specifically for email, data centres and networks.
- On November 15, 2011, through a second set of Orders in Council, an additional 5,000 public service positions were transferred to SSC from 42 other departments and agencies rounding out the new SSC staff.
- On April 1, 2012, SSC became an independently functioning department responsible for its own governance and financial results.
- On June 29, 2012, SSC received Royal Assent and support through a third Order in Council transferring 50 additional employees from the PWGSC acquisitions branch (procurement) to SSC.
- On September 7, 2012, SSC's public internet site was launched where internal SSC employees and all Canadians could find information on the role of SSC, including priorities, goals, achievements, and progress to date. This opened the organization up to both sensemaking for the internal stakeholders and image from external stakeholders.
- On October 19, 2015, the Liberals are elected with a majority government.
- 2016 – The Auditor General of Canada releases the results of an audit on SSC.
- 2016 - SSC 2.0 is announced with a new focus on enhanced service delivery, customer satisfaction and enterprise approach.
- 2019 - SSC Launches SSC 3.0 focused on digital government.

- 2020 – Covid hits creating new unprecedented challenges and opportunities.
- 2023 – SSC and government emerge from COVID

SSC Responsibilities

The narrative used on SSC's website during the creation of SSC indicated the move to a new organization focused on innovation and best practices however government did not provide SSC full accountability. SSC was accountable for procurement, service management and delivery for email, data centre and network, however the end user departments retained control of application service management and Public Works and Government Services Canada retained the procurement responsibilities for applications. Policy and standards remained the responsibility of Treasury Board Secretariat (www.canada.ca/en/shared-services/corporate/transparency/briefing-documents/ministerial-briefing-book/shared-services-canada-history-legislative-responsibilities.html).

The transfer of budget and employees from the departments to SSC represented a significant shift in accountability and may have created power struggles between the departments that were required to relinquish budget and operational control and for SSC who were required to build new processes to consolidate and manage shared services during the transition period. The transfer of employees from departments to SSC may have also encountered different reactions during the transition and the degree of choice and input into the transfer decisions may have influenced the attitudes of impacted stakeholders.

SSC Senior Management Structure

The senior management structure at SSC has evolved since its creation. The initial structure of SSC when created in 2012 included a President, Chief Operating Officer, four Assistant Deputy Ministers and multiple Director General (DG) level managers when initially

created in 2011. The structure of SSC in 2022 included a President, Vice President and 16 Assistant Deputy Minister/Sr Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) level managers and multiple Director General (DG) level managers. (https://www.canada.ca/en/sharedservices/corporate/organizational-structure.html).

Effects on Centralization, Streamlining, and Flattening of Formal Design,

SSC's purpose was to centralize and standardize IT across multiple departments. In the 2012-2013 Report on Plans and Priorities the SSC executive messaging indicated; "SSC is creating a dynamic corporate culture – one that builds on a broader public service ethos to embrace innovation as part of its brand. Supporting and challenging SSC employees is central to that undertaking. Working together, as a community, SSC will deliver service excellence, innovation, and value for money as it builds a modern, reliable and secure IT platform for the Government of Canada". During the founding in 2012 SSC also announced the new organization represented an unprecedented opportunity to bring the government's best and brightest IT talent together to form one Government of Canada IT bench. SSC communicated that the combined and complementary abilities would lead to more coordination, collaboration, and would result in more integrated approaches and solutions (SSC 2012-2013 Report on Plans and Priorities).

Changing Status in the Political Transitions Between Governments

Shared Services Canada has existed during a period of both minority and majority governments where power shifted from Conservative to Liberal leadership. The following provides insight into the political landscape leading up to and following the creation of SSC.

- 40th General Election – October 14, 2008 – Conservative minority
- 41st General Election – May 2, 2011 – Conservative majority
- 42nd General Election – October 19, 2015 – Liberals majority

- 43rd General Election – October 21, 2019 – Liberal minority
- 44th General Election – September 20, 2021 – Liberal minority
- 45th General Election – April 28, 2025 – Liberal minority

Senior Leadership Changes

The following chart shows the eight different Ministers, four presidents (including the existing vacancy) and four SSC COO/VP levels that have been accountable for SSC during its initial 12 years of existence from inception through 2024.

Table 1

SSC Minister and Executives

The following table provides an annual view of the Ministers that have been responsible for SSC with colour coding for the first three columns. The fourth column breaks out the SSC presidents coloured to show the frequent turn over and the final column show the COO/VP colour coded to show the turnover. The colour coding allows a quick visual assessment of the lack of stability within each role and across combination across the top three executive positions since SSC creation.

Shared Services Canada Ministers and Presidents				
Year	**Minister**	**Department**	**SSC president**	**COO/VP**
2012-2013	Rona Ambrose	Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada and Minister for Status of Women	Liseanne Forand	Grant Westcott
2013-2014	Rona Ambrose	Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada and Minister for Status of Women	Liseanne Forand	Grant Westcott
2014-2015	Diane Finley	Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada and Minister Responsible for Shared Services Canada	Liseanne Forand	Grant Westcott
2015-2016	Diane Finley	Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada and Minister Responsible for Shared Services Canada	Ron Parker	John Glowacki
2016-2017	Judy Foote	Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada and Minister responsible for Shared Services Canada	Ron Parker	John Glowacki
2017-2018	Judy Foote	Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada and Minister responsible for Shared Services Canada	Ron Parker	Sarah Paquet
2018-2019	Carla Qualtrough	Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada and Minister responsible for Shared Services Canada	Ron Parker	Sarah Paquet
2019-2020	Carla Qualtrough	Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility and Minister responsible for Shared Services Canada	Paul Glover	Sarah Paquet
2020-2021	Joyce Murray	Minister of Digital Government and Minister responsible for Shared Services Canada	Paul Glover	Sony Perron
2021-2022	Joyce Murray	Minister of Digital Government and Minister responsible for Shared Services Canada	Paul Glover	Sony Perron
2022-2023	Filomena Tassi	Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada and Minister responsible for Shared Services Canada	Vacant (as of February 16, 2022)	Sony Perron
2023	Helena Jaczek	Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada and Minister responsible for Shared Services Canada	Sony Perron	Scott Jones
2023-2024	Jean-Yves Duclos	Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada and Minister responsible for Shared Services Canada	Sony Perron	Scott Jones

Source: Shared Service Canada Website

Research Design Considerations

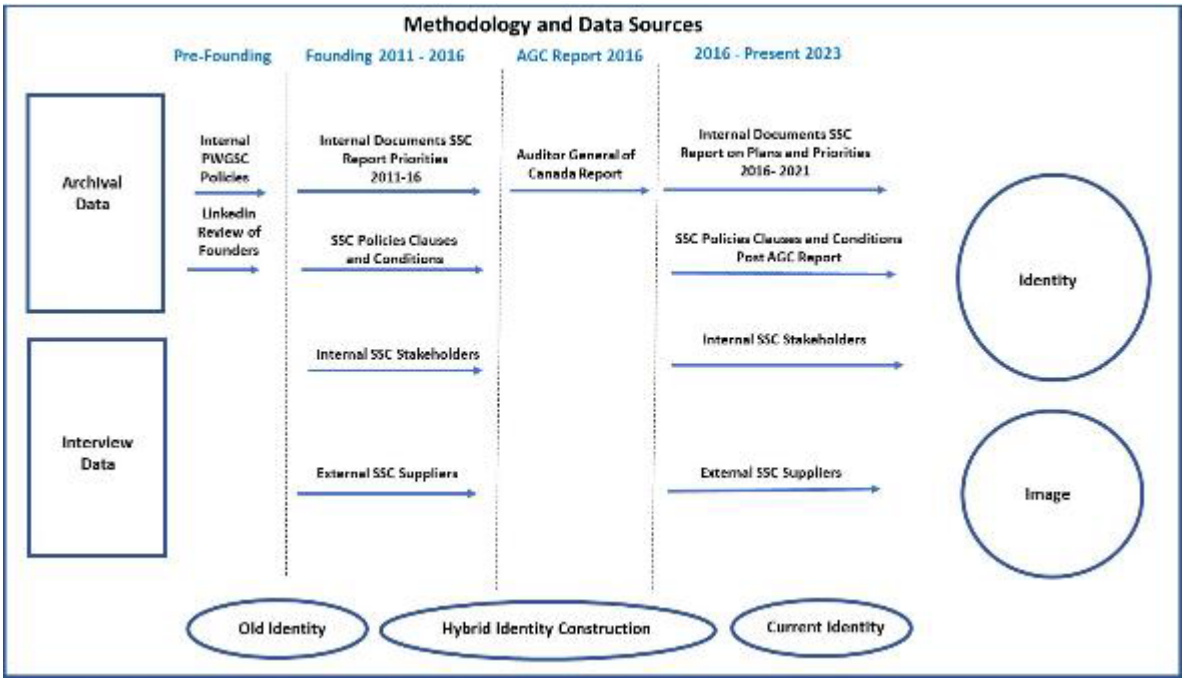
The consideration of organizational context in the SSC study is important as it affects patterns of change through its effect on how issues are interpreted (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). I

remained aware of the events that shaped SSC and examined how the organization configured themselves to deal with any recurrent problems. I looked at events, like the Auditor General of Canada Report and others that emerged through my research. As I worked though my analysis, I remained aware of the context in which my research occurs.

Research Approach

The case study allowed me to incorporate multiple perspectives, data sources, and strategies allowing for an in-depth focus specifically on SSC that provided insights that can be transferable without making generalities. This approach allowed me to systematically plan for sorting the data and then conducting a comparative analysis. My research approach included collecting a combination of internal and external archival data and conducting internal and external interviews covering multiple time periods; pre-SSC founding, SSC initial period up to the Auditor General of Canada Report in 2016 and post Auditor General of Canada Report to present.

Figure 3-1 ***Methodology and Data Sources***



As depicted in Figure 3-1, I used multiple sources for data collection across multiple timelines.

The upper horizontal axis identifies the period between when SSC was founded and the present. The lower horizontal axis identifies the identity type for which data was collected; including the period just before and during the creation of SSC titled; “Old Identity”, the period during which identity was being established titled; “Hybrid Identity Creation”, and the recent period of SSC’s existence titled; “Current identity”. The goal was to research how identity changed through this timeline. The left-hand vertical axes of Figure 4-1 illustrates the two key areas of data collection; interview data and archival data with the target documents and stakeholders identified across the horizontal axes. The right-hand vertical axes identify the elements that link to identity and those ones that correspond to image.

Data Collection

The case study used a combination of archival data and interviews as outlined in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-2

Data Overview and Use in the Analysis

	Data Type	Number	Capture Period	Role in Analysis
A	**Internal Archival Data**			
A-1	SSC procurement policies and standard acquisition clauses, and conditions (SACC)	3	Across three time periods •Pre-SSC creation 2011 •SSC from 2012-2016 •SSC from 2017-2023	Allowed a comparison of the past, present, and desired future to see if the policies and artifacts from SSC's predecessor contributed to legacy identity and either assisted with or impeded the organizational change process. These were accessed through the SSC public web site.
A-2	Executive messages in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities	12	From founding to 2023	Identify how the leadership may have used narrative (Schultz and Hernes, 2013) in the messages to help stakeholders with the sensemaking process to shape the organizational change. These reports were publicly available providing evidence of the desired organizational identity and messaging provided by management.
B	**External Archival Data**			
B-1	Summary conclusions reached in the Auditor General of Canada Report on SSC (2016)	1	2016	The conclusions reached in the Auditor General of Canada Report on SSC 2016 offered a unique perspective external image from outside SSC yet coming from inside government. Access to the Auditor General of Canada Report was publicly available through government online portals.
B-2	Executive LinkedIn profiles	32	2012-2016	Provided insight into where the SSC executive originated from at the time of founding, what their backgrounds were (private or public sector) and how long they remained with SSC. This offered insight into the potential impact legacy government identity and how it may have impacted founding members and the length of stay on their ability to communicate the new organizational identity through consistent messaging.
C	**Interviews**	19	2012-2023	To understand how leaders and members expereinced the past, present and future in the development of the new organizational dientity.
C-1	SSC Executive Level (Assistant Deputy Minister, Director General)	7	4 From 2012-2015 3 From 2016-2023	The executive interviews focus on what the executive vision was/is for the organization and assess how they communicated to assist internal and external stakeholders understand and make sense (Weick, 1995) of the new identity.
C-2	SSC Working Level (Manager, Director)	6	3 From 2012-2015 3 From 2016-2023	To identify how members understood the new identity and the imapact of legacy and executive communications
C-3	SSC Suppliers (Businesses doing greater than $10M in annual revenue with SSC. The intent is to focus on three businesses that do direct business with SSC and three that do business through channel reseller (such as Original Equipment Manufacturers OEM's)	7	3 From 2012-2015 3 From 2016-2023	To understand external image and how may have influenced identity

Archival Data.

The executive messages contained in the SSC Annual Report on Plans and Priorities speak about organizational attributes, justify organizational actions and project future goals and

aspirations. The reports provided insight into what was communicated to help stakeholders understand and make sense of the desired definitional component associated with a specific conceptual domain and category for organizational identity looking at the central, enduring, and distinctive features of SSC and allowing stakeholders to integrate this into their sense making activities. The executive messages provided insight into the leadership's envisioned identity and an idea of who they hoped SSC was as an organization and how they wanted internal stakeholders to relate to it being in a public sector category, a private sector category or something else. It also provided insight into the legacy elements that were being managed.

A review of internal government Standard Acquisition Clauses and Conditions (SACC) provided insight into the processes and policies that pre-existed SSC, were in place during SSC's early years (2012-2016) and those in place post Auditor General Report issued in 2016. A review of the Auditor General of Canada Report on SSC released in 2016 provided insight into the external image from a stakeholder external to SSC yet within government. A review of the LinkedIn profiles of the founding executives provided insight into the length of their commitment, tenure and previous work experience, education, and skills.

Interview Data

I used interviews to look at legacy impact on the enduring and / or fluid aspects of identity. My focus was on finding connections or contrasts between legacy identity of former organizational employees at SSC from 2012-2016 and those working at SSC post 2016. Emphasis was on researching in what ways legacy impacted the change initiative. I remained consistent with the information collected across each of the stakeholder groups (working level and executive) understanding that some modification was required at executive levels.

I reviewed conditions at the time of SSC's creation, how history influenced organizational change and conducted interviews across differing management levels to obtain a broad basis for legacy organizational identity research. The purpose was to see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives (Chreim, 2007). I looked to identify the type of organization the interviewees identify with and determine inclusion or exclusion by referencing logics or examples of a central and distinctive category such as public sector, private sector, or something in between. Given that the unit of analysis in the interviews is the organization with the focus on a view of the organizational identity, I collected all data to make inferences about SSC's identity from multiple perspectives about how it emerged and developed from inception.

The interviews were scheduled for an initial period of 30 – 40 minutes, however some were concluded in 25 minutes while others exceeded an hour. The interviews were designed to allow the participants to tell their stories with open ended questions and prompts for follow up questions to gain a deeper breadth of detail (Kitzinger and Willmott, 2002). The literature indicated that despite best efforts to build trust, some respondent's may not be freely forthcoming and only reluctantly agree to participate (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), however I did not experience any reluctance. I was surprised with the openness of information shared, but as indicated by Gioia et al in 2012; "we have been surprised in the past - to the point where we are no longer surprised – at how willing informants are to reveal what we might have considered to be proprietary information" (Gioia et al, 2012). I used the Microsoft Teams application (Teams) for all interviews, leveraging the ability to use the record and transcribe feature allowing greater focus on the dialogue. The use of Microsoft Teams app was well received by those being interviewed as it was one of the main government work tools rolled out at SSC during Covid

when the government went to a virtual workplace. As a result, each of those interviewed felt comfortable with the technology. In three cases the interviewee was unable to connect using Teams due to internet connection issues, so instead we used an audio telephone call that I left on handsfree at my end and set my phone in front of my computer's microphone and used the Teams application to transcribe the audio conversation.

I contemplated multiple sequencing options for the interviews, and after significant deliberation I decided the most effective approach was to conduct one initial interview across each of the SSC supplier community, the executive team in place at the point of creation at SSC and executive in place at SSC post Auditor General Report. My logic was this would provide me with feedback for consideration on the appropriateness of the questions and the stakeholders reaction to them in each of the target groups allowing for adjustments if required. Following the initial set of interviews minor adjustments were made as my initial two questions provided overlap in responses, as one question addressed pre-SSC creation and one addressed post SSC creation, and it was easier to combine it into one question to identify the differences between the stages.

Interview Questions

I used semi structured questions that allowed for similarity between interviewees but the ability to drill deeper depending on the role each interviewee played in the change initiative. Questions were focussed on gaining insight into how stakeholders viewed the plan to move from the identity of the SSC predecessor (PWGSC) to SSC, what was envisioned as the new identity, the approach used to position organizational change and how legacy may have impaired or assisted with the process. Questions are provided in Appendix 3.

Interview Sampling

As part of my sampling approach, I considered the six-stage sampling process offered by Jonathan Wilson (2014) including: clearly define the target population; select the sampling frame; choose the target techniques; determine the sample size; collect the data; and assess the responses. Large samples are not required with phenomenological research (defined by the US National Institute of Health as a form of qualitative research that focuses on the study of an individual's lived experiences within the world). As Starks and Trinidad (2007) highlight "the concept or the experience under study is the unit of analysis; given that an individual person can generate hundreds or thousands of concepts, large samples are not necessarily needed to generate rich data sets." The phenomenological approach allowed me to collaborate with members who described the meaning of this experience, both in terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced. As a result, I chose to use a technique involving non-probability sampling (Wilson, 2014). Wilson (2014) indicates that a sample of stakeholders or cases does not need to be representative or random, but a clear rationale is needed for the inclusion of some cases or individuals rather than others. For my case study I used convenience sampling (Wilson, 2014) targeting stakeholders that were readily and easily available. I chose this as I have professional relationships with many of the individuals providing me with access. While I recognized the potential for bias using this technique, the bias was controlled as my relationships are purely professional and unrelated to the topic being researched, I did not have preference for any one individual over another, did not have any preconceived understanding of their position on my research topic, nor did they have any awareness of the research I was working on.

The sampling frame is broken into three key sets across multiple time periods as outlined in Figure 3-3. The variety of the sampling was intended to provide information from a diverse

group of individuals to increase representative points of view on the impact that legacy identity had on the change initiative.

The following Figure 3-3 provides an overview of the interviewees by category, gender, level, and age.

Figure 3-3

Interview Choices

	Interviews Conducted				
	OEM/Suppliers 2012-2021	**SSC Working Level 2012-2015**	**SSC Working Level 2016-2023**	**SSC Executive at Founding 2012-2015**	**SSC Executive 2016-2023**
Interviewees	7	3	3	4	3
Gender	7 Male	3 Male	3 Female	3 Male	3 Male
Level	Director/Account Executive	Director/Manager	Manager	Assistant Deputy Minister / Director General	Assistant Deputy Minister / Director General
Age	40+	45+	45+	50+	50+

Revisit of Documents

I reviewed the documents multiple times throughout the analysis of the interviews to revalidate my initial conclusions.

Analytic Memos

As part of the analytic process, I maintained a log of reflections, thoughts, and insights (Marshall and Rossman, 2016) and maintained an awareness of the case data and the social and political environment under study. Given that members were being unilaterally transferred in from 43 different departments I inferred that there would be social considerations. Based on the

nature of SSC being created through an Order in Council, I anticipated political considerations may also be relevant. I maintained an ongoing case summary as I progressed through the research to establish and continually update recurring ideas, language, and patterns. This required continually questioning the data and reflecting on the conceptual outline.

Interpreting Data - Coding

The coding process allowed me to consider multiple meanings, identify, develop, and relate the concepts and use this as the building blocks of theory (Wilson, 2014). The internal and external archival documents were reviewed and coded first, establishing a broader foundation and understanding prior to conducting the interviews.

Coding - Archival Data Review

A list and summary of the archival data sources is provided in Appendix 1.

The following provides an overview of the coding approach used with the archival data review. A more detailed description on the coding process used for the interviews is provided in the "Interview Coding Methods" section later in this chapter.

My analysis of the archival data included a review of the SSC Report on Plans and Priorities, the Auditor General of Canada Report, the LinkedIn profiles of the senior management at SSC, and the Standard Acquisition Clauses and Condition (SACC) that existed prior to and following the creation of SSC. My analysis followed the Gioia method (Gioia et al, 2012) using a multistage process. The first order analysis looked at the data and remained true to the narrative terms. As the analysis progressed, I looked for similarities and differences among the findings to reduce the categories to a smaller and more meaningful number and gave these categories labels that retained the narrative terms. Following completion of this first step I moved on to look across the categories and codes at multiple levels and at a more abstract second

level theoretical level of themes looking for answers to "what is happening in the data?" The follow-on analysis assessed the second order themes even further into aggregate dimensions (Gioia et al, 2012). My analysis used an iterative process cycling between emergent data, themes, and aggregate dimensions (Locke et al., 2020) focused on and aligned to the organizational change at SSC. The findings were considered to provide significant insight as they represented a perspective on what was considered central to SSC (Gioia et al., 2012).

My analysis began with a review of the Minister's message in the SSC annual Report on Plans and Priorities asking questions about "what was the new desired identity', "how did they leverage history" and "how was the narrative positioned to provide sense giving". This allowed me to identify key verbatim phrases that were relevant to the research question that were further analyzed and organized into first order concepts (Gioia et al, 2012). The amount of data was overwhelming, so as I engaged with the data, I occasionally stepped away to contemplate the findings, to revisit the literature review and to consider the relevance and association of the data with the research question. The literature review provided a potential source of codes independent of the data, a source of concepts and themes to limit the field of possibilities for the coding process (Gioia et al, 2012) and acted as a source of ideas to assist in the coding process. This review and contemplation allowed me to revisit the first order concepts and establish an initial set of second order themes that linked concepts to the research question.

The second step involved a broader review of the messages in the SSC Report on Plans and Priorities. This analysis enabled me to identify additional first order concepts and develop insight into additional second order themes. The intent was to look at second order themes that assisted to answer the research question including where legacy impaired change and influenced

identity enduringness (Albert & Whetten, 1985) and other areas where legacy enabled change and assisted with identity fluidity (Chreim,2003).

My review of the Auditor General Report on SSC resulted in the development of first order concepts from an external image perspective.

My review of the SSC founding executive LinkedIn profiles, and the SSC policies and procedures provided new first order concepts and second order themes relevant to the research.

The review of the archival data provided a good foundation and additional knowledge used in the SSC interviews.

Coding Interviews

My analysis followed the Gioia method (Gioia et al, 2012) described earlier in the archival data section and followed a multistage process.

Phase 1: Reviewing and Becoming Familiar with the Data

For the data collected in the interviews I used an inductive analysis approach with a focus on making sense of the data. The automated recording and transcription feature in the Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) application allowed for further analysis across the data set (all the data used for my analysis) that represented a subset of the data corpus (all data collected for the research project) rather than just the individual data items (several elements that exist within the data set) (Braun and Clarke, 2006). My use of the automated transcription required me to review the accuracy of the transcription, so immediately following the interview I listened to each of the recordings and corrected any inaccuracies. I repeated this activity across all interview transcripts, and this allowed me to better familiarize myself with the data and to take note of initial ideas and possible preliminary areas for coding that were emerging (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Phase 2: Identifying Initial Codes

Following a thorough review of all the transcriptions of the interviews I began the second phase by generating an initial list of ideas about what I had observed in the data and the research areas of interest (Braun and Clarke, 2006). My initial focus was on the verbatim interview texts before consulting the background literature for a more abstract interpretation. I looked to answer questions as I went through the data including: how were respondents describing the SSC identity, what parts of SSC's predecessor went into making SSC what it is today, how was this positioned by the executives and how was this narrative received and understood by stakeholders? I looked for similarities and differences between the working level and executive at SSC across the different time periods. Iteration allowed me to conduct analytic activity oriented toward theoretical progression by actively pursuing my research question with awareness of the findings that arose from the initial stage of analytical work and by applying additional analytical action (Locke et al, 2022). I had the ability to review the recordings as well as transcripts during the process to further identify inflections in speech and the passion for the topic expressed by the participant to assist in the process.

Phase 3: Reviewing for Concepts

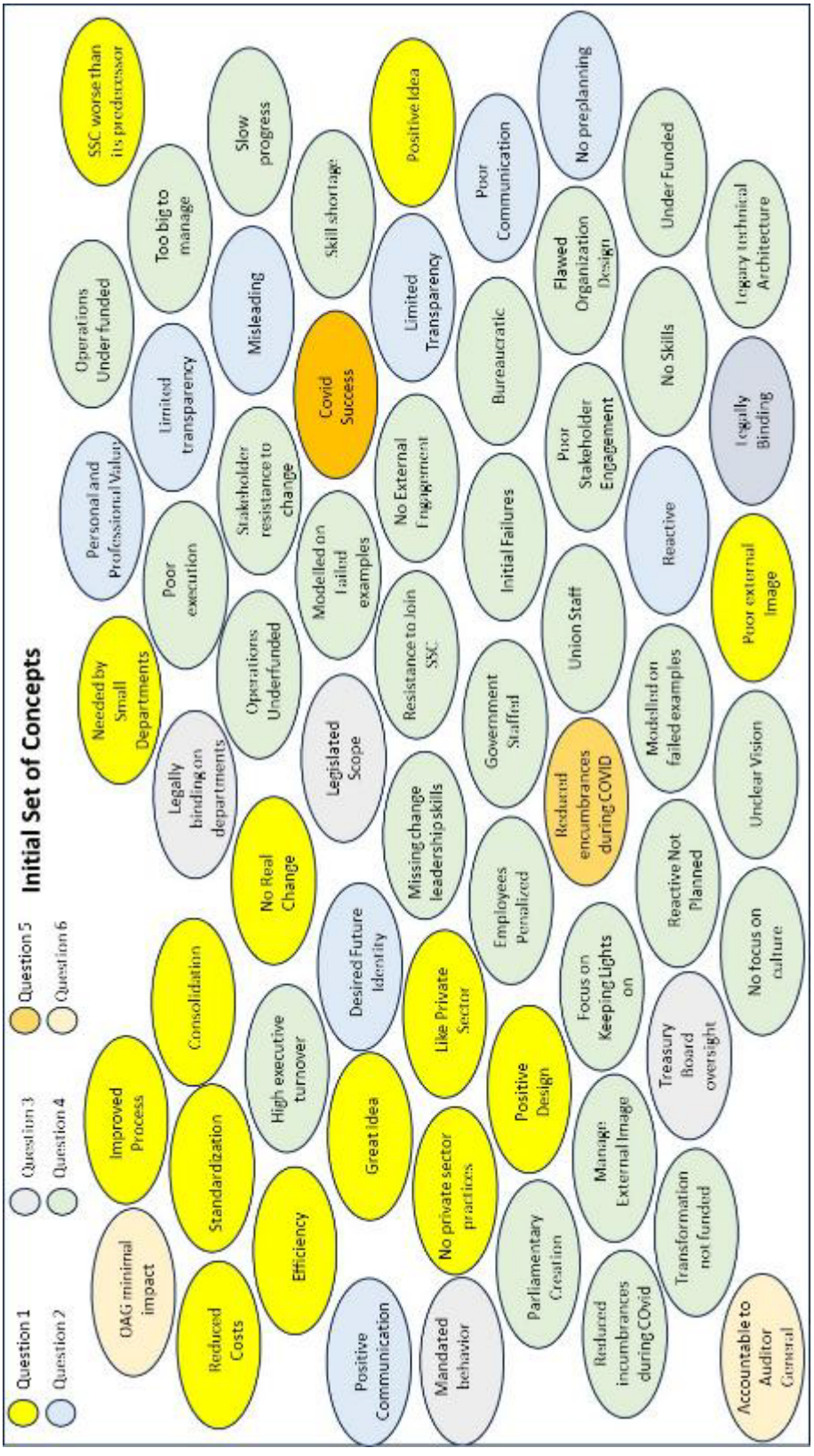
In phase 3, I began to collate verbatim terms into concepts (Gioia et al, 2012). I used both first order analysis using informant centric terms and codes and second order analysis to develop and infer concepts, themes, and dimensions relevant to my research (Gioia et al, 2012). Using verbatim texts provided insight into the behaviours and processes around the issues faced by the SSC participants, helped me preserve the participants' meaning, and allowed me to move from the data provided, to the ideas and from the idea provided, back to the broader data associated with that idea (Saldana, 2016).

My initial analysis was focussed on establishing concepts that captured a general, less-well defined notion describing areas of theoretical interest and were relevant concepts to guide the further development of themes in subsequent stages (Gioia et al, 2012). My focus remained on how the SSC stakeholders went about constructing and understanding their experience with the SSC change initiative. My focus was less about the frequency of responses but more about capturing concepts representative of the SSC stakeholders living the individual experience that were detailed enough for theorizing about the broader experience (Gioia et al, 2012). Coding required me to ponder and scrutinize the collected data and determine possible relationships and linkage to the research question (Locke et al, 2020). As I worked through the process, I started to see similarities and differences allowing me to look at it from both the first level informant term perspective and the second level theoretical perspective (Gioia et al, 2012).

The multiple reworking of the codes allowed me to recode, refilter and focus in on concepts as the interview coding progressed (Saldana, 2016). The iterative approach and process of going back and forth through the data (Locke et al, 2020) allowed me to make greater analytical progress by refining the question I was asking myself based on increased knowledge emerging from the data as part of the process. The following is the group of concepts in figure 4-4 that I initially developed for refinement in the next stage. As part of the first order analysis, I adhered to the interviewee terms with limited attempt to distill categories, so the number of categories was quite extensive as is often found at this stage of analysis (Gioia et al, 2012). The information was quite extensive, and I remained aware of the concepts and the link to the questions. While I found this overwhelming, I also recognized that the next stage would further refine these initial set of concepts from response to questions.

Figure 3-4

Initial Set of Concepts



Phase 4: Analysis and Review of Concepts and Developing Emerging Themes

At phase four, I had read the text once, had completed verbatim coding, and started combining first order concepts into second order themes, a part of which included re-visiting the data and better understanding the way verbatim codes were contextualized by re-reading the surrounding interview narratives. This required me to reframe some initial understanding about the inferences made to the second level of interpretation.

Once the initial set of first order concepts was compiled, stage 4 allowed me to further my analysis by reviewing the data from the previous phase and looking for commonality, relationship between concepts and possible themes and the data relevant to each theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I worked with first level concepts to identify commonalities and differences, from which I inferred the second level coding that captured common themes among groups of the former that made them distinct from each other. My analysis required me to consider the various relationships between concepts, between concepts and themes and between themes, as themes capture important elements in relationship to the research question and represent patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). While prevalence was considered in establishing themes, I also considered whether the prevalence was enough to establish a theme based on what the data told me. The key for me to establishing themes was not just about how frequently they appeared but how they captured detail relevant to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This process was extremely iterative, and my final output was an initial set of first level concepts and second level themes.

Once I established the set of concepts and themes, I re-engaged with the data to conduct a deeper review into the concepts and themes to confirm they were aligned to the coded extracts, and I also confirmed they aligned with the relationship to the broad data set (Braun and Clarke,

2006). During this stage, I collapsed some initial concepts and themes, as they were similar and in other cases I reworked the concepts and themes by moving some codes to other existing concepts and themes and in other cases I deleted of created a new theme.

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

In phase 5, I continued the ongoing analysis within the concepts and themes to refine the specifics and identify the overall story the of my analysis. I used this phase to distill second order themes while considering overarching theoretical dimensions (Gioia et al, 2012).

Phase 6: The Findings – Analysis and Discussion

The findings are presented in Chapter 4.

Credibility, Dependability and Transferability

Transparency of data coding was achieved using verbatim process to permit repeatability of the process, thick description of data results and display of verbatim quotes.

Chapter 4 – Presentation of Results

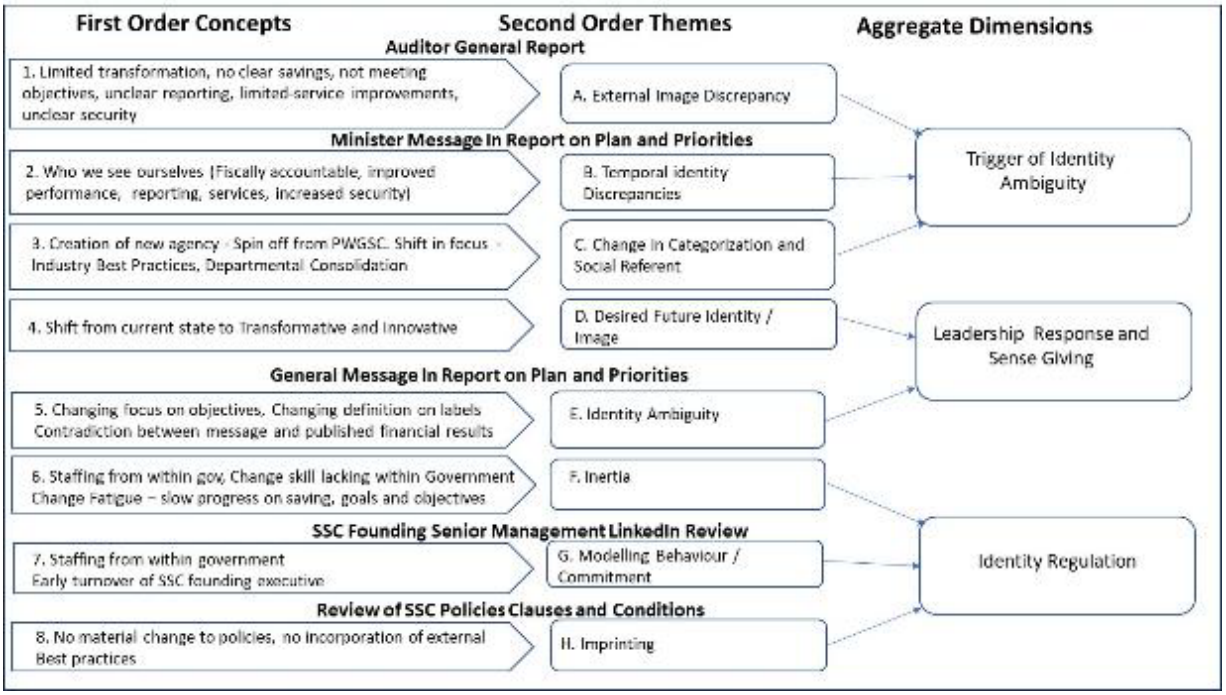
My research focussed on answering the research question; "How does legacy identity help with a public sector/government organization's transition and/or impair transition to a hybrid organizational form?" My research included a review of archival data, interviews with both internal SSC stakeholders across executives working level across two time periods and interviews with external suppliers to SSC. The following is a summary of where the SSC change began as illustrated in Figure 4-1 followed by a presentation of the research findings.

Archival Data Review Findings

The following chart provides a view of the archival data, first order concepts, second order themes and aggregate dimensions as shown below.

Figure 4-1

Archival Data Structure



Archival Data Findings

The following table identifies the themes, the definition of the theme and an exemplary quote to illustrate the connection that the definition provides between label and verbatim text.

Table 4-1

Archival Data - Theme – Definition – Quote

Second Order Themes	Definition	Quote
Desired Organization Identity	The words that portrayed beneficial attributes that would become an integral part of the new SSC organization that had not previously existed	"With the launch of SSC, we are taking a major step forward in the modernization of how the public service operates" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012 - 2013)"
Change in Categorization and Social Referent	The expressions or words used that reflected SSC was moving away from a traditional government organization to a hybrid organization adopting both public and private sector attributes.	"In all our activities, we will be leveraging public and private sector best practices" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012-2013).
Temporal Organization Identities	The expression or words used about one point in time about SSC not being the same across the across all periods of its existence.	SSC uses the label "culture" in each of the annual reports but each time the meaning changes.
External Image Discrepancy	The theme external image discrepancy was defined by the narrative in the Auditor General Report issued in 2016 that reflected an image that was in direct contrast to the projected identity and image proposed in the executive message conveyed in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities.	"We (The Auditor General) concluded that, for the transformation initiatives that we examined, Shared Services Canada (SSC) has made limited progress in implementing key elements of its transformation plan, and it has challenges in adequately demonstrating that it is able to meet its objectives of maintaining or improving IT services and generating savings. SSC did not establish clear and concrete expectations for how it would deliver services or measure and report on its performance in maintaining original service levels for its 43 partners." (Auditor General Report)
Imprinting and Inertia	Words and expressions associated with how the	"There is a risk that the Department will not have the right people with the proper skills to deliver on its

	legacy processes, tools and policies from past were brought into SSC and how they were imprinted on the organization.	mandate (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2013-2014). "There is a risk that change fatigue will negatively impact SSC's emerging culture and lead to employee disengagement, impede innovation and diminish the quality-of-service delivery" (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2015 – 2016). There is a risk that SSC will be unable to invest in, recruit, mobilize and retain a workforce with the right skills and capacity to support current, transitional and future business needs (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2016 – 2017). "There is a risk that SSC will not have the human resources capacity and necessary competencies to improve the delivery of IT infrastructure and services (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2019-2020). "There is a risk that SSC may not be able to establish the organizational culture, tools and processes to attract and retain the necessary capacity and competencies to support IT infrastructure and service modernization (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2021-2022).
Modelling Behaviour	The theme modelling behaviour was defined by the words, expressions, and action about how SSC "walked the talk" during the identity creation process and the commitment (or lack of commitment) to the change.	LinkedIn profiles identify a tenure of less than 4 years for founding executive.

Theme A: External Image Discrepancy

The theme external image discrepancy was defined by the narrative in the Auditor General Report issued in 2016 that reflected an image that was in direct contrast to the projected identity and image proposed in the executive message conveyed in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities. The significance of external image was relevant to the SSC change initiative because according to the literature, if the internal narrative provided by leaders in the creation

and maintenance of the identity conflicts with external audits and reports, the interplay between identity and image can have an impact on how identity is stabilized (Gioia et al., 2000).

The Auditor General Report in 2016 indicated that SSC had made limited progress in the change initiative, had not met its objectives, not generated savings and was unclear on the plan to measure and report on progress. It indicated SSC had made limited progress, was delivering "limited transformation", was "not meeting objectives", demonstrated "poor management and partnerships", and provided "unclear reporting and services". The report indicated that limited time and process was put in place to comply with government policies, guidelines and standards or align with partners goals. It further indicated that SSC reporting against its transformation plan was not clear or accurate.

My analysis of the first order concepts allowed me to engage with the data and emerge with a second order theme of "external image discrepancy" as the narrative in the Auditor General Report issued in 2016 portrayed an external image very different than the desired image portrayed in the SSC executive narrative.

Theme B: Temporal Identity Discrepancies

Temporal identity discrepancies were defined as the expression or words used in the executive message in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities representing one point in time about SSC not being the same or consistent across all periods of its existence. The theme emerged from my review of the Ministers Message in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities. This was relevant to the research question as leaders use the executive narrative to provide a temporal structure to which SSC and external members individuals can use to make sense of their own personal and collective histories. The literature indicated leaders must also be aware that internal organizational stakeholders may experience ambiguity when there are

temporal identity discrepancies including the inconsistency between their predecessor's identity and claims of what the new organization would be or what internal stakeholders would like it to be in the future (Corley and Gioia, 2004).

The findings of the review of the Ministers message in the SSC's Annual Report on Plans and Priorities in the early stages of SSC's existence identified SSC executive used terms such as "modernization", "innovation" and "transformation" resulting in my establishment of first order concepts (Gioia et al, 2012) based on how they saw themselves becoming with comments such as "fiscally accountable" with "improved reporting", "improved services" and "increased security" in the early years of SSC's creation. However, as time passed the message changed with a complete shift in form and format following the issuance of the Auditor General Report in 2016 with a tone that SSC was part of the larger government digital transformation ecosystem.

The Post Auditor General period saw a shift in narrative. The 2017-2018 plan introduced a comprehensive reset of its plans to modernize and transform the Government of Canada's information technology systems with a "revised strategic direction, accountabilities, and priorities to transform the Government of Canada IT infrastructure and improve the digital delivery of programs and services". In this message, SSC admitted it failed to achieve its vision, admitted failure in key areas and acknowledged the need for a broad-based consultation with the public, industry and SSC employees while also highlighting the need for leadership development and training. As stated in the report, "SSC is well positioned to experiment and to find new ways to address persistent problems that traditional approaches have failed to solve. Over the next fiscal year, expected outcomes on experimentation will be identified and tested to support new and better ways of working, both for our employees and for how the Department works with our customers and vendors." (SSC Annual Report 2017-2018). The 2017-2018 report further

recognized key risks including the following. “SSC will not have adequate financial and human resources in place to improve the delivery of services to partner organizations” and that “SSC faces challenges in attracting and retaining qualified employees with specialized skills”. SSC acknowledged that, “The fast pace of technological change requires specialized knowledge, and skill sets that are in demand across both the private and public sectors. SSC faces challenges in attracting and retaining qualified employees with specialized skills, often found in the tech-savvy Millennial generation. Internally, SSC continues to face the challenge of finalizing the organizational design and classification of all positions while also looking to optimize workplace accommodations for staff across the country” (Report on Plans and Priorities 2017-18, Pg 13). This was a temporal discrepancy from earlier narrative.

The 2018-2019 SSC Report on Plans and Priorities changed the message again, adding to the temporal identity discrepancy, and announced a refocus on four priority areas that included improving service delivery, modernizing Government of Canada IT infrastructure, strengthening cyber and IT security, and building and enabling the workforce. This renewed focus presented another major shift, and the SSC executive narrative remained silent on cost savings and reductions. In the SSC annual report 2018-19 SSC indicated that SSC, “recognized that when SSC was created, the Department did not receive all the necessary resources to ensure its success. In a continually changing, competitive and high-pressure IT labour market, SSC has faced challenges in recruiting and keeping the needed talent” (Pg 34).

In 2019-2020 SSC simplified the strategic narrative promoting a “customer-oriented culture of service management excellence through improved visibility and accessibility of services”. SSC inferred a restart of their identity when they indicated, “The continuing advancement of communications in the digital space will create a fundamental change in our

business and how we serve our customers." (Pg 12). SSC continued to identify key risks including, "There is a risk that SSC will not have the human resources capacity and necessary competencies to improve the delivery of IT infrastructure and services" (Pg 11). The shift continued to add to the temporal identity discrepancy.

The 2020-2021 Report changed the Minister's title and offered SSC a chance to again distance itself from legacy failure in the early years and began to shift the sense making effort based on a new Ministerial mandate. While this new direction shifted the desired organizational identity, SSC also reported risks in the report that SSC may not be able to establish the organizational culture, tools, and processes to attract and retain the necessary capacity and competencies to support IT infrastructure and service modernization.

This continued shift in direction and narrative allowed me to develop the second order theme of temporal identity discrepancies.

Theme C: Change in Categorization and Social Referent

The theme change in categorization and social referent was defined as the expressions or words used in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities that reflected SSC was moving away from a traditional government organization identity to a hybrid organization identity adopting both public and private sector attributes. This was relevant to the research question as the literature indicated leaders must also be aware that internal organizational stakeholders may experience ambiguity when there are changes in social referents and categorization including the loss of having their previous organization as the social referent and as the category (Corley and Gioia, 2004).

The theme emerged from my review of the Ministers Message in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities. The findings of the review of the Ministers message in the SSC's Annual

Report on Plans and Priorities identified that SSC was the "creation of a new agency" with a shift in focus that would adopt "industry best practices" and "department consolidation".

"In all our activities, we will be leveraging public and private sector best practices" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012-2013).

"We are actively engaging industry and our partners who can help us deliver the best results possible for the government and Canadians" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2013-2014).

"We will also continue to leverage IT industry expertise to identify best practices and approaches to IT infrastructure transformation" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2015 - 2016).

This triggered a shift in focus and inferred a hybrid organization identity that would blend the best of public and private sector to deliver industry best practice and maximum value leading to the second order theme of change in categorization and social referent.

The messaging changed following the issuance of the Auditor General report in 2016 with a more general message aligned to a legacy, government identity.

Theme D: Desired Future Identity

The theme desired future identity was defined as the reflected expressions or words in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities that portrayed beneficial attributes that would become an integral part of the new SSC organization that had not previously existed in the SSC predecessor. The theme emerged from my review and analysis of the Ministers Message in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities.

The findings of the review of the Ministers message in the SSC's Annual Report on Plans and Priorities identified that SSC would focus on "transformation" and "innovation" and would move away from the traditional legacy methods, tools and processes and continuously evolve the services to meet the emerging and future needs of the government. It indicated SSC would drive "consolidation" and deliver "efficiency" and "financial benefit" to the government. This allowed me to the develop the theme desired future identity.

The messaging changed following the issuance of the Auditor General report in 2016 with a more general message aligned to a legacy, government identity.

Theme E: Identity Ambiguity

The theme identity ambiguity was defined as the words or expression in the general messaging in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities that reflected inconsistent use of labels or meanings of labels over time such as the changing use of the term "culture", or the contradiction between executive narrative inferring savings and the published results that show increased spending. My analysis of the broader SSC Annual Report on Plans and Priorities provided verbatim codes that included reference to "culture", however SSC continually changed the meaning of the culture label every year. A review of the messaging in the Report on Plans and Priorities showed an inconsistent reference to, and a different use of the label "culture" over the years. The term culture had several labels during the initial 12 years of SSC development as noted below.

Table 4-2

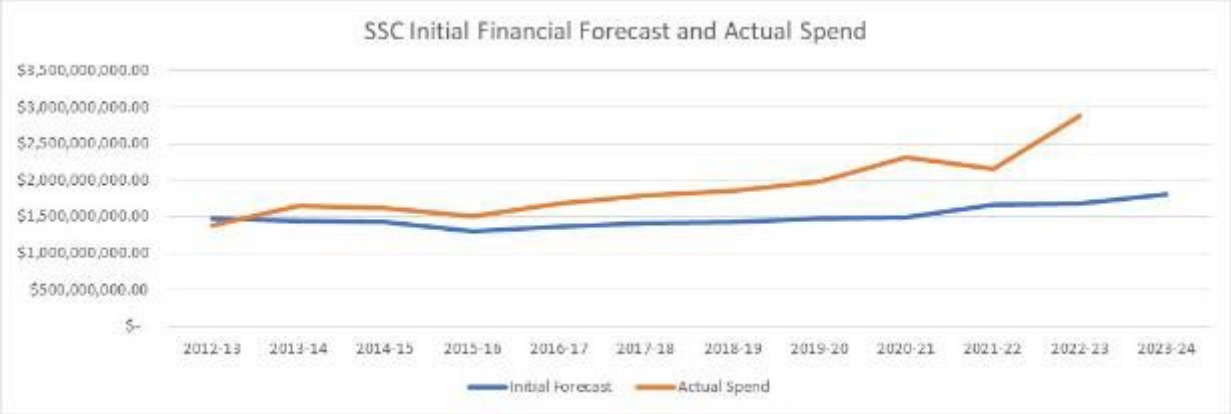
Changing Use of Culture Label

SSC Report on Plans and Priorities	Use of the Label "Culture
2012-2013	"Culture of innovation"
2013-2014	"Culture of enterprise service delivery"
2014-2015	"Project management culture"
2015-2016	"Risk management culture"
2016-2017	Silent on culture
2017-2018	"Streamlined process driven organizational culture"
2018-2019	"SSC is developing an initiative to grow and sustain a culture of customer service excellence on the basis of best and leading practices."
2019-2020	"Customer-oriented culture of service management excellence through improved visibility and accessibility of services"
2020-2021	"Changing user behaviour and building a risk-aware culture"
2021-2022	"Commit to creating a culture that embraces strong values and ethics and promotes a respectful and engaging workplace culture"
2022-2023	"SSC strives to create a culture through its leaders that enshrines psychological health, safety, and well-being"
2023-2024	"Culture of innovation and laying the groundwork for more experimentation"

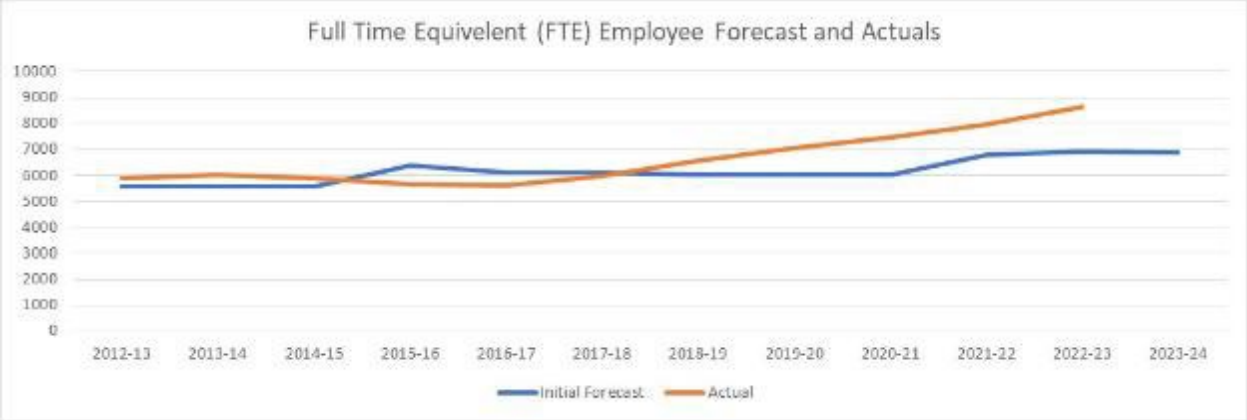
This led me to establish a first order concept of "changing label definitions" and with further reflection and analysis, a second order theme of "identity ambiguity" as the meaning behind the label was unclear and ever changing.

While the message in the annual Report on Plans and Priorities issued prior to 2016 proposed efficiency and cost reductions, the financial results against forecast and actual reported count against forecast were consistently missed. Each year the report was issued it provided the current actual results for the previous year and the forecast for the upcoming years. The intent was to provide a three-year horizon on spending and planned spending. By extracting the data and populating it into a single table it made it easy to assess a variety of key indicators including initial forecast, actual spending, the changes in future year forecasting over time and the actual spend year over year to gauge the year over year savings being achieved through the various programs deployed by SSC.

The chart below provides a summary of the findings.



SSC Human Resources/Employee Count Reporting (forecast and Actuals). The results show that while some reduction occurred in the early years of SSC existence that over time the size of the organization has continued to grow.



This led to the theme identity ambiguity.

Theme F: Inertia

The theme inertia was defined by the elements that existed at the time of SSC formation that were carried forward from the historical legacy of its predecessor and entrenched by SSC. My analysis of the broader SSC Annual Report on Plans and Priorities identified initial transfer of staff and senior management from within government and verbatim codes such as “change fatigue” and the fact change over time was not taking root and resistance was growing. The later

periods reported a lack of change skills inherent in the management ranks and the need for change competence development. My analysis allowed me to establish a second order theme of inertia (Suddaby & Foster, 2017).

Theme G: Modelling Behavior

The theme modelling behaviour was defined by the background, work experience and time committed to SSC by founding senior management based on a review of their LinkedIn profiles. Staff joining SSC showed employment within the federal government immediately prior to joining SSC according to their LinkedIn profiles. This allowed me to develop a first level concept of "staffing from within government". Senior management in place at the founding of SSC moved out of SSC within the first four years contributing to first order concept of "early turnover of founding executive". Further analysis and contemplation allowed me to develop second order theme of "modelling behaviour". (Fernandez & Rainey 2006).

Theme H: Imprinting

The theme imprinting was defined by elements of SSC's policies and procurement acquisition clauses and conditions that included legacy elements from the predecessor organization. A review of the SSC Policies and Standard Acquisition Clauses and Conditions (SACC) showed no material changes to the clauses that existed prior to the creation of SSC. The number of elements in the documents and wording was verbatim to those that pre-existed SSC. Based on this data and after analysis I developed second order theme of imprinting (Stinchcombe, 1965).

Shared Services Canada Interview Review Data Analysis

The following chart provides a view of the first order concepts, second order themes and aggregate dimensions as shown below. The analysis follows the format outlined in the data

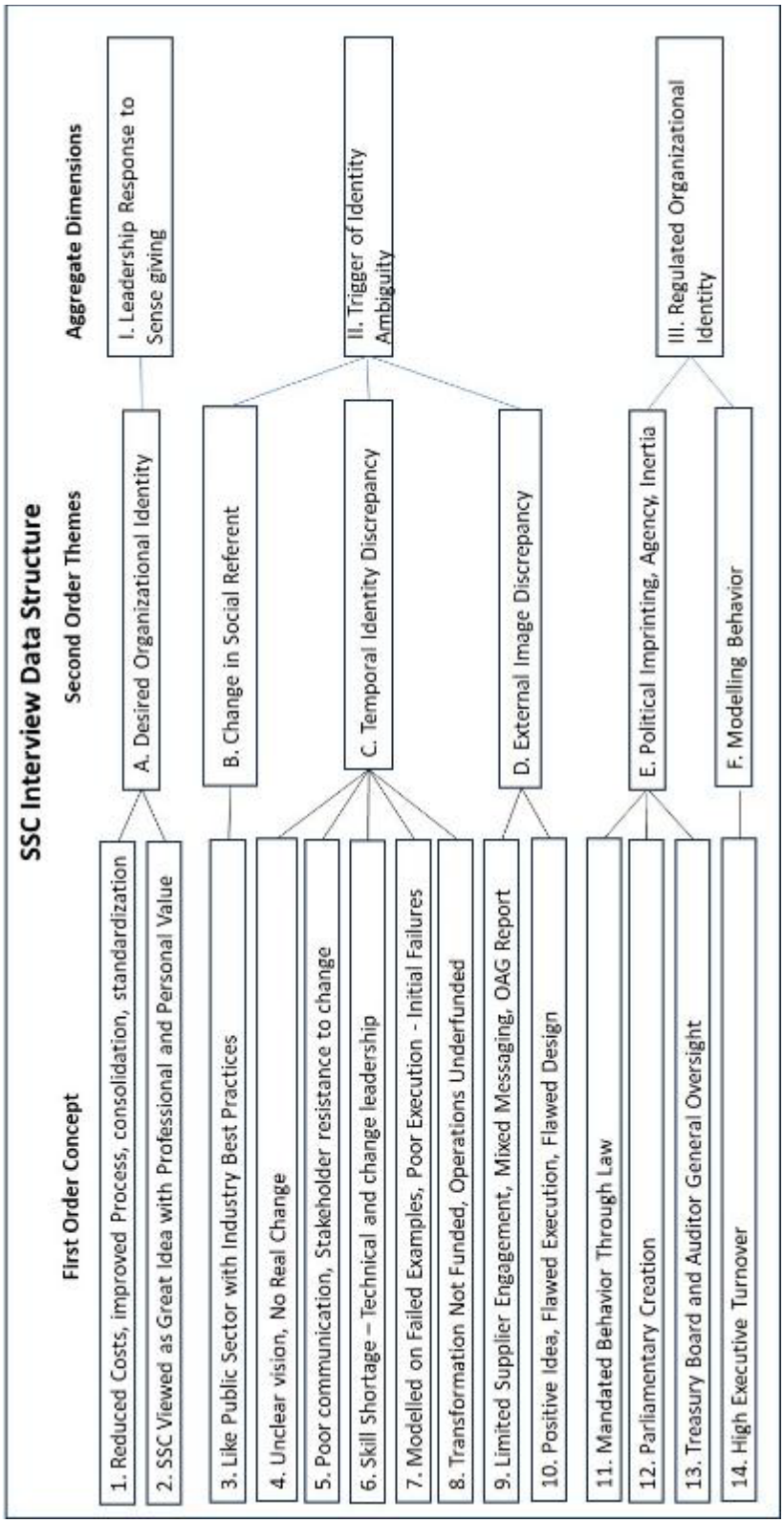
structure presented and explains the basis for the first order concepts and how they were developed based on verbatim interviews. The analysis also provides the linkage between the first order concepts and second order themes.

Data Structure

The findings are based on the following data structure with additional illustrative evidence for each aggregate dimension, second order theme and first order concept provided in Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2

Interview Data Structure


SSC Interview Data Structure
First Order Concept
Second Order Themes
Aggregate Dimensions
1. Reduced Costs, improved Process, consolidation, standardization
2. SSC Viewed as Great Idea with Professional and Personal Value
A. Desired Organizational Identity
I. Leadership Response to Sense giving
3. Like Public Sector with Industry Best Practices
B. Change in Social Referent
4. Unclear vision, No Real Change
5. Poor communication, Stakeholder resistance to change
6. Skill Shortage – Technical and change leadership
7. Modelled on Failed Examples, Poor Execution - Initial Failures
8. Transformation Not Funded, Operations Underfunded
C. Temporal Identity Discrepancy
II. Trigger of Identity Ambiguity
9. Limited Supplier Engagement, Mixed Messaging, OAG Report
10. Positive Idea, Flawed Execution, Flawed Design
D. External Image Discrepancy
11. Mandated Behavior Through Law
12. Parliamentary Creation
13. Treasury Board and Auditor General Oversight
E. Political Imprinting, Agency, Inertia
III. Regulated Organizational Identity
14. High Executive Turnover
F. Modelling Behavior

Interview Findings

The following table identifies the themes, the definition of the theme and an exemplary quote to illustrate the connection that the definition provides between label and verbatim text.

Table 4-3

Interview - Theme – Definition – Quote

Second Order Themes	**Definition**	**Quote**
Desired Organization Identity	The words that portrayed beneficial attributes that would become an integral part of the new SSC organization that had not previously existed	"So, the vision was to try and consolidate and profit from some economies of scale, reduce the overhead, become more efficient and in turn do things better" (SSC Interviewee – WL)
Change in Categorization and Social Referent	The expressions or words used that reflected SSC was moving away from a traditional government organization to a hybrid organization adopting both public and private sector attributes.	"It was an opportunity to benefit from best practices, in other words, learn from the best, aggregate things in such a way that those who have best practices can actually share them with a wider audience, so that the government will become a lean, mean, efficient machine" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
Temporal Organization Identities	The expression or words used about one point in time about SSC not being the same across the across all periods of its existence.	"That lack of consistent strategy is going to kill them over a long-time long term" (SSC Interviewee SSC Exec - Early). "In the early days, it was all about integrating the various parts that came together right, so it would have heavy emphasis on HR and communications, not vision. So, six years into its change, vision had gone out the window and it was pure survival" (SSC Interviewee – Late Exec). "The idea and vision were to adopt best practices; you know the process from end to end has to be agile as the term goes. And with all the bureaucracy, the challenges around procurement, the challenges around hiring etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, there's no way that, that vision could have been implemented, especially adopting the private sector practices into a government entity" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).

External Image Discrepancy	The words from suppliers that reflected an image that was in direct contrast to the projected identity and image proposed in the executive message conveyed in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities. This was largely because the external stakeholders embraced the opportunity to share best practices, however SSC did not take the time to evaluate external best practices in a way that would have allowed them t incorporate industry best practices into their ways of operating.	"There is a consensus that, you know, it (SSC) is slightly broken. It just doesn't work the way it was intended to work" (SSC Supplier Interviewee). "So, taking the best of what the industry had to offer definitely wasn't something that they adopted" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
Imprinting and Inertia	Words and expressions associated with how the legacy processes, tools and policies from past were brought into SSC and how they were imprinted on the organization.	"Tyranny of the majority. Where the SSC employees transferred from public works indicated there's twenty of us and four of you - so the four of you can adapt to our ways as opposed to collectively abandoning the old ways with a perspective for looking at a new way of doing things or brainstorm to find a better way to do things (SSC WL Early)" "First off, there was an idea that SSC would be an agency rather than a department to give it the requisite autonomy to fulfill its mandate - that didn't happen. Treasury Board blocked that. The Treasury Board didn't want to let go. They wanted to micromanage. They still wanted to have exert some undue influence over SSC to maintain control" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early). "You embrace the bureaucracy, embrace the hierarchy, you don't ruffle feathers, you know you can state your point of view, but in a nonthreatening way." (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late). "Cultural transformation which I believe is essential just wasn't there - in fact quite the opposite in some of the spaces like procurement where I was working at the time. You had the tyranny of the majority; you brought 80% of the employees over from public works. And yet somehow you expected them to not behave in the way they did at public works" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

Modelling Behaviour	The theme modelling behaviour was defined by the words, expressions, and action about how SSC "walked the talk" during the identity creation process and the commitment (or lack of commitment) to the change.	"I had three Deputy Ministers, and I think it's 5 Ministers. So, it's hard to get continuity of decisions that are seen through to the end. You don't have that…I think we had seven ADM's so it's hard. And most of the ADMs and the Deputy Ministers coming through had no IT background, so the business of IT, which is a thing right, was not known. They knew IT as a source of pain, not as a as an enabler" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

Theme A: Desired Organization Identity

The theme desired future identity was defined as the words that portrayed beneficial attributes that would become an integral part of the new SSC organization that had not previously existed. This was relevant to the research as the executive narrative that began the sense giving process is only relevant if the members are able to also begin the sense making process as they process the message allowing employees to move from an existing understanding of who they are, through a period of doubt, to a renewed clarity of the SSC identity in an altered form.

Members initially reported that the initial goals and objectives provided in the executive narrative for SSC were appropriate and represented a desirable organization identity for both the government and stakeholders. The theme emerged from the first level codes that 1) SSC represented reduced costs for government through improved process, consolidation, and standardization; and 2) that SSC was a great idea that delivered personal and professional value. My analysis determined that these first order concepts contributed to the theme that SSC represented a desirable organization identity and the responses from members were generally positive enabling the initiation of sense giving.

First Level Code 1: Reduced Costs, Improved Process, Consolidation.

This appeared 25 times across 9 interviews.

The members joining SSC were first made aware of the creation of SSC through the public government announcement and through early executive narrative including the Ministers messages that communicated that the new SCC organization would drive "consolidation and modernization" driving "efficiency" and "savings" for government. This aspirational goal was directed to employees to move from an existing understanding of who they were prior to being transferred to SSC, through a period of doubt, to a renewed clarity in an altered form and was initially embraced by members with common feedback from interviews aligned with the following feedback.

"So, the vision was to try and consolidate and profit from some economies of scale, reduce the overhead, become more efficient and in turn do things better" (SSC Interviewee – Working Level Early).

The feedback indicated members responded positively to the early messaging about the desired SSC organizational identity presented by management and that members saw the new desired SSC identity as an opportunity for increased value to the government and established a foundation for a shift in organizational identity.

First Level Code 2: Great idea that addressed professional and personal value.

This appeared 9 times across 7 SSC interviews.

To assist with change, SSC leaders addressed and presented both the organizational and personal needs and benefits to increase each stakeholder's organizational identification and sense

making. Members reported the new, projected SSC identity was a great idea with comments such as the following.

"The concept behind SSC was fantastic" (SSC Interviewee – working level early), and

"To be honest, for me it was a great idea" (SSC Interviewee – working level late).

Members also reported an increased focus on trying to understand both the personal and professional benefit that the new SSC organization offered. Members comments included the following.

"At the executive level there was a lot more discussions and conversations - because now all of a sudden people, it's not just a question of going over (to SSC), it is the question of wow there has to be enough value and reason inside SSC for me here individually." (SSC interviewee – Early Exec).

The members reported an agreeable alignment to the initial executive narrative used to project SSC's identity. This allowed many members to initially establish the foundation for letting go of the old and embracing the new as part of the sense aiming process.

Theme B: Change in Social Referent

The theme change in categorization and social referent was defined as the expressions or words used that reflected SSC was moving away from a traditional government organization identity to a hybrid organization identity adopting both public and private sector attributes. Members reported a desired shift in identity more aligned with a hybrid organization through the adoption of private sector elements. This theme was important as the literature indicates failure to involve the stakeholders in the organizations design, and thus gain their buy in, may create an

apathetic response reducing the likelihood of success (Chreim, 2005) and the ambiguity faced by stakeholders may have caused them to use various tactics to preserve SSC predecessor's identity (Gioia et al., 2013). The changes communicated by SSC leadership was reported to create confusion, discomfort, anxiety, conflict, and overall loss of self for some impacted staff, resulting in a misalignment with the projected and desired hybrid categorization (Whetton, 2006).

First Level Code 3: SSC was like public sector with industry best practices.

This appeared 4 times across 4 SSC interviewees.

The SSC members comments indicated a desire to integrate best practices from public and private sector as stated the following.

"SSC had to be a bit like the private sector, we had to justify what the revenue was, the expense and the small margin that we were making" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

SSC members saw the potential for the new organization to integrate and consolidate the best public sector practices from the multiple departments from which members were transferred and then to further integrate private sector practices establishing a best of breed approach providing a foundation for future hybrid categorization (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Responses include the following.

"It was an opportunity to benefit from best practices, in other words, learn from the best, aggregate things in such a way that those who have best practices can actually share them with a wider audience, so that the government will become a lean, mean, efficient machine" (SSC Interviewee – Working Level Early).

These contributed to the theme change in categorization and social referent.

However, SSC members also contributed to the acknowledgement that success in achieving a change in social referent was a struggle with comments such as the following.

"What I think we missed was industry input of how to do this consolidation. Industry was left out of those discussions" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

"I guess wishful thinking that a shared organization could do its own procurement and then leverage really the private sector to its maximum extent and that never really panned out" (SSC Interviewee - Exec Late).

Theme C: Temporal Identity Discrepancies

The theme, temporal identity discrepancies, was defined as the expression or words used about one point in time about SSC not being the same across the across all periods of its existence. This was relevant to the research question as the literature indicated that internal organizational stakeholders may experience ambiguity when there are temporal identity discrepancies including the inconsistency between their predecessor's identity and claims of what the new organization would be or what internal stakeholders would like it to be in the future (Corley and Gioia, 2004).

While the SSC executive presented strategic narrative as part of the sense giving initiatives, temporal identity discrepancies arose when members struggled to cope with differences between what members experienced in their daily activity, what the executive narrative was suggesting SSC could be, and what expectation would be for the future. This theme was developed by working with key concepts that were distinct from the others as described below including first level code 4) unclear vision / no real change, first level code 5)

poor communication/stakeholder resistance to change, first level code 6) skill shortage, first level code 7) poor execution and failed examples, and first level code 8) inadequate funding.

First Level Code 4: Unclear vision, no real change.

This appeared 17 times across 6 interviews.

Members transferred to SSC in the early stages of SSC's creation reported limited change to the daily operation at SSC with comments such as the following.

"You just tell people that they're going and that's it. It's easy, you're in the same chair, you're doing the same work. You're just reporting to a different organization. You're not even following different processes and stuff on day two or day 10 it's still the same." (SSC interviewee – WL Early).

Members in the later years reported confusion about the vision as identified in the following.

"In the early days, it was all about integrating the various parts that came together right, so it would have heavy emphasis on HR and communications, not vision. So, six years into its vision had gone out the window and it was pure survival" (SSC Interviewee – Late Exec).

"I don't know what the vision is for us is anymore" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

The discrepancy of message across different time periods highlighted the temporal identity discrepancy that existed within the SSC change initiative.

First Level Code 5: Poor communication.

This appeared 29 times across 9 interviews.

One of most reported themes that contributed to temporal identity discrepancy was related to members' comments on the communication and how the executive narrative changed through time and how it differed from reality. An example is the conflicting expectations around the adoption of a new corporate culture and changing the way they operated in the new organization as highlighted in the following comments.

"Cultural transformation which I believe is essential just wasn't there - in fact quite the opposite in some of the spaces like procurement where I was working at the time. You had the tyranny of the majority; you brought 80% of the employees over from public works. And yet somehow you expected them to not behave in the way they did at public works" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

Members reported a failure to maintain clear communication linking the message with the operational reality and the material impact it had as shown the following comments.

"SSC had a vision. Now we can debate whether the vision was right or wrong…but at least they had a vision. Right? This could be tweaked along the way for sure, but you know, make sure that the organization itself had an end state to plan and work towards. When that obviously fell to the wayside because of multiple failures, I left" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

The ability for members to decide on joining or not joining SSC was reported to have changed over time with the initial group of transferred employees having no choice in the transfer with members reporting that SSC's creation was being done "to them" instead of "with them" as highlighted in the attached comment.

"Maybe this was a temporal thing, maybe it was in the moment thing because of the creation of the OIC and the transfer rules and these transfer rules still exist. But at least now an employee has the opportunity to, with their eyes open, choose to do that (apply to and move to SSC) or not. For the thousands of us at the time that were subject to the OIC, we had no choice. It was done to us" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

First Level Code 6: Skill shortage technology and skills Technology.

Technology skills appeared 8 times across 6 interviewees and change management skills appeared 36 times across 12 SSC interviewees.

Members reported there was no human resource planning during the creation, no pre planning or prerequisite of skill requirements identified from the departments that staff were coming from, any influence on what people the departments sent to SSC as part of the transfer and who the departments retained. This left SSC to figure out skill requirements and mapping of transferred skills against the need after the transfer of people was completed instead of being done in a preplanned manner.

"If I would have been the author of that one team, I would have asked to deliberately pick their top change leaders to build the power of a coalition. It's stronger than the power of the individual accountability. That did not happen" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).

SSC executives leading the change initiative were reported to lack the change management experience, skill, and capability to achieve the desired outcomes and SSC lacked the necessary focus on change and the change skills required to achieve success. Comments from members included the following.

"I would generalize that to the whole business environment in the government is they don't train good operators in government at the executive level, right. They train good machinery of government generalists, and they move them around" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

This infers that the government may not have fully appreciated the level of effort required to successfully communicate and manage a change initiative of this size and complexity. Without the understanding of the steps needed to address the areas of change, the executive simply concentrated on the amalgamation of staff and focussed on "keeping the lights on" by adopting the roles and policies they knew that were associated with the legacy government way of operating.

First Level Code 7: Modelled on Failed Examples and Poor Execution

Failed examples appeared 13 times across 7 SSC interviewees and poor execution appeared 8 times across 6 interviews.

Members reported that the executives at the political level that built the SSC business model did so by attempting to replicate other public sector examples and failed to look beyond the public sector for examples of private best practice to replicate. This was reported at both the working level and executive level as noted in the following comments.

"So, it was the whole business case for us to see was predicated on essentially a flawed study and forward-looking business case. So, you know, they were doomed to failure from the beginning" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

"The politics of it were flawed because, of course other jurisdictions have tried this. Australia had tried this and at the time we were standing it up at the time of the OIC in 2011, Australia had abandoned or was abandoning it as a failed experiment and somehow our most

senior political masters thought Canada would be better or could do it differently right? So, you are adopting best practices from a failed example. that aspect was absurd" (SSC Interviewee – Working Leve Early).

Members reported that the internal team lacked vision and direction the absence of industry engagement impaired the change.

"It was slow and frustrating. Because on executing the consolidation we didn't have a cohesive team. OK, we have inward fighting at the executive level and not everybody really agreed. What I think we missed was that industry input of how to do this consolidation" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

SSC also reported results that fell short of the stated objectives and targets in its annual report on plans and priorities.

First Level Code 8: Transformation and Operations not Funded.

This appeared 23 times across 10 SSC interviewees.

SSC was reported to be underfunded to maintain the daily operations for the 43 various departments that they were responsible for. The feedback indicated priority was placed upon saving money for the government at the expense of maintaining service quality or focussing on continuous improvement. Members provided feedback that SSC's tactical daily operations were inconsistent with the messaging about its desired future identity. Members reported it was not until 2018 that SSC acknowledged the funding issue. This existed in both the early and later years at SSC.

"You have to spend a dollar to make a dollar type thing or make $2.00… They cut SSC off at the knees right out of the gate by appropriating a whole bunch of funds that they had gotten

from other departments in anticipation of savings - so we never had, you know, the opportunity to consolidate, implement and gain the return on that investment, because it was taken away from us right out of the gate" (SSC Interviewee - Early Exec).

"It was only in budget 2018 that it was a full recognition that, hey, we have to fund this puppy, otherwise we're shooting ourselves in the foot, right? I mean, we were running all of IT for all the important programs in government. And we were chronically underfunded." (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

In addition to underfunded operations, a related but separate concept was underfunded transformation and without transformation SSC was reported to be unable to initiate the activities to achieve the required changes necessary to meet their vision and goals.

"Here they (SSC) were, having been spun off with a pile of work to do, integrating 43 organization into one with no real means of transforming, and the money was already out" (SSC Interviewee - Exec Late).

"SSC had gotten the money prior to my arrival, and it was just a rust out program and not linked to a strategically important vision. They (SSC Management) were saying we're crumbling, and we need to do something about it without any kind of vision behind it… So, it became like painting the Golden Gate Bridge. You never stop. You finished at one end, and then you start again. By the time I left, some of the assets that we had refreshed were due for refreshing again (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

The execution at SSC was reported to be linked to political and bureaucratic goals taking precedent over the operational functionality and vision associated with the change initiative itself. As stated by one executive in the later stages at SSC.

Theme D: External Image Discrepancies

The theme external image discrepancy was defined by the words from suppliers that reflected an image that was in direct contrast to the projected identity and image proposed in the executive message conveyed in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities. The significance of external image was relevant to the SSC change initiative in the same manner it was with the archival data. According to the literature, if the internal narrative provided by leaders in the creation and maintenance of the identity conflicts with external reports, the interplay between identity and image can have an impact on how identity is stabilized (Gioia et al., 2000).

Managing and minimizing external image discrepancy was important to establish and maintain a stable identity as management was promising to combine multiple categories and logics (multiple department and industry best practices) with a view of both internal organizational identity and external image (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Glynn & Navis, 2013). However, the interviews found the internal narrative provided by leaders in the creation and maintenance of the identity conflicted with external views of SSC contributing to identity ambiguity. The theme external identity ambiguity was influenced by First Level Code 9: limiting the engagement with suppliers during SSC founding, of suppliers with SSC, the Auditor General report and First Level Code 10: positive idea, flawed design and execution.

First Level Code 9: Limited Engagement, Mixed Messaging, OAG Report.

This appeared 21 times across 6 external interviewees.

The response to the Auditor General report findings provided insight into how SSC's external image influenced change at SSC because stakeholders use external image as a gauge against which SSC evaluates organizational actions (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). My research had two key findings one unexpected and the other subtle.

On the surface feedback from members indicated even though the OAG reported negative results including comments about SSC's performance such as "limited transformation", "no clear savings", "not meeting objectives", "poor management and partnerships", and "unclear reporting and services" that were in direct contrast to the messages reported in the executive messaging in the Annual Report on Plans and Priorities, the majority of members had taken little to no time to review or assess the content of the report. This was true at the working level and executive in all time periods. The responses from members indicated the report had minimal impact with comments such as the following.

"I remember the report itself, but clearly it had no impact, right? It was just another check box" (SSC interviewee – Exec Early).

At a higher political level, the senior executive appears to have taken notice and changed the format and executive messaging in the SSC annual reports with a shift to less specific reporting. This change had an impact on the approach to sense giving that impacted the identity creation in the post OAG report period and illustrated there was a direct interplay between identity and image impacting how the SSC identity was stabilized (Gioia et al., 2000).

First Level Code 10: Positive Idea, Flawed Design and Execution

This appeared 9 times across 6 external interviewees).

Feedback from external suppliers was generally consistent with many of the comments from within the SSC working level and executive members comments. There was a general feeling that the organization was built on a strong business vision in principle, offering potential to streamline and consolidate services across government, to modify government processes and to adopt industry best practices with the potential to deliver innovation and increased value.

However, feedback indicated the opportunity was missed to strengthen the experience as suppliers indicated that no formal engagement or communication with suppliers occurred prior to the "overnight" creation of SSC. Comments were consistent with the following.

"If they (SSC) had listened and been innovative and a little less arrogant about knowing the answer already, there was some amazing things that could have been completed and there are still amazing things that need to be done. But I think it was certain amount of arrogance, a certain amount of power and a certain lack of motivation to change that prevented them from even developing that skill set" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).

Communication following SSC's creation was described as "less than optimal" occurring mainly though the SSC annual Report on Plans and Priorities and was considered inappropriate in frequency and level of detail provided. One supplier described SSC as "never gaining agreement on what they wanted to be when they grew up" while others attributed the failings to "a lack of clarity". The feedback from industry offers insight that the approach taken by SSC failed to align with industry best practices and continued down the legacy government identity path.

Theme E – Imprinting and Inertia

The themes imprinting and inertia were defined by a review of words and expressions associated with how the legacy processes, tools and policies from past were brought into SSC and how they were imposed on the organization. This is relevant to the SSC change initiative as the imprinting effect (Stinchcombe, 1965) can influence the values and direction of SSC with long held government institutionalized practices that reproduce goals, rules, coordination mechanisms and communication channels causing leaders to be restricted in their ability to think strategically (Suddaby & Foster, 2017). SSC was also influenced by the historical impact of

inertia (Hannan & Freeman, 1984), as they adopted existing government policies, traditions, and practices early that make change difficult as SSC simply reproduced routines and structures that initially made the organization successful (Hannan & Freeman, 1977, 1984). And while imprinting, inertia, and political factors often lead to enduringness of identity, the literature shows management can influence it using sense giving (Weick, 1993, 1995, 2001, Weick et al., 2005) and narrative (Chreim, 2005).

First Level Code 11: Mandated Behaviour

Respondents reported the legislation made it easier for stakeholders to position the perceived importance of SSC, reduced the level of dissent from impacted staff and aligned the impacted partner departments as the law left no alternatives for departments to acquire IT in government. Following the creation of SSC, anyone not aligning with the change initiative was dealt with harshly making it clear that not aligning to the politically imposed principles, policies and laws of SSC was not an option and therefore the government legacy identity was mandated. The following comment provide insight into the environment.

"The one thing that did help, I've got to say, is that back in the early days, dissension amongst the very senior ranks of government was not permitted. People were walked out the front door" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

Members reported a mixed reaction by those transferred to SSC as shown in the attached comments.

"Either the people were avid SSC defenders and good agents for us in there and those at that point would be viewed as outsiders by the organization, even if they came from there. And then there were the people that never aligned. They just changed the T-shirts but never became

SSC employees and so those did nothing for us in the background. They were not defenders of SSC, right? So, culture was a big thing" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

Members reported that they were expected to follow a legacy protocol and not speak out negatively. It was expected that even during times of discomfort that the established bureaucratic process was to be respected, and existing rules followed.

"You embrace the bureaucracy, embrace the hierarchy, you don't ruffle feathers, you know you can state your point of view, but in a nonthreatening way." (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

Members reported that strict government control was retained and strongly imposed on the new organization. For many the new SSC environment established more restrictions than the environment they were previously transferred from. While the executive narrative indicated that SSC was to be innovative, drive transformation and act more like a private sector organization they also made it illegal for departments to purchase services from anyone else cementing, the business with SSC (like a monopoly) regardless of their ability to transform. Feedback included the following.

"The other thing that the other thing that was really wild was that the government made it illegal for CIO to buy IT services elsewhere. Illegal - Can you imagine that? Like it was like, wow, that's a big step, right? So that helped manage that potential that you would have a rogue CIO going like screw those guys. You know, now suddenly, you were not allowed to do it." (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).

The use of identity regulation embedded legacy, bureaucratic behaviour.

First Level Code 12: Parliamentary Creation

The parliamentary creation through an OIC made the creation of SSC fast and immediate.

"What made change easy was the instrument called the Order in Counsel. No recourse. Changing the mandate in accountability at the senior bureaucrat level made it a top down, driven game" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).

The politically appointed executives had very weak relationships with the career government employees that were transferred to SSC as it was done as part of the legislation rather than a choice offered to members. This created resentment among some members limiting the alignment with the initial narrative and organizational identity goals. The regulated approach was reported to not only involve employees in the process, but it also caused some members to make career changes instead of joining the newly formed organization. For many the method in which the creation was managed and announced make it impossible for them to see the benefit and sustainability associated with the new organization.

"There were a lot of people that when they were asked to join SSC that decided to go to other departments and they actually moved out of IT, as you know, as a career choice and into other areas because they felt that this is a sinking ship" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early). The issue was not because stand-alone interdepartmental bodies do not attract the best talent but more related to their feeling that the proposed organizational identity and design was flawed.

First Level Code 13: Oversight by Treasury Board and the Auditor General

While SSC was given responsibility for the information technology, SSC was not granted the full autonomy that it might have been afforded if it had been granted "agency" status instead of retaining "departmental" status. The autonomy required to fully manage itself was further

reduced through its retained linkage to its legacy through mandated structural, political, legal, and operational connections to legacy government identity including Treasury Board's retained involvement in setting up the operational and financial framework and SSC's accountability to the Auditor General of Canada on its performance. This may be best characterized as being a result of desire for central control on the part of the political level (Prime Minister Office and the Privy Council Office) where the desire was to achieve SSC's stated goals that established a contradiction in the organizational structure and culture. The result of this identity regulation was increased bureaucratic activity reducing the time available to look at the innovation and transformation potential for the future and increased the influence of legacy government activity as shown in the following comments.

"First off, there was an idea that SSC would be an agency rather than a department to give it the requisite autonomy to fulfill its mandate - that didn't happen. Treasury Board blocked that. The Treasury Board didn't want to let go. They wanted to micromanage. They still wanted to have exert some undue influence over SSC to maintain control" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

The Auditor General and Treasury Board also impeded the ability to introduce innovation and transformation locking in the legacy identity through regulation associated with the government policies and processes they imposed on SSC. Members commented on the influence of Treasury Board including the following.

"Treasury board said, you know, we're giving you all this budget and we're giving you the infrastructure and we give you the people. But if you want to do anything new, new technology, new architecture, anything that deviates from what they already had, the budget

doesn't cover it. You must go back to the client departments and get money for it. And so that really handcuffed the money" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).

The involvement of the Auditor General was reported to impose continuous audits against government standards enforcing legacy government operational identity and impeding the ability to innovate and change. As reported in the member comments.

"I had 8 different audits on projects so the phrase that we coined is that they're standing on our chests and they're telling us to breathe" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

"If you're trying just to survive audits one after the other, you don't really think strategy you think - how do I get through the day?" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

The Auditor General and Treasury Board reinforced the government rules, policies and procedures from SSC's predecessor regulating the identity change process and imprinting legacy identity and removed control from SSC to introduce industry best practice and in some cases the ability to focus on key areas of identity change.

Members indicated that issues that existed in SSC's early period 2012-2016 were not openly discussed prior to the release of the release of the SSC Audit in 2016 and in some cases may have been kept from the public to assist with identity creation as noted in the following.

"The public was kept in the dark including people like me. The taxpayers didn't know about all these issues, and it was a big ah-ha moment" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

"It speaks volumes to how deep your Ministers were able to manipulate, you know, the messaging that is going to Parliament because, you know, Deputy Ministers run the public sector. But the political machinery relies on them to tell them the truth. Departmental plans that

were being tabled at Parliament were hiding some of that ugly truth" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

The perception from members that there was a lack of transparency adding to the impact that identity can be regulated through selecting the narrative and how the narrative is conveyed.

Theme F. Modelling Behavior

The theme modelling behaviour was defined by the words, expressions, and action about how SSC "walked the talk" during the identity creation process and the commitment (or lack of commitment) to the change. This is relevant to the SSC change initiative as the literature indicates in the public sector frequent shifts in political leadership and short tenures for political appointees can cause commitment for change to wane, and without stability and attention by senior management, career civil servants, who may be averse to change, display caution and focus on security, can use the frequent turnover among top political appointees to their advantage by simply resisting new initiatives until a new administration comes into power (Fernandez & Rainey 2006). By walking the talk and demonstrating desired behaviours SSC senior management had the opportunity to increase the understanding and buy in from SSC members in the sense making process. In the case of SSC's change initiative, there were modelling behavior elements missing that impeded the change initiative.

First Level Code 14: High Executive Turnover

This appeared 4 times across 3 interviews.

Commitment from senior management was missing in the SSC change initiative in part due to the political nature of government organizations and partially through a realization by members that the narrative had failed, and SSC had lost the vision leading some executive to leave rather than course correct as illustrated in the attached feedback.

"SSC had a vision. Now we can debate whether the vision was right or wrong…but at least they had a vision. Right? This could be tweaked along the way for sure, but you know, make sure that the organization itself had an end state to plan and work towards. When that obviously fell to the wayside because of multiple failures, I left" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

The high rate of executive turnover (most founding executive lasted less than 4 years) was evidenced in the following feedback.

"I had three Deputy Ministers, and I think it's 5 Ministers. So, it's hard to get continuity of decisions that are seen through to the end. You don't have that…I think we had seven ADM's so it's hard. And most of the ADMs and the Deputy Ministers coming through had no IT background, so the business of IT, which is a thing right, was not known. They knew IT as a source of pain, not as a as an enabler" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

The identity regulation was influenced through the frequent turn over of key SSC executives, impeding the ability for meaningful change and allowing the long held bureaucratic government policies to persist.

The following section will look at the findings aligned to the research question. It presents a clear story about the findings and interpretation of the interviews as they relate to the impact legacy identity had on the change initiative and will describe how a variety of constructs influenced the central and distinctive elements of the SSC identity and whether SSC executive was successful in establishing a transformed hybrid identity. The findings will show that while the initial executive narrative started sense giving and early acceptance of a desired

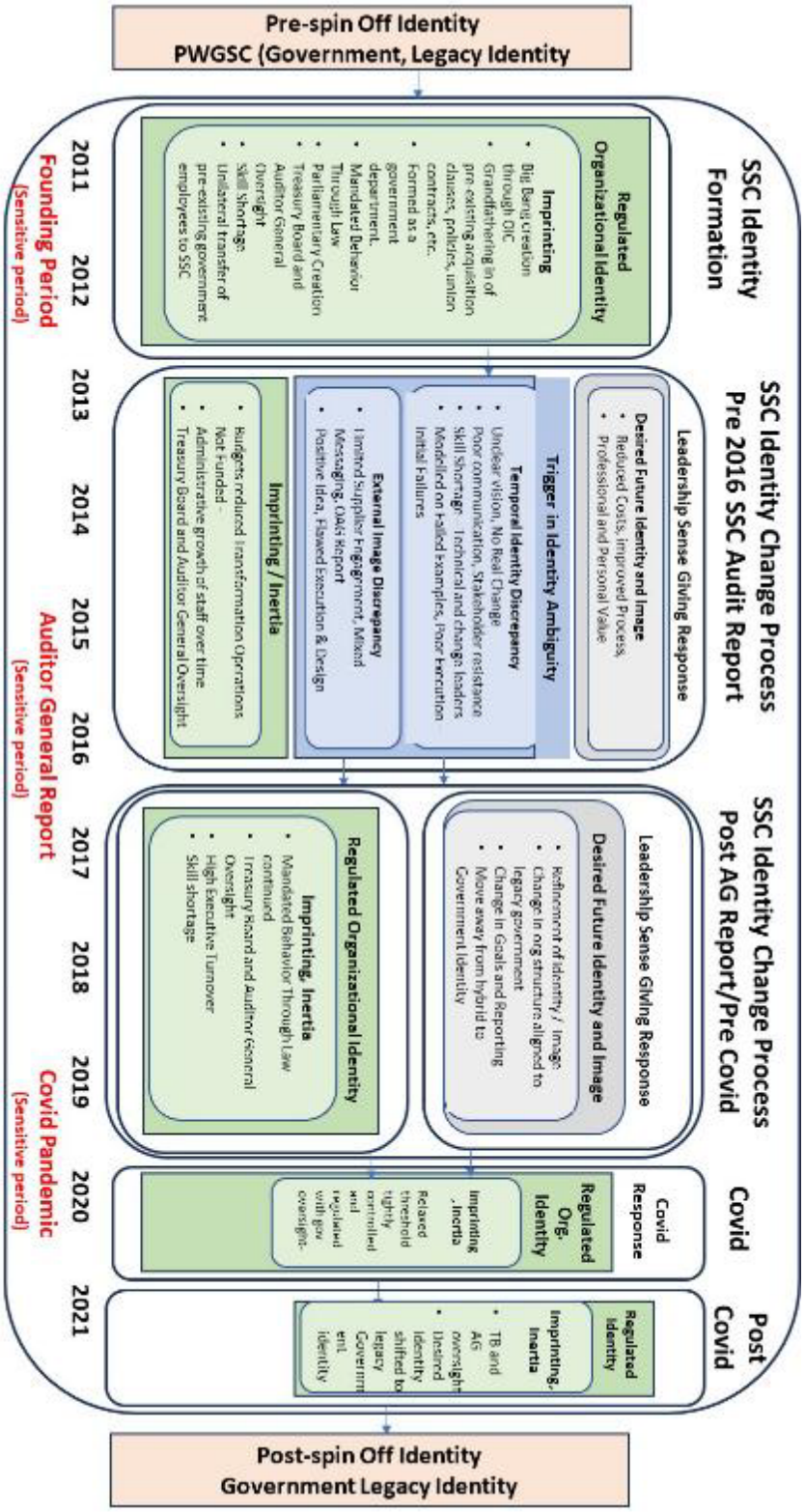
organizational identity, key attributes created barriers to change that impeded successful identity change at SSC.

Chapter 5 - Discussion – SSC Through Time

The weeks leading up to SSC's announcement, and the months and years following SSC's creation, were continuously influenced by a variety of constructs as shown in Figure 5-1 including desired identity (Whetten, Mischel & Lewis, 1992), change in social referent (Chreim, 2005), temporal identity discrepancy (Hempel & Dalpiaz, 2023), external image discrepancy (Gioia & Thomas, 1996), imprinting (Stinchcombe, 1965), inertia (Hannan & Freeman, 1984) and identity regulation (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002).

While the creation of SSC was reported to be driven by an underlying political agenda, it is worth noting the SSC organization has operated under different political parties in office with limited to no change in operations or direction when governments changed, and centralization has been a continued trend since the 1960's under both political parties. The findings presented below in Figure 5-1 look at identity change at SSC over time from the perspective of those that lived through that change with a research goal to look at whether legacy identity helped with a public sector/government organization's transition and/or impaired transition to a hybrid organizational form.

Figure 5-1: *SSC Identity Change Process*



Identity Regulation

Identity regulation emerged from my analytic work with the data, even though I had not originally identified it as a key concept. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) identified a relationship between identity, identity work and identity regulation that, with minor adaptation, are relevant to the SSC context. The political influence and control including the executive narrative, the retained organizational structure, oversight, and adopted practices restricted organizational change by regulating the degree to which potential change was possible. Figure 5-2 below provides an adaptation of Alvesson and Willmott (2002) work in the context of SSC.

Figure 5-2: Identiy Regulation, Identity Work, Identity

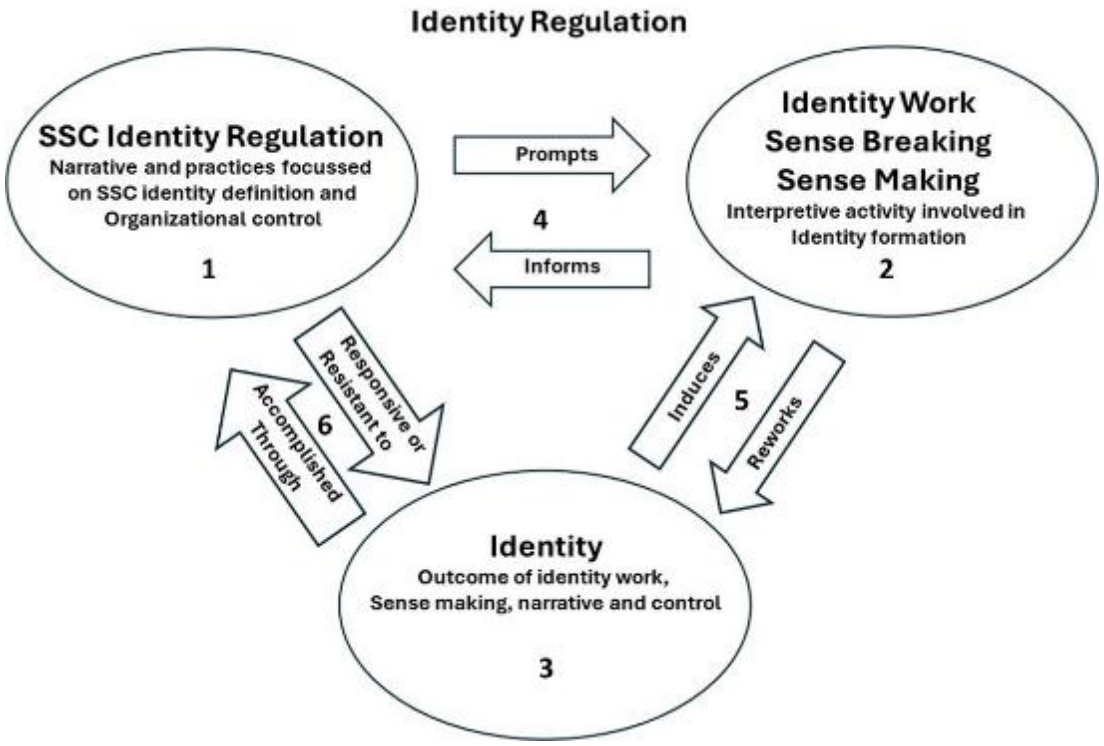


Figure 5-2 Identiy Regulation, Identity Work, Identity. (Adapted from Alvesson and Wilmott, 2002)

Identity regulation (upper left oval 1 in Figure 5-2) has existed since the founding of SSC. During the Big Bang creation of SSC using a parliamentary OIC, the founders adopted pre-exiting practices, policies, infrastructure, union agreements, transferred existing government staff to create the new entity and initiated the executive narrative. SSC founders then appointed Treasury Board to create, apply and oversee the day to day operational policies and the Auditor General of Canada to conduct periodic audits and reviews to confirm that SSC conformed to the policies. This politically controlled approach to the creation of SSC and associated narrative imposed significant identity regulation and imprinted a legacy government identity on SSC. (Figure 5-2). The exective narrative and practices provided guidance for the stakeholders to begin the sense making process associated with the identity work (upper right oval 2 in Figure 5-2). The narrative, processes, policies (oval 1) and sense making (oval 2) all contributed to the stakeholders identity formation process (lower oval 3 in Figure 5-2). In the early stages of SSC's existance there was synergy in process 4 (promts and informs) between the top two ovals 1 and 2, as stakeholders started the sensemaking based on the executive narrative to form a new organiztion that would adopt best practices from private and public sector to drive increased value. Over time the stakeholders discovered a discrepancy between the early executive narrative used in the sende giving process provided in oval 2 and the identity regulation processes, policies from oval 1. Stakeholders reconized that the initial narrative was at odds with the both the processes, policies and operational conntrol provided through Treasury Board and the conclussions of the Auditor General. As a result identity regulation created resistance to the identity outome (Process 6 in Figure 5-2) caused by the increased ambiguity between the "story" and "stakeholder experience". With the daily experience of stakeholders at odds with the executive narrative (Process 5 in Figure 5-2), stakeholders lost faith in the message and instead

embraced the legacy government as the only natural way of operating. Stakeholders embraced the legacy government identity (oval 3) as it aligned more closely with the policies and narrative created through indentity regulation (oval 1) that in turn induced a shift in the identity work, sensemeking (oval 2) to the point that post 2016 the SSC executive narrative had moved away from promising best practices, cost savings or efficiency and the desired organizational identity and sesnegiving activity had been redefined to reflect that of a legacy government identity with a revised narrative (process 4 in Figure 5-2). In this context, identity regulation as outlined in Figure 5-2 was an over-arching concept in the identity creation at SSC.

Table 5-1 outlines two major influences on the SSC organizational identity change. Identity regulation had a material impact on the SSC organizational change initiative imprinting a legacy government identity on SSC out of the gate that continues due to ongoing inertial pressure.

Table 5-1: Major Influences on SSC Organizational Identity Change

Imprinting	**Inertia**
• Big bang OIC decision (political instrument). • Grandfathering and importation of acquisition clauses, union contracts. • Oversight by Treasury Board and Auditor General. • Formed as a department, one among many, not an agency with a separate form identity. • Legal mandate that all public administration must procure IT through SSC. • Large-scale initial staff transfers of existing government employees.	• Administrative overhead growth. • Anticipated savings/net cost cutting siphons money out of SSC. • Employees face budget shortfall without guidance on how to operate. • Executive turnover. • The Auditor General Report continues to provide hierarchical government bureaucracy oversight. • The Treasure Board loosens constraints (i.e., traditional bureaucratic structures) during Covid and then tightens them. • Changes in official narrative

Imprinting

Creation in the past imprinted the legacy identity as born by political decision (i.e., SSC was set up as an instrument to achieve ideological ends), a decision made by senior policy makers in the mirror image of old government bureaucracy. There were both political and structural imprinting at SSC that existed from the beginning, influenced by the SSC founders that created the blueprint for the new organization and regulated the SSC identity. Senior level government policy makers, with a political agenda, architected the SSC design to drive savings and efficiency within a legacy bureaucratic structure, governed by a Minister with governmental controls and oversight, and this imprint has persisted over the life of SSC.

Big Bang

The politically motivated Big Bang creation of SSC using an OIC in the image of old government bureaucracy regulated SSC's identity (Figure 5-2) and imposed strong imprinting influences and impaired change (Table 5-1). The OIC transferred existing government staff, set operational, financial, and political expectations for SSC and grandfathered pre-existing government structured oversight, decision making, goals, governance, organizational structure, and policies. While there was a desired organizational identity in the executive narrative during SSC's creation, it became lost for stakeholders, and they reported increased ambiguity and discrepancy between the executive message and daily experience as SSC matured. Without a tactical plan or direction, the first wave of transferred employees from PWGSC imprinted pre-existing work routines and policies that were adopted at the organizational level as the status quo and standard way to operate at SSC, limiting the ability to adopt best practices from individuals or from other departments that were transferred in later waves. Stakeholders commented that the previous way PWGSC operated became the new norm with comments such as the following.

> "SSC employees transferred from Public Works indicated there's twenty of us and four of you - so the four of you can adapt to our ways as opposed to collectively abandoning the old ways with a perspective for looking at a new way of doing things or brainstorm to find a better way to do things" (SSC WL Early).

The desired identity outlined in the executive message that included new innovative or transformative ways to operate was not backed by any plan to achieve this goal and SSC stakeholders, facing ambiguity, simply retained and imprinted a historic, legacy bureaucratic identity, with most simply reverting to what they understood as a government approach, focussed on keeping the lights on for the existing contracts that they inherited. Feedback from the Stakeholders demonstrated the limited perceived change in identity.

> "We were still involved in the day-to-day operations of the network and therefore you know from a day-to-day operation in the first couple of years there wasn't really much a change." (SSC interviewee – WL Early).

> "You're doing the same work. You are just reporting to a different organization. You are not even following different processes and stuff on day two or day 10 it's still the same." (SSC interviewee – WL Early).

The Big Bang approach imprinted a legacy government identity influenced by the SSC founders that created the blueprint for the new organization and regulated the SSC identity impeding change.

Grandfathering

The political decision to grandfather long standing, traditional government hierarchy, government supervisory practices, adoption and extension of existing union bargaining

agreements, long-standing procedures and policies and pre-existing acquisition clauses imprinted a legacy government identity through identity regulation that contradicted the initial executive narrative creating ambiguity in the identity work and sensemaking process for stakeholders (Figure 5-2). The ambiguity influenced the identity formation and outcome with stakeholders who focussed more on the regulated legacy identity than the desired identity in the early narrative restricting the potential for management to successfully achieve change.

Government Oversight

The oversight by Treasury Board and Auditor General had an imprinting effect on the identity change as highlighted in Table 5-1. The role of Treasury Board and the Auditor General regulated the identity (Figure 5-2) by imprinting historical financial and governance processes and policies from the very beginning as they maintained top-down bureaucratic organizational expectations and controls. The hierarchical oversight represented a continuity in the mind of SSC staff that government bureaucracy still exists as it had previous and that constrained the ability for management to implement new innovative approaches and best practices. Treasury Board set the policy, and the Auditor General conducted regular audits to ensure they were followed. Stakeholders commented on the degree to which the Treasury Board and the Auditor General played a role in the daily operations, detracting management from focussing on the future vision as reported by stakeholders.

> "I had 8 different audits on projects so the phrase that we coined is that they're standing on our chests and they're telling us to breathe" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

> "If you're trying just to survive audits one after the other, you don't really think strategy you think - how do I get through the day?" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

The role of Treasury Board and the Treasury Board represented continuity of government process, governance and control regulating the degree to which change initiatives could be considered and imprinted a legacy government identity.

Formed as Department instead of Agency.

Stakeholders commented that SSC would have been more successful as an operating agency than a department, but Treasury Board blocked that choice. The decision to establish SSC as a department regulated the identity by limiting the autonomy of management to make change and imprinted a legacy government identity, as highlighted in stakeholder comments.

> "First off, there was an idea that SSC would be an agency rather than a department to give it the requisite autonomy to fulfill its mandate - that didn't happen. The Treasury Board blocked that. The Treasury Board didn't want to let go. They wanted to micromanage. They still wanted to have exert some undue influence over SSC to maintain control" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

The organizational architects that established the SSC structural model regulated the desired organizational identity after reviewing other public sector organizations as a model for SSC operations. Stakeholders commented the models used were limited to the public sector and also were failed examples.

> "The politics of it were flawed because, of course other jurisdictions have tried this. Australia had tried this and at the time we were standing it up at the time of the OIC in 2011, Australia had abandoned or was abandoning it as a failed experiment and somehow our most senior political masters thought Canada would be better or could do it

> differently right? So, you are adopting best practices from a failed example. that aspect was absurd" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

SSC creators investigated other examples prior to finalizing the organization design for SSC but limited their review to other public sector examples as the basis for creating the SSC model. This approach limited the potential options, regulated the SSC identity (Figure 5-2) and imprinted a familiar public sector organizational design and identity. I infer that this also provided the justification to establish SSC as a department, and as a result the leaders simply imprinted the structure, processes, and policies of SSC's pre-existing organizations.

Legal Mandate

The legal mandate that was imposed as part of the legislation that created SSC regulated the identity by creating an environment where all departments were mandated to procure IT through SSC. This decision imprinted a legacy government identity by adding legal and regulatory controls on top of the Treasury Board and Auditor General oversight. While an initial goal highlighted in the early SSC executive narrative was to drive continuous improvement, transformation and innovation, the mandate from government that all departments must legally procure service from SSC established SSC as a monopoly and removed the incentive to deliver industry best practices as their client departments had no alternative supplier. There was no option for departments to source services other than through SSC, regardless of the level of service or client satisfaction.

> "The SSC Act states SSC is the is the supply broker of record for the Government of Canada. It's in law" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

The relationship between SSC and its internal government clients was regulated through mandated government policies that were enforced at the SSC, departmental and individual levels and imprinted a legacy identity.

Internal Staff Transfers

Large scale initial staff transfers imported existing government culture as the default and imprinted a legacy government identity notwithstanding any efforts to regulate identity through image management to achieve desired identity. Identity regulation depicted in Figure 5-2 highlights the interrelationship that exists and can cause ambiguity and discrepancy in identity creation and sense making caused by the contrast between narrative versus founding structure." A review of Linked In profiles indicated that most executive and working level employees were career civil servants that spent their career working within government positions with many only knowing government as a place of employment during their career. As a result, the pre-existing organizational identity was that of a public service professional, working at a bureaucratic government organization.

Concern with cultural transformation became part of the executive narrative only following the 2016 Auditor General report with comments such as the following excerpts from the annual reports on plans and priorities.

> "There is a risk that change fatigue will negatively impact SSC's emerging culture and lead to employee disengagement, impede innovation and diminish the quality-of-service delivery" (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2015 – 2016).

The ability to manage the cultural change required skilled leadership and the stakeholders reported that SSC lacked the skill to manage change. Narrative alone was not enough to overcome the ambiguity and while the SSC stakeholders required sense giving to assist with sense breaking and sense making throughout the process, SSC managers were required to understand that stakeholders can also be resistant to modes of identity regulation as organizational control. An executive in the initial stages of SSC evolutions reported the following.

> "I would have done it differently. If I had been the author of that one team, I would have asked to deliberately pick their top change leaders to build the power of a coalition. It's stronger than the power of individual accountability. That did not happen" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).

SSC was vulnerable when initially formed and identity regulation imprinted a legacy identity imposed through the policies. The stakeholders fear of failing caused members to reproduce routines and structures, avoid risk and stakeholders were unable to adapt to environmental change.

The SSC change initiative suffered from strong imprinting and inertial pressures on structure arising from both internal arrangements, political influences and from the environment. The inertial influences will be discussed in the next section.

Inertia

The imprinted structural and cultural foundation at SSC continued through SSC's existence. SSC continued as a political tool and its bureaucratic elaboration carried a momentum forward that was set in motion by the initial imprint.

Administrative Overhead Growth

SSC experienced inertial pressures of its legacy identity as illustrated through SSC's administrative overhead growth over time (Table 5-1). While the initial design in 2012 was a lean organization structure intended to drive efficiency and savings, the executive team grew from four Assistant Deputy Ministers at SSC in 2012 to more than fourteen ADM and Senior advisors in 2023 (source: https:www.canada.ca/en/shared-services/corporate/organizational-structure/html). I inferred that SSC was imprinted with a historical, bureaucratic, legacy identity from the very beginning and the goal of creating the hybrid organization identity was not achieved. The concept of a lean and efficient hybrid organization was lost and SSC became the same as other areas of government. SSC's increase in top management size may have been further influenced when SSC became a department under the Minister that became jointly responsible for both Public Services and Procurement Canada, and responsible for Shared Services Canada.

Budget Based on Anticipated Savings

In the years from 2012 to 2015 the executive message remained consistent promising a hybrid, best practices approach that would deliver "savings", "value", "improved service", and "transformation", however the members reported increasing discrepancy between the executive message and their daily experiences. The executive message aligned with the expectation at the political level that government would be able to obtain saving from SSC and as a result the government took savings and reduced SSC budgets out of the gate on the assumption the operational, political, and financial goals would be realized. The ambiguity between the desired outcomes and the lived experience widened during the initial 5 years, and this inability to deliver on expected objectives occurred in part because of the ambiguity between the regulated identity

(Figure 5-2) and the desired identity described in the narrative. The lack of clarity around vision increased change resistance to the point that many stakeholders made the decision to leave SSC or revert to, and only embrace the government legacy identity that they understood, trusted and the one aligned with Treasury Board process and policy. One member indicated the lack of private industry involvement illustrated that the organization was done solely with a government focus adding to the inertia pressure (Table 5-1) on legacy identity (Figure 5-2) as shown in the following comment.

> "What I think we missed was industry input of how to do this consolidation. Industry was left out of those discussions" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

The excitement about the potential of SSC presented in the early narrative waned over time as SSC failed to achieve the stated goals reported in the annual SSC reports. As a result, inertial pressures contributed to members reverting to the legacy identity and most paid limited attention to the aspirational desired identity.

Budget Shortfall with Limited Guidance

Employees facing the resulting budget shortfall without guidance by political leadership reverted to survival mode. The executive narrative presented in the Ministers message in the SSC annual report on Plans and Priorities following the launch of SSC conflicted with what stakeholders reported as no change in the underlying building blocks and daily routine and as a result experienced the impacts of identity regulation outlined in Figure 5-2. The result of stakeholders experiencing no change created ambiguity and stakeholders reported being confused about SSC's vision and direction with comments such as the following.

> "I don't know what the vision is anymore" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

Over time stakeholders recognized the political agenda, interpreted the mechanisms of identity regulation as intrusive, the narrative as hype and inertial pressures caused the executive narrative to become ineffective in increasing employee commitment, involvement, loyalty or contributing to successful organizational identity change. The narrative and the corporate structure and controls that were implemented regulated identity and the narrative about a hybrid, effective identity focussed on change was misaligned with the stakeholder's reality with comments such as the following.

> "The plan was not there about how SSC would roll out over several years and financially, what do we expect in terms of benefit or investment over the next two, 3, 4, 5 years, whatever it is? This we never received" (SSC Interviewee – SSC Exec - Early).

Other stakeholders reported it to be a struggle to simply survive the daily routine with no regard for innovative change illustrating that inertial pressures maintained the initial government imprint.

> "So, it's been an evolution, but I would want to say from 2011 to 2017 in different instances it was survival… It's hard to have vision statement that the very top when everybody's mired in the lower layers, right?" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

The confusion, ambiguity and uncertainty created for stakeholders between the regulated identity and the desired identity in the early years of SSC created ambiguity and added to the inertial pressure and maintain their historical, legacy identity as the only way to survive. Following the 2016 audit the narrative around the desired identity shifted to that of a legacy, government and strengthened the inertial pressures on retaining a legacy identity.

Executive Turnover

A high degree of executive turnover following the 2016 audit report created the appearance of a rotating door in public administration contributing to the inertia as noted in Table 5-1. Stakeholders reported the lack of continuity in senior management as a major influence on the change initiative.

> "I had three Deputy Ministers, and I think it's 5 Ministers. So, it's hard to get continuity of decisions that are seen through to the end. You don't have that…I think we had seven Assistant Deputy Minister's. And most of the ADMs and the Deputy Ministers coming through had no IT background, so the business of IT, which is a thing right, was not known. They knew IT as a source of pain, not as a as an enabler" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

A review of LinkedIn profiles and Report on Plans and Priorities illustrated frequent turn over of senior management at the DG and ADM level (less than 4-year average tenure from the founding) and a total of 8 Ministers over 12 years since SSC's creation. This lack of consistent vision and change champion added to the inertial pressure to retain the familiar bureaucratic, legacy, government identity.

Continued Government Oversight

The 2016 Auditor General Report revealed SSC was not meeting its goals or expectations. The "Audit at a Glance" document identified many elements that were inconsistent with the executive message contained in the SSC Report on Plans and Priorities that were published between 2012 and 2016 including the assessment that SSC was delivering "limited transformation", "no clear savings", "not meeting objectives", had "poor management and partnerships", and "unclear reporting and services". The fact that the Auditor General, an

institution of the established government bureaucracy, still had oversight in its established ways over the "new" hybrid SSC identity, implied a reinforcement of the political imprint that marked the inception of SSC. The integral role Treasury Board and the Auditor General played in SSC's operation added inertial pressure to the imprinted, government, bureaucratic identity as highlighted in Figure 5-2.

In the years immediately following the issuance of the 2016 audit report, the executive messaging and format of the SSC annual Report on Plans and Priorities changed adding to the impact of identity regulation (Figure 5-2). My inference is the audit report had a material impact on the political messaging and acted as an inflection point. The content in the 2016 Auditor General report prompted changes to the executive narrative used for sense giving and sensemaking (process 4 in the Figure 5-2). The changes in the narrative in turn moved away from references to best practices and cost savings that reworked the desired end state to be more aligned with legacy government (process 5 in Figure 5-2).

The continued role of the Auditor General following the audit served as an instrument of continuity with the legacy bureaucracy due to its oversight role and efforts to maintain established government standards (process 6 in Figure 5-2) and created inertial pressure and resistance to any meaningful identity change. Therefore, the presence of the Auditor General is very ambivalent in its function.

Identity Regulation Through Covid

The COVID pandemic in 2020 added to the inertial pressures as highlighted in Table 5-1. On March 20, 2020, the Treasury Board continued its control of the "rules and policies" under which SSC would operate and approved temporary increases to emergency contracting limits. These delegations allowed Ministers, or their delegates, to approve contracts whose value would

have previously required Treasury Board approval. With these increased, temporary delegations, department heads were responsible for ensuring that emergency contract entry limits were only used in instances of a pressing emergency, where delay in contract award would be injurious to the public interest. As an example, the emergency contract entry limits that were allowed included the following.

- "Until September 30, 2020, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada PSPC's emergency contracting limit was increased from $15 million to $500 million".
- "Until September 30, 2020, the emergency contracting limits for all other ministers is increased from $1 million to $3 million".
- "Until March 31, 2021, the Minister of PSPC had an unlimited emergency contracting limit for the research, development, acquisition and deployment of vaccines related to Covid" (Source: urgence-emergency-eng.pdf (opo-boa.gc.ca)).

Note: Shared Services reports into the Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC).

The Covid pandemic in 2020 maintained identity regulation in SSC development. Members from inside and outside SSC provided positive feedback about the performance of SSC during the Covid crisis with comments like the following.

> "I would suggest the best time and the best period in SSC's history is March of 2020, with the declaration around Covid where they could afford to do what was needed without a lot of encumbrance or fear of political scrutiny of budgetary controls of vendor interference. I think as industry there were players in industry that were as guilty as anyone trying to make them trip" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).

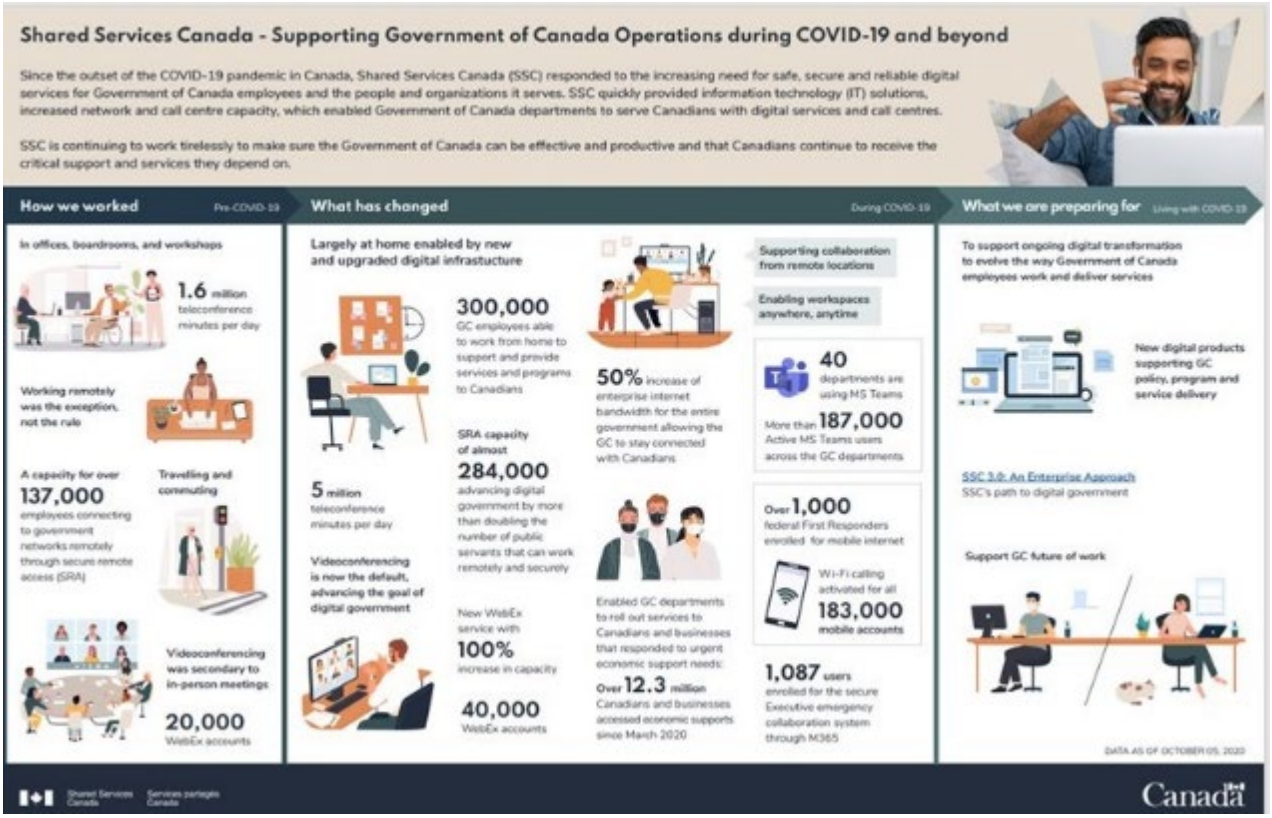
Others reported the tactical plan was more effectively defined and managed during this period.

> "There was a there was a sense of urgency brought about by Covid that brought the players to the table. The departments shared services and industry were given a very clear idea of what needed to be done in the next 90 or 120 days, and they were able to do it, if you listen to the leadership claims of accomplishments" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).

The Covid crisis offered a new opportunity for SSC's identity creation and for imprint decay (Marquis and Tilcsik, 2013) on its organizational identity allowing SSC members to unlearn routines that were inappropriate for the crisis and developing new capabilities. The goal was to quickly eliminate the effect of initial conditions of SSC's identity imprint. The chart below is an example of the SSC executive leveraging the success of the Covid experience in the continued narrative.

Figure 5-3

SSC View on Covid Activity



However, while COVID resulted in positive feedback from stakeholders, the framework was not a result of SSC management decisions, and instead the new approach was based on tightly controlled and regulated practices established by Treasury Board. Unlike decisions made in private industry, the changes to policy implemented by Treasury Board were treated as temporary and following stabilization of the pandemic conditions, the controls that initially governed SSC were put back in place by Treasury Board and the exceptions removed. Treasury Board loosened constraints (i.e., traditional bureaucratic structures) and then tightens them once the pandemic was back under control. This reverting back to original controls, even though stakeholders reported the COVID period as being more effective during the period of relaxed controls, signals that Treasury Board and the Auditor General of Canada remains in control and sets the rules through bureaucratic process. This regulatory control continues to maintain inertial pressures on the original imprint of a legacy, bureaucratic organization.

Change in Official Narrative

The leadership narrative post Auditor General report acknowledged failures in SSC's early years, the need for increased consultation with industry and introduced a "revised strategic direction, accountabilities, and priorities to transform the Government of Canada IT infrastructure and improve the digital delivery of programs and services" (Report on Plans and Priorities 2017-2018). The 2017-2018 report recognized the risk that SSC did not have the financial resources or trained employees to achieve its goals and that it faced challenges attracting and retaining qualified staff but did not provide a formal plan to address the shortcomings at the tactical level. As a result, the narrative continued to identify issues without a tactical plan driving continued ambiguity for the SSC members. In 2018-2019 report SSC admitted it had struggled to obtain the required skilled employees and their inability to attract the necessary talent from its founding. I infer this messaging may have raised questions from the members about the real value they were providing to SSC. By 2019-2020 the executive message had moved from programs to a more generic message providing the "best possible digital services" with no reference to innovation, best practice, savings, or security. In 2020-2021 SSC announced the first Minister of Digital Government to lead SSC and the message reported SSC may not have the ability to establish the organizational culture, tools, and processes to attract and retain the necessary capacity and competencies to support IT infrastructure and service modernization. This narrative undermined bureaucratic employees' identity in reference to lack of skills for achieving non-bureaucratic objectives and continued the identity regulation influences on the change initiative. Figure 5-2 illustrates that the identity regulation (Oval 1) influenced the narrative and therefore influenced the sensemaking (Oval 2). The executive narrative indicating the required skills were lacking enticed stakeholders to revert to the identity

they knew – that of a legacy, government identity. By 2021 SSC's actions to address the AG finding shifted its desired identity and it no longer seemed to be a hybrid. The shift in organizational structure aligned to a typical government department and was reinforced by the mirrored image captured in the AG report.

Conclusion

The effort to create a hybrid organization identity was done by means identified within the pre-existing legacy organization at the senior political levels and as a result vested SSC with a burden of bureaucratic genesis. The concept, and impact, of identity regulation, imprinting and inertia was not understood or managed by SSC leadership at the time of founding. Without the necessary change experience by the SSC executive, the new SSC organization was vulnerable to the imprinting of historical legacy approaches that led to the adoption of long held institutionalized practices and policies that reproduced goals, rules, coordination mechanisms and communication channels.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion – Answering the Question

The purpose behind this study was to understand how legacy identity enabled or impaired transition in the context of a spin to a hybrid organizational identity within the public sector. In the case of SSC, legacy played a significant role in impairing the transition. Identity regulation and imprinting contributed to the impairment of change at SSC that was continuously influenced through inertial pressures. From my analytic perspective, I understand the creation of SSC through an OIC as a symbolic, politically motivated and the manifestation of a political act to meet the ruling political party's bureaucratic agenda. It was established as a government department and carried forward a continued legacy of "who we are and where we came from" with a legal mandate for departments to use SSC, the adoption of grandfathered processes, existing acquisition clauses, union contracts and maintained oversight by Treasury Board and the Auditor General that represented a political and bureaucratic organization. The Minister's narrative combined a government agenda with bureaucratic method at the time of founding, committing SSC to reduce waste, increase efficiency with a reduced operating budget and assumed saving even before an operational plan was created. SSC was modelled on previous public sector examples, regulating the identity and imprinting bureaucracy and politics into the SSC identity. The imprinting established founding conditions at SSC that continue to persist and play a long-lasting role. Cultural inertia continued to reinforce the imprinted when the initial wave of employees from PWGSC established the new way of operating based on their predecessor's legacy processes and policies. Therefore my conclusion is legacy identity impaired change at SSC.

Implication for Future Research

The following describes the theoretical and practical contributions and opportunities for future study. The finding from this study provides a valuable resource for future change managers

Key Theoretical Insights:

There is importance of the character given to an organization by the act of its creation including how the administrative decision-making process occurred. This includes the consideration given to the administrative structures, practices that were implemented and the narrative used to provide sense making. Political decisions though legislation, made in the interest of political expediency and ideology can vest and imprint legacy identity reinforced through the inertia that the imprint carries forward in members' default identity beliefs.

Key Practical Insight:

In government, political parties in power make decisions about organizational change in public administration while career bureaucrats manage the bureaucracy of public administration. This de-coupling of organizational creation and public management necessitates attention to consistency between the process of decision making to implement organizational change and the nature of administrative practices required to achieve change. If there is an inconsistency, in this case the extensive use of narrative and identity regulation to manage identity, image and legitimacy could not remove the inconsistencies and contradictions. The inertia of the imprint is often too strong in a government bureaucracy, and such an imprint can lead to further, recursive, imprinting through inertial forces.

Empirical Finding

Identity regulation occurs within public sector organizations within a bureaucratic framework. When change is led by public servants with limited organizational change

experience, who only understand public sector operations, then the establishment of identity regulation including imprinting and inertia influences may unconsciously or unintendedly impede organization identity change.

Conclusion on Findings

My research contributes to the empirical, theoretical, and practical areas of change management research. The processes that occurred at this identity change initiative are likely to share commonality with other government shared services initiatives. The concept of organizational change and the creation of shared services to gain efficiency through consolidation are becoming increasingly common which lends confidence that similar processes are likely to occur in other public sector initiatives.

At a general level, in any major change situation, like a merger or spin off, organizations are likely to experience common ambiguities, identity regulation, imprinting and inertia. While the individual environments and specific characteristics may differ, the processes used, and the finding of this study would seem to apply to other public sector initiatives as well. The members experiences have similarities with other domains, so it is plausible that the findings are transferable. There is little that is unique to SSC and in general the social referent change, temporal identity discrepancy, external image, and narrative are common across most change initiative. The focus of identity regulation occurs across other public sector organizations as well as private industry. There is applicability beyond this single case study.

Limitations

This study has limitations that indicate the need for additional research. Most notably my research is based on the study of a single public sector organization who managed the creation of

a new organizational identity by amalgamating employees from 43 departments into a single shared services organization.

The individuals at the political level that built the initial blueprint for SSC prior to its launch were not involved in the interview process. The inclusion of these resources would be valuable for future researchers to gain insight into the political logic involved. I speculate those creating the blueprint were long time government or political resources and built the proposed model including the elements imposing identity regulation based on their experience and current knowledge.

The research has allowed me to identify the temporal rebranding of SSC 1.0, SSC 2.0, and SSC 3.0 but did not go into detail understanding the purpose and objective of those creating the rebranding strategy. Future research may gain greater insight investigating and understanding the decision-making process including the underlying reason that led to the decision and corrective action, if any, that management considered as part of the identity creation process shifted with each rebranding.

Future research may look at whether central control facilitate or impairs SSC's central purpose. Future research may also look at whether the sheer number of departments that were brought together (43) impacted the change initiative and whether a merger or re-engineering involving 2-5 departments might have led to a much easier management of legacy identities and what specific lessons can be learned? Future research could look at "what is the optimal size (# of departments) for successfully managing the change organizational identity? "If there is an inverse relationship between the optimal number for managing identity and the optimal number for realizing efficiencies, then you have a possible formulation for another important thesis about managing organizational identities.

Future research may continue to build on these findings and provide areas for improving the efficiency and performance of organizational change management initiatives. Practitioners may use these findings to further develop "how to" and "self-help" approaches for organizations.

The Final Word

This case study offered a unique opportunity to gain insight into the impact legacy had during an organizational change initiative in the Canadian public sector environment and help ensure the Canadian public obtains the best value on its future investments.

Of specific interest was the finding that organizations are required to have the necessary skills to manage a change initiative and the impact that identity regulation, imprinting, and inertia can have organizational identity change. Executive narrative needs to be supported by defined plans, actions, and early engagement of key stakeholders in the process to encourage greater adoption of the vision and direction. Specifically, any such organizational change needs to recognize the importance of identity regulation that will prompt identity work but will also influence the acceptance of rejection identity outcomes. Change leaders need to understand that identity work (sensemaking) will also inform identity regulation and senior management is required to continually assess the state of the change initiative as identity can be fluid if the change initiative if managed correctly but can also be enduring and resistant to change if managed incorrectly. Modelling of new identity should not be done from a political perspective but instead needs to be undertaken in a systematic way by change leadership and they must be aware of the risk of falling back to old traditional, legacy ways of operating if stakeholders fail to gain an understanding of the desired new identity of "who we are as an organization" and the value at the personal, professional and political level.

For me, the study provided insight into the areas that influenced the SSC identity change initiative allowing me to look at it from a theoretical, empirical and practical level. The combination of influences that impeded the change progress were beyond my initial assumptions when I started the research and added to my own understanding of the complexities associated with organizational identity change.

I interface with many organizations in both the private and public sector that are going through their own form of identity change or business transformation and the lesson learned from this study are both transferable and relevant and permit me to look at the both the opportunity and challenges associated with change initiatives through a different lens. While I initially recognized the common applicability of the personal and professional agendas on both private and public sector clients, the political agenda was more relevant to public sector organizations than private sector organizations. However, after experiencing the impact of politically motivated imprinting in this case, I realize that small "p" political imprinting is equally relevant in the private sector as it is in public sector organizations.

The final word is legacy identity has played a role in both assisting with, and impairing change in the SSC evolution at SSC to date with identity regulation, imprinting and inertia having a greater influence on impeding the change. However, with increased attention, proper management, governance and focus the future for SSC is still optimistic.

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Back Up Material

Appendix 1 – Archival Data Summary

SSC Annual Report on Plans and Priorities / Annual Departmental Plan

The review includes the SSC reports published in 2012 through 2022 to understand how the narrative was initially created, communicated and how it may have evolved over the first ten years of the new organization's existence. The Reports published prior to the Auditor General of Canada report refer to best practices, creating a new culture and report positive progress in reducing costs, driving efficiency, improving security, and preparing the government for the future. The post Auditor General reports (post 2016) acknowledge challenges it is facing; projects increase in spending and acknowledges the requirement for greater engagement of the stakeholder community. The following provides a summary of the reports since SSC creation.

2012-2013 SSC Report on Plans and Priorities

In its first 2012 – 2013 Report on Plans and Priorities Minster Rona Ambrose indicated that government was creating a new approach to managing IT and would be building on best practices from public and private sector to establish a new dynamic corporate culture. The report commits to savings and to create economies of scale to deliver more efficient, reliable, and secure IT infrastructure services (Pg. 2) and further indicates that SSC's eight-year journey will yield better value for money and a more robust service backbone for modern government operations and a desire for substantial service improvement, efficiencies, and financial saving (Pg. 2). The report indicates spending will decrease over the initial three years by $40M as the department anticipates savings in the short term, with further reductions planned beyond this (Pg. 14). The report indicates that performance targets were not yet developed and would only be available for presentation in the 2012-2013 Departmental Performance Report. The report

indicates SSC will create a dynamic corporate culture embracing innovation as part of its brand (Pg. 4).

2013-2014 SSC Report on Plans and Priorities

The Ministers message from Rona Ambrose is concise in the 2013-2014 report indicating that SSC is on track to streamline IT, save money, end waste and duplication (Pg. 1). The report indicated that to achieve tis desired results that SSC will actively engage industry and partners and stakeholders within government and outside government who can help SSC deliver the best results and develop a culture change toward enterprise service delivery. The financial targets published in the 2013-2014 report have been revised from the previous years report and show a slight increase in spending in the current year (an increase over what was projected in the 2012-2013 report) followed by a small decrease in spending over each in the initial three years with employee count remaining flat (Pg. 11). The internal services group activities focus on relevant legislation, regulations, policies, directives, and standards (Pg18).

2014-2015 SSC Report on Plans and Priorities

This is the first report issued under the new Minister Diane Finley who replaced Minister Ambrose. References are made to delivering cost-effective, reliable, and secure programs as well as a focus on transformation and modernization. The Minister indicates that SSC is making progress against its targets to reduce duplication, increase efficiency, cut costs, and that SSC was working closely with departments to “improve security”. The financial targets published show a slight increase in spending for the current year (an increase over what was projected in the previous years reports). The report indicates that SSC has strong and accurate financial management indicating that SSC has built and implemented strong financial stewardship in all areas through planning, tracking, reporting, and senior management oversight (Pg. 11). It

indicates SSC reporting processes are reliable contributing to the achievement of identified savings and that managers were well equipped with the necessary training, tools, and assistance to facilitate sound management of financial resources (Pg. 11). It further acknowledges that to meet its objectives and achieve continued success that SSC must maintain its continuous cooperation and engagement with partner departments, key stakeholders, and the private sector (Pg. 11). The report acknowledges that the performance measurement framework that was referred to in the initial two annual reports is being refined. The report refers to a project management culture delivering project execution, reporting excellence, capability, and governance (Pg. 9).

2015-2016 SSC Report on Plans and Priorities

The Ministers message refers to SSC leveraging IT industry expertise to identify best practices and approaches to IT infrastructure transformation (Pg. 1). The Ministers message commits to financial savings including $150 million by consolidating contracts and keeping internal overhead low, $50 million by moving government departments to a single, outsourced email service and $9 million by consolidating the procurement of workplace technology devices (Pg. 1). The message in 2015-2016 plan shifts toward a culture of risk management. The plan provides acknowledgement that the focus on change to date may be having an impact on the employee engagement. The report acknowledges a risk that change fatigue will negatively impact SSC's emerging culture and lead to employee disengagement, impede innovation and diminish the quality-of-service delivery (Pg. 12). SSC identifies a need to promote constructive behaviours, promote employee engagement and open dialogue across the Department (Pg. 12). The cost increases year over year is a consistent trend. While the previous annual report committed to develop a Workforce Management Strategy to meet the future competency needs

of the organization there is no follow up to discuss any actions in this report to either provide progress on previous commitments or new initiatives. The reports refer to the need to develop a risk management culture (Pg. 11).

Post Auditor General of Canada Report

It was between the 2015-2016 and the 2016-2017 SSC reports that the Auditor General of Canada issued the report on Shared Services Canada. Further detail on the Auditor General Report is provided later in the assessment.

2016-2017 SSC Report on Plans and Priorities

The 2016-2017 is the first post Auditor General Report on Plans and Priorities. Judy Foote, the new Minister indicates this will be the last time the current format will be used and in future a new format for the report will focus more transparently on how SSC will use their resources to fulfill commitments and achieve results for Canadians. (Pg. 1). The Minister message also states that in the year ahead that SSC will focus on transformation and on service delivery improvements for partners and clients. It indicates SSC is committed to modernizing and simplifying procurement practices so that they are simpler and include practices that support SSC's economic goals, including green procurement. Cost estimates continue to grow. There is no cultural reference in the report.

2017-2018 SSC Departmental Plan

The 2017-2018 plan acknowledges issues raised in previous reports identifying that SSC has conducted a comprehensive reset of its plans to modernize and transform the Government of Canada's information technology systems. With the new plan outlining SSC's revised strategic direction, accountabilities, and priorities to transform the Government of Canada IT infrastructure and improve the digital delivery of programs and services (Pg. 7). The plan

recognizes the need for a broad-based consultation with the public, industry, SSC employees and other federal departments (Pg. 8). The report acknowledges failure in some areas acknowledging that SSC has not yet achieved its vision to be the Canadian public sector's most innovative organization in providing cost-effective shared services that improve service delivery to Canadians and acknowledges SSC solicited feedback from customers, employees, and partners to find new ways to address persistent problems that traditional approaches have failed to solve (Pg. 9). SSC indicated that it would promote leadership development within the department, promote health and wellness in the workplace, and invest in training and development. To assist with further change SSC also committed to implementing a new leadership development program for all its executives, as well as for leaders within the management and supervisory categories. In addition, SSC commits to a broader education and training program and recruitment from outside government. The report refers to streamlined and process-driven culture (Pg. 37).

2018-2019 SSC Departmental Plan

The Ministers report acknowledges four priority areas that include improving service delivery, modernizing Government of Canada IT infrastructure, strengthening cyber and IT security, and building and enabling the workforce. SSC commits to a focus on improving core business processes, and on the capability to resolve outages as quickly as possible (Pg. 7). Spending in 2018-2019 and employee count continued to increase over previous years.

The report speaks to SSC supporting employees involved in modernization and change initiatives by providing a variety of advisory services, self-service tools, and resources in two key areas: change management (e.g., people readiness, impact assessment, stakeholder analysis, and adoption of change); and change leadership and workplace culture (Pg. 28). SSC has

provided increased commitment to focus its learning and development priorities on strategic investments and enabling tools for and on its leadership program. The approach includes several levels of management that take part in a leadership development program over a period of two years. The program, which is tailored to SSC's context and reality, includes assessments of behavioural competencies and leadership styles using various tools, communication techniques, and individual development plans. SSC goes further to acknowledge that "change management" that they seek is a structured approach to transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. Spending continues to grow over previous years. The report refers to a culture of customer service excellence based on best and leading practices (Pg. 7).

2019-2020 SSC Departmental Plan

The Ministers and Presidents message in the 2019-2020 plan makes limited references to any change and is concise about introducing the new report structure as a report on progress. The Ministers message has moved away from programs to simply providing the "best possible digital services". There is no reference to innovation, best practice, savings, or security. SSC simplifies the reference to a strategy promoting a customer-oriented culture of service management excellence through improved visibility and accessibility of services (Pg. 23). Spending in 2019 - 2020 and employee count continued to grow.

SSC recognized in the internal services priorities that simply recruiting people with the right skills is not the only requirement for a successful transformation and acknowledges an understanding that communications and engagement are key elements of service delivery and are essential to the effectiveness of all internal and external activities. The report further points out that SSC has a dual communication strategy focused on both identity and image to continually

improve its services and products. These include (1) ensure SSC employees understand the impact of their work on the lives of Canadians. SSC employees should also understand how their work contributes to overarching SSC priorities. To offer great service, they will receive the right information at the right time through the right channel and (2) improve the brand image of SSC with external stakeholders through a variety of approaches, combining traditional and innovative activities. Telling our story to the right people at the right time with the appropriate tools, messages and services will increase the impact of how the information is received. The cultural reference is a customer-oriented culture of service management excellence through improved visibility and accessibility of services (Pg. 23).

2020-2021 SSC Departmental Plan

The 2020-2021 report places SSC under the first Minister of Digital Government shifting the priorities of SSC. As outlined in the report the Ministers responsibility includes the renewal of SSC ensuring it is properly resourced and aligned to deliver common IT infrastructure that are reliable and secure. The same general human resources management risks that have been identified in many of the previous reports is reiterated identifying that SSC may not be able to establish the organizational culture, tools, and processes to attract and retain the necessary capacity and competencies to support IT infrastructure and service modernization. There are cultural references in the risk section identifying that SSC lack the organizational culture to achieve interdependent end-to-end IT solutions to implement the SSC 3.0 priorities. (Pg. 6). They also identify a risk that SSC may not be able to establish the organizational culture, tools, and processes to attract and retain the necessary capacity and competencies to support IT infrastructure and service modernization. (Pg. 6). The only proposed action plan identified is for SSC to build expertise in the strategic policy field, with a particular focus on improving the

ability to draft key documents, managing the departmental mandate and authorities, evaluating, and evolving departmental culture and delivering SSC's national and international engagement (Pg. 28). Spending in 2020 - 2021 and employee count continued to grow. The cultural reference in this year's report is an acknowledgement that SSC may lack the organizational culture to achieve interdependent end-to-end IT solutions to implement the SSC priorities." (Pg. 6).

2021-2022 SSC Department Plan

The 2021-2022 report acknowledges the effort that was placed on assisting SSC through the technological changes and challenges that Covid placed on the government programs. SSC identified cultural issues such as ensuring that Government of Canada Public Service culture and norms are flexible, collaborative, digitally knowledgeable and supported by an enabling leadership. (Pg. 3), that there is a risk that SSC may not be able to establish the organizational culture, tools, and processes to attract and retain the necessary capacity and competencies to support IT infrastructure and service modernization (Pg. 21). Spending in 2021 - 2022 and employee count continued to grow. Like previous years the report identifies a risk that SSC may not be able to establish the organizational culture, tools, and processes to attract and retain the necessary capacity and competencies to support IT infrastructure and service modernization. The report identifies SSC may not be able to establish the organizational culture, tools, and processes to attract and retain the necessary capacity and competencies to support IT infrastructure and service modernization (Pg. 21).

2022-2023 SSC Report on Plans and Priorities

The report identifies that SSC strives to create a culture through its leaders that enshrines psychological health, safety, and well-being in all aspects of the workplace through collaboration, inclusivity, and respect (Pg. 27). The report indicates that SSC is committed to

developing a leadership development framework to strengthen SSC's leadership culture by defining the requirements to ensure expected behaviors for leaders and employees are clear. Spending in 2022 - 2023 and employee count continued to grow. SSC indicates a leadership development framework will be developed to strengthen SSC's leadership culture by defining the requirements to ensure expected behaviors for leaders and employees are clear. SSC identifies it is committed to developing a leadership development framework to strengthen SSC's leadership culture by defining the requirements to ensure expected behaviors for leaders and employees are clear (Pg. 28).

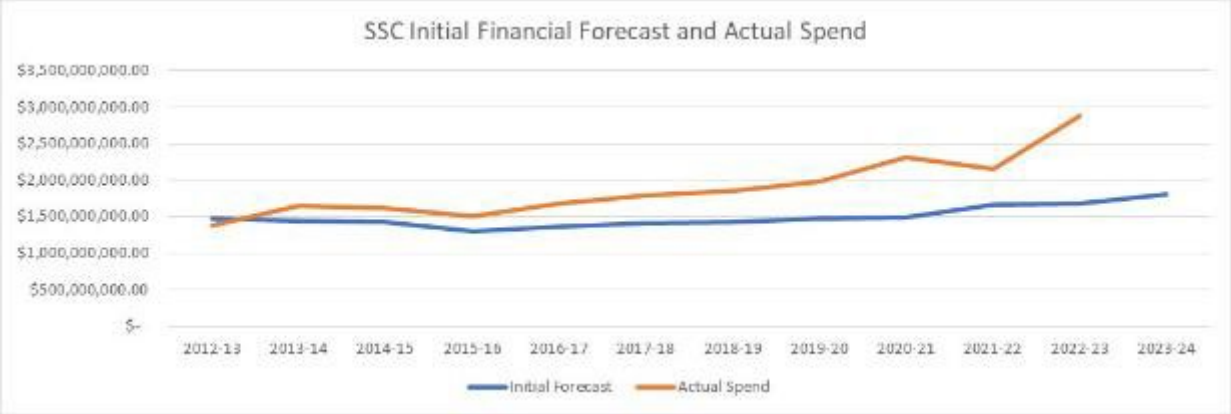
Financial Reporting (Forecasts and Actuals) Across All Years 2012 -2023

The Shared Services Canada annual Reports on Plans and Priorities offer insight into the progress against forecast. Each year the report is issued it provides the current actual results for the previous year and the forecast for the upcoming years. The intent is to provide a three-year horizon on spending and planned spending. By extracting the data and populating it into a single table it makes it easy to assess a variety of key indicators including initial forecast, actual spending, the changes in future year forecasting over time and the actual spend year over year to gauge the year over year savings being achieved through the various programs deployed by SSC.

The chart below provides a summary of the findings.

Figure A1-1

SSC initial financial forecast versus actual spend.

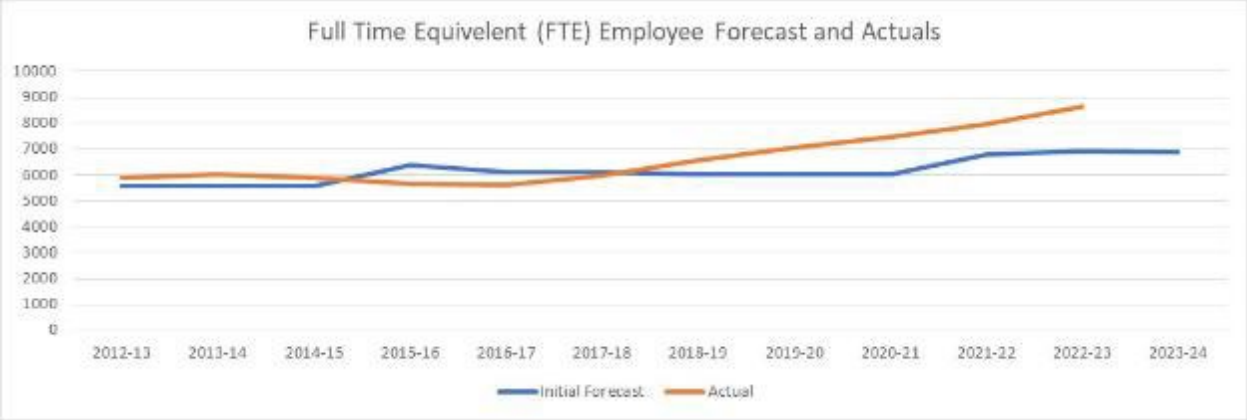


SSC Human Resources/Employee Count Reporting (forecast and Actuals)

The results show that while some reduction occurred in the early years of SSC existence that over time the size of the organization has continued to grow.

Figure A1-2

SSC full time equivalent employees forecast versus actuals.



SSC Senior Management Tenure

Review of the annual reports identifies that SSC has reported to seven different Federal Ministers (Rona Ambrose 2012-2014, Diane Finley 2014-2016, Judy Foote 2016-2018, Carla Qualtrough 2018-2020, Joyce Murray 2020-2022, Filomena Tassi 2022-2023, and Helena Jaczek

2023- present) and had four different Presidents (Liseanne Forand 2012-2016, Ron Parker 2016-2019, Paul Glover 2019-2023, and Sony Perron 2023-present).

Shared Services Canada Leadership

A review of the LinkedIn profiles of the SSC senior management teams in place during the creation of SSC provide background about their experience prior to joining SSC (public or private sector) and where they went following their time at SSC. The Presidents were all transferred into SSC from other government positions. The initial four Senior Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADM) were all transferred to the new SSC organization from other government departments. The tenure of the four ADM leaders ranges from 20 months to 57 months before one left the workforce and the other three transferred back to other government positions for an average of 40 months for the initial ADM tenure at SSC. The initial 20 Senior Director General (DG) positions were also all transferred in from other government departments during the creation of SSC with a tenure with an average of 44 months with the majority transferring to other government departments and a small percentage retiring.

2015-2016 Auditor General of Canada Report on Shared Services Canada

The Auditor General of Canada conducted a performance audit of SSC that was completed September 29, 2015, and tabled February 2, 2016. The purpose was to examine the progress SSC made implementing its key objectives. The audit looked at SSC's objectives of maintaining or improving IT services, generating savings, and improving IT security, while transforming IT services. It also looked at SSC and how Treasury Board assisted SSC with governance and leadership on the SSC strategic vision and impact on the broader government. The intent was to provide an early assessment of progress of SSC toward their 2020 SSC transformation target completion.

The audit concluded several findings most of which were not positive in nature. It concluded:

- SSC had made limited progress in implementing key elements of its transformation plan.
- SSC had challenges in adequately demonstrating that it is able to meet its objectives of maintaining or improving IT services and generating savings.
- SSC did not establish clear and concrete expectations for how it would deliver services or measure or report on its performance in maintaining original service levels for its 43 partners.
- SSC rarely established expectations or provided sufficient information to partners to help them comply with government IT security policies, guidelines, and standards.
- SSC's reporting on its transformation plans required improvements because internal reports were not clear or accurate.
- SSC has reported that it is generating savings but did not have consistent practices in place to demonstrate that government-wide savings were being achieved or to recognize that there is partner costs involved in all transformation projects.

SSC Procurement Policies and Standard Acquisition Clauses and Conditions (SACC)

A review of the governments SACC 2035 General conditions: Higher Complexity – Services identified that there have been no significant changes to the clauses and conditions during the period prior to the creation of SSC (pre-2012), SSC early period (2012-2016) and more recent years (2016 -2022). The clauses and conditions used by other procurement

departments within the government for non information technology remain consistent with the same clauses and conditions used by SSC. This consistent use of the same government terms over all the years illustrates that the commitment to adopting “best practices” across private and public sector did not include any material changes to the Standard Acquisition Clauses and Conditions used by the SSC.

Appendix 2 Evidence from Archival Data and Interviews

Appendix 2.1 Additional Illustrative Evidence for Each Aggregate Dimension, Second-Order Theme and First Order Codes from Archival Data

Figure A2-1

Additional Illustrative Evidence for Each Aggregate Dimension, Second-Order Theme and First Order Codes from Archival Data

SSC Annual Report on Plans and Priorities **Additional Illustrative Evidence for Each** **Aggregate Dimension, Second-Order Theme and First Order Code**
Aggregate Dimension I: Trigger of Identity Ambiguity
A. Second Order Theme: External Image Discrepancy **Definition:** The theme external image discrepancy was defined by the words from suppliers that reflected an image that was in direct contrast to the projected identity and image proposed in the executive message conveyed in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities. **Auditor General Report on SSC 2016** - "We (The Auditor General) concluded that, for the transformation initiatives that we examined, Shared Services Canada (SSC) has made limited progress in implementing key elements of its transformation plan, and it has challenges in adequately demonstrating that it is able to meet its objectives of maintaining or improving IT services and generating savings. SSC did not establish clear and concrete expectations for how it would deliver services or measure or report on its performance in maintaining original service levels for its 43 partners. SSC rarely established expectations or provided sufficient information to partners to help them comply with government IT security policies, guidelines, and standards. In addition, SSC's reporting

against its transformation plan requires improvements because internal reports were not clear or accurate. Furthermore, although SSC has reported that itis generating savings, it does not have consistent practices in place to demonstrate that government-wide savings are being achieved or to recognize that there is partner costs involved in all transformation projects" (Audit at a Glance, Auditor General of Canada. Audit at a Glance—Report 4—Information Technology Shared Services (https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/english.att_e_41085.html)

B. Second Order Theme: Temporal Identity Discrepancies

Definition: The theme, temporal identity discrepancies, was defined as the expression or words used about one point in time about SSC not being the same across all periods of its existence.

- "Since the creation of Shared Services Canada (SSC), we are on track to streamline IT, save money, and end waste and duplication. This will improve services to Canadians, make IT more secure and reliable, and save taxpayers' dollars (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2013 - 2014).
- "SSC is working closely with partner departments and agencies to improve the security of government systems as an integral part of the IT infrastructure transformation it was created to achieve" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2014 - 2015).
- "Be transparent with partners by reporting performance regularly" (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012 - 2013).
- These new reporting mechanisms will allow Canadians to more easily follow our department's progress towards delivering on our priorities, which were outlined in the Prime Minister's mandate letter to me (Executive Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2016 - 2017).
- In the year ahead, SSC will also focus on transformation and on service delivery improvements for partners and clients (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2016 - 2017).

C. Second Order Theme Change in Categorization and Social Referent

Definition: The theme change in categorization and social referent was defined as the expressions or words used that reflected SSC was moving away from a traditional government organization to a hybrid organization identity adopting both public and private sector attributes.

Members reported a desired shift in identity aligned with a hybrid organization through the adoption of private sector elements.

- "In all our activities, we will be leveraging public and private sector best practices" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012-2013).
- "We are actively engaging industry and our partners who can help us deliver the best results possible for the government and Canadians" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2013-2014).
- "We will also continue to leverage IT industry expertise to identify best practices and approaches to IT infrastructure transformation" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2015 - 2016).
- "SSC will continue building modern, reliable, secure, timely and cost-effective IT infrastructure services to support government priorities and program delivery in 2017–2018, with a focus on four strategic priorities: 1) improving the delivery of IT infrastructure services, 2) consolidating and modernizing the Government of Canada's IT infrastructure, 3) securing the Government of Canada's data and technology assets; and 4) increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of internal services" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2017 - 2018).
- "Projects will see a consolidation and standardization of the government's email systems, data centres and networks" (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012 – 2013

"We will also press on to re fine our consolidation strategies" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2013 - 2014).

Aggregate Dimension II: Leadership Response and Sense Giving

Ministers Message – SSC Report on Plans and Priorities

D. Second Order Theme: Desired Future Identity

Definition: The theme desired future identity was defined as the words that portrayed beneficial attributes that would become an integral part of the new SSC organization that had not previously existed.

- "Shared Services Canada (SSC) is renewing the Government of Canada's information technology (IT) infrastructure to help modernize our operations. SSC's whole-of-government approach is enabling IT infrastructure improvements which will underpin modern programs and services that are more secure, cost-effective, and accessible for Canadians" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012-2013).
- "In the course of implementing those plans, our transformative projects will see a consolidation and standardization" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012-2013).
- "As a new department, SSC is creating a dynamic corporate culture – one that builds on a broader public service ethos to embrace innovation as part of its brand" (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012 - 2013).
- "With the launch of SSC, we are taking a major step forward in the modernization of how the public service operates" (Ministers Message SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012 - 2013)"

E. Second Order Theme: Identity Ambiguity

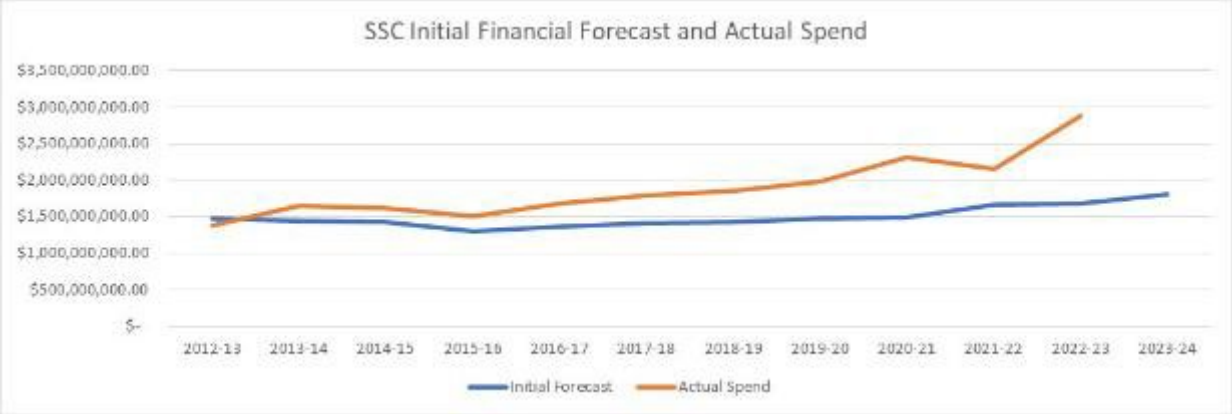
Definition: The theme identity ambiguity was defined as the words or expression in the general messaging in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities that reflect inconsistent use of labels or meanings of labels over time such as the changing use of the term "culture", or the contradiction between executive narrative inferring savings and the published results that show increased spending.

General Message in Report on Plans and Priorities

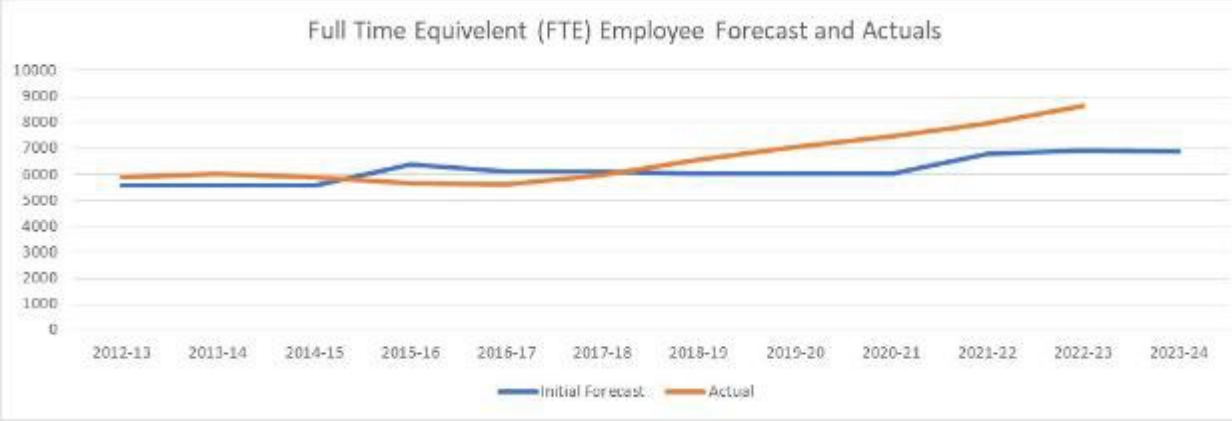
- While the message in the Annual reports issued prior to 2016 proposed efficiency and cost reductions the actual financial results against forecast and actual head count against forecast were consistently missed.
- **Financial Reporting (Forecasts and Actuals) Across All Years 2012 -2023.** The Shared Services Canada annual Reports on Plans and Priorities offer insight into the progress against forecast. Each year the report is issued it provides the current actual results for the previous year and the forecast for the upcoming years. The intent is to provide a three-year horizon on spending and planned spending. By extracting the data and populating it into a single table it makes it easy to assess a variety of key indicators including initial forecast, actual spending, the

changes in future year forecasting over time and the actual spend year over year to gauge the year over year savings being achieved through the various programs deployed by SSC.

The chart below provides a summary of the findings.



- **SSC Human Resources/Employee Count Reporting (forecast and Actuals).** The results show that while some reductions occurred in the early years of SSC existence, over time the size of the organization has continued to grow.



- The term culture had several labels during the initial 12 years of SSC development as noted below.

SSC Report on Plans and Priorities	Use of the Label "Culture
2012-2013	"Culture of innovation"
2013-2014	"Culture of enterprise service delivery"
2014-2015	"Project management culture"
2015-2016	"Risk management culture"
2016-2017	Silent on culture
2017-2018	"Streamlined process driven organizational culture"
2018-2019	"SSC is developing an initiative to grow and sustain a culture of customer service excellence on the basis of best and leading practices."
2019-2020	"Customer-oriented culture of service management excellence through improved visibility and accessibility of services"
2020-2021	"Changing user behaviour and building a risk-aware culture"
2021-2022	"Commit to creating a culture that embraces strong values and ethics and promotes a respectful and engaging workplace culture"
2022-2023	"SSC strives to create a culture through its leaders that enshrines psychological health, safety, and well-being"
2023-2024	"Culture of innovation and laying the groundwork for more experimentation"

Aggregate Dimension III: Identity Regulation

F. Second Order Theme: Inertia

Definition: The theme inertia was defined by the elements that existed at the time of SSC formation that were carried forward from the historical legacy of its predecessor and entrenched by SSC.

- See comments on review of Standard Acquisition clauses and conditions.

G. Second Order Theme: Modelling Behavior / Commitment

Definition: The theme modelling behavior was defined by the background, work experience and time committed to SSC by founding senior management based on a review of their LinkedIn profiles.

- See comments on LinkedIn review of SSC staffing.

H. Second Order theme: Imprinting

Definition: The theme imprinting was defined by elements of SSC's policies and procurement acquisition clauses and conditions that included legacy elements from the predecessor organization.

- "SSC has focused particular attention on the transition of its people to the new organization "(SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2012-2013).
- "There is a risk that the Department will not have the right people with the proper skills to deliver on its mandate (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2013-2014).
- "There is a risk that change fatigue will negatively impact SSC's emerging culture and lead to employee disengagement, impede innovation and diminish the quality-of-service delivery" (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2015 – 2016).
- There is a risk that SSC will be unable to invest in, recruit, mobilize and retain a workforce with the right skills and capacity to support current, transitional and future business needs (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2016 – 2017).
- "There is a risk that SSC will not have the human resources capacity and necessary competencies to improve the delivery of IT infrastructure and services (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2019-2020).
- "There is a risk that SSC may not be able to establish the organizational culture, tools and processes to attract and retain the necessary capacity and competencies to support IT infrastructure and service modernization (SSC Report on Plans and Priorities 2021-2022).

Appendix 2.2 – Additional Illustrative Evidence for Each Aggregate Dimension, Second-Order Theme and First Order Codes from Interviews

Figure A2-2

Additional Illustrative Evidence for Each Aggregate Dimension, Second-Order Theme and First Order Codes from Interviews

Additional Illustrative Evidence for Each

Aggregate Dimension, Second-Order Theme and First Order Code

Aggregate Dimension I: Leadership Response to Sense Giving

A. Second Order Theme: Desired Organizational Identity

Definition: The theme desired future identity was defined as the words that portrayed beneficial attributes that would become an integral part of the new SSC organization that had not previously existed.

- Reduced Costs, improved Process, consolidation, standardization (This appeared 25 times across 9 SSC interviewees)
  - "We have multiple disparate groups with individual group mandates across the Government of Canada, but from an IT telecom perspective, they all use and need the same IT telecom tools. So, we put a group together, they take care of all those departments IT telecom needs under one umbrella and that should save the Government of Canada some operational dollars." (SSC interviewee - WL Early).
  - "The plan was to provide services to all of the partners under consolidated contracts instead of everybody having separate contracts on their own, so better value, better financial for SSC and the partners as a whole." (SSC interviewee – WL Late).
  - "Standardize our language because you know everyone had their own terminology" (SSC interviewee – Exec Early)
  - "So, the vision was to try and consolidate and profit from some economies of scale, reduce the overhead, become more efficient and in turn do things better" (SSC Interviewee - WL Early).
- Great Idea that added Personal and Professional Value (This appeared 9 times across 7 SSC interviewees)
  - **"**At the executive level there was a lot more discussions and conversations - because now all of a sudden people, it's not just a question of going over it is the question of wow there has to be enough value and reason inside SSC for me here individually." (SSC interviewee – Early Exec)
  - "The concept of SSC was fantastic" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
  - "To be honest, for me it was a great idea" (SSC interviewee – Exec Late).

- "For the departments that were very weak, SSC was welcomed because they got the benefit of having and some experienced people now take over their telecom IT." (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- "Oh, I see a lot more cooperation, a lot more consultation with other departments rather than you know the silos that I first saw when I first came in, just in the last year and a half, it's improved a lot" (SSC Interviewee – WL Late).

Aggregate Dimension II: Trigger of Identity Ambiguity

B. Second Order Theme: Change in Social Reference

Definition: The theme change in categorization and social referent was defined as the expressions or words used that reflected SSC was moving away from a traditional government organization to a hybrid organization identity adopting both public and private sector attributes. Members reported a desired shift in identity more aligned with a hybrid organization identity through the adoption of private sector elements.

- Like Public Sector (This appeared 4 times across 4 SSC interviewees)
- "It was an opportunity to benefit from best practices, in other words, learn from the best, aggregate things in such a way that those who have best practices can actually share them with a wider audience, so that the government will become a lean, mean, efficient machine" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- "SSC had to be a bit like the private sector, we had to justify what the revenue was, the expense and the small margin that we were making" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
- **Industry Best Practices**
- "I guess wishful thinking that a shared organization could do its own procurement and then leverage really the private sector to its maximum extent and that never really panned out" (SSC Interviewee - Exec Late).
- "What I think we missed was industry input of how to do this consolidation. Industry was left out of those discussions" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).
- "There is going to be people in every company, doesn't matter where you are, that believe they know how to make it better and sometimes they're right, and sometimes they are not. It kind of puts into

question that whole best practices commitment and bringing commercially reasonable terms from the industry" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).

C. Second Order Theme: Temporal Identity Discrepancies

Definition: The theme, temporal identity discrepancies, was defined as the expression or words used about one point in time about SSC not being the same across all periods of its existence.

- Unclear Vision / No Real Change
    - No Real Change (This appeared 11 times across 8 SSC interviewees).

- "We were still involved in the day-to-day operations of the network and therefore you know from a day-to-day operation in the first couple of years there wasn't really much a change." (SSC interviewee – WL Early).
- "You just tell people that they're going and that's it. It's easy, you're in the same chair, you're doing the same work. You're just reporting to a different organization. You're not even following different processes and stuff on day two or day 10 it's still the same." (SSC interviewee – WL Early).
- "The first wave was purely just people who would see it as simply transferring to this group and thus Shared Services was created with the organization that was in PWGSC. So, there was no big change, no big impact." (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "I was pushed into SSC. I mean I was on vacation. I came back and I was told I'm now in SSC." (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

    - Unclear Vision (This appeared 17 times across 6 interviews).

- "I don't know what the vision is for us to see is anymore" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "In the early days, it was all about integrating the various parts that came together right, so it would have heavy emphasis on HR and communications, not vision. So, six years into its change, vision had gone out the window and it was pure survival" (SSC Interviewee – Late Exec).
- "So, it's been an evolution, but I would want to say from 2011 to 2017 in different instances it was survival. And so, it's like the Maslow pyramids of need, right? It's hard to have vision statement that the very top when everybody's mired in the lower layers, right?" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

- "That lack of consistent strategy is, is going to kill them over a long-time long term" (SSC Interviewee SSC Exec - Early).
- "The plan was not there about how it would roll out over several years and financially, what do we expect in terms of benefit or investment over the next two, 3, 4, 5 years, whatever it is? This we never received" (SSC Interviewee – SSC Exec - Early).

- Poor Communication, Stakeholder Resistance to Change
    - Stakeholder Resistance to Change (This appeared 29 times across 9 interviews).
- **"**They never had buy-in from anybody. Nobody trusted SSC to do the right thing" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "DND represented a huge amount of money and lots of talent in their department. Those people fought like you wouldn't believe resisting the creation of SSC" (SSC Interviewee – Exec early).
- "Every Deputy Minister in town was saying I told you it was better before. So, it was just a mental, psychological change effect. We don't like what happened. We don't really know why, but I think it was better before" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).
- "I was paying lip service is probably too lite a word, but I was doing the minimum I could do to appear to be a good corporate citizen without really embracing it and trying to not be dependent on it" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
- "The most difficult portion though, and I'm I'll try to phrase it properly. Is the fact that even after 10 years, after 12 years some departments are still not fully behind the objective of Shared Services and they're still trying to get the function back" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
- "And trying to attack things as multi million or even billion-dollar projects, I don't know, it's just it just got too big for anybody to handle. And then I guess the second point is they never had buy-in from the business itself" (SSC Interviewee - Early Exec).
- **"**There were gag orders on everyone - you weren't allowed to go to conferences; you weren't allowed to talk to anyone. Industry is going like it was a total gag order" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- "I think in some cases, Deputy Ministers, when accountability isn't clear, they kind of like that because there isn't a single throat to choke" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

- "The public was kept in the dark including people like me. The taxpayers didn't know about all these issues, and it was a big ah-ha moment" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
- "It speaks volumes to how deeply your Ministers were able to manipulate, you know, the messaging that is going to Parliament because, you know, Deputy Ministers run the public sector. But the political machinery relies on them to tell them the truth. Departmental plans that were being tabled at Parliament were hiding some of that ugly truth" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
- "Preoccupation" was how is it going to be perceived and can we touch up the messaging without hiding the truth but make it land softly in the public opinion. And that's what the DM's were doing. Prior to 2015, nobody cared, and the Deputies were what I will not call lying, but they were hiding the truth. You know, there wasn't truth to power before 2015" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
    - Poor Communication (This appeared 24 times across 8 SSC interviewees).
- "The first year was critical for people from the other departments to understand the goal and how it was going to be done and why they were moving from their existing department to SSC. This was less than adequate" (SSC interviewee - Exec Early).
- "It was a bit brutal. Because it was created at the stroke of a pen overnight the next morning you woke up and you were like, boom, you are part of Shared Services now. I have to tell you that prior to that announcement there was minimal communication" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "There was no pre planned change agenda" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "Not enough pre change agenda setting. Not enough transparency. Exactly why are you doing this?" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "It was going against every cultural element of a deputy minister being accountable to deliver government programs. I'm accountable for delivering departmental services but I don't manage a computer that runs on it anymore" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).
- "Who's in charge of culture change? Who's in charge of community change? … No plan, no agenda…Change is built on a purpose, change is built on transparency, change is built on clarity of role and responsibility. Hey, open that bloody org chart. Can you tell me who's doing what? I can't anymore" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).

- "Either the people were avid SSC defenders and good agents for us in there and those at that point would be viewed as outsiders by the organization, even if they came from there. And then there were the people that never they just changed the T-shirts. But never became SSC employees and so those did nothing for us in the background. They were not defenders of SSC, right? So, culture was a big thing" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- "Cultural transformation, which I believe is essential, just wasn't there - in fact quite the opposite in some of the spaces like procurement where I was working at the time. You had the tyranny of the majority, you brought 80% of the employees over from public works. And yet somehow you expected them to not behave in the way they did at public works" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

- Skill Shortage – Technical and Change Leadership
    - Skill Shortage (This appeared 8 times across 6 interviewees).
- "I would generalize that to the whole business environment in the government is they don't train good operators in government at the executive level, right. They train good machinery of government generalists, and they move them around" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
- "They (SSC) still don't have yet the natural instinctive service product management. Client relationship. Native talent" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "It was slow and frustrating. Because on executing the consolidation we didn't have a cohesive team. OK, we have inward fighting at the executive level and not everybody really agreed. What I think we missed was that industry input of how to do this consolidation" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
    - Missing Change Leadership Skills (This appeared 36 times across 12 SSC interviewees).
- "I had a lot of good support, but I would have done it differently. If I would have been the author of that one team, I would have asked to deliberately pick their top change leaders to build the power of a coalition. It's stronger than the power of the individual accountability. That did not happen" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).
- "The idea and vision were to adopt best practices; you know the process from end to end has to be agile as the term goes. And with all the bureaucracy, the challenges around procurement, the challenges around hiring etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, there's no way that, that vision could have been

implemented, especially adopting the private sector practices into a government entity" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).

- **"**The initial group of employees moved from public works to shared services as part of the first wave. And then there was another larger group like a few months later that joined us. And another bigger group, you know like a year down the road and that sort of completed the transition. And those other groups came from other departmental resources. Each department had to identify which resources were allocated to those specific functions or services that were being transferred to Shared Services" (SSC interviewees – Executive Late).
- **"**Maybe this was a temporal thing, maybe it was in the moment thing because of the creation of the OIC and the transfer rules and these transfer rules still exist. But at least now an employee has the opportunity to, with their eyes open, choose to do that (apply to and move to SSC) or not. For the thousands of us at the time that were subject to the OIC, we had no choice. It was done to us" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- **"**I got a major shift because I inherited a bunch of grievances. Some employees came from an agency, and they had slightly different classifications than say the PWGSC community and they were under a different contract via the unions that we had to kind of go through the process by which to kind of, you know, bring that together" (SSC Interviewee – Executive Early).
- "That little detour to SSC probably cost at least $100,000 in gross salary and gross revenue over a period of 10 years" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- "And so, people that are working in IT, networking data centers on location, all of a sudden started losing their parking privileges or were treated as second class citizens" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- **"**It was easy after being forced unilaterally into something. Yeah, you were there. You didn't have to kick and fight about it" (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

- Modelled on Failed Examples, Poor Execution, Initial Failures
    - Modelled on Failed Examples (This appeared 13 times across 7 SSC interviewees).

- **“**So, it was the whole business case for us to see was predicated on essentially a flawed study and forward-looking business case. So, you know, they were doomed to failure from the beginning” (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- “The politics of it were flawed because, of course other jurisdictions have tried this. Australia had tried this and at the time we were standing it up at the time of the OIC in 2011, Australia had abandoned or was abandoning it as a failed experiment and somehow our most senior political masters thought Canada would be better or could do it differently right? So, you are adopting best practices from a failed example. that aspect was absurd” (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- “I would say the government in standing up SSC really missed the mark” (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- “You could write a case study on what not to do from a change management perspective based on SSC” (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- “Despite all the self-inflicted wounds. The government did not set SSC up for success, and even to this day, I think it's still haunts” (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
    - Poor Execution, Initial Failures (This appeared 8 times across 6 interviews).
- **“**The idea was noble and quite aspirational, but the execution was horrendous” (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- “I will say that I didn't have a problem with the concept, right. My problem with the execution” SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- “People were left on their own to execute something that had never been done. It was brutal” (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
- “It's a question of execution. If it would have been private sector it would have been done faster. Nonunionized private sector would have been done much faster” (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).
- “My analogy is we were asked to run transportation between Toronto and Ottawa but rather than buying a bus to run between Toronto and Ottawa we had 43 cars running back and forth and possibly if four different people from the same department were driving between Ottawa and Toronto, they each drove their own car, they didn't even get in the same car or van together. It was awful” (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).

- "So, there was a contract there for email transformation. It was celebrated. I thought it was a disaster" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "We had pretty major failures" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "SSC had a vision. Now we can debate whether the vision was right or wrong…but at least they had a vision. Right? This could be tweaked along the way for sure, but you know, make sure that the organization itself had an end state to plan and work towards. When that obviously fell to the wayside because of multiple failures, I left" (SSC Interviewee – Early Exec).
- "There were a lot of people that when they were asked to join decided to go to other departments and they actually moved out of IT, as you know, as a career choice and into other areas because they felt that this is a sinking ship" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).

- Operations and Transformation Underfunded
    - Operations Underfunded (This appeared 12 times across 7 SSC interviewees)

- **"**You have to spend a dollar to make a dollar type thing or make $2.00… They cut SSC off at the knees right out of the gate by appropriating a whole bunch of funds that they had gotten from other departments in anticipation of savings - so we never had, you know, the opportunity to consolidate, implement and gain the return on that investment, because it was taken away from us right out of the gate" (SSC Interviewee - Early Exec).
- **"**It was only in budget 2018 that it was a full recognition that, hey, we have to fund this puppy, otherwise we're shooting ourselves in the foot, right? I mean, we were running all of IT for all the important programs in government. And we were chronically underfunded." (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
    - Transformation Not Funded (This appeared 11 times across 5 SSC interviewees).

- **"**So, the Conservatives pivoted somewhat on their original statement indicating we are going to harvest some money out of SSC prior to any transformation taking place. And that was the kiss of death. So, it that had a perverse effect." (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
- **"**Here they were, having been spun off with a pile of work to do, integrating 43 organizations into one with no real means of transforming, and the money was already out" (SSC Interviewee - Exec Late).

- "SSC had gotten the money prior to my arrival, and it was just a rust out program and not liked to a strategically important vision. They (SSC Management) were saying we're crumbling, and we need to do something about it without any kind of vision behind it… So, it became like painting the Golden Gate Bridge. You never stop. You finish at one end, and then you start again. By the time I left, some of the assets that we had refreshed were due for refreshing again (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

D. Second Order Theme: External Image Discrepancy

Definition: The theme external image discrepancy was defined by the words from suppliers that reflected an image that was in direct contrast to the projected identity and image proposed in the executive message conveyed in the annual SSC Report on Plans and Priorities.

- Limited Supplier Engagement, Mixed Messaging, OAG Report
    - Limited Stakeholder Engagement (This appeared 16 times across 6 external interviewees).

- "The term hostile takeover - We were sitting with the CIO at DND when he was told what was going on or about to happen and there had been no consultation there. You know your largest stakeholders" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "I think there was no change management done on it to tell people as to, you know, when you want to implement change one of the first things you need to communicate is why? Why are we doing this change? And if people don't understand the why, then they sit on the side. It's basic stuff they didn't follow" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "There is a consensus that, you know, it (SSC) is slightly broken. It just doesn't work the way it was intended to work" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "There wasn't really an approach that would drive change" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "People did not believe it would last right? (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "So, taking the best of what the industry had to offer definitely wasn't something that they adopted" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "When they got to be SSC, there was very little listening to industry and very little evolution" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).

- "In the federal government, as you know, there's a thing called, you know, passive resistance. It is a real-life thing, and I think there is a significant amount of passive resistance, meaning we'll wait it out, you know, they'll bump their head and come to the realization that this this doesn't work" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "Because of the fact that it was almost like conscription, I'm not sure that everybody wanted to go to the new role" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "Starting from a position where you have a workforce that may not be happy to be there" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "If you were to describe it in private sector terms it was more of a hostile takeover than it was in a type of, you know, strategic imperative in that regard" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
    - OAG Report impact (This appeared 5 times across 5 SSC interviewees).
- "I remember the report itself, but clearly it had no impact, right? It was just another check box" (SSC interviewee – Exec Early).
- "It (The Auditor General Report) was noticed and talked about for, you know, like 60 days and then and then it went away (SSC interviewee – WL Early).

- Positive Idea, Flawed Execution, Flawed Design
    - Positive Ideology (This appeared 9 times across 6 external interviewees).
- "Departments rely on IT professionals and rolling that up into one entity made a lot of sense" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "I think they (SSC) picked the right areas to consolidate" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
    - Flawed Organizational Design and Execution
- "They (SSC) really did not have a road map to follow. New Zealand had gone to a shared service model previously and abandoned it within five or seven years" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "They used the template of a smaller nation, but Canada is a much larger nation, with much larger needs…I'm not sure they looked at scale. I think if there was one obstacle, it's the scale and the impact that has on being able to be flexible and nimble" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).

- “If I was to lift the hood of the Chevy Nova, the 1974 Chevy Nova, I don't know to what degree they really understood what they were dealing with that motor. I don't think they understood what zero to 60 looked like” (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- “I mean, how often do you get assigned a homework assignment from a professor and you're sitting back and saying, what is it that the professor really wanted again? I mean, I see the rubric. I see what the outcome is supposed to be, but I'm not quite sure what it is that I need to do. I wish the professor would have shown me what a finished paper looks like so I could replicate that. I don't think the government had that opportunity. I don't think the people that were left with putting the pieces together had the tools in place” (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- “Every business line was created equal, and it didn't matter if it was a circuit driving a field operation at DND or a Parks Canada campsite. He wanted everybody to be treated equally and that, unfortunately, wasn't reality. And I think that led to a lot of frayed nerves. frustration and discontent” (SSC Supplier Interviewee – WL Early).
- “And the other thing, SSC was made in Ottawa. I think it took Shared Services a long time to realize they were a national organization and needed to distribute autonomy or authority out into some of the areas. When we talk about RCMP, where you know, 60 to 80% of the power of the RCMP is in two provinces and SSC tried to do everything out of Ottawa” (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- “I don't think they (SSC) really had a vision” (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- “What do you want to be when you grow up? I don't think they ever reached agreement on what that was” (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- “A lot of the failings that I've seen were a result of lack of clarity” (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- “There was no investment fund to build what they needed. So, it was the old adage of trying to replace the engines on the plane while you're flying it” (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- “On one hand you're trying to run a business and manage business investments and return on those investments within an electoral term and also focus on the long game. However, they (SSC) were being scrutinized based on every two or four years as to what have you done for me lately” (SSC Supplier Interviewee).

- "I guess the interaction with the departments or the impact on the departments really was the loss of skill sets in some of the core areas where they would have traditionally delivered services on their own" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "If you try and build a car, you know when everybody else is moving to electric and you don't have any skills in that area. Why would you think you'd be successful" (SSC Interviewee).
- "If they had listened and been innovative and a little less arrogant about knowing the answer already, there was some amazing things that could have been completed and there are still amazing things that need to be done. But I think it was a certain amount of arrogance, a certain amount of power and a certain lack of motivation to change that prevented them from even developing that skill set" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "I can't have this discussion without differentiating between organizational change and cultural change. I think that they (SSC) can create an organization, but they still struggle to build a culture, and you know that probably got in their way significantly over their years of existence is that that service culture has never really been integrated into their behavior" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "If I compare SSC to how things were before Shared Services existed, I think things were much easier before SSC. There was a higher sense of accomplishment" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "Dealing with shared services is a slower process" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "Transformation is what they were being asked to achieve with no bankroll. This was a very difficult job" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "Treasury board said, you know, we're giving you all this budget and we're giving you the infrastructure and we give you the people. But if you want to do anything new, new technology, new architecture, anything that deviates from what they already had, the budget doesn't cover it. You must go back to the client departments and get money for it. And so that really handcuffed the money" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "The barrier always was finance. (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "I don't know that I saw a lot of enablers, to be honest. I've seen a lot of barriers, and I would say the biggest barriers always was around finance" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).

- "Fast forward to, you know 2020, I would suggest the best time and the best period in SSC's history is March of 2020, with the declaration around Covid where they could afford to do what was needed without a lot of encumbrance or fear of political scrutiny of budgetary controls of vendor interference. I think as industry there were players in industry that were as guilty as anyone trying to make them trip" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).
- "There was a there was a sense of urgency brought about by Covid that brought the players to the table. The departments shared services and industry were given a very clear idea of what needed to be done in the next 90 or 120 days, and they were able to do it and I think, you know, if you listen to the leadership those claims of accomplishments, we're all centered around, you know, a lot of it there" (SSC Supplier Interviewee).

Aggregate Dimension III: Regulated Organizational Identity

E. Second Order Theme: Imprinting and Inertia

Definition: The themes imprinting and inertia was defined by a review of words and expressions associated with how the legacy processes, tools and policies from past were brought into SSC and how they were imprinted on the organization.

- Mandated Behavior (This appeared 16 times across 7 SSC interviewees).
  - "People ended up getting fired - dissension was not tolerated" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
  - "Tyranny of the majority. Where the SSC employees transferred from public works indicated there's twenty of us and four of you - so the four of you can adapt to our ways as opposed to collectively abandoning the old ways with a perspective for looking at a new way of doing things or brainstorm to find a better way to do things (SSC WL Early)"
  - "The one thing that did help, I've got to say, is that back in the early days, dissension amongst the very senior ranks of government was not permitted. People were walked out the front door" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
  - "You embrace the bureaucracy, embrace the hierarchy, you don't ruffle feathers, you know you can state your point of view, but in a nonthreatening way." (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

- **“**I think technology requirements during Covid helped progress a lot. Yes. Because in the case of Covid SSC had to get something in place, right? Nobody was in the office anymore and tools like MS Teams were needed, they said to security, have a nice day” (SSC Interviewee – WL Late).
- “SSC could be granted procurement exemptions and HR exemptions and not be tied to the bigger machinery of government in every painful way” (SSC Interviewee Exec Late).

- Parliamentary Creation (This appeared 7 times across 6 SSC interviewees).
  - “What made change easy was the instrument called the Order in Counsel. No recourse. Changing the mandate in accountability at the senior bureaucrat level made it a top down, driven game” (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).
  - “The creation of a different department and services was enacted by law and obviously it became into existence (SSC Interviewee - WL Early).
- Treasury Board and Auditor General Oversight (This appeared 16 times across 7 SSC interviewees.
  - “Treasury board comes out with a mandate that makes one group responsible” (SSC Interviewee - Exec Early).
  - “First off, there was an idea that SSC would be an agency rather than a department to give it the requisite autonomy to fulfill its mandate - that didn't happen. The Treasury Board blocked that. The Treasury Board didn't want to let go. They wanted to micromanage. They still wanted to have exert some undue influence over SSC to maintain control” (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
  - “I had 8 different audits on projects so the phrase that we coined is that they're standing on our chests and they're telling us to breathe” (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
  - “If you're trying just to survive audits one after the other, you don't really think strategy you think - how do I get through the day?” (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).
- Legally Binding on Departments (This appeared 10 times across 5 SSC interviewees).
  - “The SSC Act actually states SSC is the is the supply broker of record for the Government of Canada. It's in law” (SSC Interviewee – WL Early).
  - “The other thing that the other thing that was really wild was that the government made it illegal for CIO to buy IT services elsewhere. Illegal - Can you imagine that? Like it was like, wow, that's a big step, right? So that helped manage that potential that you would have a rogue CIO going like screw

those guys. You know, now suddenly, you were not allowed to do it." (SSC Interviewee – Exec Early).

F. Second Order Theme: Modelling Behavior

Definition: The theme modelling behavior was defined by the words, expressions, and action about how SSC "walked the talk" during the identity creation process and the commitment (or lack of commitment) to the change.

- High Executive Turnover (This appeared 4 times across 3 interviews).

"I had three Deputy Ministers and I think it's 5 Ministers. So, it's hard to get continuity of decisions that are seen through to the end. You don't have that…I think we had seven ADM's so it's hard. And most of the ADMs and the Deputy Ministers coming through had no IT background, so the business of IT, which is a thing right, was not known. They knew IT as a source of pain, not as a as an enabler" (SSC Interviewee – Exec Late).

Appendix 3 – Interview Questions

Figure A3-1

List of Interview Questions

	Question	Purpose
Question 1	Minister Rona Ambrose came out and said she was looking at creating an organization that combined the best practices from both the public and private sector. What ultimate characteristics did you see in SSC that differed from the from its processor?	This question was asked to establish a baseline understanding of the organization that existed prior to the creation of SSC. It allows the interviewee to reflect on the pre-existing organization and the categorization, and uniqueness that existed and allows the interviewee to reflect on what has changed
Question 2	From your experience, how was vision communicated either internally or externally?	This question provides insight into how sense making and sense breaking activity may have occurred through narrative
Question 3	How was SSC influenced during creation; business influenced or politically influenced? Explain.	This questio was intended to obtain insight into the acceptance of transferred staff, acceptance of the impacted departments and if there were political influences
Question 4	What did you see as the biggest barriers or the biggest enablers to help drive change through the initiative?	This was intended to identify if the interviewee recognized the enablers and barriers that the organization faced during the hybrid organization creation
Question 5	How did the character of SSC evolve over time? Explain.	This was an outcome-based question that allows the interviewee to clearly identify if and what major changes were accomplished
Question 6	How did the Characteristics of SSC change following the Auditor General of Canada Report in 2016	This was used to understand the impact of the AG Report on the change initiaitive
Question 7	If you were to rate SSC change initiative on an ABCD scale?	This provided an undersanding of the general success from the interviewees point of view

Appendix 4 – SSC Interview Summaries

Interview Summaries – October 27, 2023

Executive 1 – Interview Findings

SSC Executive One (E1) indicated SSC's predecessor PWSGC was viewed by departments as being a large, slow, monolithic organization and that prior to the creation of SSC, Information technology (IT) was viewed at the political level as expensive, inefficient, and not forward looking. SSC was created through parliament with a focus on achieving cost saving and efficiency. The largest difference reported between SSC and its predecessor was the centralization and consolidation of 43 departments IT and associated contracts for network, email, and data centre to a single harmonized government wide enterprise approach. The mindset shifted from IT being viewed as a utility in the pre-SSC era to now managing IT as a business and maximizing value extraction from the use of IT and to shift the perception of IT as a major cost driver to an enabler of digital transformation.

There were things that made change difficult. The initial communication of SSC's creation came as a surprise to most stakeholders and was initially viewed as a cost cutting exercise with some stakeholders indicating that they felt the government was not really implementing change and SSC was simply a pig with lipstick. The initial transfer of staff and budgets was done unilaterally with no pre-announcement communication, which caused many impacted stakeholders to refuse the transfer or change jobs to remain with their primary department. While the Ministers message at the SSC launch indicated a desire for change and adoption of best practices, much of the first two years was spent on assessing and taking inventory of the current state with a focus on keeping the lights on for existing departmental services while concurrently trying to work with cost reductions. This split focus caused SSC to lose momentum with respect to

transformation. Bureaucratic processes placed further barriers to SSC's change and many of the preexisting government policies remained with the new structure.

There were also elements that helped with change. One of the turning points for SSC assisting with the change journey came with the government's commitment to digital transformation in the last 5 years (2018-2023). Even though SSC scope was limited to infrastructure - the infrastructure was a critical foundation for the broader digital enablement. SSC's value was further enhanced with the maturation of security threats reported in 2015 as a common requirement was identified across departments. The Auditor General report of 2015 became a key report as the public were given insight into internal issues that existed with SSC and highlighted that perhaps not all the details associated with the progress being reported up the political chain in the early years was fully complete or accurate. The. The audit resulted in a rethinking and reorganization within SSC.

Exec one felt SSC remains on the right path, but they still have a long way to go with unification and consolidation across a variety of platforms and technologies with some initiatives having realized success and others realized less success like a governance structure and framework for data utilization as part of the digital transformation.

Executive 2 – Interview Findings

Executive 2 indicated that prior to the creation of SSC, PWGSC was a central government department that provided people, processes, tools and recovered costs as overhead from departments. When SSC was created it operated as a department, but the entire group of IT people and budget previously with the departments moved to SSC positioning SSC as a provider of services to the departments instead of an agent of the department. The SSC mandate was to

consolidate, maximize and optimize IT capacity utilization across departments and deliver increased value to the government. The ideology of SSC was considered by most to be a great idea in principle.

Areas that contributed to resistance to the SSC change effort included the method in which SSC was created when it happened overnight and the announcement coming as a surprise to most stakeholders. Preplanning of SSC was done at the political level with very limited involvement of the management team. The staffing of SSC happened in three key stages; the initial group of people transferred to SSC from PWGSC and brought their existing processes and tools establishing the foundation for how SSC would function. The initial group was joined by a second group from the 43 stakeholder departments three months later and the final transfer of people almost a year later. The communication to impacted staff and stakeholders was conducted within and through each of the impacted departments rather than a unified communication plan led by SSC. The initial group from PWGSC welcomed the transfer and were more accepting of SSC as they saw the shift as continuation of their current roles providing services to a broad set of departments and as a result, they experienced limited cultural change. Many of the subsequent transferred employees from the broad set of departments had mixed emotions, and some brought resentment from past dealings with PWGSC or from being felt pushed out of their previous departments that many had called home for many years with colleagues who had been their work family. On paper the transferred people were SSC but in practice they remained under the Minister of Public Works. The initial two years at SSC were spent simply trying to sort through boxes of bills trying to gain an inventory of what existed in the SSC environment, eliminating the ability to focus on change and transformation. Operationally the focus was keeping the lights on and trying to keep suppliers paid for the services they had received.

Things that made change easier included the diverse background of the staff transferred into SSC. The broad knowledge provided the foundation for the new department to look at the services from a variety of requirements. The executive saw SSC as a success providing greater insight into broad government requirements and taking accountability for the investments being made.

Executive 3 – Interview Findings

Executive 3 indicated that before SSC, PWGSC was a department that provided common services to departments, but the various departments retained control of budgets, had unique technologies, architecture and terms for the services used. Government executives at both the political and bureaucratic levels began looking at other global government jurisdictions that were providing shared services to assist them to build a business case for consideration in Canada. This pre-planning work was the activity that led to the decision to build a central organization for IT and the passing of the Order in Council that created SSC. The goal for SSC was to drive savings. Executive 3 indicated their findings determined that based on an analysis of 65 corporations' approaches. If SSC delivered the worst of the best (i.e., number 65) it was proposed to result in savings of $1,000,000 a day forever.

There were elements that created resistance to change. The formation of SSC occurred overnight with limited to no involvement of key stakeholders. Existing PWGSC people were transferred and took with them existing tools or processes. The second wave transferred to SSC included people from the stakeholder departments followed a few months later. Prior to the creation of SSC, the interaction between PWGSC and the departments had collegial governance, structure, and cooperation but this familiarity and trust was lost with the announcement of SSC and the transfer of responsibility. Time and effort were placed in the early years to build collaboration

and increase cooperation between the leaders of SSC and the departments. To gain the cooperation of the largest departments required both personal, professional political engagement as resistance was strong at times. A missing element in the creation process was industry was left out the discussion and internal conversations at SSC were done in confidence. Many managers were left to execute something they had never done and had limited experience doing. Union staff and government bureaucratic process has impeded some progress.

There were also things that assisted with the change. A focus was placed on enhancing security across the entire enterprise addressing a requirement that was fragmented and inconsistent prior to SSC. All funding was transferred from the departments to SSC and legislation made it illegal for departments to buy services from anyone other than SSC.

SSC has made progress but not as fast as typically seen in private industry. The departments gave up their paths, people, process, technology, and budget and therefore had no choice but to work with SSC and SSC continues to improve running IT as a business.

Executive 4 – Interview Findings

Executive 4 indicated that prior to SSC, departments were delegated authority of IT and had an option to use services provided by PWGSC for procurement, sourcing etc. on a cost recovery basis. The departments made the strategic and architectural decision and PWGSC acted as a broker with the largest value being the procurement function.

There were areas that made change difficult in the SSC change initiative. A lack of communication and transparency contributed to lack of trust between SSC and key stakeholders. The senior SSC management were notified of their involvement at SSC just prior to the organizational launch announcement. SSC had no preplanned change agenda, and the

management team had limited previous experience managing a change this large. No formal communication plan within government or outside government was put in place and financial numbers and expectations were published prior to the executive management team review and alignment. Year one focused on setting up and gaining an understanding of what existed in the new SSC environment. Initial communication provided insight and understanding of the basis for the decision including the socio, organization and economic basis for the decision however did not include details on how SSC was going to work, who was going to move to SSC, who would stay with departments, the impact on the CIO's or their budget. Year two communication shifted to an employee focus. Communication was done through executive meetings that occurred both formally and informally through the initial 8-12 months. Most impacted department's reaction was the governments approach to IT was better before SSC was created. Departments reacted poorly to the post change environment as it went against the cultural norms of most Deputy Ministers, and it introduced dependence on their end-to-end services. In hindsight, an improvement that could have been made would have been to ask the departments for their lead change agents as part of the SSC creation process.

There were also things that assisted with the change. On August 4, 2011, when SSC was created, the government centralized over $3B in spending to a single department. The change was announced through an Order in Council that mandated cooperation and left no recourse for departments who were obligated to align to the new model. Political alignment was established when DM accountability letters were updated and aligned to the SSC mandate. Strong leadership at SSC creation assisted with the change. From year 2 onward SSC placed a focus on creating both personal and professional trust and established a formal plan to understand the levels of cooperation that existed across the various departments and gain collaboration at both a strategic

and tactical basis. From that point forward SSC took a dynamic management focus on organizational change management with a shift from technology to organizational change with an increased investment in organizational learning and skills. In 2016, the Auditor General Report was used as an opportunity to reinforce the need for collaboration across all stakeholders even though the union employees that represented 90% of the staff used the Auditor General report to resume their arguments against the creation of SSC.

In general, while maintaining significant progress, SSC still lacks natural instinctive product management client relationship talent and needs to see themselves as an extension of the services provided by the end departments they serve. The SSC leaders in place at SSC founding were change agents, however the subsequent leadership team is more focused on delivery, and I still think change and culture needs to be a focus. SSC is seeing continued progress but still lacks cultural issues as it has a "actuation of legacy culture". However Executive 4 felt SSC can reach their goals and enter cruise control by 2027.

Executive 5 – Interview Findings

Executive 5 indicated that prior to SSC, PWGSC did not have its own autonomy on rules, budget, procurement, etc. and the government felt the only way to maximize efficiency was to create SSC with its own mandate.

The things that impeded change included the fact that the desired approach for SSC never materialized as SSC never gained full autonomy. The impetus of SSC became cost cutting taking precedence over the focus on transformation. This focus demoralized SSC staff and underwhelmed partner departments as the funds were taken from the annual budget that would have been needed for real transformation. Many partner departments followed the minimum

action required to be considered a good corporate citizen of SSC but did not go out of their way to make SSC successful. Cultural issues existed that needed to be dealt with as two camps existed; those that were SSC supporters and those that changed T-shirts but never became defenders of SSC. In the first couple of years communications was about integration not about vision that created a focus on tactics not strategy. Six years into the creation of SSC the vision was gone and daily life at SSC had fallen to pure survival. Executive 5 indicated that government does not generate good operators and at the senior level they produce generalists. Executive 5 had seen 3 DM's, 5 Ministers and a constant turnover of ADM level in the last 6 years making it difficult to gain continuity of a strategy. Most executives have a limited IT background and treat IT as a source of pain not as an enabler shaping how messaging and actions were felt by stakeholders. SSC required adequate funding and investment to drive transformation instead of simply trying to cut costs. As an example, just prior to 2018 a special fund was put in place to replace rusted out equipment just to maintain services but not tied to any strategic vision. The issue with the replacement project is the time required to roll them out was so long the equipment was almost halfway through their life cycle prior to being implemented. The multiple audits placed on SSC also created an environment where everyone operated while looking over their shoulder. A statement associated with audits was that the leadership felt like they had someone standing on their chest and asking them to breathe. With so many audits the focus becomes less on transformation and more on building walls around their area of responsibility.

Things that helped with changes. In the early days dissent was not permitted at the political level and legislation was implemented to align the process. In budget 2018 a new vision was created to realign the focus of SSC. The shift moved from consolidation to transformation and more tightly tied SSC infrastructure mandate to the broader government digital transformation agenda.

While in the early days SSC was focused on tactical initiatives, today SSC is more strategic. The first year of Covid allowed SSC to prove they could react when required.

SSC is in the right place to manage assets, but SSC still needs to think out the cloud strategy and where it is right and where it is not. SSC still has work to do in managing the partner departments and their needs against consolidation and standardization.

Executive 6 – Interview Findings

Executive 6 indicated challenges influenced the SSC change initiative. SSC's ability to adopt the best practices was made impossible with the bureaucratic processes, union and government policies imposed upon them. When SSC was created there was no buy-in or trust from the partner departments. The barriers they faced included dealing with the impacted staff that were unilaterally transferred and a reduction of funding that would have been necessary to allow SSC to achieve the required transformation expected in the new role. At the outset SSC had a vision that required some tweaking but as they experienced failures on some major projects, they lost the vision and never replaced it. The business plan for SSC was based on a flawed study that set them up for failure. It is still unclear of how private and public cloud fit the future IT model and how legacy applications fit the ongoing support from a consolidation perspective. The technical focus of the SSC staff appeared more focused on getting through the day instead of looking at "IT as a business".

There was an acknowledgement form executive 6 that at the executive and working level there was no greater dedication than that provided by the people that were in SSC.

Executive 7 – Interview Findings

Executive 7 indicated there was no real predecessor to SSC and that the creation of SSC was simply a re-tee-shirting of existing government employees into SSC. The vision for SSC was around services and security with a major focus on savings, however the initial focus following its creation was simply to keep the lights on for existing departments. The goal of SSC was to bring an enterprise scale into a government wide enterprise service solution. The challenge was 5-6 departments represented 80% of the requirement which made transforming from a disparate service into a standard set of services difficult across both production and test and development environments.

Change was made easy through formal governance with a focus on best practices. SSC following its launch organized the departments by vertical clusters with similar interests in the attempt to find synergies, commonality, and economies of scale. This approach allowed SSC to take the best of the best from a capability and competence perspective and share it across government. There was willingness to share open communication. Covid provided the opportunity to demonstrate what they can do in a crisis.

The transition of people, and funds from departments to SSC made maintaining visibility and control of budgets challenging. The transfer of employees created the need to align job descriptions from employees transferred into SSC from outside departments and the structure that was used at PWGSC prior to the creation of SSC became the model. The unilateral transfer of employees coupled with the change in job title for some created a requirement to maintain focus on moral issues across all employees to maintain focus. To provide a broad outcome and better outcome, there could have been processes around departmental preparedness, around people, around money and around governance to track and measure. While the creation of SSC was an opportunity for professionalism of IT management, the change was hard in a federated

model to be efficient and to get clear accountabilities during the transfer period. Most Deputy Minister's understand policy but do not have experience with the business of IT and DMs typically prefer general accountabilities that are unclear or non-specific end to end.

Working Level 1

The Working level (WL) One felt that the business aspirations around SSC were great, and that SSC would bring together disparate groups to a single enterprise to save operational funds. WL1 also indicated there was no change between SSC and its predecessor as the origin involved moving resources from PWGSC to SSC as the first group who brough their existing processes and practices and entrenched them in SSC.

One of the big challenges to the change initiative was a misconception that one size fits all in the approach to unify IT services and that approach did not work for all stakeholders. For small departments the value offered by SSC was well received, however, the larger departments felt they had lost autonomy and control had been given to someone with less skills and understanding of the departmental requirements than existed prior to SSC's creation. The limited resources at SSC created a situation where priority needed to be placed on who to serve first when faced with competition for scarce resources, yet some senior management felt all departments should be treated equally, which may be politically correct but operationally flawed. Change was further impeded due to a lack of adoption of common or industry best practices such as ITIL. There was no formal planning or communication with the departments and no broad roadmap of SSC initiatives.

Change was made easier because SSC now had people with departmental knowledge within SSC.

Working Level 2

WL 2 indicated the largest difference between SSC and PWGSC was a consolidated approach to enterprise-wide services and that there had been improved change in the approach to consultation and collaboration.

Areas contributing to make change easy included communication had improved over the past 5 years with quarterly staff meetings identifying and reporting on results across SSC goals and objectives. SSC had added private sector resources to their staff adding to their competences, thinking and behavior. There was a business shift with SSC moving from a departmental focused organization to running IT as a business.

The barriers that limited the SSC change initiative included the retention of process and policies that existed within government prior to SSC's creation including the approval processes remaining the same as they were prior to the creation of SSC. The culture of acting like "we are the government" is just now giving way to improved business practices.

Working Level 3

WL 3 indicated the goal of SSC was to improve service and modernize delivery of IT services. The relaxation of steps in the procurement process added agility and for some things but there remained a required balance between fair open and transparent and agile.

The change initiative was made easier through the legislated unilateral migration of IT budget and staff to SSC. Communication was greater at the beginning than currently and seemed good.

Things that added to the challenge included client departments were not necessarily aligned with the direction of SSC. The work, role, and processes initially remained the same with the initial

launch of SSC and nothing really changed on day one. There was a mixed reaction from those being transferred into SSC as most woke up the day SSC was launched and found they were with the organization with no prior input or involvement. There was an increased focus over time on security requirements for all activity and projects, adding time and complexity and often requiring other department involvement in the process for security review, accreditation, and approvals. There remains a fragmented distribution of responsibility where SSC only controls the infrastructure subset of broader government initiatives. Funding of transformation remains a huge barrier as the focus remains on savings yet the expectation on transformation.

Working Level 4

WL 4 indicated SSC had a vision to consolidate larger departmental IT.

Things that created challenges to the change is that SSC is very top heavy with a focus to stay out of the paper. There is a high level of risk adversity and significant attention placed on security that impedes progress and agility. The vision was to consolidate the large departments, but SSC had no idea what they were doing to achieve the goal and no formal plan in place to accomplish it. The focus on security, legal and risk is slowing progress on most projects, adding time. While SSC has become better over time in putting a plan in place and getting partners on board, they still have too much micromanagement.

Covid provided an opportunity to enhance services under unique situations and allowed SSC to demonstrate what could be done with reduced incumbrances.

Working Level 5

WL 5 indicated SSC was created to consolidate IT within government.

The area that contributed to making change difficult was a lack of understanding of unique departmental requirements when the shift of responsibility went to SSC. SSC was looking for a one size fits all but did not want to build to the highest common denominator leaving those with critical but unique requirements at odds with SSC's direction. The goal for SSC was good but the execution lacked. The funding was lacking to maintain the level of service required and there were not enough funds to transition and transform. The creation of SSC was politically motivated to cut costs instead of improving services. While the working level had ideas and input that could have helped with the broad understanding, no one at SSC would listen to feedback from the working levels.

Working Level 6

WL 6 indicated the vision for SSC was to benefit from best practices by adopting the industry best and economies of scale. The idea was to consolidate services and gain efficiency. There was a debate about whether SSC should be an agency or a department, but to retain control and oversight the Treasury Board designated it a department.

The thing that contributed to making change difficult was the government missed the mark setting up SSC. The goal behind SSC was good, but the execution was poor. People were given new tee shirts, but nothing changed. There was no focus on culture. As an example, in procurement 80% of the resources came from PWGSC and therefore their processes became the norm and considered best practice without looking at other options. There was no brainstorming even among the group transferred to SSC to decide on best practices. Politics played a role that were acting for the sake of acting. Canada was implementing a model that other global jurisdictions had failed. SSC is focused on their small element of the solution (primarily the infrastructure only) and not the end goal of the underlying department, this often leads to

increased delay and over thinking of security and legal reviews. Even with the failed examples SSC continued to move forward with the same approach without retrenching and course correcting.

OEM 1

OEM 1 indicated SSC was created to consolidate and improve IT within government.

There were very few enablers to change at SSC.

The thing that made change difficult with SSC was they were handcuffed as there was no room or budget for innovation or transformation in architecture and design. SSC is currently well behind industry in terms of technology and architecture and the budget allocated to SSC did not allow them to change their approach to business problems. Placing leadership primarily from PWGSC and CRA did not bode well for change as it did not provide insight into the breadth of capability and understanding that existed in the market. Communication was poor and there was no roadmap created and no path to follow. Other jurisdictions had tried implementing shared services groups in other parts of the world and had abandoned them due to failure. SSC spent millions of dollars in “bulk buys” that benefitted a small number of OEM’s to simply replace old equipment that was end of life without looking at new or better ways of doing things. In the past different OEMs benefitted from doing business from different departments allowing for more sharing of the wealth across the Canadian supplier community. Budget created a major barrier to change because in the past the departments were always open to innovation and change and that was lost when they became part of SSC. The focus shifted from value to cost reduction. SSC had no ability or teeth to gain increased funding as the expectation was reduced spending.

OEM 2

The vision for SSC was a focus on specific areas of IT consolidation including email, data center and network but SSC may have over committed what they were competent to achieve. The goal of SSC was the right idea but was likely politically motivated.

Things that made change difficult included PWGSC had existing processes that were simply adopted by SSC negating the ability to reinvent how they operated. Employees were unilaterally transferred to SSC with no engagement or consultation and as a result no one had a choice about going to SSC. Barriers were created with how SSC were assigned their people – through conscription and allowing the departments to decide who went to SSC and who stayed with the departments leading to a demotivated workforce. Communication was provided on the SSC website with no pre-announcement communication. Deputy Ministers changed frequently, and the vision changed with them. The original leaders seemed like the right generals, but it is questionable whether they had the right soldiers. If SSC used metric based performance against their initial targets, then SSC would be a failure.

Covid did provide them with the opportunity to demonstrate the art of the possible in unique situations.

OEM 3

OEM 3 felt SSC was created and moved from an agent of departments to a supplier of service to departments and took control of people process and budget for government wide IT infrastructure. There was an objective but no real vision at the beginning but was later followed with the release of the three pillars with an internal departmental focus aligned by verticals.

Things that made change difficult included SSC was formed overnight, and everyone was moved overnight. Even though people functionally reported to SSC directions were often given from

their original department resulting in an awkward roll out. There was no formal change process deployed or communicated. SSC looked to external suppliers for best practices for services such as email but the initial contract award failed and was terminated. For things such as data centre projects there was a budget to maintain the status quo but had no budget to modernize resulting in another failed approach and limited consolidation. SSC was created with a political mindset that having consolidation will provide rationalization, consolidation, and savings. Prior to the creation of SSC, there was no meeting of the departments to agree that operational benefit could be achieved through shared services. Internal bureaucratic pushback occurred by many stakeholders not believing the SSC concept would work and passive resistance also played a significant barrier to the change. SSC was politically based, and no change management processes were implemented, and no one was explained "the why" to the stakeholder community. There was no anticipation of the internal political battle that occurred within the government. Early projects were over engineered and failed with SSC experiencing very few quick wins. SSC has recently lost its vision and the employees inside SSC have no view of a common vision. The size of the organization continues to expand and grow where it should be compressed.

The most recent release of SSC 3.0 has improved the vision for SSC.

OEM 4

OEM 4 felt SSC's big change was looking at government as an enterprise rather than an agent of departments. SSC was its own entity with its own budget.

Areas that made change difficult included the creation of SSC was more of a hostile takeover not a business imperative and did not focus on culture. There were too many people with too many

agendas with SSC initially struggling to identify what they had. Service culture has not been integrated to drive behavior and SSC never reached agreement on what they wanted to be. SSC agreed on consolidation and do more with less and drive productivity but that's where it stopped. As a service provider to the departments, SSC needed to know their customers' requirements but instead they focused on telling them what they could provide instead of understanding what the departments needed. A focus on all customers being equal was unrealistic as organizations like DND are not equal to other departments such as Parks Canada. SSC placed a focus on Staffing SSC in Ottawa prior to building presence across Canada which was not aligned with the distribution of client departments such as RCMP. None of the departmental CIO's, including DND and CRA were engaged in discussions prior to the public announcement of the creation of SSC creating pushback from key stakeholders. Communication was poor with respect to the people, process, and budget, how the creation of SSC would benefit the stakeholders and as a result many good people were retained by departments rather than being transferred to SSC. Funding was provided to SSC to maintain what was currently in place but no funding for innovation and transformation was added.

The best period in SSC history was the opportunity to demonstrate capability during Covid.

OEM 5

OEM 5 felt there was no change between PWGSC and SSC. The mandate of SSC was to look at consolidation of data centre, network, and security.

Things that made change difficult was SSC was less open to listening to industry than PWGSC had been. Industry would offer input based on best practices however SSC leadership was not there, and they were not open to listening or taking input. The issue with the approach taken by

SSC was the effort was more about deploying tactics rather than considering the goal, looking at strategic options and then deciding how to move forward. SSC was stuck on a legacy path with no focus on transformation. An enabler that would have added to their success could have been listening to industry. The services were already being provided globally by OEMs to similar organizations around the world, but SSC was still focusing on how to build it themselves in a similar fashion to how and what they had bought 20 years ago. Opportunities were lost through lack of industry consultations. Part of the issue was there was no incentive for SSC to do anything different nor was there funding for change. SSC was stuck in the status quo as that is what was always done.

OEM 6

OEM 6 described the difference between SSC and its predecessor as PWGSC left more autonomy to the departments for innovation and outsourcing decisions. With the creation of SSC services came under the control of SSC in a centralized manner.

The things that contributed to an impeding change included a loss of skills and understanding specific to the departmental requirement. There was also a lost focus on transformation as SSC focus was on keeping the lights on and had no funding for transformation. The shift to a consolidated approach hurt some OEM's while helping others. A recent bulk buy to replace aging technologies benefited incumbent vendors but may not have driven the best value for SSC as they remained focused on "how they have always done it" instead of looking at innovation options and best practices. SSC has not focused on transformation to meet the emerging needs of its clients and does not appear to have invested in its people to remain relevant with the evolving industry.

OEM 7

OEM 7 described PWGSC as a more agile organization in addressing departmental requirements and considered that before SSC existed things were much easier. There was a higher sense of accomplishment and service was a lot faster. Government departments felt that they had the confidence level of getting things done and having better control.

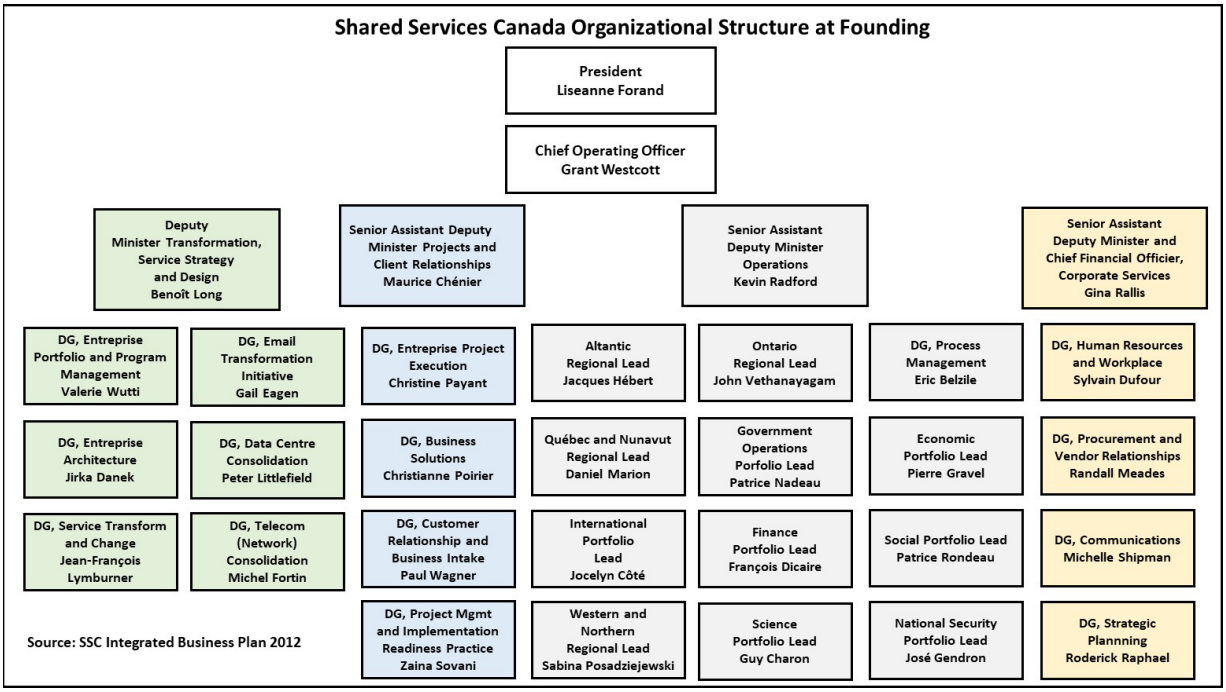
Things that made change difficult, included SSC never ending processes and policies. Communication seems to be a struggle as SSC publishes a report on plans and priorities, but it does not translate it to tactics and planned roll out with timelines. SSC appears to have a group of resources unsure about how to achieve any meaningful change, so they focus on what they know and become stuck in the status quo.

Appendix 4 – Founding SSC Organizational Structure 2012

The SSC organizational structure has changed multiple times since founding and the organizational structure in 2023 differs greatly from the one created at founding.

Figure A4-1

SSC Organization Structure at Founding



Appendix 5 – Ethics Approvals

Athabasca University
RESEARCH CENTRE

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed and approved the research project noted below. The REB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) and Athabasca University Policy and Procedures.

Ethics File No.: **24855**

Principal Investigator:
Mr. William Woods, Graduate Student
Faculty of Business\Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Supervisor:
Prof. Kai Lamertz (Supervisor)

Project Title:
IDENTITY AS BARRIER TO AND FACILITATOR OF CHANGE - A CANADIAN PUBLIC SECTOR CASE STUDY

Effective Date: July 4, 2022 **Expiry Date**: July 3, 2023

Restrictions:

Any modification/amendment to the approved research must be submitted to the AUREB for approval prior to proceeding. Any adverse event or incidental findings must be reported to the AUREB as soon as possible, for review.

Ethical approval is valid *for a period of one year*. An annual request for renewal must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date if a project is ongoing beyond one year.

An Ethics Final Report must be submitted when the research is complete *(i.e. all participant contact and data collection is concluded, no follow-up with participants is anticipated and findings have been made available/provided to participants (if applicable))* or the research is terminated.

Approved by: **Date: July 04, 2022**

Weiming Liu, Chair
Faculty of Business, Departmental Ethics Review Committee

Athabasca University Research Ethics Board
University Research Services Office
1 University Drive, Athabasca AB Canada T9S 3A3
E-mail rebsec@athabascau.ca
Telephone: 780.213.2033

Athabasca University
RESEARCH CENTRE

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL - RENEWAL

The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed and approved the research project noted below. The REB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) and Athabasca University Policy and Procedures.

Ethics File No.: 24055

Principal Investigator:
Mr. William Woods, Graduate Student
Faculty of Business\Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Supervised Project Team:
Prof. Kai Lamertz (Supervisor)

Project Title:
IDENTITY AS BARRIER TO AND FACILITATOR OF CHANGE - A CANADIAN PUBLIC SECTOR CASE STUDY

Effective Date: April 11, 2023 **Expiry Date:** April 10, 2024

Restrictions:

Any modification/amendment to the approved research must be submitted to the AUREB for approval prior to proceeding.

Any adverse event or incidental findings must be reported to the AUREB as soon as possible, for review.

Ethical approval is valid *for a period of one year*. An annual request for renewal must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date if a project is ongoing beyond one year.

An Ethics Final Report must be submitted when the research is complete *(i.e. all participant contact and data collection is concluded, no follow-up with participants is anticipated and findings have been made available/provided to participants (if applicable))* or the research is terminated.

Approved by: **Date: April 11, 2023**

Paul Jerry, Chair
Athabasca University Research Ethics Board

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Athabasca University

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL - RENEWAL

The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed and approved the research project noted below. The REB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) and Athabasca University Policy and Procedures.

Ethics File No.: 24866

Principal Investigator:
Mr. William Woods, Graduate Student
Faculty of Business\Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Supervisor/Project Team:
Prof. Kai Lamertz (Supervisor)

Project Title:
IDENTITY AS BARRIER TO AND FACILITATOR OF CHANGE - A CANADIAN PUBLIC SECTOR CASE STUDY

Effective Date: April 4, 2024 **Expiry Date:** April 04, 2025

Restrictions:

Any modification/amendment to the approved research must be submitted to the AUREB for approval prior to proceeding.

Any adverse event or incidental findings must be reported to the AUREB as soon as possible, for review.

Ethical approval is valid *for a period of one year*. An annual request for renewal must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date if a project is ongoing beyond one year.

An Ethics Final Report must be submitted when the research is complete *(i.e. all participant contact and data collection is concluded, no follow-up with participants is anticipated and findings have been made available/provided to participants (if applicable))* or the research is terminated.

Approved by: **Date: April 04, 2024**

Paul Jerry, Chair
Athabasca University Research Ethics Board

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Athabasca University

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL - RENEWAL

The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed and approved the research project noted below. The REB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) and Athabasca University Policy and Procedures.

Ethics File No.: 24855

Principal Investigator:
Mr. William Woods, Graduate Student
Faculty of Business\Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Supervisor/Project Team:
Prof. Kai Lamertz (Supervisor)

Project Title:
IDENTITY AS BARRIER TO AND FACILITATOR OF CHANGE - A CANADIAN PUBLIC SECTOR CASE STUDY

Effective Date: February 4, 2025 **Expiry Date:** February 04, 2026

Restrictions:

Any modification/amendment to the approved research must be submitted to the AUREB for approval prior to proceeding. Any adverse event or incidental findings must be reported to the AUREB as soon as possible, for review.

Ethical approval is valid ***for a period of one year.*** A request for renewal must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date if a project is ongoing beyond one year.

An Ethics Final Report must be submitted when the research is complete *(i.e. all participant contact and data collection is concluded, no follow-up with participants is anticipated and findings have been made available/provided to participants (if applicable))* or the research is terminated.

Approved by: **Date: February 04, 2025**

Katie MacDonald, Chair
Athabasca University Research Ethics Board

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