PROCESSING PUPPIES
AN ANIMAL SHELTER ETHNOGRAPHY
LINDA TALLBERG
Linda Tallberg

Processing Puppies
An Animal Shelter Ethnography

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Processing puppies: An animal shelter ethnography

Key words: animal shelter, ethnography, emotion, positive organizational scholarship, dirty work, crystallization

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In Helsinki, on the 19th of April 2014

Linda Tallberg
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1 PROCESSING PUPPIES: AN ANIMAL SHELTER ETHNOGRAPHY

Work is increasingly defining not only what we do, but also who we are. Finding meaning in work, as well as in our lives, focus attention on values. Such values should define action, both in an individual sense as well as the collective sense of how we structure our societies. My research started as a search of understanding meaningful work in an area that I personally find important - animal welfare and rights.

My study suggests that highly emotional contexts are important places to investigate Emotions in Organizations. I chose an animal welfare organization as this context due to a personal interest in animal rights and welfare. In this way, I was similar to other individuals who choose to work in the animal welfare industry. As these organizations deal with employees who are animal lovers, yet must navigate limited resources, I thought that such a context would surely yield an interesting perspective on a broader societal issue – pet overpopulation and animal management.

I found that there are limited studies where the researcher undertakes an ethnographical stance in understanding the employee perspective within animal welfare as organizations such as charities, nonprofits, and volunteer groups are underrepresented in the Emotions in Organizations literature. Indeed, I originally thought (and later concluded), such organizations that deal with a largely ideologically aligned membership, would provide interesting avenues into researching emotions. Furthermore, with an increased attention on Human-Animal Studies, the complex relationship between humans and non-humans is finding an academic foundation for exploring this previously “silenced” bond. Also, in Organizational Studies, I suggest that inclusion of this unique feature of many work places be further investigated, to allow for better understanding of such organizations.

Hence, in my fieldwork, I became a paid employee at a case organization, living and experiencing events alongside other employees. I gained a unique perspective because, as far as I have found, other animal shelter ethnographies have only been researched through a volunteer or observational perspective. As an employee, I was privy to many of the emotional, physical, and psychological issues that other employees faced as a result of being a full member of the organization.

My methodology of becoming “one of the employees” allowed for a deeper understanding both in terms of conducting and analyzing interviews, gaining access to “hidden issues” such as the euthanasia process, and understanding the complexities of an animal welfare organization. The relationships and trust that developed between the employees and myself allowed me to access highly personal and emotional issues that, otherwise, could have easily remained hidden. Furthermore, using my own experience as a conduit gave me valuable insights into the work processes and emotional management involved in the organization. As a result, I came to question the suitability of employees involved in animal management and, ultimately, whether the methods used are suitable in today’s society.

My main contributions include highlighting the emotional and moral conflict animal shelter employees face in their daily work. I also found that there is a traditional conflict between management and employees, but one that does not include the ideological alignment to the organization. I extend the chosen literature of Emotion in
Organization, Positive Organizational Scholarship and Dirty Work through multiple issues based on a lens of power.

This thesis is structured as a monograph based on my ethnography of the case organization. In chapter 2, I introduce the literature of Emotions in Organizations: Positive Organizational Studies (POS) and Dirty Work. I looked to these three literatures to provide a theoretical framework to understand my case organization. In chapter 3, I explain my ontological and epistemological positioning (as well as that of this thesis). In doing so, I discuss an alternative way to represent fieldwork, through “crystallization”. This methodology allowed me to use ethnographic research methods of interviews, autoethnography, and participant observation to inform the resulting narratives, poetry, visuals and traditional thematic analysis that transpired out of the animal shelter experience in chapter 5. Three mini-cases in the organization became representative of how it was to work and live in the case organization (introduced in chapter 4). The first case was regarding hidden voices in the organization – that of the low-level animal attendants as well as the animals. These were vocalized and constructed into narratives, poems, and interview commentary to communicate the emotionality of the work for some of the “silenced” in the organization. In the second case, the stormy summer, organizational issues such as processes, lack of communication, and also some positive outcomes are represented to further understand the organization. And, the third case, euthanasia – business as usual, is represented as a central issue employees’ deal with which is an intricate part of their work-role at the core of the organization but is left for individuals to cope with. As a result of these three events, four roles evolve as ways of coping with the moral conflict in the organization.

Power becomes the key feature in understanding the context as well as how the employees’ cope. Hence, my discussion chapter deals with power as the analytical lens for understanding the previous emotional events. Three categories evolved as a result of the power analytical lens. Firstly, The Processing Plant focuses on the work processes, and how these are at odds with a highly motivated work force. Secondly, Wanted: Silent Workers develops the work processes further, by linking findings to the employment conditions of working in the case organization. Finally, The Lifestyle extends the emotional socialization of how individuals cope, and how the individual coping process blurs the boundary between work and home. I argue throughout the discussion that power and emotion are highly interlinked. Consequently, I suggest that in contexts, such as animal shelter work, framing moral conflict in a positive way may not be enough for employees who find themselves in an exploited work-role, dealing with a social problem (unwanted animals and pet overpopulation) in less than conducive ways. Thus, the theoretical and practical implications of my study further the understanding of this emotional context. Posing a general question to society – is this what we (as humane, responsible, sustainable, and civilized individuals) want to support? If not, what are the alternatives?
2 POSITIONING IN ACADEMIA

This chapter outlines the literature framework of my project. It focuses on introducing the current literature on Emotions in Organizations, Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS), and Dirty Work. As POS uses mostly a positivist approach, I discuss the mainstream psychological approach to emotions as well as more critical ones that my specific project is based upon. The Dirty Work literature positions my specific research context as one that has strong links to identity construction and coping mechanisms. However, limitations are made in regards to these three areas as my theoretical foundation. The study of emotions is a complex multi-disciplinary issue spanning psychology, sociology, and neurology among others. The most dominant perspective within the emotions in organizational literature comes from psychology.

2.1. Theoretical framework #1: Emotions in Organizations

The first theoretical framework deals with how emotions have been studied in organizations. But in order to frame a specific organizational context of emotions, a more generalized discussion is warranted on emotions, and how the research agenda frames this understanding. Therefore, I now present the psychological, sociological, and critical approach to studying emotions.

2.1.1. The Psychological approach to emotions

In the conventional psychological literature, there are two approaches to emotions: (1) Darwin’s (1859/1965) basic emotions approach, and (2) Arnold’s 1960 appraisal approach. These form the “natural kind of view” of emotion, which sees emotions as naturally occurring in the brain as a result of trigger events (Barrett, 2006; 2011). This mainstream stimuli/response model of emotions contend that there is a basic set of emotions that are “cross-cultural, universal across time and place, and due to innate human physiology” (Locke, 2011, p. 186).

Within this frame, Elfenbein (2007) defines emotions as the adaptive responses to the demands of the environment. Emotions are higher intensity short-term reactions to stimuli while moods are lower intensity and longer experiences that can often lack stimuli. Emotions have been described as discrete experiences such as hate, love, anger, grief, and joy (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O’Connor, 1987). Furthermore, emotions can be divided into subjective feelings (these are internal), expressive behaviour (emotions that can be seen externally), and physiological/body responses (such as sweating, blood rushing to the face, the release of adrenaline, and the increase in heart rate). A range of theoretical work has been done on emotions in organizational studies including Elfenbein’s emotional process (Elfenbein, 2007), affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), emotional labour (Hochschild, 1979; 1983), and bounded emotionality (Mumby & Putnam, 1992).

According to Ashforth and Humphrey (1995), everyday emotions are neglected in organisational research. They argued, in 1995, that a focus on emotions in the workplace was essential. Since that time, research on emotion in organisations has flourished. Indeed, currently entire series of books dealing with the topic with updated editions are being published (e.g., Ashkanasy, Zerbe & Hartel, 2002; Fineman, 2000),
and there is a general acceptance that emotion is an intricate part of organizational life (Fineman, 2000; Bolton, 2003, 2005; Sieben & Wettergren, 2010).

The five-step emotional process model by Elfenbein (2007) begins with a stimulus according to the environmental situation. Secondly, the stimulus triggers an emotional registration, which is regulated by individual schemata and "feeling-rules" and accounts for the emotional experience of the situation. This third component of the automatic components in the intrapersonal emotion process responds according to individual differences of tendencies to experience positive and negative affect. Studies show that positive affect can have a beneficial influence on the cardiovascular, immune, and neuroendocrine systems (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008) while negative affect can lead to job strain and stress when at work (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Fourthly, there is an emotional expression that often includes display regulations. This regulation can be based on norms masking the underlying feeling with more “appropriate” expression. Within an organizational context, these social and cultural norms can be explicitly outlined in organizational manuals (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). This regulation can, in the long-term, lead to emotional labour (EL), a common commodity within today's service industry (Hochschild, 1983). Outward expressive cues, such as smiles (whether authentic or regulated), are expressed as a result in many customer service industries. As a result, EL has become the focus of several studies within the organizational field (see, for example, Martin, Knopoff & Beckman 1998; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005).

2.1.1. Emotional Labour

Emotional Labour is commonly accredited to Arlie Hochschild research on flight attendants in her widely referenced book “The Managed Heart: A commercialization of human feeling” (1983; 2005). Here, Hochschild (1983, p. 90) defines emotional labour as the “management of feeling to create a publicly facial and bodily display”. The disassociation between internal feelings and outward behaviour is what wears away and can cause stress and disillusions about personal authenticity. Emotional labour infers that simultaneous feelings of positive and negative emotion do occur. Indeed, warnings about emotional and cognitive dissonance that can be precipitated by emotional labour set up these dual feelings. Researchers have referred to deep acting (attempting to feel the emotions that are required for display) and surface acting (displaying emotions that are not actually felt through verbal and nonverbal cues) (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). The issue here is that individuals can display one emotion while feeling another emotion. While acknowledging that there is a difference between felt and displayed emotion, research has shown that purely expressing positive emotions can result in changes in brain chemistry as if one were actually feeling that emotion (Burgdorff & Panksepp, 2006).

Mumby and Putnam (1992) define bounded emotionality as the controlled expression of emotion to enhance relationships. From a bounded emotionality perspective, the ability to regulate one’s own emotions is an essential skill. Therefore, the ability to regulate and control one’s own emotions is essential for the implementation of bounded emotionality in organizations. Martin, Knopoff & Beckman (1998) agree in stating that the ability to express emotions, combined with the ability to control emotions, contributes to relationship building in organisations.

---

1 The term “affect” is often confused with “effect”, see the glossary for the definition.
In their famous study on The Body Shop, Martin et al. (1998) explored not only how bounded emotionality can work for organizations appealing to employees’ emotions in favour of organizational outcomes but also warned against a more intimate level of organizational emotional control (Martin et al., 1998). Here, bounded emotionality becomes a way that organizations can use employee emotions to promote an organization’s strategy and goals. Within the new field of positive psychology (POP), there is a focus of how to change negative emotions into positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). This bifurcation leads to a mindset where negative emotions are bad and positive emotions are good (see Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Fickenuer, & Vohs, 2001 for an explanation as to why this happens). On the other hand, in the sense making literature (Weick, 1995), emotions are seen as useful for the utility they provide in making sense of situations. It is useful to note that critics, most notably Fineman (2010), suggest that this way of thinking (positive emotions are superior to negative ones) is breeding a commoditization of emotions which is driving an elitist programme of managerialism (Gabriel, 2010). This may account for the limited animal shelter studies I have found that look at emotions from an employee perspective.

Fernández-Ríos and Novo (2012) have critically explored POP and suggest that there are some serious shortcomings of the popular trend. As POS is closely linked to POP, it is relevant to consider these criticisms when looking at emotions in organizations. Fernández-Ríos and Novo (2012) list the following relevant criticisms: (1) there is too much weight placed on optimism, achieving a high self-esteem, unrealistic cult of happiness, dangers of individualism, “cultural obsession of [U.S.] American lifestyle”, “tyranny of the positive attitude” (Held, 2000), and “tyranny of well-being (Warren, 2010), and (2) most studies in POP are conducted on WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) subjects (Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan, 2010).

There is an argument that all living beings have an innate inclination to move away from pain and suffering (also called a “heliotropic inclination” by Erhard-Seibold, 1937). Because work is such a big part of people’s lives today, it is thus reasonable that there is a focus on looking at how to minimize organizational suffering. However, it is interesting to note the power issues that, through a more critical perspective on the emotions literature, have begun to grow and issues of suppression (silencing), domination, and resistance that have developed as a result. In mainstream literature on emotions in organizational such issues are generally unheard of (see, for example, Ashkanasy, Zerber & Härtel, 2002) as most management literature is based on scientific rationality, which has come under scrutiny in terms of producing a gap between academia and practice (see, for example, Ghoshal, 2005; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Bartunek, Rynes, & Ireland, 2006). EL then becomes closely linked to looking at ways that individuals cope with this emotional dissonance. This links the organizational literature of EL to the long-standing literature on stress and coping strategies.

As discussed, EL is a common occurrence in many occupations. Therefore, one of the central issues within the psychological approach to emotions is how to manage adverse emotions in working situations. Toxic emotions at work have implications not only for the individual but also on an organizational level for its culture (Frost, 2004). Hochschild (1983) has described the “double-edged sword” of EL. She found that although EL can foster task performance by regulating the interactions in a service context as well as offer service providers an avenue for self-expression, it can also lead to emotive dissonance and self-alienation if there is too much of a difference between the felt and expressed emotions (Hohschild, 1983). Wolkomir & Powers (2007) discuss employee identification and their job autonomy as important factors of emotional labour. Employees who are emotionally heavily invested in their work, such as self-
selected social service care workers (for example in Clemans, 2004), may be more prone to experience emotional dissonance, exhaustion, and stress and burnout at work than those employees who identify less with their job roles (Wolkomir & Powers, 2007). Therefore, the central issue for such organizations is to create environments, policies, or processes that help employees cope better with EL.

There have been many studies documenting the damaging effects of EL. Building on Hochchild (1983), Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) suggest that workers identify with the work role (or values). Social identity theory can in this way offer employees a way to enjoy the service encounter and maintain wellbeing (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Other coping mechanisms include solidarity with co-workers (Karabanow, 1999) and distancing themselves from those they care for (Wolkomir & Powers, 2007). Erickson (2004) suggests customer relationship-building as a coping strategy while Karabanow (1999) goes on to mention the psychic and emotional rewards that authentic self-evaluation can bring. There are several other mechanisms that help workers cope and I discuss some of these below in the literature review about the ‘Dirty Work’ context. In terms of emotions, it is safe to conclude that the “psychic cost” of EL for many professions and individuals can be higher than their ability to make sense, and, in such cases, there can be adverse effects such as stress and stress related disorders (documented for example by Cooper et al. 2004; Kaufmann et al. 1998; Glynn et al. 2002).

2.1.2. The Sociological approach to emotions

If the psychological approach mainly favours positivist methodologies, the sociological approach has a distinct social constructionist foundation. The constructionist literature argues that emotions are “states of mind” that happen as a result of common issues and are not “psychic entities” but instead changeable mental states (Bennett, 2011, p. 362). Within the social constructionist approach, there is the cultural and structural approach. The cultural approach finds that emotions are prescribed according to the social situation and its normative “feeling-rules” (Locke, 2011). According to Hochschild (1983) and as expanded later by Thoits (1990), these culturally prescribed rules manage emotions accordingly. Therefore, there are situational cues effecting a physiological change that reveal an expressive gesture and then has a category or emotional label attached to it.

Social constructionists argue that the socio-cultural conditions influence emotions more than biology (Locke, 2011). According to Kemper (2001), societies share emotions, and this sharing also impacts emotional management issues such as which emotions are deemed suitable for each event. He also notes that emotions vary over time.

[T]he fundamental notion is that virtually nothing, not even mind or self, precedes social interaction. Thus social interaction actually constitutes or constructs these fundamental categories (Kemper, 2001, p. 782).

2.1.3. The critical approach to emotions

Besides the psychological and sociological approach to emotions, a third stance is that emotions are both constructed through social interactions as well as predetermined in some sense by biology. Barrett (2012) notes that this “dualist split” of emotion does not serve scientific understanding and should, therefore, end by acknowledging that
emotions are both social and biological. Within organizational and management studies, this third stance has taken form under what has been named “the human resource development” (HRD) approach (Callanhan & McCollum, 2002). Within this approach, there is a divide of focusing on emotions that deal with learning or with performance (Callanhan & McCollum, 2002). Learning has a sociological component while traditionally performance is about rationality and efficiency. However, research into the core beliefs of the goal of HRD has highlighted a distinct variety among professionals and scholars in the field (Ruona, 2000; 1999), using the HRD approaches. HRD also acknowledges the growing interest in, for example, emotional intelligence (Salovey & Meyer, 1990; Greenspan, 1989; Goleman, 1995) which, therefore, warrants a more “paradigmatic lens of emotion research” (Callahan & McCollum, 2002, p. 9). Hence, Callahan et al. (2002) developed a conceptualization of emotions research in organizations. This conceptualization is based on the seminal work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) on sociological paradigms and organizational analysis. Callahan et al. (2002) divided their quadrants into power, interpretive, structure, and function to understand further the areas where emotions research has been researched.

![Figure 1 Conceptualizations of research on emotions](source: Callahan and McCollum (2002, p. 9))

These four paradigms are not mutually excluding, and thus allow for overlapping to create a more holistic approach. As I will later discuss in my study, the dimension of power became my focus. Therefore, emotion is seen as both subjective and emergent according to figure 1. A central question by Callahan and McCollum (2002, p. 11) is

> can organizations have heeded our [human resource development professionals] well-intentioned call in an attempt to package a resource in the name of profit?

This may follow a similar vein as that expressed by Martin et al., (1998) regarding the dark side of bounded emotionality (and possible emotional exploitation).

In terms of understanding emotions in organizations, there are biological and socio-cultural issues that influence emotional expression, management, and understanding. As mentioned above, the research agenda on emotions is also divided. Fineman (2010)
argues that recent attention on positivity in organizations (such as by POS researchers) has a “moral tonic” to it, which exaggerates human resource processes whose ultimate aim is to increase performance and production (p.23).

The (re)construction of people as ‘resources’ that is regarded as part of the problem, sending a strong message about the way individuals are to be defined, used and, if necessary, discarded (Fineman, 2010, p. 24).

From a more critical perspective, power (and powerlessness) becomes the focus. The narratives that form the identities within the organization are part of this power struggle (Fineman, 2010). Hence, emotions become tools for transmitting power as well as defining organizational knowledge. “Tempered radicals” is a concept coined by Meyerson and Scully (1995) and later used by, among others, Fineman (2010) to describe individuals who:

identify with and are committed to their organizations and are also committed to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and possibly at odds with the dominant culture of their organization (p.586).

These can use the aforementioned power struggles to instigate organizational change and have been used by POS scholars to encourage agency in positive organizational change (Golden-Biddle & Mao, 2012). However, this propagates the mainstream management agenda of “psychologising” emotion in organizations according to Fineman (2010). Thus, it would seem that by allowing “Other” narratives (or voices) to express emotion in organizations, a more comprehensive understanding of emotional use would emerge. The “silenced” employees experience emotions in a variety of ways (Bishop, Korczynski & Cohen, 2005; Fineman, 2010), creating important insights into the organizational life outside the managerial agenda.

In a similar line, Dustin (2007) and Ritzer (1993) look at the “McDonaldization”2 of organizations where structures, processes, and even emotions become standardized. Fineman (2010) uses a vivid example to portray this standardization in care organizations. He draws on studies by Carey (2007) and Dustin (2007) of UK social care workers that have shifted from individual casework towards managerialism (“care management”). Hence, social work practice becomes contextual, both structurally and politically, to fit into society’s push towards managerialism by focusing on the worker’s resilience to stress, coping mechanisms, and leadership issues instead of asking probing questions regarding the morality of the organization (Fineman, 2010). Therefore, through a critical perspective, organizations in sectors such as the social service sector may be fundamentally inept to function ethically in a consumer market driven society (Fineman, 2010). Therefore, important issues need to be considered on a larger scale of whose interests these organizations should follow.

Interestingly, much of the criticism regarding managerialism of emotions in organization has gone relevantly unnoticed until recently. A much referenced study by Mumby and Putnam (1992) on ‘Bounded Emotionality’ proposed a duality of emotions and rationality at work and argued against the dominant paradigm of the time that emotions were the opposite of cognition. However, Putnam and Mumby (1993) were critical to the use of rationalising (or bureaucratizing according to Gabriel, 2010) emotionality and found that:

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2 This term was introduced in “The McDonaldization of Society” where sociologist Ritzer (1993) famously presented McDonald’s as the par exemplar of how the over-rationalization of culture and society. See the glossary for further details.
through recruitment, selection, socialization and performance evaluations, organizations develop a social reality in which feelings become a commodity for achieving instrumental goals (1993, p. 27).

Also casting a critical perspective on the commoditization of emotions is the “ethics of care” discourse. This is comparable to Gilligan’s (1982) analysis of differences in the moral development of girls versus boys. Caring relationships are at the core for girls and this realization has influenced surprisingly few organizational theorists or sociologists (Gabriel, 2010). Consequently, occupations that involve care or service have traditionally been over-represented by the silenced or powerless (whether they are women or minorities) because this work is often undervalued in society (Gabriel, 2010). The literature on emotions in organizations seems to also support this argument as much is based on managing emotions in a rational way and how to cope with disturbing issues. Therefore, it seems that the broader societal factors remain (of how society deals with under-privileged sectors such as the aging, sick, or poor), and third sector organizations face a challenging task of making humanistic objectives fit with a rational, standardized, management agenda.

2.1.4. Emotions in nonprofits

As mentioned before, research on emotions in organizations is a relatively recent phenomenon that has shifted away from the more “rationalized” image of organizations. Most of the research done has focused on for-profit organizations, especially those service organizations that use high levels of emotional labour (see for example Hochschild 1983; Bolton, 2003). Eschenfelder (2012) lists the various “workers” that have been researched based on EL as “social workers (Meyerson, 2000), youth shelter workers (Karabanow, 1999), human rights activists (Taylor, Mallinson, & Bloch, 2008), domestic violence shelter workers and volunteers (Shuler, 2007), animal shelter volunteers (Taylor et al., 2008), peer providers of mental health services (Mancini & Lawson, 2009), and retirement centre workers (Miller, Zook, & Ellis, 1989)” (p.175).

She suggests that there is higher emotional involvement, especially EL, for workers in non-profit organizations (Eschenfelder, 2011; 2012). The reasoning being this is that the self-selection of non-profit employees create a strong bond to the organization’s values, based on their own personal motivation and values.

Their career choices are motivated by concerns such as working with people, helping to meet their needs, and making the world a better place to live. Such workers often go above and beyond the call of duty, even if it means increasing their emotional labour (Eisenberg & Eschenfelder, 2009, p. 940).

I could only find one study, by Eschenfelder (2011), which compared emotions and EL in nonprofits and for-profits. The study found that both contexts included similar, common felt emotions such as compassion, contentment, love/liking, joy, pride, anxiety, and frustration. What differed were the emotions of depression and anger in nonprofits and stress/tension and manipulation in for-profits (Eschenfelder, 2011). Thus, there is a slight difference in the contexts of felt emotions reported in for-profits and non-profits even though both settings can be high in emotional labour. With only one study looking at this issue, further research to make any generalizations of differences is needed. However, as emotions in organizational research are predominantly conducted on for-profits but practical implications also applied to nonprofits and third sectors, this could inherently institute a fallacy of comparisons. It
seems plausible to promote more research on how to manage emotions in both settings, but in terms of nonprofits, this research could go beyond the effect on employees and organizations and also include the social cost in terms of societal effects if, for example, adverse emotional issues are left unchanged. Nonprofits should be seen as viable cases for emotions research and not be generalized to fit with outcomes from for-profits or even third sector organizations. There could be differences, such as seen in Eschenfelder’s (2011) study. Also, as the population in many nonprofits is a mixture of paid and voluntary employees, this adds a dimension to investigating the contexts and felt emotions. In the animal shelter sector, for example, there is limited understanding to differences between paid employees and volunteers. I will discuss the implications this generalization has for understanding the emotional landscape within the organization closer in section 2.3.3. (Animal shelter studies). At this point, however, it is useful to note that there are studies on emotions in non-profit contexts, but these are generally limited to fully realize the unique composition of the actual organizations or the mixture of individuals working within them. Therefore, volunteer and paid employees are often lumped together in emotions research even though the management of, for example motivation between these two distinctly different groups of organizational members would surely warrant more explanation.

2.1.5. Summary of emotions in organizations

My theoretical framework for this thesis has, so far, discussed emotions in organizations and presented the key approaches – psychological, sociological and critical approaches to emotions. Investigating critical approaches to emotions suggests new ways to frame traditional issues such as emotional labour and coping-strategies. These approaches also urge researchers to consider nonprofits as interesting settings for emotions research rather than the traditionally explored service industries or for-profits. One gap identified from this review was that there are limited studies looking at the critical approach to emotions in organizations. A second gap found was to focus on nonprofits as a context for emotions research in a more discrete manner – acknowledging the uniqueness involved in choosing such organizations. Hence, my first research question is:

RQ1: In what ways do animal shelter workers cope with their emotions?

2.2. Theoretical framework #2: Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS)

Moving on from emotions in organizations, this section reviews the literature in Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS). There are multiple reasons why POS has been selected as a theoretical framework for my thesis. Firstly, POS is a relatively new field and organizational scholars have increasingly tried to implement a “positive” view on organizing, and how such a stance influences research in new ways. This lens seems interesting especially to test out in emotional contexts. Secondly, there is limited empirical work done on POS, especially from a critical aspect, which presents an opportunity to add to the emerging literature on POS. Therefore, I introduce the theory behind POS next and then sort the literature according to relevant themes. These themes are aggregates of research to date and, therefore, inform my theoretical framework for my project.
2.2.1. What is new about POS?

Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) claims to be a new lens, creating earlier invisible elements more visible. It is “the study of that which is positive, flourishing, and life-giving in organizations” (Cameron & Caza, 2004, p. 731). POS looks at understanding positive states such as resilience, meaningfulness, gratitude, and positive connections. Furthermore, it examines positive phenomena within organizations as well as positive organizational contexts themselves. This can be by creating “callings” instead of focusing on employee productivity, mitigating effects of downsizing, creating positive states of learning or stakeholder empowerment in public organizations, and leadership development. According to the key text that set the foundation for POS, it is seen as a scholarship because its concepts, relationships, and prescriptions rest on scientific methods (Cameron et. al., 2004). Furthermore, POS is specifically focused on the enablers (e.g. processes, capabilities, structures, and methods), the motivations (e.g. unselfishness, altruism, contribution without regard to self), and the outcomes or effects (e.g. vitality, meaningfulness, exhilaration, high-quality relationship) (Cameron et al. 2003; Cameron et al. 2004; Cameron et al. 2008).

Positive psychology, appreciative inquiry, community psychology, humanistic organizational behaviour, corporate social responsibility, organizational development, pro-social motivation, and citizen behaviour are all traditions that focus on positive phenomena (Cameron et al. 2003). In this way, POS recognizes that it is not unique; however, it looks to be a generative lens that links theories to organizational studies (Ibid). For example, POS can provide an expanded view of how organizations can create competitive advantage. Meaning creation, relationship transformation, positive emotion cultivation, and high-quality connections can all help organizations to thrive (Cameron et al. 2003). Therefore, POS is a conceptual foundation created for understanding how and why organizational strategies have certain effects on human behaviour in the workplace and why some strategies are more successful than others. There have been several articles discussing what POS is and what it is not. However, what the POS field does seem to agree on is that positive energy is “life-giving” (Cooperrider & Srivastra, 1987; Diener, 2009; Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). For this reason, within this project, POS is defined as having “a bias towards life-giving, generative, and ennobling human conditions regardless whether they are attached to traditional economic or political benefits” (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012, p. 4). Situating POS with this definition, I will in the next section present some of the themes from the current POS research which will inform my specific study. This section will does not present all POS themes to date because an undertaking, although interesting, does not add value to my study per se.

2.2.2. Themes in Positive Organizational Scholarship

The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012) is the “first major resource for scholars and professionals interested in learning about POS” (Cover). This text claims to be the seminal work of the POS field. Prior to the publication of this text, I had undergone a literature review of the field in 2010 through an ISI Web of Knowledge search based on three main texts within the field: Cameron and Caza (2004), Cameron et al., (2003), and Roberts (2006). At the time I found 22 peer-reviewed articles using these citations. I further updated this search in April 2013 and found 57 new articles matching the previous criteria (of referencing the three texts) 2009-2013. This showed a high increase in the number of articles published in POS. The scope had also increased in width as new themes and sub-
themes appeared in the newer search. The interesting new trends are around positive organizational and HR practices, using a positive lens for problems and challenges as well as the expansion potentials for POS. These all evolved after my study had taken place; however, they offer some theoretical insights that are worth mentioning. Next, I will briefly look at some of these sub-themes dealing with socialization, resilience, and critical movements in POS.

2.2.2.1. Socialization

The integrative socialization model enables organizations to function even when employees change (Ashforth, Sluss & Harrison, 2007). According to Ashforth, Myers and Sluss (2012), newcomers view this socialization process in positive terms and feel “exhilarated and energized by the novelty and challenges of a new work setting” (p.537). Hence, they find that this can induce “thrive” in organizations, which is one of the central factors of POS (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Newcomer proactivity also induces newcomer learning, adapting to the organizational requirements by self-directed questioning and role clarity (Ashforth, Myers, & Sluss, 2012). In this way, socialization models may explain the positive experience of newcomers to organizations who often are anxious at the onset of a new job but who soon find fulfilling rewards in the social contexts at work as well as learning new skills. On the other hand, this does not account for circumstances where newcomers expect a positive experience but are faced with damaging factors such as bullying, manipulation, and stress. Therefore, there is a gap regarding prosocially motivated newcomers who may face disillusionment upon realizing the realities involved in the work.

Prosocial motivation\(^3\) is an antecedent of social concern (Grant & Campbell, 2008). It is “desire to have a positive impact on other people or social collectives” or the desire to make a difference (Grant & Berg, 2012; 29). This challenges the assumption of employee’s being purely self-interested, recognizes that there are other-related goals that are important for employees (for instance, in regards to customers, communities, co-workers), and can serve to enhance meaningful connections in work (Grant & Berg, 2012). Prosocial motivation has been found to initiate positive “helping” behaviours and accept more readily negative feedback (Korsgaard, Meglino & Lester, 1997). These studies, along with positive occupational practices of organizational citizenship behaviour among temporary knowledge employees (Blatt, 2008), include a sense of “Other” focus. Prosocial motivation could be a precondition for resilience at work, although I found no literature making such a connection. Furthermore, it could be assumed that organizations that are very value-driven, such as nonprofits, could be suitable contexts for looking at prosocial motivation. This is a gap in the literature, which my study will investigate further.

2.2.2.2. Resilience

Resilience is a popularized term among practitioners and laymen alike and has occupied much public attention. This is also a popular issue among organizational scholars, traditionally those within the stress management field. However, recent interest is gained also among those interested in applying a positive lens on problems and challenges (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). Resilience is also a construct of a specific

\(^3\) This is not to be confused with the earlier concept related to “tempered radicals” which is proactive motivation and refers to making change happen.
part of POS called Positive Organizational Behaviour (POB) that has at its root Positive Psychological Capital (PsyCap) which essentially is made up of hope, optimism, and resiliency (Luthans, Luthans & Luthans, 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). PsyCap is defined as “a core psychological factor of positivity in general, and POB criteria meeting states in particular, that go beyond human and social capital to gain a competitive advantage through investment/development of ‘who you are’” (Luthans, Avolio, Walumba & Li, 2005, p. 253). Thus, PsyCap is a trait which affects performance positively (Avey, et al., 2006; Luthans & Jensen, 2005; Luthans, et al, 2005). The literature suggests that PsyCap can increase individual growth and performance, while organizations benefit from employing individuals with higher PsyCap because it “may provide leverage, return on investment, and competitive advantage through improved employee performance” (Luthans et al., 2005, p. 253). Other POS studies also focus on organizational performance such as the impact of pride on individuals (Verbeke et al., 2004), compassion on customer care (O’Donohoe & Turley, 2006), spirituality on customer satisfaction (Duchon & Plowman, 2005), and leadership responsibility as an organizational virtue (Bright et al., 2006) which, in turn, can affect performance positively (Cameron et al., 2004). Furthermore, studies show that there are aspects of positive relationships that directly affect performance (Gittell et al., 2006). For example, positive communication leads to better team performance (Losada & Heaphy, 2004) and valuing relationships can affect an organizational unit’s performance (Wooten & Crane, 2004). For that reason, it does seem that organizational performance is a central theme within many of the POS studies. With this in mind, resilience then becomes a way for organizations to improve performance. According to Caza and Milton (2012), resilience at work is defined as:

A developmental trajectory characterized by demonstrated competence in the face of, and professional growth after, experiences of adversity in the workplace (p. 896).

Adversity is seen as an event, which is experienced by the employee as disruptive. In this way, adversity is a very subjective experience (Caza, 2010). Some POS studies do recognize adversity as an important factor within POS. These studies show that failure can teach more than success (Ellis et al., 2006), career mobility does not necessarily effect organizational commitment (Pittinsky & Shih, 2004), and morale is fostered by meaningful work (Britt et al., 2007).

A similar construct to resilience is post-traumatic growth (PTG | Maitlis, 2012), which also deals with adversity that ends with an improvement in functioning. PTG involves transformational growth after a traumatic event, and although research within this area is limited, there are potential insights from individuals who face vicarious trauma at work on a regular basis and are, thus, at risk for PTSD (Maitlis, 2012). Interestingly, according to Maitlis (2012), meaning making is not enough to endure difficult situations. Instead, it is the re-evaluation of goals during adverse events that may be more important than keeping unrealistic old ones (Ibid.)

What can be said on the subject of resilience is that uncovering virtues and strengths, positive individual attributes and positive relationships all seem to contribute to individual resilience (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). There is recognition that challenging circumstances can generate positive organizational issues because of resilience. Individual traits, such as hopefulness, can increase an individual's performance and resilience to problems at work (Peterson & Byron, 2008; Peterson & Luthans, 2003). This is in line with hope theory (Snyder et. al., 2000), which describes individuals who have more hope achieve goals to a higher degree than those with less hope. Hence, the literature suggests that the cognitive abilities of individuals are important to the success of the organization. Peterson and Byron (2008) argue that this knowledge is useful in
recruitment situations as organizations can optimize the probability of high-performance through recruiting individuals with higher traits of hopefulness. Interestingly, this does not acknowledge the developmental process as part of resilience. This is something that my study will also investigate.

Psychological climates can also explain the unique variance of stress, affective well being, and performance (Rego & Cunha, 2007). A psychological climate differs from an organizational climate by its measurement while an organizational climate is the aggregation of individual perceptions on the organizational level. On the other hand, the psychological climate is the individual’s perception of the actions, structures, and events of the organization (Rego & Cunha, 2007). As situations may result in a variety of perceptions by different individuals, it is interesting to see how the individual psychological climates relate to wellbeing and, hence, performance. The “authentizotic” psychological climate influences employees to perform better. “Authentizotic” refers to the authentizotic theory as described by Frost (2003). The idea behind this theory is that organizations do not necessarily all lead to pain and suffering, but rather they can be sites to develop growth and meaning (Frost, 2003; Rego & Cunha, 2007). “Authentizotic” organizations have been linked to those that feature in different rankings such as “The Best Companies to Work For” (Rego & Cunha, 2007), and a key impact on such rankings is leadership. POS studies around leadership find that ethical leadership affects employee’s optimism of job continuation (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008), servant leadership may enhance performance and organizational commitment (Liden, Wayne & Zhao, 2008), spiritual leadership increases follower wellbeing, commitment, and productivity (Fry et al., 2005), emotional abilities affect leadership perception (Kellet, Humpphrey & Sleeth, 2006) and, finally, hopeful leaders lead to increased profit, employee retention, and satisfaction (Peterson & Luthans, 2003). Therefore, leadership impacts followers and their psychological climates as well as the organizational climate.

POS research further shows that individual's virtues, which are connected to resilience, can affect organizational action. This is evident in the studies by Giacalone et al. (2005), which were later extended in Andersson et al. (2007). These show that higher levels of hope and gratitude lead to increased social concern such as for corporate sustainable responsibility. However, hope and gratitude did not affect economic and quality issues in the organization. This means that hope and gratitude are only applicable when there are ethical or philanthropic responsibilities (Anderson et al., 2007), which suggests that these traits would be more important for value-driven organizations such as nonprofits. This conclusion has not been tested, however, but the research on hope and gratitude does connect it to social concern and, in turn, to higher resilience.

In a similar line, resilience is linked to a relation of the aforementioned concept of prosocial motivation. Service employees such as doctors or fire-fighters experience prosocial behaviour from surroundings when saving a patient and antisocial behaviour when losing somebody or causing harm (Grant et al., 2005). These negative feelings can lead to burnout and service employees have the highest percentage of burnout cases across occupational sectors (Maslach et al., 2001). However, findings show that well-being costs of harming others can be offset by the experience of benefiting others. In this way, positive experiences weigh more heavily on memories than negative ones, contradicting wide-held theory of the opposite. Instead, resilience and coping with stressors are induced through the positive experiences influencing wellbeing and job satisfaction. In summary, the enablers are the prosocial experiences that are motivated by serving and helping others.
2.2.3. Power and POS

Traditionally POS has been linked to a humanist, positivist agenda where universal knowledge is uncovered by investigating the “true nature of people” (Caza & Carroll, 2012, p. 966). According to Alvesson (2008), knowledge is privileged and, therefore, “truth” is a product of power. Critical theory offers a unique foundation where other critical perspectives can also be legitimately considered as part of the POS field (Caza & Carroll, 2012). Caza and Carroll (2012) combine POS with critical management studies (CMS) and suggest that, without a critical agenda, POS may have “nothing new to say” (p. 975). In order not to lose “its impetus for change and become obsolete”, POS needs to consider issues raised by critical theory (Caza & Carroll, 2012, p. 975). POS articles have mainly focused on economic profit as a performance indicator. As has been discussed above, in this section, most studies relate to an economic agenda with organizational profit and performance at its core.

Moreover, privileging management over employees has been widely criticized (Fineman, 2010), and only a few articles deviated from this. Three themes emerged from the study; firstly, how individuals can determine their outcomes (Roberts et al., 2005; Spreitzer et al., 2005); building positive employee relationships (Dutton et al., 2006; Spreitzer, 2007), and extending influence to alternative stakeholders (such as the community, families, and individuals) in attempts towards positive organizational change (Wooten & Crane, 2004; Wooten et al., 2005). Wooten et al., (2004) looked at nurse-midwives in a hospital who specifically had a “sense of calling” to do the challenging work. They found that the strong occupational socialization of being a nurse-midwife promoted a “collectivist and communal approach to work” (Wooten et al., 2004, p. 862). These findings supported the concept “renegades” (which seem to be similar to the “tempered radicals” of Meyerson & Scully, 1995). Such individuals (renegades or tempered radicals) fuel positive growth (Wooten et al, 2004). Thus, a critical perception of POS offers interesting opportunities for researchers who, like Alvesson, believe in:

> a moderate version of constructionism, some interest in ‘reality out there’, some in ideologies/discourses and subjectivity, plus some interests in the specifics and details of language...radical humanism with a clear postmodernist (poststructuralist) bent (2008, p. 17, as quoted in Caza & Carroll, 2012, p. 966).

A critical perspective can challenge the convention of what is considered meaningful work (which is the par exemplar of the thriving, life-giving phenomena of POS). Thompson and Bundeson’s (2009) study on zookeepers, for example, found that callings are essential parts of creating positive meaning at work. Their study relates to my theoretical foundation as they found that callings are double-edged swords that bind the zookeepers to what they consider their moral duty, thus exposing them to possible exploitation at work. On the other hand, callings also ennoble zookeepers to self-identify with the significance in their jobs (Thompson & Bundeson, 2009). This duality is under-researched within POS and is a central focus in my study. Hence, I seek to gain a better understanding of what contributes a critical stance on POS.

A further critical viewpoint of POS is that it generally only deals with positive issues, and there is a danger with the “tyranny of the positive attitude” which seems to have become a “zeitgeist” of North American culture today (Held, 2002). Keeping a happy face in times of despair and hopelessness have been attributed with the self-help explosion of “looking on the bright side” and if growth is not possible, it is the individual’s “personal moral failing” (Held, 2002, p. 987). This has been widely
criticized in Cultural Studies by for example, Sara Ahmed (2008), who argues that the idea of happiness:

involve[s] social as well as moral distinctions insofar as they rest on ideas of who is worthy as well as capable of being happy ‘in the right way’. Reading happiness is a matter of reading how happiness and unhappiness are distributed and located within certain bodies and groups (p.11).

In this way, happiness becomes dependent upon power – particularly those privileged with determining the discourse of what happiness in a society entails. As this critical stance to POS only became evident in the later stages of my study, I went into the field with little knowledge of such a power-struggle. However, as will be clear in later chapters, power is at the root of POS and was very much a part of understanding the emotional context as well as involved in the analysis of the organization. However, power as a concept, does not appear in the seminal book of Cameron and Spreitzer (2012) at all – an omission that in retrospect suggests its importance.

2.2.4. Summary of POS

As a new field within organizational studies, POS has received a lot of attention. However, there has been a relative accepting support from both practitioners as well as researcher to use positivity as an “antidote” to many challenges. Resilience training is today common in many work places as well as self-development. More attention is needed on POS from a critical perspective, calling into question some of its taken-for-granted perceptions (such as, for example, happiness). Thus, I will look at the double-edged sword (Thompson & Bundeson, 2009) that work callings may create. Hence, my second research question becomes:

RQ2: Which coping strategy does a POS lens offer animal shelter workers?

My study is one step to critically exploring POS’ application in a less studied context. Thus, I will now lay the foundation to understanding this context which links directly to the dirty work literature, a place less studied when it comes to positivity and privilege.

2.3. Theoretical framework #3: Dirty Work

So far, this literature review has discussed emotions in organizations and Positive Organizational Scholarship. Both fields are highly focused on psychological aspects and derived from psychology. However, as mentioned before, I take a more critical approach (Alvesson, 2008) where both psychology and sociology inform my project. The third, and last, stream of literature considered for my thesis is “Dirty Work”. The scholarly concept of dirty work is attributed to Everett C. Hughes in 1958, when he wrote the book “Men and their work” (Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark & Fugate, 2007). It has been widely used in sociology but seems a more unusual context for emotions in organizations studies. As far as I know, my study is the first to apply a critical POS lens on what is considered dirty work.

Within organizational studies, there has been several studies looking at dirty work specifically in the identity literature (see, for example, Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Kreiner, Ashforth & Sluss, 2006), in managerial literature

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4 The term “dirty work” can also be used in a colloquial manner today in society (Ashforth et al., 2007).
(Asforth, Kreiner, Clark & Fugate, 2007), in resource literature (Bergman & Chalkey, 2007; Baran, Rogelberg, Ropina, Allen, Spitzmüller & Bergman, 2012), and in the stress literature (see, for example, Rollin, 1986; Gohen & Willis, 1985). “Dirty work” is a social construct and may change over time and culture depending on the predominant social identification of a number of tainting factors. Dirty work is defined as occupations that have a physical, social, or moral taint (Ashforth et al., 2007) and, consequently, bears a stigma in the wider society (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Baran et al., 2012). According to these, physical taint is described as having work that deals with “dirty subjects” (such as issues that morticians, sanitation workers, and animal care attendants deal with), social taint comes from dealing with stigmatized populations (such as addicts, prisoners, poor), and moral taint comes from “performing work of a dubious nature” (p. 65) such as exotic dancers and debt collection (Baran et al., 2012). Stigmatization of those who do “dirty” work has been the focus on most research on the matter, in this way, taking an occupational perspective on the issue (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

Within the dirty work literature, there has been research on occupational groups as diverse as miners (Lucas, 2011) and exotic dancers (Grandy, 2008). In both, self-categorization processes were significant in how the dirty workers regarded and felt about their work. These self-categories resulted from individual, relation, and social identities both formed within organizations as well as from the outside social environment (Lucas, 2011). In a way, it is a combination of social categorization and self-categorization that constructs identity. Consequently, social categorization is an important facet in understanding dirty work and how dirty workers make sense of their work.

Dirty work occupations can be classified according to the physical, social, and moral taint as well as to the occupational prestige (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Status, power, education, income, and quality of work “buffers” some occupations from social tainting and, therefore, offers either a lower or higher occupational prestige (Treimann, 1977; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). For example, judges enjoy higher status than many of the other dirty occupations. Thus, they have the power to use privileged deviance as a way to manage their emotions (Scarduzio, 2011). Lower status professions may not have self-directed ways of managing conflicting emotions, thus creating emotional dissonance.

The classification of taint, although somewhat outdated, represents stigmatized occupations and how they can be seen as “tainted” in the three ways. Occupations can also include multiple levels of tainting; for instance, a combination of physical and moral taints that prostitutes may encounter (Grandy, 2008). Furthermore, this taint can have an enduring effect which remains after individuals leave dirty work. Bergman & Chalkey (2007, p. 251) call this process “stickiness”, where individuals retain a “mark” of having tainting even after they have left the occupation. Observers or “others” that have not been involved in the “dirty work” often see those involved in such occupations as “dirty people” as:

most people believe that workers choose their work, so that the work that people do appears to provide an insight into who they are...dirty people...a belief that is likely to persist even after dirty workers no longer are in their dirty jobs (Bergman & Chalkey, 2007, p. 252).

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This refers to findings by Scarduzio (2011) who found that judges used their positions in the courtroom to break certain professional “feeling rules” (of how a judge “should” feel), such as expressing anger instead of being “emotionless”.
Among others, Hulin (2002) and Dawis (1991) found that societies based on individualist values (such as the US and Australia) mostly see job choices as revealing important aspects of an individual’s interests and motivation – for this reason, these are key indicators of their values (Bergman & Chalkey, 2007). Therefore, a negative social evaluation of occupations such as dirty work often leads to harassment, discrimination, and prejudice as well as creating “in-groups” (the dirty workers) and “out-groups” (non-dirty workers) (Bergman & Chalkey, 2007). A gap here appears to be that there may be intragroup motivational differences among the dirty workers. As seen by the self-categorization processes of the miners and exotic dancers mentioned above, there are different processes that dirty workers use to make sense of their work by socially categorizing it in comparison to others. But do all dirty workers in a group ascribe to the same categories or roles? In a similar vein, Kreiner et al. (2006) have found that there is a difference to how dirty-work stigma affects individuals.

Dirty work literature recognizes that negative experiences of dirty work can be “reframed” in a more positive light. This “reframing” can be done by, for example, ascribing to ulterior motives (for example, limited education, pressing need for money, financial downturns, proving for the family) thus limiting stickiness (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Miller & Major, 2000; Puhl & Brownell, 2007; Bergman & Chalkey, 2007). There has also been investigation into how stigmatization of former dirty workers presents challenges in applying for non-dirty work roles (Bergman & Chalkey, 2007). In this way, there are some issues that seem to “stick” with dirty workers even after they leave dirty work, implying that the “dirtiness” is somehow inherent not only for the work-role but also in the actual individual.

Hence, “dirty work” needs to be positioned into the scholarly context, specifically as originally meant by Hughes (1958) as work tasks that are “physically, socially or morally” tainted (p.122). From a power perspective, individuals who do dirty work are considered less powerful (or “lower class”) in society. The reasoning being that individuals would not chose to do dirty work if they had other alternatives. This stereotype relates directly to my study as I am applying a POS lens to the context (positivity being a more privileged asset). In the next sections, central questions that relate to the contextual situation of my study are discussed. Namely, what are some ways of normalizing dirty work (2.3.1)?, what is the impact of the employment relationship (2.3.2)?, and what findings focus on similar context within an animal shelter (2.3.3)?

### 2.3.1. Making sense of doing Dirty Work

Ashforth et al. (1999; 2007) suggests that there are important normalizing tactics that dirty workers use. These are occupational ideologies, social buffers, confronting clients and the public, defensive tactics (Ashforth et al., 2007), and habituation/desensitization over time (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2002).

Firstly, dirty worker managers use **occupational ideologies**. They reframe tainted issues by focusing on the positive aspects of their job. They also recalibrate meaning by adjusting the importance of tasks to reflect the more positive issues. Finally they refocus attentions to non-stigmatized issues of their work (Ashforth et al., 2007).

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6 This study was done on dirty work managers and, therefore, may not be representational of other organizational levels.
Secondly, dirty work managers use **social buffers** to see themselves through the eyes of others (Ashforth, 2001). Cliques of colleagues would become friends and many had been socialized through family/relative occupational choices that lessened the taint. In this way, “in-groups” create social buffers against “out-groups” and form social support in their “localized cocoon” (Ashforth et al., 2007; 160).

Thirdly, dirty work managers **confronted clients and public perceptions** as a normalizing tactic (Ashforth et al., 2007). They confronted public perspectives by explaining specific issues or focusing on generalized occupational ideology. They also used self-deprecating humour to normalize their work. Furthermore, they confronted client perceptions of taint or the client’s behaviour that led to taint by changing their own or the clients’ behaviour to be more desirable.

Moreover, the managers used a range of **defensive tactics** that limit the taint of the dirty work similar to the coping tactics of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The transactional model of coping from 1984 focuses on the imbalance of stressors and an individual’s way to manage these stressors; thus, spanning a wealth of stress management and well-being literature. In dirty work, there were normal coping tactics that had limited effects on the actual taint such as physical exercise, venting, respites, social support, and drugs/alcohol (Ashforth et al., 2007). Avoiding behaviour served as a behavioural tactic to limit contact with the taint. Gallows’ humour also helped to avoid the taint and make light of the situation. Accepting limitations and social comparisons were cognitive tactics. Social comparisons with others “worse off” situated their position in a better light (Lucas, 2011). Also, condemning the condemners was a tactic used by exotic dancers (Grandy, 2008; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), and managers did the same by dismissing condemners as ignorant (Ashforth et al., 2007). Furthermore, the tactic could be a combination of behavioural and cognitive issues where blame and distance are used to alleviate taint (Grandy, 2008; Ashforth et al., 2007).

In other studies (Arluke, 1991; Ashforth & Kreiner, 2002), habituation or desensitization is a way to limit taint. Being detached has been suggested to prevent burnout (Lief & Fox, 1963) but may also lead to negative issues such as blaming (Ashforth et al., 2007). Hence, these normalizing tactics serve dirty workers with limiting the taint of their work and offering a more positive social identity than otherwise. There are also measures that organizations use to normalize events. Briefly (as these are on a macro-level), according to Ashforth & Kreiner (2002), these include the following: **diffusing** undesired emotions, **reframing** emotions/situations, **adapting** to repeated exposure, and **ritualism** to create standardized procedures. Organizations instil emotional labour and emotional regulation through neutralizing, buffering, prescribing, and normalizing (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). Therefore, there are tactics and ways organizations can limit taint thus creating a less conflicted social identity for the dirty worker.

Accordingly, individuals on lower levels in the organizational hierarchy often conduct dirty work. As a result, industrial and employment issues become more prevalent to protect those employees with less power from exploitation. In the next section, I look at the psychological contract as an important factor in particularly dirty work contexts and how a breach can influence employees.
2.3.2. The psychological contract of “meaning –creation”

Even though there have been several studies looking at the positive relations at work (Dutton & Ragins, 2007), POS has not considered the employment relation of the employee-employer. Within the POS critique, there is the point that POS deals only on a managerial level, consequently propagating the power imbalance in organizations. Issues in employment relations such as the employment contract level this imbalance. Therefore, it is worth noting that there seems to be a gap within POS on issues of imbalance within the working relationship.

One issue that has gained momentum in recent years regarding this imbalance is the psychological contract. The psychological contract is defined as:

[An individual’s beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party. Key issues here include the belief that a promise has been made and a consideration offered in exchange for it, binding the parties to some set of reciprocal obligations (Rousseau, 1989, p. 123).

This unwritten contract includes transactional (money), relational (friendship), and ideological rewards (O'Donohue & Nelson, 2007). Most of the literature deals with the psychological contract from a transactional (what’s in it for me) and relational perspective (what’s in it for us). However, nonprofits often attract staff based on their ideological alignment. Therefore, ideological rewards become vital and a breach in this part of the contract may be more serious than in non-value-based organizations. The limited research done on the ideological breach in the psychological contract deals with professional employees such as doctors (Bundeson, 2001), nurses, and knowledge workers (O'Donohue et al., 2007) breaching these contracts. Dirty work situations have, to the best of my knowledge, not been investigated in regards to breaching the psychological contract. Furthermore, as the ideological “currency” in the psychological contract is relatively unknown, there have been few studies overall that focus on this particular breach. In consequence, nonprofits know very little regarding the impact such seemingly important issues have on the employees or even the overall organization. As a result, my study will explore this issue, taking one step to fill this gap by focusing on the emotional experience of being an animal shelter worker and how the psychological contract affects the employee.

2.3.3. Research on animal shelters

Human-Animal Studies\(^7\) has developed as an interdisciplinary field where human-animal relationships are being critiqued (Potts, 2010). Many are from critical, feminist (more specifically an ecofeminist) perspective, questioning the dominant discourse of Otherness and their treatment. In “Considering Animals: Contemporary Studies in Human-Animal Relations”, this relationship is discussed in terms of image (art), ethics, and agency (Freeman, Leane & Watt, 2011). According to Bekoff (2011, p. xiv), “scholars as well as those who work for animals outside of the ivory tower can have an impact transforming attitudes toward animals”, but there is an acknowledgement that “there is long-held resistance to anything but human priorities in mainstream academia.” This has limited the inclusion of animals in academic work, especially within organizational studies. However, animals are a part of many organizations, whether as clients (such as in veterinary practices), products and producers (such as in

\(^7\) This term was developed by Ken Shapiro and signifies the relational focus of the field on the human and animal.
food, clothing, and furniture industry), objects (such as in the entertainment industry), substitutes (such as in the animal testing/medical industry), or resources (such as in the tourist industry). Animals are silenced in these organizations due to specicism where verbal communication is privileged and humans are superior with socially ascribed higher values/importance. Yet, when studying organizations, this omission of animals is vital to recognize, as, how can organizations be understood without acknowledging the interests of non-human interests that are part of the organization?

Slaughterhouse (or abattoir) studies focus on how animal death is organized on a large scale (Hamilton & Taylor, 2013). Many of these studies discuss repressive employee issues such as affects of globalization, labour processes, and politics (Goveia & Juska, 2002). Others have found a link between violence and slaughterhouse proximity (and involvement) of individuals (Fitzgerald, Kalof & Dietz, 2007). Arluke and Sanders (1996) found that persons who worked at abattoirs saw livestock intended for slaughter as “deanthroporphized, becoming lesser beings or objects that think few thoughts, feel only the most primitive emotions, and experience little pain” (p. 173). In this way, workers framed the animals in a light that made it more acceptable to kill them for food. Wilke (2010) found that livestock farmers also detached themselves from the animals organizing their work according to “commercial realism” where they were just doing their jobs. Wilke also separates the hobby farmer who framed the livestock as having led a better life than the factory-farmed counterparts, as less tainted in working in the slaughter process. These studies are important in understanding the conflict workers in the animal food industry face on a daily basis, and how they organize their identity to support their actions. Interestingly, there was a strong gender divide in which livestock farmers kept. For example, beef-cattle production was considered a masculine food-product while sheep where more feminized (Wilke, 2010). It seems that the “feeling-rules” of Hochschild (1983) and emotional labour is regulating the type of animal and how this animal is kept (i.e. factory-farming is masculinised and detached while hobby farmers are more about caring for the animals on a small scale). This shift towards a more masculine production form has seen the commoditization of food animals, where the sentient value is minimized and the production value (profit) is maximized. This is a shift from the older-generation farmer who Wilke (2010) found used a drastically different narrative to animal production than today’s farmer.

A shift has also occurred on the domestic animal front in terms of how pets are kept and regarded in society. Animals are increasingly viewed as part of the family in Australia (Franklin, 1999; 2007). For example, dogs and cats have greater access today in homes as opposed to the mid-twentieth century. Before pets were largely kept outdoors in Australia while today 75% allow pets indoors and 50% allowed their pets on furniture and in the bedroom (Franklin, 2007). This shows a shift of perception where qualitative work from the same report found that pets are increasingly regarded as substitute children (Franklin, 2007). Hence, extending the definition of compassion to include pets would be natural. On the other hand, pet overpopulation is a massive problem in Australia indicating that there is still a perception by individuals of pets as “disposable”. According to Rohlf and Bennett (2005), 76% of the animals euthanized in Australian animal welfare shelters are killed because they are unwanted (and not based on medical reasons).

There have been limited studies within an animal shelter context. The earliest, most prominent study by Arluke (1991) provided some insights regarding “moral stress” that shelter employees involved in euthanasia suffer from. This has further been discussed as the “caring-killing paradox” (Arluke, 1994; Arluke & Sanders, 1996). This refers to the daily conflict between
deal occupational selves (protectors and caretakers of nonhuman animals) and the reality of having to kill healthy – but unwanted- nonhuman animals (Rogelberg et al., 2007, p. 332).

Similarly, other studies have reported on the negative physical and psychological issues among shelter staff (Arluke, 1991; 1992; 1994; Fogle & Abrahamson, 1990; Frommer & Arluke, 1999; Hart & Mader, 1995; Owens, Davis & Smith, 1981; White & Shawhan, 1996). This moral stress induced by this caring-killing paradox has been linked to adverse health issues such as high blood pressure, ulcers, unresolved grief, depression, substance abuse, and suicide among shelter workers who perform euthanasia (Rogelberg et al., 2007).

Shelter workers also find themselves dealing with traumatized beings, and there is an increasing recognition that compassion fatigue may be more prevalent among shelter workers than commonly acknowledged (Taylor, 2010). About 50% of shelter staff that are involved with the euthanasia process develops posttraumatic stress disorders (PTSD), and the staff turnover rate is directly proportional to the euthanasia rate (Rand, 2011). Although PTSD develops as a result of ongoing extreme stress (APA, 2000), there is also secondary traumatic stress disorder that has been found to affect therapists (Catherall, 1999), as well as compassion fatigue (Figley, 1995, 1999), which has been researched as burnout among nurses (Sommer, 2008). Furthermore, vicarious trauma is a concept which also encompasses “toxicity” of working with clients who themselves have been traumatized, as an “occupational hazard” (Sommer, 2008, p. 62).

Animal shelter employees often chose their work due to a high affection to animals (Reeve, Rogelberg, Spitzmuller & Digiacomo, 2005). This self-selection creates a highly emotional context out of animal shelters. Thus, it could be argued that emotional management is of particular interest in such groups and how individuals cope with the conflicting moral stressors. Social support and lengths of time working with animals were predictors of this stress (Rohlf & Bennett, 2005). Similarly, Baran et al. (2012) found that the frequency of engaging in euthanasia, along with the psychological salience, impacted how individuals felt negatively affected by euthanasia. The shelter study found that the higher levels of euthanasia (the dirty task) created higher levels of job involvement. However, it also found that this created less job satisfaction, higher levels of physical symptoms and negative wellbeing, and a reluctance to discuss work with outsiders (Baran et al., 2012). This limitation of sharing dirty task emotions with others also restricted maintaining and developing social relationships outside of work. According to Ashforth & Kreiner (1999), dirty tasks can lead to simultaneous dissatisfaction and meaningfulness. In light of this, Baran et al., (2009) suggests further training in euthanasia as well as training in emotional management.

Emotional contagion is a shared social process where emotional states are shared in a group (Hatfield et al., 1994). In organizational literature, Barsade (2002) showed how emotion contagion occurs in groups and teams while Bono and Ilies (2006) found emotion contagion to be a central concept in leadership-followership relationships; “…walking mood inductors,’ continuously influencing the moods and then the judgments and behaviours of others” (Barsade, 2002, p. 667). These influences are important to note, especially in contexts that have a high degree of emotionally involved individuals.

Other issues studied in animal shelters are the creation of personhood, personality, and mindedness of the animals (Taylor, 2007; Sanders, 1995). For example, in Taylor’s
study on animal sanctuaries, employees used several techniques creating personhood of the animal (such as naming the animals). However, Taylor’s ethnographical study had her working as a volunteer at a small animal shelter in the UK that had a no-kill policy. There are significant differences to working in “no-kill” shelters that regulate intake and restrict euthanasia, and regular “kill” shelters. A heated ongoing debate has resulted between the two models (kill or no-kill) of animal shelters. Winograd (2007) makes a compelling case for the no-kill movement in his book while critiques (PETA) claim No-Kill blame shelter workers of indifference and incomplete understanding of pet overpopulation. Acknowledging this debate can help frame some of the previous research on animal shelters. Therefore, it is worth noting that there are differences in work tasks (euthanasia) among different types of shelters.

In the same study, she looks at the emotional management, specifically anger and frustration among the staff directed at the general public and animal abuse (Taylor, 2010). Anger and frustration have previously been labelled as “hard” masculine emotions, while compassion is seen as a “soft” feminine emotion (Martin et al., 1998). In Taylor’s study, she found that compassion for animals was the primary reason for volunteering at a shelter but that animal shelter workers also felt anger while at work (Taylor, 2004; 2010).

The national context of animal shelter work also plays a factor in how the work is organized. There are similarities to shelter work across western countries, even though national regulations and animal cultures vary. Animal shelter-work in the U.S. (Rogelberg et al., 2005; Baran et al., 2012), in Canada (see, for example, Turner, Berry & McDonald, 2012), and Australia (see, for example, Mournement, Coleman, Toukhatsi & Bennett, 2010) all report similar issues affecting the employees. However, no cross-national studies of animal shelter work have been found, and, for this reason, this could be something worth investigating in the future. For the purpose of this study, insights from all Anglo-Saxon societies seem viable as a theoretical foundation. However, it is worth noting that there are many geographical, climate, and slight cultural differences among the nations that may affect some organizational differences.

One of the most controversial issues in the animal shelter context is euthanasia based on animal behaviour assessment. This entails shelter employees to make a behavioural assessment of the animal (whether to euthanize animals with behavioural issues or to place animals for adoption if considered “safe”). Animal shelters use different measurements of determining this “adoptability” (or “suitability”) of animals. In a study by Mornement et al. (2010), Australian animal shelter behavioural assessment protocols were reviewed. The study found that none of the assessments used have been adequately analyzed in peer-reviewed literature, thus calling into question the reliability and validity of the tests (Martin & Bateson, 1993). The tests used also had a lack of standardization in content, methodology (Taylor & Mills, 2006), and focus (Mornement et al., 2010). One of the most common behavioural assessment tests used was the “Amy Marden’s Dog Behavioural Evaluation” as outlined in Dowling-Guyer, Marder, and D’Arpino (2010). The study by Mornement et al., (2010) revealed the surprising outcome that experience was not correlated with confidence in their behavioural assessment tests or confidence in correctly assessing dogs. Shelter staff

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8 Sanctuaries differ from shelters usually in size (they are smaller), form (many are independent) and using a no-kill policy.
involved in assessing dogs had limited training in using the tests with a majority only having had on-the-job training (Mournement et al., 2010). Nonetheless, shelter staff are still required to decide on the fate of a dog based on:

- inadequate training,
- potentially invalid assessment protocols,
- and subjective interpretations of behaviour in which they have limited confidence...shelter staff members decide whether dogs live or die and which dogs are released into the community (Mornement et al., 2010, p. 326).

This results in higher staff turnover (Rand, 2011), as well as staff exhibiting traumatic stress symptoms (Mornement et al., 2010; Rohlf & Bennett, 2005).

In addition to these limitations for shelter staff, the literature reports how the non-human animals are negatively affected in shelter conditions increased levels of cortisol stress hormone levels (Tuber et al., 1999). The stress and anxiety among the dogs can develop into serious behavioural problems (such as separation anxiety) and link to early primate studies of deprivation (Tuber et al., 1999). Furthermore, in a German shelter study, it was found that the adverse stereotypical behaviours were reduced when dogs were group-housed as opposed to single-housed (Mertens & Unshelm, 1996). The subjective interpretations and limited training of behavioural assessment testing is only one example of a controversial issue involved in animal shelter work for the individual employee. With these studies in mind, how do employees manage emotions around such contentious issues?

2.3.4. Summary of Dirty Work

The third, and final, stream of literature considered for my thesis is on dirty work. I started this section by explaining how the literature defines dirty work tasks as “physically, socially or morally” tainted (Hughes, 1958, p. 122). Individuals who do dirty work use a variety of strategies to manage this social stigma and reframe their actions. Moreover, individuals who do dirty work are generally lower level employees in organizations. This may lead to an unequal positioning for such employees in regards to social status and opportunity to employee voice. Therefore, employment relation issues such as the psychological contract are noteworthy. Another issue to note was the limited tools and strategies available for employees (emotional as well as operational) to manage the dirty tasks of specifically animal shelter work where there are multiple areas of taint. Overall, the literature revealed that individuals cope with Dirty Work through creating occupational ideologies, social buffers, confronting clients and the public, defensive tactics and habituation/desensitization over time. Yet, little is mentioned in regards to extreme situations such as moral conflict that animal shelter workers face in regards to euthanasing the animals they want to save. Therefore I ask the following third research question:

RQ3: How does moral conflict affect dirty workers?
2.4. Conclusions of the theoretical framework

This chapter has reviewed literature on, firstly, emotions in organizations, secondly, Positive Organizational Scholarship, and, thirdly, Dirty Work. I have discussed some issues from these fields as they relate to my specific context and the following discussion. My review found the following main points from each field:

1. Emotion in organization literature:
   - emotional labour has been extensively studied in the service industry to explain the emotional repression of felt emotions versus expressed emotions.
   - The literature shows that employees use different coping mechanisms to manage emotional disconnect in work situations.
   - there are limited studies looking at a critical approach to emotions in organizations.
   - few studies focus on nonprofits as a context for emotions research.

In light of these issues, my first research question asks: *In what ways do animal shelter workers cope with their emotions?*

2. Positive Organizational Scholarship literature:
   - one-way to frame an emotional work event is to portray it in a positive light.
   - Positive Organizational Scholarship is the, relatively, new study of looking at the positives in challenging work tasks and, thus, finding ways to cope in organizations.
   - POS recognizes that there are difficulties in some cases to coping with emotional issues at work, such as the “double-edged sword” for zookeepers.
   - work meaningfulness can also be limited to an individual’s coping process.

Therefore, my second research question asks: *Which coping strategy does a POS lens offer animal shelter workers?*

3. Dirty Work literature:
   - dirty work tasks have a social stigma and taint which can be physical, social or moral.
   - the literature acknowledges a variety of coping mechanisms that dirty work employees use to make sense of their work. However, little is said in terms of extreme work situations involving moral conflict.

Hence, my third research question asks: *How does moral conflict affect dirty workers?*

These three research questions are all focused around understanding the context of an animal shelter. In this context, there is a socially constructed silence to deal with
emotions, yet they must exist. Animal shelter work is dirty work on all three levels of taint (physical, social and moral), where employees face a unique challenge, to manage emotions from wanting to save animals, yet faced with the task of killing them. Therefore, throughout this thesis, I not only attempt to answer my theoretical research questions identified in this chapter, but I also endeavour to contribute to the larger societal issue of questioning how we, as a society, deal with silenced beings.
3 MY PERSPECTIVE ON KNOWLEDGE AND HOW TO UNDERSTAND MY STUDY

Denzin and Lincoln (1994; 2000) have analysed the transformation and development of qualitative research into “moments” (for an overview, see, May, 2002). These moments follow “the lone fieldworker” of the early 1900s to the development of research today that is “simultaneously minimal, existential, autoethnographic, vulnerable, performative, and critical (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1048). According to Lincoln and Denzin (2000), there is an increasing significance placed on:

making ourselves visible in our texts - not one future but many, not one ‘moment’, but rather many; not one ‘voice’, but polyvocality; not one story, but many tales, dramas, pieces of fiction, fables, memories, histories, autobiographies, poems and other texts to inform our sense of life ways, to extend our understanding of the Other, to provide us with the material for cultural critique (pp. 1053-1060).

My study follows these goals as a critical yet layered account of animal shelter work. In this chapter, I present the methodological underpinning of my research, which is mainly informed by a social constructionist viewpoint. I have considered the various ways that emotion research in organization has been communicated and found that it has largely taken the traditional research report. Hence, in this thesis I attempt through alternative means to answer the following methodological research question:

RQ4: How can emotions from the field be communicated?

To explore this research question, I use crystallization, which is a methodology based on a social constructionist stance (Ellingson, 2009; Polsa, 2013a, b). This chapter explains my understanding of crystallization as a viable methodology for my specific research aims outlined in 2.4. By applying this methodology (crystallization) to my study, I explore alternatives to traditional social constructivist research.

To probe deeper into understanding the conflicting emotional issues that employees face in their work, I have chosen a charity organization with a specific research context: an animal shelter. As an animal lover myself, I wonder how can employees who want to save animals contend with euthanizing them on a daily basis? As my research organization is unusual for organizational studies, I argue that ethnography is appropriate to understand the complexities of the context and hidden issues by becoming a complete member. To further stimulate understanding of the context and my participation, I use an alternative methodology called “crystallization” to represent my findings. I argue that using crystallization may uncover hidden issues that are vital to understanding and managing these types of organizations. But to understand the positioning of my study, brief discussions of my ontological and epistemological underpinnings are first warranted.

3.1. My ontology and epistemology

According to the classic paradigmatic analysis by Burrell and Morgan (1979), I position myself as “The Radical Humanist”. This stance looks to develop sociology of radical change from a subjectivist standpoint (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The radical humanist is anti-positivist, and the social world is seen as relative and can only be understood from the individuals who are directly being studied.
The radical humanist is ideographic. The social world can only be understood through first-hand knowledge of the subject under investigation by “getting inside” through diaries, biographies, and journalistic records. There is a critique of the status quo and aims at overthrowing the existing social world. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), the radical humanist sees a wedge of “alienation” and “false consciousness” between humans and their true consciousness, which is dominated by superstructures in the social world. This, in turn, creates an emphasis on radical change, modes of domination, emancipation, deprivation, and potentiality. The human consciousness is very central and looks to change the social world through a change in modes of cognition and consciousness.

My epistemology also follows the classical text of Berger and Luckmann (1967) on the social construction of reality. They contend that “the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality” (p.15). Although there are no explicit recommendations regarding methods, ethnography by nature involves interpretation (Prus, 1996). Furthermore, according to Michelle Fine (1994, p. 6), “activism stance” is where the ethnographer takes a clear position and advocates exposure of hegemonic practices. In this way, ethnography can be both concerned with the construction of society as well as a critical way to uncover the underlying discourses that the context is constructed though.

Referring back to my theoretical framework, positive organizational scholarship has mainly been framed through positivist research but recently calls have been made to expand it to critical theory (Caza & Carroll, 2012). This, along with the sociologically constructed context of “dirty work”, would require an epistemological positioning that sees knowledge as situated in the “lived experience”. Hence, the ethnographic method is used in this study.

3.2. Troubling the comfortable and comforting the troubled

According to Van Maanen (2010), the key goal of ethnography is to “trouble the comfortable and comfort the troubled” (p. 340). In this way, ethnography has a social purpose that transcends the context and theory it is based upon. Ethnography, as a research method has been around for a century and sociologists list Goffman’s “Asylums”, Lynd’s “Middletown”, and White’s “Street Corner Society” as seminal ethno-graphic work (Gobo, 2008). Ethnography comes from anthropology, originally as a way to study cultures and societies. In organizational research, there have been a variety of ethnographies on everything from Balinese cockfighting (Geertz, 1972), routine at McDonald’s (Leidener, 1993), police street patrols (Van Maanen, 1973), technicians at Xerox in the 1980s (Orr, 1996), working in a confections factory (Kondo, 1990), and corporate culture in a high-tech organization (Kunda, 2006). Yet in terms of conducting ethnography within nonprofits (as part of organizational studies), there are a limited amount of ethnographies. The exact scope of how many ethnographies there are in this field remains open to debate, depending how “organizational studies” and “nonprofits” are defined.

Critical ethnography is based on the ontology of “what is out there to know” but seeks to reveal the underlying power structures of society (Thomas, 1993, pp. 33-49). As oppression is often based on taken-for-granted assumptions of the social world, triangulation can be one way, according to Denzin (1978), to minimize incorrect ethnographical conclusions. According to Hammersley & Atkinson,
What is involved in triangulation is not the combination of different kinds of data per se, but rather an attempt to relate different sorts of data in such a way as to counteract various possible threats to the validity of our analysis (1983, pp. 198-9).

As will be evident in the section below on crystallization, I do not adhere to the normal usage of triangulation as I do not follow the notion of a “fixed truth” that needs to be verified and uncovered by a variety of methods. In this way, it is useful here to note that triangulation is defined as “an attempt to get closer to the truth by bridging together multiple forms of data and analysis to clarify and enrich a report on a phenomenon” (Ellingson, 2009, p. 22). Therefore, triangulation seeks to uncover a truth, while crystallization presupposes that there is no fixed truth “out there” to uncover (ibid).

Thus, I recognize that the critical ethnography of my study is “inherently partial, situated and contingent” (ibid), which is derived from my position of knowledge as socially constructed and also informed by the postmodern understanding of multiple realities. In this way, I situate myself between the art/impressionist and middle-ground approaches on the qualitative continuum (Ellingson, 2009; also in Denzin et al., 2011). Using a continuum reflects a shift away from positioning oneself into a tight-fitted stance to one that is more fluid and flexible allowing research to have fewer constraints than one based on duality. My ethnography uses autoethnography. This is part of the “layered account” of my study as the fieldwork was done two years before the write-up, allowing time for reflection as well as detachment from the highly emotional diary-entries. ‘Leaving the field’ will be further discussed later on in this thesis.

3.2.1. The “Me, myself and I” in research

As mentioned above, the main method in my study is autoethnography. Autoethnography as a term is traced to Hayano (1979) who acknowledges that there is a wide array of ethnographies that could be thought of as autoethnographies. The similarities among these are that the “researchers possess the qualities of often permanent self-identification with a group and full internal membership, as recognized both by themselves and the people of whom they are a part” (Hayano, 1979, p. 100). But today, there is a wider variety of the uses and meanings of autoethnography “that makes precise definition difficult” (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 449). In my research, I follow the definition set by Ellis (2004, p. xix): “autoethnography is research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political”. In this way, autoethnography is a very personal process and method that includes both benefits (such as access), but also limitations in terms of being emotional or “sentimentalist” (Hayano, 1979). In my study, I had to become a full member for the practical benefit of access, as my attempts to gain access as an outsider failed repeatedly. Using autoethnography as a method became a way for me to make sense of the experience and evolve more organically than as a strategically thought-out method.

According to Parry and Boyle (2009), there is no specific, clear definition of organisational autoethnography. However, they identify different writing genres and approaches in autoethnography that can be used when researching organisations. As autoethnographies are highly “personalised accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding” (Sparkes, 2000, p. 21), it can be argued that the reflexivity of autoethnography allows the researcher to intimately connect the personal to the cultural of an organisation. Hence, using autoethnography in researching organizations can create “some of the richest and most original data available to organisational researchers” (Parry & Boyle,
Autoethnography is largely a reflexive process. Reflexivity allows for a deeper understanding of the topic and can voice issues which otherwise would be difficult to explore in more traditional qualitative research. For example, in sociology, autoethnography has been used to deepen understanding on sensitive issues such as abortion (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), erotic dancing (Rambo Ronai, 1998), and the sudden death of a brother (Ellis, 1993). For these reasons, I suggest that this method can also cultivate understanding on sensitive issues in organisations. Within organisational studies, there have been attempts at using this method. Recent examples include Hayes’ study (2006) that deals with the identity construction of motherhood and being an accountant; Karra and Phillips’ study (2008) that reflects on doing research on communities in which they are members; Parry’s study (2007) on leadership; and Jago’s (2002) study on depression in an organisation. Other research veins that expose sensitive issues are, for example, research on “memory work” (see, for example, Widerberg, 2011; Bryant & Livholts, 2007), which focuses on how memories dominate or are oppressed. These studies revealed aspects of organisational life, which would have been difficult to capture through more traditional methods. The personal reflective understanding of the topics in these studies by the authors becomes vital to transcend knowledge of the issues to the reader. Personal experience creates a high level of authority of the topics at hand and is an accepted form of generating knowledge. For example, Parry and Boyle (2009) find that reliability in research, whether based on a small number (such as N=1\(\text{a}^9\) in an autoethnography) or large quantities (such as N=20,000 in global surveys) should be judged as reliable according to the impact on the reader. In this way, personal experience becomes a justified form of knowledge because it generates understanding in the reader. Furthermore, Silverman (1993) finds that authenticity rather than reliability is key in qualitative research, and the focus is on an “authentic” representation of experience that furthers our understanding.

Some organisational ethnographic work has been criticized as “sanitized in order to conform to scientific standards” (Parry & Boyle, 2009, p. 692). Attempts to objectify ethnography by distancing the researcher from the studied context could be seen as “sanitizing” ethnography. Although there are many benefits from doing this in some ethnographies, this does not exclude the potentiality of alternative ethnographic methods such as autoethnography. The strength of autoethnography is that because researchers use themselves as participants in gaining new understanding of the organisational life, the researcher is in control of the quality of output generated from the research. So, depending on the researcher’s ability to be self-reflexive and honest, the output in terms of new knowledge is directly affected. Truthfulness, utilization, and applicability of findings to those studied have been suggested as goals for crystallization (Ellingson, 2009; Polsa, 2013a, b) rather than truth. As social justice (Ellingson, 2009) or social change (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) for research participants are important outcomes for crystallization, this provides an interesting methodology for researchers who themselves identify with wanting to support change processes, especially positive organizational change. Therefore, in value-laden organizations, (such as in nonprofits where social change and progress is an underlying goal for all action), I see the potential of applying crystallization as a methodology which I explain in more depth in following sections.

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\(^9\) This does not take into account collective memory work.
The challenge with autoethnography is that it should not become a narcissistic exercise in self-development but is more about reflecting on the researcher’s social, cultural, and political positionality as well as their own emotions in order to create a richer understanding of the organisation in question. Gobo (2008) refers to the danger of an autoethnography becoming “intellectual masturbation” if accounts are written to an audience of oneself (p.63). Hence, there are a limited number of organizational autoethnographies probably because researchers want to create strict boundaries and avoid critique. Also, exposure of oneself, which often is the case in autoethnographies, is bounded by the politics and institutionalism of a researcher’s professional career (Gobo, 2008). The challenges of autoethnography have most likely influenced the fact that there are few published autoethnographies in organizational studies. In the next section, I look at positioning my study into the methodological research context, having a closer inspection of animal shelter ethnographies.

3.2.2. Animal shelter ethnography

Animal shelters have been studied through ethnographic methods before (Taylor, 2004; 2007; 2010; Irvine, 2002; 2004; Arluke & Sanders, 1996; Arluke, 1999; 2006; White, 2013). The commonality of previous animal shelter ethnographic studies is that the researcher was, or became, a volunteer in the case organization. This follows the traditional reasoning that suggests that the same organizational behaviour applies to both volunteers and employees in an organization (Gidron, 1984; Miller et al., 1990; Newton, 1985; Pierce 1993). However, in a study by Laczo and Hanisch (1999), they found important differences related to commitment and withdrawal in the organization. De Jong, Seydel, and van Vuuren (2008) similarly found a difference in commitment between the paid and unpaid individuals in a non-profit.

To date, I have found no ethnographic study where the researcher actually became a paid employee of an animal shelter, therefore, becoming a full member. There are vital differences between being a volunteer and an employee at an animal shelter, not only in work design and tasks, but also regarding the moral stress and powerlessness. Volunteerism is mostly a positive task, with lower responsibilities, stress, and disconnect than being a full employee. That is why, it could be argued, the insights from researchers conducting ethnographic research in animal shelters, such as volunteers (Taylor, 2004; 2007; 2010; White, 2013; Irvine, 2002; 2004), are not full representative of an “insider” as they were all volunteers. There are nuances of “knowing” that become different as well in the interviews, as subjects are interviewed as “one of them” (i.e. paid employee) to those interviewed by volunteers. Several issues are shielded from those uninitiated (for example, not having to deal with euthanasia, management of volunteers, and dealing with internal power struggles). I suggest that only through being a paid employee can certain issues be revealed that constitute the most distressing in the organization. For this reason, conducting research through this “insider” role (as a paid employee), I attempted to resist the “iron cage” of institutional power (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), which may cloud the responses of interview subjects as well as colour the results of the researchers who are conducting participant observation but work as volunteers in the organization. Therefore, I argue that the differences between being a paid or unpaid employee are so vast that researchers need to start acquiring positions that reflect the employee’s position rather than what is simpler in terms of access (for example, as commissioned consultancy work). Otherwise, lessons and knowledge gained from “a half-insider’s position” (i.e. unpaid work) is severely limited if not altogether incorrect.
3.3. Representation through Crystallization

Denzin (2012) has referred to crystallization as “Triangulation 2.0”, in this way recognizing that this (crystallization) is a newer, updated way of doing qualitative research. In traditional qualitative research, triangulation is used as a justification for validity of research findings. It assumes that researchers, through a method of cross-examination, reach a fixed truth. Most postmodernist researchers reject this idea of a fixed truth (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2000). Multiple genre research moves beyond such limiting perspectives by challenging this three-sided truth to be deconstructed through crystallization. Richardson and St. Pierre (2000) define crystallization as a “messy, multigenre, paradigm-spanning approach to resisting the art/science dichotomy”. This process holds that “there is no single truth [that] texts validate themselves” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2000, p. 963). These texts, which are representations of two or more genres of data, create a deeper and more complex reflection of a specific issue. It assumes no authority over reality, but is a representation of a partial understanding stressing the researcher’s positionality. Thus, crystallization is multivocal, giving room for both internal and external experiences, and grows and changes over time and space (Ellingson, 2009). It is an interpretation of reality that follows a social constructionist paradigm in research.

In qualitative studies, the dominant writing genre has been the academic research report genre, which is comprised of technical language, processes, claims, and evidence based implications (Ellingson, 2009). While other forms of representations exist in the form of poetry, performance, plays, and narrations, these are still rare, especially in organisational studies. Crystallization is not a rejection of the traditional research report as a method of communication but rather a blending of multiple forms to create ways that transmits the research message in the best way possible. In ethnography, traditionally “thick description” has been used to transmit uncommon contexts such as Geertz’s study on Balinese cockfights (1972). Looking at organisations through multiple perspectives can unveil knowledge previously hidden due to blindsided research through the presiding traditions.

Validity of qualitative research findings has traditionally been employed through a process of triangulation (Scandura & Williams, 2000). This is the norm, for example, in mixed method studies. Some of the challenges with mixed method approaches are the misunderstandings of combining data sources to show “the whole picture” (Silverman, 2010, p. 134) or a more “complete picture” of reality (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 199). Triangulation has also been criticised for being two-dimensional and lacking in today’s social science research (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2000; Boyle & Parry, 2007). It also assumes that there is a fixed point of truth that needs to be uncovered through research (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2000). In postmodern social science research, alternative forms of representing and uncovering knowledge, such as stream of consciousness writing and writing as a form of inquiry, have become increasingly popular (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2000). This type of research blurs the line between art and science focusing on knowledge and shared understanding more than on hegemonic scientific methods. Richardson’s (2000) methodological concept of crystallization is an appealing framework for those conducting provocative and evocative research within an organisational setting. Similarly, crystallization has been seen as useful also in other fields such as sociology (Ellis, 2000) and communications (Richardson, 2000). In business settings, the crystal image (as opposed to a triangle) has been suggested to be useful in organisational autoethnographies (Boyle & Parry, 2007; Parry & Boyle, 2009).
Crystallization moves beyond traditionally accepted boundaries of mixed methods. Ellingson’s (2009, p. 14) describes crystallization as “that [it] reflects a single, coherent representation (e.g. a book, a performance) and [is] woven, in which small pieces of two or more genres are layered together in a complex blend.” In other words, it is the multiple representations of the data into different genres that tell one story, transmitting if you will, one message through a variety of means.

I use Ellingson’s (2009) methodological concept of crystallization to uncover the role of power and its impact on emotions in ANIMA. I find that using a multi-genre representation pushes established organisational boundaries and, ultimately, leads to a deeper understanding of the organisation. I use a traditional ethnographic method of a single case study with full immersion of being a complete-member in ANIMA, with the use of field-notes to construct how power (or lack thereof) was an everyday construct that underpinned my experience. This is seen in the emotions around euthanasia and the powerlessness felt while working with death row animals.

Crystallization has already been suggested to be useful within organisational settings (Tallberg & Boyle, 2011), sociology (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), and communications (Richardson, 2000). I argue that this is true, especially for extremely emotion-laden organisational contexts where the formal research report format may not fully transmit the emotional turmoil faced in the context. Ellingson (2009), explains that integrated crystallization “reflects a single, coherent representation (e.g. a book, a performance) [that is] woven, in which small pieces of two or more genres are layered together in a complex blend” (p.14). In other words, it is the multiple representations of the data into different genres that tell one story, transmitting one message through a variety of means.

I attempt to represent the “lived experience” of ANIMA through crystallization. According to Ellingson (2009) and Ellis (2004), there is a qualitative continuum (ranging from “art” to “science”) in social study research. Deetz (2001) also noted the differences in positioning research according to research stance of, for example, realists and interpretivists. Autoethnography can be seen as part of a creative analytical representation (Ellingson, 2009). Autoethnography moves inwards as well as outwards, forwards, and backwards (Rambo-Ronai, 1992), but when presented with other genres (such as in crystallization), it differs in that it allows space for a connection with the reader by changing over time and space (Ellingson, 2009). Richardson and St.Pierre (2000), posit that “texts validate themselves” as they are representations of two or more genres of data, creating a deeper and more complex reflection of a specific issue (p.963). Crystallization assumes no authority over reality but is a representation of a partial understanding stressing the researcher’s positionality and the critical role the researcher plays in the research itself as no research is done in a vacuum. In this way, the core of understanding social constructionist research is to acknowledge the impact of situated knowledge.

Crystallization had not been used in organizational studies when I conducted my research; however, there has been a recent application of it to international business in a Chinese context by a Finnish researcher (Polsa, 2013a; 2013b). Polsa uses crystallization to” demonstrate that with help of body and spirit research can move towards indigenous findings of the research site that can be put into action to improve the life of those studied” (2013a, p. 76). In this way, recent applications of crystallization support using it to uncover findings that are highly context specific and offer a technique that resists hegemony – both within the research as well as a way to understand the context. Crystallization attempts also to unite “mind, body and spirit” in
research (Polsa, 2013a). Although intriguing, such an application stretches beyond this thesis, however, and this may be a fruitful area for future research efforts on crystallization. Recognizing this limitation, I attempt my own application of layered accounts to transmit my experience at ANIMA. In my research, I use layered accounts of narrative, diary entries, poetry, pictures with a combination of traditional thematic analysis to represent my findings. In the following sections, I discuss my methods in more detail.

3.3.1. Methods towards the thematic analysis

I conducted 20 semi-structured interviews of paid employees at ANIMA. These interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two hours (see the appendix for interview questions). The interviews were all audio taped and transcribed. The interview participants were chosen through sending an organizational-wide email introducing the whole staff to my study and asking for voluntary participants to undertake an interview. None responded to this and after two reminder emails, I approached directly individuals whom I identified as potential gatekeepers. My emphasis was on those with direct animal interaction, the animal attendants, and those administrative staff with formal power over the animal attendants. In this way, I tried to get a better understanding of not only the perspective of the animal attendants, but also to cross-check my understanding of events and issues by interviewing individuals with some sort of managerial duties. The voluntary nature of the interviews dictated who were willing to be interviewed, i.e. all interviewees were individuals who I had established a positive rapport with while in the field. Although this limits the study through relying upon only those individuals whom with I had developed a professional relationship, this was a necessity due to the limited access to my research field and suspicion of employees to researchers.

As my position in the organization was as an animal attendant, most others in this position agreed to an interview. The location for the interviews was mostly in a conference room at the shelter, however, one interview was conducted in a participant’s home; two at the participant’s work desk; another in the shelter’s training field; two in a dog obedience training room; and two in an employee training room. This was all based on availability. Interviews were held until saturation of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Participants were asked for consent and ensured anonymity (see appendix 8 for consent forms). I also provided the interview subjects with the option of approving the transcriptions. Only five subjects opted for this, all of whom agreed that the transcript was correct. No participants withdrew from the study after having given consent. Interviewees were only interviewed once, however with more resources and time, multiple interviews could have benefitted the results. Table 1 provides some general technical information on the interviewees. The table is according to formal decision-making power in the organization, starting from individuals with highest formal power (senior managers), ending with those with the least formal decision-making power (animal trainers). The names of the interviewees have been changed due to anonymity. A total of 159 single-spaced typed pages were transcribed out of these 20 interviews.

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10 Positions are not specific due to anonymity issues, however, the table shows positions in relation to potential formal power over decisions.
Table 1  Interview key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>Middle Manager</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Human Resource Administrator</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>20-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie</td>
<td>Behavioral Assessor/Animal Attendant</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Behavioral Assessor/Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>20-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>Senior Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl</td>
<td>Senior Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria</td>
<td>Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>20-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>20-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassie</td>
<td>Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>20-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>20-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Animal trainer/Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>Animal trainer/Animal Attendant</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of my work shifts, I recorded daily events and feelings in a diary on my laptop. There were a total of 212 diary pages written in note form. These records were mostly recorded on a daily basis, unless I was too tired or emotionally upset to record issues. In these cases, I wrote them down the following day or the next at the latest. There were times when I was so traumatized that I would stare at the blank screen for an hour without realizing time had passed. The work-shifts were often 5-6 times a week, from 7.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. In reality, employees had to be on location around 7 a.m. and few left before 5 p.m. Many times, I would be working until 6 p.m. if required, although this was never formally demanded. There were a few employees who would stay longer if the sections were not finished as we felt that the animals would otherwise be disadvantaged.

The diary entries were all coded by concepts as well as the interviews. No computer software was used; instead, I arranged them all in first-order concepts as printouts and then developed the second-order concepts as a result. Out of this work also grew the three mini-cases that I base my findings around. These events and concepts are found in chapter 5 and are derived from a traditional thematic analysis. I also use two genres closer to the “art” end of the qualitative continuum, story and poetry, to transmit the findings in a more “crystallized” manner. In the remaining sections, I briefly introduce these genres and discuss how they fit into my study.

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11 Due to longevity in the organization who had been given animal behavioural training.
12 Due to active role in collective unions.
13 Due to longevity in the industry.
14 Due to a private relationship with a middle manager.
The three events are mini-case studies of experiences that happened while I was in the field at ANIMA. Through these case studies, specific themes evolved. These themes were combined with the themes from the interviews. These interview themes were found through traditional textual analysis of the interview transcripts. After having disseminated these themes in a primary-order analysis based on interview results, secondary-order themes evolved that will be discussed further in chapter 6. Therefore, I present my findings from my ethnographic study, visually, as represented in a series of images that I took during the analysis process (see picture 1 below). I cut up text from transcribed interviews and diary entries and arranged them according to main concepts on my study wall. These formed columns of text that I arranged according to second order concepts and that, finally, transpired into the three events I base my results around.

Figure 2  Picture 1 Analyzing the data

The analysis is built up on first order concepts, which are below illustrated in table 2 and are the “facts” of the organization (Van Maanen, 1979). In my thesis these are based on interview data and diary entries. The second order concepts are “the notions used by the researcher to explain the patterns in the first order concepts – they are ‘interpretations of interpretations’ (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 541 as quoted in Rhodes, 2001, p.49). These have successfully been used in previous organizational research, such as by Franck (2012), who linked the data to themes in her PhD thesis.
### Table 2  First and second order concepts

#### Work role and Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second order concept</th>
<th>Empirical illustration (First order concept)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deviance</td>
<td>• I don’t follow (the) policy on ringworm (Joanne, SM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ...so she just (wiped the C off) ...(laughs)...she said she’s not taking it to Central... (Cassie, AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disillusionment &amp; conflict</td>
<td>• I feel like God at times...that’s one of the main reasons some people do this job (Maggie, BA/ AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• We become immune to it (euthanasia) sometimes...But then again to a certain degree if you build that up too much then the caring and the ability to do what you need to do is also diminished (Joanne, SM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Crazy! He has not done anything wrong. When I put him to sleep he did not do anything wrong, he did not growl, nothing...I cannot understand those sort of things (Lauren, AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It is ok to think you do not agree with a behavioural assessment call, just do not say it! There is too much questioning now by new staff (Jill, AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I just thought we are empty, we are empty, why cannot this dog have <strong>some</strong> more time? (Cassie, AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ...we’re going to be capitalizing on that (Rick, SM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ...this is NOT going to be a Pets In Crisis. This HAS to be a prosecution. Cause this is...a line has been crossed (Wendy, M).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• People are the problem, not the animals (Mary, AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There’s this idea of us vs. them – the animal staff and the people staff* (Betty, AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress &amp; transferred responsibility</td>
<td>• So myself still on a daily basis, I go home and have a cry like everybody else (Joanne, SM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are people burning out ... it’s not sustainable so when you can’t keep it up and then it needs to be you who put your hand up so that somebody else can address it and so I struggle with that (Rick, SM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I find that we are very judgmental about people (Betty, SM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ...working at ANIMA is not a job, it’s a lifestyle (Wendy, M).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There’s nobody who says you can go home, they just expect you to finish your job and stay as long as it takes and if it takes too long then you’re not doing your job effectively so it’s your own fault (Mike, AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I don’t know which route it comes through, so you just have to do the job and do it. I questioned it enough in my own mind and I have to deal with that myself. I thought, “just do the job you’re meant to do and get on with it” but it’s not right. It’s not right (Lauren, AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Because of this place about a year and a half ago, I had a complete nervous breakdown, a mental break. A lot of shit, I almost lost my job and got accused of something that was just revolting and then it was, yeah, a year and a half ago I did try to kill myself. That was pretty hard-core. (Ruth, AA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• That was my second day. It was a five-month-old puppy (cries) and I’m just going “this is crap!”(Cassie, AA).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Leadership | • Just deal with the facts really. Just deal with the basics, what’s the problem. Don’t wince about it – They should just get on with it and not feel sorry for themselves because (Aaron, SM). |
|           | • You realize that either people are just lazy or just more focused on themselves (Rick, SM). |
|           | • Jill was on anxiety pills cause she was just too scared to come to work after Will harassed her. (Gloria, AA) |
|           | • I think this is such a highly emotionally charged environment
backstabbing is more than in any other job I've been in and there's a thing about you know, management up there and we're just the shit keepers, we're like nothing (Ruth, AA).

Support
- Senior management are just bullies. I'm glad I'm in the union, put it that way - I've used them a couple of times (Ruth, AA).
- Support from senior management is atrocious, there is no support, and they think we should just harden up and do our jobs. They don't understand how it actually works in Central and things like that, they say they do, but they don't. There's no respect. They know I'm active in the union, so they're a bit scared of me though (Jill, AA).
- Support network is mainly ground-level staff. I don't feel supported by management. There's not a lot of respect, we aren't made to feel as part of the process – it us vs. them (Maggie, AA).
- They (management) just tick a box that they asked, they 'showed an interest' but that's where it stops (Mary, AA).

Organization and Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second order concept</th>
<th>Empirical illustration (First order concept)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication</td>
<td>• it was absolutely pointless, but I don’t think people prepared or realized it was going to be as bad as it was. I don’t know why though, given all the information we already had about what was going to happen. (Lucy, HR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• So, we had to evacuate quicker than expected. Now, that could have gone a bit better. If the staff had done what they should have done all the time – make sure the animals had a microchip or had a label on them – it would have been much better (Aaron, SM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There was a complete lack of communication from management. It almost felt like they were too scared to say anything. It was a nuthouse, it was absolutely ridiculous... (Jill, AA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outcomes</td>
<td>• I must have been THE most excited person with the floods because all I could think of was “they can’t be putting any animals to sleep because Central is under water”. So, I was very excited about that. The thing that impressed me the most was the public coming here to pick up animals and help house them. There was a guy who came in for a puppy and got a rooster. (Cassie, AA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ...there were just 100s of members of the public here willing to take animals out on foster. That was, I just stood back and went “wow, this is really good”. It’s nice to see that positivity in the community and sort of attitude and I guess that only comes out in really big disasters and stuff like that. But it was nice to see and a good moment to be a part of the team here. (Anna, AA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational processes</td>
<td>• Had the staff done what they should have done all the time – make sure the animals had a microchip or label on them - that wasn’t in place - it would have been a lot easier (Aaron, SM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The reality of it is that because we are all so busy, it’s often difficult to get those processes and policies in place to help us do our jobs better, because we are just so focused on just getting work done as fast as we can and then moving on to the next thing that needs to be done. (Lucy, AA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are just so many people in the mix until it comes down to an operational level. There is no understanding of who has the power – or authority to make what decision. (Wendy, AA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Individuals and Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second order concept</th>
<th>Empirical illustration (First order concept)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional management</td>
<td>• I cry, I’ll definitely have more drinks. (Jill, AA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drinking - this place can really dig you in a hole. I try to organize things that take me away from here. And also boxing, that releases the aggression, when you hit a bag and imagine someone’s face there. (Mary, AA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One animal attendant told me he felt that this was just an attempt from senior management to “put us in our place and tell us how we should be thinking” (Diary entry 18/6/2010).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Disconnect           | • If we show emotions we’ll be deemed weak that we can’t handle it and shouldn’t be working here. Those AA’s not coping might be picked on, like if they’re on certain sections like Central and they’re not coping with it, if they confess that to their managers - they’re just going to be seen as weak. (Jill, AA) |
|                      | • I felt compelled to give some words of empathy to the sad, crying lady that I later regretted, because those who cannot be responsible pet owners should be punished – not pitied (Diary entry 5/6/2010). |
|                      | • You have to acknowledge that compassion fatigue is a huge, huge actor here at ANIMA. Being involved in this industry, it’s exhausting! I think as a whole the organization takes advantage of the fact that we all want to help. (Sue, BA/AA) |
|                      | • But the others made me feel guilty to take more foster animals, even though I’m in a rental that doesn’t allow pets. (Jill, AA) |
|                      | • Then one night when the shelter was empty, they just euthanized him. They muzzled him, they had a man straddle him because he became aggressive as he had been molested before and was traumatizes as a result. Without telling me or anybody else, he was just killed - he didn’t need to go that way. (Maggie, BA/AA) |
|                      | • It was just like; “Yep, she’s going to get put to sleep, who cares” - type attitude. She had just had her puppies in the shelter. We had all worked with her for weeks before they came and then weaning them off her. Nobody even questioned it. I didn’t understand, I still don’t. But I felt that there was nothing I could do, except wonder why and cry. (Gloria, AA) |

### Figure 3  My analytical path

![Analytical Path Diagram]
3.3.2. Building a story

According to Parry and Boyle (2009), it is not so much the research methods that will influence readers, but how the findings are presented. Therefore, I suggest that by blending both creative and normative approaches, I can increase understanding among readers and connect on an emotional level and not merely on a cognitive level. This follows my understanding of crystallization as the “mind, body and spirit” approach. In order to be evocative and create an impact on the reader, I suggest that creative techniques are viable for transmitting knowledge. It is through these creative techniques that a connection can be made between the researcher and the reader. In essence, I ask myself the following question: can I transmit knowledge found in this study through the text but also in spirit by calling upon the emotional nature of the reader? I believe so. In support of this, Parry and Boyle recognise that “while the research report might have an impact due to its cognitive nature, so too would the autoethnography due to its emotional and evocative nature” (2009, p. 697). As this study is located within a social constructionist framework, I use the process of crystallization to construct texts that transmit my findings to the readers in an emotional way. The purpose is to enable readers to construct their own understanding and interpretation of the texts while simultaneously attempting to highlight the researcher’s positionality.

Furthermore, there is an interesting link to one of my theoretical frameworks, Positive Organizational Scholarship. POS researchers have suggested the “story” is a way to understand positive issues from organizational life (Dutton, 2003). As narratives can connect the reader to a more spiritual understanding of the “lived experience”, they can offer a layer, which pure research reports may struggle with. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) also explained that “narrative and life go together and so the principal attraction of narrative as method is its capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways” (p. 10). My stories are meant to transmit insightful moments and “extend understanding of the Other” (Denzin, 2000, pp. 1053-1060). Stories are a way to transcend the purely cognitive level of knowledge. Hence, stories become ways for others to understand the context in a more holistic way, by invoking spiritual connections through imagination. Stories, as well as poetry, are used in my research to transmit these issues and evoke feelings similar to those felt in the context. Consequently, the understanding of the context is not purely cognitive but also involves a spiritual and embodied appreciation.

3.4. Creative writing

Successful expressive poems are based on empirical data that are sensitive and evocative in nature. Imagistic language allows the reader to enter a work and develop [a] personal relationship with it; the images are transformed into knowledge pertaining to both the poem and the reader (Furman, 2006, p. 561).

Poetry is increasingly recognised as a creative tool in organisation studies. It has been referred to as the “true intersection between art and science” (Lahman, Rodriguez, Richard, Geist, Shendel, Graglia, 2011, p. 805). This has been used by scholars, (as well as practitioners), to express emotions, in, for example, the research process (Darmer, 2006), leadership development (Hiley, 2006; Grisham, 2006), business education (Kostera, 1997), communication in organizations (Grisoni & Kirk, 2006; Whyte, 1994), and organizational development (Pruetipibultham & Mclean, 2010). There is a wider appreciation of a range of “emergent methods” in social science and a need to “push methodological boundaries” (Hesse-Biber & Levy, 2010). Richardson (2000) calls on
academics to use poetry as a form of creative analytical practices (CAP) ethnography. This is what, for example, Van Maanen (1995) has previously labelled as experimental/alternative ethnographies. Richardson (2000) argues that CAP ethnography is the preferred form, as it resists the discourse of traditional ethnographies. Among others, CAP ethnographies include autoethnography, fiction-stories, poetry, drama, performance texts, polyvocal texts, readers’ theatre, responsive reading, aphorisms, comedy and satire, visual presentations, allegory, conversation, layered accounts, writing-stories, and mixed genres (for references to each ethnography, see Richardson, 2000, p. 930).

Emerging through a social constructionist perspective, poetry becomes a way to creatively express knowledge and stimulate emotion within the reader. Acknowledging the claims of Richardson (2000), that much research goes un-read as it is so textually lacklustre, poetry can spark interest and convey knowledge through co-creating meaning with the reader. Depending on the emotional response of the reader after reading the poem, there has been a transmission of the text. Therefore, procedural issues such as reflexivity, subjectivity, authority, and positionality are all present in the text thus increasing process transparency to readers (Richardson, 2000). As crystallization is based on spirit and body as well as mind, poetry fits well with this approach. For example, Leggo (2008) has suggested that poetry is “rooted in everyday experience, connected integrally to the flow of blood in our bodies, expressed constantly in the rhythms of our speech and embodied movement” (p. 170). Furthermore, Darmer and Grisoni (2011) claim that poetry can be used to understand organizations better. Hence, my study uses poetry to connect on a spiritual level and transcend understanding of organizational life in my context. By situating narratives, diary entries, visuals and poetry alongside my interview thematic analysis, I attempt to create a “path” towards embodied, spiritual, and cognitive knowledge of what it was like to be an animal attendant in ANIMA at a specific time in history (2010-2011).

3.5. Conclusions of the methodology

Crystallization is an exciting new methodology for those who, like I do, believe that there are alternative ways of gathering and transmitting knowledge than traditional research reports. In this chapter, I have created a foundation for understanding how I gathered “data” in ANIMA. I became a complete member in the organization by working as a paid animal attendant in the shelter. However, I acknowledge the limitation of not being a “permanent” employee in ANIMA, as this could potentially distort some long-term issues I experienced. In the next chapter, I introduce ANIMA as the context of this study. The aim of this chapter has been to set a foundation through which my findings can be understood. My methodology has been explained in terms of a qualitative continuum (which others have also recognized propagates the duality of “art vs. science”). My study opts for a middle-ground approach through the use of thematic analysis of my diary entries and interviews as well as narratives and poems constructed as a result of my autoethnography.

I have argued in this chapter that researchers may need to become full organizational members, (i.e. paid employees) if they want to gain access to insider knowledge in difficult, emotional contexts. I consider that my study would be dramatically different if I had relied on interviews or observations without having embodied the work role and fully assimilated into the context “as an ANIMA employee”. As mentioned earlier, it took two years after leaving the field to become detached enough to finish the write-up
of this thesis. For this reason, I have decided to add a section on ethics at this point, to fully explain my conflicting role, both as a researcher and as an ANIMA employee.

### 3.6. Ethical underpinnings of my study

This section deals briefly with some ethical issues of my study. My aim throughout this thesis has been to protect the organization and the research subjects to the best of my ability from identification. Throughout the field process, I was upfront with both the organization as well as organizational members about my research role. I acknowledge that at times this role may have been forgotten as in the everyday duties. The dual role and blurred boundary between researcher and organizational member has, for example, been noted in social work research (Landau, 2008). Here the social work researcher aims to create distance to avoid emotional role ambiguities. In ethnography, ethical dilemmas are readily discussed (see, for example, Gobo, 2008). However, as the field is constantly changing and difficult to anticipate, my ethical underpinning became that of my intention of “doing no harm” to those involved in my study.

I entered the organization with the goal of gaining access. Nonprofits, especially within animal welfare, are understaffed and without a practical role in the organization, I struggled with access. I started as a volunteer, working with the volunteer coordinator to manage the large unpaid work staff. This role involved mostly shadowing the coordinator, getting to know the organizational members, and recruiting appropriate volunteers. At this point, it became clear to me that there were complexities in the organization that I did not understand and which there was nobody who had time or interest to explain to me. I was offered a work-placement internship for two weeks to shadow and assist paid employees in the different departments within the organization. My research-role was at the forefront of each and every day, and, so, most staff was interested in sharing their work issues with me. Unexpectedly, I was encouraged to apply for a paid work-role in the organization at the end of the internship. I went successfully through the selection process that included an interview with the shelter manager, human resource coordinator, and regional shelter manager. I disclosed openly my research-role in this meeting, and it was agreed that I would apply for a formal written consent from the CEO. I was given written consent from the CEO as well as becoming hired as a paid animal attendant in the shelter. My research-role was also made clear to my colleagues. Two essential issues are discussed in more detail below: the formal ethical clearance I gained from an Australian University to conduct research and the issue of anonymity in my study.

#### 3.6.1. Ethical clearance

This study passed the Griffith University human research ethics committee expedited ethical review checklist and was approved with the reference no. EHR/09/10/HREC. In the ethical review, several ethical issues were considered and found to fit the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council’s “National Statement on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans” and the “Griffith University Research Ethics Manual”. This manual is quite involved and can be accessed through Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee. For the purpose of this thesis, ethical issues in specifically a case study were reviewed. The most prominent issues were risks, consent, protection and identification of participants. It was found by an expedited ethics review committee that my strategies for protecting participants were acceptable
under the ethical guidelines of Griffith University (which was my research abroad University in Australia).

3.6.2. Anonymity in my study

There are two central areas of anonymity in my study. I have purposefully omitted details of the organization that would lead to identification such as name, history, specific location, structure, and statistical data. I have further protected the organization through suppressing references that would lead to identification. This information is available to examiners upon request. Furthermore, I have aimed to protect anonymity through withholding specific picture references and faces of employees. Those individuals who are interested in attaining the pictures based on their artistic nature can contact me for further details on how to contact the photographers. I have also formatted pictures without any identifying information such as the organizational logo or name. Secondly, I have protected individuals from the study by using pseudonyms. This applies to all individuals’ names in my study. In this way, I have tried to maintain both anonymity and confidentiality of research participants. One such participant, whom I cannot hide, is myself as the researcher takes a central role in autoethnographic work. In the below section, I describe some of these issues. Around these issues, I also describe entering and leaving the field as both impacted the study.

3.6.3. Entering the field

Access to organizations can be challenging and gaining access to ANIMA was no different. Before coming to Australia to commence fieldwork, I contacted several animal welfare, animal rights, human rights, and even emergency organizations as possible contexts for my fieldwork. They all declined my research requests. Volunteering became thus my objective as a way to gain access. However, even in this aspect only, ANIMA contacted me and screened me with a phone interview. Upon arriving as a volunteer in ANIMA, I started lobbying key decision-making individuals in senior management positions to consent to my research. As events turned out, I was offered a paid role as an animal attendant, whereby I committed myself to working as “one of the members” to avoid previous negative experiences the organization had had with university researchers. In a previous event, a researcher had disrupted and damaged the organization as a result of research and, hence, ANIMA managers were wary of my requests of access. However, through becoming an animal attendant, I effectively created trusted relationships with both managers and employees, who saw my intentions as genuine and well meaning. This is part of the spirit of my research as I hope to avoid vilification and instead represent as accurately as possible ANIMA and the emotions in it.

3.6.4. Managing competing demands and leaving the field

I had multiple roles during my research. These roles were as a researcher, an animal attendant, a student and, finally, as a human being with her own morals, ideals, and thoughts. These are not discrete roles as they overlap and complement each other throughout the research process. One of the main challenges of this research was to manage these competing demands. The following is a short representation constructed of the reflexive reading of my diary account. It depicts some of the competing demands
that I felt during the research process and are presented here in the spirit of crystallization.

Can data ever be represented in a way that expresses the intense feelings I felt involved and the moral dilemma I battled with?

Who cares what I felt? Who cares what I experienced? People in my discipline don’t care about charity organizations, especially not those that deal with animals because animals can’t voice their oppression. Some people working in the shelter have even become detached and cold to killing the animals. So why should others care about our working conditions, what we have to endure due to the lack of care by the general public? They’re the reason we have to take care and kill these animals in the first place. The wear and tear mentality along with the ignorance of pet owners is the reason we are in this horrible dilemma.

…but can something that is traumatizing really be “retold”, communicated to another who has no experience of the context? Can I write in a way that transmits my experience and calls upon the emotions of the reader to intrinsically feel what I felt, what we in the organization feel as business as usual, or are traumatized experiences at arm’s-length, both sterile and objectively scrutinized, as they do not personally affect the reader?

Does the experience need to be “shared” as a lived experience for a more accurate transmission, or can words conjure emotional responses that connect the reader with the context? If such is the case, then traditional research itself needs to be questioned as lived experience would be the only/most fruitful to gain knowledge and understanding of anything. Horrible events such as war crimes, poverty, cruelty, abuse all come with imagery and hence an emotional response as a consequence.

Emotions research is already novel in organizational studies, I should stick to work that can enhance my career possibilities and then when I’m established I can do the “interesting” and “meaningful” stuff.

Don’t rock the boat and over complicate things. Will my readers understand what I mean? Will they think it’s “valuable” research or just narcissist tendencies towards psychoanalysis? How can I say this technique is more “effective” than others? This itself positions my research as “superior” in some ways to other methods and, thus, buys into the hegemony of “right and wrong” ways of doing research and uncovering knowledge and explaining the lived experience.

My interest is in exposing alternative ways of communicating organizational life, not propagating the power struggles of “us vs. them” in research methodology camps...

Some people do care, and it’s my job as a researcher to uncover the uncomfortable issues and go into places that are unusual so that we can understand more and work on making progress towards a better society.

I need to use my voice for those in the organization (human and non-human) that traditionally are silenced and ignored. Focusing on the unfolding story and coping mechanisms that allows members to justify the killing is key to understanding a main component in this organizational life.

If I use literary genres that evoke the readers’ imagination, a connection is made in transmitting (or reliving) the event. This itself is often absent in the “pure” academic report form and I still hold the belief that it adds knowledge to conflicts within the organization that otherwise would not as easily be explored. There is a deeper connection and emotional association to the event, which may be lacking in the more traditional academic report forms. In this way I attempt to invoke the spirit of emotional connection to the reader by honestly exposing my thoughts, doubts and feelings surrounding the cases and those I observed in similar situations. By doing this, I can limit the unintended prejudices I may have regarding euthanasia, so that I can better represent the event from multiple angles, by being as honest in my representation of what constituted our reality in ANIMA.

Reflexive thoughts 7/1/2011
I have attempted at including reflexivity in my study in various ways: first, in my diary entries after each day at ANIMA, then after each interview when deciding what to include/exclude, and finally after having written texts and deciding on themes and meanings. Due to the emotional nature of the research, there were long writing breaks and internal conflicts as I mapped the results in a meaningful way that would satisfy my research goals. Some senior academics, during this research process, recommended to stay away from issues that are too personally challenging and emotional. I acknowledge this sound advice to PhD students as the actual research education is excruciating enough. So, to advise novice researchers to hone in on learning the skills of the trade before embarking on content that is sensitive for them personally is very likely decent advice. There were many times throughout this thesis I wished I had done just that.

On the other hand, as a person with what some would call “extreme” personality with a stronger sense of social duty and responsibility than common sense, I decided to spend my PhD years in emotional turmoil, studying the subject that angered and saddened me the most. As a long-time animal rights advocate with strict moral values pertaining to animal welfare, working in a location where animals were unwanted, displaced, and discriminated against posed some practical as well as philosophical dilemmas. I had to learn to adapt a more realistic view on how humans treat domestic animals, one which I had had little contact with in a privileged life where pets were considered part of the family. The Australian animal welfare context is vastly different to the one in my homeland, Finland, not only in how people regard animals but also in terms of legislation. Doing “dirty work” also removed me from the more “sanitized” culture in academia where blue-collar mentalities and priorities were exceedingly different from those I had previously been accustomed to.

Two events influenced negotiating my identity: being in the field and leaving the field to write my dissertation. In the field, I felt conflicted and overwhelmed by seeing the reality of pet overpopulation and its management through euthanasia as my personal moral values were so different. Leaving the field and writing this dissertation, I contemplated the following questions which particularly reflected my own identity transformation as within the field: how should I confront and assimilate the experiences to reflect the complexities that were involved in understanding the phenomena of working in an animal shelter? Which issues do I choose to discuss and which ones do I leave outside the thesis? How do I stay true to the employees and animals that I had promised to represent with a voice when they usually are silenced without becoming too sentimental and losing my critical lens?

In many ways, power (and the lack there of) seemed destined to portray heavily in the research no matter which path I chose to take. Non-profit organizations are already disadvantaged from the start in the societal standing, not to mention the focus on animals that doubly weaken the organization’s position. Although the organization is influential in shaping public policy in Australia, at an operational level, it is the frontline employees and animals that bear the weight of limited resources. Coming from Finland, where I could only find one animal shelter (in the whole country) that housed temporarily eight dogs, to a national culture where animal shelters are the norm for unwanted animals was a huge culture shock. Also, having previously worked in several privileged organizations in the for-profit sector did not prepare me for the conditions that ANIMA’s animal attendants faced on a daily basis. This too was quite shocking. In the relatively egalitarian society in Finland, status is not as noticeable as I found in the so-called “classless” Australia. Therefore, I learned to be vague about my work and life experiences and education while I was in the field. However, I did feel often quite isolated at work and had some troubles forming strong work relationships
as I did not realize until later that having a friendly attitude to management was seen with suspicion among some of the other animal attendants.

In my results and concluding discussion of them, I attempted to focus on key issues that other ANIMA members also encountered. Hence, extremes such as vegetarianism and other animal rights issues that I found personally challenging while in the field were left out. Instead, the core issues of euthanasia and right to life were discussed as these were directly affecting the employees and animals. Furthermore, coping strategies such as the psychotherapy I underwent to manage my emotional and moral disconnect are not discussed at length as this was unusual for employees in ANIMA to use. Also, I wanted to steer away from focusing too much on myself in studying the organizational life at ANIMA. Instead, the more common mechanisms of self-harm through addictions and avoidance have been analyzed.

3.6.4.1. Leaving the field.

Gobo (2008) suggests that it is time to leave the field in ethnographic research somewhere “between duty and pleasure” (p. 307). In my study, I left when I did for numerous reasons. One of the main reasons was out of “sheer mental and physical exhaustion” (Snow, 1980, p. 107) of the moral conflict I felt of being an animal attendant. As my psychological and physical well-being deteriorated from the straining work, I had also started to question my research, purpose, and meaning of life by becoming all consumed by the plight of the organizational members (both human and non-human). On the advice of supervisors, family, and a therapist, I left the field. The emotional trauma and distress from the field contributed to creating a distance to the organization, which tried to pull me back in as a volunteer on several occasions. Leaving the field physically was easier than psychologically. I was haunted by the moral conflict long after. Three years later, I still do not think I have left the field psychologically and still keep in touch with ANIMA members. Lady, my adoptive dog from ANIMA’s death-row, was also a daily reminder of ANIMA and while she lived, ANIMA was a constant in my life. This is why it took considerable time to be able to commit to writing the thesis as, without sounding too dramatic, the experience still brings me to tears and many events boils my blood. My disengagement with the field is an ongoing process and by September 2013, I have not revisited the site. My organizational exit was amicable, however, as most employees saw me as a colleague more than researcher. Yet, I do expect some negative reactions to this study, although my intentions has throughout been to be as honest, open, and truthful about my feelings, my research, my motives, and observations. Therefore, the ethical underpinning of this study is, as many ethnographies (Gobo, 2008), subjective, but I am hopeful to be understood in the research spirit conducted of doing no harm.

In the next chapter, I introduce ANIMA as much as possible without disclosing the anonymity of the organization. I then present my findings according to the three themes outlined in figure 2. This ultimately leads to a discussion of power in organizations and how limited the three theoretical frameworks underpinning this study are in terms of recognizing the affect power has on animal shelter employees and their coping-mechanisms.
4 ANIMA

My first day in an animal shelter

Anticipation. Excitement. Fear. I arrived with mixed emotions at the shelter. I was struck by hundreds of high-pitch barks echoing along grey concrete walls. It was so loud! Different dogs were crying in cramped cells that stretched as far as I could see in the early Australian morning. It was autumn, yet a hot sweltering sun threatened on the horizon. Serious looking animal shelter workers watered down the soiled cages from the night before while the in-mates desperately tried to avoid the hard water blasts. Urine and faeces was mixed with pink chemicals, masking the desperation of the confinement. The sensory overload was unexpected and primitive, forcing my uncomfortable emotions to the surface, wanting to run away, hide and forget the horrible reality.

Diary entry 15/3/2010

My study was conducted at an Australian animal welfare organization at its animal shelter during March 2010 – March 2011. The organization will be called ANIMA in this study to ensure anonymity. The organization is a non-profit organization as it operates almost fully on public donations.

The irony of uncovering silence is that my case setting was anything but silent. As evidenced in my diary entry from my first day in the animal shelter above, it was a physical “sensory overload” as well as mentally troubling. I often reflected on this paradox, of a place that literally screamed attention amongst a quiet suburban neighbourhood of family housing, while similarly silenced to deal with unwanted animals in society. This paradox of the seemingly “hidden” problem of unwanted pets was abundantly clear to those who stepped into the animal shelter. But after having been part of the local community for over 30 years, few seemed to question the societal solution of unwanted pets to be dealt with in animal shelters.

The organization was split into different departments based on key focus areas. There was a traditional hierarchical structure within the organization, as well as within each department. The department, which was the focus of my study, was called “shelter operations” (SO). SO’s main task was the everyday animal husbandry of stray, abused, or unwanted domesticated animals as well as injured wildlife. Beside pets such as cats, dogs, and marsupials, there was also livestock such as horses, birds, goats, pigs, and sheep that were cared for. In 2010-2011, there was a total of around 20 000 animals cared for in the specific shelter in my study. During my time in the organization, there were, on average, ten paid animal attendants (AA) working in the shelter along a team of volunteers. On any given day, the SO team consisted of five AA’s, one shelter manager, and two behavioural assessors. The AA’s reported to the shelter manager who in turn reported to the shelter operations manager and other senior operations managers. Each AA was responsible for an area of the shelter (including managing the volunteers) and its animals (depending on the shelter section, this was on average around 50 animals).

In the next sections I introduce the animal shelter context. This includes the cultural context, layout, and everyday work structure. These lay the contextual foundation for the rest of the thesis, which is built around three mini-cases chosen to represent the experience of working in ANIMA. These three cases are presented in chapter 5 and further discussed in chapter 6.

\[15\] Statistical numbers are rounded due to anonymity.
4.1. Shelter context

Only around 10% of all the animals arriving in animal shelters are unable to be rehomed due to medical or behavioural issues\(^{16}\). Therefore, unwanted animals are largely euthanized on the grounds of animal welfare. This means that around 90% of all animals entering animal shelters could be adopted if there were enough resources. The euthanasia of pets that could be treated and adopted is a global phenomenon and statistics in Australia are similar to the USA with animal euthanasia rates of 8-10 per 1000 humans in both nations (Rand, 2011; Rand & Alberthsen, 2011). Such statistics confirm the experiences in the shelter of many of the interviewees, as well as my own, where adoptability of the animals was based on other factors than true potentiality of the animal. Animals, who do not arrive at the shelter in such a condition that warrants a straight adoption, are euthanized, as both veterinary members and behavioural assessors are required to judge the animal upon entry. Many animals entering the shelter are fearful and confused regarding the new surroundings and, therefore, display behaviours induced by their situation more than on their temperament. In ANIMA, animals are usually held for three days before processed. The decision is then taken whether the dog is sent for a behavioural assessment or to Central to be euthanized.

4.1.1. Cultural context

The Australian Companion Animal Council Report “Contribution of the Pet Care Industry to the Australian Economy 6th Edition 2006” estimated that 53% of Australian households have either a cat or a dog or both (animalsaustralia.org). Animal welfare groups estimate that around 250 000 pets are annually euthanized in Australia (www.givepetsachance.org.au); however, this is only an estimate as statistics are not gathered across organizations nor regions. The no-kill movement\(^{17}\) has had a slow momentum in Australia, as the overpopulation and supply of domestic animals has grown with technological advances such as the Internet. A booming pet trade has developed over the Internet coming from questionable conditions such as puppy farms. Furthermore, it is legal in Australia to sell live pets for profit in pet shops making it financially lucrative for backyard breeders to use pets as breeding machines. However, this morally questionable industry has received much needed negative media attention in Australia, yet this discussion seems lacking on a global scale (which was exemplified by the dog culling during the recent Sochi Olympic games). ANIMA is one of many Australian animal welfare organizations actively campaigning for public awareness of these issues as well as lobbying legislature towards more controlled pet breeding laws in Australia. To date, this has had limited success.

An unwanted domestic animal is a growing social phenomenon when over half of every household in Australia has pets. Animal shelters across the nation deal with the increasing problem every day and struggle to make ends meet when the supply of unwanted pets far outweigh the demand for them. Animals come into shelter generally through two main channels, strays and private surrenders. The standard process of dealing with both is based on time, space, breed, behaviour and health. There are generally two ways for an animal to leave the shelter, either through the front gate with a new family or through the back in a body bag collected in a garbage bin.

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\(^{16}\) Reference suppressed due to anonymity.

\(^{17}\) Animal rights movement against animal shelter euthanasia.
As outlined in the literature review, shelter workers come into the industry with a love for animals as well as a prosocial motivation to help animals. However, these are often the same individuals who have to decide the fate of an animal as well as perform euthanasia. This misalignment between values and actions creates a disillusioned and heavily compassion fatigue affected work force. In such an emotionally laden work environment, how do individuals manage their daily emotions? The three cases in this thesis depict some ways and issues that follow as a result of the conflicting demands.

4.1.2. Layout of the shelter

As an animal attendant, on an average day, I was responsible for one section in the shelter. A section comprised of several areas that housed different animals and had, on average, between 0-5 volunteers in it. It was my task to manage the animal husbandry of those animals as well as manage volunteers. This was the norm for each animal attendant and there were approximately 400 animals in the specific shelters’ care at any time. The sections that I will cover as an example of shelter work are, firstly, the section dealing with the incoming animals, and, secondly, the section dealing with adoption pens. The other sections in the shelter included the section on “Central” (where the euthanasia happened) and holding pens (called “New Security”) for cruelty case (Black Tag) animals as well as those awaiting space in any other section.

Due to ANIMA’s wide reaching focus on several animal welfare areas, rehabilitation was mostly reserved for cruelty animals referred to as Black Tag animals (BT). These were housed until the cases were trialled and, therefore, the animals were “held” until surrendered to ANIMA. These cases included larger seizures of 100s of animals to individual cruelty cases. Several of the animals would also be held in foster-care. These were those deemed fit for society or where a staff member would foster and try to rehabilitate the animal until the court case was decided\(^\text{18}\). In the following figure I have detailed how the animal processing happens at ANIMA. Figure 3 shows a rough overview of processing animals in the shelter. This is presented here in order to further understanding of the following sections, as most individuals are unaccustomed to animal shelter management practices.

\(^{18}\) Specifics on this issue are suppressed due to anonymity.
The next section illustrates a normal day at the shelter for an AA. It is a sanitized diary entry, which demonstrates the work-tasks, thoughts, and emotions that I encountered when working with the dogs that were up for adoption (i.e. these were dogs that were deemed “re-homable”). The purpose of this extract is to demonstrate in a narrative the shelter context and tasks for an AA in the most positive section (i.e. where animals were given a second chance and not euthanatized).

The loudest are the mornings and each day I dread the sight of what could await for me in the pens. On a good day, the dogs have just ripped their winter coats and blankets to shreds and were not too covered in excrement, while on bad days, there is blood, vomit, and a blank stare waiting.

The regular process is to clean the cages, feed the animals, clean again, and feed the animals as quickly as possible. This is very time consuming and leaves little time for one-on-one interaction with the dogs starved for attention. Without volunteers, it is impossible to get through all the tasks alone, and even with them, it is a rush for time. Some volunteers are regulars while most are drifters who come a few times, (enough for the AA to train them up on the section), and then left when they realized that the work involved more than just cuddling cute puppies or kittens. AA’s are derogatorily named “shit-pickers” by other staff, as that is our main activity throughout the day. Some dogs get a short walk from volunteers to the exercise yard, but mostly the dogs are alone in their pens, waiting for the quick feed and cage clean by AA’s.

The stench is gagging at times, and we (AA’s) try to mask it with chemicals that we hose the pens down with. In the beginning, it was a sensory overload for me, with the barks and cries,
the frantic behaviours of animals that need attention and the foul smells of excrement that hangs in the air. At the end of each shift, I strip my soiled uniform off outside my home, bag it, avoid touching my own animals and run to the shower where I scrub my skin until raw. I then attend to my own animals after the daily dirt is scrubbed away.

Diary entry 25/5/2010

In this way, the shelter had “dirty” tasks such as cleaning the pens and the animals. My diary account above depicts the sensory overload of the animal shelter, and the attempt at creating a boundary between work and home life in terms of “cleaning off the dirt”. At work, dirt was all consuming as there was limited protective gear such as masks or gloves and more often than not, there was excrement, blood, vomit, and urine on staff uniforms as well as directly on the skin. As dogs would jump up in excitement when you entered their pen, the dirt on their paws would splash up, often into your face. This was something that happened regularly, so you developed resilience towards it. However, staff was encouraged to de-worm themselves, their families, and pets because of parasites picked up in the animal shelter.

The following sections contain the work-tasks of two of the sections mentioned in figure 2. These were the “incoming” animals that were awaiting “sort”, and those that “had made it” and were available for adoption.

4.1.3.1. Incoming animals

“The Rail” was the first point of contact for an animal attendant with a new dog. It was a narrow row of cement cells up at the front of the shelter where any new stray or surrendered dog was housed after customer services had booked her/him into the system. The cell was just big enough for a medium-sized dog to lie down in and, at times, there would be a small bowl of water. The dogs were often terrified at being locked into the cells and displayed fearful behaviour when staff approached them. Some staff, sensitive to this fearfulness, would hang bed-sheets cover the front bars, allowing the dog privacy and some comfort. AA’s, working in the section on incoming animals, needs to check the cells a few times a day, whenever a pen opened up in another shelter section. A free pen meant three things in this section: (1) the previous dog had been returned to its owner, (2) it had moved on to veterinary treatment, or (3) it had been taken to Central for euthanasia.

There were different housing options depending on the dog. Those that had been surrendered by an owner were taken to a section called “Privates” (meaning private surrender). This was by far the best section as the pens were bigger than the others. On the other hand, stray dogs were taken to a section called “strays”. These were also larger pens, but instead of concrete walls, the pens had only chicken wire separating them. This meant that fights were common as well as pen running. Anxious dogs became more anxious as a result, and the dogs were in constant contact with each other through the chicken wires. Some AA’s covered the sides of the pens with bed-sheets, but mostly the dogs ripped these down as there were only clothes pegs holding them to the wires.

19 This is when dogs incessantly run up and down their pen, barking, and often jumping up at neighbouring pens. Many dogs would do this until their paws were bleeding and retain injuries from the frantic behaviour. This also caused high levels of anxiety, not only for the dog doing the pen running, but also for those dogs in the other pens. Pen running was contagious, creating dog pack behaviour of chasing each other up and down the pens. As several dogs were housed in the same pen, this could lead to fights and injuries as anxiety levels rose in the pens.
Next, “Bullies” was the smallest, cramped, and dirtiest section. This was where aggressive, anxious, and senior dogs were housed. The dogs were very cramped, and no volunteers were allowed into the pens. This meant that there was little interaction with humans and anxiety was heightened for many of the dogs. Because of the small spaces, the dogs had to go to the toilet next to their beds. Because of the anxiety, many were covered in their own excrement as a result of pen running and jumping around in the cramped spaces.

None of the incoming dogs were walked, and there was limited enrichment to keep them occupied. This led to a range of negative behaviours such as the heightened anxiety already mentioned, excessive barking, and aggression. The dogs had a minimum of three days until “sort” happened. The “sorting” process entailed the following: a dog that had come into the shelter (surrendered by owners or as a stray) was removed from the holding pen. The dog was walked on a lead back and forth in front of pens holding other dogs while a veterinarian, behavioural assessor, and animal attendant watched how the dog behaved. If s/he showed signs of fearfulness, aggression or physical impairments (such as limping, hip dysplasia, skin disease etc), this would often result in an immediate transfer to Central for euthanasia. If, on the other hand, the dog showed minimal behavioural issues, was in good physical shape and of a youngish age, s/he would be placed back into the pen waiting her/his turn to have a behavioural test.

The behavioural test could take place within a few days and involved a range of issues such as resource guarding, separation anxiety, the dog’s reaction to children and strangers, and social skills with other dogs. This would be the first time the dog was let out of his/her pen and would have to behave in a positive manner, without fear, anxiety, or aggression. If not, the dog was taken to Central for euthanasia. Those that passed the rigid tests, which were largely subjective and not breed specific, would then be desexed in the next few days. Following desexing, the dog would be transferred into an adoption pen, once space was available. Staff at the shelter often agreed that even their own dogs would not pass the stringent process (I know none of my dogs would ever have done that). Indeed, after 4+ days in a strange shelter environment, most dogs would feel stressed and show some negative behaviours. There was a inconsistency to size, breed, and behaviour in the tests as discussed in the theory section. Usually smaller dogs (for example, Maltese, Shih Tzu, Dachshund, Jack Russell’s, Terriers and Chihuahuas) were favoured over larger dogs (for example, Rottweiler, Doberman, Mastiff, German Sheppard’s). Therefore, euthanasia figures (of less than 50%) do not reflect breed-specific figures.

The animals were mostly excited to be walked out of their “incoming” pens. The dogs would sniff around and happily find a patch of grass among the concreted pathways on the way to Central. The short walk would come to a halt at the doors of Central. Many dogs stiffened and tried to pull away, and sensing death in the air, they would start to tremble and whimper. The dog would be pulled inside the heavy gates and chained to a wall waiting for her/his turn to be euthanized. If the dog was a stray, a last lost dog search was done on a stray dog online listing for potential matches. This was usually unsuccessful as the most common reason a dog was a stray in the first instance (and not collected by worried owners), was due to inadequate owner commitment. While the dog waited along the wall, other dogs in front of her/him were euthanized. They would sometimes struggle, but most would allow the animal attendant and veterinarian to

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20 Not a normal dog-lead, but a noose-lead which many dogs are unfamiliar with and chokes the dog if it pulls.
administer the lethal injection without complaint. When the dog was dead, s/he would be bagged into a black garbage bag. Large dogs were placed on a conveyor belt with a garbage bin at the end. When the bins were full of bodies, outsourced collectors would pick the bins up in a truck and drive them to a landfill.

Figure 5 Picture 2 21Euthanized dog in a garbage bin at ANIMA.

4.1.3.2. The Adoption pens

The adoption section was the most “positive” section as this section in the shelter housed animals that had passed their behavioural assessment test and were up for adoption. The section consisted of adult adoption dog pens, a puppy/small dog block of pens, small animal room, and cattery section.

Figure 6 Picture 3 22Waiting for a home: Dog in adoption-pen at ANIMA.

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21 Image courtesy of I. L.
The dog adoption pens were split into four holding blocks called adoption pens 1/2/3/4. They were made from concrete and were located at the front of the shelter close to the reception and public access. Animal adoption was from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily. The dogs had a water bowl (or bucket), a sleeping area which consisted of old blankets, sheets, dog-bed or kennel which was undercover, and each pen had 1-4 animals in them depending on their size, breed, and sociability of the dog. The pens were made out of steel wire and concrete with a hatch on the door. In front of the pens was another fenced area containing a “poo-scooper” (to remove excrement from the pens), watering can, dog toys, black bin-bags, an old paint bucket, (which was used as a garbage-bin), and chemicals used for cleaning. There was a ditch running through the middle of the pens where water was flushed down during cleaning the pens. On the front of each pen was an A4 sized white slab, which contained brief notes about the animal housed in each respective pen. At the front of each pen on the outside of the fencing, there were printouts detailing the animal’s profile. In adoption pen three, there were dogs recovering from Kennel Cough, and these would have medication attached to each pen. The adoption pens had a small overhead cover where the dogs’ sleeping area was at the back of the pen; otherwise, it was open to the extreme weather elements of Australia.

The puppy pen was enclosed in a building with one wall made out of wire where the public could view the dogs from the outside. There were small breed dogs and puppies housed together in each pen with a water bowl and bed. During colder months, there was a plastic cover that was lowered in front of the exposed wires to shield the small dogs from the cold. In front of the puppy pen was a small concreted fenced area where puppy litters were placed during the days to play and attract attention from potential adopters.

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22 Image courtesy of L. W.
23 This is a common viral and bacterial upper respiratory infection that is highly infectious. It is similar to the human cold, but some strains are preventable through vaccination. ANIMA did not vaccinate the animals.
24 Image courtesy of L. W.
Inside the cleaned adoption puppy pens at ANIMA.

The small animal room housed mice, rats, and guinea pigs in small enclosures and carry cages. These were stacked upon each other along the wall of the small storage room, and there was a small window that would let some fresh air in. There was an old noisy air conditioner that would keep the room cooler during hot weather. There was an old radio in the room, which would blare rock music when there were animal attendants cleaning in the room. There was a bin, newspaper for the flooring of the enclosures, chemicals, dry food, and various half-broken enrichment toys for the small animals (such as tubes and wheels for mice). The room was dusty and stuffy with printouts of the animal details attached with a laundry peg to each cage. At the end of the peg, there was the animal’s shelter tag, and on the floor, there were random “lost” tags that nobody had time to check.

The cattery was placed next to the dog adoption pens and was constructed from a long row of concrete pens with wiring for the door and wiring towards the outside for the public. The section, similarly as the puppy section, had a plastic cover on the front that was lifted each morning and lowered each afternoon. The cover was old and was always getting stuck down or up. Each cat pen housed several cats. There was water and food bowls at all times and hidey-holes, small pieces of donated old bed-sheets, and cushion covers made into temporary cat bedding. Some cats had scratch poles and sometimes there were enrichment toys for the kittens. There was an undercover hallway, as was the whole cattery, and animal detail printouts decorated each wired door. Some of the hatches were broken, and at times, cats were missing from their pens. Also, there was an outdoor CatMax (an outdoor enclosure) where “Catchoo-cat’s” (cat’s with respiratory issues) were held during adoption hours.

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25 Image courtesy of L. W.
26 This is a small, cat-hiding place that allows the cat some privacy.
5 EMOTIONS IN AN ANIMAL SHELTER

This chapter explores the results from my study at ANIMA. The first event depicts the trauma of doing euthanasia in the shelter, specifically, in an event that involves euthanizing a puppy. The event reveals themes of moral disconnect, conflict, and emotional management that are corroborated with the interview results. Interestingly, the results centred on the theme of “Power” in different forms. In the theoretical foundation of my study (chapter 2), this was not something I had anticipated. Power, or powerlessness, is lacking in the Positive Organizational Scholarship literature. Within the Emotions in Organizations literature, power is an underlying factor in, for example, emotional labour and regulation, however, power is rarely explicitly treated as a theme itself. Within the Dirty Work literature (Ashforth et al., 2007), there is also the fundamental assumption that highly tainted dirty work tasks is for individuals who are unable or powerless to work in less tainted professions. Therefore, there is an element of power that runs through all three literatures, although, this is mostly as a result of something else. My findings attempt to fill this gap by specifically including power as the aggregated dimension throughout the results (cf. figure 3). The results in this chapter should be read as mini-cases that each forms one of the aggregated dimensions; “Work role and Power”, “Organization and Power” and “Individual and Power”. These mini-cases are examples of each aggregated dimension with the accompanying first and second order concepts as seen in table 2.

In the following three sections, I present the three dimensions from my study. These are a collection of events that actually took place and are presented through a variety of texts and visuals. The first dimension deals with a common phenomenon of “processing” a dog in the shelter, and it allows for a non-human perspective. The second dimension could be classified as an uncommon event, as it was a result of a natural disaster, however, the issues that emerged as a result reveal points that the organization faced even when not in an emergency crisis mode. The third dimension deals with the traumatic experience of euthanasia, specifically with a puppy. This was a usual occurrence in the overcrowded shelter, one that I could never come to terms with. All three cases form the aggregated dimensions from figure 3. To ensure better clarity, I will only present the findings in chapter 5, discussion of these are explored in detail in chapter 6.

5.1. A story of hidden voices

My first mini-case, (on “Work role and Power”), focuses directly on the literature of dirty work further discussed in the next chapter. I have named it “a story of hidden voices” as it depicts the task of processing society’s unwanted animals by individuals who themselves feel unheard (both in the organization and in wider society). This first case illustrates through Lady’s story, issues of deviance, disillusionment and conflict, stress and transferred responsibilities, leadership, and support.

Stories are not new within organizational studies to convey corporate culture. However, stories that are used as research methods (such as, for example, Critical Incident Analysis) to uncover knowledge are now also increasingly used as a legitimate way of collecting and interpreting data, especially within the ethnographic genre. I use stories built upon my different methods: interviews, diary entries, reflection, and observation to communicate through mind, body, and spirit framing crystallization (Ellingson, 2009). In this way, my stories transmit how life was experienced in the organization.
The following story allows me to present an unusual perspective on organizational life. As crystallization allows for more alternative aspects, the traditionally silenced voice of an animal is portrayed in the story. This helps readers to get a glimpse perspective, which is often overlooked when studying organizations – those non-human beings that cannot speak.

Lady sat in her dark, cold, wet pen. She had now been in this place for many months. There had been sleepless nights when dogs would be barking, howling and crying in confusion of their confinement. In the darkness, the cockroaches and rats arrived crawling over any food remnants in her cell. She patiently waited for her human to come back and get her out, but he never came.

For Lady, it was always the same. She wagged her tiny stumped tail every time somebody walked past her pen. “Maybe today it is my time?” She jumped up and down on her steel bed that at times would be blessed with some soft, and maybe even dry, bedding. Her excitement was always followed by a long howl “My turn! My turn! See me! Spend time with me! Feed me! Love me!” After a while, she stopped being excited. The repetitive behaviour of it never being her turn, she was here to stay which made her turn her back on whoever was coming in the morning. She had lost hope.

Story 19/6/2010

This narrative conveys the physical setting to the reader. It also shows the confusion over the abandonment that Lady felt as a result of irresponsible pet ownership. This theme is developed throughout the story, but, in the first section, her discomfort is introduced and the descriptive language helps the reader to imagine the reality of living or working in ANIMA.

The second section moves the story towards the climax, with themes of hopelessness and abandonment strongly present in the comments about Lady’s predicament. She is given a voice through the text, even though to society (and the organization), she would be perceived as invisible and mute. In ANIMA, the animals far outnumber the humans; hence, I argue that it is vital for organizational researchers to include non-human voices in order to understand all life in the organizational. The section builds further on the physical setting of the shelter that, in stark contrast to the beings inside, is a cold and dark place. The humans inside the organization, on the other hand, are passionate about their commitment to animal welfare and work tirelessly to try to accommodate unwanted animals in some adverse conditions not only for the animals but also for the humans (for example, safe and healthy work standards).
The next section further uses multiple perspectives to build a story. In this way, I use crystallization to understand and transmit Lady’s behavioural assessment in the shelter. She had been in the shelter for several months, and it was the first time that Lady was let out of her pen when taken to the test. She walked stiffly along the corridor and led me outside. It was only a short 20 m walk to the yard. On the way, she saw some grass and pulled towards it before she entered the testing grounds.

**Lady’s version:**

I had seen many strange people when living on the streets with my human, and it was my job to guard him and make them go away. This is a new place. Many different scents, so exciting! But I can feel some fear in the air. Somebody I do not know comes over to me, swinging a stick! Is he going to hit me? I stood my ground and froze, staring at the stranger approaching. The three girls watched me and shifted their attention away from me to each other. Food! They’re giving me food! I greedily bit into the rawhide and tried to eat quickly with my head down, watching them carefully in case they tried to take it away from me. I knew it! They want it! I lower my head trying to shield the treat and growl to keep them away. They gave it, it’s mine...but they take it from me and lead me back to my cell. It’s wet and cold, my body aches as I jump up on the steel-framed ledge waiting for what is next.

**Linda’s version:**

Lady didn’t like the friendly stranger – she is not rehomable...we can try her dog-dog behaviour on the way back to her pen, but it doesn’t really matter anymore...Lady failed. The assessor didn’t even look up from her form as she unflinchingly delivered the outcome. I heard her saying it, but didn’t comprehend what she meant. Slowly the words kept echoing in my head – failed-failed-failed. A nauseous feeling hit my stomach as the realization started to form in my mind. Death.

She was shoved into her pen where she cast one longing look at me, before sighing heavily when the pen door was tightly slammed shut. The assessor scribbled the verdict on the information tablet on her pen. That was it. Her time was up.

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27 Image courtesy of L. W.
The stories are constructed using a rich and deep combination of interview data, observational data, and diary to form an organizational story. The behavioral assessor, Maggie, was not only observed in the organization but also interviewed. The text can be said to have multiple sources to form an account of understanding. The tablet shows the limited information that is Lady according to the organization. I interacted with Lady on a daily basis for 3 months until she was “processed”, her non-verbal communication (such as body-language, eye movement, tail and ear movement) as well as verbal communication through “dog-talk” became easy for me to understand. Hence, the story is an uncomplicated way to transmit such an understanding to the reader, without the reader having to understand animal behaviour (see, for example, Donavan, 2006 for a discussion of justifying animal voices in research).

This organizational story is an example of how, through combining several sources, I attempt to represent Lady’s story. The text is the (sanitized) account of actual events from my research diary, working as an animal attendant in the section Lady was housed in. This element in crystallization allows the reader to “feel” how the everyday organizational life is for two of the organizational members, Lady and the animal attendant. It is a typical organizational story, which several of the other animal attendants identified with in their interviews. Furthermore, as it is a combination of sources that make-up the text, one could claim multiple sources of credibility and reliability towards the themes raised.

In the next section, I tell Lady’s story. As fostering and, ultimately, adopting animals was a large part of the informal organizational life in ANIMA, this story can be seen as a common occurrence of being an ANIMA employee. During my fieldwork, I fostered three dogs in total: Rufus, Lady, and Boris. Each individual animal was very special and had an amazing story. The one similarity of all three was that they all found love in the end. In ANIMA, foster animals take a great deal of work as most have behavioural issues that need time and effort to rectify in order to pass for adoption. ANIMA employees spend much of their free time caring for these animals as well as those at work, thus, essentially, blurring organizational boundaries of care between home and work life.
Lady’s story:

Lady was a senior female Rottweiler who came to ANIMA through a Pets In Crisis program. Her owner had been an elderly man who had lived with her out of his car for a long period of time. He was homeless. One day, he was taken into police custody and lost his car because he was diagnosed with dementia. He was placed in a nursing home where animals were not allowed. As a result, Lady was taken to the ANIMA animal shelter to be held for 30 days. I knew little of what became of the owner; however, his situation cannot have improved because the month elapsed, and he was not capable of assuming his care of Lady. This meant that she was effectively surrendered to ANIMA and ready to be processed. As a senior dog that had lived roughly, her physical health was poor. She was thin and had hip dysplasia, arthritis, and skin dermatitis from fleas. She also had eye inflections and muscle dystrophy, making her movements awkward. She had also had several puppy-litters from the look of her body. She failed her behavioural assessment due to aggression. It was decided that Lady would be euthanized. In a strange act of attachment (love, guilt or even ignorance?), her old owner found out about this and threatened to commit suicide if ANIMA euthanized her.

Through discussions with senior managers, it was decided that I would foster Lady and, later, adopt her if she showed progress. This was an exception that was made due to my breed-knowledge as well as my willingness to provide for her until she deteriorated further. But above all, ANIMA managers were not keen on having a suicidal man on their consciences. It took me two months to get her into a better psychological and physical state, which allowed me to take her home.

Lady flourished in my home and lived another 2.5 years until a malignant growth forced me to euthanize her. It was a difficult decision, one which I had prepared myself for over the years, yet due to her stubborn life-spirit, she always bounced back after a physical setback. She lived out her life in comfort and love alongside my other dog. She became mine, and she showed me unconditional love for having saved her from ANIMA. She was my shadow and followed me everywhere I went, even capturing the hearts of strangers. When she died, she fell asleep in my arms, twitching when the drugs hit her veins but still, trustingly, watching me as I cradled her until she was dead.

Lady was the loveliest dog with one of the sweetest, loyal spirits. As a shelter-dog, she was certainly not perfect, but her flaws were part of her personality and when we worked on them together, the progress felt even more special knowing what she had been through. There were nights I had to restrain her in a dog kennel because she would be guarding me from the rest of the family. Most nights during the first year, she had night terrors, waking up screaming and whimpering, shaking from fear. Each time an ambulance siren was heard, she would howl a long, sad howl – I imagined this must have been the sound she heard when her old owner was taken away. Towards the end, she had stopped doing this. I always tried to comfort her, tell her that I would not go away, that I would never leave her. She slept contently next to me on my bed, always leaning against me, wanting to be as close to me as possible.

I am saddened when I think of how many wonderful beings, just like Lady, are euthanized every day without ever having had the experience that I shared with her. She now rests in her urn, and I hope she is free of the suffering she felt in life. I miss her every day.

Reflection 19/04/2013
This story shows the emotions that go beyond mere work tasks when working at ANIMA. Other members also gained cherished relationships with animals that would have been euthanized had they not stepped up. These were the “short moments of victory”, where the promotivated employee was able to “save” an otherwise “doomed” animal. Holding on to positive stories, such as where a disadvantaged animal had been “rescued” and given love, was a typical coping strategy to deal with the seemingly endless animals that did not get a second chance. Saving a death row animal allowed employees a sense of power in their, otherwise, largely powerless work situation.

5.1.1. Work role and Power

The first aggregate theme from my research is the limited power in the work role that results in the feeling of powerlessness for the individual (this is discussed in 5.3). There is little training that goes into being an animal attendant. Some animal husbandry training such as feeding animals, handling them, and identifying breeds was offered at the start of the job. Employees came with a range of skills handling their own animals, which was the only training that all employees had in common. However, there was limited training in terms of dealing with the emotional issues that resulted from the job. As a new initiative (supported by management), when I had been in the role for a
couple of months, there was a voluntary two-hour workshop about resilience conducted by external consultants\textsuperscript{28}. This case is further discussed in 5.3. Overall, the workshop was seen as suspicious by staff, and many thought that it was yet another way for management to impose regulations on them – now in terms of how they felt and would potentially deal with their emotions.

Furthermore, I attended a voluntary three-hour workshop on compassion fatigue that was offered by a government researcher for veterinarian nurses. The evening event was again unpaid and advertised in an email to staff who wanted to learn how to deal with compassion fatigue. Among the 50 participants, there were only two from ANIMA attending. Both workshops were seen as having low managerial support as staff was asked to attend them outside of working times (and therefore for free). Hence, the limited power in the work role stemmed from restricted decision-making and limited training for the job. These are presented through themes of deviance, disillusionment, stress, leadership, and support.

5.1.1.1. Deviance

Organizational policy was to euthanize cats infected with ringworm in an attempt to contain the spread of disease. Ringworm is a cheaply treatable fungal skin-infection, however animals infected are considered “less adoptable”.

I did (fostered) 40 ringworm cats because ANIMA put them all to sleep. I said, “hang on – ringworm is nothing, I can fix that” - I don’t follow (the) policy on ringworm...we didn’t adopt out Cat flu\textsuperscript{29} cats. So every Cat flu cat got euthanized. (Joanne, senior manager)

Even though these diseases are treatable, they presented the organization with added cost and resources so even cats that were not sick, merely housed in the same building, were euthanized by association and in an attempt to contain the disease. Staff frequently commented on such processes as a waste and hard to follow. Those who did not actively deviate from the policy expressed feeling emotional dissonance:

We could do better treatment of Cat flu, rather than when one cat sneezes in cattery, we euthanize them all. Because if you do a cost benefit analysis, you would realize that vaccination on entry is perhaps going to stop the Cat flu spreading the way it does. When you euthanize all of cattery, then you’ve got microchips, you’ve got spaying/neutering, you’ve got all the time when they’ve been in the shelter being fed and housed...I think that there are some other processes that can be put in place. (Cassie, AA)

In what can be termed “production deviance”, some staff questioned the euthanasia decisions of others by erasing notes off animal profiles, which indicated the animal was to be euthanized. Erasing the “C” marked on the dog’s pen door did this. The “C” stood for “Central” (the building where the euthanasia happened) and was written on a whiteboard containing the animal’s details located on each pen. When the animal attendant responsible for the Central section would do his/her rounds to collect the animals, the “C” would be the indicator for which animals would be euthanized. Sometimes there were additional notes, such as an explanation like “pen running”, “vocal”, “untrustworthy”, “old”, “resource guards”, and “timid”, written afterwards but not always. When the shelter team was “sorting” the animals (who would stay and who

\textsuperscript{28} It is worth noting that these consultants were not working for management (or on request) and were simply volunteering their services and knowledge on resilience.

\textsuperscript{29} Cat flu is a feline upper respiratory infection that is highly contagious, but fully treatable. Vaccinations also exist to prevent Cat flu.
would go to Central), there was a shelter veterinarian and behavioural assessor present to assess the animal. The team would spend around 5 minutes assessing each animal, where it was taken from its pen (that it had been confined in for a minimum 3 days), put on a choking lead, walked up and down in front of the team and the other dogs still in their pens barking at it, and be touched by the veterinarian who would check the animal’s teeth, ears, and bone structure (and any signs of illness/defects). The dog was then returned to its pen after a quick verdict was made amongst the team present. This happened twice weekly in order to empty the incoming animal pens. But there were also times when the animal would do something in its pen that attracted attention from a passerby behavioural assessor or vet, who would then unceremoniously, use the marker in his or her pocket and write “C”. It was not allowed to question these decisions, and when asked, some would try to explain while others would not bother. One interviewee told of such an instance when witnessing a more senior member rubbing the marked “C” off the board.

I respect her a lot and will go along with a lot with her. One day, one dog was marked for Central and she just went “that is just wrong, that’s ridiculous...it’s a nice dog” so she just (wiped the C off)...(laughs)...she said she’s not taking it to Central, and it ended up being adopted like two days later. (Cassie, AA)

This senior staff member got a reputation for being “difficult” because she did not follow through on decisions that higher ranked individuals had made (as was organizational policy). I was caught in a similar incident when working in “Bullies” (pens for difficult dogs). There was a dog that had obviously been cared for as it had pink nail polish on its large black nails but was sentenced to Central due to being “untrustworthy”. It was a stray, and I had done several searches on lost pet registers without success. I erased the “C” off its file and saved the dog for one more day. This undermining of authority was revealed during the next “sort” when the dog was still alive. As the shelter manager was absent, I was called in to defend myself in front of a senior animal attendant. She reprimanded me to take the dog directly to Central if I wanted to keep my job. In the hierarchical shelter structure, the senior animal attendant did have some leverage over me; however, it was her close friendship with the shelter manager (and thus, informal power) that made the reprimand serious and legitimate.

5.1.1.2. Disillusionment and conflict

Among the shelter team, there was often conflict around disagreements on euthanasia decisions. It was often a highly subjective decision and based on the power of the decision-maker. Essentially, it was the animal attendants’ role to assess whether an animal was to be euthanized or not. However, there were a variety of issues that weighed on such a decision, ranging from if there was room in the pens to if the animal was seen as “adoptable”. The latter differed between individuals.

I feel like God at times...that’s one of the main reasons some people do this job (Maggie, behavioural assessor/ AA).

A senior manager in one of the interviews explained that many newcomers, such as myself, are “leftwing activists”. This was because we seemed to have a difficult time accepting the organizational limitations such as space and resources.

We become immune to it (euthanasia) sometimes...you always build that front – that coping mechanism...But then again to a certain degree if you build that up too much then the caring and the ability to do what you need to do is also diminished. And I think that is the hardest part here,
having to try to toe that line and work with everybody, because everybody has different levels of
what they can cope with... in some places it is a veterinarian that makes the decision (about
euthanasia), here it is the animal attendant. They have not been trained to make that decision
and they have not been trained for the coping mechanisms, they build them up themselves.
(Joanne, senior manager)

Yesterday, we put six animals to sleep. That one is a five month old that is timid. Well, why? That
is an 8 month old that’s going crazy in the kennels and you think “why? ” So put her in a foster
home because her owners say that she is a good dog and she seems really nice so “why?” and that
one is a 8 year old German Sheppard that has a dangerous dog label but got it when it was 4
months old and jumped up on a lady and that has lived with the owner for 8 years and we cannot
rehome him because he has got that [label]. Crazy! He has not done anything wrong. When I put
him to sleep he did not do anything wrong, he did not growl, nothing...I cannot understand those
sort of things (Lauren, AA).

The illusion of saving animals was firmly broken by senior animal attendants during a
new staff member’s first day. I observed in others, (and felt in me), an overwhelming
feeling of desperation and powerlessness in those first days. It was a surreal feeling that
coupled with the physical exhaustion of the laborious job tasks, did not really sink in
until much later. I was in utter disbelief about the limited processes that underpinned
the decisions at the shelter. In my time in the field, I would struggle most with the
unscientific methods used to determine an animal’s fate for euthanasia. It was of little
use pointing out the limitations to other staff members. Their knowledge of scientific
reasoning, validity, reliability, and credibility was limited and explaining the literature
was met by blank stares. Therefore, procedurals were not questioned (decisions were
though) as the frameworks underpinning the theory were beyond staff cognitive
practices.

Emotional labour at work was frequently reported from the interviews as well as from
the participant observational part of the study. This was shown in, for example, having
to deal with people from the public with a sense of professionalism, even though the
organizational members internally felt anger and frustration towards them. As evident
from my literature review, the surface acting that results from emotional dissonance
has been linked to stress and negative emotional wellbeing. Conflicting individual
moral values to task related behaviours inflict deep internal struggles among
employees.

It is ok to think you do not agree with a behavioural assessment call, just do not say it! There is
too much questioning now by new staff...too much emotionality around the euthanasia
issue...they should just realize we’ve been here longer and know better (Jill, AA).

In a similar account, one of the animal attendants, Cassie, had been working with a
stray and told me that she could not understand organizational policy that condemned
animals even when they were making progress. She was new to her role and felt
powerless in spite of working on a “To Be Euthanized” (TBE) dog, which was classified
as “useless” because it “did not cope” in the shelter environment. In contrast to the
organizational deviance that other members showed by changing verdicts on dogs
behind the backs of veterinarians and behaviour assessors, she tried to use negotiation
as her method of deviance as well as positive behavioural training in her breaks and
during her other duties. This was not part of her job role and, thus, a form of hidden
resistance of not accepting organizational policy. Even in light of this, those with the
decision-making power ignored her efforts and did not include her in sorting, as her
efforts were “harmful” to the organizational processes by disrupting efficiency.

Who has done sort? Who has done sort?” and Leigh (the veterinarian) said that Rhonda had and
said “and that dog is going to Central”. I said “ why...” and Leigh just said that “it is frightened, it
is going and do not even speak to Maggie (behavioural assessor and animal attendant), Maggie
knows about it, end of story”. I thought “what a waste” so...48hrs to perform miracles and it was not even enough. I just thought we are empty, we are empty, why cannot this dog have some more time? (Cassie, AA)

Those who most often and loudly questioned the decisions regarding euthanasia had all similar traits. They were more travelled, had lived in foreign countries or were of other nationalities, and had been involved with animal welfare outside of Australia. Mostly, those who accepted decisions without debate were the local Australians, many who had limited educational and work backgrounds. The workforce was very diverse in terms of education, work experience, and nationality; however, I observed that those who had lived or visited the US or Europe found the euthanasia process at ANIMA the hardest to swallow. Many told me during their interviews that the process and culture at ANIMA was “old-fashioned”, “archaic”, and, at times, “cruel and ignorant”. However, ANIMA is regarded as the forerunner in animal welfare in Australia, and accordingly, many who wanted to “make a difference” in animal lives saw ANIMA as the only viable option to do so.

Interestingly, most of the animal attendants were women in their 20s - 30s. The workplace had gender segregation, with females working as animal attendants (the carers) and male managers. This caused friction in terms of communication and decision-making styles as well as priority given to the individual animal or the organization. It seemed, through observation and interviews that women were more sensitive to the conflicting processes in the workplace and struggled to cope.

Another issue affecting staff was their intrinsic (prosocial) motivation (of saving animals), which was exploited for organizational gains.

You can’t do anything about it if everybody is going, “no I’m fine”, working 18 hours a day - we’re a charity of course we are going to take advantage; we’re going to be capitalizing on that (Rick, senior manager).

This passage shows the conflict for managers as they see work that needs to be done but have insufficient resources to complete it. The managers in this way tried to show care but ignored the consequences of a high workload, as resources were limited.

The following is an extract, which shows how a manager dealt with a similar experience.

And the cats were in carry cages and were sitting in thick layers of thick excrement and were ...just...it was just...atrocious...and I went from feeling compassionate for the woman in need of help, cause she was obviously dealing with a situation that shouldn’t be going on any longer, but to see what she had done to her animals which she claimed she loved...I just couldn’t! I remember standing in the inspectorate stomping my feet and crying and saying “this is NOT going to be a Pets In Crisis. This HAS to be a prosecution. Cause this is...a line has been crossed (Wendy, manager).

The emotional dissonance took an unusual turn, as the manager had power to change the terms from Pets In Crisis (PIC) to a prosecution. Mostly, the organizational members would have low decision-making power to change cases and had to, therefore, internalize any emotional conflict they felt towards the animals and the people involved in each case. Animal attendants frequently described themselves as “animal-people” as their main priority was for the animals that, more often than not, were seen as having been wronged by humans.

I don’t really like people - I’m here for the animals (Ruth, AA).
People are the problem, not the animals (Mary, AA).

I’m more of an animal-person than a peoples-person (Cheryl, AA).

On the other hand, the “people-people” also were part of ANIMA. These were those in administrative roles who had regular office-duities and responsibilities (for example, those working in human resources, customer services).

There’s this idea of us vs. them – the animal staff and the people staff (Betty, AA).

There’s still a lot of mistrust between the departments…people complain that it was better before…it was more flexible, now there are rules…it’s just like any business (Aaron, senior manager).

Many don’t like this turn towards a business-model…we’re a charity, not a business (Jill, AA).

A divide existed both internally in the organization between these two groups with suspicion and hostility lacing comments on the other group. Dialogue was limited and fraught with miscommunication as the “people-people” had decision-making power of guidelines, policies, and regulations and the “animal-people” had to follow. Those involved with the animals felt enormous responsibility and often on days off volunteered their time in other departments that they were not paid for. One interviewee claimed that “this place gets into your blood, you can’t let it go” (Wendy, manager). Management, who saw it as a necessary evil, acknowledged the stress of taking on responsibilities outside the job description.

As a perfect example, Rhonda doesn’t have children and a family therefore it’s taking advantage and capitalizing on her because of her position and people do take advantage of that, but I think that for people coming in there needs to be that understanding that nobody here determines when an animal’s sick and if everybody has gone home at 4 o’clock then one of us will have to deal with it, whether that’s on an animal attendant level, a senior managerial level, it’s a part of what we do if we are honest about what we do (Rick, senior manager).

There was a sense that ANIMA exploited, out of necessity perhaps, its staff’s sense of responsibility and morality. The staff was expected to give “all they had” to the organization in terms of time, energy, and, at times, even money. This was echoed in interviews throughout the organization, on every level from animal attendant to senior manager.

Working here is not an 8-5 job (Rick, senior manager).

We always work overtime, that’s just how it is, I can’t leave an animal just like that (Mike, AA).

I’m never off - answer calls in the weekend, something happens I’m always involved (Aaron, senior manager).

Even climbing Kathmandu I was thinking about the shelter, how I could make things better (Wendy, manager).

Utilizing emotions such as responsibility and compassion for animals meant that most staff were overworked and spread thin. Hence, physical injuries were abundant for the frontline staff as well as psychological burnouts and compassion fatigue, which were felt throughout the organization.
5.1.1.3. Stress and transferred responsibility

The workload and demands were very high in the shelter and most animal attendants felt that they could not take sick leave even when ill because being short staffed would disadvantage the animals in care. However the emotionality of the work role weighed heavier on me than the physicality, as it was very difficult to separate the issues at ANIMA to a normal private life.

So myself still on a daily basis, I go home and have a cry like everybody else. I’ll go home and talk to my husband who’s not really an animal person, so I might as well talk to the wall (laughs). (Joanne, senior manager)

There are people burning out … it’s not sustainable so when you can’t keep it up and then it needs to be you who put’s your hand up so that somebody else can address it and so I struggle with that. (Rick, senior manager)

The constant compassion fatigue that accompanied most members shone in their regard for the public. Some admitted to being judgmental as event upon event had revealed some despicable sides of humanity.

I find that we are very judgmental about people; I’ve even caught myself doing it. When I joined the organization I was horrified at the lack of focus on customer service and engagement with people who were going to adopt the animals. (But) the more entrenched I became in the organization... I was standing there watching a man walk in the shelter, walking up to the front counter, finding myself judging him. Doing what I had previously never understood thinking “what an asshole! What a pig. That poor dog, it’s such a cute dog and here he is - he’s going to surrender (Betty, senior manager.)

Again, here, the sympathy is with the animal rather than the owner. Compassion is given to the animals while the owners are judged for their lack of commitment.

I do often worry about people who live and breathe the place in its entirely. You got to have external stuff going on as well, you got to have other interests that make you switch off, otherwise it’s all consuming. (Sue, AA)

There was a one-liner on the bottom of an email saying, “working at ANIMA is not a job, it’s a lifestyle” and I do believe that’s very true. I think it gets into your system, it gets into your blood and it’s really hard to step away from it. (Wendy, manager)

I’ve worked in other places but never felt this strongly, and the heartstrings are being pulled as much as possible. It takes months to get this place out of your system if you leave. I think it’s really demanding here. (Wendy, manager)

Bounded emotionality control staff, to not only take on more animals at home, but also to make them work harder and longer without claiming extra pay. During an infectious parvovirus outbreak in the shelter during Christmas public holiday, animal attendants worked overtime to handle the contamination. After being denied compensation, one member told me his reactions:

It pissed me off! Because I’m not asking for overtime everyday but being as there was Parvo we couldn’t leave by lunch, we did what we were meant to do and I think we should’ve been compensated, but people are here for the animals not for the money. I’m going to do any measure necessary. (Mike, AA)

There’s nobody who says you can go home, they just expect you to finish your job and stay as long as it takes and if it takes too long then you’re not doing your job effectively so it’s your own

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30 Canine parvovirus is a very serious, infectious, highly contagious virus that causes death if left untreated. It is preventable through a vaccine.
fault. I got a talking about that - I was told I needed to work on my time management skills. (Mike, AA)

At the end of three months when they realize – hang on I can’t keep this up, I can’t continue (Rick, manager)

I was told I looked tired today – I am tired, and my feet stink and my tummy is swollen. This is not a job for those that value their physical health as your back aches and all is very unergonomic and you lift a lot and bend over; not a profession you can do a long time. (Diary entry 2/5/2010)

As one interviewee reflected on the emotionality of working in the organization:

Because of the euthanasia, killing things, and the bullying and harassment - I think you get the bullying and harassment in any other place but that coupled with seeing things die, that’s huge. It’s unlike any other sort of workplace. (Jill, AA)

As a new member, who had over two decades of experience within the animal welfare sector commented:

I don’t know which route it comes through, so you just have to do the job and do it. I questioned it enough in my own mind and I have to deal with that myself. I thought, “Just do the job you’re meant to do and get on with it” but it’s not right. It’s not right. But my job never has been. Like I say all those years ago when I had to put those animals to sleep cause there wasn’t room, it wasn’t right, who am I to do that? But then I realize that they wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for the public, they’re in the wrong. I’m tidying up somebody’s mess and although how bad I felt all my life having to do it I’ve still been able to give them that compassion, you know, a bit of something at the end, so I think that’s important, but I don’t know. I just want to get my own place, my own kennels and show them how it’s really done. (Lauren, AA)

Many of the interviewees found that helping the “most broken, neglected or mistreated” animals to improve psychologically and physically were the most positive aspects of working in the organization. Such animals are given extra care and attention.

And, as awful as this sounds, I guess I don’t really give a shit about humanity, it’s just the animals I care about so I guess I block the people out of my mind. (Ruth, AA)

You can just twist yourself up in knots cause I remember saying where’s the mentality come from when you say “oh, it’s Christmas Day, let’s find a pony and drag it behind the fucking car.” So I think I tend not to think about it, cause I don’t know, I’d just end up coming in here with an Uzi (laughs). (Ruth, AA)

I absorb it but I know like I can handle it, the facts and stuff and whatever. But I think if I sat there thinking about it. Instead my focus, which I guess helps, I guess I don’t dwell on it, the focus is the animals. And even if they have to get euthanized at least they’re not suffering anymore. So maybe that it, that’s the secret (laughs). (Ruth, AA)

On the other hand, those who struggled with the euthanasia reported that they cried a lot. The general joke in ANIMA was that the acronym for Animal Attendant (AA) actually stood for Alcoholics Anonyms because of the frequent and heavy use of alcohol as a result of the emotional stress.

I think the stress is higher (here), it just depends, more people are likely to go home and abuse things like alcohol and drugs because of this workplace. (Jill, AA)

A lot of alcohol helps too. You ask anybody here, they’re pretty much alcoholics (laughs). On my day off (I’ll) have my first beer at 9.30. I never ever used to drink; now I got to have a beer every day. In a way I think it’s just a bit of a release, but a lot of people are on prescription meds - I was. (Ruth, AA)
Because of this place about a year and a half ago, I had a complete nervous breakdown, a mental break. A lot of shit, I almost lost my job and got accused of something that was just revolting and then it was, yeah, a year and a half ago I did try to kill myself. That was pretty hard-core. (Ruth, AA)

One of the interviewees echoed my own experience as a new staff member. Unlike myself, she had extensive experience within the animal welfare industry but still found it hard to swallow her experiences at ANIMA.

I think for the first three weeks here, at the end I think I said to my husband “today I didn’t cry” and then I looked at him and went “oh no, I did” (Cassie, AA)

My first day here we BA a puppy that passed but they said it was untrustworthy. So I said “can’t you put it away from the other dogs for a while so it can calm down and look at it again tomorrow?” So they put it away and the next day it was marked for central, I was on that area, so I got to lead it to Central. That was my second day. It was a five-month-old puppy (cries) and I’m just going “this is crap!”(Cassie, AA)

Hence, even people with far more industry experience than myself found it difficult to manage the emotionality of working at ANIMA. Emotional stress often resulted in negative physical and mental issues such as back injuries, weight loss, sleeplessness, and depression.

5.1.1.4. Leadership

The theme of leadership is closely linked to how individuals saw power being used in ANIMA. Management was perceived by animal attendants to focus on running ANIMA as a business rather than a non-profit organization that had a social agenda – the welfare of animals. There was much discussion of “where all the money went?” as animal attendants worked in poor conditions and euthanized animals due to limited resources.

I would like to put the point across that the general consensus at the moment is that the ANIMA feels like it’s more of a business now and they want to do things “business-wise” and they want to cut costs and corners. It’s getting to the point that it’s getting embarrassing. For example, I heard that Joanne (senior manager) asked customer service to book more animals in as TBE (to be euthanized) rather than give them a go because it looks better for our figures. So instead of us euthanizing animals because they failed our tests, the owners are booking them in as TBE. And that is SHOCKING, that’s disgusting and that’s not why I work for ANIMA. (Jill, AA)

The guidelines and SOP’s (standard operating procedural) in the shelter were outdated. Shelter staff had a short training on them when starting their employment but even managers admitted these needed to be more current. However, with limited time and resources, there was not anybody to actually undertake this task, which is why they remained as before. Individual managers would instruct staff according to their own reasons, and, as revealed in the section above, many opposed these instructions and found them hard to understand. Due to limited communication on such issues that often lacked proper justification, there was disgruntled staff that would feel powerless in following these orders.

I interviewed managerial staff with regards to this, so I could better understand their perspective on managing difficult situations in the shelter. The following is an extract from a senior manager’s interview where they were asked how they manage such issues.
Just deal with the facts really. Just deal with the basics, what’s the problem. Don’t wince about it – they should just get on with it and not feel sorry for themselves because if they don’t like the job they should go somewhere else because we need people who can just get on with it and do the job and aim to get the animals out on the other end.

I find the best employees here are the ones that have done some normal work outside, like worked for McDonald’s or Subways or something and realize “hey you do as you’re told, you get on with it, you follow the procedures, and you don’t make up your own mind.

There are things that happen out there that I don’t want them to happen, and it’s so hard to get those people to change, you know their attitude, they’ve so been focused on cleaning.

(Aaron, senior manager)

Another senior manager was disappointed at the frontline staff as the level of care was not up to the standard, which was expected. In the interview, the manager questioned the integrity of shelter staff that seemed more concerned with the “politics” than doing their job. The attitudes from management, across all the interviews, were a certain amount of frustration that shelter staff “didn’t just get on with it” and perform their duties.

You realize that either people are just lazy or just more focused on themselves than maybe the task at hand and maybe more involve in the politics of this place and talking about who’s who and what and where rather than focusing on their jobs. Sub-standards are tolerated from some people but the mistakes we make are critical, they are amplified because we are dealing with living things. I mean, I can’t sleep if I think that people have left here without medicating animals, or forgotten to feed them or water them. You can’t work in this like in other processes where if it doesn’t get done today you can do it tomorrow, if it doesn’t get done today then the animal’s lives have been compromised and that’s the difference. (Rick, senior manager)

Admittedly, management faced difficult issues; however, they were removed from many of the dirty tasks and could rationalize euthanasia decisions. Furthermore, full information and understanding of ANIMA policy and process at a managerial level seemed to create a “bigger picture” approach to dealing with the issues. This was difficult to reconcile for animal attendants who were actually “doing” the euthanasia and had formed bonds with the animals that were affected, as communication was limited at the best of times or non-existent at others. There was a strong sense of those “in the know” and those not, revealing how access to knowledge was a powerful factor in coping with emotional conflicts.

I try to stay positive, as long as there is an improvement in process. (Rick, senior manager)

I look at the big picture. (Aaron, senior manager)

The fear and uncertainty of being shelter staff in comparison to management creates a distrust as well as suspicion when they are seen to fluctuate policy while shelter staff cannot. This combined with a lack of social skills among the managers created a toxic environment where there was an “us vs. them” attitude on both sides. Some of the examples of how disillusioned frontline staff was in regards to management involved not only process issues but also bullying and harassment within the workplace. Animal attendants told me in their interviews that managers screamed, manipulated, and intimidated them regularly. None of the managers reported such instances, so it seemed that it was a source of power to try to make lower level employees feel powerless and submissive.

Will, [senior manager at ANIMA], likes to take charge without really knowing what he’s doing. He like screamed in Jill’s face in front of a group of people. He followed me around central one day and got right in my face, asking me where I lived, how old I am, asking me why I think I...
Should be in this job? Put me in tears by the end of it, just followed me around Central one afternoon at like 4.30, to show me who’s boss, like he’d say “Hey Gloria! Have you been a good girl? You look in my eyes when you talk to me” and he was doing that like every day, he scares the crap out of me. (Gloria, AA)

Jill was on anxiety pills because she was just too scared to come to work after Will harassed her. (Gloria, AA)

Support from senior management is atrocious, there is no support, and they think we should just harden up and do our jobs. They don’t understand how it actually works in Central and things like that, they say that they do, but they don’t. My physiotherapist said that if I had received the support that I should have gotten then my back would be resolved. But because I’m not getting that, I’m in pain. (Jill, AA)

I think this is such a highly emotionally charged environment backstabbing is more than in any other job I’ve been in and there’s a thing about you know, management up there and we’re just the shit keepers, we’re like nothing. (Ruth, AA)

These extracts are from three different animal attendant interviews. They all portray how power is used in the organization to intimidate, control, ignore, and exclude frontline staff. Information about upcoming raids and other issues that affected the shelter staff were kept in secrecy; for instance, before a seizure of over a hundred Australian Cattle dogs, that were essentially wild, from a property, there were signs that something was happening. I noticed that there were more animals euthanized and “sorted”, making room for something. There were rumours floating about, but no one was prepared in terms of being emotionally ready for when the dogs arrived. Employees found out the same day as the public. When the dogs arrived at the shelter, they were a shock to see. The state they were in physically and psychologically were distressing for all of us involved. Furthermore, it was tolling to witness how resources were pulled from the “regular” animals to attend to the new black tag (BT) dogs. Veterinary staff, behavioural staff as well as animal attendants were centred on the BTs. However, simultaneously, the same amount of normal cases was coming into the shelter. As a result of the pooled resources to deal with the seized dogs, the regular animals got a quicker and less thorough treatment of care.

5.1.1.5. Support

An essential motivator for job satisfaction and empowerment is adequate managerial support to perform a work-role in an efficient way. In ANIMA, there was limited managerial support for frontline staff. The most powerful support came from outside the organization in terms of union support and inside the organization in terms of team support.

Senior management are just bullies. I’m glad I’m in the union, put it that way - I’ve used them a couple of times. (Ruth, AA)

Support from senior management is atrocious, there is no support, and they think we should just harden up and do our jobs. They don’t understand how it actually works in Central and things like that, they say they do, but they don’t. There’s no respect. They know I’m active in the union, so they’re a bit scared of me though. (Jill, AA)

Animal attendants look after so many animals, but get no backing, instead are told that they aren’t doing a good enough job, but yet how can they? The sections are way to big to handle by yourself. (Mary, AA)

Support network is mainly ground-level staff. I don’t feel supported by management. There’s not a lot of respect, we aren’t made to feel as part of the process – it us vs. them. (Maggie, AA)
I observed the “silo-culture” on a daily basis, as few frontline staff members would interact with management. There simply was no time to build relationships with management when animals needed to be cared for. On the few occasions when management brought the employees together for a workshop or training session, there would be hostility, suspicion, and avoidance among the lower level staff due to disillusionment from past broken promises of better communication.

A lot of us long-timers just go why ask our feedback and opinions? Nobody gets the opportunity for even small things like a forklift license. In staff meetings, it’s the same questions, same issues, but nothing comes about it. They (management) just tick a box that they asked, they ‘showed an interest’ but that’s where it stops. (Mary, AA)

After one staff meeting, I too felt the disappointment of limited outcomes as a result of a much hyped feedback session held by senior managers. Not only did management make the attempts futile, the limited social and communication skills by managers frustrated and alienated lower level staff. Having been used to voice my opinions, I was vocal in meetings as well as with my feedback to management when asked. This was not the norm among my peers of animal attendants. As a result, I was under the false impression of being able to discuss issues with management and, in a conflict situation such as when I faced my first puppy euthanasia, I sought support from senior managers unsuccessfully. Hence, unless the animal attendant was willing to privately care for the animal, as was the case of Lady, there was no support by supervisors.

5.1.2. Lady’s poem

Huddled,
tight,
pressing against me
“don’t kick me!”
Night air vibrates old fear
distant siren -
“come back!”
she nuzzles me
content.

5.1.3. Summary of “A story of hidden voices”

This section revealed how power was lacking in the work role. There were strong undercurrents of disillusionment and conflict felt as a result, both in terms of the outcomes for animals and how management constricted employees to do a mechanical job of animal husbandry while often ignoring emotional attachments and conflicts faced by employees. Avoiding difficult issues and limiting employee decision-making created stress and often challenged individual coping processes. Leadership in the organization was based on a top-heavy bureaucratic business model, which was often at odds with the value-based motivation that employees felt in regards to their job. Managerial support was limited and, instead, employees found that support among others in similar situations was crucial in order to cope with the demands of the work role. The event of Lady portrays the conflicting powerlessness of saving animals with the constrictions of individual resources of finding “other” solutions than euthanasia. This posed employees with compassion fatigue and its associated inflictions. Being in a constant battle of disillusionment regarding the motives of the organization and what
employees were forced to settle for drained personal resources. For many of the animal attendants, including myself, a degree of the moral conflict invoked by the euthanasia at ANIMA, was slightly alleviated by succeeding to save at least one animal by revoking a decision.

5.2. The stormy summer

This second mini-case explores the dimension on “Organization and Power”. I have named it “the stormy summer” as it reveals the breakdown of communication and organizational processes during a crisis. Also, positive outcomes come out of the event, which deals directly with the gap of power in Positive Organizational Scholarship explored in the following chapter.

The summer of 2010 - 2011 was unusually stormy in Australia. It included severe flooding and cyclones. This caused havoc not only to businesses, infrastructure, and structures but also displaced, stressed, injured and killed domesticated animals, wildlife, and livestock. ANIMA’s shelter was also flooded and evacuated. Approximately 300 animals were placed in temporary foster care, and the shelter was closed for several months. During this time, I was an animal attendant at ANIMA and involved in a dramatic shelter evacuation as well as in the consequent clean up in the shelter. The incident was fraught with chaos, and diary entries, as well as subsequent interviews, reveal a lack of leadership, responsibility, communication, but surprisingly, also, some positive outcomes.

5.2.1. Organization and Power

The floods presented ANIMA with a loss of power (both in terms of electrical shortage as well as powerlessness in terms of a natural disaster), as they had to evacuate without much of a plan. Even though staff had asked on numerous occasions leading up to the flood about evacuation processes, management remained certain that flood levels would be lower than predicted. This is why no formal evacuation plans or process was discussed with staff, and why, on the day of the floods it, was pure chaos. As those with decision-making authority neglected to face the potential evacuation as a reality, animal attendants (and other lower level staff) were forced to round animals together, match those suitable with emergency foster families, and try to figure out by themselves ways to save the animals. Amazingly, no shelter animal lost their life. However, this was a direct result of the frontline staff being able to evacuate without senior management support.

I double-checked the pens quickly. We had just transferred the last dogs out and I remembered the geriatric ward. When I got there I could hear a soft whimpering. Opening the door to the small, dark pen a huge grey shadow jumped up on me almost toppling me over. The dog tried to climb up into my lap, but failed miserably as his long hind legs were flopping down in his panicked excitement. I looked into his big brown eyes and said hello to my third foster-dog who I later named Boris.

Somebody tried to squeeze Boris into a crate. It looked ridiculous in the midst of the chaos. The large Irish wolfhound looked out from behind the wires at me, pleading. I sighed – put him on a lead and ran to find my car before it too would be flooded.

31 Specific details of the destruction incurred during this time are suppressed due to anonymity.
“You’re taking him? He scares me” Will looked at me frightened from behind his macho moustache. “Well you creep everybody else out, so I wouldn’t be talking” I thought to myself while trying to find my car among the street, which now was crammed with people and emergency vehicles.

Diary entry 17/1/2011

Boris’ story

Boris was a stray Irish wolfhound who had been found around New Years wandering the streets in a well-to-do suburb. When he came into the shelter, he was placed in a small pen reserved for the sick, old or pregnant dogs as he had high anxiety levels. When the floods forced the evacuation and I took him home, he had been in the shelter for several weeks without processing. I never found out why, but some animals just were “missed” in the daily rushed routine.

For seven weeks, I trained Boris to walk on a lead, sleep inside, and stop peeing on my bed. As the shelter was being cleaned up, the behavioural assessment happened in my home. I was nervous, and it felt a bit intrusive when Maggie came over to assess Boris. He passed the five-minute assessment easily. It was nothing like the one at the shelter. A family who had wanted a “Maltese Shih Tzu-type” dog then adopted him. A week later, he was returned back to the shelter and after spending time in the pens not coping, I was given him back on foster care. I would spend the next month interviewing and assessing potential adoptive families, as I no longer trusted ANIMA to find a suitable home for him. I felt that they wanted to adopt the animals to anybody at this point as the shelter was barely up and running after the floods. Boris became a favourite at home among my family who were visiting from overseas. Ianguished at the thought of him leaving me, but walking him along with my other two dogs was too big a challenge. I often had to do two separate walks to be able to handle him even with a head and body harness due to his high energy levels. I felt tired of caring for two foster dogs as I also had Lady who required special medical and behavioural attention. However, this was nothing exceptional as all other employees at ANIMA were using their free time, money, and home to care for foster animals alongside their own private animals.

Eventually, I found a suitable home for Boris. Unfortunately, he was diagnosed two months later with bone cancer. It was devastating for the new owner as well as myself, who had loved the “big boy”. His new owner decided to treat him and spent a year battling the cancer with chemotherapy. I visited him several times and was saddened by the demise in his health, however, it helped that he was in a loving home. His owner contacted ANIMA with inquiries on how his health issues could have been missed during desexing but was never given an explanation. I did not find the miss very surprising as I had done training in the desexing ward and knew how quick the procedural was with no extra tests or examinations. Boris passed away a year later when his chemotherapy was unsuccessful in the long run. Towards the end, I lost contact with his owner. I think I tried to shield the sorrow of his death by distancing myself. Boris taught me that even with a positive adoption outcome, the emotionality of getting attached to the animals was high and even with the best intentions, and sometimes the outcome was less positive in the end. Many of the other employees at ANIMA also kept in touch with past foster dogs. Successful adoptions that were based on staff fostering were framed as one of the few positive things in our work.

Reflection 12/12/2012
5.2.1.1. Lack of communication

There was a clear lack of responsibility by management in preparations for the evacuation. One day before the evacuation, it was clear that communications had fallen, and there was no display of leadership within the organization or to the general public. Staff was left wondering about what would happen and management kept quiet repeating, “it wouldn’t be so bad”. After having failed to reach the shelter by phone, I texted my supervisor to volunteer on the day the Bureau of Meteorology had predicted the floodwater to hit the shelter. Social media sites were full of people wanting to help the shelter but without getting any advice. Having received no contact, I decided to drive down to the shelter the day the flood hit. The following is an extract from my diary of the day:

The floods came, and the unthinkable happened. When I got to the shelter at 8 a.m. I was not really prepared for what I saw. Electricity had been switched off, and, in the darkness of the tearoom, there was staff already soaked from the floodwater and sweating in the humidity. They all had a wild, frenzied look on their faces running around without talking. Nobody was in charge.

I started emptying the cat building as the floodwater was increasingly filling the rooms. There were not enough cat carry-cages to transport the cats out in, so the other animal attendants and I took the cat holding cages apart. There was cat excrement everywhere and the cats were very terrified. While we worked trying to get all the cats out, the brown, foul, floodwater came above my knees.

There was confusion and people standing around wanting to help but not knowing what to do. Management later admitted that they had predicted floodwater up to the feed shed, but it went much, much higher. The shelter was almost completely under water within hours.

Staff worked together, and there were public citizens helping who had never even been to the shelter before. Social media was filled with people wanting to help the animals. One lady had a property with ten acres and wanted to foster animals – people just really pulled together and pitched in.

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\(^{32}\) Image courtesy of E.
Some people freaked out, started crying and could not handle the emotionality of the evacuation. There were people taking pictures of the rising water levels, film crews filming animal attendants while they were trying to evacuate the animals. Nobody knew when the water would stop or what to do with all the displaced animals. Numbers and descriptions of animals were being scribbled down along with telephone numbers of public persons who had volunteered to foster a displaced animal. No formal communication systems were working and all technology was shut down.

Staff dealing with the crisis in different ways: one was handing out water, another was freaking out and just sobbing in a corner. I think the emotional exhaustion was too much. Managers were roaming around without direction, not really doing anything. The reception area of the shelter (which was still dry) was filled with people who wanted to foster and help out. There was the look of bewilderment on everybody’s face, while trying to manage multiple animals that felt the tension in the air.

It was such a hot and sticky day. No rain - only a very, very hot sun. I was tired but happy when I got home. I could not believe we had managed to save all the animals! It was a giant victory and I felt like management got what they deserved. The heroes were the animal attendants who stepped up and took it upon themselves to figure the situation out without any help from their supervisors. It was a bittersweet victory as I realized that there probably would be little appreciation for the extraordinary efforts of the low level staff. Secretly, I also hoped that the foster families who were given a pet to care for until the shelter was functional again would get so attached to their foster animals that they would adopt them.

Diary entry 17/1/2011

The passage clearly reflects the frustration of the uncoordinated actions of those in a management position. The lack of leadership or even managerial visibility on the ground during the evacuation was quite dramatic. It was the animal attendants and customer service staff who rallied in the dirty water. Those who regularly were not in contact with the dirty tasks in the shelter were absent.

It wouldn’t be very wise to participate in the mud. Because obviously I could very clearly see that it was going to be a very toxic environment. (Wendy, manager)

The evacuation also forced staff to consider the issues, which they usually avoided and found confronting such as handling the dead bodies from the freezer room. Body collection to the rubbish tip was handled by contractors who would twice weekly park in front of central and wheel the garbage bins with the dead bodies into their trucks.

Figure 13 Picture 1133 The floodwater hit the shelter roofs at ANIMA. This is the building Lady had been housed in.

33 Image courtesy of S.S.com
I was like “ah, yeah, what about central? Bodies?” So I went to two managers, and they were like “oh, yeah, we hadn’t thought of that (Ruth, AA)

Even valuable equipment was largely forgotten and did not get moved before the evacuation. This led to costly delays in terms of time spent on cleaning as well as repurchasing the equipment. Again, it was the frontline staff that managed to salvage some materials and did so at the expense of their health.

Because all the animals were out so I was like “I want to go back and try to get some equipment”. So I got out three anaesthesia machines, dental machines, so probably about $35000 worth of equipment. I got cut with a scalpel because I was doing the pathology bin as well. I basically worked 7 days straight and did a lot of the dirty work, watering down the muddied rooms. And then I had three days off and I’ve never been so sick in my life. I just wanted to die. So, that sort of pissed me off, no thank you, not anything. And I actually did bring that up with my boss, and he was like “don’t you remember I did thank you” and I was like “well, it must have been a bit underwhelming otherwise I’d remember (Ruth, AA)

This shows the limited acknowledgment by management of efforts that lower level employees dealt during evacuation. Interestingly, in the time leading up to the evacuation, staff was ordered to complete meaningless tasks (for example, buying tin food). If staff had been properly informed, or allowed to start moving things out of the shelter, time could have been spent salvaging documentations or trying to find suitable foster-care or holding facilities for the animals.

We were told to get canned food. That was crazy, something I’ve never experienced before, completely useless, but it is difficult when your manager tells you to leave the shelter and busy yourself elsewhere. It was utterly heartbreaking opening our door to our office and see everything that we had worked so hard on had just been completely ruined, destroyed by the floodwater. We had been told by managers to take everything out of the bottom draws and put them on the top draws. I mean, the water came up to the top of our roof so it was absolutely pointless, but I don’t think people prepared or realized it was going to be as bad as it was. I don’t know why though, given all the information we already had about what was going to happen. (Lucy, HR)

I saw staff getting more and more stressed and more burnt out, over the period of say five days. I think without the overwhelming support of the community we would have been sunk, absolutely. I don’t think the animals received the best duty of care they could have with better planning. Many people would not have been given the opportunity to adopt the displaced animals and I feel that they have been given that opportunity inappropriately sometimes. There was one animal in particular that almost lost its life because it was put into the wrong foster home and not set up for success there and ended up biting a child (John, AA)

The “free for all” attitude of giving the care of an animal to random people could have been costly for the organization. Most of the people wanting to help house an animal seemed well meaning, but there was limited conversation as to appropriate care for the animals they took. As the phone lines were jammed after the floods, both with people trying to help as well as those trying to be reunited with their own lost pets, it would have been very difficult to contact ANIMA. Positive thinking seemed the prevalent plan as well as hoping for the best outcome for the animals involved.

On the other hand, management blamed the chaos of the evacuation on the low level staff, specifically the animal attendants. This was because identifying the animals proved difficult, as several animals were not micro chipped or tagged (which is mandatory according to ANIMA protocol).

So, we had to evacuate quicker than expected. Now, that could have gone a bit better. If the staff had done what they should have done all the time – make sure the animals had a microchip or had a label on them – it would have been much better. That wasn’t in place. But anyway, we evacuated ok. I felt sorry for some of the managers because some of them had been on call since
before Christmas another shelter was hit by a cyclone. So, by the floods management were getting a bit tired. (Aaron, senior manager)

Only animals up for adoption are micro chipped and often with the shelter tags, the tags fall off the animal collars. As there was only one staff member making notes by the entrance where the animals were leaving, it was later difficult to know where an animal had gone. Management offered sympathy to managers, but there was no mention of frontline staff or those involved in the evacuation in positive terms.

The ground staff assumed responsibility for the evacuation, arranging themselves and volunteers to evacuate the animals. This was the priority for everybody during the evacuation. People, who were not used to initiating action, broke down as I observed in the diary entry above. On the ground level, there was a unity among different departments, which was unusual for everyday activities. However, this was mainly among those involved in dirty tasks in their respective departments.

It was very draining on a lot of people. At the same time, I think it’s been great for a lot of people to get together and have that real feeling of bonding and working together where I think they all did throughout the floods. What I’ve found though, recently, is that we have all disintegrated back into our own little silos. I find that awful. It was so nice to see everybody pitching in together. (Wendy, manager)

There was also a clear lack of responsibility of owners who, after the floods, surrendered their animals. In the midst of chaos, it was the animals that suffered or, in the worst cases, were left behind and even died as a consequence.

It was a bit eerie and I think some of the staff were a bit freaked out. It was weird, working here without hearing any animals, it was really strange. Now, with some animals that have been returned, the pens are very chaotic. The dogs are just very reactive and loud. Maybe that’s a combination of people who since the floods haven’t had the time or the energy to put into their animals and then eventually decide to surrender them. So, when we get them now here at the shelter, they are pretty much at the worst that they can be in terms of behaviour. (Sue, AA)

Ultimately when it comes down to it we (the low level staff) make it work. I thought that it was a big risk asking the public just to come and grab a dog. HUGE risk, but this is ANIMA and it always works out, somehow. I guess we were lucky, but I don’t think it was through good planning, let’s say that. (Sue, AA)

The lack of leadership was community-wide, as the temporary shelters for flood-victims did not accept pets. This meant that many animals were left behind during community evacuation or the people refused to evacuate as a result. The devastating images of dead horses floating down a flooded street haunted me for weeks.

I had only completed three out of the twenty interviews before the floods and, because it halted organizational life, my interviews were cancelled. It took several months until after the re-opening of the shelter for staff to agree to be interviewed.

As a casual employee, there was limited information about the evacuation and technology was shut off in the shelter. Very little was communicated afterwards, and everything was very ad hoc. The most concerning issue was to get the animals out (there were no casualties). However, the lack of information from management lead to frustrations among staff that felt ignored and neglected yet who were faced with the actual evacuation.

There was a complete lack of communication from management. It almost felt like they were too scared to say anything. It was a nuthouse, it was absolutely ridiculous, we were talking about it on the ground staff days before, what we were going to do, are people going to stay here
overnight in case things happen. It was not taken on board at all what we had to say, and then we come in the next day and half the shelter is completely flooded. (Jill, AA)

I found it very confusing. Nobody knew what was going on, nobody could tell you what was going on. You got no direction whatsoever. It was really confusing .It was ridiculous! Nobody still knows what’s going on a month later. (Gloria, AA)

I think it was handled well initially, but how it is still today, it is very confusing. Nobody knows what we are doing; nobody wants to make decisions about the dogs. I've been trying to keep myself busy outside the shelter like doing behavioural assessments on dogs in foster care so they can be up for adoption. But nobody is directing, informing or supervising me. (Maggie, AA)

The limited communication meant that little was done in preparation of evacuating the animals. Once it became clear that the pens and the buildings were going under water, it was the animal attendants that waded into the water and moved the animals incrementally upwards as water was flooding lower areas.

I took the Bull Mastiff from the flooded pen and stuck him into a cat enclosure. There was nothing else. I tried to ask a manager of who was in charge? He told me to figure it out while posing for media cameras. The dog barely fit into the cat enclosure, but at least he was out of the water. He was scared as people were running around, shouting - there was tension in the air. This was the first time for days he was outside the confines of his pen only to be put into a smaller one. It was terrible and so unnecessary.

Diary entry 17/1/2011

The entry showed the frustration I felt alongside the other animal attendants at the lack of direction and how we felt the animals were compromised as a result. As the other animal attendants and I found ourselves in a situation where we had to find storage room for hundreds of animals in a few hours, it was disheartening to observe managers who had limited our preparation to the flood stand by posing for media. Up to this point, I had reserved judgment of how ANIMA was led, but witnessing other animal attendants risk their welfare to save the animals (and even ANIMA property such as valuable veterinary equipment); I felt a real dislike and disappointment in those who were in supervisory positions. Wading through the toxic water, and later in line for tetanus vaccinations, I felt a real camaraderie among us “shit-pickers”.

5.2.1.2. Positive outcomes

Besides bringing unity to the ground staff, the floods did bring some positive issues according to the interviews. One such issue was that euthanasia was stopped as Central was flooded. Another was the community outreach by helping members of the public.

Well, I was pretty gob smacked. You just can’t comprehend, you can’t understand. Because you had seen the night before that the water was at the end of the road but you didn’t think it was going to get any worse than that. The first thing I said when I got into the shelter the morning of the evacuation was “have we lost anything?” You know, because the kennels had gone under and we had left dogs in them the night before. It was chaos, it was manic, people were just – I guess it is a sight to see somebody dragging a sheep down the road and somebody has a peacock in their car and in this crisis, this experience, we certainly all pulled together, but it was manic (Lauren, AA)

I must have been THE most excited person with the floods because all I could think of was “they can’t be putting any animals to sleep because Central is under water”. So, I was very excited about that. The thing that impressed me the most was the public coming here to pick up animals and help house them. There was a guy who came in for a puppy and got a rooster. (Cassie, AA)
The best thing was probably on the day when we evacuated for the floods and there were just hundreds of members of the public here willing to take animals out on foster. That was, I just stood back and went “wow, this is really good”. It’s nice to see that positivity in the community and sort of attitude and I guess that only comes out in really big disasters and stuff like that. But it was nice to see and a good moment to be a part of the team here. (Anna, AA)

I’m just trying to choose my words – in my experience the communication from management was awful, but the vibe, the positivity - it was just astounding. Seeing people cue and help us to shovel mud and clean and do stuff. Animal attendants showing up on their days off saying “right, what do we need to do?” Someone said that they had been here the day we were evacuating the animals and said it was like Noah’s ark. There were people streaming up the road with different animals and that to me, that hideous, awful event just brought out the best in people. And I hope staff recognizes it, but I hope it was nice for staff to see all these people falling over themselves to come and help us and seeing that positive side of the human race. (Betty, senior manager)

Teamwork excelling during crisis situations is a well-documented phenomenon. Interestingly, it was the frontline staff that managed this best while management reported in their interviews a focus on the negatives and mainly applauding the public in the evacuation.

The shelter reopened seven weeks after it was evacuated. Three quarters of the shelter was flooded, amounting to over 1 million Australian dollars in damages. As a new ANIMA shelter was being built elsewhere, only the necessary reparations were fixed. What has been called the “mud-army” by media, consisted of volunteers, staff members, and people from the public who showed up to volunteer their time for cleaning up the aftermath of the flood. It is hard to describe the goodwill and positive climate that existed during the clean up; everybody was relieved that there had been no human and animal casualties in the floods. There was a sense of hopefulness and trust in the public, who had come out and offered temporary foster care for the 300 animals that were displaced when the shelter was inundated. However, most of the hidden voices, those of the animals who remained homeless and unwanted as well as those silenced, those of the low level staff (for example, the animal attendants) who were actively involved in the evacuation, were unaccounted for as the positive story of no casualties became the discourse.

Figure 14 Picture 12 Animal attendants and public volunteers arranging animal transportation in front of ANIMA.

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34 Image courtesy of the C.M.com
5.2.1.3. Organizational processes

The floods event showed evidence of several breakdowns in organizational processes. Every animal coming into the shelter is to be assigned a “shelter tag” which is placed on the animal’s collar. It has an ID number on it which links to the animal’s file on ‘Shelter mate’, computer software. Without this system, there would be confusion and disarray of the hundreds of animals in the shelter. As the tag is loose on the collar, it can easily get lost or even confused with another’s. As the daily duties are always rushed, there is little focus placed on checking if the right animal has the right tag. This can be detrimental to animals with special needs such as illnesses that require consistent medications. During the floods, this became evident as many of the animals were missing their tags. In the few hours during evacuation, a list was hastily compiled of tags along with descriptions for those without.

Had the staff done what they should have done all the time – make sure the animals had a microchip or label on them - that wasn’t in place - it would have been a lot easier. (Aaron, senior manager)

The reality of it is that because we are all so busy, it’s often difficult to get those processes and policies in place to help us do our jobs better, because we are just so focused on just getting work done as fast as we can and then moving on to the next thing that needs to be done. (Lucy, AA)

Processes neglected to factor in the unexpected issues that were everyday life in the organization. Issues included covering two sections instead of one, having inadequate volunteers or animals that required extra attention because they had injured themselves or were ill and needed treatment or another animal attendant leaving the section undersupplied the day before. The routine was rushed and consisted of several components that were out of the animal attendants’ hands to control. The high workload, frequent interruptions, and short timeframe forced staff many times to compromise standards. The high workload, short staffing, and frequent interruptions led to the organizational processes not being followed. It was usually only in unusual circumstances this was noticed on a higher managerial level such as during the floods. So while there was a system in place, it failed to recognize the reality of the job.
I think we could use additional resources to put into training and reinforce those behaviours that we want. There are still going to be those cultural issues that are people's priorities. Like some people's priorities is to fill every possible space of animals and that’s our role and that we should be reducing our euthanasia rates and be putting more effort into the animals. There needs to be a balance with where the best investment of our time is within this frame. (Rick, senior manager)

Most of the standard operating processes were too general and did not reflect the reality of working in the shelter. Therefore, there was poor transparency to which ones were to be followed and which ones were less important. As part of new staff induction into the organization, these were given and read through on a training day. There was no reflection nor was there any adaptation made to these operating processes to help newcomers learn how to apply them.

Many of lower and middle level staff members found the organization top heavy which according to them lead to a lack of decision-making, transparency, and accountability. The few formal channels of communication were evident during the floods when staff was left without direction in the evacuation. There was no clear leadership on the scene, and instead there was reliance upon the animal attendants to sort out a way. On several occasions, I asked managers about what we were supposed to be doing and none could offer any advice. This pinpointed the problem that the shelter staff faced on a daily basis; they had little control of decision-making power, yet were asked to figure things out for themselves.

There are just so many people in the mix until it comes down to an operational level. There is no understanding of who has the power – or authority to make what decision. (Wendy, AA)

Therefore, issues brought on frustration and indecision and took its toll on those who are most affected – those on the frontline caring for the animals. As these employees are directly affected in the care they can provide to the animals, limited decision-making power and antiquated or insufficient processes lead to a decreased level of care.

An example would be that we had an animal that was post-flood and was presented to us with a broken leg and because of resources we usually just manage the pain of animals while they do their stray time, we don’t invest very much, we don’t have the resources to do that. It sat there for 5 days when it became clear that it did have a microchip and we contacted the owners who were furious. (Rick, senior manager)

The process is to scan every animal for a microchip when they enter the shelter. Either a customer agent service or the animal attendant does this. This is then recorded in the animal’s file as well as on the white board in front of its pen. It is not unusual for the scanners to malfunction or for the animal to be so anxious upon arrival that no chip can be found. In this specific case, the scanner had worked, yet nobody could be found to be held accountable for what a manager concluded was:

a human error. But there are many examples where we have euthanized animals that were people’s pets when a microchip wasn’t detected, overlooking things - just that lack of attention to detail. (Rick, senior manager)

As an animal attendant, having worked with the individuals in question, I find it questionable whether it was down to a human error. I had on numerous occasions worked with the scanners not working, the animal being un-cooperative or simply that the work-task of scanning a chip was overlooked due to more pressing issues. To management such protocol would trump what we as animal attendants felt was duty of care to the animals – providing food, warmth, and shelter. In this instance, I believe that the processes truly did not reflect the reality of what an AA dealt with in their daily tasks. On the other hand, I can see it as a possibility due to the limited training involved
in being an AA. Therefore, organizational processes, no matter the intention behind them, were often unrealistic in light of the work-burden that frontline staff dealt with.

5.2.2. A final poem...

Shackles floating
chain me to reality.
Silence
echoes
dead -
uncertainty.
A fluid dark blanket hides
cruelty and hope.
Bodies float by.
Change – avoided.
Pause – pressed.
Death – resumed.
Cameras retire -
interest sways.
Chaos,
organized again.

5.2.3. Summary of “The Stormy Summer”

The stormy summer of 2010 – 2011 with the flood that closed the animal shelter was an exceptional incident. However, such incidents can reveal much about organizational life as it becomes exposed in a greater way than during everyday actions. The floods illustrated some power struggles within the organization. The lack of communication, organizational processes, and leadership restricted employees to plan ahead for the evacuation of the shelter. Procedurals and duty to care for the shelter animals were compromised as a result. Management was visibly absent during the crisis and lower level employees were left to find a way to handle the flooded shelter. The employees rallied together to evacuate the shelter successfully and as the organization came to a halt when inundated with water, so too did the euthanasia which was considered a good thing. Furthermore, the goodwill and support from the public energized staff and through fostering the animals, there was a higher level of public responsibility to deal with unwanted animals. This showed that when systems broke down during the crisis, the public was ready to support the organization.

5.3. Euthanasia - business as usual

This third mini-case explores the dimension on “Individual and Power”. I have called this case: “euthanasia – business as usual” as it explores the emotional management, and disconnect of conducting euthanasia at the shelter. This refers to the gap in the literature on emotions in organizations and how power (or rather the lack thereof) affects the individual.

One of the main controversial issues for animal shelters in Australia is whether or not they euthanize animals. There are no-kill shelters that regulate the intake of animals, and those animals chosen are put up for adoption if healthy. The majority of animal shelters are, what is labelled as, “kill-shelters”, which euthanize animals not only based on health reasons but also in terms of resources such as space and time, as well as adoptability. The adoptability of animals can depend on breed, age, behaviour as well
as what is already available for adoption. For example, if there are many black dogs available for adoption then it is undesirable to process through more black dogs as shelters want a variety of animals in their adoption pens to attract the public. Furthermore, specific breeds, such as working dogs (for example, Australian Cattle dogs, Kelpies, Border Collies), require more attention from prospective adoptive families. Suburban animal shelters have an oversupply of these breeds due to behavioural issues as a result of limited activity. Smaller breeds are more popular, and breeds like mastiffs, Dobermans, and Rottweiler are more likely to be euthanized due to poor socialization and behavioural issues. These breeds, if put up for adoption, often have strict adoption requirements such as no young children or other animals in the family. This limits the adoptability and attraction of such dogs.

Figure 16 Picture 14 An oversupply of working dog breeds at ANIMA (image of Australian Cattle dog puppies at ANIMA).

Euthanasia is the “easiest” and fastest way of coping with an oversupply of domestic animals in a society such as Australia, which has an unregulated market of domestic animals. There is a large problem with “backyard” breeders and puppy farms that often supply the pet shops with cute puppies and kittens. These animals often come from miserable conditions, and there is still a large-scale ignorance in society regarding the situation and health of such animals. Furthermore, a combination of limited knowledge of the benefits of early de-sexing, warm weather, and a tradition of keeping dogs outdoor, often unattended for long periods of time, results in “accidental” litters. Educational campaigns have so far had limited success, and short-term attitudes reflect some shocking behaviours. For example, shelters are crowded during holiday periods with surrenders as some people are unable (or unwilling) to provide care for animals when they are travelling. Many of these people would buy or adopt a new animal upon returning home thus propagating a demand for “cute” animals that did not consider less-than-perfect specimens, which often was surrendered.

5.3.1. Individuals and Power

Animal shelters exist due to an oversupply of unwanted domesticated animals. The buy-and-spend attitude of many western societies influences the pet market as a lucrative business opportunity with limited regulations. Animals are considered property and, therefore, owners are often free to manage the animals’ reproduction in

35 Courtesy of the C.M.com
profit-making ways. This leads to unregulated breeding and issues such as factory farming pets in puppy mills. Legislation in Australia still allows for such business ventures, which has repeatedly been shown to break animal welfare standards.

There is little individuals can do to change the legislation on puppy mills and breeding unless it becomes a governmental issue. Politicians do not have this as a primary issue in parliament, and, therefore, little happens, other than the media’s exposés on the horrors. These puppies are foremost sold over the Internet or in puppy shops. There are limited health issues known of the puppies or even consultation on breed specific requirements for the dog’s wellbeing (for example, Kelpies need high energy activities, and Rottweiler need to be included in family life due to their high need of social attachment). Therefore, individuals often acquire pets that do not fit their lifestyle, activity level, interest or housing. This poor fit creates a problem whereby the owner often surrenders the animal to a shelter.

Animal health and behavioural treatment is often very costly. Proper care of domesticated animals are far more expensive than many realize when buying or adopting a pet without the correct information. There are now pet insurances that subsides the caring costs, however, as many people euthanize their pets if they require treatment. Surrendering these animals to a shelter is another way of avoidance. There are also multiple issues where irresponsible pet ownership leads to the animal being handed to an animal shelter.

There was little employees could do to limit the steady inflow of unwanted animals. In a way, this was a societal solution to an individual problem. Within the shelter, there prevailed a similar culture of normality surrounding pet surrendering and destruction. Individual animal attendants had very little power to save animals that were not deemed “adoptable”. The following extract involves a specific incident with a young puppy that had come into the shelter as a stray with a littermate. The veterinarian had marked the puppy for euthanasia, while his brother was to go to be desexed and then be put up for adoption. The failed puppy had an under bite and was being euthanized because it would require surgery to fix its mouth. Another animal attendant took the puppy to Central instead of me, as I was very conflicted about the decision. The following depicts the incident, taken from my diary entries.

The puppy was marked for euthanasia. I held him in my arms and took him around the shelter trying to find somebody with enough decision-making power that I could plead his case. I found a manager and begged for the puppy to be spared. She stared blankly at me and told me to see the veterinarian. The veterinarian said that the easy dental surgery to fix the puppy’s under bite was expensive and ANIMA wouldn’t foot the bill. “There are plenty of healthy puppies – if you want a puppy”.

I asked if there was any way to keep him. With tears running down my cheeks she shot me down - “No”. I do understand the financial burden that less-than-perfect beings incur on society, but death seemed too high a price. I was a mess.

Later that same day, another terrible “case” came in. A surrendered dog, neglected and abused, more dead than alive arrived with its four day old puppy-litter. I had never seen such hopelessness and defeat in a dog’s eyes. Her body was covered in ulcers that glowed hot pink where fur should grow. Her diseased body tried to shield the blind and filthy puppies. Their owner dumped them as a problem for us to solve. They had no chance for life.

I couldn’t sleep. I believed I had failed both the dogs and myself for silently enduring the emotional trauma of such unspeakable horror that, to ANIMA, was business as usual.

Diary entry 8/6/2010
The narrative reveals the moral conflict of being an animal attendant. Assuming my job would be about saving animals, it quickly became evident that it was more about “managing” society’s unwanted beings. The theme of powerlessness is portrayed through my inability to affect the outcomes in light of financial concerns and limited positional power in the organization. The employees who handle, and directly care for the animals, have little decision making influence over whether an animal lived or was euthanatized. I observed a powerful connection between the negative emotions experienced by shelter workers and the self-harm that animals caged for long period of time did to themselves. Trying to escape from the uncomfortable reality, substance abuse was commonplace, especially among those members who had trouble ascribing to a sense-making story that recognized euthanasia as a compassionate choice. As the employees had low control over outcomes, self-harm (for example substance abuse) was often an escape and the coping mechanism of choice. The animals similarly had no control and would self-harm when exposed to the shelter environment for a longer period of time. I observed animal self-harm that included stereotypes such as incessant licking or biting of limbs until raw, biting of the chicken wire around the kennels, and trying to climb walls.

Some of the most emotionalised and intensive parts of ANIMA are also the parts where the interplay between powerlessness of staff and animals align through the highly emotionalised context of loss, grief, and euthanasia. Euthanasia of animals in shelters has been labelled a “moral stressor”. The following extract demonstrates this.

Yesterday was the toughest day yet. I cried and I cried. I’m a bit embarrassed by my emotionality but I couldn’t help it. I hate the word “euthanasia” at the moment - the “good death” For whom is it good? Is it just good for us humans who don’t have to pay and care for the puppy? I just don’t know if I can continue to do this.

Diary entry 9/6/2010

Discrete negative emotions such as sadness and hopelessness are expressed through the repetition of “crying” and by statements regarding “unfair situation, inability to help them” as well as anger “what’s wrong with people?!” Sadness, hopelessness and anger are all emotions found in the tone of the entire event. These negative emotions are expressed through crying, walking around with the puppy in the shelter trying to talk to the veterinarians and the managers about saving him as well as the physical pain and emotional anguish.

I was a mess, trying to busy myself with dishwashing in a state of crying. I still woke up with an ache in my heart, like a lump or muscle that had been torn.

Diary entry 8/6/2010

Emotional management such as avoidance techniques and hiding emotions was commonly used. The meaningless physical tasks were a distraction from the more disturbing issues or moral conflict. Others felt similarly and told me,

Sometimes I just go outside and pull up some weeds in the paddocks, and then I have exhausted myself and feel better. (Anna, AA)

The physicality of the work also meant there was less energy to dwell on upsetting issues such as conflicting decisions of euthanasia.
5.3.1.1. Emotional management

In the shelter, there were daily instances of emotional regulation and surface acting when in contact with the general public. Professionalism was viewed as a front to gain distance from the humans in an unemotional manner. This also limited any compassion towards the humans who were more often than not at fault for the animal being in the shelter. One such example involved a much neglected cat and its owner. I met the owner, a US male in his early twenties, surrendering his cat at the reception of the shelter. My role was to process the cat into the system.

The cat was panicked; it had excrement all over its matted long fur and had vomited in its cat carry cage. I took the cat and placed it in a clean holding cage and informed the veterinarian that she needed to take a look at the cat. The owner was standing with his soiled cat carry cage and wanted to get it cleaned out. I told him to use the bathrooms as other staff ignored him; we were all fuming at the poor condition of his cat. I found him sobbing in the men’s bathroom, wondering if his cat had any chance of adoption.

Diary entry 17/8/2010

The staff avoided any eye contact with the man and his soiled cage stank up the reception area. He was deemed a “bad” owner by the staff-team (“ignorant bastard”) and, therefore, deserved no sympathy. The emotionality was uncomfortable for staff, and he was getting huge accusing stares by other public persons in the waiting area. The veterinarian took one quick look at the cat and decided it would be euthanized. She told me to “take it straight down to central so we can get the poor animal some peace and this god-awful stench out of the customer service area”. I took the scared cat to be euthanized, trying to regulate the disgust I felt for the owner while keeping it together from the smell coming from the cat. Animal attendants would at times put a towel or blanket over the cat carry-cages to decrease the animal’s fear, but often this was also a way to hide from the people in the adoptions area the horror inside the cages. I had to walk through the adoptions area to reach Central and I did not want to upset people who might be here to adopt somebody. Some animal attendants paid more attention to covering the cages than others; this was not something that was regulated by management rather a discretionary part of the work.

In my interviews, as well as in my participant-observations part of the study, the physicality of the work for the animal attendants was tremendous. Some used physical exhaustion as a coping-mechanism to avoid thinking about their emotional trauma, but eventually, many had serious back issues at the end of my study. In my interviews, it was confirmed that most drank and self-mediated to cope with the animal attendant work and hangovers were normal in the workplace. Dulling physical and psychological pain is normal in dirty work industries with low prestige as evident in the literature review. Even at managerial levels, the trend was mentioned to me in interviews, for instance, that sick leaves were increasing and were longer than before. Many of the mistakes that happened in the shelter were because of carelessness or laziness of individuals who had enormous strain placed upon them and trouble coping. Towards the end of my study, I too was on prescription medications, attending counselling, and exhibiting similar self-harm behaviour as the other animal attendants. My physical health deteriorated as a consequence, and the work took even more of a toll on my body than before. These issues were echoed in the interviews as the “norm” in the organization where anxiety medication, alcohol and substance abuse as well as depression were reported.

I cry, I’ll definitely have more drinks. (Jill, AA)
Drinking - this place can really dig you in a hole. I try to organize things that take me away from here. And also boxing, that releases the aggression, when you hit a bag and imagine someone’s face there. (Mary, AA)

Talking to partners and friends was reported as an important coping mechanism as well as attempting to frame situations through a more positive light. Organizational members explained that they had almost become numb to seeing the cruelty cases and neglect, that often these were business as usual at the organization. This forms a coping mechanism when emotional trauma is a constant, and there was much talk of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue as a result. I observed a rapid turnover in especially animal attendants at ANIMA, but also within middle management. In the interviews, there was a divide between interviewees who felt they managed to cope with the euthanasia, and those who did not. One-way those who felt they coped was to frame the euthanasia as a more compassionate fate for animals that would otherwise suffer in a world where they were unwanted.

In an attempt to build resilience and healthier coping-strategies, management arranged two volunteer consultants to hold a workshop for animal attendants. This was received as an imposition on individual’s choice of coping-mechanisms and that “now management was telling us what to feel when they make us kill”. For many, it simply shifted the problem of euthanatizing animals to the individual animal attendant, as s/he “could not cope with the reality of the job”. Most animal attendants had no issues with the dirty tasks, rather with the directives and reasoning behind doing them (for example, euthanasia due to space restrictions or breed popularity). The following extract is from my field diary and describes the training workshop.

Staff resilience training workshop

It was a very interesting day today at work – one I hope not to regret because I was perhaps too eager in comparison to the rest of the staff. The two facilitators were consultants who had volunteered their services for the two-hour workshop. They were both very interesting and good at their job going through stress management tools and opening up discussion about coping with emotions at work. We did some exercises in pairs and then reported to the whole group, although the active participation was very low. The overall feeling was quite hostile, and there was a general feeling of resisting a lot of what the consultants had to say as “they didn’t know what we had to deal with” according to one participant. One attendee, who many looked up to, was staring off into the distance and listening to hear “her” dogs that she had placed in a yard while she had been ordered to attend the workshop. She said that it took her away from the “real work”. Most animal attendants were quiet and refused to participate. It was not so much what happened in the workshop but outside, afterwards, that really surprised me. Everybody was ridiculing it. Actually, I was quite shocked by the overall impression that I got from the others that the workshop was a big waste of time. One animal attendant told me he felt that this was just an attempt from senior management to “put us in our place and tell us how we should be thinking”. I was very surprised, as I had thought this to be a sincere attempt at helping struggling staff members cope. A senior animal attendant compared it to a two-day work training that took place a year earlier, which had been an attempt to gain feedback from animal attendants about their work. Supposedly that had resulted in “nothing”. The overall message from the animal attendants was that “we’re not here for the people, but for the animals”. Workshops were perceived a waste of time, time that was taken away from the important part – the animals – and thus contributing to a lower level of care for the animals.

Diary entry 18/6/2010

5.3.1.2. Disconnect

There was a large pressure on animal attendants to be actively involved in the euthanasia process, and it was a main work duty. The norm was that within two months
of other shelter duties, a new animal attendant would get a day of training in Central and then commence the rotational shifts along with the other areas in the shelter. However, leniency was applied to those new animal attendants who did not feel ready for doing euthanasia. This was what I played upon, indefinitely, even amidst pressure that working in Central was an important part of our job.

If we show emotions we’ll be deemed weak that we can’t handle it and shouldn’t be working here. Those AA’s not coping might be picked on, like if they’re on certain sections like Central and they’re not coping with it, if they confess that to their managers - they’re just going to be seen as weak. (Jill, AA)

I struggled with deciding whether or not actually doing the euthanasia was essential to my study. However, I felt that the moral conflict was too great for me to euthanize animals that were healthy due to organizational constraints. Therefore, I must acknowledge that being able to resist this morally tainted task in the animal attendant’s job privileged me. Still, I did observe the effects of doing euthanasia on other animal attendants (my colleagues). Furthermore, I was almost daily involved with transporting animals into Central for euthanasia, and I, on multiple occasions, witnessed animals being euthanized. In this way, I indirectly participated in doing euthanasia but did have more of an observer role in this task. The following passages depict examples of my role when working in Central.

The dog became stiff when we approached the door. Fear shone in his big eyes and his hind legs started trembling. I had to force him through the door, pulling him after me. I didn’t want to do this. I chained him quickly to the wall and rummaged for a bone, trying to ignore the stiffened body bags that crowded the freeze room. The dog sadly looked at the bone, then me – pleading while he trembled on the cold concrete floor. I hated this! I wish I could take him home, comfort him and make him feel wanted. The veterinarian turned away from the large dog lying dead on the floor, his eyes had rolled into his head and his tongue was lying strangely on the floor. She got the syringe ready as I looked away, trying to stomach the last stare from the doomed dog I had brought in.

Diary entry 7/7/2010

Figure 17 Picture 15 Dog surrenders to her death sentence in sorrow in Central at ANIMA.

I was searching the databases for any reported lost dogs that matched the stray’s description when I heard it. A cat was scratching the metal walls of its cage trying to avoid the “cat nab”.

36 Image courtesy of I. L.
which an animal attendant was using to restrain and grab the cat. I could hear the jaws of the
nab closing, squashing the cat inside to immobilize it. The gurgling scream that followed sent
chills down my spine. I smelled a pungent odour from the cat. The veterinarian left and I was
alone with the distressed cat dying a slow, noisy death, while it emptied its bowels and bladder
on itself. Moments seemed like an eternity until the veterinarian came back to administer a
second dose on the half-dead cat. The sound of the dying cat was gone, but still rang in my
dreams for months afterwards.

Diary entry 20/9/2010

Figure 18 Picture 16

Euthanasia of dog through lethal injection at ANIMA.

One of the most frustrating issues in the shelter was the lack of responsibility and
accountability for euthanizing animals too hastily. Some of the “old-timers” complained
that new staff kept questioning decisions and that this was annoying and “newbies”
should respect the senior animal attendants’ extensive experience and knowledge of
euthanizing animals. The repeated mantra in the organization was that nobody liked to
euthanize animals but that this was the job and it had to be done. In my experience, I
witnessed too many lightly handed euthanasia verdicts, which I, as other new staff,
questioned (much to the disapproval of the many permanent animal attendants).

Figure 19 Picture 17

Dog wets herself from fear of entering Central at ANIMA.

37 A steel contraption with netting that was used to catch and immobilize distressed cats without the animal
handler being injured.
38 Image courtesy of I. L.
Emotional disconnect was also seen in the customer service treatment of the people that surrendered their animals to ANIMA. Firstly, the reception team became emotional when an elderly lady had to surrender her cat as she was moving house.

She had tried everything to keep the cat. She had had the cat for a year. She was told it would most likely be euthanized because there was no room at the shelter. I was angry with her throughout the surrendering process and wondered how she could leave her cat so lightly behind?

I knew that many of the other staff members felt similarly disgusted as I did. We avoided eye contact with the lady and there were great efforts at displaying professionalism while feeling the internal moral conflict of her actions. But, when I helped the lady with the cat, I felt a sting of sympathy for the lady and wondered what unseen issues she must have been battling with to surrender her cat at an animal shelter. I felt compelled to give some words of empathy to the sad, crying lady that I later regretted, because those who cannot be responsible pet owners should be punished – not pitied.

Diary entry 5/6/2010

ANIMA made the surrendering pet owners take their animals to the holding cages; they also have to answer a lot of questions in the front of reception (as to why they are surrendering their animal) and pay 50 Australian dollars. This is to guilt out the owners, so they would reflect on their behaviour and think twice before getting a new pet. This small retribution was the only way animal attendants could “teach the public a lesson” about responsible pet ownership. The lady in the above excerpt was given some sympathy as her actions were not deemed as “bad” as those of the man surrendering his cat before. In this way, there were different levels of “bad” owners who would receive different emotional reactions from staff.

Another experience reflecting individual applications of power involved an incident with a small dog and her owner.

Today a man surrendered a 9-year-old Chihuahua because he was homeless after his partner had died. The disapproving reception staff member told the emotional man straight away that the dog would be euthanized and not available for re-homing. However, behind the scenes a senior receptionist was choked to tears during the whole episode as she had recently lost her own Chihuahua. Once the man had left she put a hold on the dog’s file so it could not be euthanized without her knowledge. She said she might take it on, meaning that she would adopt the dog herself to avoid it being euthanized.

Diary entry 5/6/2010

This episode showed one of the many ways individuals used deviance in the organization by applying their limited power to adopting (or “saving”) certain animals. ANIMA routinely played on this, encouraging staff members to foster and adopt as many animals as possible. Many times, animals would be put down if a staff member did not assume responsibility and take the animal home. To avoid this, the animal would be paraded around the shelter and emotional blackmail was used to pressure staff to volunteer their homes and families to care for the animal. Everybody had personal favourite animals or breeds, and this was systematically played upon when doing the rounds. For example, I was always pressured into taking larger breed dogs or working with difficult Rottweiler’s because of my personal affection of the breed. Using emotional blackmail this way made many staff members feel trapped and, as most lived in rentals (where animals were not allowed), staff was forced to hide their animals and

39 Image courtesy of I. L.
dodge house inspections. The following extract is based on a diary entry and represents the emotional blackmail used in ANIMA to “save” certain animals.

Karma, a beautiful, but sick, 8-month-old puppy was patrolled in front of us by an animal attendant who was trying to convince somebody to foster her. “Linda, you could take Karma couldn’t you? You don’t have any fosters yet...?” I tried to explain my rental situation to deaf ears. I looked into the puppy’s big brown eyes and melted. Her ribs were protruding and her energy was drained. The animal attendant looked at me and made me feel guilty by saying that Karma would not survive another week in the shelter. All of us looked at the poor dog, now playing with a shoelace, unbeknown to her that we were discussing her fate. We all knew that she was then living her last days if one of us did not take her. Everybody seemed to have a better excuse than the next. The guilt hung heavy in the air around us. In the end, one of the animal attendants stepped up and volunteered. She now had her own large breed dog, three cats, a snake, rats and spiders in her house as pets. She shared a rental with others and was not allowed any pets at all.

Diary entry 19/4/2010

Furthermore, the stress of dealing with animals 10 hours a day and then coming home to a house of animals that also needed attention often created an unsustainable lifestyle for staff who were emotionally and physically drained at work and at home. “Saving” animals by fostering them was seen as one of the most positive issues in the job but also led to stress due to individuals’ already stretched and limited physical resources.

Looking after all my foster animals, with my animals, I don’t have any free time with my husband because I’m here every weekend. (Cassie, AA)

You have to acknowledge that compassion fatigue is a huge, huge factor here at ANIMA. Being involved in this industry, it’s exhausting! I think as a whole the organization takes advantage of the fact that we all want to help. They have often sent out emails recommending staff not to foster animals, but it’s hard when you are working with animals everyday day and you know that they will only be saved if you adopt or foster them. (Sue, BA/AA)

I just wanted to spend some time with my own dog after my last foster dog was adopted. But the others made me feel guilty to take more foster animals, even though I’m in a rental that doesn’t allow pets. (Jill, AA)

Fostering was seen as the only available option to those animals that borderline passed/failed in the behavioural assessment or had special needs. If nobody stepped up, the animal was euthanized as the network of foster-carers usually was used for the large animal seizures such as raids at puppy-farms. As court cases would take years, these carers were needed to house the animals that ANIMA could not euthanize, and there was a policy of “letting the foster carers in the community rest” between big cases. Hence, staff became the only viable option for individual animals that already were “property” of ANIMA, and therefore could be processed. However, there was recognition by ANIMA that staff would succumb to fostering and adopting special needs animals. In my interviews, I found that middle managers encouraged staff to take on animals if they wanted an alternative to euthanasia. At a senior management level, there was acknowledgement of this trend but also an understanding of limited resources of staff to care for animals during work-hours as well as outside work. Therefore, there existed a confusing support from managers on fostering and adoption that individuals would then frame as a battle to “save” a certain animal.

The controversy and moral conflict was not so much about performing the euthanasia, but rather how many animals were killed daily due to reasons of “too loud”, “moving house”, “having a baby”, “untrustworthy”, “barking”, “pen-running”, “resource guarding”, “timid”, “fearful”, “anxious”, “too many animals”, “no space in the shelter”, “too old”, “too young”, “pregnant” and all the minor and major health issues such as
“arthritis”, “under bite”, “overbite”, and even “bad skin”. If the animal was deemed “less than perfect”, it did not stand much of a chance to see the inside of an adoption pen. It was the lucky ones that would pass the stray/private “sort”, get through the behavioural assessment, be desexed, and put up for adoption. These then had a chance of being adopted, but many became bored, fearful, and anxious in the pens and were put asleep because of “not coping”. There were always the “long-timers”, dogs that had been up for adoption for several months, sometimes over half a year, who nobody wanted. These often became institutionalized and anxious often ending in euthanasia.

In my case, power was in choosing a dog that I was “allowed” to save. There were three Rottweiler, all with minor behavioural issues, that caused them to fail their behaviour assessment. I was attached to all three, as I had been caring and working with them on a daily basis for months. I was told to choose one that I could save (I think in an attempt by senior staff to appease my confrontational style against euthanizing Rottweiler). The first, “Lady”, had been in the shelter for three months; she was a senior dog that had lived out of a car with a homeless man. Her physique revealed years of neglect, and she had serious health issues that needed daily, costly treatments. The second candidate, “Shanti”, was a timid five-year old that had been surrendered by her family after they had decided they no longer wanted her. She was in good physical shape and had a lovely personality. The third candidate, “Thor”, was a two-year old that had been already once through ANIMA’s system and had been adopted by a family that now had abandoned him. He had behavioural issues as a result of abuse. None of these dogs would be processed through to the adoption pens as they were considered “less-than-perfect” and needed specialized attention. Therefore, their chances of finding such a home through regular adoption were low and management wanted to ensure “adoptable” dogs were available in the limited adoption space.

I worked the section where these three dogs were housed and formed a close bond with each dog during their time in the shelter. After many sleepless nights, desperate attempts and pleading to friends and neighbours for rescuing the Rottweiler, I realized that the cruel fact was that one could only be saved if I adopting the dog myself. This was a common solution in the shelter, and staff all had animals that had narrowly escaped euthanasia due to staff adopting the unwanted ones. I made a difficult choice by choosing Thor, but the shelter manager who felt he might be a danger in society as he was timid around men revoked this. This was never tested, but my pleas fell on deaf ears. I was happy to learn that my begging had paid off, and one of my neighbours had promised to save Shanti. Therefore, I went ahead to save the old one, Lady, the most difficult medical and behavioural dog. Unfortunately, the neighbour changed his mind, and Shanti was euthanized. This made the victory of saving Lady bittersweet, as two others who I had campaigned for were euthanized as a result of not finding a solution to the adoption dilemma. Such incidents were commonplace in ANIMA for several other animal attendants and show the limitations that individuals had to deal with in regards to the constrained boundaries of power that could empower (when an animal was saved) yet restrict (as management always retained veto power).

The following diary extract tells of the emotional turmoil I felt when Thor was euthanized. Having tried to champion the rescue of all three dogs, I failed on two accounts, thus learning the difficulty of finding potential new homes. It was understood within the shelter culture that we could only save a small amount, and this was usually by adopting them ourselves.

*We didn’t have resources to check-up on the adoptions so we just hope for the best. At least that’s what I was told we had to believe. Thor hadn’t been as lucky, they ruled over my way out for him.*
When it happened, I wasn’t even there. I was too much of a coward, and I was too weak to be there for him at the end. I still hate myself for that. I knew deep down that I couldn’t have taken to see him die in front of me without me kicking and screaming at whoever had to stick the needle into him. But I let him down – he died alone without anybody who cared for him.

Diary entry 29/10/2010

Euthanasia weighed heavily on ANIMA employees, whether they were actually performing the act or not. Central was (as the name suggests) in the centre of the shelter which meant it was visible as a constant reminder when at work. The building was not built for euthanizing animals and reminded me of holocaust pictures from death-camps during the Second World War. In a failed attempt to “cheer” the place up, somebody had painted the concrete walls in now-faded bright colours that I thought was more mocking than comforting. When entering Central, the first thing you saw were the warning signs “Absolutely No Volunteers” and “Staff Only” in big letters on each entrance door. The windows had been taped over to shield people from what was behind the walls, and there were heavy locks and chains on all entrances. Except for animal attendants, the veterinarians, and carefully chosen customer service members, nobody was allowed into the building. I observed that the mere thought of euthanizing animals was enough to deter others from wanting to see inside Central, and in interviews, staff told me that they trusted euthanasia was done in a humane way to those animals that had no other option. This was a safe and naïve organizational story, but one that prevailed the order of things and discouraged individuals to ask difficult questions. Euthanasia attributed directly to turnover, if not solely, then in addition to more “normal” dysfunctions in organizations such as bullying and harassment. Many animal attendants could not defend euthanizing the animals ANIMA wanted them to kill, therefore, this was a key issue for many to quit.

Figure 20 Picture 18\(^{40}\) ANIMA shelter workers “bagging” a euthanized dog while the next dog looks on.

\(^{40}\) Image courtesy of I. L.
Euthanasia of healthy animals was a morally tainted issue, even for those with many years in the animal welfare industry. The following interview excerpts reveal the hidden, dark side of the euthanasia process. The first incident reveals the inconsideration of human emotions that happened around euthanizing. The second incident shows how euthanasia decisions were often trivialized and unexplained, leaving employees with questions nobody wanted to answer.

Luke was a dog who was really, really mistreated by a guy - an alcoholic, who was homeless. Luke was raped; you name it, dragged behind moving cars, the whole nine yards. I worked with this dog for a year. If I had not had my own two dogs I would have adopted him. I was just sad that I couldn’t. Then one night when the shelter was empty, they just euthanized him. They muzzled him, they had a man straddle him because he became aggressive as he had been molested before and was traumatizes as a result. Without telling me or anybody else, he was just killed - he didn’t need to go that way. (Maggie, BA/AA)

When Chloe got put to sleep, it was pretty upsetting. Because there was no show of support for why she had to be euthanized. It was just like; “Yep, she’s going to get put to sleep, who cares”-type attitude. She had just had her puppies in the shelter. We had all worked with her for weeks before they came and then weaning them off her. Nobody even questioned it. I didn’t understand, I still don’t. But I felt that there was nothing I could do, except wonder why and cry. (Gloria, AA)

Most interviewees had specific cases involving euthanasia that was identified by them as the most upsetting issue about their work. Many animal attendants, as well as managers, cried in the interviews when remembering the cases that they had unsuccessfully fought for. This power battle was reared often, and those who fought more about decisions were labelled as “difficult” employees and would be socially excluded from social gatherings, discussions, and other supportive functions.

5.3.2. A final poem...

My final poem for this section attempts to transmit, in an artistic genre, euthanasia as business as usual in ANIMA. It is unclear who speaks and whether the toxin is the lethal intravenous injection used when euthanizing animals or substance abuse of an animal attendant, however, it is more the helpless and hopeless feeling which is the aim of the transmission. It also creates a sensory context for the reader who might never have been in a shelter environment.

Figure 21 Picture 10 Lethal injection – “the green dream”.

[^41]: Image courtesy of I. L.
I argue that this adds to the understanding of an unusual context, which few even may want to recognize due to the disturbing nature. People in the public, who after asking me what I do for work, consistently told me that they could never do that job; it would be too upsetting, heartbreaking, that they would want to save all the animals. Many interviewees mentioned the same response from people outside the organization and often expressed anger over the “ignorance of the public” and “don’t they think that it hurts me just as much?” The implication being that the members needed to become cold-hearted and initially not even like animals very much if they could do what they did (meaning euthanasia). As a result, there existed a conflict between what the members often saw as their responsibility, to care for animals abandoned by the public, and how the public viewed the organizational members.

Incense
clouds the air
reminiscent
of life
extinguished.

Steel bars frame the scene
in hollow cells
desperation cries.

Innocence touches, nudges, pleas
“What cruel destiny?”
Judged by those
trained to shield
society’s pretty picture.

Under the surface
souls rejected, unwanted, imperfect
my existence
shudders
of the inability
to withstand the toxin
pumping in veins
to live, die and forget.

Through poetry, the narrative presented earlier in this paper is given a creative form. I can reflect on the position of my powerlessness to stop the euthanasia, while echoing the purpose of the organization – to manage, not save, unwanted animals. This reality is uncomfortable for many (including myself), hence, I feel it is important to recognize especially when studying emotions in organizations. If I do not confront and communicate emotions that I feel are painful, I perpetuate the problem of “sanitized” research.

5.3.3. Summary of “euthanasia – business as usual”

Euthanasia is the ultimate example of how human domination over animals. Having an organization that manages society’s “unwanted beings” and “processing” the attractive ones through to adoption, while those deemed “unsellable” (and thus unadoptable) are euthanized, depicts the values and ethics of a society that discriminates based on loose scientific and subjective reasoning such as short behavioural assessments and breedism. There was a strong sense of powerlessness by ANIMA staff of the constant stream of unwanted animals that came into the shelter. I also felt this powerlessness, emotional and moral conflict about euthanasia as described in this section on it being business as usual. Other animal attendants, similar to myself, had been motivated to work in the animal welfare industry because of an innate motivation of wanting to save
animals. However, the reality of doing euthanasia to save space, money, and time, disillusioned ANIMA employees to the point where their coping mechanisms were stretched. Furthermore, individual power to affect change in the rigid work environment was a challenge that crossed personal boundaries into each and every employee’s home life.
6 POWER IN EMOTION

This research started as a project seeking to understand the positive side of life in organizations, that which is “positive, flourishing, and life-giving” (Cameron et al., 2004, p. 731). ANIMA, a charity organization based on the principles of compassion for animals, seemed a good fit for such an exploration. What I found, however, was both more complex and more challenging than what I had anticipated in the highly emotional context.

The purpose of this study was to advance what we know about how employees manage emotional work contexts. It used a non-profit organization as a case study for furthering our understanding of emotion in organizations. Through a combination of interviews, diary entries, and applying creative writing to the participant observations, three aggregate dimensions evolved. These, interestingly, all had underpinnings of power. Therefore, it seemed increasingly evident that emotions in organization, at least in ANIMA, could not be discussed without an understanding of the central and complex nature of power dynamics. Therefore, I use power here in my discussion section, as an analytical tool to understand organizational life in ANIMA similar to that of Steven Lukes (Dowding, 2006). This links back to Figure 1 from my theoretical framework as emotion becomes an “emergent force” that is “subjective” in my study of ANIMA (as per Callahan & McCollum, 2002). In my study, then, the focus is within the “Power” sphere, however, differently than what is mentioned in the article by Callahan and McCollum (2002). Instead of focusing on how power affects emotions in an organization, my study has looked at emotions in an organization and the outcome is power. This is a small, but vital difference in how to understand emotions in the organization and to explain the context. Power, as the analytical tool, is the underpinning of what emotions were felt, how, and by whom. Therefore, the discussion is structured through this power lens below in three sections, which all link to my theoretical research questions. Figure 4 illustrates the following three sections and section 6.5 deals with the methodological research question.

![Figure 22 How power influences coping-strategies in an animal shelter](image-url)
6.1. **Coping mechanisms in an animal shelter**

My literature review found that there are limited studies looking at the critical approach to emotions in organizations. Another gap found, was that few studies have focused on nonprofits as a context for emotions research in a more discrete manner – acknowledging the uniqueness involved in choosing such organizations. Hence, my first research question became: *In what ways do animal shelter workers cope with their emotions?*

Answering this research question, my study revealed four roles animal shelter workers used as coping mechanisms that at times were overlapping and progressive. I have named these roles: the Victim, the Hero, the Professional and the Tourist. These roles were influenced by time. Many animal attendants, for example, started in a tourist frame of mind, then mixed in some Victim aspects along with Hero-moments. Professionals were ANIMA’s organizational preference, but what I observed was that these were developmental, whereby some animal attendants would cope as a Professional only after many setbacks and a longer time spent working in ANIMA. As a newcomer, I often shifted between all the coping-mechanisms, making it difficult to balance the emotional roller coaster, which resulted from dysfunctional (or incomplete) coping strategies. I do not believe that this was due to my own individual issues, as other animal attendants testified to similar challenges throughout their interviews and when I was observing them in the field. The following four sections describe the resulting coping-mechanism with rationalization as examples of making sense of their work.

### 6.1.1. **The Victim**

Firstly, the Victim’s rationalization of euthanasia was that s/he was forced through matters beyond her/his control to be working as an animal attendant and had to abide by the job description no matter how traumatizing s/he felt the job was. An underlying issue was a negative worldview where humans regularly abused animals and are cruel and ignorant. Many of those who managed according to a “Victim” coping strategy were people others felt uncomfortable with, had mood swings, and suffered from depression. One interviewee even reported thoughts of suicide in her desperation to justify the killing and animal cruelty witnessed. Victims felt powerless and reduced humans in society to “bad” people. The Victim felt trapped in their role, unsure how else to help animals in need with their limited abilities and power to affect the bigger picture. The Victim also saw the organizational processes and hierarchy as part of the problem, and their own role as imposed upon them by both. The main rationality of the Victim could be understood as follows:

> I want to work with and help animals in need – ANIMA does not respect nor understand me but I have no choice but follow their rules. Because society is cruel and ignorant, animals are treated poorly, just as me, and I do what I can which in the larger scheme of things doesn’t change much. On a smaller scale, at least I can provide some comfort to an animal before it’s euthanized.

### 6.1.2. **The Hero**

The Hero saw him/herself as an emotionally stable person who could rise above the horrible events and care for the animals without breaking down. S/he had high resilience and would offer support to those who were weaker and more sensitive. S/he would take on the extra shifts in Central (to do the euthanasia) so that colleagues did
not have to face the trauma of euthanasia. The Hero often relished in their good deeds towards shielding colleagues, but also found that the animals that had to be euthanized had a calm experience in their last moments before death, without too much drama from an overly emotional animal attendant. This storyline was told by those who saw it as their responsibility to step up and take onboard the weakness of people who could not care for their animals. They often shouldered vast amounts of responsibility for humanity and many believed in a higher cause (religion or spirituality) as a support to justify euthanizing healthy animals.

The Hero believed in change and that society was moving towards better understanding as well as ANIMA, which although changed slowly, was moving towards providing more options and care for the animals. The rationalization that could represent the Hero is as follows:

It’s my responsibility to shoulder the emotions of others and act with compassion towards the animals in our care, which due to forces beyond my control often means euthanizing large amounts of unwanted animals. At least they do not suffer anymore, and I have contributed in eliminating this suffering.

6.1.3. The Professional

The Professional had been in ANIMA for a number of years working throughout less and more traumatizing situations. S/he had become institutionalized to obey and follow commands and avoid questioning decisions or actions. The Professional had outlived many organizational changes (staff, culture, and attitudes). S/he was not fazed by fluctuations in staff or volunteer turnover and just did her/his job as was required in her/his job description. S/he accepted and understood the limited power in the job to change animal welfare and perceptions of the public as well as within ANIMA. S/he believed that her/his job involved “shielding the public” from their own cruelty and present a “sanitized” image of animal welfare in the community.

The Professional focused on the care of the animals and even though s/he had come into the organization with a passion for helping them, s/he saw the work role mainly as a source of income (transactional) that should not be layered with too much attention to individual animals or emotional attachment. The Professional was helpful if necessary, but as s/he had non-work related issues that were prioritized, this help would only come when part of the job or during work hours. The Professional could seem cold to other employees and volunteers as the Professional had low ideological reasons to do the job. The rationalization that represented the Professional is as follows:

It’s my job to euthanize animals - this is what I do. I do it efficiently according to protocol that is made by those who know more, so don’t judge me! Somebody has to do it; it’s a job just like any other type of job. I have to support my family with an income and animals die every day anyways.

6.1.4. The Tourist

Finally, the Tourist was the most visibly emotional who would at first try to change and positively affect the conditions for the animals by spending every minute (even breaks) socializing with the animals. They would foster those who were threatened for euthanasia, and leave late because they wanted to make sure all animals were well taken care of. Even spare time was spent campaigning for responsible pet ownership or volunteering in the organisation. After a while, however, disillusioned and traumatised
by the never ending repetitive cycle of abuse, neglect, and cruelty, s/he would battle with exiting the organisation or changing work roles so not to be personally involved in the euthanasia process. The momentary energy and spirit would damage the individual’s coping mechanism, and many “Tourists” exited the organisation as a result. The tourist had a naïve illusion of what helping animals meant in reality, which often resulted in cognitive and mental breakdown of their concept of compassion. The Tourist never lasted long, either becoming a Victim, Professional or a Hero depending on the organizational support s/he would receive when confronted with the breakdown of the illusion. The Tourist’s rationalization is as follows:

I want to help animals, but not by killing them if they are not sick or aggressive. Every animal deserves a second chance, and just because their situation is desperate at ANIMA, does not warrant killing them for convenience. Each animal is different, and I create bonds with many which are cruelly killed by organizational policy that I cannot change. I feel desperate and helpless – with each animal pleading his or her case. I need to get out of ANIMA to keep my sanity about what I can and cannot change in the world.

All of these rationalizations are examples of coping strategies of the sense making that employees used to cope with working at ANIMA. They are not discrete and at times employees used several to cope with their emotions. I try not to judge the coping-strategies as one being more favourable over another, however, it is worth noting that some created self-harm which ultimately may be costly from an organizational, societal and especially individual perspective.

In the remaining parts of this chapter, I discuss my findings in terms of these coping strategies and how the experiences fit with the Emotion in Organization, Positive Organizational Scholarship and Dirty Work literatures. Do the literatures offer ways of understanding the moral conflict? How are dirty work employees supposed to manage these emotions? What does crystallization bring to framing the main issues? I discuss the theoretical and methodological contributions in light of the main societal factor realized – that organizing unwanted aspects of society into hidden, “sanitized” solutions removes the root of the problem and forces those human and nonhuman beings with the least power among us to bear the consequences.

6.2. “The Processing Plant”

ANIMA can be seen as a “processing plant” for society’s unwanted animals – it, literally, “processed” 45 000 animals in 2010 - 2011, killing 21 000 animals and adopting 12 000 animals. This amounts to an average of 60 animals euthanatized per day in each ANIMA animal shelter. One animal attendant was responsible for euthanizing these animals in the shelter on a daily basis. Over 50 % of the dogs euthanized was based on behavioural issues of the animal. The high level of behavioural-based euthanasia was the most controversial aspect of work for employees. Conflict resulted among the employees, and power was used to manage this.

There was a specific procedure behind how animals made their way through the organization. Unwanted animals entered ANIMA where they would be housed, fed, and cared for by animal attendants (see figure 2 for the process). These attendants had no say over what animals would arrive at the shelter, however, their duty of care included animal husbandry tasks as well as being part of forming a decision on the fate of the animals...
animal. Often, emotional connections formed between the human and the animals in their care, extending outside the organization into the home through fostering activities. Because of limited space, time and financial resources, the attendants were often faced with a moral conflict of wanting to save animals while still following organizational guidelines and having to euthanize the animals as a result.

As a context for this organizational process, it is important to reiterate that there is limited legislation in Australia regarding animal breeding and transaction, creating a disadvantaged position for animals. As a result, there is little protection for the treatment of animals from the law. “Processing” the animals, by the animal attendants in ANIMA, was a dirty task that dealt with the social problem of unwanted pets. Thus, ANIMA was part of perpetuating the social discourse of how animal overpopulation (or rather management) was dealt with in Australian society.

Financial, spatial, emotional, and time limitations create a situation where owners need to “get rid of the animal”. Some individuals try private adoption, “dumping”\(^{45}\), or veterinary euthanasia as a solution, while some surrender the animal to an animal shelter. In this way, owners can transfer responsibility of the animal to an organization whose image is of professional duty of care. ANIMA employees are then faced with the morally tainted dirty task of deciding the animal’s outcome, whether it will be adoption or euthanasia.

Increasingly, public opinion is that “people should adopt pets from shelters and not purchase them from shops/breeders,” (Pet Owner Survey, 2012). However, as public opinion is progressively more supportive of shelter animals in Australia, it could lead to employee’s experiencing more moral conflict than before as the supply of pets greatly surpasses the demand. Therefore, employees are faced with euthanizing the animals as a solution. This change towards acknowledging the value of shelter animals may account for the observed and reported higher level of conflict among newcomers and others at ANIMA.

We are a processing plant... there are people here that have never seen another way to manage animals and all they know is a processing number. So that’s going to be hard to change cause we’ve only known this one way for so long. I’m personally looking forward to that (laughs) and getting people to see that there are other things that you can do (for animals). It’s a lot more work, but then the easy way out is always the easy way out. So, you don’t always get the best results. (Joanne, senior manager)

My study shows that the realization that ANIMA manages unwanted pets mainly through euthanasia was a shock for many new employees. This was especially important as many self-selected working for ANIMA in order to “save” animals. This may have implications in the developmental path of progressing through ANIMA from Tourist to another role. However, each role was laced with power opportunities as well as powerlessness.

My findings show that processes in the “plant” were often outdated and inefficient, yet employees were expected to follow the procedurals exactly. One might actually see the shelter as more of a “holding-facility” than a “processing-plant” because there was relatively little change in the animal (at least positive change) from when it came into the shelter to exit. The behavioural and training team in ANIMA was largely used for private animal customers, and not usually to improve behavioural issues among the shelter animals. Therefore, incoming animals were assessed according to their

\(^{45}\) This refers to a common practice of leaving the animal behind in an empty building, park, or other location.
temperament, behaviour, age, medical situation, and breed quickly and without too much intervention from employees (see figure 2 for the process). Moreover, the shelter environment was very stressful for most of the animals, and many displayed unfavourable behaviours, which later could be used as a basis for euthanasia.

The processing plant “system” was inconsistent with ANIMA’s public image. Many employees noted in my study that it would be disadvantageous for ANIMA to publicize the factory-like conditions as ANIMA relied on a positive public image for donations. However, the reality was that few animals received individual attention or walks and, therefore, started exhibiting negative behaviours such as “pen-running”, “excessive barking”, and other shelter animal stereotypes (see similar evidence found, for example, by Bashaw, Tarou, Mali, & Maple, 2001; Ridley & Baker, 1982; von Borell & Hurnik, 1991). Animal attendants’ work was designed according to an efficiency and standardization model of an assembly line worker; there were even minute schedules that management posted in each work section. This shows a highly hierarchical power structure in ANIMA, with very limited opportunity for employee input into the production process. This example follows Dahl’s (1957) conceptualization of power as an observable phenomenon (i.e. power and control were embedded in a routinized and highly prescriptive production process).

Also, animals were reduced to the prevailing status as “property” and unwanted animals; they became the property of ANIMA. From a legislative perspective, the owner’s interest always trumps the animal’s, no matter how trivial (Francione, 1995). In ANIMA’s case, this interest was often based on managing resources such as pen-spaces and adoptability. Therefore, the animal was valued in terms of a wider societal judgment – not on the fact that it had an intrinsic value as a sentient being, rather its market value. Hence, the animals faced prejudice based on factors such as age and breed. In terms of power, animals faced discrimination by shelter workers as they followed organizational procedurals of quick adoption or euthanasia.

And so, there was a pressure towards the processing-plant mechanization where individual animals did not share equal opportunities but rather were judged according to stereotypes. For example, big dogs were not to be adopted to families with children. This was a huge disadvantage as most adopters were of this category. Many individuals with decision-making power were highly subjective in judging which animals were “adoptable”. Opinions were divided on these judgments, and this became a source of controversy.

According to Lukes:

> Power can be used to manipulate peoples’ perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, perhaps because they can see no other alternative to it, or because they view it as natural and unchangeable, or even as they value it as divinely ordained or beneficial (quoted in Graetz et al., 2011, pp. 218-9).

The processing plant concept is founded upon this interpretation of power. Thus, domination is built into the organizational structure of a hierarchical system of providing the public with a service of handling unwanted animals. The animal shelter is the “existing order of things”, a natural solution that few Australians question. This acceptance of the “animal shelter” concept as a formal authority on handling unwanted animals creates a societal animal welfare discourse where it is acceptable to surrender animals that are less than perfect such as those presented in my study section on “Euthanasia – business as usual”. In this way, the previous owner has done the socially acceptable deed of handing the unwanted pet to ANIMA to be cared for.
Through a power lens on POS, many see the “processing-plant” system of handling unwanted animals as the best alternative. For example, in a recent daily Australian talk show, Dr Chris Brown (a celebrity veterinarian) revealed that many Australians still think it is ethical to euthanize pets by hitting them with a shovel (The Project 15.08.2013). This not only portrays the limited value of animals that no longer serve a purpose (old, disabled, unwanted), but also how, at large, pets are disadvantaged in Australia. As a dirty work task, the euthanasia then becomes less tainted for animal attendants who have been socialized in this cultural environment. The justification for “Professionals” may actually represent a realistic interpretation of animal value in the Australian society. Therefore, “Professionals” are, according to Lukes’ quote above, merely doing their jobs in a natural environment where animals are still given a low priority. In ANIMA, these individuals saw euthanasia as a task that needed to be done, and did not require discussion.

From a POS perspective, any dissonance to identity can be framed as an opportunity to grow as an individual (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009). Framing difficult issues in a positive light and enduring through them can create individual resilience. In today’s high-demanding society such resilience is revered as employees manage conflicts (whether internal or external) in positive ways. However, the conflict at ANIMA is based on a fundamental moral conflict, where employees enter with a high sense of prosocial motivation for the organization and alignment to its ideology, yet feel conflicted in their work tasks. In search of whether a POS lens on the moral conflict leads to individual growth, my study concludes that this depends on the employee. The four roles, Professional/Hero/Victim/Tourist, were linked to the psychological contract and its perceived breach. This psychological contract was constructed out of the perceived transactional, relational, and ideological rewards. Those that could align a positive identity along organizational expectations reported less internal conflict and moral ambiguity. These were those who ascribed to a Professional or Hero storyline. In fact, management reported that they wanted employees to adhere to a “McJob” work design that would follow the Professional rationalization. This, however, promoted silenced employees where prosocial motivation was curbed to fit into the standardization of the work processes. However, as seen in “the stormy summer” when crisis hits the organization, employee prosocial behaviour is exploited, thus requiring other rationalizations than the Professional to direct its employees. This is a contribution to what Grant and Berg (2012) refer to as the “dark side of prosocial motivation” (p.38) where employees are exploited due to their intrinsic values. In my case, this transpired as saving animals that otherwise would have drowned in a flood due to inadequate evacuation processes by management.

Within the Emotion in Organization literature there has been a specific interest in research on Emotional Labour (Hochschild, 1983). Employees’ innate feelings conflict with their organizational role and this has been extensively studied in especially the service industry to explain the emotional repression of felt emotions versus expressed emotions. In terms of the processing-plant, there is a power element that needs to be considered. Employees with low power adopt either a Tourist or Victim role and use coping mechanisms of low power. This could be self-harm, deviance or exiting the organization. With an increase of power, there are more alternatives available such as the Professional who may choose to “adapt-stay”. Hence, when answering the first research question - In what ways do animal shelter workers cope with their emotions- this depends on which resources the employee has. For example, a Victim could be unable to exit the organization as s/he is fully dependant on the job and, thus, self-harm such as addictions becomes the coping-mechanism. A Tourist on the other hand may exit and learn, in this way gaining self-insight into ones resilience and coping with...
conflict. The processing plant metaphor does not recognize such difference among employees and instead constructs through bureaucratization and emotional exploitation a work force which copes with emotions in a cold, matter-of-fact way (i.e. as Professionals). This is at odds with the prosocially motivated workforce that is attracted to ANIMA.

6.3. “Wanted: Silent workers”

This section follows the discussion in “The Processing Plant”. In this part, I discuss how the Dirty Work literature specifically deals with stigmatized work but find it lacking when there is a moral conflict. The Industrial Relations (IR) and labour process literatures have traditionally focused on employees in large-scale, “blue collar” industries. Issues such as employer control and worker resistance are to the fore and have led many scholars in these fields to examine the role of employee representation and employee voice as mechanisms for employees to gain greater control over work (see, for example, Edwards 2003).

In such work places, employees are traditionally perceived as working for monetary compensation rather than value-driven motivations (i.e. they are generally not seen as having a strong goal alignment with the corporation). In this literature, people are seen as typically performing low status dirty work because they are deskilled, migrants, women, minority, and uneducated or otherwise disadvantaged in the work force. This would follow the notion of ANIMA as a processing-plant and, therefore, its employees work there due to their inability to secure a job with better pay and working conditions (a non-dirty job). Seeing employment through this lens would put animal welfare work in the same category as factory or assembly line work.

However, this is not a complete explanation of staff motivations. There is also a strong self-selection in ANIMA among the low status animal shelter staff. Both at the frontline and in managerial level jobs, there are individuals who have decided to work in a dirty work context with low pay, poor working conditions, heavily laced with both physical and emotional trauma, and low status. While the self-selection of a dirty occupation seems to be at odds with the Industrial Relations literature, there is a high degree of conformity in other respects. Thus, the traditional conflict of a power struggle between management and staff is present in findings that report internal organizational conflict. A silo-culture resonated from the resilience workshop experience as well as a common theme in the interviews. Comparing ANIMA to traditional blue-collar work contexts, ANIMA differs not due to a lack of autonomy and discretion of employees, nor in their resistance to the production process, but rather in a moral conflict of the organization’s role in society. Shelter staff identified with an animal welfare work identity of doing “good work” that others cannot handle due to the physical and emotional trauma the work. However, when one of the main tasks is to euthanatize rather than save animals, this causes moral conflict to many, which is not anticipated when joining ANIMA. Here, then, there is a clear conflict of ANIMA practices of animal management, where the solution to unwanted animals is euthanasia in over 50% of the cases. On the other hand, the ideological values ANIMA espouses to save and care for animals seems to be an illusion that not only attracts prosocially motivated employees but is also used to attract the considerable 20 million Australian dollars in yearly donations. This illusion creates moral conflict for animal attendants who have self-selected to work at ANIMA due to the public image.
Many ANIMA employees worked in the shelter because they wanted to make a positive difference in the lives of animals. When the transactional “processing”-plant reality confronted such employees, they struggled to make sense of, or find meaning, in their work. The positive illusion was part of the ANIMA branded image that attracted many employees to volunteer at the organization before taking on a paid position. However, what many employees neglected to consider was the difference of responsibility of volunteers versus paid animal attendants. Processes, such as unwritten (or outdated) guidelines, became more apparent to paid staff. Paid staff then had a clearer picture of the shortcomings of the general animal welfare management system in society, as no matter how many adoptions or euthanasia events took place, there was a constant stream of incoming animals to process. The physical taint of the dirty tasks (such as the handling of blood, vomit and excrement) were part of the volunteers’ experience of work, but the moral taint (regarding subjective euthanasia decisions) was something that only paid employees dealt with.

The business model was in stark contradiction to the animal welfare model that most frontline employees preferred. According to my findings, many employees saw the efficiency methods and processes where animals were commoditized as a breach in the mission of animal welfare and, therefore, as a breach of their psychological contract with the organization (Rousseau, 1995). However, as my results show, management considered the care and welfare to be a result of standardization and efficiency, thus creating a considerable gap between managers’ perspective and that of other employees. As a result, management spent considerable time and effort in trying to resolve these differences. There were several of the traditional power struggles from blue-collar work environments in the shelter context. These were expressed in such ways as covert and overt resistance to management directives such as defending animals that had been deemed unadoptable. In this way, resistance was played out in what could be seen as employees defending a welfare view based on the intrinsic value of the animal. This was exemplified in the findings regarding my resistance about the euthanasia of a puppy, fighting for Lady, and saving Boris. By fostering and adopting animals that would have been euthanatized, employees resisted the organizational decisions. This was commonplace among many of the animal attendants.

While many prosocially motivated animal attendants sought to protect and save animals, an interview statement from a senior manager echoed the clearest expression of what management wanted from its employees:

> If you worked in any other retail facility you actually don’t get all the benefits that you get here. I find the best employees here are the ones that have done some normal work outside, like worked for McDonald’s or Subways or something and realize “hey, you do as you are told, you get on with it, you follow the procedurals, you don’t make up your own mind”. (Aaron, senior manager)

The senior manager did go on to mention that with more experience in ANIMA, employees could potentially have more input. However, this required employees to be socialized into the culture but yet retain their unique ideas and passion from being a newcomer. Employee initiative (or prosocial behaviour) was discouraged at a newcomer stage, only being allowed to resurface at a later stage when newcomers gained organizational experience of “how things work”. However, this failed to consider the effects of socialization and the prevalence of conforming to the culture. Thus,

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46 I was also guilty of this error by presuming ANIMA was a "positive" place to work because of the stron ideological connection of organizational members.
conforming to the culture supported a “McJob”-worker role, for this reason, silencing their voice.

Through a POS lens, this can be described as a type of identity threat, or incongruence, which can lead to identity growth opportunities in the long-run. Kreiner and Sheep (2009), argue that incongruence can generate identity growth through “adaption-staying” (where the employee adapts to the organization and stays) and “learning-exiting” (where the employee exits the organization but through the incongruent process learns something about them, thus increasing self-awareness) (pp. 39-40). This is similar to the exit-voice-loyalty-neglect typology (Tunley & Feldman, 1999) and earlier studies on exit-voice (Hirschman, 1970) but with an important difference. Hirschman’s (1970, p. 30) definition of voice is described as “any attempt at all to change rather than to escape from an objectionable state of affairs”. What the POS lens offers is framing the decision to exit or stay in a positive light, avoiding the issues associated with “objectionable state of affairs”, and the further possibility of an associated growth process. Applying this to the quote above suggests that ANIMA offers employees identity growth if they felt there was a difference between the values of staff and management. In this way, POS suggests that ANIMA actually provides a context for personal growth as value-driven employees face traumatic experiences that can act as catalysts for personal strength and resilience. The resilience workshop in my findings was an attempt of ANIMA to offer tools to employees to handle their moral conflict. On the other hand, as seen by the attitudes towards the workshop, most employees failed to acknowledge these strategies as sincere.

Management wanted “McJob” workers. However, they recognized that individuals were attracted to work in the animal welfare industry based on intrinsic values and prosocial motivation.

People who work in the animal welfare industry are very passionate. That passion can have a good part and a bad part. Because some people take that passion to a point that they can’t see anywhere else and understand that that necessarily isn’t the only answer. So that can be really challenging, to help people see that there could be other options that we could use. So I guess the power of passionate people is what makes the organization, a lot of times, go and do great things. (Joanne, senior manager)

Prosocially motivated staff identified strongly with the animal welfare cause. This presented management with a challenge when employees perceived this cause to be overlooked in favour of business goals. Individuals who were primarily intrinsically motivated found it challenging to manage moral conflict with what was perceived as “silencing” their opinions. Self-selecting to do dirty work was often a conscious choice and, therefore, the ideological motivation was the drive, and a perceived breach in the employers’ commitment to the animals presented such individuals with a conflicting identity situation.

I’m an animal attendant, I have no power...that’s probably one of the things that I struggle with the most, because in my previous life I was a lawyer and I was also in charge of a business school so I’m used to have people listen to me. I find it quite frustrating that nobody listens, and I have no power. But I understood when I came in to this role that that would be the case because we are the bottom of the food chain. (Cassie, AA)

In many ways then, management saw the Person-Job (P-J) fit (Edwards, 1991) of an animal attendant as a typical “McJob-worker”, but the animal attendant saw the Person-Organization (P-O) fit (Kristof, 1996) of a typical value-based worker.

McJob-worker refers to a low-skilled service worker with low emotional attachment such as in the fast-food industry (McDonald’s).
Confusion about these two different factors created a disillusioned workforce for ANIMA with the potentiality towards high compassion fatigue, turnover, and conflict. This clash of demanding “McJob”-workers from the supply of “Value”-workers resulted in trying to change the “Value”-workers into “McJob”-workers. This happened through socialization tactics such as social exclusion for animal attendants who did not euthanize without a fight. These resisters also got higher and dirtier workloads (such as managing new or difficult volunteers) or scheduled on sections that had not been properly managed the day before. Also, they had less knowledge of organizational events (such as when a raid was going to happen) and lower access to power gatekeepers (and thus, lower access to the indirect channels of saving certain animals). Long-term animal attendants could effectively, through their socialization tactics, ensure others followed managerial demands of “McJob”-workers. In this way, even if “Value”-workers came to work at ANIMA, they had to change (“adapt-stay”) or give up and leave (“learn-exit”). Hence, other employees were crafting employees into “McJob”-workers and, thus, effectively doing the bidding of management and perpetuating the culture of silenced factory-workers. This is known in the knowledge management literature as socio-ideological control:

Socio-ideological control can be defined as efforts to persuade people to adapt to certain values, norms and ideas about what is good, important, praiseworthy, etc in terms of work and organizational life. Ideologies justify certain principles, actions and feelings, and discourage others. (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2004, p. 426)

This form of control has been linked to knowledge intensive work such as consultancy (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004), but my study showed that there could also be a similar control mechanism in low-knowledge intensive contexts. This organizational socialization of ANIMA’s processes, culture, and work influenced employees negatively as many joined ANIMA on emotional (rather than transactional) grounds. Employees with formal power (such as senior animal attendants) as well as those with informal power (such as long-term animal attendants) used different power mechanisms to “teach” others (i.e. newcomers) the “real” raison d’être of ANIMA: to handle the social problem of unwanted pets. This included the socialization mechanisms mentioned above and failure to adapt to the dominant culture included social exclusion. This could be seen as exacerbating the moral conflict and stress of individual employees as research shows that social support by peers is essential to coping in emotional contexts.

Both in the Hero and the Professional coping roles, employees constructed a rather positive image of their work. Both saw their work as relieving the public of the stress of disposing of their unwanted pets. For many Australians, animal shelters are a natural part of society and not the terrible “holding-facilities” that I, as a privileged northern European, seemed to think. Euthanasia was seen by many animal attendants, who identified with the Hero/Professional role, as justified because it alleviated any future pain and suffering for the unwanted animal. These employees rationalized such actions with, to them, compassionate motives of it being a pain free death with a person who cared about the animal. Hence, individuals managed their emotions through creating a positive story for the animal (i.e. going to heaven).

My interviews detailed that although the work tasks were physically and emotionally tolling, it was also the social tensions with management that led to stress and burnout. This conflicted with the socialization processes described above as these issues were often mentioned by those interviewees who felt newcomers should be silenced. Furthermore, Alvesson and Kärreman discuss the socio-ideological control of the organizational culture creating an “iron cage of subjectivity” (referring to behavioural
conformity in organizations) (2004, p. 149). In this way, culture and the belonging to a group can control how emotions are dealt within an organization.

In my findings, managers reported that employees needed to follow organizational processes and indicated that any resulting moral conflict was due to individuals inadequately coping. This “silencing” of other employees was directly related to power. The “unspoken” or “silent” use of power has been discussed as a form of organizational violence (Hearn & Parkin, 2001). These suggest that “silence may mean the absence of noise and be the plight of the oppressed but can also be part of domination as in managerial silences to requests to be heard and demands for change” (Hearn & Parkin, 2001, p. xi). Therefore, controlling the agenda of what was discussed (or rather not discussed such as subjective euthanasia decisions) can be seen as domination and organizational violence towards employee voice.

Controlling the agenda of what is discussed can be attributed to the second dimension of power by Bachrach and Baratz (1962). The resilience workshops was seen as a way for management to “tick” the box on improving employee wellbeing, as it did not include senior manager involvement, indicating a lack of full buy-in. It could also signify the transference of the problem onto the individual, rather than examining organizational causes. This seems to be one of the largest shortcomings of the Positive Organizational Scholarship (and positive psychology) movement as employees are seen as individuals empowered towards creating flourishing situation even amongst crisis. As Fineman (2010) notes, POS speaks of empowering workers, but this is only in terms defined by management. Through this managerial definition, POS is corrupting the term empowerment, which in the POS usage is provided to workers as an opportunity for fulfilment and growth rather than power being taken by employees to improve their status and control in the workplace.

In ANIMA, a modest amount of “empowerment” came with employee voice. ANIMA employees wanted clearer decision-making guidelines on euthanasia and the opportunity to challenge them. However, improved working conditions only came as a result of unionized support in terms of minimal extrinsic rewards. Being part of the union was seen as a security blanket for employees when they suspected management of exploiting their terms and conditions of employment. This also allowed employees some degree of employee voice (through independent representation), which was otherwise discouraged by the organization. As seen in the data, management was aware of the intrinsic, prosocial motivations of employees in ANIMA and relied often on their goodwill (such as in the flood crisis) to follow through and volunteer their services in an unpaid manner. If not, employees knew the animals would suffer (e.g. they would have drowned in the flood). Could it be that ANIMA counted on prosocial employees to step in and handle the crisis, yet in daily functioning employees were expected to follow procedurals? This lack of communication to employees may have been an attempt by management to control and dominate the animal attendants, who were referred to derogatorily as “shit-pickers” in the data.

Generally, human resource management literature reveals that HR tries to tap into employee intrinsic motivation to create higher levels of loyalty, commitment, and satisfaction to the organization (Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Quinn Mills & Walton, 1985). Indeed, the commitment model is what differentiates HRM from its earlier label of personnel management or personnel administration (Lawrence, 1985). In ANIMA, HR was seen with hostility and suspicion according to my interview material. Therefore, ANIMA’s HR dealt mostly with recruitment and unfavourable performance management issues. In one interview, HR was the scapegoat for explaining subjective
promotions by management. In other words, HR performed a very functional, rather than motivational role in ANIMA. As one employee stated, "we can't do the fun HR stuff yet" (Lucy, HR) referring to the exclusively structural power of HR. Therefore, it could be argued that HR recruited employees on false pretence (e.g. saving animals and making a difference in animal welfare) while the reality was quite different in terms of what employees experienced. One such reason could have been that HR was a relatively young department and had limited knowledge of the actual animal attendant work tasks. For example, Lucy from HR told in an interview “I don’t know so much about how it’s done [the euthanasia], and I respect the fact that whoever has made the decisions and processes the way they are have researched and tested them.” In many ways, the animal attendants would have benefitted from knowing the explicit information of the work that entailed low involvement, decision-making, and driving change. On the other hand, this would have prevented ANIMA to exploit employee emotions for fostering and adopting animals and deter employees from working overtime in an unpaid manner. A radical suggestion to coping in emotional work settings is to compare the context to war zones and how military personnel cope with killing. Soldiers are trained to kill and develop coping mechanisms that are socially constructed. McKenna (2010) discussed the “positive asymmetry” that surrounds military personnel and their families. Furthermore, she finds that

[the] culture of militarism secures the positive attitudes that keep them up to the standards of the military community while it curbs their anxiety and depression, and in some cases distances them from anti-anxiety medication. (McKenna, 2010, p. 84)

Perhaps this is the type of culture that ANIMA needs to instil among its employees, to compare euthanasia to casualties of war? In a way, the public is already seen as the enemy that abandons responsibility of their animals to the shelter. The conflicting issue with this analogy is that animal shelter work is dirty work, stigmatized, and tainted while military work is seen in a very different light with ethos of heroism. On the other hand, the Hero in my findings could in many ways be compared to the self-sacrificing “hero” in military. “People are here for the animals not for the money” (Mike, animal attendant). Without proper training and limited social standing, animal attendants face a disadvantaged sense-making story compared to soldiers, yet face similar coping issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Notwithstanding whether the military analogy applies in this context, there is a clear ethical issue if ANIMA manipulates employees’ intrinsic values to promote unpaid overtime and increased commitment to the animals in the employees’ free time (for example, through fostering, volunteering, activism). There is also a contradiction in the fact that management simultaneously wants a low involved and emotionally detached “McJob”- worker while still wanting prosocial values to endure when the organization needs them. Cases such as Lady and Boris exemplify this strategy. Employees had to individually find resources to manage the needs of pets if they felt these were being disadvantaged. In my interviews, it became clear that many animal attendants had multiple “saved” pets and responsibilities, which blurred the boundaries of work into the home life. From a power perspective, this means that individuals were empowered to find solutions but were not given any resources to do so. As a result, the animal attendants adopted and, in this way, “saved” the animal from euthanasia. Such manipulation of emotional bonds may be seen as unethical, but saving animals in this way also presented practical difficulties for many animal attendants who lived in small rental houses.

From a POS perspective, these small victories (saving Boris and Lady) served as “small moments of success” that may lead towards developing a positive identity at work.
Weick (1984) calls these “small wins” as they create “controllable opportunities that produce visible results” (p. 43). Saving Boris and Lady were examples of both overt as well as covert forms of employee resistance in situations where employees felt powerless to change or shape organizational decision making. The case of Lady and the euthanasia of the puppy were examples of overt (observable) conflict. Lukes (2005) calls this the first dimension of power. Herein, power relies on being able to influence another through open conflict. Management appeased one of the situations by allowing the adoption of Lady to take place, but not in the case of the puppy. Analyzing the two cases as objectively as possible, why did management choose a somewhat aggressive elderly dog over a puppy to save? It was the same manager who made the decision in both cases. Therefore, the externality of Lady’s previous owner blackmailing ANIMA to save her in return for him not committing suicide certainly held some weight over a stray puppy who nobody but I fought for.

On the other hand, saving Boris could be seen as the second dimension of power where non-decision making is taken place (Bacharrach & Baratz, 1962). Although it would not have been appropriate in terms of animal welfare to place a large Irish Wolfhounds such as Boris in a small dog kennel, ANIMA had no plan how to care for the dog. Avoiding such logistically difficult issues by focusing on easier tasks can be seen as a use of power. Furthermore, the entire evacuation of the shelter during the flood falls into this category of power. In these instances, managers dismissed concerns by animal attendants of an imminent flood as “minor” and ordered employees to handle menial tasks to avoid conflict. In this way, management avoided conflict through political activity (Graetz, Rimmer, Smith & Lawrence, 2012) of busying employees in a controlled manner. This relied ultimately on the prosocial motivation of the employees to deal with the crisis, which management undermined as being “part of the job”.

As discussed, a central area of contention was the disagreements of which animals to save or euthanize. Therefore, final decisions were ultimately based on the formal power of managers and animal attendants who were trusted “long-timers”. Hence, these individuals were what could be recognized as employees who would find meaning and flourish in their work. This goal of POS, neglects the issue that such individuals possessed more decision-making power and influence in the organization and were, not as morally conflicted as individuals who felt powerless and repressed.

According to the POS literature, however, there can be employee identity growth through the processes of “adaption-staying” or “learning-exiting” (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009). This suggests that there is an identity growth opportunity if a newcomer adapts to the organizational requirements to be a McJob worker and thus stays. There can be relational rewards from doing this, as employees form strong social networks of what it means to be an “animal attendant”. Belongingness is similarly found as “the comfort of we” in studies by Kärreman and Alvesson (2004, p. 161), where social identity comforts in the face of identity conflict. Forming a positive identity of belongingness provides relational rewards while working in a sector that still, at some level, generates ideological rewards of caring for animals. In this way, social relatedness is fulfilling the psychological contract of belonging to a group that identifies itself as helping animals (which in turn is the ideological part of the psychological contract). However, what is unclear is what makes some employees fulfil psychological contracts while others find it breached?

My literature review mentions, “tempered radicals” as a way to lead positive change (Meyerson, 2001; 2003). These “radicals” are focused on “small wins”, and through incremental change, they quietly resist issues in organizations that need improvements.
Such strategies have been promoted by social activists such as Saul Alinsky (1971) who generated positive social change through small wins where the goal was “highly specific, realizable, and immediate” (Peabody quoted in Weick, 1984, p. 44). Similarly, Meyerson’s (2001; 2003) radicals affect radical change through applying endurance and patience to their goals. Such a strategy can enable individuals to “adapt-stay” more authentically in organizations, even in face of incongruent behaviour by ANIMA. What thus seems important is to generate ways to encourage long-term goal achievement behaviour among employees who feel disenchanted.

Resistance to managers, however, in some cases can actually create positive identities such as greater work group cohesion and camaraderie. Therefore, instances where employees resist euthanizing animals in spite of organizational pressures (for example with Lady) spurs growth in positive identity. Small successes lead to complex role identity construction that can grow resilience. Building resilience is beneficial for individuals working in challenging work situations, such as for ANIMA employees, where compassion fatigue is prevalent.

Given this positive framing, can employee resistance be seen as supporting management to build positive identity constructions at work? By allowing small wins for employees, these build resilience and the ability to manage adversity better. Critics of POS find that focusing on the positive “reinforces and legitimizes the dominant position of the powerful” thus creating major political effects and implications for what is studied, researched, and focused on in POS (Ehrenreich, 2009; Fineman, 2010). In this way, POS serves those with power, i.e. managers. POS scholars have defended this position through the empowerment literature, which concludes that empowered employees are more satisfied, committed, and loyal (Dewettinck & van Ameijde, 2011). It could be argued, however, that this in itself is benefitting the organization more than the individual employee. Hence, Harris (2003b) finds when researching power struggles in the workforce, one should refrain from defining power for respondents as this may influence the outcome. For example, workplace emotions in organizational studies have long focused on emotional labour and resilience. There are those who see this as an agenda of managerial control of employee emotions, or even as a way that organizations can create slaves out of employees through its culture (Wilmott, 1993). According to Albrow (1997, p. 113), “rationalization of emotion is just the next phase in the rationalization process”. As Martin et al., (1998) show in their Body Shop case study on bounded emotionality, emotional control at the workplace can be used to enhance the organizational commitment and become part of the organizational strategy. In terms of power, this shows how manager’s control and mould employees on an emotional level, blurring personal boundaries. This may imply ethical issues of where to draw boundaries on employee privacy and organizational control. This blurring of boundaries was present in my study as individuals taking animals home, and, thus, ANIMA became involved in consenting or declining new animal family members.

The counter criticism of POS is whether being positive in a difficult context can ever be seen as just that – positive - instead of supporting managerial goals? What does POS offer non-managerial employees in organizations? For example, in the resilience workshop at ANIMA, animal attendants framed it as a classic case of emotional labour (another way for management to attempt to control employees; this way through dictating how employees should feel and deal with those feelings). However, by shifting stress and compassion fatigue onto individual employees’ limited coping strategies, the workshop effectively relieved management of its obligation to consider the actual workload and work design of being an animal attendant. By offering tools such as the
resilience workshop and a counselling service, however, management was seen to “tick” the box on managerial support.

Answering the second research question - Which coping strategy does a POS lens offer animal shelter workers – it follows similar veins are the first research question answer. Job crafting, callings and meaningfulness are all dependent on power. In ANIMA fostering and “small wins” may form some base for creating meaningfulness. POS would see only the Hero and the Professional as “positive” coping mechanisms in ANIMA. The rest would assume private resources for coping such as fostering or saving multiple animals in order to justify the euthanasia of others. Therefore, it is only through the third part, “The Lifestyle” where coping mechanisms from Dirty Work literature become somewhat relevant.

6.4. “The Lifestyle”: an extension of the workplace through emotional socialization

Working here is not a job, it’s a lifestyle...it gets into your system, it gets into your blood and it’s really hard to step away from it. It’s part of who you are...I think you will never shake the feeling of working with these animals and people who all commit to the same cause – it makes for a very strong place of belonging. I’ve worked in other places and had strong connections to my work before but it has never felt this strong. (Wendy, middle manager)

There was a strong alignment to the animal welfare cause of the ANIMA employees. The reality of working in the industry meant employees self-selected to work in a dirty work context that offered low economic compensation, minimal career development, and low societal status. A passion for saving animals and sense of responsibility to provide good care united the employees, and “the good for the animals” framed most employee actions and motivations. ANIMA’s mission statement can be generalized to prevent animal cruelty by promoting care and protection. This goal allows for subjective understanding when implementing it to everyday shelter work. Other issues that ANIMA based its care upon can be interpreted on many levels. Accordingly, employees had a diverse set of ideologies of what it means to work in animal welfare but were motivated to work in the organization because ANIMA was seen by many as the only viable organization that provides the needed care for unwanted, abused, and strayed animals. These ideologies and beliefs of what “good” animal welfare means dominated how the shelter work was framed for the employee.

The reality of euthanizing fit and healthy animals due to limited resources was psychologically and physically tolling for many of the animal attendants. POS suggests that the “flourishing of the human condition” can excel in value-driven circumstances, and employees can find meaning in their work (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). This implies that individuals are at fault if they cannot frame work into a meaningful activity. In a dirty work context, such as working at ANIMA, this is problematic. Such a frame removes organizational responsibility to employee wellbeing, training, and recruitments policies to one where the organization happily employs prosocially motivated individuals and, in effect, “processes” them through employee socialization tactics where the employees are powerless in changing the animal overpopulation problem. “The Lifestyle” focuses on these two points: firstly, how the moral conflict could be a breach in the psychological contract, and, secondly, how to manage moral conflict through resilience, deviance, and identity construction.

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48 The aim has been generalized due to anonymity.
ANIMA employees were often volunteers before they become paid employees. Volunteers knew that animals were being euthanized due to limited resources, but they were not directly involved in any decisions nor did they witness or work in Central (where the euthanasia happens). In this way, volunteers were shielded from the euthanasia experience that paid employees struggled with. This distinction is vital to acknowledge, as previous animal shelter studies, (such as Arluke, 1996; Taylor, 2010) have not fully recognized this difference.

However, the motivation for working in ANIMA was similar, for both paid and unpaid individuals, as they wanted to “save animals”. When faced with executing organizational processes that were less than ideal (such as the euthanasia of healthy animals), many paid employees struggled with moral conflict of what their job required them to do versus their fundamental ideological beliefs of right and wrong. This has been explained in the psychological contract literature as the differences between ideological, transactional, and relational rewards (Blau, 1964). Recognizing that ideological rewards are a relatively unexplored area (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003; Bunderson, 2001), this would have strong implications for employees generally working in nonprofits and specifically those who are prosocially motivated in their work. If individuals choose work based on ideological rewards, there is a strong innate sense of meaning that needs to be met for employee work satisfaction. This is something that ANIMA does not recognize.

My study suggests that moral conflict can be especially complex in value-driven nonprofits. Especially the “moral hot buttons” indicating a psychological contract violation (Thompson & Bunderson, 2003, p. 576) were recognized in terms of euthanizing fit and healthy animals. Due to these intrinsic values, ANIMA was a fruitful site for studying emotions. In Rothschild and Milofsky (2006) the following is said of organizations such as ANIMA:

> Non-profit organizations are grounded in their members' values and passions and sustained by the bonds of trust that develop within and between them. They are the organizational expression of their members' ethical stance toward the world: non-profit organizations, by way of their very existence and practices, convey a public statement of what their members see as a better, more caring, or more just world. This is why they come into being in the first place. Business firms, by way of contrast, are fuelled by a profit motive. (p. 137 emphasis added)

As this was the underlying goal for many of ANIMA employees, there did exist some clear social divisions. These were linked to the four roles that evolved out of the results. For example, there was a heavy gender segregation of females working as animal attendants while males where in administrative, managerial roles. This gendered division follows the organizational gender literature where women are found in lower, deskillled, and oppressed work roles while men are found in higher, managerial and powerful work roles. There were several ways control and power was assumed by female animal attendants, in specific, there was a baby-boom explosion whereby the majority of the animal attendants shifted their priorities and care onto making their own babies (“at the moment I'm pretty happy to just focus on the baby “ Sue, animal attendant).

This was in stark contrast to the prevailing culture of focusing on animal care rather than human families. Before the baby boom, children were commonly regarded as distractions from the real cause of saving animals. Acknowledging that most animal attendants were in their late 20s -30s, and, therefore, at an age when reproduction becomes more prevalent, it is still curious that such a large cultural shift occurred so quickly in regards to priorities. However, I question whether shifting attention to more
controllable issues (such as having children) in some ways alleviated the powerlessness felt at work in terms of saving animals. In a way, pregnancy and babies could be seen as covert resistant to managerial control over emotions and attachment. Management could decide which animals (no matter how attached the employee was to her/him) would be euthanized, but management had no control over the reproductive system or attachment to employees’ children. The gender issue in animal shelter work could be fruitful for further research as there is a traditional conflict between the “care” values and “business” values within ANIMA. There is also a more general question regarding the direction of care organization in today’s society.

The four roles revealed in the findings match ways of dealing with the moral conflict of euthanasia. Euthanasia of shelter-animals has been recognized as a specific “moral stressor” in the literature because shelter workers:

> Are faced with a daily conflict between their ideal occupational selves (protectors and caretakers of nonhuman animals) and the reality of having to kill healthy—but unwanted—nonhuman animals (Rogelberg et al., 2007, p. 332, emphasis added).

Therefore, animal shelter work is a unique dirty work occupation, as the employees have a strong sense of helping those that they are forced to kill. Unresolved, this moral disconnect (of wanting to help/save but tasked with killing) can lead to posttraumatic stress (Rand, 2011) and compassion fatigue (Fingley, 2002). Coping with this stressor is an important factor in employee wellbeing according to both POS literature as well as the Emotions in Organizations literature. As employees are highly committed to the animal welfare cause, they would find it difficult to manage role conflicts whereby their animal shelter work does not actually help the animals. In this way, their work would lose its ideological meaning and other factors such as transactional and relational motivators would increase in importance.

As a result of the limitations placed on employees in ANIMA, I compared the organization to a processing plant in a previous section, which sorted and practiced the general societal solution of pet management in the form of euthanasia. As in a dirty work context, shelter workers are in a unique and unenviable position as they are forced to kill the animals that they want to save. In this way, the hidden taint and stigma of what happens to unwanted pets is perpetuated, as society would rather “cleanly” deal with the issue behind closed doors (or, as in ANIMA, behind bolted gates that hid the death row animals). The moral disengagement that Professionals used to manage this conflict made them useful for the everyday work tasks in the organization. Therefore, transactional, as well as to an extent relational, rewards were the most appropriate to suit such employees. However, there certainly would be societal outcries if animal lives would have been lost due to improper planning and limited ideological commitment in the flood. Dirty work literature has suggested ways to manage such identity conflicts such as through occupational ideologies, social buffers, confronting clients and the public, defensive tactics (Ashforth et al., 2007), and habituation/desensitization over time (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2002). In my study Professionals used both occupational ideologies and desentization, Heroes used defensive tactics, while Tourists generally confronted others such as supervisors. Victims used social buffers to a degree, yet did not manage in ways that other dirty work social support such as for example among miners (Lucas, 2011). There seems to be a difference in how the moral conflict impacts the coping strategies. From an organizational perspective, it also seems that both Heroes and Professionals coping styles were desired, yet there is limited knowledge of how employees can be both at the same time. Finding such a duality could be an interesting avenue for future research.
The dirty work literature suggests that social networks are vital in tainted and stigmatized occupations. In this way, belonging to a group heightens relational rewards. This is consistent with my study as social support in the workplace was one way for employees to manage their moral conflict and emotional disconnect. Refocusing on positives in their family lives or friendships created resilience to the emotional trauma of euthanasia at work.

Having a good network is good. One of the big things that I think helps me manage work is a lot of positive stuff going on in my personal life like a new house, partner, having a family this year, it’s just put things in perspective for me. I was never happy when I threw myself into work and it became more consuming. Now I think I can deal with almost anything at work because it isn’t my main priority. (Maggie, BA/AA)

The dirty work literature suggests reframing as a tool to create a more positive identity. Certainly in ANIMA, employees used social comparisons to no-kill shelters to justify euthanasia within ANIMA. The no-kill movement maintains that the costs in term of human, non-human, and fiscal issues are too high to support shelter killing as an effective societal pet management strategy (Lawlib), and it is the killing that needs to stop as it is an “endlessly demoralizing activity” for the shelter employees (Arluke, 2006, p. 119). The “caring-killing paradox” (Arluke, 1996; Reeve et al., 2005) was highly evident in my study even 14 years after Arluke’s classical publication on the issue. According to Arluke’s study:

> for most workers this conflict was **neither intense nor constant**, but manifested itself as episodic uneasiness. From time to time, euthanasia provoked **modest** but clearly discernable levels of emotional stress (1996, p. 102 emphasis added).

Yet, my findings contradict Arluke. The moral conflict in ANIMA is **both intense and constant** with extreme levels of emotional stress. The “caring-killing paradox” was perhaps not as evident to Arluke due to his incomplete member status in the organization he studied, but I certainly, throughout my ethnographic study, found evidence to suggest that compassion fatigue is a major problem for shelter workers. This is further supported by previous research by Figley and Roop (2006). There is a big difference between theorizing the necessity for euthanasia due to a lack of resources and having to administer euthanasia in practice. This was evident in “Euthanasia - business as usual”, as decisions were based on “managing” society’s unwanted pets according to the subjective decisions by individuals in power.

From a POS perspective, the “Hero/Professional” roles rationalized their involvement in the killing as the more benevolent (or compassionate) act than a prolonged suffering of keeping the animal alive but unwanted. The “Hero/Professional” coped by reframing, recalibrating and refocusing the situation and the meanings of the dirty work (Kreiner et al., 2006; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Trice, 1993; Hansen, 1999). Furthermore, my findings confirmed other coping tactics, such as the normalization of day-to-day tasks (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), routinization of processes counteracting limited managerial support (Chiapetta-Swanson, 2005), and desensitization to dirty tasks (adaption) (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2002). Successful implementation of these strategies made it feasible for individuals to engage in the dirty work and control emotional/moral disconnect. Thus, employees who were successfully socialized into the

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49 No-kill shelters are often criticized by “kill-shelters” (also called “open admission shelters” to regulate the intake of animals to avoid euthanasia. This means that animals that were considered “unadoptable” would not be admitted into a no-kill shelter and instead told to go to a kill-shelter. In this way, employees at no-kill shelters avoided moral conflicts that kill-shelter employees had to deal with.

50 From losing money on housing and euthanizing animals that are not reclaimed in adoption fees.
organizational culture had lower qualms with seeing killing as a “natural” part of the job.

Arluke reports similarly:

There is a terrible paradox in what you will have to do – you will want to care for the animals, but you will have to kill some of them. It is a painful process of killing animals when you don’t want to. It seems so bad, but we’ll make it good in your head. You will find yourself in a complex emotional state. Euthanizing is not just technical skills. You have to believe it is right to make it matter-of-fact (1996, p. 86).

My findings show that socialization into the shelter culture was essential for employees to “believe it is right to make it matter-of-fact” (ibid). Employees who resist the culture of “caring for animals” instead of “saving animals” faced enduring moral conflict and compassion fatigue. As an example, in the results chapter, I reflect on ANIMA’s culture inevitably facilitating the pet overpopulation problem. This is because the shelter assumes responsibility of unwanted pets that, in effect, maintains the commoditization of non-human animals (killing for short-term management). By admitting more animals to the shelters than ANIMA can house, there will always be a strategy of euthanizing those that are deemed less desirable. My data shows that one way employees managed this conflict was to blur the boundaries to private life by fostering “unwanted” animals such as Lady and Boris.

Through the conventional hierarchy of power within the organizational structure, lack of accountability and transparency, lack of managerial support, and socialization made employees feel powerless in their battle to protect animals. In this way, it is not only a societal battle to save the animals, but also an organizational one, where some employees fight those with decision-making power as well challenging the organizational processes to ensure they can save as many animals as possible. ANIMA as a lifestyle, instead of just a job, was evident in all interviews as well as in the struggle explored in “managing competing demands”.

ANIMA employees are laced with negative feelings in the workplace, which is consistent with findings from Lopina et al. (2012). What does this finding mean for POS and its application to ANIMA? If there is a link between dirty work and higher negative emotions, one can assume that such contexts would be ideal for implementing or looking through a POS framework to find new positive issues. My literature review of POS finds that most research is conducted in “easy” (non-dirty work) contexts from a middle-class perspective. Thus, this confirms criticism of POS being primarily focused from an elitist viewpoint. For POS to claim application to diverse occupations, a variety of contexts need to be evaluated for its relevance. ANIMA, as a dirty work context, is a contribution to investigating this claim.

The “psychic cost” on individuals can lead to compassion fatigue or burnout (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). In ANIMA, the prevalence of traumatic events required individuals to use their various coping mechanism on a daily basis. Thus, there was limited “down time” where daily activities would fall to a “normal” level. Instead, individuals were pushed physically and psychologically, often past coping reserves, to handle in their own time the trauma from the work environment. Therefore, coping mechanisms and resilience became important factors for dirty workers that have prolonged negative experiences at work. Some “adapt-stay” while others “learn-leave”. To stay, socialization processes mould employees along the organization’s culture and expectations (to be McJob-workers). To leave means individuals can grow in self-
awareness but here the organization looses in terms of turnover and prosocial motivation. Thus, the workforce relies heavily on high NA workers to stay and conform.

The Victim role is similar to previous studies that named it “The Exploited” (Grandy, 2008) where the taint of the dirty work was transferred to others. In ANIMA, this was threefold. Firstly, blame of euthanasia was shifted to the public that surrendered animals (Arluke, 1994; Taylor, 2004); secondly, legislation was to blame as it did not protect animals; and, thirdly, management was seen to take advantage of both employees’ goodwill and profiting from animal overpopulation (by high price adoptions). In this way, the “blame-game” was extended in ANIMA to include everybody outside the organization who was not actively helping the cause. Similarly, “Lifers” in Grandy’s study (2008) or the “Professionals” in my study also reframed their dirty work position to others to save face (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Ashforth et al., 2007) and through matching their role self-categorizations (Lucas, 2011). These individuals had chosen the career-path of ANIMA and had integrated the coping-mechanisms that allowed them to handle different events in a more desensitized way. These were seen by other employees as accepting the organizational conflicts, positional powerlessness and being less absorbed by creating a societal change (thus more cynical to positive change). “When you’re here for 20 years, you’re not here for the right reasons anymore” (Mike, animal attendant). The “right reasons” (for the Heroes rather than the Professionals) were around making a positive change in the rights and welfare of the animals, rather than extrinsic motivations such as having an animal welfare career. Anything beyond the welfare of the animals was seen as suspect and not worthy of the “true” animal champions who saw time away from care (such as team building days, resilience workshops etc) as non-essential and meaningless in a “Processing-Plant” mentality of standardization. In this way, there seemed to be a higher level of negative emotions among those who had worked at length at ANIMA. This confirms the results from Lopina et al. (2012), who found that dirty work contexts have lower turnover (and thus more long-timers) of individuals who are more inclined feeling negative emotions.

This leads to an interesting observation about the exit/voice framework raised earlier. ANIMA workers had no power to change their work design or communicate their dissatisfaction, yet they did not want to leave the organization because of their intrinsic value alignment and commitment to the organization. In this way, the apparent choice between exit and voice, as is often presented in the organizational behaviour literature on voice (Van Dyne et al 2003), was not a real choice at all, but rather both voice and exit were constrained. One the one hand, silence was produced by an organizational climate that was not receptive to voice (Morrison and Milliken; Donaghey et al 2011). Meanwhile, voice was constrained by the employee’s own prosocial motivation, in the sense that there were no other alternatives for employment for workers who were driven by desire to make the lives of animals better.

POS literature recognizes roles and identity as vital to coping with high stress and adversity at work. Caza and Milton (2012) summarize that high-risk professions of burnout usually have either high levels of emotional labour, constant role stress or acute adversity (such as for emergency care workers). In ANIMA, all three were prominent. Resilience is seen as an anti-dote to this, according to POS. In this way, “The Victim” could be understood to have lower levels of resilience than “The Professional”. The Professional may be viewed as having a higher degree of resilience and, thus, be a more “positive” coping strategy than, say, the Victim. But the Professional had established boundaries based on experience that limited the emotional attachment to the animals (Thompson, 1991), seeing the animals as “virtual
pets” (Arluke, 1996). In this way, the coping-mechanism was to distance oneself to the dirty task of euthanasia as a Professional. Professional rules of conduct were prescriptive emotion management (Bolton, 2003; Grandy, 2008; Kessler, Heron & Dobson, 2012) and learned through socialization and ascribing to the organizational culture. Furthermore it was essential for the Professional to believe that the positives outweighed the negatives in the work (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007; Sanders, 2010).

The Hero role found in my study is similar to the “tempered radicals” of Meyerson & Scully (1995). These have coping strategies of altruistic love and other virtues such as courage, integrity, compassion, humility, and wisdom (Dutton, Roberts & Behar, 2010). The work is seen as a calling or a “moral duty” (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), and giving meaning in life (Fry et al., 2005). The Hero focuses on the perceived positive issues of euthanasia such as loving care of the animal in its final moments (Arluke, 1991) and high technical skills to avoid unnecessary suffering of the animal (e.g. high shooting rate in Ashforth et al., 2007). They also framed the dirty work as something others avoided. It was seen as undervalued and invisible in the general public (Stacey, 2005), and employees found meaning in the work as a “gift” (Kessler, Heron & Dobson, 2012) to the animals. In this way, the Hero frames euthanasia as “something only ‘real’ [animal lovers] can do” (Bolton, 2005).

Finally, The Tourist, through a POS lens, could be seen as individuals who were progressively developing towards the ideal self (Dutton, Roberts & Behar, 2010). In the dirty work literature, this takes on a more opportunistic perspective (Grandy, 2008) that focuses on personal benefits rather than virtuous ideals. Hence, the same behaviour can be seen differently depending on the intention of the individual. In dirty work literature, this takes on an opportunistic character while, in POS; there is a growth of positive identity or self-awareness. In ANIMA, therefore, the Tourist could theoretically progress into a Professional (opportunistic) or Hero (ideal) given the correct training. Alternatively, they could exit the organization if such training needs are not met and moral role conflict resides. From a POS perspective, this could lead to post-traumatic growth for “learning-exits” whereby, even though individuals leave the organization, they strengthen their own moral values and grow in self-awareness. For this reason, even if employees could not adhere, adjust, and accept the organizational and managerial goals of wanting “silent (or silenced) workers”, they could go on to benefit a new work organization.

In connecting dirty work and emotions, there is a relatively under researched concept called “emotionologies” (Fineman, 2010). Emotionologies are:

> politico-ideological constructs part shaped by prevailing currents of nationalism, ethnocentrism, racism or homophobia, as well as by governmental, religious and party-political dogmas. They encapsulate emotions’ stocks of knowledge, vocabularies, feeling and display rules...they provide a vocabulary, rationalization and ‘place’ to feel or express attitudinally ‘appropriate’ emotions, such as admiration, hate, love, pity, fear, anger or indignation towards particular sections of society (Fineman, 2010, p. 27).

“Emotionology work” has been done by, for example, climate change consultants, who involved themselves in emotional dissonance by framing Corporate Sustainable Responsibility as a business case (Wright & Nygberg, 2012). These became “tempered radicals” in order to affect change (Meyerson & Scully, 1995). These managed their emotionality through calculating, constraining, compartmentalizing, and championing emotionality (Wright & Nyberg, 2012). This differed from research on emotional labour in that it does not focus on emotions in a customer service relationship but instead looks at encouraging organizations to consider wider social issues such as sustainability.
(Wright & Nyberg, 2012). They also call for more work in this limited area, especially in non-corporate contexts such as NGO’s (ibid). Emotionologies may also be prudent when considering that dirty work is socially constructed and therefore, research in these contexts may be undervalued (Fineman, 2010). Also, as emotionologies reflect societal power over what is unacceptable/acceptable, this would seem to be a crucial point when researching emotions at work. This could particularly be vital when focusing on oppressed individuals (Fineman, 2010) who are traditionally silenced and what narratives that are constructed as a result in the organizational life.

Thus, when answering the third research question - *How does moral conflict affect dirty workers* – it relates back to the power base of the employee and which role s/he assumes. Those with alternatives may often exit, thus creating a costly turnover for the organization. From an organizational perspective it would seem important to correctly manage expectations of new employees. Also, to differentiate between the public image that is marketed towards donations and that of employees who are faced with the unfortunate task of balancing organizational limited resources in a market of abundant supply.

In the previous section (6.4 The Lifestyle), I discuss two issues – ideological rewards and moral conflict. These related issues were important in my experience of the organizational life at ANIMA. The thematic textual analysis of the interviews shows that other animal attendants felt similarly torn. The three mini-cases from chapter 5 support this moral conflict. Hence, my study suggests the following:

- Employees in ANIMA self-select to work in the organization based on an alignment between the organizational values and individual values.
- Employees love animals and want to save unwanted pets from pain and suffering. This is the expected ideological reward.
- Employees have high levels of prosocial motivation of working if they can help the animals. This blurs the boundaries of work into the private life domain.
- ANIMA relies on a positive public image for donations to keep functioning as well as goodwill from employees.
- All tangible resources are limited; financial, space, time & human, while workloads are high. This creates conflict.
- Decision-making power is top-heavy, based around a bureaucratic structure that focuses on efficiency and standardization.
- Standardization of a McJob-design is at odds with the prosocial motivated Value-worker. This creates conflict.
- To manage identity and moral conflict, employees use relational rewards to counteract unmet ideological rewards.
- ANIMA offers a context for personal growth according to POS – to either learn-exit or adapt-stay.
The transference of responsibility from ANIMA to the employee reframes the problem not as a work design issue but as a personal resilience issue. This creates turnover and loss of prosocial motivated employees.

6.5. Reflections on using crystallization as a methodology

I argued before that crystallization might be an interesting alternative methodology to use in organizational science, especially to try to communicate emotional contexts. So, I question at this point to answer my fourth research question, what has crystallization brought to my study? By using layered accounts in my findings, I tried to represent the issues in ANIMA in a more evocative way that transcends the duality of art/science. Attempting creative writing of the data also clarified issues through what Van Maanen (2006) calls “textwork”. Richardson and St. Pierre (2000, p. 959 italics in original) have similarly referred to this as “writing as a method of inquiry... to learn about themselves [researchers] and their research topic”. In this way, through a POS lens, my writing of the research could be seen as a personal growth-building endeavour. Thus, not only is the understanding of the research topic increased, so too is the experience of researching and my own values are refined (Figure 5). Therefore, I contend (through crystallization), the final outcome embodies the study through mind, body, and spirit. This connection is worth further study to understand the embodied effects of research on the researcher, beyond the ones I mention in my study.

Figure 23 Crystallization in my thesis

Crystallization has been called “triangulation 2.0” by Denzin (2012). But the use of this methodology in organizational studies remains limited. In a recent study by Polsa (2013a, 2013b), she uses crystallization in international business in a Chinese and Indian context to understand the “Other”. Similarly, my study attempts to use narrative, poetry, and autoethnography to communicate the organizational issues and context in a more creative way, to invoke the emotional understanding of the reader. Crystallization focuses on embodiment rather than the traditionally “disembodied researcher” that has prevailed in academia (Ellingson, 2009, p. 34). However, as the underlying motivation of my study was of social concern for the animals and the
employees, my study could be linked to other ethnographies with similar “Save-the-World missionary zeal” (Van Maanen, 2006, p. 19) (See, for example, Gusterson, 1995; Foley, 1993; Young, 1991). The strength of crystallization is that it did provide a flexible framework for filtering and sense making of a messy reality. It allowed for issues that conflicted and overlapped, resisting the simplification of complex problems. As some pure autoethnographical studies have been criticized with being overly narcissistic (Coffey, 1999; Roth, 2005), my use of crystallization tries to limit this by adding interviews to the mix of data. However, crystallization is a time-consuming effort, which would not be appropriate for all research. It was also challenging, as the personal emotions to the content of the study remained so real throughout the thesis. In this way, I felt haunted by the moral conflict far beyond exiting ANIMA, as I tried to write creatively later about it, conjuring the emotional conflicts as closely as I could. This leads to efficiency issues and analytical difficulties. This is also mentioned as moral and ethical concerns raised by Doloriert and Sambrook (2009) on autoethnography, but crystallization also faces the general criticism all creative genres receive in many scientific communities – that it is not scientific enough. One means to restrict this impact on the researcher could be to use a co-created autoethnography as Kempster and Stewart (2010) in their study on situated learning in leadership. Co-creating an autoethnography between an academic and practitioner may alleviate some of the efficiency issues I mention before regarding sole autoethnographies.
7 CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Organizations are key players in how we shape our societies. Animal shelters exist because there is an oversupply of unwanted, neglected, and abused animals as a result of human actions. Animal shelters are disadvantaged as they are dependent on charity donations, and therefore, there is a power imbalance for such organizations in society dealing with managing a growing social problem with limited resources. ANIMA exists as a way to deal with these unwanted, neglected, and abused animals in Australia. However, as was evident in my study, there are issues in the work process as well as in the employee motivations that create conflict, specifically regarding emotions and how power is used and distributed in the organization.

I found that to study emotions, specifically emotions that lead to the “flourishing and thriving of the human experience” (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012), power must be acknowledged. Without recognizing the impact that power and powerlessness has on our emotions, understanding these in a context becomes flawed and futile. Simply put, why is animal shelter work something most people would avoid, yet as a society it is the social solution that is supported? Although this question extends beyond my thesis, I attempt in my study to shed some light on the often hidden work that is done in animal shelters. I believe that to do so increases knowledge on what the true costs are, in terms of human and animal distress that the lucrative pet industry acquires. The underlying societal question becomes: why is buying and breeding still occurring when millions of healthy and fit animal are destroyed yearly because nobody wants them? It is this reality that may seem hardest to swallow in our comfortable daily lives. In the following points, my contributions are listed, and outlined to “comfort the uncomfortable” and “trouble the comfortable” (Van Maanen, 2010).

I believe my main contribution is that I extend the literature on animal shelter studies by becoming an employee in the organization under study. This has not earlier been done. The insider position allowed for unique insights into the work life of an animal attendant, such as the intense and constant emotional conflict in the role, that earlier was not fully evident, nor realized. I found covert and overt conflicts, as well as solutions, which would not have been apparent without this full immersion in the organization.

Secondly, I add to the Emotions in Organizations literature by confirming the use of Bounded Emotionality in the animal shelter context. Here, management exploits employee emotions for organizational gains (such as in the flood example). Power is a main factor involved in this exploitation and is my main contribution to understanding emotions in the organization. Management and employees clashed over the Person-Job fit of McJob workers versus the Person-Organization fit of Value-workers. This conflict was further complicated by findings that there was a socio-ideological control of crafting McJob workers in the organization. This point shows that the socialism tactics of animal shelter workers are similar to other, considerably different industries, such as knowledge-intensive workers (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2004).

Thirdly, my study extends the traditional understanding of exit-voice by Hirschman (1970), through placing a POS spin on employees leaving an organization. As exits can be viewed through a developmental lens as catalysts for self-awareness and opportunities for individual growth, this extends beyond Hirschman’s original point, of employees leaving only by escaping the “objectionable state of affairs” (p. 30). This
further contributes to our understanding of exits in the organizational behaviour literature. Here, there has been little mention of the prosocial motivations found in my case that complicated exiting the organization. As individuals were aligned to the organization’s main goal of saving animals, their free choice of leaving the organization due to difficult work circumstances was lowered. Hence, employees faced ideological conflicts on a level previously not fully recognized by either the OB or IR literatures.

Fourthly, I make a contribution to the limited studies on how the ideological rewards function in a psychological contract at work. In animal shelters, employees enter with high prosocial motivation to work towards saving animals. However, my study in ANIMA showed that employees became disillusioned as these ideological rewards were unrealized, to the extent that other rewards, such as relational issues, rose to those who adapted to the organizational socialization processes. By recruiting highly motivated employees, the organization could exploit the workforce by counting on employee emotional attachments. But this was highly controlled when it did not meet managerial goals. “Moral hot buttons” became the euthanasia of healthy animals which showed the complex situation of how moral conflict is played out in value-driven organizations.

Fifthly, I contribute to the literature on Positive Organizational Scholarship mainly through testing its application to a dirty work context. By critically using a POS lens I found reasons to support the critique by Fineman (2010), of much positivity being of an elitist, (or managerial), agenda. Rather than allowing for employee voice and work involvement, POS focuses on creating a resilient workforce through compliance and individual responsibility. In this way, there may be employee exploitation as organizational issues, (such as coping with animal euthanasia), are pushed onto the individual, rather than critically discussed on an organizational level.

Sixtly, I contribute to the literature on Dirty Work by coming to four roles that showed the rationalization of work and emotions of the employees. The Hero, Professional, Victim and Tourist all dealt with the moral conflict in different ways and, for example, the Professional and Victim has been found in other Dirty Work contexts (such as those by Grandy, 2008, which she calls “Exploited”). However, in my study there are two further points of blame the Victim uses that other studies have not highlighted enough; that of self-blame (and self-harm), as well as blaming management for not coping.

Seventhly and finally, my methodological contribution is to add to alternative ways of studying organizations. I use crystallization with various elements of narratives, diary entries, interviews, poetry and visuals to represent an unusual context for organizational studies. My study attempts to resist the methodological “iron cage” of organizational studies as well as the “ivory tower” of research by becoming a low-level employee. I find that doctorial research can be done in such a setting, encouraging others to also follow their passions for viable research areas.

7.1. Practical implications

My study shows that dirty work occupations, such as animal shelter-work, are fraught with moral conflicts and coping strategies, which may not be as frequent in work with less taint (i.e. work with no/low degree of dirty tasks). Employees enter the organization due to their love of animals and alignment with the values of the organization. But, the lived experience of daily events shape the employees experiences, often in a negative way, as ANIMA often failed to manage their intrinsic expectations according to the best interests of the animals. This may result in many
There are two practical implications of this for the organization. Firstly, to develop the “Victims” and “Tourists”, managers and HR professionals need to focus on identifying specific coping strategies for employees and train them to become “Heroes”. In this way, the organization needs to adapt a care model for its employees rather than the mechanized processing plant. Literature suggests strengthening the relationships in the organization between the employee and the client (see, for example, Kanfer, 2009). The client in the animal shelter is the animal and through strengthening the human-animal bond, there are benefits for all involved. In this way, heightening the prosocial motivation becomes key rather than the limiting factor. This demands a restructuring and new thinking among managers to empower and support employees rather than control them. In value-based jobs, such as shelter work, it would seem to be even more important to focus on aligning the management strategies to the employees’ values. Developing appropriate coping skills for the job would also mean more attention on the processes and employee voice to increase efficiency, but also duty of care. Kreiner et al. (2006) suggest recalibrating and reframing to be the most useful defence strategies as these are focused on the work itself rather than negative comparisons to others. These could include focusing on small incremental wins and tying these to long-term goals of both the individual and the organization. Focusing on the beneficiaries (Grant & Berg, 2012; Grant, 2009) of the work (i.e. successful adoptions) can also present an interesting avenue for creating positive meaning out of everyday wins and setbacks. Developing self-awareness through non-confrontational yet meaningful tasks would encourage such goal alignment that in the process-plant are often overlooked. These positive strategies, along with carefully crafted symbolic management (such as stories, traditions, metaphors), could increase the collective’s positive characteristics (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999) and, thus, create more job satisfaction as well as work role acceptance.

The second practical implication is to be upfront of the realities of working in the organization. Therefore, if management wants “McJob”-workers, this should be explicitly stated in their recruitment processes to avoid costly disillusionment and conflict. The issue here is to decide whether employing animal lovers is appropriate for this context in light of the limited resources of the organization. The new role of animals in society as intimate family members may imply that euthanizing animals may be similar to some individuals as it would be to killing children. As individuals increasingly use pets to replace children, this implication is of importance in how ANIMA develops its recruitment and training policies, especially in the future. Consequently, the organizational leaders need to have some authentic or “fierce conversations” (Scott, 2002) about how to adapt either the corporate culture to allow for increased employee voice or to adapt recruitment policies to take responsibility for employee disillusionment.

These two practical implications are not straightforward to implement. By choosing to realign recruitment policies to those adhering to a Professional storyline, there may be increased standardization and efficiency in the organization. This decrease in employee conflict could leave management to focus energy on other issues such as lowering euthanasia rates, increasing adoption possibilities, and advocating legal reform to pet ownership and commercialization. On the other hand, a care model for employees as well as the animals may create innovative solutions from the bottom-up and thus spread in a more organic way than forced top-down. Therefore, the practical implication of my study could be summarized with the following question: for the
organization to decide how they want to reach their goals is it an “ends-justify-the-means”-approach or a journey-approach?

Furthermore, there is a practical implication in terms of research. Alternative methodologies such as the one I have used in this thesis may expand hidden knowledge in organizations. Therefore, more effort needs to be placed on traditionally positivist contexts, such as business schools, to invite a variety of research methodologies. This may inspire research in contexts to both contribute to unusual findings as well as transmit organizational understanding and knowledge to a wider audience than what pure research reports do. This may lead to societal change as exposing the hidden “truths” of, in my case animal management, can lead to shock-value which may be needed for the public to change the culture of pet overpopulations and, in turn, legislation.

7.2. Limitations and Future research

As with all studies, there are limitations to acknowledge. My study is a case study on one organization in a specific time in history through the eyes of a specific researcher. Critics will challenge the generalizability of my findings and reasoning behind choosing the genres in my crystallized representations. I accept and acknowledge these as valuable contributors to the ongoing debate of science, art, and knowledge. However, my purpose was never to claim any overreaching “truths” nor to say that all animal shelter experiences match those ones explored in this study. Rather, my general aim of this study was to better understand the experience of the animal shelter context from an internal perspective. This was to further understand why pet overpopulation is such a problem in Australia, even though pets are increasingly thought of in terms as a family member.

I mentioned in the methodology chapter the limitation of me being a Swedish-Finn coming into an Australian animal welfare context and the impact this cultural difference could have had on my ethnography. But, acknowledging this limitation does not fully explain the emotional trauma I felt in the context as others experienced similar issues. I profess to entering the context with a somewhat naïve stance of what I could accomplish in the organization (i.e. saving more than killing animals). However, this was very similar to the newcomer idealism that others felt before socialization hit them in the organization. Therefore, the issue becomes whether to exit and grow or stay and adapt? I struggle with both options. As I created bonds with other employees and managers, I could see the complex organizational issues from multiple perspectives. However, in the end, I follow Irvine (2003) who finds in her study on unwanted pets, that some shelters are actually doing more harm in protecting people who surrender their pets than necessarily helping the animals.

Organizations, such as ANIMA, attest that humane education is the most important way to combat pet overpopulation in association with pet spay/neuter programs. However, if shelters allow surrendering individuals to ascribe to the moral identities that still make them “good” people, they are, in effect, not targeting the problem. Animal shelters today are effectively teaching the public that:

We [the shelter] will take in your canine and feline mistakes and inconveniences, and we will shield you [the public] from the ‘dirty work’ [euthanasia] that takes place here (Irvine, 2003 p. 562).
If a realistic solution is to be found in regards to unwanted pets and high shelter killings, giving moral justifications to irresponsible pet ownership is most likely not the most effective way. Therefore, an interesting venue for further research on this important social problem would be to see if a more direct response of the shelter to the surrender of animals could change public pet negligence. How would shelters that truthfully disclose real euthanasia figures in campaigns be affected? Should shelters be as concerned as ANIMA about their public image? Would it really affect the bottom line of donations or would a more authentic approach to outlining the real “horrors” affect more change? Does it not excuse poor public behaviour if there is little to no consequence for surrendering a pet? If a value-based organization wants to create societal change, how can it sanction efforts to transfer responsibility? Countries with more progressive animal welfare policies could be targeted and investigated, to inform the Australian animal welfare industry of best practice.

Other interesting avenues would be to investigate if similar issues and roles are evident in other dirty work contexts such as in human palliative care or in no-kill shelters where euthanasia is not a factor. Also, looking at the managerial paradox of McJob’s vs. ValueJob’s and if a balance is possible, and if not, then what are the benefits and challenges of each employment model? And finally, there is a question that earlier studies do not give too much attention to, which is, what happens to individuals who leave animal shelters versus those that remain? In this way, a longitudinal study on employees in animal shelters is needed to effectively understand circumstances where they stay to when they exit and where they go next? This could lead to interesting avenues for POS in terms of whether the identity growth theory actually holds or if it is a “cope-out” not to change organizations to healthier environments.

ANIMA employees have limited resources to voice their moral conflict at work. As in previous studies on animal shelter employees, this moral conflict is a result of animal-loving employees being tasked with euthanizing healthy animals. Individual strategies, such as fostering, are a small step towards a way to resist this task. However, then employees are faced with resisting these processes by finding alternative means to saving the animals in their private lives. This creates a blurred boundary between the employee’s work and private life. The stress of caring placed on employees is well documented and can potentially lead to compassion fatigue (Figley, 1995) affecting not only the individual negatively but also the organization and in turn is a heavy societal cost. Future research needs to target this issue in a more collaborative way, emphasising leadership support and buy-ins that aid employees to manage their high workloads. Some interviewees mentioned ambitions of setting up rescue organizations; this could be a venue for reducing euthanasia rates while helping empower employees.

Throughout my study, I found similar coping mechanisms that are suggested by the dirty work literature. In order to cope with the nature of the work, ANIMA workers developed strategies such as normalizing the dirty work through occupational ideologies, defensive tactics, social buffers, and habituation/desensitization. For some, these formed a justification of euthanizing healthy animals, but overall, there was an acknowledgement that this act was innately wrong. To counteract this, some employees reframed euthanasia to be the more compassionate act than the prolonged suffering of unwanted animals. However, as found in the cases of Lady and Boris, both cases that would have resulted in euthanasia, they lived happy lives with families that loved them. Findings showed that this was highly contradictory; however, as employee deviance was commonplace as seen through a range of tactics to resist euthanasia decisions. In future research, more attention is needed on how employees value these “small wins” and how this could be practically increased to retain employees and increase resilience
as a result. Therefore, it would reduce the processing-plant metaphor both in regards to that of processing the animals and to that of processing employees.

Animal welfare organizations rely on their employees to care for animals in highly emotionally toxic environments. As outcomes affect life and death for animals, these are highly emotionalised by the employees. There are strong implications for the employees and can be costly for the organization in terms of a high turnover, when employees cannot cope. I argue that if the organization wants McJob-workers, they need to change recruitment strategies to include more transactional and relational motivated employees. During my study, most employees were recruited based on volunteer experience, indicating a high ideological motivation rather than those spurring the McJobs. In this way, changing recruitment strategies idealist elements are limited and the employee's psychological contract is less likely to be breached. However, recruiting such employees would limit the positive externalities of having a prosocially-motivated workforce. On the other hand, organizations may find that this would be more costly long-term as unpaid work would be limited, but this might reduce the moral conflict of employees.

7.3. Last reflections

Many people in my study reported that they felt a similar pain and suffering as I did when faced with abused, unwanted, and neglected animals. To work in the animal welfare industry is an emotional rollercoaster that few people outside of it can fully understand or even want to acknowledge due to its emotionality. Yet, Anima, with its processes and policies, belongs to the accepted societal solution to pet overpopulation in Australia. Recognizing that a perfect solution to this social problem is unknown, silence on what is done today, how, and by who has, in my opinion, not helped to find an answer. The discussion needs to be held around why there is an increasing amount of animals that are abused, neglected, and unwanted while simultaneously there is a higher societal awareness of animal welfare and exposure to this welfare breach. Those profiting from a lucrative pet industry are not held responsible for the masses of unwanted pets. Australian legislation allows puppy mills and factory-farmed pets that are sold in pet shops without much screening to those who supply or those who buy these pets. As a result, animal rescues and shelters are crowded with rejected or discarded pets that are no longer wanted. Allowing mass productions of scale in pet breeding contradict animal behavioural experts as well as any shelter workers experience of how easily pets are discarded if found inconvenient.

I highly respect individuals who choose to be exposed to the emotional disconnect of killing those they want to save and being able to cope. They are ultimately in an exploited position both in the organization as well as society. It is those of us privileged enough to choose our research contexts and subjects who need to step down from our ivory tower of academia and become human through exposing our emotions and will to help find understanding and, hopefully one day, solutions to problems that torment us as well as those who work in contexts such as ANIMA. This thesis is my humble attempt at understanding a phenomenon which creates for me, personally, great suffering and share this knowledge for the animals and employees who are silenced, either through powerlessness in organizations framed as a solution as well as the countless beings society deems as worthless and thus sentenced to death.
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APPENDIX 1  PICTURE SOURCES

Picture sources:

1) C.M.com
2) E.com
3) I.L.
4) L.W.
5) S.S.com

To protect the anonymity of ANIMA, limited links are provided in this thesis. However, those interested in contacting the photographers of the images can get their contact details through emailing me on linda_charlotta@yahoo.co.uk
APPENDIX 2  GLOSSARY AND ANIMA TERMINOLOGY

AA = Animal Attendant: Employee at ANIMA that is responsible for the animal husbandry.

Affect = According to the Oxford dictionary (online) many confuse affect with effect. “Affect means 'make a difference to; change' (the changes will affect everyone), whereas effect means either 'a result' (the drug has a painkilling effect) or 'bring about a result' (he effected a cost-cutting exercise)”. In the field of Psychology affect is used as a noun to describe the “emotion or desire as influencing behaviour”.

BA = Behavioural Assessment. This is temperament testing of dogs over 5 months old. Those that pass are sent to desexing and adoption, those that fail are euthanized, some may also be placed in foster care or under behavioural training.

BT = Black Tag animal. This refers to an animal that has been seized by inspectors due to negligence or cruelty and is awaiting a court ruling. Once a ruling is issued the animal goes through “sort” if it is surrendered to Anima.

Desex = When an animal is spayed or neutered, thus unable to have offspring.

McDonaldization = “the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world “(Ritzer, 1993, p. 1). This is also referred to as “Chain”-mentality.

PIC = Pets in Crisis. A program that allows mainly victims of domestic abuse or other negatively affected individuals up to a month interim housing for their pet at the shelter until their domestic situation is stabilized. The animal is after a month surrendered to Anima and sorted if the owner does not reclaim the animal.

Sort = Biweekly process when animals are evaluated to go to behavioural testing, desexing or euthanized.

Vollie(s) = Volunteer
APPENDIX 3  INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) Can you tell me about your job?

2) Can you tell me some positive and negative things about your job?

3) Can you think of a specific event that triggered a positive emotion? How about a negative emotion?

4) How do you manage difficult situations on a regular basis?

5) Can you express your emotions at work?

6) What do you think about the organizational culture?

7) What are your plans for the future in terms of work?

8) How supportive do you find your colleagues/supervisor/community?

9) Can you tell me about your experience with the floods?

10) Any other events that would explain how it feels for you to be in this organization?
Information Sheet

Project Title: How employees manage positive and challenging experiences at work

Researcher: Linda Tallberg, Griffith Business School
Supervisor: Professor Peter J Jordan, Griffith University
Supervisor: Dr Maree Boyle, Griffith Business School

Griffith University
Nathan QLD 4111
Phone: 0420268277; 07 3875 3717
linda.tallberg@griffithuni.edu.au

You are invited to participate in a project that examines how employees manage events at work. The study is being conducted by researchers Linda Tallberg, Professor Peter Jordan and Dr. Maree Boyle at Griffith University. The research is part of Linda’s PhD data collection and will provide important information about how employees manage positive and challenging experiences at work. The purpose is to provide insights and enable improvements in organizations to support employees during critical incidents.

- Participation involves an interview. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour. The interview will take place at a location of your choosing; in a private conference room at your workplace; in your home; at a private meeting room at Griffith University; or at another location appropriate for the interview. A copy of the results will be made available to each participant upon request.

- All data collected as a result of this research will be treated confidentially and stored securely.

- Participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty. You may discontinue participation at any time without comment or penalty.

- Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project you should contact the Manager, Research Ethics as 3735 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

- Participation in the interview will be taken as your indication of informed consent.

Thank you for your assistance with this research project.


LINDA TALLBERG

PROCESSING PUPPIES: AN ANIMAL SHELTER ETHNOGRAPHY

This book is about life at an Australian animal shelter, called ANIMA. The shelter is tasked with organizing the dark side of humanity of cruelty, neglect, and ignorance. It is about the humans and animals who live and die in the organization - often silenced and hidden in society.

Employees join the organization to save animals, yet due to organizational constraints, are the ones who are tasked with the killing. In ANIMA, the emotional and moral conflict is both constant and intense for animal shelter employees. They are promotivated and have strong ideologi cal alignment to the organizational goals. This creates a lifestyle that revolves around saving and caring for the neglected, unwanted and mistreated animals of society. However, management and the animal shelter employees are at odds on how to best handle the social problem of pet overpopulation. The organization rests upon a traditional hierarchical power distribution where those who perform the stigmatized job task of euthanasia are also those without any real decision-making power. Reducing the animal shelter workers to assembly-line workers in a processing-plant is a key way to ensure the business model of the animal welfare organization flows smoothly.

I was employed for a year as an animal attendant in the animal shelter. My ethnographic material includes diary entries, interviews, participant-observations and are represented in my thesis through Crystallization. It is through this unusual form of communication that I use poetry, pictures and narratives to try to engage the reader to understand the unique, emotive context of the organization. In this book, I specifically focus on the paradoxical work role that includes euthanasia of healthy animals; how the hidden voices of the animals give knowledge of the organization; and how power relationships are revealed during emergency evacuation during a natural disaster.

The study argues that there are immense problems, both at an organizational as well as broader societal level, of how unwanted animals are dealt with. The focus of powerlessness felt by employees and animals leads to four coping mechanisms throughout the study which I call: Hero, Victim, Professional and Tourist. I make contributions to literatures on Emotion in Organizations, Dirty Work and Positive Organizational Scholarship.