Using a Positive Lens to Explore Social Change and Organizations

Building a Theoretical and Research Foundation

Edited by

Karen Golden-Biddle
Boston University

Jane E. Dutton
Univesity of Michigan

8

Agency and Innovation in a Phase of Turbulent Change: Conservation in the Great Bear Rainforest

Darcy Riddell, Ola Tjörnbo, and Frances Westley
University of Waterloo

CONSERVATION IN THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST: AGENCY AND INNOVATION IN A PHASE OF TURBULENT CHANGE

The rallying cry for a new generation of activists, from the words famously famous attributed to M. K. Gandhi, proclaims that "we must be the change we wish to see in the world." This is a call both to enact change and to embody a desired future in one's current way of life. Yet, when impersonal political and economic structures and large-scale cultural forces are implicated in systemic problems such as poverty, climate change, or species loss, what power do individuals truly have to create positive social and organizational change? So-called messy, wicked, or complex problems refer to problems whose very definition is contested, and for which solutions are unknown, multiple, and emergent. Organization- or leadership-based theories can be inadequate to explain change in these complex problem domains: those with convoluted overlaps of authority, institutions operating at multiple scales, and a multiplicity of actors with clashing beliefs that frame the problem differently and generate competing knowledge claims. Yet individuals *are* enacting change, and impacting on large-scale problems—with both positive and negative consequences.

Many cases describe how courageous individuals and collections of people can catalyze social innovations through their own agency and tenacity (e.g., Bornstein, 2007; Hawken, 2007; Westley et al., 2006). Given

the increasing complexity of the problems in our world, theories of agency that illuminate, without privileging, the role of individual change makers in addressing complex problems, are an important part of theorizing change. Such theories, when consistent with complexity theory, suggest that positive change has an emergent process: that change at the individual level can change group dynamics which in turn can change broader system dynamics (Westley et al., 2006). A complexity- and agency-based approach contrasts with heroic leadership-based theories of organizational change, and is more appropriate for theorizing in complex social-political domains. This chapter looks at these dynamics of change in a case of social innovation, and focuses on the question: what are the individual and collective processes of agency that catalyze systems change? By applying a positive lens, we enrich our exploration of the processes of agency that enabled system change to emerge.

This chapter describes the case of forest conservation in the Great Bear Rainforest, where the passion and purposeful action of individuals created conditions for greater social justice, sustainability, and community resilience. In the process, these individuals met circumstances that called forth their own transformation, which in turn supported their ability change relationship dynamics, and through this process, to enlist conflicted sectors into collaboration toward a shared vision. This group of actors and organizations successfully established a globally significant conservation agreement that protected 33% of the Great Bear Rainforest, caused a radical reorientation of forest policy and management regimes, raised conservation capital to support innovation in communities, and enshrined a powerful new legal role for First Nations. After introducing the case, we frame it as an example of social innovation in a complex problem domain, emphasizing the phase of turbulent change (Westley et al., 2006). We describe six processes of individual and collective agency that led to innovation, drawing from socio-cognitive (Bandura, 2001; 2006) and sociological theories of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998) to better understand these aspects of agency. We suggest that social change agency can be understood as a multilevel process of creating intentional change, where actors must attend to transformation at personal, interpersonal, and systemic levels in order to be successful. We identify positive dynamics at each of these levels, whereby individuals experience growth and harness compassionate motivation, which in turn supports generative relationships and new forms of problem-solving between actors in conflict, finally

contributing to emergent, innovative solutions that support human development and are more just and sustainable. We highlight some new lines of sight offered by the case, and propose future areas of research.

CONFLICT AND SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

Forest Conflict on British Columbia's Coast

Heated controversies over the large-scale clear-cutting of old growth forest—dubbed "the War in the Woods"—made headlines in the province of British Columbia, Canada (BC), for over a decade. The Great Bear Rainforest on BC's west coast was the largest unprotected coastal temperate rainforest remaining worldwide in the 1990s, and a coalition of environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) was determined to protect it. Located between the Alaska panhandle and the northern tip of Vancouver Island, the 6.4 million hectares Great Bear Rainforest is about the size of Ireland, encompassing hundreds of intact valleys of temperate rainforest (Figure 8.1). About 22,000 people live in the Great Bear Rainforest, and it is home to the unique white "spirit bear," grizzly bears, and cedars over 2000 years old. First Nations (aboriginal people) make up about half of the population, and the region includes the traditional territories of 25 culturally distinct Nations, who face a loss of languages and traditional cultures, serious social problems, and limited economic opportunities as a result of being excluded historically from the economic benefits of forestry, fishing, and other extractive industries (Prescott-Allen, 2005; Smith & Sterritt, 2007). During the period of conservation battles, First Nations were claiming rights and title over their traditional territories, and winning key battles against the provincial government in the Canadian Supreme Court. The provincial government controlled the majority of land in BC, and granted long-term forest tenures to a handful of forest companies operating on the coast, in turn reaping logging fees (Wagner, 2003). Forestry was historically of vital importance to BC's economy, and the changing softwood lumber market had the coastal forest industry struggling.

Aware of looming controversy, in 1997, the province created a multi-stakeholder land use planning process for the central coast region, and
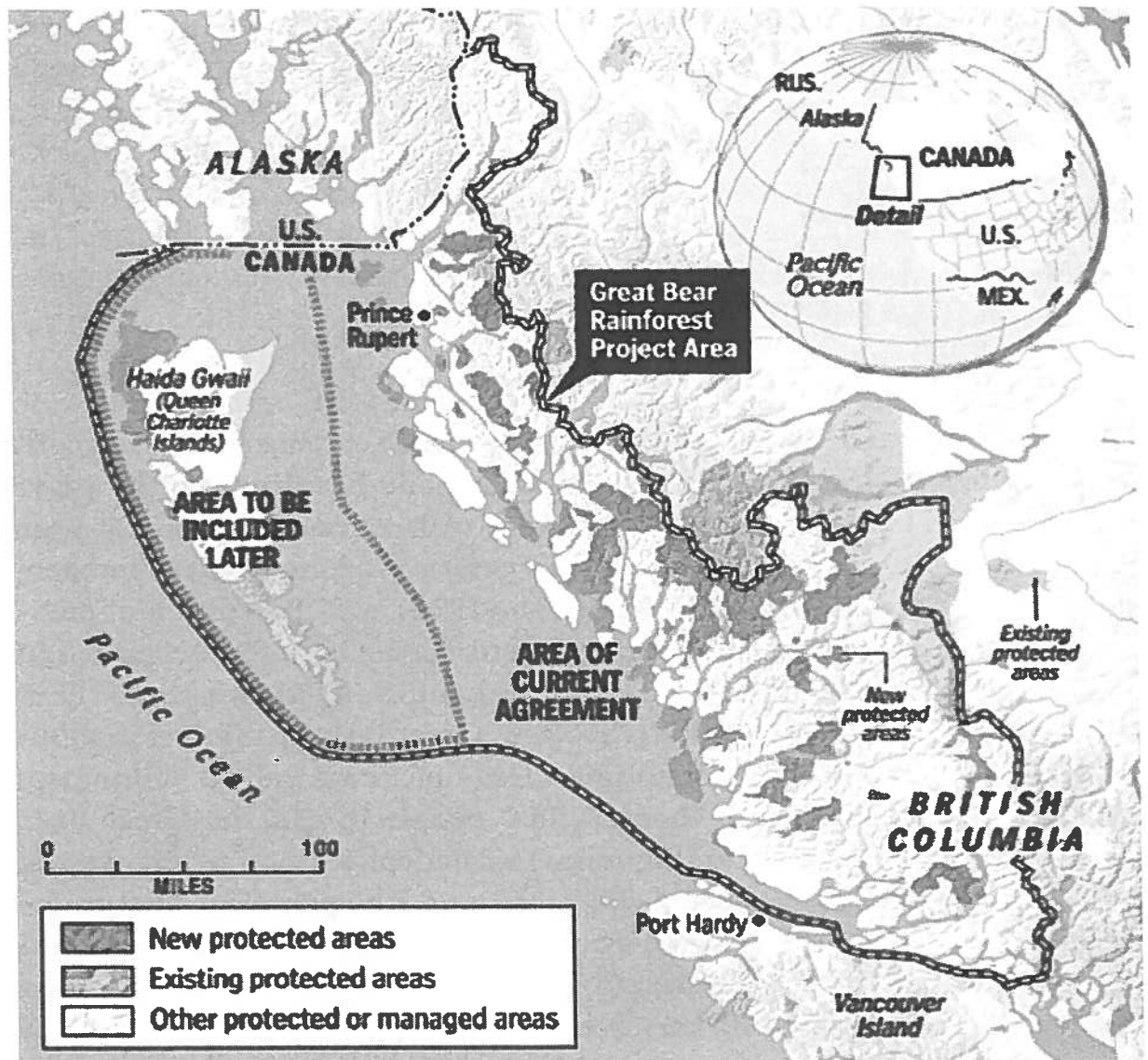
FIGURE 8.1

Map of the Great Bear Rainforest area including Haida Gwaii, British Columbia, Canada.

later the north coast, and invited stakeholders from all sectors to partici-
pate (Tjornbo et al., 2010). The process was undermined from the outset,
as environmental organizations boycotted the process—labeling it as inca-
pable of legislating meaningful conservation, and First Nations attended
as observers, unwilling to be considered merely "stakeholders" in an area
they believed to be under their jurisdiction. In 1997–1998, as the plan-
ning process proceeded, 13 rainforest valleys were roaded and logged, and
almost every valley in the region was scheduled for clear-cutting within
decades (Sierra Club of BC, 1999). A coalition of ENGOs consisting of

ForestEthics, Greenpeace, the Sierra Club of BC, and Rainforest Action Network launched international and provincial campaigns to protect the Great Bear Rainforest. Their vision was of large-scale rainforest conservation, new forest practices, recognition of First Nations title and rights, and new sustainable economic opportunities for the region. Public and marketplace campaigns targeted wood and paper products originating from endangered forest regions worldwide, using the Great Bear Rainforest as the "poster child."

The ENGOs' campaigns fueled intense conflict between the forest industry, government, forest workers, First Nations, and environmentalists in both the media and political arenas—but they proved to be powerful strategies in catalyzing change. Campaigns targeted customers of BC wood products in U.S., European, and Japanese markets worth roughly one billion dollars (Smith & Sterrit, 2007). Over 80 companies made commitments to phase out endangered forest products, including Home Depot and Lowe's, the world's largest wood retailers, IKEA, and Fortune 500 companies Nike, Dell, and IBM (Riddell, 2009; Smith & Sterrit, 2007). Over $200 million in contracts were cancelled with forest companies logging in the Great Bear Rainforest, and German and U.S. buyers registered concerns with the government and industry, signaling that a solution to the conflict had to be found. As a result of this financial pressure and the related controversy, forest companies operating in the Great Bear Rainforest entered into bi-lateral negotiations with ENGOs, and the province lifted restrictions so that ENGOs would agree to join official land-use planning processes.

Negotiations and Coalition-Building

In 1999, senior forest company representatives met, agreeing that they would redefine their approach to the coastal conflict and seek a negotiated resolution to the War in the Woods (Smith & Sterrit, 2007). Clearcut logging and markets campaigns continued, while the two sides found their footing in tense negotiations. A skilled facilitator, hired by forest companies, supported the negotiations. The ENGO leaders negotiating with industry were the same individuals who were leading the much-hated markets campaigns, and there was strong personal animosity on both sides. The negotiators on the ENGO side had faced threats of violence and backlash in the media and logging-dependent communities.

The premier of British Columbia had publicly labeled environmentalists as the "Enemies of BC" (Hoberg, 2001). Early negotiations were polarizing and uncomfortable, with environmental and industry representatives hurling bitter recriminations across the board table (Tjornbo et al., 2010). The industry negotiators were largely male, and had previous negotiating experience, whereas the women leading negotiations on the ENGO side had never undertaken such a role. During this time, ENGO leaders sought training and delved deeper into collective strategizing and visioning processes, as well as embracing new dialogue and learning approaches with their opponents.

In 2000, after over a year of negotiations, the parties created a "Standstill Agreement" whereby the markets campaigns would be suspended, and the forest companies agreed to a voluntary moratorium of logging in over 100 valleys, so future negotiations could proceed without battles in an atmosphere of "solutions space." The logging moratorium was an extraordinary milestone, as nothing like this, let alone on such grand scale, had ever been negotiated in BC—and certainly not without government involvement. The two sides had to "sell" the agreement to government, First Nations, and the land use planning table, and endured significant backlash from rural mayors, forest workers, and disgruntled members of their own camps when news of the agreement was leaked.

During this time of negotiations, coalitions were formalized both on the ENGO side (Rainforest Solutions Project—RSP) and the Forest Industry side (Coast Forest Companies Initiative—CFCI). After successfully negotiating the Standstill, CFCI and RSP created the Joint Solutions Project (JSP) as a structure for communication and further negotiations, and to advance dialogue with First Nations, the BC government, labor groups, and local communities. JSP became a venue for sharing information, discussing new policy and regulatory models, and problem solving (Smith & Sterrit, 2007). This ushered in an era of coalitions, where First Nations formalized their relationships with one another in the Coastal First Nations alliance, and government and coastal communities also established vehicles for collaboration, experimental thinking, and piloting new approaches.

Joint Solutions Emerge

In 2001, these multilateral negotiations led to a joint solutions framework, which maintained the logging deferrals and created new vehicles

for knowledge generation, developing alternative management regimes, and supporting economic transition. The framework included an independent scientific panel—the Coast Information Team (CIT), which was set up to determine which areas needed protection, and how logging could take place in the region within the highest conservation standards. Parties agreed to embrace ecosystem-based management (EBM) principles and goals, which are based in the recognition that healthy ecosystems form the basis of healthy communities and economies—representing a significant shift from the extractive industrial forestry mindset. They also agreed to pursue efforts at economic diversification away from natural resource extraction toward a "conservation-based economy," which included a $35 million transition package for displaced workers, and the idea for a $120 million conservation investment fund. Finally the BC government and First Nations signed historic government-to-government protocol agreements with eight Coastal First Nations, acknowledging their shared jurisdiction.

Turning this framework into a substantive plan took five years, over a dozen committees, and thousands of hours of meetings (Smith & Sterrit, 2007). The CIT conducted ecological and socio-economic research, developed recommendations for the land use planning tables, and created a framework and guide for the new forest management regime. Individual First Nations pursued land use planning, and the Coast Investments and Incentives Initiative (CIII) was created as a joint initiative between the First Nations, ENGOs, and government, with ENGOs taking the lead to raise $60 million of philanthropic capital for conservation investments. Pilot projects were initiated in Coastal First Nations communities to apply new business concepts and EBM forestry. In 2004 the land use planning tables of the central and north coast came to consensus recommendations regarding protected areas and EBM forestry. In a parallel process, First Nations were completing their land use plans and preparing for government-to-government negotiations.

At last, by February 2006, the final Great Bear Rainforest Land Use Decisions were announced, formalizing the multifaceted new policies and legal agreements developed through ongoing collaboration. The final policy package represented a significant institutional shift to ecosystem-based forest management, with over 33% of the region (two million hectares) protected from logging. New legal designations were created to allow First Nations cultural uses in protected areas. The conservation fund of

$120 million was raised successfully, with half the funds supporting a permanent conservation endowment to finance ecosystem protection and management on public lands, and the other half to support ecologically sustainable First Nations businesses and economic development (Price et al., 2009). Finally, in March 2009, after tough negotiations on EBM implementation, the full agreement entered into force—a startling example of system transformation whose full effects on the province of BC are still to be felt.

The final agreements are touted by all parties as a world-class example of positive change, conserving large areas of rainforest, enshrining a more just relationship with First Nations, supporting community economic development needs, meeting forest industry requirements for certainty, and alleviating conflict. The parties agree that such a multidimensional solution would not have come about without participation and input from such diverse coalitions of interest (Smith & Sterritt, 2007). Inevitably, the parties involved continue to disagree on important aspects of implementation, and conflicts and competition for influence still characterize the policy arena, albeit in the context of these new institutional arrangements. As with all complex problems, change unfolds, the context shifts, and there is no true end to the process.

PHASES OF CHANGE IN THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST CASE

Social Innovation and the Adaptive Cycle

Social innovation is an emerging concept at the nexus of change efforts in civil society, business, philanthropy, government, and the emerging "fourth sector" of hybrid organizations, describing the myriad ways social and environmental value can be generated, and deep-rooted problems can be addressed. We define social innovation as a product, process, initiative, or program that profoundly changes the basic routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of any social system (Westley & Antadze, 2010). When a social innovation has a broad or durable impact, it will be *disruptive*—it will challenge the underlying system and institutions, changing the distribution of power and resources, and altering beliefs (Antadze & Westley, 2010).

According to the definition, social innovation occurred in the Great Bear Rainforest in many ways. The positive changes that took place required disruptions in social systems and institutions, redistributions of power and resources, new forms of governance, and a revolution in the management regime and assumptions guiding forest practices. The new legislation and parks designations, combined with the EBM approach, may be the largest of its kind globally. It is also likely the largest such region to have aboriginal co-management and highly transparent and adaptive governance structures (Price et al., 2009). On a global scale, markets campaigns have shifted the ways that wood and paper purchasing occurs, ushering in new supply chain management regimes (Riddell, 2009).

One of the ways social innovation theory illuminates complex change processes is by applying the concept of the adaptive cycle. The adaptive cycle describes four phases of change in a complex system, and suggests that a given system cycles continually through these stages as it responds to fluctuations in the internal and external environment (Gunderson & Holling, 2002). It provides a heuristic to understand processes of social innovation because by understanding the rhythms of different cycles and influences across scales, it is possible to identify points where the system can accept positive change, and to anticipate points of vulnerability (Holling, 2001; Westley et al., 2006). In this case, we apply the adaptive cycle to better locate and understand how phases of social innovation occurred and to analyze processes during each phase.

The four phases of change are depicted in Figure 8.2. The "front-loop" of the adaptive cycle is a relatively stable phase of predictable, incremental growth where production and accumulation are maximized—moving from the *exploitation phase* where new configurations grow in the system, and competition for resources increases, toward the *conservation phase* where a mature system is sustained, with little flexibility. The "back-loop" is an unpredictable phase of turbulent change and variation, where reorganization and invention are maximized, and transformative change is possible. This is characterized by the *release phase,* where the system undergoes a process of "creative destruction" and structures, processes, and/or function are disrupted. Changes release resources, dissolving the connection or coherence between existing systems parts. Dominant beliefs and understandings are called into question and novelty may emerge. In the *reorganization phase* that follows, a process of exploration and renewal occurs, enabling growth, resource accumulation, and storage. Ideas and adaptations proliferate. The system then moves along the front-loop toward
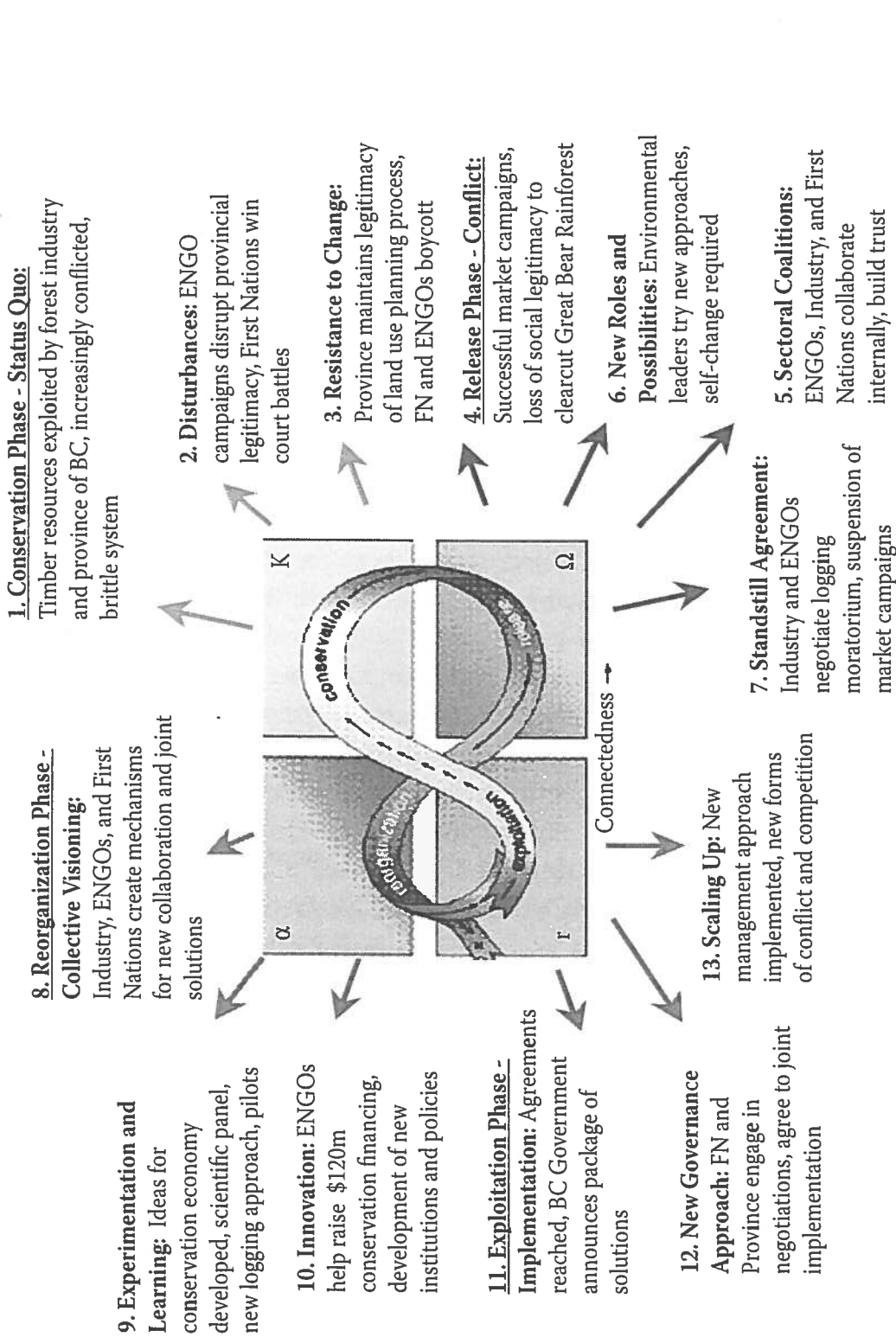
1. Conservation Phase - Status Quo: Timber resources exploited by forest industry and province of BC, increasingly conflicted, brittle system

2. Disturbances: ENGO campaigns disrupt provincial legitimacy, First Nations win court battles

3. Resistance to Change: Province maintains legitimacy of land use planning process, FN and ENGOs boycott

4. Release Phase - Conflict: Successful market campaigns, loss of social legitimacy to clearcut Great Bear Rainforest

5. Sectoral Coalitions: ENGOs, Industry, and First Nations collaborate internally, build trust

6. New Roles and Possibilities: Environmental leaders try new approaches, self-change required

7. Standstill Agreement: Industry and ENGOs negotiate logging moratorium, suspension of market campaigns

8. Reorganization Phase - Collective Visioning: Industry, ENGOs, and First Nations create mechanisms for new collaboration and joint solutions

9. Experimentation and Learning: Ideas for conservation economy developed, scientific panel, new logging approach, pilots

10. Innovation: ENGOs help raise $120m conservation financing, development of new institutions and policies

11. Exploitation Phase - Implementation: Agreements reached, BC Government announces package of solutions

12. New Governance Approach: FN and Province engage in negotiations, agree to joint implementation

13. Scaling Up: New management approach implemented, new forms of conflict and competition

FIGURE 8.2

Adaptive cycle in the Great Bear Rainforest case. This figure describes the phases of change in the case, and highlights the "back-loop" of turbulent change (underlined numbers 4–10), from conflict, through negotiations, collective visioning, experimentation, and innovation. FN, First Nations.

exploitation again. Adaptive cycles of change operating at different scales have been observed in ecosystems (Gunderson & Holling, 2002), institutions (Ostrom, 1992), societies (Westley, 1995), economies (Whitaker, 1987), and the production of scientific knowledge (Kuhn, 1962).

Using the adaptive cycle as a lens to interpret events in the Great Bear Rainforest case (Figure 8.2), different phases of change can be observed. In the ***conservation phase***, forestry institutions became increasingly brittle and locked-in, making them vulnerable to economic pressures from changing markets and from the deliberately disruptive actions of environmentalists (numbers 1–3). Initially, conservative forces resisted change, but a release and reorganization was catalyzed by successful environmental campaigns and the changing status of First Nations resulting in a loss of legitimacy for the status quo of forest policy and the beginning of a transformative back-loop. During the ***release phase*** (numbers 4–7), sectors had to overcome conflict and collaborate more closely, and environmental leaders experimented with new strategies to navigate change. The standstill agreement created a foundation for the ***reorganization phase*** (numbers 8–10), a time of experimentation and learning, where the building blocks of the solution were generated including attracting new capital, creating political buy-in, and developing the economic, scientific/ecological, and human cases for change. New policy and economic and management mechanisms were developed and scaled up, leading to the ***exploitation phase*** (numbers 11–13), where the BC government announced a solutions package supported by all parties; new institutional arrangements with First Nations were established, and new battle lines were drawn between sectors as they jockeyed for position and power in defining implementation details of the complex new agreements. Of particular interest in this chapter is the phase of change through the turbulent back-loop, when the system moved from conflict to innovation. The next section highlights the role of agency in this turbulent phase, and identifies six processes of agency that influenced systemic change.

AGENCY IN THE GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

Understanding Agency in Phases of Turbulent Change

While the adaptive cycle illuminates the phased process of social innovation and provides a lens for understanding the trajectory of change that

took place in the Great Bear Rainforest, the cycle alone does not tell us how it was possible for such change to occur. We now look more closely at the agency social change actors expressed during the back-loop, from release to reorganization, to help move the system toward social innovation. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) suggest that upheaval stimulates particular aspects of agency, and have called for further research into how different aspects of agency are related to periods of stability and/or change. High levels of disorganization—manifesting as antagonism and open conflict—marked the release phase in the Great Bear Rainforest case. Despite the hostile environment, it was possible for the actors involved to build new partnerships and generate change. The lens of agency reveals dynamics across multiple levels (from micro-individual, to meso-relational/organizational, to macro-systemic) which actors deliberately cultivated to generate social innovation. What is also revealed is that many of the expressions of agency involved positive processes. The macro-process of social innovation in the Great Bear Rainforest led to positive outcomes for human and community well-being, increased justice for First Nations, and more adaptive, sustainable forest practices and protection. The six micro- and meso-processes we have identified involve generative personal experiences, and the transformation of relationships from conflict to constructive engagement, which were framed as positive by the individuals involved. Taken together, these multilevel processes provide greater clarity into the kinds of individual and collective agency that are effective during times of turbulent change.

Social innovation concerns the interplay between intentionality and complexity and portrays change as occurring simultaneously at different scales. Because social innovators operate in fields of uncertainty, agency involves attending to and influencing the context in a manner that enables the success and extension of innovations. The agency involved in this kind of systems change has been described as institutional or systems "entrepreneurship" (Garud et al., 2007; Westley & Moore, 2009). Many social innovators describe the paradox that wanting to change others means also accepting profound change in oneself (Westley et al., 2006). This self-transformation is dependent on learning and reflection, as an individual realizes how they are implicated by and participating in the system they seek to change. Bandura (2001, 2006) understands humans as both producers and products of their life circumstances, recognizing that agents and systems/structures are mutually dependent and co-evolving.

Following Bandura we define agency as intentional action to influence one's functioning and life circumstances or environment (2001, 2006). Drawing on the definition of social innovation, we define social change agency as intentional action to influence profound change in the basic routines, resource and authority flows, or beliefs of a social system.

Bandura's socio-cognitive approach identifies key elements of agency, including *self-reflectiveness,* which is the meta-cognitive capacity to reflect on (and change) one's purposes, thoughts, and actions, and *self-efficacy,* which is the belief that one has the power to effect change. Self-efficacy is a primary determinant of which challenges people will undertake, how long they persevere in the face of obstacles, and how they interpret failure (Bandura, 2001). Bandura (2001, 2006) describes other elements of agency including *intentionality*—the formation of intentions and commitment to a course of action by individuals or collectivities, and *forethought*—the visualization of futures as motivators that provide direction, coherence, and meaning to actions. Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) sociological conception of agency echoes these elements, and emphasizes the temporal nature of agency in its past (*iterational*), present (*practical-evaluative*), and future (*projective*) aspects. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) emphasize the importance of collective agency in responding to the structural and emergent demands of real-time problem contexts. *Collective agency* refers to the interdependent efforts of people acting in concert, pooling knowledge, skills, and resources in order to shape their future (Bandura, 2001). Bandura's (2001) research suggests that groups with strongly perceived collective efficacy have higher aspirations and motivation, more perseverance, stronger morale and resilience to stressors, and greater performance accomplishments. Taken together, these elements of agency imply an array of positive or generative processes both individually and collectively, including individual reflection and transformation, establishment and maintenance of motivation, and perseverance in pursuit of a future vision. Next, we will explore how these processes of agency operated in the Great Bear Rainforest case, showing how social change agency operated at individual and collective levels, and ultimately led to broader systems change.

Six Processes of Agency

Many individuals played significant roles in generating the final agreements; however, it can be argued the social conflict over the region's fate

was instigated by ENGO leaders, and they continued to advocate most strongly throughout the process (Riddell, 2009). Several sector representatives interviewed, including First Nations leaders, government representatives, and forest company executives indicated that it was the ENGO leaders' commitment and tenacity that maintained momentum toward the ultimate solution. For this reason, and because early in the process ENGO representatives outlined a vision encompassing the central elements of the eventual solution package, it is instructive to look at the Great Bear Rainforest case through the lens of the agency expressed by the ENGO leaders. Other actors or sectors did not call for a solution of this scope, as they were generally looking for minor modifications of the status quo in their own interests (with the exception of the large-scale legal challenges of First Nations). It is clear that the agency of the ENGO leaders played a large role in enabling social innovation in this case, and that is where we begin.

Analysis of interview data in the Great Bear Rainforest case revealed six generative processes of individual and collective agency that were critical to the transition from release to reorganization and innovation in the back-loop: (1) creating powerful personal narratives; (2) humanizing opponents; (3) tolerating conflict and uncertainty; (4) focusing on solutions; (5) building an inclusive vision; and (6) understanding the dynamics and psychology of change. While these processes interweaved, they also acted as emergent dynamics that allowed for the subsequent processes to build on them. Taken as a whole, these processes of agency describe the stages of the ENGO leaders' journey, beginning with three processes that primarily happened at the micro-level (self), which enabled shifting perceptions of others and new relationships to be forged with former opponents, developing into three meso-level (group/relational) processes enabling development of a broad vision for the region that became the touchstone for a system-wide change coalition, and a range of concrete solutions. These six processes demonstrate links between the micro-level processes of individuals, meso-level group interactions, and the macro-systemic context, and show that positive personal transformations gave rise to new relationships and laid the groundwork for system transformation.

Creating powerful personal narratives: "... *what I am learning is that it is 'as above, so below'—everything is completely connected and we can't pull things apart from each other. My personal process is mirrored back to me*

through this campaign, and the more that each of us does our personal work and integrates that into this broader campaign the more it becomes whole, and this whole journey has been about becoming whole, and it has been about finding peace." ENGO campaigner.[1]

The ENGO leaders came to the negotiating table as political activists steeped in their sector's perception of the problems of the Great Bear Rainforest. However, in order to spark a social innovation they had to alter their perspective to encompass the concerns of the other actors. While environmentalists were committed to the idea of social justice for First Nations, there were conflicts when First Nations perceived that conservation was placed in opposition to human well-being and economic opportunities. First Nations leaders made clear to environmental leaders that any solution must address the realities their communities faced, including social dysfunction and up to 80% unemployment rates (Smith & Sterritt, 2006). The Sierra Club of BC and Greenpeace campaigners went back to their respective organizations and initiated a mission statement change, reflecting the commitment to advance conservation and just resolution of First Nations rights and title simultaneously. Through such encounters the ENGO leaders engaged their self-reflective capacities (Bandura, 2006) and the campaign was experienced, among other things, as a journey of personal development. One campaigner described the Great Bear Rainforest campaign as a "crucible for personal development and transformation," and emphasized her sense of responsibility to future generations, "There was this intentional fusion of what does this mean to each of us individuals personally in terms of our life story. There is a story that is being created, what do we want to tell our grandkids about this, and tell them we were working for more than just saving the trees; we are thinking about how communities are going to survive, and we have to address this." This personal focus also led to a re-evaluation of their role in negotiations. Another campaigner had a breakthrough when realizing her power in negotiations did not come from being an "ice queen," likening early negotiations to a battle where each side shot bullets and then hid behind riot shields, not letting any of their opponent's words hit them. In her previous role as a video producer and interviewer, she had an ability to open people up and

---

[1] All quotations in this section come from personal interviews with the authors, conducted between 2009 and 2011.

listen to their perspectives to gain deeper understanding. She resolved to integrate that part of herself into the environmentalist role, and began to make progress with her opponents.

Individuals underwent transformations as they developed emotionally meaningful personal narratives of the change they were seeking, reflecting on and re-evaluating their purposes and roles. This set the stage for the building of different kinds of relationships with other stakeholders. Instead of a battle of opposing and warring factions, the campaigners began to define their work as a journey of mutual discovery and understanding.

Humanizing opponents: *"Respect costs you nothing."* ENGO negotiator. *"Leaders who spent the time and care to understand interests and aspirations were much more able to envisage and achieve an outcome that could work."* Representative of Environmental Foundation.

When individuals understood that their vision needed everyone's contribution, they began to see the humanity in their opponents, treating them with greater respect, compassion, and curiosity. In an approach that became known, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, as "the Love Strategy," ENGO negotiators shifted their engagement with opponents, working to see them not just as enemies, or as corporate representatives, but as people. One negotiator says this originated from the strong caring relationships that existed between members of the ENGO team. This group participated in training retreats that emphasized negotiation, leadership, and strategic skills, and introduced campaigners to new approaches, including the idea of sourcing action from love, not anger or animosity. Over time, genuinely friendly personal relationships developed between some initial "enemies." This shift is described by one ENGO negotiator as shifting from "not having a crack of compassion" toward becoming genuinely curious, and when roadblocks in negotiations were hit, persevering and always "digging deeper" to find solutions. This led to new conversations and new possibilities from what seemed to be impasses, "It's about being curious...OK now we have to ask them a bunch more questions—'what is it the contractor needs?' and we really had to understand the consequence of what we were asking for and to understand it so that we could either defend or position or we could actually come up with ideas to try to mitigate some of the fallout." As ENGO leaders deliberately redefined and humanized their interactions with forest industry representatives, trust and engagement

increased, and more information about the needs and interests of each group surfaced. This provided more material for solutions, but it also revealed more grounds of conflict. Fortunately, the individuals involved and the relationships being cultivated were becoming resilient enough to absorb considerable increases in tension and uncertainty.

Tolerating conflict and uncertainty: *"You need to stay in that proximate place and engage."* ENGO negotiator.

With positive processes of self-change and relationship building as the foundation, conflict could be made to serve the process of social innovation, rather than derail it. The lead ENGO negotiators identified the ability to sit in both conflict and uncertainty as being central to finding solutions. The external power that the markets campaign provided was essential to creating an equal playing field of negotiations, and they enabled negotiators to engage in more powerful yet dialogical ways, maintaining their bottom line, but looking for alternative options. One negotiator described the challenge of sitting in conflict: it was uncomfortable to have people angry at her, but she deliberately cultivated a sense of staying anchored and empowered, noticing but not giving in to, the urges to run away, lash out, or compromise in order to be liked. One strategy she used to stay engaged through conflict included being very frank with company executives, explaining positions and countermoves they could anticipate from more radical members of the coalition ("good cop-bad cop tactics"). This ability to remain empowered while in conflict was generative, enabling participants in the negotiations process to focus on gaining more information about the situation, learn together, and look for alternatives.

Another ENGO negotiator described how fruitful it was for her to learn to be comfortable in uncertainty. "My natural tendency up until that point had been to find what's wrong. It is so much more challenging to find what is right or to make right." She gradually learned to accept her own internal feelings of conflict and "stuckness" for long enough to allow new alternatives to emerge. This practice also helped her to be patient and allow collaborative processes to remain "stuck" until there could be collective learning, without bypassing the important experience of uncertainty, and the natural resolutions that emerged.

These first three processes of agency (creating new narratives, humanizing opponents, building tolerance for conflict and uncertainty) reveal

many generative micro-dynamics of self-development and transformation that were key to moving creatively through the release phase of turbulent change. In this case, we see how this process began by transformations in personal identity and meaning making but grew to include a transformation of relationships. Dominant beliefs and ways of interacting were called into question, and new generative patterns of interacting emerged. Here we can see how individual social change agency was expressed first through self-development and then through enlisting others in a change process—linking individual agency to collective agency. In terms of the adaptive cycle, this allowed the problem domain to move from the release phase to a reorganization phase. This in turn gave rise to the emergence of an integrated vision and concrete and innovative solution building.

> **Building an inclusive vision:** *"This campaign felt more whole, it felt healthy, that the best of each of us was being mixed into it, and the best of us was being asked for…The questions that were being asked within this campaign and the ways we were building it were much bigger and broader."* ENGO campaigner.

The ENGO leaders' vision was founded on a belief in people's capacity to create a better future for the benefit of the whole. The personal work that ENGO leaders did supported effective action in service of this larger goal: "The most effective leadership was egoless—people who were most effective were less concerned with their role or the perception of their role and more about the big picture or the big outcome we were working for." This founding ENGO commitment to the health of the whole rippled out into a compelling narrative in the Great Bear Rainforest Campaign. Later, when the First Nations challenged ENGOs to "put their money where their mouth is," they tried something never done before and successfully raised $60 million in private philanthropic capital to invest in conservation-based economic development on public lands. It became clear to those involved that solutions would require a vision of profound change that addressed many sectors' concerns for the region.

This greater collective vision and the strong personal identification with it created a powerful sense that anything was possible (self- and collective efficacy, Bandura, 2001), and people were motivated to create innovative approaches to accomplish the vision. One campaigner in particular is credited with fueling this efficacy belief, and she was able to build confidence in the ENGO team over time—in their ability to create the future,

to "pull rabbits out of hats," and to accomplish the previously unthinkable. One of her colleagues reports that, "a lot of people have begun to believe it…it is a mystique, and we still have it 10 years later." She described it as building up a "powerful intentional field," and that, "After a couple of times doing the impossible, discovering that it was possible against the odds, this built on itself." She gave the example of the creation and strong outcomes from the CIT science panel, which ultimately called for 44–70% protection, saying, "we never would have predicted we could accomplish that." This sense of the possible expanded over time to include other sectors, and was referred to in terms that conjure the presence of a supportive field, a "mystique" supporting success. One of the foundation representatives reflected on the power of the founding vision created by sector leaders pursuing conservation financing initiatives (the CIII):

> I looked over the diagram we made during the original brainstorm, and it's remarkable how much actually came to pass 8 years later. For me, there were a number of pivotal CIII discussions, when the deputy minister of the Premier looked at the dialogue papers, and said, if we could actually pull this off, it would be magic. And, this word over 5 years became a touchstone for the discussions—are we really creating the magic?

One of the forestry executives observed that nobody had the power to force anyone to agree to a vision, and "this new path forward, is uncertain, but we have to believe in it—there's a whole thing about believing which is hard to articulate…you have to believe that you have the power as an individual and within your team, to achieve the goal that you set out." It was described as "alchemy" by one of the forest industry negotiators, bringing together forces, and coming up with innovations between them that could never have been done alone. By deliberately co-creating an inclusive and positive vision, ENGO leaders invited broad participation and a powerful sense of collective efficacy.

> **Focusing on solutions:** *"We realized we needed to keep driving the solutions forward, and we needed a forester, an economist, scientists, we needed professionals to help us design solutions so we stayed one step ahead of everybody."* ENGO leader.

The shift in role from campaigner to negotiator required ENGO leaders to embrace a new mindset as architects of change, and invite others into that mindset. While the ENGOs successfully initiated change through

their campaigns, they realized that the path to solutions required a maturation of strategy. Instead of demanding that others change, ENGO leaders took the onus upon themselves to "figure out the path," consciously shifting tactics to deepen their analysis of the obstacles facing forest companies and communities. In negotiating the Standstill Agreement, tenure agreements and obligations to contractors required creative solutions, and ENGOs participated with industry in generating novel approaches to get around policy and contractual obstacles. This focus on solutions also became a hallmark of the work done across sectors in bilateral coalitions. For example, a foundation representative who was collaborating with ENGOs described his role: "I was focused on process so that all the relevant actors were moved along, with the endgame in mind, and also building the institutions to oversee investments and ensure tools we were bringing to table had viable delivery vehicles, for example the Coast Opportunities Fund, which could continue to grow, evolve and add more benefit over time."

Through the coalitions, negotiations processes, and other institutional vehicles that were established, sector leaders within the ENGOs, forest companies, First Nations, foundations, and government began to work out the elements of the solution. Several pilots were initiated as proving grounds for new ideas generated from the CIII, on EBM, and co-management, which built people's belief in the new approach. One of the ENGO negotiators stated, "It is very holographic, you don't have to make the change at the largest scale—the whole idea of piloting—the ripple effect is profound."

In the reorganization phase of the adaptive cycle, new innovations occur through a combination of experimentation, partnerships, and new ideas joined together. We have seen how this was made possible by positive processes of trust and engagement engendered by personal transformation during the release phase. Mutual understanding and tolerance for conflict allowed for the surfacing of the diversity necessary for building innovative solutions. Finally, an inclusive vision created the space and capacity to move solutions into new institutional arrangements. Equally interesting, however, from the perspective of understanding social change agency, is the fact that the first five processes unfolded within a growing and strategic awareness by participants that understanding the psychology and dynamics of change in itself contributed to facilitating change.

Understanding the dynamics and psychology of change: *"Humans always require drama when changing underlying belief structures else they fall back into the old patterns. They need an excess of pain, joy, strong emotion, or new experience, to impress the change upon the dull recording medium between their ears."* Asher (2010), quoted by ENGO negotiator.

The Great Bear Rainforest conflict raised high levels of emotion on all sides, as it called into question people's deep beliefs about the purposes of society and what constituted moral action. One campaigner shared her recognition of the emotional experience of exclusion experienced by the forest industry when they were targeted as destructive "bad guys." She observed that "humans don't want to be excluded, and they don't want to be bad. They needed to hear us say 'there is a place for you, you can be gold star good.'" This accompanied the shift toward discussing *how* and *where* logging might take place, as opposed to an outright ban. She observed that this process took time (about five years), and though at first the companies were pushed into participating in the solutions structure, over time they recognized that the region was of global significance and that they *could* do things differently, culminating in them proudly taking joint credit for the solutions package.

ENGO representatives intentionally cultivated the role of drama and conflict in the process of human change and politics (including among their own allies). Upon reflecting on the success of the campaign, one ENGO leader quoted Asher (2010), and described the deliberate use of both rational and irrational tactics to create this sense of drama in order to facilitate change. Environmental campaigners strategically engaged different aspects of their identity—from the threat of direct action groups protesting and hanging banners, to strategic suit-wearing and inclusion of economists, professional foresters, and MBAs on their team. The campaigner observed, "I think a lot about the psychology of change. This is not about policy. You want to know how to be a change agent? It is how humans change psychologically that you have to master." Another way the ENGOs successfully harnessed and influenced the psychology of change was by advancing the Coast Investments and Incentives Initiative. First Nations, forest company executives, and senior government officials have all acknowledged the shift in perception that occurred when environmental leaders initially delivered $9 million in seed funding for the CIII, and then quickly raised their half of the $120 million fund from private donors

in Canada and the United States. It was surprising and compelling to have ENGOs delivering tens of millions of dollars to support community transitions and calling on government to match their contribution—not the least because it became difficult to dismiss them as economically naïve or self-interested.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter analyzes the individual and collective actions of key leaders, and uses a positive lens to understand processes underlying social change agency, particularly during periods of turbulent change. The narrative arc that the data presents is one of positive, system-wide changes emerging from personal transformation, through transformed group relationships to system-wide transformation. The ENGO leaders first disrupted the current system through the markets campaign and helped to trigger a release phase. This created a phase of turbulent change bringing the forestry industry to the table. However, with mistrust and animosity at very intense levels, the challenge was to keep all players there long enough for innovative solutions to emerge. The individual and collective processes of agency that led to solutions involved positive processes of self-reflectiveness and transformation, motivation, relationship building, and persevering in pursuit of an inclusive future vision. Strong individual agency expressed in these positive processes gave rise to collective agency, forging a powerful coalition of shared action. Both conflict and collaboration are hallmarks of this process of emerging innovation and change.

The markets campaign got the ENGOs to the negotiating table with the forestry industry and ensured that they were taken seriously. However, when they got there the two sides were adversaries and it would have been easy for negotiations to deadlock. Instead, the individual ENGO negotiators underwent a period of self-reflection and redefined their expectations for the system (Bandura, 2001), developing powerful personal narratives. This transformation was triggered by their encounter with the First Nations, which encouraged ENGO leaders to shift from their role as traditional environmental activists. Their own process of change, and their deep bonds of trust in each other, in turn led to a reevaluation and transformation of their perception of forest industry opponents, through

the "Love Strategy." By humanizing their opponents, they turned a phase of uncertainty and conflict into a generative space for solution building. Such work required the joint effort of all of the major actors in the system and was motivated by the ENGOs' ability to communicate and co-create an inspiring vision of success and potential for all the region's major players. The strong self-efficacy of environmental leaders built on successes and led to a collective sense that this vision was possible. Finally, a conscious cultivation of the psychology and dynamics of change is a critical part of social change agency. The data demonstrates that while some of the success depended on a complex series of opportunities and dynamics far removed from the negotiations, the intentional expression of positive forms of agency, spread from environmental leaders to other sectors, enabled the emergence and the flowering of generative relationships and innovative solutions.

This process incorporated activities such as vision building, sense making, and collective learning, which led to the development of new collaborations and innovations that helped to transform the system. In this way, a close analysis of the Great Bear Rainforest case corroborates other findings in social innovation theory (Westley et al., 2006). This data also shows that successful social change agency in the release and reorganization phase involves the positive micro-processes of self-transformation and profound changes in relationships. These six processes of agency enabled collective social change agency to emerge and guide solution-building. This analysis highlights how personal change engendered positive outcomes, allowing the conflict and confusion typical of the release phase to give way to a positive alliance for change. It also helps to enrich social innovation theory by answering the question of how individual agents are able to enact more abstract strategies such as sense making, visioning, and collaboration during times of turbulent change.

These positive processes involved the ENGO leaders' recognition of the limits and narrowness of their own perspective of the system, and an active effort to overcome these limitations by incorporating both the perspectives of other groups and parts of their own persona that were being neglected into creating a new role for themselves in the system. Moreover, there was an active effort to transmit this change to others partly by using a compelling vision of change and partly by being sensitive to the perceptions and internal changes taking place in other actors. Such hard won perspectives, when linked to opportunities presented by the larger system

dynamics, resulted in positive social and ecological outcomes. Through these forms of generative, intentional action, individuals were able to "be the change" they wished to see in the world.

In the Great Bear Rainforest, social change agency played a crucial role in navigating a complex change through a period of disruption to allow for the emergence of a collective process of innovation and solutions building. Although structural forces shaped the evolution of this process, they did so in relation with individual and collective agency, which both responded to and acted to direct these forces. By incorporating a socio-cognitive perspective on agency, this case highlights positive processes of social change agency that operated at personal and relational scales, complementing and advancing efforts to create profound systems change. Social change agency can therefore be understood as a multilevel process of creating intentional change, where actors must attend to transformation at personal, interpersonal, and systemic levels in order to be successful.

Further Research

This has been an exploratory chapter, where we engage the neglected topic of the co-emergence of individual and broader system transformation in response to complex problems, specifically during times of turbulent change. More research is needed to describe these micro-meso-macro interactions, to understand the role of social change agency in social innovations, and to further illuminate the positive dynamics underlying change at different scales. This chapter has drawn on social-psychological theories of agency and applied them to a case of social innovation, but it should be seen only as a first step in this direction. The authors hope that more systematic studies can be conducted in the future. Such studies would explore social change agency as a multilevel process of creating intentional change in complex systems, deepening our understanding of linkages between personal, interpersonal, and systemic change. Further research could also describe in more detail the interlinked processes, individual and collective agency, and the role of positive dynamics in developing and extending social change agency. Specifically, studies could ask questions about the importance of the individual capacity for accepting conflict and uncertainty (especially its' primary role during the "backloop" of turbulent social change) and how this relates to self-perception, personal power, self-efficacy, and perseverance/resilience (Lichtenstein &

Plowman, 2009). They would also look at the importance of the human-izing dynamic observed in this case, including shifts in perception toward architect of change from advocate or agitator. What are the dynamics underlying this change, how is it fostered (what conditions/contexts), and how does it spread from individual to collective form? Further research is also warranted on the role and dynamics of vision in its individual and collective forms, and how this may strengthen social change agency. Finally, in exploring all these questions, we anticipate, based on the find-ings of this chapter, that self-transformation may play a more important role in social transformation than has been previously thought.

REFERENCES

Allen, R. P., (2005). Coast information team review report. Retrieved November 15, 2010, from http://www.citbc.org/c-citreview-jan05.pdf.

Antadze, N., & Westley, F. W. (2010). Funding social innovation: How do we know what to grow? *The Philanthropist, 23*, 343–356.

Asher, N. (2010). *The technician.* London: Tor UK.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 1–26.

Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 1*, 164–180.

BC Stats. (2009). Retrieved March 2009 from http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/exp/exp0011.pdf.

Bornstein, D. (2007). *How to change the world: Social entrepreneurs and the power of new ideas.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology, 103*, 962–1023.

Garud, R., Hardy, C., & Maguire, S. (2007). Institutional entrepreneurship as embedded agency: An introduction to the special issue. *Organization Studies, 28*, 957–969.

Gunderson, L., & Holling, C. S. (Eds.) (2002). *Panarchy: Understanding transformations in human and natural systems.* Washington, DC: Island Press.

Hawken, P. (2007). *Blessed unrest.* New York: Viking.

Hoberg, G. (2001). Policy cycles and policy regimes: A framework for studying policy change. In W. B. Cashore (Ed.), *In search of sustainability: British Columbia forest policy in the 1990s* (pp. 3–30). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Holling, C. S. (2001). Understanding the complexity of economic, ecological, and social systems. *Ecosystems, 4*, 390–405.

Kuhn, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lichtenstein, B., & Plowman, D. (2009). The leadership of emergence: A complex systems leadership theory of emergence at successive organizational levels. *The Leadership Quarterly, 20*, 617–630.

Ostrom, E. (1992). *Crafting institutions for self-governing irrigation systems*. San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies Press.

Persky, S. (2000). *Delgamuukw: The Supreme Court of Canada decision on Aboriginal title*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Rao, H. (1998). Caveat emptor: The construction of non-profit consumer watchdog organizations. *American Journal of Sociology, 103*, 912–961.

Riddell, D. (2009). Evolving approaches to conservation: Integral ecology and Canada's Great Bear Rainforest. In S. Esbjörn-Hargens & M. E. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Integral ecology: Uniting multiple perspectives on the natural world* (pp. 454–475). Boston: Shambhala Publications.

Sierra Club of British Columbia. (1999). *Canada's ancient rainforest: Home of the great bears and wild salmon*. Victoria, BC: Sierra Club of British Columbia.

Smith, M., & Sterritt, A. (2007). From conflict to collaboration: The story of the Great Bear Rainforest. Retried June 2010 from http://www.forestethics.org/section.php?id=19.

Tjornbo, O., Westley, F., & Riddell, D. (2010). *Great Bear Rainforest case study*. Social Innovation Generation case study. Retrieved November 15, 2010 from http://www.sig.uwaterloo.ca/sites/.../SiG%20GBRF%20Web_Feb2%202010.pdf.

Wagner, W. L. (2003). Tenure reform in British Columbia? Model, trust, and charter forests. *Small-scale Forest Economics, Management, and Policy, 2*, 423–439.

Westley, F., & Antatze, N. (2010). Making a difference: Strategies for scaling social innovation for greater impact. *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal, 15*, article 2.

Westley, F., & Moore, M. L. (2009). Surmountable chasms: The role of cross-scale interactions in social innovation. Social Innovation Generation working paper no. 001. Retrieved November 15, 2010 from http://sig.uwaterloo.ca/research-publications.

Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., & Patton, M. Q. (2006). *Getting to maybe: How the world is changed*. Toronto: Random House Canada.

Westley, F. W., Carpenter, S., Brock, W., Holling, C. S., & Gunderson, L. (2002). Why systems of people and nature are not just social and ecological systems. In L. H. Gunderson & C. S. Holling (Eds.), *Panarchy: Understanding transformations in human and natural systems* (pp. 103–119). Washington, DC: Island Press.

Whitaker, John K. (1987). Marshall, Alfred (1842–1924). In J. Eatwell, M. Milgate, & P. Newman (Eds.), *The new Palgrave: A dictionary of economics* (1st ed.). The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics Online. Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved November 15, 2010, from http://www.dictionaryofeconomics.com/article?id=pde1987_X001413; doi:10.1057/9780230226203.3045.