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THE EPISTEMIC IN-BETWEEN: A REGIME-BASED MODEL OF MEDIATION IN SENSEMAKING AND INSTITUTIONAL MEANING

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ABSTRACT

Expanding on a wider conversation about the In-Between as both an ontological and cultural threshold, the article rather takes a more modest epistemic and organizational problematique. The study's key question runs as follows: Which processes transform uncertain, diffuse, and polyvalent formations into a recognizable, legitimate, and actionable institutional object? The central tenet of the article is that institutions function not on events but on mediated versions of events. To this end, literatures on sensemaking, framing, institutional meaning and legitimacy, valuation and quantification, sociomateriality, expertise, and infrastructure are brought together on a common analytical ground. The study first defines the "epistemic In-Between" as a selective intermediate space spanning the gap between event and intelligibility; then distinguishes eight mediation regimes that operate within this in-between: categorical-naming, narrative-causality, authority-procedure, valuation-norm, evidence-epistemic authority, material-technical, affect-attention, and time-scale. The functioning of these regimes is explained through six fundamental mechanisms: cue selection, acceptability, translation to a common scale, anchoring, authorization, and reopening. The article also develops a process model ranging from dispersed signs to provisional closure and testable propositions; finally, it proposes a methodological and diagnostic framework in the form of episodic process research and mediation/object-formation control. Thus, the study conceptualizes the In-Between not merely as an ontological state or a space of cultural hybridity, but as an epistemic in-between where institutional meaning, decision-making objects, and possibilities for action are produced.

KEYWORDS: Epistemic In-Between; Mediation; Sensemaking; Institutional Meaning; Object Formation; Valuation; Sociomateriality; Institutional Legitimacy.

1. INTRODUCTION: FROM THE ONTOLOGICAL “IN-BETWEEN” TO THE EPISTEMIC “IN-BETWEEN”

1.1. *The Problem's Framework*

An era often reveals itself not through the concepts it proclaims most loudly, but through the intermediate languages it uses when making decisions. Despite the permanence of words, the world on which they rest quietly shifts. In a first study, this situation was conceptualised as the In-Between the ontological threshold of modern life: a coexistence during which the old forms start collapsing while the new ones have not yet fully established themselves; neither full order nor pure collapse but rather a threshold full of potential (Uygur & Skučaitė, 2026). In other words, how does the indeterminate become recognizable, discussable and decidable in front of institutions?

This is not a trivial question, on the contrary, the most concrete moments of political and organizational life are precisely bound up here. No institution experiences raw events. Consequently, the fundamental concern is not what happened, but what it is said to be.

Political thinkers and the pragmatic tradition had noted this distinction long ago. Dewey places the origin of inquiry in an “indeterminate situation” but considers the transformation of this indeterminacy into a problem as the prerequisite to make public action possible. (Dewey, 1938/1991) According to Schön, professional life's central difficulty does not lay in producing solutions, but rather in “framing the problem”. If one does not know what a problem is, then any solution is directionless (Schön, 1983). According to Rein and Schön in their analysis of policy disputes, we may find that parties do not clash at all over the same facts. Instead we find them clashing over the different frames through which they construct those same facts (Rein & Schön, 1993). According to Rittel and Webber (1973), referred to as “wicked problems,” the definition of the problem cannot be separated from solution design; that is, every definition predetermines the scope of intervention.

Consequently, the epistemological is not simply a theoretical sub-category of knowledge theory in the narrower sense. It is, at the heart of the actual political, legal and institutional decision, the very first question.

The question becomes in the interregnum of Gramsci and in the splits of Arendt the rupture in the past and the future. Although old standards are still in effect, their power of persuasion has faded;

whereas new standards have begun circulating, they have yet to achieve common-sense status (Arendt, 1961/2006; Gramsci, 1971).

1.2. *The Purpose and Central Thesis of This Article*

The prior conceptual study served the necessary function of taking “In-Between” as a broadly shared name for a dispersed corpus of literature, and gathering it around an ontological, relational, and ethical-political node. The concepts of metaxy, liminality, third space, and liquid modernity were interpreted as various expressions of a threshold ontology. In this way, being in-between was framed not as a temporary gap or pure chaos but as a potential-rich, relational and plural space (Uygur & Skučaitė, 2026). An understanding of a world which is experienced in a liminal state must furthermore be set up.

This paper, therefore, is not a reiteration of the previous study but the pursuance of a more narrowly focused and sharper question that has arisen from it.

The existing literature has looked at various aspects of the issue. According to the sensemaking literature scholars have shown how conditions that are ambiguous in nature are made intelligible through clues, language, narrative, and reasonableness (Weick, 1995; Weick et al, 2005; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). According to Brown et al (2015) and Whittle et al (2023), recent discussions in this area have shown that sensemaking should not be perceived as neutral as it is a practice that has linguistic and affective and power relations. Competitive and public issues are not just simply given but constructed in framing struggles, most often under conditions of uncertainty (Kaplan, 2008). On account of institutional theories, the attention, legitimacy, authority and the meaning are structured around the institutional logic, field pressures and symbolic translations. (Ocasio, 1997; Suchman, 1995; Thornton et al., 2012; Greenwood et al., 2011; Zilber, 2002, 2006). Research on valuation and quantification shows that measurement and comparison not only document the world but also create what is seen as valuable, serious, comparable and governable (Espeland & Stevens, 1998; Espeland & Sauder, 2007; Mennicken & Espeland, 2019). Scholarly research on sociomateriality and infrastructure denotes devices, forms, platforms and classification schemes are not just simple carriers of information flow. Instead, they create regimes of visibility, recording which is memory (Bowker and Star 1999; Star 1999; Orlikowski and Scott 2008).

But the problem is still there. Because these

literatures often illuminate the same scene from different angles, yet they have not yet provided a portable architecture that explains the entire scene. The problem lies precisely here: The object of institutional action arises not from abstract interpretation, but from mediation frameworks that build upon and support one another.

The central thesis of this article is as follows: Institutions do not act upon raw events, but upon events objectified through mediation. The question of “what a situation truly is” in institutional contexts often concerns not the event’s bare essence, but on how the event is categorized, into which narrative it is embedded, by what method it is addressed, by what value criteria it is judged, by what evidence it is proven, by what technical tools it is made visible, by what emotional thresholds it gains urgency, and on what time-scale comparisons it is grounded. Rather, it consists of repeatable, teachable, and device-embedded mediation patterns that enable interpretation to gain institutional weight.

Building on this, the article proposes a model it calls “mediation regimes.” The term “regime” is not chosen arbitrarily here.

1.3. Method, Contribution, and Structure

The methodology of this paper is not a classical literature review. Instead, it rests on a research logic located between conceptual analysis and mid-range theoretical construction. The objective is not to reinterpret “being-in-between” as the overall metaphor of the time, but rather to devise a theory that clarifies how meaning obtains institutional validity in specific circumstances of situations like meetings, case studies, audits, crisis escalations, board decisions, performance appraisals, complaint investigations.

The paper contributes on three essential levels. Initially, it organizes the cognitive progress created through previous existence work. This gives a research a better observational ground as well as a more resilient diagnostic language for practical diagnosis.

One thing must be made clear at this point. This study does not rely on the simplistic conclusion that all forms of truth are relative. Therefore, what is being defended here is not a loose pluralism of the “everything is interpretation” variety; rather, it is a more rigorous analysis explaining which mechanisms produce the institutional weight of interpretation.

The remaining sections of the article will progressively narrow down the question established in this introduction. First, the conceptual nature of

the epistemic in-between will be explained; that is, the discussion will focus on how this intermediate space between event and intelligibility produces a condition of knowledge. Thus, this article will attempt to complete the trajectory extending from ontological “becoming-in-between” to epistemic “constitution-in-between.”

2. THE EPISTEMIC CONDITION OF “IN-BETWEEN”

Knowledge of a world experienced as a threshold is itself constituted as a threshold. The issue here is not to patiently await the hidden essence of things and one day reveal it in its entirety. Traces are present; yet, the language in which these traces will speak has not yet been determined.

The central claim of this section is this: The epistemic dimension of the “In-Between” arises not so much from a problem of missing data before a singular subject, but from the fact that multiple modes of knowledge have not yet been anchored to a common ground of intelligibility. Thus, here uncertainty is not merely a void; it is often an excess. When these three elements are considered together, what we call the “epistemic In-Between” emerges: a dense, noisy, and contested intermediate space between what is happening and the meaning that can be constructed about it.

2.1. Uncertainty, Plurality, and Partial Knowledge

Uncertainty is often misinterpreted. In simple terms, it is considered as if it was a temporary dark area where light is scarce, data is lacking, and also that is expected to cease to exist with time. We begin our epistemic exploration from this in-between-ness: the thing is visible but which knowledge framework gives it meaning is vague.

The history is full of thresholds. A classic case is the 1854 London cholera epidemic. However, these deaths did not speak for themselves as a “waterborne disease.” John Snow’s famous map did not just map the points of death; it reinterpreted the deaths in a different spatial logic and made evident the clustering around Broad Street pump (Snow, 1855; Rosenberg, 1992). In epistemic uncertainty, it is not necessarily ignorance but that the event can be seen as having many other potential explanations.

This is why plurality is not what relativism is called here. Although interpretations are not equal, serious ones are not produced in a vacuum. According to Kuhn, scientific communities do not simply observe the world. They have ways of seeing it that are informed by questions that are internal to

the paradigm. These questions determine what counts as a problem, what anomalies matter, and what is said to correspond to what (Kuhn, 2012). According to Knorr-Cetina, epistemic cultures refers to different communities of knowledge that do not only come to different conclusions, but are producing different objects, working under different regimes of evidence, and working at different thresholds of certainty (Knorr-Cetina 1999). The history of objectivity presented by Daston and Galison also makes this point but in a different way. Objectivity is not the name of some perspective standing outside history. Rather, objectivity is the institutionalized form of certain epistemic virtues mechanical objectivity, educated judgment, the expert eye that have emerged through long historical struggles (Daston & Galison, 2007). Therefore, uncertainty is not simply a space where knowledge has not yet been formed. Rather, it is a space where many underlying principles are simultaneously at play.

The term "partial knowledge" cannot be equated with "less knowledge." There is a deeper issue. According to Polanyi's (1958) classical formulation, we know a good deal of what we know but do not reduce it to explicit formulas. In other words, knowledge involves a whole lot of things, including practice, intuitive thought, habitual thought, professional training and bodily aptitude. In Haraway's view, all knowledge is always situated and for that very reason, responsible; there is no all-seeing eye, only perspectives which see from a position that must account for that position (Haraway 1988). Harding's suggestion of "strong objectivity" works similarly: it is not achieved by ignoring perspective, but by making the social and institutional conditions of that perspective visible. (Harding, 1993) The real problem is not knowing a little; it is presenting this half-knowledge as if we know it fully. It is evident from here, that.

2.2. Translation, Mediation, and Reflectivity

If knowledge is always partial and plural, meaning does not emerge directly from perception; it is translated. This is a point of crucial significance. The area in the middle is not a quiet waiting room; it is a booming translation booth.

Among STS's literature's key contributions is the seriousness with which it takes the translation room. Translation refers, in the sense Callon uses it, not just the movement of one content to another language. It is the coming together of actors, interests, things, and problematizations (Callon, 1986). Scientists and engineers are most often concerned with things that happen in the laboratory and not in the field. In their

analysis, Latour insists that the scientific and technical world works not through "intermediary carriers" but through transformative mediators. Thus, data, reports, graphs, and samples, laboratory protocols, visual diagrams, and the like do not just transmit information but redefine what counts as information (Latour, 1987). Due to this reason, Star and Griesemer's boundary object idea is significant. Some objects such as sample forms, catalogs, maps, and file diagrams can have different meanings for different communities, yet they perform a common function (Star & Griesemer, 1989). Consequently, mediation should not be seen as some external imposition on reality afterwards; it is the condition of reality becoming shareable and portable.

At this stage, the work of Annemarie Mol on medical practice is particularly enlightening. According to Mol, atherosclerosis doesn't "simply exist" as a singular disease, which clinics merely see from different angles. Rather, she argues that the disease is constituted in different ways through different practices for example in the outpatient clinic, vascular surgeon, pathology lab and patient's life (Mol, 2002). To be precise, the epistemic "In-Between" designates this plural field of performance: the event has not yet been fixed within a single practice; different lines of mediation are simultaneously laying claim to it.

However, it is never free. All translation has to prune an excess to make other things visible. As Desrosières (1998) and Porter (1995) argued, this is precisely what makes numbers powerful; they tie heterogeneous experiences to a single scale, while at the same time depriving them of what does not fit within that scale. What can be simplified often determines what can be conveyed.

Reflexivity is an epistemological necessity and not an intellectual refinement. Gadamer (2004: 327) shows how understanding is a process, which is always carried by pre-supposition, language, and history, rather than a timeless observation. Bourdieu and Wacquant refine this line of thought for the social sciences. The greatest form of blindness to knowledge, they argue, is the assumption that the categories of the researcher or institution are transparent. Reflexivity consists not merely in turning toward the object but also toward the way one constructs that object (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Haraway's thesis on situated knowledge arrives at the same conclusion: hiding the perspective does not enhance objectivity but renders the power and positional relations in the production of knowledge invisible (Haraway, 1988). So, reflexivity doesn't mean "to doubt everything." It means to

honestly investigate: what perspective makes what visible and what invisible?

At this stage, a crucial differentiation needs to be made. A system of self-doubt cannot paralyse us to inaction. This tracing is needed in the epistemic “In-Between.”

2.3. *Between What Happens and What Is Understandable*

Just because something occurs does not mean we understand it. In day-to-day usage, the event and its name seem to occur immediately, so this difference is often obscured. Therefore, the epistemic ‘in-between’ refers not so much to the gap between event and meaning rather to the space of making intelligible the event.

We observe the most basic form of this space in official reporting and legal regimes. In public health, individual cases only achieve collective recognizability when they pass through the agreed-upon diagnostic criteria, laboratory confirmations, reporting rules, and international reporting system. The International Health Regulations of the World Health Organization, lay out an official intelligibility framework which brings events into the global attention by deciding when and under what threshold they ought to be reported (World Health Organization, 2016). In the same vein, violence in international criminal law does not remain violence but rather becomes a “crime against humanity”, “war crime”. This, of course, through the conceptual and evidential apparatus that is the Rome Statute (Rome Statute, 1998). In other words, intelligibility is not a label attached at random after the event; it is the threshold that determines the status with which the event enters the shared world.

This threshold is also a time. An occurrence happens in its respective time, but we often understand occurrence in another time. Ricoeur shows that the event which we experience is often not possible without being situated in a narrative; isolated occurrences are recognized as they acquire a sense of cause and effect, before and after, and direction (Ricoeur, 1984). The implications of Koselleck’s separation of the ‘field of experience’ and the ‘horizon of expectation’ are important also here: what is happening is not always read on the bare face of the present; it is affected by concepts inherited from the past and outcomes expected from the future (Koselleck, 2004). When the perceived time frame changes, not only the evaluation of an event but also often the event itself will change.

The history of public issues also shows the truth of this logic. According to Gusfield, public issues do

not exist as objects that just appear in the world. They are problems which have been chosen, named in some public way and endowed with carrying capacity within some symbolic order (Gusfield, 1981). Consequently, figures and classifications are powerful: they create trust, allow comparisons, and bring together different spaces and different times onto a common scale of measurement (Porter, 1995; Desrosières, 1998). Because of this power, they produce comprehensibility which is not neutral, but formative.

Hence the “space between what is happening and what is understandable” is not vacant. In fact, it is a busy workspace with activities of selection, naming, ordering, recording, comparing, authorizing and circulating. To put it differently, uncertainty presumably does not become knowledge simply through the capacity for interpretation but rather through the recurring mediation that institutionalizes this capacity for interpretation.

3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND ANALYTICAL GAPS

The second chapter had revealed the main conditions of the “epistemic In-Between”: uncertainty, plurality, partial knowledge, the necessity of translation, and the tension between what is happening and what is comprehensible.

The purpose of this section is not to list a broad body of literature in a chronologically neutral manner. The aim is to re-gather the intuitions already strongly present in various writings around a single analytical question: Through which pathways does a dispersed situation attain an institutionally recognizable and actionable meaning? The problem lies here: Each of these literatures illuminates one aspect of mediation; yet a portable architecture that explains mediation’s multifaceted and integrated operation remains missing.

3.1. *Sensemaking and Framing*

Undoubtedly, the strongest starting point in organizational theory regarding the acquisition of meaning from uncertainty is the sensemaking literature. Weick’s classic formulation demonstrated that organizational life proceeds not through given objects, but through non-equivalent cues, incomplete signals, and explanations pieced together later. According to him, sensemaking is an activity that operates not so much along the axes of identity, retrospection, enactment, cue selection, sociality, continuity, and truth, but rather along the axis of plausibility (Weick, 1995). Later, Weick et al. (2005) stated that organization is the process of “articulating

conditions into words and acting upon those words,” thereby making it clearer that sensemaking is not a mental explanation following action, but rather a prerequisite for action. The key insight here is this: Organizations do not initially perceive fully defined objects; rather, they first sift through a chaotic environment to identify specific sets of signs, and then, based on this sifting, construct a provisional understanding of “what is happening.”

The direction this article subsequently takes has deepened this initial insight. Sensemaking is not constructed within the inner space of the mind of the individual but rather is established through interactive social processes (Maitlis, 2005). According to their comprehensive review in the field, Maitlis and Christianson (2014), argue that sensemaking is not confined to crisis situation. Rather, sensemaking is a ceaseless activity (constructing and reconstructing) in organizational life. According to Brown et al. (2015), who offered a more critical account of the field, sensemaking has long been interpreted in an overly harmonious and “rational” way, and... sensemaking cannot be understood without power, conflict, exclusion and discursive struggle. Like Schildt and colleagues in 2020, ‘meaning cannot be understood independent from power relations. Not all actors are equal and it is a power relation that renders signals meaningful and determines which narratives circulate. In contrast, Whittle et al. (2023) analyze language as the essence of meaning, rather than simply a carrier of meaning. Because of this body of work, we now understand that sensemaking is not an innocent reflecting mirror of organizational reason; it is in fact a constitutive practice carried by language, narrative, identity, and power.

However, the power of sensemaking also produces its own limits.

At this point, the framing literature serves an important complementary function. Goffman’s famous question—“what is actually happening here?”—shows that social situations do not present themselves in their raw form but are always read and recognized within specific frames (Goffman, 1974). Benford and Snow (2000) extended this line of thought to the field of social movements, demonstrating that diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames simultaneously establish the name, cause, and direction of intervention for a problem. In organizational theory, Cornelissen and Werner (2014) comprehensively synthesized framing debates, highlighting the decisive role of struggles over “what the problem is” in the domains of strategy, leadership, change, and organizational

communication. Kaplan’s (2008) interpretation of strategy-making under uncertainty as “framing contests” is particularly significant; as this work demonstrates that organizational decision-making often relies on the contest between different definitions—even more so than on technical analysis. Similarly, Sonenshein (2010, 2014) has shown that organizational change and resource allocation are constructed through narrative and framing, and that “the same reality” can open up entirely different horizons of action within different stories.

Nevertheless, the framing literature also has its own limitations. A frame provides the name and direction of the problem; however, it does not, by itself, make it binding. As Schön’s emphasis on “problem setting” and Rein and Schön’s analysis of policy debates demonstrate, most conflicts occur not over solutions but over what constitutes the problem (Schön, 1983; Rein & Schön, 1993). Sensemaking and framing provide the initial spark; but for that spark to burn in an institutional hearth, other mechanisms are required.

3.2. Institutional Meaning, Legitimacy, and Routines

If sensemaking and framing are models that can explain the initial sparks of meaning that get created in uncertainty, institutional theory can explain which of those sparks will officially get institutionalized. In their classic work, Berger and Luckmann showed that social reality is constructed through externalization, objectification, and internalization processes; that is, institutions do not merely regulate behavior, but make the world real in particular ways (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Meyer and Rowan (1977), injected this insight into organizational theory by showing that the structures of modern organizations are judged not only on technical efficiency but also on the legitimacy they confer. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) isomorphic processes interwove rationality with historical and institutional pressures to explain organizational competition. The most basic lesson to be drawn from this literature is this: The question “What is the event?” never arises through the characteristics of the event alone; the event already exists in specific regimes of classification, expectation, and appropriateness.

The institutional logics approach has further refined this picture. Friedland and Alford (1991) argued that social life is not woven by a single rationality but by partially conflicting institutional logics, demonstrating that organizations operate simultaneously within different value worlds. Ocasio’s (1997) attention-based view argues that

attention is not distributed neutrally but is directed by institutional structures and decision-making agendas. Thornton et al. (2012) systematized this line of thought, demonstrating that institutional logics structure not only values but also what is deemed worthy of notice, whose voice carries weight, and what is considered reasonable. Greenwood et al. (2011) and Pache and Santos (2010) have examined how organizations split, hybridize, or carry different meanings across different forums under conditions of institutional pluralism and conflicting demands. A student's failure might be a quality issue in one forum; an equity issue in another; and a budget and efficiency problem in a third.

However, one of the most fruitful strands of institutional theory is the literature on "institutional work," which demonstrates that meaning is constructed not only through top-down structures but also through local practices. Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) argued that institutions are not merely fixed structures surrounding us, but rather orders established, maintained, and disrupted through everyday practices. Lawrence et al. (2009) expanded on this line of thought, compelling us to view the institutional world not merely as a space "in which we live," but as a field on which we work. Zilber's (2002, 2006) work is particularly instructive; it demonstrates that the meaning of organizational events changes as the same event is reconstituted through different symbolic interpretations by various actors. Smets et al. (2012), meanwhile, have demonstrated how local adaptations of practices can trigger institutional change at the field level over time. We can therefore conclude that institutional meaning is not merely a structural necessity nor is it merely a free interpretation; rather it is created through the locally distanced translations and global agreement legitimacy frameworks present.

Legitimacy is something which does really matter. The question of legitimacy is directly illustrated through Suchman (1995: 574) who defines legitimacy as "a generalized perception that actions are appropriate, correct, and desirable" In this case, it is not a clash of interpretations but a clash over which interpretation can wear the cloak of legitimacy.

Drawing on the literature of routines and decision-making processes, this picture is more mundane. The bounded rationality approach of Simon (1997) and Cyert and March's (1963) behavioural theory of the organisation have long shown that organisations do not reason ideally but rather have a short attention span, follow standard operating procedures and reach negotiated compromises. Feldman and Pentland (2003)

theorized routines as dynamic, flexible structures that can create changes within themselves, not as mechanical repetitions. Pentland and Feldman (2005) later show that routines is the basic unit of analysis for organizations. Further, they discuss that not just operational pipelines, procedures are mechanisms that define inputs and outputs. All of this determines the event processing as well as the event qualification. Where is the file sent? Which form is filled out? Which approval is awaited? Which sequence is followed? Which exception is noted?

Yet even here, the analytical gap is not fully closed.

3.3. Evaluation, Quantification, and Evidence

Contemporary organizations do not just describe the world but also seem to assess it unceasingly. Which performance is good? Which risk is high? Which quality is acceptable? Which deviation is serious? Which candidate is qualified? Which file is the priority? The definition of commensuration by Espeland and Stevens (1998) can be taken as a basic starting point here: The process of commensuration – the translation of heterogeneous qualities into a common scale – does not only make the world comparable but also creates a certain new universe of intervention. When you share an event as a score, rating, ratio, level, ranking or violation of a threshold, you are not just giving it a new expression; you are placing it within a new decision-making context.

Consequently, quantification is one of the invisible state rationalities in contemporary organizations. According to Desrosières (1998), statistics do not only record what is, but also allow the state and institutions to construct and manage abstract entities. The state can interact with its subjects as social, economic, and geographic categories, while not being required to take responsibility for their individual existence. 'The population' is a prime example of an abstract term. In contrast to other terms such as 'misery', 'risk', and 'deviation', 'the population' renders these communities abstract entities subject to government control. Similarly, Porter (1995) looks not to their divine accuracy but the perception of their impartiality as a key to their power; they are impressionable, portable and empty of personal judgement. According to a defence of rankings by Espeland and Sauder (2007) and Sauder and Espeland (2009), metrics do not just mirror the world, they also remould it. They do so by transforming behaviour, reorienting priorities and changing self-conception. A university ranking does not find prestige; it reconstructs prestige around

organizational behaviour.

The literature on evaluation demonstrates a wider field than measurement alone. Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) demonstrated that social judgment is not reducible to a single measuring system, but takes place within different “orders of worth”. Lamont (2009, 2012) has shown that evaluation practices are always interlaced with historical, professional and cultural criteria; hence, to show that categories such as “merit”, “quality”, or “superiority” are not pure but institutionally constructed. According to Stark (2009), economic and organizational life does not generally follow a single logic of value but rather multiple conflicting value principles. Karpik (2010) shows that the judgment of the specific or singular cannot be reduced to ordinary market logic. Fourcade (2011) and Fourcade and Healy (2013) show that classification regimes reorganize the life chances of individuals and institutions. A late delivery could denote an efficiency problem in one value system, a trust problem in another, and a sign of labor exploitation in a third.

The debate revolves chiefly around the question of what constitutes evidence. The bridge between evaluation and intervention is often established by the question, “Is there evidence? However, evidence itself is not given as raw and natural. Power (1997) in his classic study of the audit society showed how verification and audit practices ritualize trust in institutions. According to Callon and Muniesa (2005) as well as Muniesa (2011), the tools of calculation and valuation are not simply evaluative, they also define what is calculable. More often than not, evidence is not the finding of something which already existed, but rather proof of its capacity to be generated in certain devices and formats.

However, this text alone does not suffice. Research on the valuation and quantification shows that comparability and evidence have a constitutive power. However, whether its linguistic nature, narrative, institutional, or affective carriers, all get underplayed. However, in an organizational context, the measurement usually works parallel to the narrative, legitimacy, process, and technical infrastructure.

3.4. Sociomateriality, Expertise, and Infrastructure

The production of knowledge by organizations cannot be accounted for by discourse or measure alone, for this story also requires the material mechanisms and technical carriers and bound the delimiters of expertise. Insights provided by the STS,

infrastructure and sociomateriality literatures are central at this juncture. Mediators are never merely simple carriers; they are often transformers. This is the essential point made by Latour (2005) and Callon (1998). As such, what is referred to as a ‘data flow’ is often not a neutral flow but rather the sum of specific transformations.

The works of Bowker and Star (1999) and Star (1999) on classification studies and infrastructure ethnography decode, from the inside, modern institutions. Classification systems may seem like technical arrangements, but they are, in fact, political-material apparatuses that determine who, what events and what records should be made visible. As Star and Ruhleder (1996) say, when infrastructure works, we do not see it; for this reason, it often works silently to produce effects. Star and Griesemer (1989) coined the term “boundary object” to explain how different communities can work on the same object without ascribing it the same meaning. This shows that the shared world is often produced not with total agreement, but through flexible yet portable objects. Something like a standard form, file schema, a sample case file, a report template and many more are not just technical conveniences; they are material thresholds we required to make the minimal language of a shared world.

Debates over sociomateriality in organizational theory have brought this line of thought much more directly into the very fabric of organizational life. According to Orlikowski (2007) and Orlikowski and Scott (2008), it is insufficient to view technology and the organization as separately defined domains that are linked only later; rather they are intertwined from the beginning. Leonardi and Barley (2010) and Leonardi (2012) have revealed that materiality cannot be understood as either rigid determinism or a passive backdrop; but rather as a concrete field of influence that directs action in specific directions and closes off certain possibilities. Orlikowski and Scott’s (2015) study on the relationship between algorithms and crowds demonstrates that service outputs in contemporary organizations are increasingly produced through human-machine collaboration. A dashboard does not merely “provide information” to the organization; it directly turns some issues into “red zones” while permanently pushing others into the background.

The literature on expertise adds the question of authority to this material world. Abbott’s (1988) classic shows that domains of expertise are not just domains of knowledge but are also domains of authority. Gieryn’s (1983) notion of “boundary-

work” demonstrates that the legitimacy of knowledge can be reduced to “who can speak? Haas (1992) argued that particularly complex policy domains bring forth the collective effort of specific expert communities to define the problems at hand, solution repertoires as well as standards of evidence. Expertise is not simply certification, Collins and Evans (2007) can refer to the importance of making distinctions among different modes of expertise. According to Jasanoff (2004), knowledge of social order is not produced separately. Rather, knowledge and social order are co-produced. According to Knorr-Cetina (1999) and Daston and Galison (2007), objectivity, too, is not a monolithic entity; it finds its meanings through different epistemic cultures, trained with contrasting things through history.

It is clear that, just as importantly as whether evidence is accepted, the question of who has the power to interpret that evidence is decisive for organizational life. According to Bechky (2003), the diverse professional communities create shared meaning through translation; where knowledge is re-framed and not transferred. Carlile (2002, 2004) through the lens of boundary objects and boundary work showed expert communities do not simply exchange information on objects, they often reconstruct the object in different ways. In this instance, the clash is not merely over values but over the way in which different professional communities construe the incident in materially and evidentially different ways.

Nevertheless, the literature on sociomateriality and expertise does not provide a complete explanation on its own.

3.5. Why Is Mediation Still Theoretically Underdeveloped?

At first glance, the literature appears to be rather abundant at this moment in time. Indeed, it is not that there is not enough material but, there is too much material. There is no shortage of mediation, but rather a plethora of misplaced mediation.

At least four reductionist tendencies have emerged from this fragmentation. The frequent reduction of meaning to the level of interpretation and narrative represents the first issue. Sociomateriality and infrastructure studies show how material mechanisms are not only constitutive but may over-determine emergent properties. However, the same intensity of explanation is not offered for their coupling to value regimes and institutional legitimacy.

Yet organizational episodes do not conform to these distinctions. Whether a service complaint is

classified as a “quality issue,” a “legal risk,” a “communication mishap,” or a “discrimination case” is not solely a matter of language, procedure, metrics, or technology. Current literature highlights the components of this alignment; however, a mid-range model explaining the alignment itself – that is, how these components connect within an episode, in what order they gain power, and why some meanings become binding while others remain peripheral – is still missing.

A deeper theoretical problem also emerges here. The broad-scale ontological concept of “in-between-ness” is powerful for grasping the threshold nature of contemporary life; yet it may remain too general to explain the narrow, technically oriented operations of organizational episodes. What is needed is an intermediate theory capable of defining the recurring forms of mediation that bridge the gap between the event and the institutional object.

Therefore, the next step is to treat “mediation” not as a secondary intermediate layer, but as the foundational ground of institutional knowledge and action-open objects.

3.5. The Definition Of The Epistemic “In-Between”

The analytical gap that emerged at the end of the third chapter is now becoming clearer. We understand separately how meaning begins, how legitimacy is distributed, and how measure and technique acquire constitutive power; however, we need a more precise concept to explain how all these processes converge on the same event. In earlier ontological work, the “In-Between” was conceived more broadly as an ontological, relational, and ethico-political threshold; here, however, a narrower claim is advanced: epistemic “in-between-ness” is the name for the series of processes that render the world itself determinable for institutions (Uygun & Skučaitė, 2026).

Therefore, the epistemic In-Between is neither a simple freedom of interpretation nor a secondary layer of language retroactively imposed upon a fully determined object. More accurately, it is a selective intermediate order that determines in what respect an event is considered “the same event,” which aspect is taken as the basis, in what form it becomes transferable, and when it becomes the object of action. The following three subsections define the epistemic In-Between through these three lines.

3.5.1. Selective Determination

What falls before an institution is not a finished object torn from the world and placed on a table. The

phenomena to which institutions are attuned are frequently scattered traces: a deviation, a complaint, an interruption, a number series, mismatched narratives, disorderly records, an unexpected image, an unusual silence. The epistemic in-between rejects both of those easy avenues.

The key takeaway here is that determination is not separate from the apparatus. At best, this is the only lesson that physics has to offer on this matter. The uncertainty principle of Heisenberg and the complementarity concept of Bohr can show that properties come into existence only in certain frameworks. A complete single description, which does not depend on the observational framework, is not always possible (Heisenberg, 1927; Bohr, 1928). An event is categorized as a risk, anomaly, violation, malfunction, performance drop, and learning opportunity not by the event itself but the category, time period, threshold value, reporting mechanism, and comparator used to analyze the event.

Because of this, "selective determination" does not simply mean bias, or a failure of the subjectivity of individual agents. It specifies the structural condition of institutional knowledge. The state does not perceive the forest as it exists; it makes it intelligible by turning it into a world of countable trees, cadastre, utility, and parcel and mapping that can be organised (Scott, 1998). A municipality is aware of not just the "difficult neighbourhood", but a local problem that is readable through densities of complaints, maps of services, security records and zoning files.

Therefore, the epistemic In-Between must be defined as the selective intermediary order between an event and its institutional legibility. Here, the term "mechanism" is used in a broad sense: concepts, classifications, indicators, time frames, comparison charts, procedures, filing formats, forms, bulletin boards, meeting routines, digital spaces, and professional habits are all simultaneously part of this order. Even if the event is singular, its institutional determination is neither singular nor self-evident.

Based on this, the first definition of the epistemic In-Between can be stated as follows: This intermediate space is the selective determination field that enables certain meanings among the various possible interpretations of an event to be selected and elevated to the status of organizational reality through mediating mechanisms. Without this space, there is no organizational knowledge; but when the functioning of this space remains invisible, organizations begin to mistake their own forms of determination for the natural form of reality.

3.5.2. *Partial Reveal and Epistemic Authority*

The inevitable result of selective determination is partial reveal. An event is never visible all at once and in all its aspects. None of these is "merely wrong"; yet none, on its own, constitutes the entirety of the event.

At this point, the second element of the epistemic In-Between emerges: epistemic authority. Because partial revelations do not merely coexist; they are ranked, weighted, with some deemed "primary," others "secondary," and still others "anecdotal." The capacity of epistemic authority to determine which perspective is taken seriously, which language generates decisions, which evidence comes into circulation and who is given a voice.

According to Abbott(1988), knowledge alone does not make one an expert but a monopoly on the definition of the problem. Gieryn's concept of "boundary-work" reminds us that the limits of legitimate knowledge are constantly drawn and redrawn (Gieryn, 1983). Further work by Collins and Evans (2007) indicates that expertise is more than just certified technical knowledge it comes to be distributed in experiential, contributory and interactive form. Indeed, expert reports, performance charts, audit trails, standard sources of evidence, etc. on the contrary often get more attention than regular testimonies, lived experiences, or in-difficulties observations.

The epistemic authority is inherently present not just in the person but also in the form, as illustrated here. At times, an expert appears convincing not because the person speaks but because the person's speech fits a specific report format, classification logic or visualisation regime. The significance of the history of objectivity as presented by Daston and Galison is precisely for the reason that objectivity is not the abiding quality of the transcendent eye, but historical achievement of specific rules, training, recording formats, and conception of virtue (Daston & Galison, 2007). The work of Shapin on trust and truth shows that credibility always has a social context; the truth of a claim is often as much a function of who made it as it is of the social and institutional conditions under which it was made (Shapin, 1994). The well-known work by Porter on numbers and the analysis of the surveillance society by Power also confirm this point on another level: numbers and traces of surveillance are powerful precisely because they seem to be devoid of personal judgment; they create an effect of objectivity that can be transported, compared, and defended (Porter 1995; Power 1997).

Yet it is precisely this power that deepens the

problem of the epistemic In-Between. Because some partial revelations, due to their technical portability, can overshadow others. Jasanoff's co-production approach and Knorr-Cetina's concept of epistemic cultures are therefore significant: knowledge and social order, or knowledge and institutional form, are not established independently of one another; which form of knowledge holds sway also determines what kind of organizational world is possible (Jasanoff, 2004; Knorr-Cetina, 1999).

From this, a second definition emerges: the epistemic In-Between is an intermediate order where the event unfolds in different fragments, yet these fragments do not circulate equally; rather, they are sequenced and weighted by specific regimes of authority.

3.5.3. Closure, Controversy, and Reopening

Institutions can't stay suspended in between forever. Decision-making requires closure irrespective of the structural uncertainty, plurality and partial visibility of the complete design scenario and its context. In other words, as Ricoeur usefully puts it when thinking narrative, scattered events are arranged into narrative order and start taking the form of "an event". The sequencing, contextualizing and directing make what has happened narratable (Ricoeur 1984). In organizations, closure often works this way: scattered signs are brought together within a specific file logic, and this integration produces the object necessary for action.

Nonetheless, closure never means utter peace. Each closing generates an exclusion. Callon's argument with regard to framing and overflow is critical here: any frame to function must incorporate some elements and exclude others, however, what is excluded does not entirely go away, it often returns later on to "move" (Callon, 1998). An excluded testimony, an overlooked time series, an experience not translated into the technical format, a claim which is rendered ineffective in the bad forum, a comparison logic which is suppressed can later come to re-open "the object itself" to discussions.

Therefore, reopening is not an extraordinary malfunction, but rather one of the structural possibilities of the epistemic In-Between. When the perspective of time expands, an occurrence may cease to be an individual accident and take the form of a safety predicament. Kaplan and Orlikowski's findings on temporal work show that the temporal horizon reconfigures not just the evaluation but also the event itself; Reinecke and Ansari's discussion of temporal brokerage shows similar properties: the clash of different rhythms and temporal logics is

capable of transforming objects (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Reinecke & Ansari, 2015). Sometimes, reopening occurs, as Kuhn described for the history of science, when enough anomalies exist that do not fit into the old explanatory frame (Kuhn, 2012). Likewise, in organizational life, too many "exceptions" in time will undermine the language of exceptions and force a new definition of the object.

The third definition of the epistemic In-Between becomes evident as this intermediate space is a field of determination that can be shaped. Here, the closure of events is not permanent. But this closure always carries the potential for conflict and reopening.

This definition leads us directly to the next conceptual step.

4. A REGIME-BASED MODEL OF MEDIATION

In the corridors of an organization, the same incident gets passed like a multilingual game of Chinese whispers. Whenever something goes wrong at any level of the organization, it is always possible to downgrade the issue. This is achieved via a reassessment, according to the systematic computer-like processing of the error at hand. Therefore, the code is set up so that a malfunction at most will have an indirect consequence. It is just an incident that they will handle, and it will not become their fault. What is needed now is a more concrete model to capture this process.

The thesis of this section is as follows: institutions do not make sense of uncertain events through a single interpretive move, but rather through recurring and learnable sets of mediations. These sets will be referred to here as mediation regimes. In a manner reminiscent of Foucault's "regime of truth," the term "regime" here refers to the pattern that regulates what is deemed sayable, measurable, acceptable, and authoritative (Foucault, 1980).

Eight regimes will be distinguished below. These are not entirely separate empirical boxes; they are analytical distinctions. Thus, mediation emerges from an abstract state of "being in-between" to take the form of an institutional architecture.

4.1. What Is the Mediation Regime?

The mediation regime, in the broadest sense, is the sum of recurring patterns that transform an indeterminate becoming into a recognizable and actionable object.

What is important here is that regimes are not merely "interpretive frameworks." They are also embedded in institutional memory, devices, written

procedures, and professional habits. In this sense, regimes persist even if specific actors change. Therefore, a regime is not merely a way of thinking; it is also a form of institutional operation.

To explain how these regimes function, one must pay attention to the idea of a "common object." Institutions require an object upon which to act.

Furthermore, these eight regimes should not be understood as a closed and definitive list. They have been distinguished for analytical purposes; new regimes may be added in other fields, or some may be subdivided into subtypes. What matters is which regime makes the initial determination and which regimes subsequently carry the closure.

4.2. The Categorical-Naming Regime

The Process Begins With Naming The world is called by certain names by the institutions before their perception of the world. What is happening in the present? Often takes the following form in an institutional context: 'what should this be called?' Goffman (1974) context The label does not simply name the event; it determines which script gets invoked, which procedure activated, and which parties get to be considered legitimate discussants.

Classifications are not innocent is established now for a long time. Classification systems and standards are not just technical devices; they are orders with social effects (Bowker and Star, 1999). Hacking (1999) observes that categories do not just describe people; in some cases, they create certain kinds of people. The differences between "imminent danger" and "accident," "inappropriate behaviour" and "psychological harassment," "productivity gap" and "structural inadequacy" are not only words. The differences also concern the scope of the actions.

This system draws its strength from the first line that it draws. When an event is named, it becomes not only easier for us to refer to it but also makes it more likely to take on a particular meaning for us and therefore the subsequent events. Organizational action often follows the trail of this topological cut.

The categorical-naming system is a decisive regime that is thus yet early. However, this is insufficient by itself. Consequently, the categorical order represents the initial limit of objectification, but it is the narrative which constructs the object's movement and internal logic.

4.3. The Regime of Narrative and Causality

When a category draws a boundary, a narrative maps time, cause, and agent within it. Organizations do not just process data but also tell stories according to Boje (1991). According to Czarniawska,

organizational identity and decision-making are constructed through narrative. On the other hand, Sonenshein has shown how different narratives drawing upon "the same reality" such as change and resource utilization can open up entirely different possibilities for action (Czarniawska, 1997; Sonenshein, 2010, 2014).

The narrative regime serves three key purposes. To start with, it organises the events: what happened first, what happened next and what happened next. Thus, a category becomes an object that lives and moves within a narrative.

Since Weick's study of Mann Gulch we have known that organizations do not merely pick up facts in times of crisis but that they retroactively arrange these in a meaningful sequence (Weick, 1993, 1995). However, this sequence is never neutral. While the "individual negligence" narrative narrows accountability, the "institutional learning deficit" narrative opens up a broader scope.

The defining feature of this regime is that it constructs the object of the event over time.

Yet narrative alone is not enough.

4.4. Authority and Procedure Regime

Where an issue lands is often inseparable from what it is. In organizational life, the forum is half the battle. Abbott's classic work on fields of expertise demonstrated that problems are defined not only by knowledge but also by fields of authority (Abbott, 1988). Determining whose domain an issue falls into dictates which language of knowledge and which repertoire of solutions will come into play.

The regime of authority and procedure determines the incident's "owner" and the sequence of its handling. Who will take the first look? Simon's reflections on bounded rationality and decision-making processes, along with Feldman and Pentland's reinterpretation of routines as dynamic structures, demonstrate that such procedures are not passive operations (Simon, 1997; Feldman & Pentland, 2003). As Pentland and Feldman emphasize, routines determine not only repetition but also the definition of inputs and the form of the output (Pentland & Feldman, 2005). Therefore, the order in which a complaint is processed, which authority will approve it, and which evidence will come into play at which stage are integral parts of the objectification process.

The power of this regime stems from its capacity to produce official outcomes. An incident may be highly persuasive within a narrative; however, if the procedure does not recognize it, it cannot enter circulation. Here it is important to highlight

Suchman's discussion of legitimacy as testifies not only the technical flow of procedure but also legitimacy and recognizability (Suchman, 1995). An event that has become procedural is 'real' in the world of the institution.

The object is thus constructed directly by the regime of authority and procedure.

However, procedure alone is not sufficient.

4.5. *The Regime of Evaluation and Norms*

Institutions do not just acknowledge, they also judge. Noticing a deviation is not the same as taking it seriously. The evaluation of an event and the interpretation of that event will be, either or both, determined by principles: efficiency, safety, justice, quality, care, merit, innovation, adaptability, sustainability, public good.

The authors' distinctive "orders of worth" analysis has convincingly shown that social judgment cannot be reduced to a single rationality (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). Lamont (2009, 2012) has also shown that value judgments are historically, professionally, and institutionally interlinked. In this sense, all fields are possibly public. According to Stark (2009), modern economic and organizational life operates through competing orders of value rather than a single value principle.

A delivery delayed may be an issue of process efficiency for the logistics unit, a customer trust issue for sales, an indicator of workload and burnout for human resources, and a contractual risk for the legal unit.

This regime is sharply distinguished from the previous ones. The categorization of the event gives it a name whereas the narrative gives it a sequence and a cause. The authority-procedure gives it a forum and process. Evaluation and norm tells us why it counts. Issues that are addressed immediately, which ones may wait, which ones might be manageable and which ones are red lines – these things cannot be understood without normative.

This point is also the point of conflict. Many of the big disagreements we see regularly in organizations concern not data, but criteria. Now we move to the fifth regime.

4.6. *The Regime of Evidence and Epistemic Authority*

Every institution has an unspoken constitution of evidence.

In their writing of the history of objectivity, Daston and Galison revealed that forms of knowledge that appear to be 'objective' are actually constructed through specific epistemic virtues,

educations, and habits of perception (Daston & Galison, 2007). Porter's classic analysis of numbers argues that strength of numbers does not depend on their being true but merely on their appearing to be free from personal judgement (Porter, 1995). Power's discussion of the surveillance society reveals why traceability and verifiability carry such high legitimacy in modern institutions (Power, 1997). According to Collins and Evans, there are epistemic domains in which not everyone is entitled to an equal say, while Jasanoff and Haas demonstrate how expert communities and knowledge networks influence the framing of problems (Collins and Evans 2007; Jasanoff 2004; Haas 1992). In an institutional context, the outcome of this regime is highly concrete. There may be emotionally charged testimonies regarding an incident; yet the institution may give greater weight to log records, camera footage, expert reports, or numerical data. This distinction is not merely about the "nature of knowledge"; it concerns which form of information the institution trusts.

The central importance of this regime lies here: an event often becomes "real enough" only at this point. The valuation regime may declare something significant; but the evidence regime determines whether that thing has reached actionable thresholds. Conversely, very narrow but standardized data can become a strong reason for intervention, even if it does not capture the full scope of the event.

The evidence and epistemic authority regime also determines which expertise has the final say.

Still, evidence does not circulate on its own.

4.7. *Material-Technical Regime*

The politics of forms is often hidden not on the cover page, but in the required fields. Which box will be checked? Bowker and Star's work on classification systems demonstrated that technical infrastructures are not neutral; they shape who and what events become visible (Bowker & Star, 1999). Star and Ruhleder's infrastructure ethnography also clearly demonstrates that technical mechanisms – which become invisible when functioning well – are actually one of the most powerful shapers of organizational life (Star & Ruhleder, 1996; Star, 1999).

Discussions on sociomateriality take this insight further. Orlikowski and Scott argue that viewing technology and the organization as two separate domains added later is misleading; they contend that work, technology, and order have been intertwined from the very beginning (Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Leonardi and Barley also

demonstrate that materiality is not a passive backdrop but a concrete element that influences the direction of action (Leonardi & Barley, 2010; Leonardi, 2012).

The distinctive function of this regime is the formatting of visibility. The regime of evidence determines what constitutes acceptable proof; the material-technical regime, however, determines what can enter the system, what can be visualized, what is retained in memory, and what is excluded from the record. If an alarm system pays attention only to certain thresholds, anything below threshold might be ignored even if it is serious in nature. Thus, the material-technical regime is one of the silent architects of organizational reality. An event that has appeared in the gadget, exists; an event that has appeared in a report can go into circulation; an event that can be mass-produced can be compared; an event that can be archived can be recalled. In contemporary institutions, something can be public only in as far as its technological medium allows it.

However, technical visibility alone is not enough to drive action.

4.8. Affect and the Regime of Attention

Institutions are not only thinking entities, but also feeling entities. Naturally, this “feeling” does not consist of just the emotions. Ahmed understands that affect does not reside solely in the individual: it circulates among objects, institutions, and collectivities producing public orientations (Ahmed, 2004). Hochschild and Huy's work shows that emotion is not a mere 'irrational byproduct' of organizations, but can direct attention, commitment, defences and capacity to change (Hochschild, 1983; Huy, 1999, 2002). When reading alongside Ocasio's attention approach, it is clear that affect functions as a silent filter for what is worth noticing (Ocasio, 1997).

In the regime, some authority is given to the early stage where uncertainty is high and formal evidence is below. This regime must be distinguished from the narrative regime. Narrative provides the cause and sequence of an event; the affective regime, however, often precedes the narrative. This demonstrates that the emotional regime modulates other regimes.

The emotional and attentional regime is therefore neither a secondary “human element” nor merely a matter of leadership psychology.

5.9. The Time and Scale Regime

Every issue arises within a specific timeline and a specific framework of zooming in and out. Is a decline in performance being compared to which

period? As demonstrated by Ancona et al. and Emirbayer and Mische, organizational and social action always operates within the tensions established between the past, present, and future (Ancona et al., 2001; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Kaplan and Orlikowski have clearly demonstrated how the study of time in strategic decision-making processes can reconfigure its objects; Reinecke and Ansari, meanwhile, have shown how the clash of different rhythms transforms organizational meaning (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Reinecke & Ansari, 2015).

The distinctive function of this regime is to redefine the intensity and scope of the event. A steep drop that looks severe in the monthly chart can be a normal fluctuation in the five yearly series. Thus, time and scale are not neutral frameworks that are external to the data; they are an internal part of the judgment of what the event is.

This regime often provides one of the most powerful reframing moves in organizational conversations. When a discipline file is compared to older cases, it is no longer just a one-off incident but rather a cultural repetition. Not just the reading of the figures changes here, but the institution object of the event.

While this regime may seem to take effect later than other regimes, it is the regime that often first identifies the problem.

The eight regimes identified to this point do not constitute a linear sequence but rather an architecture. A situation can start in response to a technical signal, an emotional shock, a story, or a procedure in real organization events. The following segment will analyze closely how exactly these regimes function in practice.

4.9. Productive Mechanisms: How Do Regimes Produce Closure?

Chapter 5 has positioned mediation's topography: the regimes that close in on the event, namely, the axes of naming, narrative, procedure, value, evidence, technical- apparatus, affect and time-scale.

The suggested response is organized around six mechanisms: selection of cue, acceptability, conversion to a common scale, binding to a record, authorisation and reopening. The stages are not linear, and they don't always happen in the same order. If political regimes are viewed as the architecture then mechanisms are the pulse of that architecture.

None of the foregoing mechanisms “produces the truth” on its own, which is one of the things they all have in common. Each is a selective process that

emphasizes certain features of the event while suppressing others. The two kinds of tensions will be made visible in the detailed section.

4.9.1. *Cue Selection*

Every organization does not see first; it filters first. An uncertain environment never arrives at the table in its full intensity. In Weick's sensemaking approach, this process is conceptualized through the concepts of bracketing and cue extraction; organizational sensemaking begins not by grasping the entire environment, but by isolating certain parts of it and making them meaningful (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). Ocasio's attention approach reaches the same point in different terms: organizational attention does not disperse freely; it is guided by structures, agendas, and expectations (Ocasio, 1997). Therefore, the first mechanism is an act of selection that precedes interpretation itself.

The selection of a clue often appears to be a neutral starting point; yet it already contains an assumption about the object.

Weick's analysis of Mann Gulch remains instructive at this point. In the midst of the disaster, the fire crew faces not a lack of data but a lack of meaning; there are scattered signs, but which sign constitutes the critical clue cannot be identified quickly enough (Weick, 1993). The selection of clues is therefore not the prelude to the event but the very moment of its inception.

The foundational nature of this mechanism lies in the fact that selection is never purely cognitive.

This leads to the following conclusion: Cue selection is the event's initial, as-yet-unfinished objectification.

4.9.2. *Admissibility*

The selected clue does not enter institutional circulation on its own; it must be admitted through the door. This is the second mechanism: admissibility. Consequently, a significant portion of organizational decision-making occurs not at the open discussion table, but before it even reaches the table—at the invisible thresholds of the door.

Admissibility, in its simplest form, rests on two questions: Who can speak? and In what manner can they speak? Abbott's classic work on fields of expertise demonstrated that the right to define a problem is as much a matter of authority as it is of knowledge (Abbott, 1988). Gieryn's concept of "boundary-work" also reminds us that the boundary between legitimate knowledge and excluded knowledge is constantly drawn and redrawn (Gieryn, 1983). By distinguishing between different

types of expertise, Collins and Evans have shown that not everyone possesses the same epistemic status, but that this hierarchy itself is socially constructed (Collins & Evans, 2007). The consequence of this in organizational life is clear: A field worker's observation and a dashboard output, a patient's lived experience narrative and a laboratory result, a student's oral application and a standardized survey series do not share the same status of acceptance.

These thresholds often appear procedural. The application must be in writing; a date, witness, form, category, relevant unit, and specific type of evidence are required. Thus, admissibility decides what is processable before determining what is true.

The critical point here is that exclusion often operates not as an explicit prohibition but as a silent filter. Institutions rarely say, "This is incorrect"; instead, they say, "This is not yet in the appropriate format for processing." Yet this formal statement often yields significant material consequences. Thus, "student failure" is established from the outset as a narrowly defined object.

This mechanism is directly linked to legitimacy. Suchman's approach, which interprets legitimacy through appropriateness and recognizability, is illuminating here: the institutional weight a claim gains depends not only on its descriptive power but also on whether it conforms to the normative forms of the relevant forum (Suchman, 1995).

4.9.3. *Commensuration*

To manage often means to compare; and to compare requires converting heterogeneous things into a common measure. As Espeland and Stevens demonstrate with their concept of commensuration, this process is not merely measurement; it is the act of making different things comparable within the same unit (Espeland & Stevens, 1998).

Commensuration is one of the silent engines of organizational action. When a complaint is converted into a "number of complaints," a violation into a "risk score," a maintenance error into a "severity level," an organizational issue into a "KPI deviation," and a training gap into a "decline in learning outcomes," the event ceases to be merely a narrative and becomes an object of comparison. As Porter points out, this is why numbers are powerful: they appear free from personal judgment, portable, and defensible (Porter, 1995). Desrosières's classic work on the history of statistics also demonstrates that a common measure does not merely record reality; it simultaneously creates manageable entities (Desrosières, 1998). Abstract concepts such as "risk,"

“success,” “efficiency,” and “deviation” gain institutional weight precisely within such scales.

However, the common scale does not merely facilitate; it transforms. The translation of a customer experience into a “satisfaction score,” a student’s journey into a “completion rate,” or a care relationship into “service duration performance” makes certain layers of the event visible while obscuring others. As Lamont demonstrates, evaluation processes are never purely technical; which criterion is deemed fundamental, and which quality is considered “important,” is both historical and institutional (Lamont, 2012). Boltanski and Thévenot, meanwhile, have shown that the same phenomenon can lead to entirely different judgments across different value systems (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006). Thus, conversion to a common scale is not merely about establishing a measure; it is, in effect, a choice of which value language will prevail.

For this reason, translation into a common scale, while enabling institutional coordination on one hand, produces loss on the other because it cannot capture certain qualities. Karpik’s work on the valuation of the singular demonstrates that some objects and experiences cannot be easily translated into a common scale; yet, institutions often approach them with distrust precisely for this reason (Karpik, 2010).

Mennicken and Espeland’s assessment of the literature on quantification reveals that today, numbers have become not merely a language of reporting but a direct instrument of governance (Mennicken & Espeland, 2019).

4.9.4. *Inscription*

In the institutional world, memory is often what has been textualized. If there is no record of what is said, it often has no institutional life either. As Latour consistently demonstrates in his scientific studies, knowledge gains power not only through discovery but also through record formats that can leave traces and be transported (Latour, 1987). Bowker and Star, while conducting the ethnography of classification systems and infrastructure respectively, bring this same point to the corporate world: categories, files, codes, recording fields, and archival logics determine not only how an event is stored but also what it will be remembered as (Bowker & Star, 1999; Star, 1999).

Archiving refers to the process of transferring an event from a transient interaction into organizational memory. A complaint becomes a ticket, a suspicion is assigned a case number, a meeting note is incorporated into a presentation slide, an alarm appears on a dashboard, and a relationship issue is

recorded in a performance file. Hull’s work on bureaucratic documents is significant precisely for this reason: documents do not merely represent; they circulate, establish connections, carry authority, draw boundaries, and govern (Hull, 2012). For institutions, the file is often more real than the memory of the event.

What is critical here is that the record is not neutral. Every form asks certain questions and omits others. The studies compiled by Lampland and Star on standards clearly demonstrate the profound impacts of these invisible formalizations that shape daily life (Lampland & Star, 2009). Thus, the record produces not only memory but also ontology.

The constitutive power of this mechanism stems from the combination of durability and selectivity. The record makes the event durable; but at the same time, it narrows it down. This is why Orlikowski and Scott’s discussions of sociomateriality are significant: technical and material devices are not merely tools that carry information afterward, but its constitutive conditions (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Something that does not exist in a database is, for many institutions, almost “non-existent.”

For this reason, linking to a record is one of the hard shells of institutional closure.

4.9.5. *Authorization*

The act of recording an event is one thing; the act of speaking on behalf of the institution is another.

This seal can originate from various sources. Hierarchical authority approval, professional expertise, the completion of a procedure, an audit trail, external regulatory expectations, or public legitimacy are among the primary ones. Suchman’s discussion of legitimacy demonstrates that this process cannot be reduced solely to the exercise of power; it must also produce effects of appropriateness and acceptability (Suchman, 1995). Thornton et al.’s approach to organizational logics also demonstrates that which authority is considered the “final word” is culturally and historically constructed (Thornton et al., 2012). Therefore, authorization is neither a matter of bare command nor simple persuasion; it is the convergence of different sources of legitimacy within the organizational world at a specific juncture.

What is important here is that authorization often operates through the coupling of multiple sources. A single data series may remain weak on its own; but when combined with an audit procedure, an expert report, and a management committee decision, it instantly becomes an organizational object. This is what Porter and Power jointly teach: numbers and

audit trails produce not only information but also the effect of objectivity and decision-making confidence (Porter, 1995; Power, 1997). As we know from Daston and Galison's history of objectivity, what appears objective is often carried by specific tools, training, and display techniques (Daston & Galison, 2007). To put it in the language of institutions: sometimes "being right" is not enough; one must "speak in the valid format and through the authorized voice."

Authorization is therefore an epistemic and political threshold. Whose interpretation becomes the final record? A patient complaint may be closed at the clinical level; but if risk management authorizes it as a system-level case, the same incident takes on a different institutional life.

For this reason, authorization is not the final stage of validation but the distribution of the right to institutional discourse.

4.9.6. Reopening

No file is ever truly closed for the last time; some files simply remain silent for a while. The sixth mechanism names this often-overlooked aspect of mediation: reopening. Callon's discussion of framing and overflow is of fundamental importance here: any framework must include certain elements to function, while excluding others; yet what is excluded does not disappear—it may return by accumulating or forming new relationships (Callon, 1998). Closure is therefore not merely an ending but also produces the conditions for future conflict.

Reopening can occur in various ways. Suppressed clues may resurface. In other words, reopening often arises not from a change in the event itself, but from a change in the regimes and mechanisms through which it is re-examined.

Kaplan and Orlikowski's discussion of "temporal work" is particularly illuminating at this point. As they demonstrate, time is not merely an external context; new sequences established between past, present, and future alter the object itself (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013). Reinecke and Ansari's work on temporal conflicts also illustrates how different rhythms and scales can reconfigure the same issue (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015). The case may appear unchanged; yet the subject has shifted.

This mechanism should not be viewed as an exceptional breakdown. Reopening is one of the fundamental possibilities of organizational learning and critical correction. As Sonenshein demonstrates, narratives of change in organizations do not progress in a linear fashion; reversals, reframings, and the return of alternative narratives are extremely common (Sonenshein, 2010). Therefore, reopening is

not a sign of a failed closure, but of the structural inadequacy of closure itself.

This leads to the following conclusion: Institutional objects are never completed entities; they are provisional working compromises.

When these six mechanisms are considered together, the dynamic dimension of the regime-based model becomes clear.

4.10. Process Model and Recommendations

The truly decisive moment in an institution's life is often not the moment of decision; rather, it is the intervening period leading up to that moment, during which the nature of the event is gradually narrowed down, shifted, and shaped. This interval between the event and the decision often appears brief, yet it is the most intense phase from a theoretical perspective. Therefore, the question that must now be asked is not merely which regimes and which mechanisms come into play; rather, it is how these together establish a process logic.

This section condenses the previous two sections into a single flow model. The model proposed here is not strictly linear; organizational life often operates through reversals, leaps, accelerations, and abrupt closures. This sequence of events begins at what Dewey calls the "indeterminate state" and progresses toward the possibility of a temporary closure, action, and reopening (Dewey, 1938/1991). The process model below aims precisely to transform this struggle into a structured and investigable framework.

4.10.1. Sequence of Events: From Scattered Signs to Temporary Closure

The process often begins with a vague sense of unease. A number drops unexpectedly, a complaint is repeated, a minor deviation gains unusual intensity, or a certain silence no longer sounds like silence to the organizational ear. As Langley points out, process studies must take precisely such moments seriously; for organizational phenomena are often grasped not as fully formed objects given in an instant, but as transformations in flux (Langley, 1999; Langley et al., 2013). As demonstrated in Weick's sensemaking approach, the environment does not arrive as a pre-organized table of meanings; some signs are cut out and separated, while others are left behind as noise (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). This initial act of cutting influences, right from the start, in what respect the event will be deemed "meaningful."

The second moment is the pre-determination moment. The scattered sign is no longer merely

something perceived but something that has become a specific candidate. Kaplan's work on framing contests has clearly demonstrated why this early moment is so crucial: under conditions of uncertainty, actors often clash not over solutions, but over the very frames defining what the problem is in the first place (Kaplan, 2008). Early naming creates a powerful path-dependent effect on subsequent search and evaluation activities.

The third moment is when institutional frameworks are mobilized. The initial version of the event no longer circulates on its own; different forums, different expert fields, different measurement tools, and different spheres of authority come into play. Greenwood et al. (2011) and Schildt et al. (2020) have demonstrated that institutional pluralism and power relations become visible precisely in such moments. Thus, the formation of the institutional object is less an abstract interpretation and more a struggle for the temporary alignment of regimes.

The fourth moment is the moment when the institutional object achieves temporary stability. At this point, the event has been translated into a common scale, fitted into acceptable formats, tied to specific recording formats, and some of its alternative versions have been pushed into the background. Espeland and Stevens' concept of commensuration is central here; because institutions establish priorities and interventions by translating heterogeneous qualities onto common planes of comparison (Espeland & Stevens, 1998). As Latour and Bowker and Star have shown, recording and classification do not merely preserve the event; they render it portable, comparable, and suitable for institutional memory (Latour, 1987; Bowker & Star, 1999). The institutional object, therefore, is not the event's "natural essence" but a specific form of stability.

The fifth moment is the moment of authorized closure. The existence of an object is not the same as its being deemed valid on behalf of the institution. Porter (1995) and Power (1997) explained why objectivity produces such a powerful governance effect in modern institutions precisely through such convergences. The success of closure often depends less on accuracy and more on which version of the object gains the right to speak on behalf of the institution.

However, the process does not end here. The sixth moment is one of overflow and reopening. Callon's distinction between "framing" and "overflow" is key to understanding this moment: every closure operates by leaving certain elements outside, and these excluded elements may later return (Callon,

1998). Kaplan and Orlikowski's discussion of "temporal work" and Reinecke and Ansari's studies on time conflicts have clearly demonstrated that what an event is often changes with new sequences of time scales (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Reinecke & Ansari, 2015). Thus, the process model conceives of closure not as an endpoint but as a temporary stabilization.

From this, the following general conclusion emerges: The formation of an institutional object is not a single-step transition from dispersed signs to action.

4.10.2. *Fundamental Propositions*

This process model claims not only to be descriptive but also to generate testable propositions. The propositions listed below express, in a testable manner, how the regimes and mechanisms developed in previous sections will yield outcomes under specific conditions.

Proposition 1. In episodes where object formation is concentrated in a single dominant regime, closure occurs more rapidly; however, this closure carries a more fragile legitimacy in the eyes of actors embedded in alternative regimes.

This proposition is grounded in the relationship between the tension between speed and institutional pluralism in sensemaking. An early and dominant technical, legal, or administrative regime can quickly reduce uncertainty; yet Kaplan's analysis of framing contests and Greenwood et al.'s studies on institutional pluralism demonstrate that excluding different regimes accumulates legitimacy issues (Kaplan, 2008; Greenwood et al., 2011; Schildt et al., 2020).

Proposition 2. In episodes where authority-procedural, evidentiary, and substantive-technical regimes are tightly intertwined, the resulting object appears more "objective"; this effect of objectivity enhances coherence but tends to suppress qualitative markers that fall outside the established framework.

The "objectivity" here is not a metaphysical guarantee of truth, but rather a portable and defensible appearance. As Porter, Power, and Daston and Galison have shown, when technical format, a trail of verification, and procedural completion converge, a powerful effect of institutional certainty emerges (Porter, 1995; Power, 1997; Daston & Galison, 2007).

Proposition 3. As an institution's capacity to maintain multiple regimes simultaneously increases, the likelihood of problem reformulation rises, and the likelihood of the same structural conflict recurring under different labels decreases.

Drawing on Maitlis and Christianson's emphasis on explanatory plurality in interpretation, Lamont's comparability of value orders, and Carlile's boundary-spanning approach, it can be argued that early plurality often yields stronger learning (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Lamont, 2012; Carlile, 2004). If an institution can genuinely engage with different regimes before closing off, the chance of reformulating the initial object version increases.

Proposition 4. As affective intensity increases, institutions close off more rapidly to familiar categorical, procedural, and technical regimes; discovery-oriented plurality narrows.

Shame, threat, crisis visibility, and external pressure harden the organizational attention economy. Huy's analyses of emotional capacity and Ahmed's work on the circulation of emotions explain the tendency of organizations to revert to familiar formulas during moments of high intensity (Ahmed, 2004; Huy, 1999, 2002).

Proposition 5. Early and uncontested categorical labeling renders subsequent evidence-gathering, orientation, and evaluation processes path-dependent.

Goffman's framing insight, along with Cornelissen and Werner's work on organizational framing literature, demonstrates that the initial labeling significantly narrows the subsequent interpretive space (Goffman, 1974; Cornelissen & Werner, 2014).

Proposition 6. Changing the temporal and scalar framework is one of the most powerful mechanisms for reopening the institutional object; because this change often transforms not only its value but the object itself.

The studies by Ancona et al., Kaplan and Orlikowski, and Reinecke and Ansari have clearly demonstrated that time is not an external context but a constitutive element of the object (Ancona et al., 2001; Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Reinecke & Ansari, 2015). Re-alignments such as short-term/long-term, micro-scale/institutional scale, and local patterns/sectoral comparisons can dissolve previously fixed objects and construct new ones.

Proposition 7. Transboundary actors and artifacts capable of translating between regimes produce more resilient closures when they can relate different object versions without forcing them into a single language.

Star and Griesemer's boundary object approach, along with Carlile and Bechky's boundary studies, have demonstrated that different communities of expertise can produce collaborative work even without full consensus (Star & Griesemer, 1989;

Carlile, 2002, 2004; Bechky, 2003).

Proposition 8. As the density of records increases, the institutional resilience of the closure increases; however, the same density of records also accumulates more material for comparative contestation and reopening.

The work of Latour, Hull, and Bowker and Star demonstrates that regimes of inscription and writing render institutional reality resilient (Latour, 1987; Bowker & Star, 1999; Hull, 2012).

When read together, these propositions clarify the fundamental logic of the process model.

4.10.3. Scope and Boundary Conditions

This process model does not claim to be a universal theory explaining every type of knowledge-building practice. It occupies a narrower yet sharper domain: limited organizational episodes in which an uncertain or ambiguous phenomenon is transformed into a recognizable and actionable object within institutional forums. Its strength lies in the intermediate space between the event and the organizational object.

For this reason, the model's explanatory power increases particularly under certain conditions. First, when organizational pluralism is high; that is, when multiple value systems, expert languages, and procedural pathways claim authority over the same event. Under these conditions, distinguishing between regimes and mechanisms can significantly explain how the institutional object is constituted.

Conversely, there are areas where the model is relatively weaker. In situations where the object is already largely fixed by professional and institutional consensus, alternative regimes are low in intensity, and decision-making operates largely automatically or as pure routine, the explanatory value of this model may diminish. However, it should not be forgotten that precisely in such areas, rapid closure increases the need for subsequent reopening and learning.

Another boundary condition is the issue of power.

Finally, the process model and propositions developed in this section lay the groundwork for the next step.

4.11. Methodological and Diagnostic Findings

The preliminary ontological study had proposed In-Between not merely as a subject but also as a mode of reading and thinking; this section translates that proposal into a narrower domain—namely, the investigable design of organizational episodes.

Therefore, the methodological conclusion of this study is simple yet rigorous: the unit of research is

not a predefined “problem,” “risk,” “performance gap,” or “case”; it must be a limited episode that demonstrates how such objects are institutionally constructed.

The following subsections develop these two findings together.

4.11.1. Studying Limited Episodes: The Objectification Sequence as an Analytical Unit

If this article’s theoretical claim is to be taken seriously, “organization,” “field,” or “institutional logic” alone are insufficient as research objects.

Langley’s classic work on deriving theory from process data demonstrated that the most significant aspects of the organizational world are often not the “moment” but the “flow” (Langley, 1999). Van de Ven and Poole also argued that explanations of development and change should be based on sequences of events and logics of transformation rather than static characteristics (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995).

The term “episode” is not chosen arbitrarily here. An episode is neither an infinite social backdrop nor a single micro-moment. The episode is thus established between two boundaries: the initial drawing of attention and the temporary closure.

This definition directly influences research design. The first implication is this: a researcher seeking to examine an object must track not only the actors but also the carriers. As Latour notes in his work on science, events move not only within people’s minds but also in notes, charts, the margins of tables, software domains, threshold values, and forms (Latour, 1987). Czarniawska’s “action nets” approach also demonstrates that the organizational world can often be understood not so much in terms of fixed entities but rather through interconnected actions and circulating documents (Czarniawska, 2004). If an email becomes a ticket; a ticket, an agenda item; an agenda item, a risk note; a risk note, a dashboard; and a dashboard, a board decision, then the research path must also follow this chain of transformation.

The second finding is the inadequacy of retrospective narratives alone. Of course, interviews are important; through them, we understand how actors perceive things, what they consider significant, and which alternatives they exclude. As Pentland emphasizes regarding the relationship between narrative and process, stories constructed in hindsight often present the sequence of events as more consistent, more linear, and more logical (Pentland, 1999). Yet the formation of the object emerges precisely in those moments that do not fit

this smoothness: the wrong choice of category, an alternative narrative that opens and closes during a meeting, an experience that goes unrecorded because it does not fit the form, a threshold where the system does not trigger an alarm but the actors on the ground sense that “something is wrong.” For this reason, a contemporary research design must always combine interviews with simultaneous traces, sequential documents, and device traces.

The third conclusion is that the episode must not be considered in isolation from its context. A limited episode does not imply that macro-structures become insignificant. Therefore, the episode is not an alternative to the context; it is the cross-section where the context becomes observable.

From this emerges a methodological principle: the research unit should not be the “problem area,” but rather the series of objectifications. The researcher should begin with the following question: “What changes did this event undergo from the moment it first drew attention until it became capable of speaking on behalf of the institution?” This question is more fundamental than the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research; because it determines the form of data collection, field entry, document selection, and analytical logic from the outset.

4.11.2. Process-Oriented, Comparative, and Multi-Modal Methods

Selecting a limited episode as the unit of analysis does not automatically resolve the methodological issue. The real question is which tools we will use to capture this episode. Therefore, the most appropriate approach is a process-oriented, comparative, and multi-modal research design.

The process-oriented method, first and foremost, is one that transforms time into data. Langley et al. (2013) note that process studies make visible the dimensions of “temporality, activity, and flow” in organizational life.

For this reason, one pillar of field research is episodic ethnography or, at the very least, process observation. Nicolini’s practice theory approach and Suchman’s situated action studies demonstrate that events must be understood not only through what is said but also through the ways they are performed (Nicolini, 2012; Suchman, 2007). Object formation often becomes visible precisely in these details.

The second step is sequential document and record analysis. As Bowker and Star, as well as Lampland and Star, have pointed out, standards, forms, and classifications do not merely represent everyday life; they shape it (Bowker & Star, 1999;

Lampland & Star, 2009). Here, three types of change must be coded:

(1) name change: under which headings does the incident circulate?

(2) change in causality: Is the explanation shifting from the individual to the system, from the system to measurement, or in the opposite direction?

(3) change in form of evidence: Is testimony giving way to numbers, or is technical data being reinterpreted through expert commentary?

The third pillar is material-technical interface analysis. Many studies rightly emphasize organizational discourse and interviews; however, they tend to view technical interfaces as secondary tools. Orlikowski and Scott's discussions on sociomateriality have shown that treating technology and the organization as two separate, subsequently integrated domains is insufficient (Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Without these questions, half of the object's formation remains invisible.

The fourth pillar is comparative design. Eisenhardt's emphasis on case comparisons for theory-building, along with Eisenhardt and Graebner's evaluations of theory-focused case studies, remain instructive here (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

The first is comparing how the same type of event transforms into different objects across different organizations.

The second is tracking how the same event within the same organization takes on different forms across different forums.

The third is examining how the same event over time is handled differently before and after a change in policy, software, or procedure.

The fourth is to compare alternative versions of objects within the same episode: narratives that were brought to the table but not accepted, metrics that fell outside the system, and evidence that was rejected.

At this point, the analytical value of multi-modal design increases.

This process-oriented and multi-modal design also reorganizes analytical coding. The coding logic proposed here is three-layered. When the researcher maps these three layers onto an event timeline, the process of how the institutional object is constructed becomes visually and analytically traceable.

Finally, the role of quantitative tools should not be entirely excluded; however, their proper place must be determined. Cross-sectional surveys, extensive event logs, or comparative performance series can be useful for testing the propositions developed in Chapter 7. This is because the central claim of this article is precisely that variables often operate

through objects that have been fixed ex post, whereas the core theoretical issue lies in how these objects are constructed.

4.11.3. Mediation / Object-Formation Control: A Practical Diagnostic Protocol

If the theoretical framework lacks practical value, it remains merely a well-organized abstraction. Therefore, the final subsection aims to bridge the gap between research and practice. It is particularly effective in situations such as: "the issue is clear but there is no consensus," "everyone claims to be looking at the same data but the results conflict," "the discussion about a solution goes in circles," or "the same type of conflict recurs under different names."

The purpose of this review is not to produce endless relativism. Dewey's understanding of problem-setting, along with Schön and Rein & Schön's emphasis on problem setting and reframing, is decisive here: most practical blindness stems not from an inability to produce solutions, but from failing to question under which name and within which boundaries the problem is framed (Dewey, 1938/1991; Schön, 1983; Rein & Schön, 1993).

Step One: Separate the incident from its current label.

The institutional file often already carries a label: "non-compliance," "poor performance," "customer complaint," "case," "risk event." The audit's first task is to temporarily set this label aside and isolate the simplest observable traces. What happened? Thus, the organization begins to see that other possibilities for the object may exist beyond the category it imposed from the very start.

Step Two: Mapping the regimes.

Here, the question is no longer "what is the issue?" but "which regimes are currently carrying the issue?" Which naming convention is dominant? Which narrative establishes the sequence and cause of the event? It becomes clear here that what is seen as the "core issue" in a case is often the result of a single regime's dominance.

Step Three: Conducting an analysis of exclusion and invisibility.

Callon's framing/overflow distinction serves as a diagnostic tool here (Callon, 1998). Every dominant version of an object excludes certain elements. This step is particularly important; because a significant portion of recurring organizational blind spots stems not from a lack of information, but from systematic exclusion.

Step Four: Conduct a counter-object experiment.

This step is the most creative yet most disciplined part of the review. The goal here is not to arbitrarily

turn everything upside down; it is simply to see how the object shifts by altering a single parameter. Carlile's boundary-work approach has demonstrated how such controlled translations can generate new understandings across different fields of expertise (Carlile, 2002, 2004). The counter-object experiment offers the institution this possibility: is the problem not in the solution, but in the object's misfixation?

Step Five: Establishing a transparent and reviewable closure.

The goal of oversight is not to make closure impossible, but to make it more honest.

(1) Which regimes have become dominant?

(2) Which alternatives were excluded?

(3) For what timeframe and scale does this closure apply?

(4) Under what conditions will the file be reopened?

Such a closure does not claim absolute truth; rather, it accounts for its own selectivity. In this way, the institution partially keeps its own blind spots visible while making decisions.

The practical benefit of this oversight protocol lies not so much in producing consensus as in accurately identifying the source of disagreement. Often, organizations believe they hold different solutions regarding the same facts; yet in reality, they do not perceive the same event as the same object. It becomes clear that what circulates today as "poor performance," tomorrow as "integration issues," and the following month as "communication breakdowns" is actually the systematic side effect of a single value, evidence, or forum regime.

The final methodological and diagnostic conclusion drawn from this is as follows: the framework proposed by this article extends research not only to the pre-objective realm but also to the realm of institutional self-critique.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The quietest yet most decisive moment in an organization's life is often not when the decision is made, but when the subject of the decision has been established without anyone noticing.

This final section synthesizes the argument developed so far under four headings. First, the article's fundamental theoretical contribution will be discussed. Finally, the study will conclude by returning to its central thesis: what lies in between is not merely humanity or the era, but knowledge itself; therefore, any research seeking to understand contemporary organizational life must investigate how the object of decision-making is constructed.

5.1. The Article's Fundamental Theoretical Contribution

The first and most explicit contribution of this article is to remove the concept of In-Between from being merely the name of a general ontological or cultural threshold and to anchor it to a specific epistemic problem.

The second contribution is that it removes "interpretation" from being the sole explanatory category. The sensemaking and framing literature has long demonstrated that organizational uncertainty is addressed through the process of making sense (Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005; Goffman, 1974; Kaplan, 2008). In other words, the article shifts from "meaning" to "institutional meaning," and from "interpretation" to "selective determination."

The third contribution lies in its ability to consolidate insights scattered throughout the literature into a single mid-range model. Sensemaking, organizational logics, legitimacy, valuation, quantification, sociomateriality, expertise, infrastructure, and time studies have long illuminated different regions of the same landscape (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Thornton et al., 2012; Lamont, 2012; Mennicken & Espeland, 2019; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Jasanoff, 2004; Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013). The regimes of categorical-naming, narrative-causality, authority-procedure, valuation-norm, evidence-epistemic authority, material-technical, affect-attention, and time-scale reveal the areas of intensity in which institutional fixation regarding "what actually happened" is established.

The fourth contribution is its treatment of closure not as an innocent outcome, but as an explicable production. In this article, closure is not understood as the triumph of correct explanation by its own power. Precisely for this reason, the central concept of the article is the "institutional object." Risk, violation, poor performance, quality gap, strategic threat, customer loss, or ethical issue are not self-contained entities; they are institutionally produced objects.

The fifth contribution is that it does not leave the theory merely as a conceptual synthesis. The process model and propositions make this framework investigable. In line with Langley's call for a process theory, the issue is no longer "what did the organization do?" but rather "what did the organization objectify, when, and within which configuration?" (Langley, 1999).

5.2. Implications for Organizational Theory and Broader Social Theory

The most significant outcome of this article's discussion is its problematization of a common shortcut in organizational theory. The assumption that organizations face given problems and that management's primary task is to find appropriate solutions to these problems is extremely widespread in both practice and theory. This article's answer is clear: because the parties often do not perceive the same event as the same object.

This point yields two important implications for sensemaking research. First, it is insufficient to track the sensemaking process solely within language and narrative. While Whittle et al. (2023) center language, this article argues that material-technical and organizational carriers are equally constitutive alongside language.

From an organizational theory perspective, the conclusion is even more pronounced. The literature on legitimacy and organizational logics shows us which value worlds and which principles of appropriateness are effective (Suchman, 1995; Thornton et al., 2012). Here, the real power lies in the ability to determine which version of an object will be treated as "the thing itself."

This framework also yields illuminating insights for the literature on valuation and quantification. It is already known that metrics and rankings do not merely record the world but reconstruct it (Espeland & Stevens, 1998; Espeland & Sauder, 2007; Mennicken & Espeland, 2019). Therefore, in management science, the critique of metrics must now be directed not only at performance pressure but also at the formation of objects.

From the perspective of sociomateriality and infrastructure discussions, the fundamental conclusion is this: technical devices are the silent ontologists of institutions. Forms, screens, category menus, alarm thresholds, required fields, data series, and report templates shape not only the record of an event but also its mode of existence. Bowker and Star's classification studies and Orlikowski and Scott's sociomateriality analyses were already robust in this regard (Bowker & Star, 1999; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Consequently, the technical is not external to the social here; it is one of the constitutive planes of social meaning.

For broader social theory, the fundamental contribution lies in conceiving the idea of "being in-between" not merely as an existential or cultural theme, but as a condition for the production of knowledge and decision-making. Arendt's concept of the fissure between past and future, Bhabha's third

space, Bauman's liquid modernity, and Gramsci's interregnum have been read in this article as narrowed down into the organizational world (Arendt, 1961/2006; Bhabha, 1994/2012; Bauman, 2000; Gramsci, 1971). The sum of these questions constitutes the core of contemporary epistemology – a core that appears technical but is, in fact, profoundly political.

5.3. Boundaries, Risks, and Open Research Areas

Like any conceptual framework, this model carries risks. The first risk is to think of the regimes as being overly independent. Otherwise, the model may become more classificatory than explanatory.

The second risk is overgeneralizing mediation and neglecting the material resistance of the event. This article does not adopt a simplistic position such as "everything is merely discourse" or "every object is entirely produced as fiction" at any point. Hacking's warning is crucial here: "social construction" arguments can become empty slogans unless they meticulously demonstrate what is constructed and how (Hacking, 1999). This article's claim is not that events are invented out of thin air, but that the transformation of events into institutional objects is organized through mediation.

The third risk is that the model can be used by management practices not critically, but manipulatively. When an institution becomes aware of regimes and mechanisms, it may use this not to learn better, but to produce faster and more indisputable conclusions. This model, at the very least, makes these invisible technical-political fusions discussable.

The fourth boundary concerns spatial differences. Not all organizational spaces produce mediation pluralism with the same intensity. Therefore, the areas where the model is most explanatory are those where plural value systems, different languages of expertise, and technical recording formats compete over the same event: hospitals, universities, public institutions, platform companies, risk management systems, ethics and compliance domains, and multi-stakeholder management.

The scope of open research is broad. The first research track will involve detailed episodic ethnographies. Intervention studies that conduct counter-object experiments against institutions or consciously alter the time horizon or standard of proof can test the model's practical utility.

The most critical open question at this point is: What exactly does "better decision" mean? The answer provided by this article differs somewhat

from the traditional decision quality literature. Closure is necessary; but knowing that closure is selective is equally necessary.

5.4. Conclusion

This article has sought to point to the most fundamental yet least discussed reality of contemporary institutional life: institutions do not live with events themselves, but with mediated versions of those events. A complaint, a loss, a deviation, a crisis, a data corruption, or a grievance becomes an object for the institutional world only by passing through certain mechanisms. Category, narrative, procedure, value, evidence, technical format, affect, and temporal comparison are not explanatory frameworks added later to the event's context; they are the primary structures that determine what the event will be for the organization. Therefore, the "epistemic In-Between" is not merely the name for a lack of knowledge, but for the way knowledge is institutionally constructed.

Viewed this way, the central question of organizational theory also shifts in a subtle yet significant way. It is no longer sufficient to ask

merely, "How do organizations make decisions?" The real question is: "How do organizations render the thing they will decide upon into something that can be decided?" When this question is opened up, it becomes evident that discussions about solutions often rest on underlying discussions about the object. It is here that institutions' most persistent blind spots arise: while they believe they have reached consensus on the data, in reality, they have not agreed on which object is being discussed.

The conclusion of this article is therefore simple but not trivial. In an age of uncertainty, epistemology has moved beyond being a narrow subfield of the philosophy of abstract knowledge to become an institutional and political issue. The world is no longer governed solely by what it is, but by how it is recorded, how it is conveyed, and how it is authorized. For this reason, a more mindful institutional life requires not merely better data, but a more honest practice of object formation. The problem often lies not in the solution itself, but in the fact that the very thing the solution addresses was flawed from the start. That invisible space between event and decision is, precisely for this reason, the epistemic and political knot of our age.

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