Inside the National Association of Black Hospitality Professionals: Using Dramaturgical Analysis to Discuss Lateral Flexible Voluntary Organizing

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Abstract

This research produces a dramaturgical framework capable of describing the early stages of one voluntary and lateral flexible organization, the National Association of Black Hospitality Professionals, a professional American association for hospitality and tourism industry managers from 1984 until 1999. The theoretical framework used is dramaturgical analysis concerning how the NABHP organization enabled African American hospitality managers, as members of the NABHP, to construct upwardly mobile strategic professional networks throughout the American hospitality and tourism industry. Both the organization and its membership, in turn, are viewed in the critical light of the two environments in which the NABHP was embedded at the time, the macro socio-cultural environment and the industry-operating environment.

Key Words: National Association of Black Hospitality Professionals, Voluntary Organization, Lateral Flexible Organization

Introduction

The goal of this qualitative field study was to understand the utility and meaning that a peer-linked, social, and occupational network held for hospitality and tourism managers who were voluntarily affiliated with the National Association of Black Hospitality Professionals (NABHP) from 1984 until 1999. A paucity of literature still exists regarding specific ethnic populations and the networking strategies they utilize to achieve upward mobility as first and second-generation managers in specific industries. Studies concerning black and African American managers in the hospitality and tourism industry, for example, have not been well documented except for the historical work done about labor organization by biographers and folklorists external to the industry with The Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters and/or its leadership (Anderson, 1973; Harris, 1977; Santino, 1989; Wilson, 1989).

If it is true that cultural understanding must precede efforts to manage cultural diversity, and I believe that, then from both a cultural and an organizational perspective, we must learn more about the strategic preferences, proclivities, and needs of this professional segment's interactions as individuals and as ethnically, heterogeneous linked professional associations engaged in promoting change. An understanding of minority based networking processes, especially ones based upon an emic understanding would be useful at this time in an era of post-affirmative action (Thomas, 1990, 1991) where the "open door" succeeded only in bringing new ethnic groups through the doors of organizations, but has not necessarily contributed to their successful retention. The significance of this particular project is to bring to the forefront the voices of men and women who are black or African American and who work as managers struggling with upward mobility issues on a daily basis in the hospitality industry.

Such work as this is particularly useful to the hospitality industry because this service sector employs and serves more people than any other industry in the world. On a very practical level, there is a need for this kind of work so that industry leaders and managers may engage in dialogues that are culturally informed and more sample specific than to, out of necessity, constantly refer to a broadly based general demographic pattern that does not do more than stress, and thus enforce, stereotypically described demographic patterns. In summary, this story and its significance are about multiple meanings and the on-going, inherent conflict and pluralistic concerns of constituents for whom W. E. B. DuBois' *color lined, double-veiled reality* (1903, 1978) remains, some would say,--and rightly so-- all too real. Andrew Pettigrew (1985) said that our most sophisticated understanding of ethnic group conditions could be found at the intersection of the macro and the micro levels of analysis. He further suggested that the dynamics of many of the social problems that result from multifaceted forms of ethnic or racial discrimination could not be understood from only one level of analysis, but that these must be combined as much as possible for a more complete picture of understanding to be constructed.

The scope of this study is moving between the macro-history of the association (e.g. data gathered via archives, records, and interviews) and the micro-worlds of some of the most active leaders and members in the NABHP (e.g. data gathered from interviews and observation).

Dramaturgical Analysis

Using metaphors from the world of theater referring to front and back stage behavior in the presentation of self and the resultant impression management of strategic role selection, dramaturgical analysis results from Goffman's expansion of symbolic interactionism and Mead's definition of the situation to discuss what are normally contradictory tensions which confront the NABHP while trying to live up to societal and its own operating environment's expectations, thus requiring negotiating some semblance of order and sense making with which to operate. Goffman affirms that the performers and the audience assume team-like collusion because the ultimate self or true identity of a person or organization lies at the nexus of social acts (e.g., private behavior in public places); focusing on how convincing one's performance is to one's audience, or vice versa, and to one's self. If the interactional performance is not successful, two types of role distancing may result: the audience interrupts the performers, or independent of the audience, the actors may suffer from an internalized cognizant dissonance due to a self-perceived form of stigma.

Stigma is a term of Greek origin originally referring to "bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier" (Goffman, 1863: 1). Used in sociology, the term refers to the difference between one's virtual social identity (e.g., the characterization society imputes to the stigmatized person) and one's actual social identity. These terms emanate from preliminary conceptions about how society categorizes individuals as well as the complement of social traits viewed to be attributed to the specific categories and, thus, normal for members in each category.

> Social settings establish the categories of persons likely to be encountered there. The routines of social intercourse in established settings allow us to deal with anticipated others without special attention or thought. When a stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his category and attributes, his "social identity"—to use a term that is better than "social status" because personal attributes such as "honesty" are involved, as well as structural ones, like "occupation" (Goffman, 1963: 2).

The NABHP labored under

> the tribal stigmas of race…transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate to all members of a family…an individual who might have been received easily in ordinary social intercourse posses a trait that can obtrude itself upon attention and turn those of us whom he meets away from him, breaking the claim that his other attributes have on us. He possesses a stigma, an undesired differentness from what we had anticipated. We and those who do not depart negatively from the particular expectations at issue I shall call *normals* (Goffman, 1963: 4).

Goffman goes on to tell us that normals—today, the terms, *mainstream* or *majority*, are more likely to be used-- view a person with a tribal stigma as being

> not quite human and …on this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. We construct a stigma-theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity based on other differences, such as those of social class…Further, we may expose his defensive response to his situation as a direct expression of his defect, and then see both defect and response as just retribution for something he or his parents or his tribe did, and hence a justification of the way we treat him (Goffman, 1963: 6).

Operating in a time when new negotiated identity for black middle- and upper-level hospitality managers was being requested on a larger scale than ever before due to an expanding black customer mix in the hospitality industry, the NABHP perceived the trend to be a pivotal strategic opportunity and strength in their environment. The result was the enactment of an industrial strategy closely aligned to all black labor and civil rights movements, demonstrating how the external adaptation of the NABHP to its environment linked to the common ground of a national umbrella where the founders, officers, and members of the NABHP understood that

> the negotiated order on any given day could be conceived of as the sum total of the organization's rules and policies, along with whatever agreements, understandings, pacts, contracts, and other working arrangements currently obtained. These include agreements at every level of organization, of every clique and coalition, and include covert as well as overt agreements (Strauss, 1964: 5).

The basic self-contradiction of the stigmatized person (or organization, depending on one's level of analysis) is that while the stigmatized entity defines himself as being no different from anyone else, he is conscious that at the same time others around him are viewing him as someone set apart. At that point, Goffman posits, "the stigmatized entity will respond by making every effort to find a way out of the dilemmatic situation" (Goffman, 1963: 109). In an essay entitled, *Professional Presentations*, Goffman explains that other stigmatized professionals will "help out—sometimes in the guise of telling their life story or how they handled a difficult situation" (Goffman, 1963: 109).

This help is coded and the codes that are presented to the stigmatized individual, whether explicitly or implicitly tend to cover certain standard matters. A desirable pattern of revealing and concealing is suggested. (For example, in the case of the ex-mental patient it is sometimes recommended that he properly conceal his stigma from mere acquaintances but feel secure enough in his sanity, and believe enough in the medical, not moral, nature of his past failings, to reveal himself to his spouse, his close friends, and his employer.)

Other standard matters are: formulae for dealing with ticklish situations; the support he should give to his own; the type of fraternalization with normals that should be maintained; the kinds of prejudice against his own kind that he should blink at and the kinds he should openly attack; the extent to which he should present himself as a person as normal as anyone else, and the extent to which he should encourage his receiving slightly different treatment; the facts about his own kind he should take pride in; the "facing up to" his own differentness that he should engage in (Goffman, 1963: 109).

Research Method and Design

Interviewees

Philosophically, an interpretive paradigm guided this study. The specific methods employed include the use of contextual analysis working with the primary data sources of in-depth interviews, collected from 1993-1996, and field records that are corroborated with historical publications from newspapers and industry sources dating all through the life cycle of the NABHP. Triangulation was achieved because the field records corroborated the existence of the founder chapter locations as well as the individual members who often appeared in published regional newspapers and industry magazines of the time such as the Black Convention and Black Traveler, providing rich stories about the economic and political circumstances surrounding their chapter's geographic locations during the NABHP's life cycle. Sets of both chapter-level and national-level meeting notes were included in the secondary field records.

Thirty-seven interviews with NABHP members were collected and used as the primary sources for the study. Thirty-one of the interviews were conducted in person and were tape-recorded; six interviews were conducted by telephone with founding chapter leaders in locations I did not visit. Of the recorded interviews: one took place in Manhattan; one in Newark, NJ; seven in Orlando, Florida; eight in Tampa Bay, Florida; and fifteen in Chicago, Illinois. Inclusive in this sample were the voluntary leaders who composed the national and local boards of directors in Orlando, Florida; Tampa Bay, Florida; and Chicago, Illinois. I also interviewed the founder of the organization who was living in Newark, New Jersey, as well as non-members or critics of the association, whenever possible, to give balance to my evolving inquiry. The six phone interviews were with affiliate chapter leaders in Florida in the cities of Jacksonville, Fort Meyers, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami; and in California in the cities of Los Angeles and San Diego.

All interviews took place from 1993-1999 and they were used to tell the chronological story of the association located in very different parts of the United States as well as data for a dramaturgical analysis. The interviews, on the average, were about two hours in recorded time. I always asked the respondents for permission to telephone them after the interviews were transcribed for the purpose of asking follow-up questions or receiving additional clarification. I conducted more than one interview with some interviewees over years. I found that everyone was willing to talk at great length and that this was more likely to be the case if I did not meet with respondents in their offices, where the tendency to be interrupted or to more carefully watch the clock was greatest. Later, I employed secretaries to word-process the taped interviews, but I also spent many hours proofreading and correcting the final versions of each transcript, and months piecing together the oral history narrative that tells the history of the NABHP from the vantage point of voluntary leaders working in different geographic locations. The collection of field records occurred before, during, and after the interviews ended. This sample is powerful in that each respondent occupied interesting dual roles. Not only were they representative of the most active NABHP chapter leaders, but they were also representative of black hospitality managers, who with few exceptions possessed an average of eight or more years of industry

experience and occupied positions in various hospitality and tourism organizations that were representative of key level positions such as hotel regional directors (2), hotel general managers (2), hotel division directors (Rooms, Housekeeping, and Purchasing) (2), HRM director (1), HRM assistant director (1), a convention and tourism bureau president (1), a convention and tourism bureau vice president (1), convention and tourism bureau meeting planners/salespersons (4), hotel sales and marketing executives (4) , hospitality and tourism entrepreneurs (4), a public relations manager (1), association meeting planners (4), an airlines regional director (1), airlines manager (1), a corporate recruitment specialist (1), an expedition management consultant (1), an assistant auditorium manager (1), an HRIT instructor (1) and professors (2). Each respondent, except for five, was the only black or African American in his or her organization at their level. In terms of gender, 23 respondents were male; 14 were female. Overall, the respondents comprised an experienced and elite sample.

Dramaturgical Findings

Front Stage: National NABHP

Incorporation, identification of members, creation of by-laws, and the construction of a loosely coupled national-local chapter linkage within and across chapters imbued national leadership movements with the formal organizational elements of unity, focus, and legitimacy. This allowed leaders to promote their issues among a receptive, growing membership base. This also allowed for an NABHP presence at hospitality and tourism industry conferences and national shows, and in industry publications. Such a show of front-stage, impression management was useful for various mediums of publicity, the introduction of leadership, the movements of leaders, and subsequent localized urban chapter presences linked on a recognized national level. This attracted resources, growing industry familiarity, and acceptance among a heterogeneous base of middle-level black hospitality and tourism managers who then used the *performance* of unity to build a modest pipeline for the NABHP. All of this, in turn, led to the formation of new charter chapters and the advancement of the charter's most active voluntary leaders into new career positions due to the resultant networking that ensued.

Key in all of this was the psychological acceptance of the NABHP platform on the part of the industry. Implicit in that was the need for the industry to perceive a reason to need the NABHP, and that as the NABHP leaders knew had to be tied into the industry perceiving that a profit could be made by doing business with the NABHP. This is why the Miami boycott was a virtual stroke of good fortune for the NABHP, and why they were careful to cultivate good relationships with the leaders of the boycott. The NABHP forged natural alliances with the many black organizations responsible for the boycott as well as the lawyer-organizer of the boycott, Harold Smith who was employed by the Dade County Black Lawyers Association in Florida. The organizations involved included the American Civil Liberties Union, National Association of Black Social Workers, National Bar Association, National Sickle Cell Foundation, National Foundation of Economic Opportunity Organizations, Association of Black Foundation Executives, National Medical Association, National Forum for Black Public Administrators, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees, The National Conference of Black Mayors, and the National Association of Black Journalists.

At the national level, the NABHP sought to create the highest caliber of professional black manager to represent to the industry. These men and women were, inevitably, those who had been stalled in middle management positions who, through participation in the NABHP-Industry relationship desired upward mobility into more elite managerial positions. Imaging and social positioning as professionals were extremely important because the leaders knew that they were managing and attempting to transform a stigma, which had defeated efforts in the past. Leadership had to pay careful attention to impression management in order to negotiate a post-affirmative black identity that was viewed as being equal in all professional qualities and traits to their non-black counterparts. They created the Cornerstone Commitment.

The Cornerstone Commitment: Core Identity Codes

Behavioral and conduct codes were a mainstay of the NABHP culture. Being black was a constant and could not be altered, but "being a black professional" was carefully defined at every step as an ongoing manifest example of how the NABHP national board helped its membership to create front stage performances desirable by the hospitality and tourism industry.Early on, when I first interviewed the president of the NABHP on the college campus where he worked, he had explained to me the research results of a survey he conducted for his undergraduate students receiving degrees in the field of hospitality management. The conclusions of the survey were framed on a plaque in his office and when I asked about how the school managed such a high retention rate among its graduates, he referred my gaze to the plaque:

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Me: What are those things you think you are doing right?

President: Right behind you on the wall is our graduate success profile. We try to make sure that everybody who graduates will reflect hospitality attitude, marketing mindedness, quantitative competence, relevant work experience, and international sensitivity. The industry has told us that if we graduate people that reflect that successful profile, then they will be hired and they will be prepared for long-range career success. That is what we are about.

The NABHP Cornerstone Commitment evolved as a carefully planned set of professional codes that manifested what leadership viewed as tangible way to unite two audiences it sought to cultivate. The cornerstone embodies how the NABHP believes it is best for black hospitality professionals to be viewed by their industry. At the same time, the cornerstone codes serve as a banner of help and assistance for isolated black middle-level managers, stalled in their careers, who need a viable face or visible platform upon which to stand in order to be acknowledged. The cornerstone was both a way to solicit industry interest and approval by mirroring those leadership traits industry said it wanted in managers and graduates, and it was the message to be used to recruit targeted potential members willing to adopt or grow to adopt the professionally sanctioned leadership traits required of them by the NABHP in the staging areas of education, professional imaging, dedicated association support of youth education, political action, and economic development.

Professional Certification

Because many of the middle-level managers did not have degrees in the field of hospitality, the NABHP was committed to fostering professional certification across the entire spectrum of hospitality managerial careers. In a post-affirmative age, the NABHP never stopped preaching the vital importance of a college education and the ascertainment of professional certification programs that would signal, along with five or more substantive years of middle-management industry work experience, that this black man or woman was fully qualified for the upper-level management promotion.

The organization believes immediate aggressive widespread Black professional acquisition of industry credentials appropriate to their specialty will send a loud message to the wider hospitality industry that Black Americans are more than ready to step up to the plate, assert their pedigree, and take their rightful place among the industry's leadership. The idea is not to wait until the bar of competition and external forces that may or may not have hidden exclusionary agendas raise qualification. Thus, local and state units have sponsored certification awareness seminars and organized study groups (Boger, 1995a).

The admonition "to not wait until the bar of competition and external forces that may or may not have hidden exclusionary agendas" refers, historically, to blacks being denied qualifications and then being told that the reason they were denied was because they lacked the prerequisite qualifications. This occurred in the civil rights movements when blacks protested for the right to vote while living under southern "separate and unequal" segregated school systems. The response of black civil rights leaders was the establishment of black "citizenship schools" taught by black community members. Here, blacks were taught how to read and write well enough to pass the voting tests so that they could cast their ballots in local political elections. The schools were held in community centers such as beauty parlors and barbershops. This is also an example of the "No Blacks Have Applied" that white managers were telling men like Mikoel Turner, the founder of the NABHP, in the decade of the 1980's when, in fact, Mikoel had sent qualified black candidates to interview with his manager, and the black candidate would tell Mikoel that the manager said he was "overqualified."

Professional Courtesy.

The NABHP is committed to creatively developing ways and means of fostering the highest level of professional courtesy among NANHP colleagues as a technique for enhancing the stature and image of local, state, and national hospitality professionals. While this ideological thrust involves a code of conduct with respect to extension of VIP industry perks to include deep discounts, complimentary and/or upgrade services for members, the real purpose is to demonstrate to those inside and outside of the industry that the professional hospitality lifestyle can be highly rewarding and fosters glamorous careers of choice for Black Americans prepared to make an effort to reach for, and grasp the brass ring beyond the glass ceiling (Boger, 1995a).

This refers to "the red carpet treatment" (B) black hospitality managers perceived themselves as being routinely denied compared to their white counterparts when they visited some hospitality organizations. Earlier, it was explained, in part:

…If one of us goes into a hotel or a restaurant, or whatever, we will expect the red carpet to be rolled out if it is within the person's power to roll it out, and if it is within the realm of the business that is being done, so to speak.

What I'm saying is don't go crazy just because the person is NABHP but, historically, we have not received the red carpet treatment--I don't know why--even though we deserved it but a lot of our people have not been in the position to roll out the red carpet for anybody because we haven't had those positions of power to start with.

…So instead of seeing that we are not going to get all that is due to us, we can begin to create the impression that "Gee, this is an NABHP person first class professional receiving first class service from their peers or whatever." Those of us who have been in the industry realize that kind of thing ripples all through the hotel. So we are interested in raising images.

Historically, you know, the black VIPs are treated differently from non-black VIPs and the hotel workers know it. And they say, "Oh well yeah they're putting the Don Perignon on there, but last week when this guy came in, they were putting the California EJ Special Whatever, and they pick up on the subtle things, so the idea is to again not go to the other extreme but just be absolutely sure that our people, our members, get everything they are supposed to get. And, you know, if there are extra things which you have the discretion, then you can do that, too. (B)

Here is a rich example of a back stage sentiment existing in comparison to the more refined front stage expression. However, there is more than meets the eye to all of this. First, to some extent, the idea of "professional courtesy" is being presented as a well-rounded etiquette rule with clear behavior codes for how black should treat each other in professional settings, elevated to a technique for impression management.

Youth Education

The NABHP is committed to identifying ways and means of bringing the positive reality of hospitality careers and professionalism to Black high school and college youth. Information and encouragement is provided for these individuals to seek hospitality educational advancement in universities, colleges, and technical schools. NABHP members actively seek to generate scholarship funds within their companies as well as internships and permanent placements (Boger, 1995a).

Every NABHP chapter that I personally observed was very involved with some facet of youth mentoring in their area. Such involvement ran the gamut of staging Career Days, adopting whole classes of elementary school children, public speaking in schools and as the next example illustrates, volunteering several hours a week as a Junior Achievement classroom facilitator in Orlando, Florida. Herman Ross who, at the time, was the Director of the Rooms Department at the Lake Buena Vista hotel in Orlando, Florida, and president of the Orlando NABHP chapter shares his experience as a Junior Achievement volunteer:

Political Action

The NABHP is committed to identifying the critical political organizations, issues, and individuals that influence Black hospitality professionals on the local, state, national, and international levels. Appropriate linkages are continually sought with supportive organizations. The degree of activism is the prerogative of the local unit. Individual or committee leadership brings recommendations to their general membership on action required to support organizations, issues, and individuals that advance NABHP welfare and discourage or otherwise politically neutralize those who do not (Boger, 1995a).

In the nineties, political action on the part of the NABHP assumed many national and local level forms including assisting and networking with the Miami Boycott. Below is one more modest example involving a project that the Chicago NABHP worked on with the Sheraton Hotel-Conference Center, located in the downtown area. The hotel had not hired any black manager and received negative criticism from its corporate headquarters because black convention groups were inquiring, but when they learned that the hotel did not have a diverse managerial staff, they cancelled plans to stay at the property. The hotel contacted the Chicago NABHP and chapter officers worked with the hotel to search for potential middle and upper-level black managers as well as engage in other community projects of a similar nature.

Economic Development

> The NABHP is committed to fostering Black professional acquisition of capital assets and equity positions in hospitality business ventures of all types. This philosophy recognizes that true ability to make a tangible enduring difference in American business is defined by ownership.

> Thus, hospitality image enhancement by NABHP must necessarily embrace entrepreneurship. NABHP local and state organizations nationwide are supporting Black businesses by holding some meetings in their facilities and contracting for catering and other supplier services. Investment groups are forming to seek and explore independent or franchise opportunities.

> In summary, the NABHP is poised to enhance its status as a major player among hospitality professional associations as it moves into the second decade of existence. In this era of celebrating diversity, the NABHP presents an excellent vehicle for "getting our own house in order" as a healthy corollary in building bridges to the wider hospitality professional community (Boger, 1995a).

Back Stage: National Leadership Meetings

Quarterly Leadership Caucus and Area Development Meetings were held in places such as Florida, North Carolina, and in any primary or secondary city where the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners held its bi-annual conference such as Tampa, Florida, and Chicago, Illinois. The national board consisted of five members whose official capacity divided into the functional roles of corporate officers. In addition, the designated chairperson of each chapter attended both national meetings. Agendas were planned around both the front and back stage needs of the organization, but educational workshops and guest speakers known to either the national black hospitality business or political community were usually present, too. Herman Caine, the CEO of Godfather's Pizza, and Andrew Young, the mayor of Atlanta as well as prominent player in the King's civil right activities, were both speakers on different occasions. In the back stage area of the national NABHP, issues of tremendous interest to the black leaders could surface that were best thought to be less marketable to the mainstream industry. Such issues usually fell into two categories: black entrepreneurial pursuit of property (e.g., NABHP ownership of property upon which to build a black owned hotel in Florida) and issues of institutional racism. No one watched the numbers more closely: counting how many black managers was being promoted, where, and in what positions. Conversely, which corporations were not hiring blacks and why was of larger concern and interest. Remedies were taken to fit individual problematic situations as they occurred.

Within Chapters

Gradually, within the lateral, loosely coupled national and chapter-based organizational structural, the Cornerstone Commitment blueprint will, it is hoped by national, translate within and across chapters into the chapter-level board of directors' action leadership committee responsibilities to be enacted in some abridged version where chapters form. Individual chapters were charged with the task of figuring out how to operationalize the bylaws, the organizational structure set forth by national, and the cornerstone commitment, but it was tacitly understood that each chapter would contend with its own set of unique interpretations for enacting front and back stage platforms, forged by both varied geographic locations in the nation and the type of hospitality and tourism hubs to be found in each specific area. It was implied by national to the chapter leaders that with respect to their regional needs, their organizing efforts would be constructed and authored to suit individual chapter needs.

Throughout the life cycle of the NABHP, the structure of the board of directors at both the local and national level is arranged in a self-selected manner and operates as the circle of power for the association, or attempts to do so to the best of its ability amidst serious constraints, usually ones involving financial resources that curtail the hiring of a paid professional management association assistance of any kind. What also emerges during this time is that certain leaders are appearing in multiple roles and functions on local, state, and national boards in what amounts to an elite cadre of voices who, in turn, shape policy for this organization.

This is, on the surface, a result of having only a small number of active and interested leaders, and not an attempt at oligarchy. A perhaps less obvious result of this situation is the state of being new as an association. In fact, although it verges on political incorrectness, most mainstream and black association leaders admit that only a very narrow kind of democracy usually works in these types of associations. Members, for the most part, are busy professionals who prefer to be *represented* by a cadre, usually elected, that accepts it as their task to do the major portion of the front stage work.

The NABHP boards, during my field research were not at the point of being elected, but were appointed volunteers, who served largely out of a devotion to the cause as well as for legitimate self-serving career interests. This was not only accepted behavior, but it was expected behavior by all. After all, the primary core mission of the NABHP was to build the pipeline, however and wherever opportunities arose. The modus operandi in terms of both espoused-values and values-in-use is representational management as much as is possible in the early stages of organizational growth. The action committees, defined by individual chapters according to the association bylaws, tended to vary as part of an intentional loosely coupled design. Although the priority of the codes put forth in the Commitment have been reordered by the chapter leaders, there is an attempt to operationalize the national cultural blueprint at the chapter level with correspondence to both the national directives and the local chapter's perceived needs as the following example, defined by the Orlando, Florida, chapter, illustrates (See Addendum A):

In this presentation of the professional self/entity embodied by the above chapter-level identity codes, several types of role performances are being enacted within the chapter membership base. First, the linkage between national and one of its ten current chapters is becoming established in an isomorphic manner that suited the chapter members to their own area and environmental needs. The members are both identifying with the national culture and imbuing themselves with agency. Second, the action committee functions are not specifically "black" in any way and could be found in the chapter of any professional voluntary association in any industry, which was engaged in formulating an industry network designed to display its membership for the reason of promoting their upward career mobility (e.g., the members are shifting from a normative "black" social and occupational identity into the necessary utilitarian mode of "professionals"). Third, the ordering of the committees has altered from the national order, reflecting the priority of the need communicated, member to member, albeit in a stigmatized staging area, but with the articulated awareness of saying publicly, "This is who we are, and this is what we need to be successful in reaching our goals."

Political and economic needs are viewed by members as being the most difficult hurdles facing their goals for acceptance in a situation where they may still be viewed as being stigmatized or apart by others, but they are working towards no longer viewing themselves as victims so much as voluntaristic strategic agents who are learning that they can effect the environment just as it effects them. The chapters, in order to be effective strategic weapons in a turbulent environment needed to establish both authorial and authentic agency as a small to medium sized group capable of both reading and responding to their environment. The Orlando NABHP board of directors, for example, exhibit their own internal pluralism, to be sure, but they also exhibit the quality of a professional association capable of both espousing and articulating their core primary mission with the national board and founders of the organization, as well as to the hospitality and tourism industry in which they seek admission and upward mobility in a most delicate strategic balance characteristic of true lateral flexible organizations.

> The central feature of the stigmatized individual's situation in life can now be stated…Although the codes or lines presented to those with a particular stigma will differ among themselves, there are certain arguments, however contradictory, that are very generally agreed on. The stigmatized person (*or organization,--my addition*) is almost always warned against attempting to pass completely…he is generally warned against fully accepting as his own the negative attitudes of others towards him.

> He is likely to be warned against "minstrelization,"whereby the stigmatized person ingratiatingly acts out before normals the full dance of bad qualities imputed to his kind, thereby consolidating a life situation into a clownish role…and contrariwise, he is usually warned against "normification" or "deminstrelization"; he is encouraged to have distaste for those of his fellows who, without actually making a secret of their stigma, engage in careful covering, being very careful to show that in spite of appearances they are very sane, very generous, very sober, very masculine, very capable of hard physical labor and taxing sports, in short, that they are gentlemen deviants, nice persons like ourselves in spite of the reputation of their kind (Goffman, 1963: 111).

What is emerging out of the front stage development is that the agreed upon "professional codes of conduct" (e.g., the Cornerstone Commitment actualized at the within chapter-level, in the above example as well as countless examples found throughout Part II, provide the most active NABHP members, officers, and founders with "a platform and a politics, and not merely with instruction as to how to treat others, but with recipes for an appropriate attitude regarding the self" and the chapter entity (Goffman, 1963: 111; Mead, 1934, 1938). "To fail to adhere to the code is to be a self-deluded, misguided person; to succeed is to both real and worthy, two spiritual qualities that combine to produce what is called *authenticity*" (1963: 111).

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In summary, the chapter entity as well as the members within have begun to master the art of becoming "situation conscious" (Goffman, 1963: 111; Mead, 1934, 1938), and while the majority of Floridian normals are still perceived by the NABHP members to be institutional racists, and are thus still "within the situation…this extension of consciousness on the part of the stigmatized person is reinforced, as earlier suggested, by his special aliveness to the contingencies of acceptance and disclosure, contingencies to which normals will be less alive' (Goffman, 1963: 111; Mead, 1934, 1938). This network, lateral in formation, is largely the result of the ability of the individual chapters to not only be loosely coupled with both National and every other chapter location, but to be mirror-images of national, in a sense which alleviates the need for national general management. This network maintains itself to this day, and thanks to the founders and leaders of the NABHP in 1984, --as well as the work of the Coalition--the black tourism and hospitality professional network is now in its third generation. The creation of the list was the reason the NABHP originally came into existence. It was their raison d'etre.

Issues of lateral support building in the case of the NABHP are being defined here to mean the voluntary creation of merged utilitarian and emergent social support systems, in other words: networks organized as professional voluntary organizations. Lateral support systems and resultant voluntary organizational structures are the result of conscious choices professional individuals make for a wide variety of reasons about which people to reveal themselves to and to avoid, or at best, remain neutral with (Ibarra, 1993,1996) in order to promote career advancement. Such networks possess the identity of being flexible lateral support networks and organizations, and in the case of the NABHP display the following characteristics and functions: They are essentially social- and occupational-communication networks based upon such loosely coupled interactions as those resulting from cultural companionship and ethnic identity, and as such consist of a myriad of acts related to the following: job related (or pure task-centered) help, job contacts, image preening, professional development, mentoring, and informal advice giving and receiving. Additionally, they exist across varied individual organizational sites in clusters of organizations bound by an industry identity because they are created to counter balance the numerical isolation, which black and African American men and women in the NABHP experienced in their industry-operating environment as reported in this fieldwork.

Lateral Flexible Organizations

All lateral organizations share one element: they are mechanisms for decentralizing general management decisions (Galbraith, 1993: 6). The decentralization function is accomplished by "recreating the organization in microcosm for the issue at hand" (p. 6). This entails creating sub-units that are mirror images of the primary organization (e.g., how the national board of the NABHP created self-managed charter chapters in its early growth period). "The simplest lateral organization is the informal voluntary organization, formed at the initiation of those comprising it…managers perceive a situation and spontaneously communicate among themselves to resolve the issue…top management may be informed but is otherwise not directly involved" (p. 6).The following additional characteristics may be true of informal lateral voluntary organizations: " it is formed at the initiation of those who comprise the linkage or network (e.g., the network may be purely informational which is why so many IT firms select from a wide array of lateral flexible organizational design options); top management may be informed but otherwise not directly involved; the collective action is informal, yet it is organized; the organization's scope will depend on the lateral coordination requirements of the strategy" (Galbraith, 1993: 37).

Functionally, "this system can handle a large volume of interdepartmental activity, much of which may be spontaneous. Small groups consisting of two of more organizational members may confront and resolve issues. Unplanned decentralization is expected, and those closest to any particular which arises may handle matters expediently,--or opt to communicate with other people or units in the organization" (Galbraith, 1993: 45). "The informal organization is well known and documented, but what is new are the attempts to facilitate its formation in pursuit of organizational goals" (Galbraith, 1993: 44). A palette of potential add on characteristics are available for the lateral organizational design. The add-ons to the system are in the form of actions that organizational members could adopt to "increase the probability that people in different departments will naturally and voluntarily, cooperate, and take collective action on an ongoing basis. The result will be a decentralization of cross-departmental or general manager issues" (Galbraith, 1993: 45).

If an informal voluntary organization wishes to become more formalized for "the purpose of increasing the probability that *important* relationships are created and used, additional types of relationships and networks can be created through interdepartmental rotation, co-location, information technology, and inter-or intra-departmental events.

Lastly, the whole creation of the lateral flexible organizational structure involves the goal of "building organizational capability…a concept…implied in the listing of pros and cons for choosing either a functional or a product organizational structure. However, the identification of organization as a capability to be built and sustained is new. And the use of an organizational capability as a competitive tool is also new…as competitive advantage" (Galbraith, 1993: 1). We are now coming to see that the lateral flexible organization, especially when used as voluntary organization of great versatility for populations afflicted by glass ceilings can be a true instrument of strategic change and social-industrial evolution for peer-linked, social, and occupational networks.

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Appendices

National Association of Black Hospitality Professionals
Greater Orlando, Florida Chapter
Action Committee Responsibilities

Author's note: [1] These definitions of the action committees were found in notes that Herman Ross, the chapter president, gave to me. The notes were undated, but most likely were the result of many first year meetings held by the Orlando NABHP leaders.

Political Action:

(A) To determine the critical political organizations, issues and individuals that impact black hospitality professionalism, in the greater Orlando area.

(B) To the extent that these organizations, issues and individuals network to impact on the state, national and international levels, the committee will establish appropriate linkages with other NABHP and related supportive organizations.

(C) Establish an information flow system that will automatically keep the chapter up to date on political organizations, issues, and individuals of concern.

(D) Bring recommendations to the Board of Directors and General Membership on action required to support organizations, issues, and individuals that advance NABHP welfare and discourage or otherwise neutralize those who do not.

Youth Education:

(A) To identify ways and means to bring the positive reality of hospitality careers and professionalism to black high school and college youth in the Greater Orlando area.

(B) To provide information and encouragement for these youth to seek hospitality educational advancement in area universities, colleges, and technical schools.

(C) To create, energize, and monitor permanent programs between the Greater Orlando NABHP Chapter and local area Historically or Predominantly Black Colleges and Universities (HPBCU's).

(D) To create a local HPBCU hospitality student support fund and set guidelines for maximum positive impact.

Funding:

(A) To react to the collective recommendations of all other committees and determine ways and means of monetizing the specific annual objectives, operations, and special projects approved by the Board of Directors.

(B) Specific sources would include membership dues, conferences, professional development certification workshops, publications, celebrity golf tournaments, film festivals, as well as foundation and corporate contributions above and beyond their membership dues.

(C) The output from this committee would be an annual budget, with specific inflows, timed to meet the cash outflow needs of projected approved activities.

(D) To recommend, implement and monitor a chapter endowment fund, to assure long-term stability and eventual pursuit of capital ventures.

Association Operations:

(A) To provide a creative forum for evolution of a structure to manage the day-to-day operations of the association. These include the critical functions of membership growth and record keeping, public relations, development of archives, program planning, and accompanying logistics.

(B) To guide the process of Greater Orlando NABHP chapter constitution/by law refinement, as required for state tax exempt incorporation, as well as local functionality.

(C) To monitor Chapter liaison with state and national offices, and other chapters.

Networking:

(A) To provide a forum for the creative development of ways and means of fostering professional contact and communication between members of the association.

(B) Projects might include, establishment of a universal monthly meeting day, computer disc and/or printed membership directory, recommended liaison with affiliated ethnic or industry networks.

(C) Committee also brings recommendations to Board of Directors, concerning social and professional, regular or special events to provide networking environments.

(D) Would collect job opportunity information for the chapter, state, or national newsletter.

Professional Certification:

(A) To be aware of the major categories of hospitality industry professional certification as identified by the national office of NABHP.

B) To establish a data bank of Greater Orlando industry professional, who have obtained the various types of certification?

(C) To identify individuals who are desirous of achieving certification.

(D) To establish resource files, organize educational sessions, and alert NABHP certification candidates as to exam dates, location, and fees.

Professional Courtesy:

(A) To creatively develop ways and means of fostering the highest level of professional courtesy among NABHP colleagues as a technique for enhancing the stature and image of local, state, and national hospitality professionals.

(B) To develop a code of conduct encouraging the extension of deep discounts, complimentary and/or upgrade services, to NABHP members, whenever possible.

(C) To document professional courtesy benefits of similar industry professional organizations and make recommendations to support (B) above.

(D) Explore the possibility of automatically providing Hospitality Industry Association (HIA) card memberships as a benefit of Greater Orlando NABHP Chapter Membership.