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Aesthetic Rationality in Organizations: Toward Developing a Sensitivity for Sustainability

This paper explains the empirically observed co-existence and interaction of aesthetic experience and moral value systems of decision makers in organizations. For this purpose we develop the concept of “aesthetic rationality” which is described as a type of rationality that serves to encourage sustainable behavior in organizations, and to extend the commonly held, “instrumentally rational” view of organizations. We show that organizations regularly exhibit not only an instrumental rationality, but also an “aesthetic rationality” which is manifested in their products, processes and practices. We describe aesthetics, its underlying moral values, and its evolutionary roots as a basis for defining the concept of aesthetic rationality. We examine its links with human resources, organizational design, and other organizational elements. We examine these implications, identify how an aesthetic-driven ethic provides a potential for sustainable behaviour in organizations, and suggest new directions for organizational research.

Keywords:

aesthetics; organizational change; rationality; sustainability; values

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Within applied behavioral science fields, decision-making is most often framed in terms of rationality, whereby the processes used to solve problems in organizations are rooted in practical ends/means evaluations (Mele, 2010). Choices are normally based on the short-term instrumental purposes for the managers being evaluated on such terms. However, it has become increasingly apparent that for organizations to survive managers must pay attention not only to financial performance in the short term, but also be mindful of long-term social, economic, and environmental needs that affect future performance. To achieve long-term viability, organizations must learn how to adapt to high velocity business environments and the changing natural environment. Organizations mired in the classical economics paradigm conduct their operations in alignment with short-term rational assumptions of human beings. That managers are instrumentally rational is well established in the organizational literature (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992; Elbanna & Child, 2007; Townley, 2002).

While governments and organizations have been touting the importance of sustainability for decades, real social change toward sustainability remains sluggish (Sachs, 2005). Current ways of looking at and thinking about organizations does not allow much room for serious consideration of sustainability initiatives. The adjustment of policies and regulations to present day challenges is not enough to address sustainability issues (Rasmussen, 2001). Rather, it may be useful to change the way we think about our place in the ecological environment. What we are proposing in this present paper is nothing short of gamma change, which “involves a redefinition or reconceptualization of some domain” (Woodman, 2014: 468). For sustainability to be more easily incorporated into the management mindset, the whole conception or frame of sustainability’s place in organizational functionality must be redefined.

Perhaps the lack of emotional attachment to the natural environment partly explains the propensity to which corporate activities currently dominate and deteriorate nature in lieu of seeking harmony. It seems that deeper cognitive, value-laden, and emotional engagement between businesses, communities and nature is necessary. “Whether business will...meaningfully advance the sustainability agenda necessarily depends on the specific actions corporations engage in, and whether those actions preserve or degrade environmental, social and economic integrity. It is therefore important to better understand the factors that contribute...” to understand what conditions businesses will act toward sustainability (Marcus, MacDonald, & Sulsky, 2015: 459). Values and norms must come into play when striving for strategic collective action toward sustainability (Woodman, 2014).

Recent research underlines that apparently one of the greatest obstacles to long-term triple-bottom line thinking in organizations is the limited concept of rationality that organizations have inherited (Austin & Devlin, 2003; Savitz & Weber, 2006). While reason and rationality are highly valued qualities in organizational decision-making, they are limited to an “instrumental” rationality—that individuals’ behavior will be causally related to an objective, self-interested outcome. We believe that a fuller

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3 understanding of organizational rationality that embraces a “sensitivity” for the ecological well-being of
4 the planet is essential for transforming existing business models to become more innovative and deploy
5 more progressive business strategies (Cyphert & Saiia, 2003; Darso, 2004; Shrivastava & Statler, 2010).
6 Successful sustainable innovation in business depends on how organizations rationalize and provide
7 intellectual spaces for it to happen (Freeman & Harris, 2009; Nidumolu, Prahalad, & Rangaswami, 2009).
8 Some scholars are convinced that indeed, 21st-century organizations will need to “engage in new, more
9 spontaneous, and more innovative ways of managing” given the dramatic ways in which society is
10 changing (Adler, 2006: 486). Strategic decisions need to be “based on a rationality that convinces
11 stakeholders” (Bouwmeester, 2013: 429). We respond to a call in this journal to find “new ways of
12 knowing” in organizational research (Mirvis, 2014).
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20 Surveys of organizations have shown that despite innovation and sustainable practices being
21 considered highly desirable by CEOs, organizations sorely lack these elements (IBM, 2010; Taylor &
22 LaBarre, 2006; UNEP, 2004). Practices emanating from the industrial era with the dominance of techno-
23 financial logic, use of machinery over artisanal work, preference for large-scale mass consumption, and
24 mass destruction of natural resources now appear unsuited to averting the negative impacts of business
25 enterprises on society. We advocate looking for new ways of thinking that lead to alternatives to business
26 as usual, that respond to emerging economic and ecological crises. This implies the necessity for better
27 understanding of emotional and cognitive triggers to sustainability-oriented innovations. A “paradigmatic
28 value-shift, or global mindset change...is required in order to construct a new ‘politique de civilisation’
29 for sustainability” (Kagan, 2010: 1095). There is evidence that such aspects are important but there is also
30 a lack of knowledge about how they might work to favor the sustainable development of our societies
31 (Shrivastava & Statler, 2010).
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39 One promising avenue for investigating fundamental factors underlying our inability to integrate
40 sustainable practices into organizations is the field of “aesthetics” (Linstead & Hopfl, 2000; Strati, 1992;
41 Taylor 2002). In this paper we investigate this field for practical insights and clarify concepts that may
42 assist managers in building more creative and sustainable organizations. We posit that one of the
43 fundamental reasons underlining the aforementioned creative inabilities of organizations is the lack of
44 appreciation of aesthetic processes in organizations. We argue that promoting creative and sustainable
45 behaviors among managers could be facilitated by enabling a deeper understanding of what we call,
46 “aesthetic rationality”.
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52 Organization theories depict organizations as instrumentally rational entities seeking to optimize
53 their goals of financial performance, technological efficiency, and operational productivity normally over
54 a limited fiscal period (Kallio, Nordberg, & Ahonen, 2007). But in practice this is not always the case.
55 Organizations are complex entities that seek to balance changing and diverse stakeholder needs. “Non-
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3 monetary and non-instrumental incentives, such as leaders' values...counterbalance pure monetary and
4 instrumental orientations" (Miska, Hilbe, & Mayer, 2014: 349). We see that organizational agents are
5 capable of exhibiting aesthetic and emotional behaviors as well (Burrell, 2013; Strati, 1992; Taylor &
6 Hansen, 2005), which is what we explore in this paper.
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10 The purpose of this paper is to introduce the concept of aesthetic rationality, which we believe
11 can be used alongside "instrumental rationality" to give a more comprehensive picture of how rationality
12 operates in organizational settings. Our approach in this paper is at first, descriptive, as we articulate the
13 construct of aesthetic rationality and its organizational manifestations, and examine its relationship to
14 other organizational elements. Then, we demonstrate that the construct also has normative implications
15 because it opens up new possibilities for sustainability through aesthetic decision-making. Our approach
16 taps into humans' innate affect-laden concern for beauty and nature through an appreciation for aesthetics
17 (Dissanayake, 1995; Dutton, 2009). An enhanced sensitivity for aesthetics among organizational members
18 can increase the likelihood of sustainable innovations.
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24 Aesthetics refers to a knowledgeable appreciation of beauty, which encompasses art - as object
25 and performance, and other forms of creative expression. This appreciation is a natural human tendency
26 of "estimating an object or mode of representation by means of a delight..." (Kant, [1790], 1952: 139).
27 Analyses of what is aesthetically pleasing are acknowledged as valid for social and organizational
28 applications. Aesthetic experience is useful for producing knowledge within organizations (Strati, 1992).
29 Recently, "organizational theory has started to include the aesthetic sphere" for addressing instrumental
30 questions regarding organizational leadership, effectiveness and efficiency (Adler, 2009; Taylor &
31 Hansen, 2005: 1211). For example, companies have used nature-based team building programs such as
32 "Outward Bound" and art museum visits and artistic events to inspire employees for design thinking
33 (Harter, Leeman, Norander, Young, & Rawlins, 2008). In some industries where originality and ingenuity
34 are essential (e.g., high fashion, architecture, luxury goods, perfumes, and graphic design), companies use
35 a variety of aesthetic experiences to create the mood and environment for creativity to occur (Hosey,
36 2012). One salient example can be seen with Google. The campus environment they created at their
37 headquarters in Northern California is widely thought of as being conducive to creative thinking for their
38 employees.
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49 We contend that an aesthetic rationality is manifested in many organizational actions and
50 elements and that aesthetics can serve very useful functions in organizations. Furthermore, we will show
51 that aesthetics, rooted in moral values, can motivate individuals to develop a shared ethic. A related
52 contribution is that we explain how an aesthetic concern for sustainability influences organizational
53 behavior. Aesthetic processes and rationality are introduced as factors triggering evolutionarily derived
54 human emotions and naturally developed values, which engage creative impulses and affect the moral
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3 perception of issues. Our perspective integrates critical cognitive and emotional aspects of decision-
4 making.
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7 This paper is structured as follows: To demonstrate the presence of an “aesthetics” mindset in
8 organizations we begin with several real world examples manifesting this consideration of beauty in
9 organizational products, policies and practices. In this section we establish the link to moral values. We
10 then lay out the foundation of instrumental rationality, on which our new concept of aesthetic rationality
11 can be built. Subsequently, we examine the notion of aesthetics and its evolutionary roots, as a basis for
12 understanding the construct of aesthetic rationality. Then, we explore aesthetic rationality as a useful lever
13 to facilitate creative strategies for sustainable behavioral change. We position organizational aesthetic
14 rationality as an interaction between emotion and reason, and explore its links to other organizational
15 elements. Finally, we end the paper with specific implications for research and business practice to
16 generate long-term solutions for sustainability.
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24 **Organizational Manifestations of Aesthetics**

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26 Aesthetics refers to the knowledgeable appreciation of beauty, which encompasses art, as object and
27 performance, and other forms of creative expression. Aesthetics is not new in organizational life. It is
28 implicit in organizational life, but its manifestation may be muted. While aesthetics may not be in the
29 traditional management nomenclature, concerns for beauty have endured. In fact, it could be argued that
30 much of industrial production has not cared about beauty and instead valorised standardized and mass
31 produced products, there has always been a niche for beautiful designs and uniquely crafted products. In
32 recent years concerns for the visual and sensory appeal of organizational products and processes has been
33 acknowledged and has proliferated through “design thinking” and through explicit integration of aesthetic
34 values by engineers, designers and managers (Austin & Devlin, 2003; Darso, 2004). Moral values
35 underlying aesthetics are based on the concepts of beauty and enduring design. (We discuss the moral
36 values associated with aesthetics in the next section.) In a broad sense, design includes architecture,
37 landscaping, workspace arrangements, graphic design, urban design, product design, manufacturing
38 design, process design, and other intentional choices. Design has strategic value in technological
39 innovation and change (Eisenman, 2013). “Long-term value is impossible without sensory appeal,
40 because if design doesn’t inspire, it’s destined to be discarded” (Hosey, 2012: 7). This implies the
41 existence of an underlying moral standard that promotes technological advancement and long-term
42 survival. We discuss this in more depth in the next section. We briefly outline some examples of this one
43 aspect of aesthetics in organizations to provide a context for our rationality model (presented later), and
44 to illustrate the existence of a moral value substrate within aesthetics.
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Over the past two decades, design thinking has advanced significantly and is being adopted in many facets of organizations. Aesthetics has been apparent in and has influenced many consumer products (e.g., fashion clothing, cosmetics, accessories, eyewear, jewelry, perfumes, etc. from companies such as Yves Saint Laurent, Hermes, Prada, Chanel, Hilfiger) and household goods (e.g., crockery, linens, window treatments) that use beauty and sensory qualities as competitive advantage. Its implementation has expanded to consumer electronics products such as, Apple's iPad, iPod and iPhone, and other cell phones that use colourful and transparent designs. Sensorial and textural qualities in product design are even appearing in larger sized equipment such as, coffee makers (Meile, Illy, Kahva, Brunopasso), furniture (Knoll, B & B Italia, Fritz Hansen), kitchen counters (made of Onyx), and even automobiles (Pininfarina, Ferrari, Toyota Prius, and Mercedes Smart Car) (Austin & Devin, 2003; Hosey, 2012). Thus, we are witness to ubiquitous examples of aesthetic design thinking all around us. In this present paper we do not wish to focus on design thinking as our scope is broader and exists at the processual level. Design thinking involves only one aspect of aesthetics that is often operationalized in business organizations.

Aesthetics is also apparent in building architecture and design. Buildings have been subject to grand designs for centuries not only to express beauty, but also status, grandeur, reverence, and power. The designs chosen convey a message about the organizations associated with the buildings themselves. St. Peter's Basilica, built in the late Renaissance period by Bramante, Michelangelo, and Bernini, conveys an intense message about the Catholic Church through the design of its famous dome (Kuhl, 2012). The famous Bruneschelli's Dome in Florence was designed to symbolize the moral values of the Catholic Church (King, 2006). In modern times buildings are being designed to encompass an aesthetic on a regional scale. The Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Gehry in Bilbao, Spain, jump-started the whole regional economy when it moved into the area. Built in 1997, it attracted 9 million visitors over the next decade, involving \$5 billion in economic activity and \$100 million in tax revenues. Eighty percent of people visiting the areas come to see this one site to see the marvel of modern architectural process, but also to experience the aesthetic values Gehry intended. His vision for the structure is meant to inspire creativity and reflection. He wanted visitors to reflect on their place in the world. Here we see aesthetics and design affecting the well-being of all stakeholders of the architectural achievement (Hosey, 2012).

Richard Florida (2008) provides numerous examples of beautiful buildings and infrastructure making neighborhoods and entire cities more attractive. Cities around the world have rejuvenated down-and-out neighborhoods through aesthetic gentrification. Artists are often given free or low cost access to land and buildings. The aesthetic products and lifestyles that they generate over time attract more people, services, and businesses. Why? Because people are naturally attracted to beauty and possess an aesthetic sense (Dutton, 2009). This is something we will discuss in the subsequent section. For instance, the

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3 Echigo-Tsumari Art Fields in Nigaata, Japan and the Fogo Islands in Newfoundland offer examples of
4 aesthetic regional development. In these places, the entire region and its economy have been rejuvenated
5 through deployment of art projects that include building public sculptures, artist studios and residencies,
6 museums, festivals and living arts activities. Aesthetic regional development seems not to be independent
7 from a concern for the natural environment. A city that collaborates with nature using aesthetic values is
8 more likely to survive and thrive than one that exists in spite of its environment (Hosey, 2012). Jane
9 Jacobs advocated this same urban re-design to reconnect residents of cities founded on imperialism.
10 These types of cities should be re-imagined to reflect post-modern visions of time and aesthetic shape for
11 the benefit of their inhabitants (1996). For Jacobs, this involved living within a more self-sufficient and
12 ecologically efficient community that utilized resources economically. We will see values associated with
13 this approach surface in the next section.

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15 On a national scale (i.e., the collaboration between the public and private sectors), the “Keep
16 America Beautiful” program serves aesthetic reason for the community and region too. It was formed in
17 1953 to develop and promote a national cleanliness ethic. Its activities and events include, road side
18 garbage cleanup, recycling, cigarette litter prevention, graffiti prevention, public service advertising about
19 cleanliness, nationwide recycling competitions for K-12 schools, colleges, and universities, and a
20 national planting day for the greening and beautification of communities. Community-centered
21 beautification programs have proliferated at the city and neighborhood levels. Once again, one can derive
22 a certain set of moral values linked to these efforts.

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24 Finally, we point to Burrell’s (2013) recent analysis suggesting that “styles of organizing” have
25 lasting affinity with styles of architecture, design and politico-economic theory. Thus, the entire enterprise
26 of “organizing” is an aesthetically driven task of sharing a “will to form” in an effort to give meaning and
27 order to the world. This position is certainly value-laden. “By creative visualization, through responses to
28 art...through contemplation...people sense values which seem to emanate from ‘beyond’ us” and obligate
29 us to respond (Woods, 2001: 695). Given the rising infusion of aesthetics in organizations, it is fruitful
30 to examine the institutional rationale underlying such manifestations of organizational aesthetics. Before we
31 examine the concept of aesthetics more deeply, a discussion of the moral values associated with aesthetics
32 is a necessary and worthwhile next step.

33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 **Moral Values**

52 Values are “the beliefs held by an individual or group regarding means and ends organizations ‘ought to’
53 or ‘should’ identify in the running of an enterprise” (Enz, 1988: 287). They are important in the
54 determination of strategic choices that agents of an organization make and influence how organizations
55 are designed and run (Amis, Slack, & Hinings, 2002). Major ideological changes in an organization in
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3 terms of structure, vision, or design are accompanied by an emphasis of certain moral values (Ranson,
4 Hinings, Greenwood, & Walsh, 1980). Normative systems help to define goals of the organization and
5 guide how those goals are met (Scott, 1995). In his framework on how to motivate behavior, Locke
6 (1991) considers values as one of the most fundamental drivers of human actions. Without a strong tie to
7 stated values, organizational change is less likely to be successful. So, in encouraging sustainable
8 behaviors (our context), the importance of moral values is paramount. They are “the emotive mechanisms
9 needed to create positive, sustained ethical action in human organizational systems“ (Bagozzi, Sekerka,
10 Hill, & Sguera, 2013: 70). Moral values affect a person’s intentions to act and can be viewed as decision
11 tendencies (Bagozzi et al., 2013). These dispositions incline a person to behave in a certain way when the
12 situation activates them. As guiding principles (Schwartz et al., 2001), moral values can be emotional
13 dispositions toward empathy, caring, and concern for others (Bagozzi et al., 2013). The stronger the moral
14 value is felt emotionally, the more likely the person’s intention to act in a particular manner is affected.
15 Values “can be understood as human emotional responses to sources of importance” (Woods, 2001: 694).
16 This magnifies the fact that moral values are linked to individuals’ natural human drives (Frederick,
17 1995).

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19 Any effective sustainability efforts are based, in part, on individuals’ value sets (Florea, Cheung,
20 & Herndon, 2013). There is much evidence that values are intimately related to aspects of the
21 sustainability area (Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004; Marcus et al., 2015; Shrivastava, 1995). Pro-
22 environmental actions have as their substrate a set of moral values (Thogersen & Olander, 2002). We
23 attempt to identify what those values may be in this section. We begin with a brief discussion of the
24 philosophical arguments for moral values related to sustainability and then take a step back to see where
25 and how these value sets may be derived. Social actions (like sustainability initiatives) “are anchored in
26 the common human properties of the person” (Woods, 2001: 689). Insights from psychology and biology
27 are important for understanding how social actions are initiated (Archer, 1995), and how morality is
28 promoted (Joas, 1996). Individuals indeed have the ability to know what is ethical. This is likely not
29 “...the product alone of the logical analysis and reasoning about values” (Woods, 2001: 693). We
30 contend there are natural drives that aid us in determining proper norms of society.

31 32 *Moral Environmental Values*

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34 As a starting point, sustainability efforts are critically related to the idea of protection of future
35 generations. Thus, there is the assumption of a long-term time horizon for sustainability. Individuals in
36 an organization must *value* the rights and protection of persons in the future. A morally valuable state of
37 the world is one that “promotes, furthers, or sustains” (Moore, 2004: 83). This cannot be accomplished
38 without the promotion of environmental integrity. The primary objective of ecological values is to
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3 maintain the integrity of the environment for future generations. This relates to a sense of responsibility
4 to to society at large, which includes the environment (Molthan-Hill, 2013). They “relate to the desired
5 end state of natural systems integrity and the means of human adaptation to...the natural environment”
6 (Marcus et al., 2015: 463). These values would lead to environmental strength, which is operationalized
7 as a long-term organizational commitment to environmental management systems and renewable
8 processes for operating the business.
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13 Economic, social and environmental pressures in organizations tap into different values sets in
14 individuals, which can lead to varying outcomes. We posit that a balance of the values related to these
15 different domains can lead to sustainability engagement through an aesthetic rationality process. Sagiv
16 and Schwartz (2000) argue for self-transcendence, which emphasizes serving the interests of others and
17 being oriented toward “harmony” with the environment, rather than a mastery over the environment.
18 With this orientation, self-transcendence activates a concern for others, cooperation, and mutuality, but
19 taken to its extreme, can detract from one’s own sense of self-accomplishment (Florea et al., 2013).
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24 At the other end of the spectrum from self-transcendence, we find self-enhancement (Schwartz,
25 1992). This value set motivates persons to operate in the short-term through the controlling of others (and,
26 the environment). The benefits to the individual inclined to this value set are the promotion of personal
27 goals and competitiveness. Certainly, self-enhancement does not necessarily address long-term
28 sustainability concerns. In this present paper, we argue that both value inclinations are naturally derived
29 and linked to survival instincts. At either extreme, these value sets can be detrimental to sustainability
30 efforts, so we seek a balance of the two through an understanding of our natural tendencies. Florea et al.
31 (2013) observe a missing link between values and sustainability which they try to bridge through HRM
32 practices. Our approach is different. We seek to connect moral values and sustainability through aesthetic
33 rationality.
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42 ***Natural Moral Values: The Link to Emotional Drives***

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44 These two aforementioned orientations are not far-fetched, nor are they new to the human condition. For
45 instance, the whole idea of property rights has its origins in the natural, deeply embedded need to
46 cohabitate with each other, but within the boundaries of our natural environment (Greene, 2013). The
47 “rules” may have become socially constructed and taken the form of various symbols to communicate
48 the intended norms, but the underlying motivation to live in a community exists independently of its
49 cultural manifestation and indeed has evolutionary value. In an Aristotelian sense, we are born out of the
50 earth (Eros); we are a part of nature and cannot be separated or distinguished from the natural world. In
51 short, we have an unavoidable connection with nature. We believe this can be reestablished through an
52 aesthetic rationality process. The following discussion on naturally derived value sets is necessary in
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3 order to link the moral values discussed in the previous section with individuals' emotional drives. It is
4 argued that humans' natural values are intimately tied to experienced emotions, which is a critical
5 component in our aesthetic rationality process.
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8 Humans have the « ability to achieve an advanced form of value-sensing in which the focus
9 is...an affectual appreciation of what is important and to be valued beyond the person or between people
10 » (Woods, 2001 : 695). Thus, we are values-intuitive. Where do these intuitions originate ? Underlying
11 these natural emotional drives are evolutionarily formed value clusters derived from natural processes in
12 physics and evolutionary biology (Frederick, 1995; 2012). The first dominant values which drive human
13 behavior are *economizing values*. These values are representative “of natural processes that undergird
14 the struggle for life in general and the particular way in which humans have organized themselves for
15 this struggle” (Frederick, 1999: 207). Both thermodynamic laws and (Darwinian) evolution by natural
16 selection are a consequence of the same process: an influx of external free energy flowing into both
17 inanimate (chemical) and animate (biological) systems (Annala, 2008). They relate to the tendency for
18 an organism (of any kind) to acquire energy from its environment and use it to create something of
19 direct value for itself, leading to growth and survival in the short-term.
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28 But a sustainability orientation underlies the human condition as well. *Ecologizing values* are
29 embedded in the natural substrate of human cognition and emotion and are concerned with the humans'
30 relationship with the ecological environment (Frederick, 1995). They guide, control, and motivate
31 individual's behavior as it pertains to one's relationship with nature. These values are “derived from an
32 ecosystem's interlinked, highly diverse network of organisms living symbiotically with each other”
33 (Derry et al., 1999: 641). Ecologizing values promote the tendency to work collaboratively in mutually
34 trusting relationships (Ostrom, 1990). An ethic based in the principles of ecology can be “self-critically
35 anthropocentric in the sense that its agents take seriously the responsibility to understand what it means to
36 occupy a particular epistemic position relative to those...human and nonhuman others” (Lee, 2006: 23).
37 An aesthetic experience offers the potential for increasing the capacity to empathize with the fate of an
38 ecosystem's constituents. Including aesthetic experience in an ecologically minded moral value compels
39 us to consider deeper questions related to our complex relationship with nature, as well as to consider the
40 long-term worth of environmental protection (24). Thus, ecologizing values which are widely shared
41 among all humans can be directive in shaping pro-environmental behaviors.
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50 *Ecologizing* and *economizing* values co-exist. Where economizing predominates, organisms
51 achieve a temporary respite from entropic trends, thus surviving in the short-term. The tendency for
52 individuals to economize often takes precedence over our less pronounced drives to ecologize. Humans
53 economize through technological innovation. It is natural and unavoidable to human nature to strive to
54 develop and utilize new technologies in order to survive. It became a moral imperative for our ancestors
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3 to innovate new solutions to social and ecological challenges. Thus, in order to survive, humans had
4 (and, have) to navigate the social and environmental world. Technological developments were (and, are)
5 necessary to overcome the threats posed by the ecosystem (including those by other individuals living in
6 the ecosystem). Certainly, technological innovation has been a key to development, but in the recent past
7 it has come to over-dominate all forms of innovation, which has led to one of the major problems of
8 “progress”; it is viewed largely in technological terms (Alvesson, 1984 ; Rosa, 2010).
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13 We propose a theoretical justification of moral values based on the following logic: Economizing
14 values connect self to others (thru economic relations) and ecologizing values connect self to nature
15 (through sustainability). But the formation of the self is increasingly moderated by technological and
16 symbolic processes within culture. Thus, it is important to distinguish between the moral values we find
17 at the root of human nature and the cultural manifestation of these values through an aesthetics process.
18 The rules related to sustainability (our context) are the moral norms that result from the use of aesthetics.
19 We provide tools and strategies for business that will enable a rebalancing of these competing value sets
20 in the Discussion section of this paper.
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26 Next, we describe the natural foundations of aesthetics to illustrate how our innate inclinations for
27 beauty are emotionally tied to foundational moral values linked to sustainability. Through an aesthetic
28 rationality process, sustainable practices can be promoted and spread through an organization.
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31 32 33 **Aesthetics: An Evolutionarily Formed Sense of Beauty**

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35 *“When you make judgments of beauty you do not follow mere fancy, but the workings of a reasoning*
36 *faculty that is inborn in the mind.”*

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38 --Leon Battista Alberti, Renaissance architect

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41 In Western philosophy, Plato is credited with the first study of beauty. He considers it to be one of three
42 primary archetypical virtues, the other two being, truth and goodness. Ancient Greeks studied aesthetics
43 in terms of beauty, but only in relation to creative endeavors like music and poetry. The Greek root of the
44 word means ‘perception’. Pre-Socratic etymological origins of aesthetics are Greek ‘to breathe in
45 suddenly’” (Dobson, 2010: 393). Aesthetics is a field of philosophical inquiry and also considered a part
46 of science. It is not synonymous with “art”, rather, aesthetics and art overlap but are not necessarily
47 linked. Art is one important medium for realizing aesthetics nonetheless. Aesthetic “experiences are
48 crystallized in art forms...that enter into the marketplace...” (Harter et al., 2008: 432). We highlighted
49 some of these earlier in the paper.
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55 Some aspects of a general human value system derive from evolutionary forces (Cosmides,
56 1989), and among these forces we find an inherent appreciation of art (aesthetics) (Dutton, 2009; Fehr &
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3 Falk, 2002; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003). The underlying idea is that aesthetic tendencies and abilities
4 linked to it enhanced the long-term survival of individuals (or groups of individuals) that possessed them,
5 and therefore, have become widespread and dominant through the evolutionary process of natural
6 selection. This perspective acknowledges the role of sociocultural forces (i.e., “nurture”) in the
7 development of aesthetic inclinations. Thus, both “nature” and “nurture” determine properties of human
8 ethics and aesthetics, but the “nurture” component is itself derived, at least in part, from evolutionary
9 forces (Wasioleski & Hayibor, 2009).

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15 Evolutionary psychologists claim that there is a natural instinct for aesthetics. This is the position
16 we adopt here in this paper. Individual *intuition for* aesthetics, the “art instinct” served an evolutionary
17 purpose. Notions of beauty were developed in the Pleistocene Era and became imprinted in humans’
18 minds through natural selection. In his elaboration on the evolutionary foundations of art, Dutton (2009)
19 discusses how aesthetics evolved as an antecedent of human emotions naturally selected to enhance the
20 chances for survival against natural elements. For example, communities that were able to draw useful
21 pictures or tell stories of natural dangers (such as the sabre tooth tiger, or rocky cliffs) were able to warn
22 and protect their kin from those dangers. Similarly, representative pictures, stories and songs about plants
23 and animals increased the chances of obtaining and maintaining food supplies. Art elicits an affective
24 response from individuals and that emotion makes the perceiver of the art (illustrating a potential threat or
25 danger) more likely to behave in a risk-averting manner, which provided a better chance for survival
26 (Dissanayake, 1995).

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34 The art instinct is a universally held trait that is formed naturally, but is moderated by cultural
35 constructions of reality. Thus, its substrate is universal but the manifestation in behavior is culturally
36 variable. “The principal way to make sense of the universality of art is...to understand the arts
37 naturalistically, in terms of the evolved adaptations that both underlie the arts and help constitute them”
38 (221). Despite cultural differences in interpretation, aesthetics expresses basic human perceptions and
39 emotions (Bell, 1914). The universality of art and aesthetic (artistic) behaviors, their spontaneous
40 appearance everywhere across the world and throughout the history of human development, regardless of
41 culture, suggests that they are derived evolutionarily from natural and innate sources. It is clear that the
42 specific functioning of the brain is subject to environmental influences, but that our biological brains also
43 shape culture (Azar, 2010). Art falls into many disparate categories; in general it represents “separate
44 adaptations for valuing particular fitness-enhancing things” (Gaulin & McBurney, 2005: 291).

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52 Aesthetics discipline of study developed much more recently. It is a vehicle for knowing. While it
53 is linked to an understanding of beauty and is concerned with questions surrounding what constitutes
54 beauty, its scope covers other elements of human experience (Dewey, 1927). John Dewey initiated a
55 practical examination of aesthetics in *Art as Experience*, published first in 1934. It served as the impetus
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3 for modern aesthetic theory and remains a powerful influence today on discussions about ethics (Pappas,
4 2008). Dewey showed the common connections between individuals and phenomena, and the relation
5 between people and the external world. He thought that the purpose of art is to create a more “satisfying
6 experience, one that invigorates us and aids our achievement in whatever ends we pursue” (Taylor &
7 Hansen, 2005: 1224). He saw aesthetics as a way of helping persons achieve a unifying ethic emphasizing
8 shared common goals of creativity and global stability by developing and communicating an
9 understanding of humans’ place in the world. This is why moral values are a necessary antecedent. “An
10 aesthetic experience is knowledge producing insofar as it offers a heightened sense of reality pregnant
11 with possibilities, a greater depth of insight, and fuller and richer interactions” (Harter et al., 2008: 426).
12 Aesthetic inquiry is capable of providing more depth in our understanding of organizations as well as
13 offering criteria for assessing organizational members’ decision-making and meaning (Taylor & Hansen,
14 2005: 1226).

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16 In relation to art objects, aesthetics is a way of assessing beauty. Objects of beauty have
17 “purposiveness without purpose” (Kant, 1790/1954). A work of art for Kant was not an answer to a
18 problem, “but an object of contemplation in the theater of the imagination that makes up its own problems
19 and supplies its own solutions” (Dutton, 2009: 229). Kant conceived of art as having a rational structure.
20 This notion of rationality is important for our purposes in this paper. Thus, Kant’s intention was for art to
21 lead to reflection and rational discourse resulting in emotional satisfaction. The rational discourse requires
22 a progressive inquiry from the spectator, who tries to understand and to feel the aesthetically objectivised
23 emotion. The longer the spontaneous inquiry goes on, the more s/he feels the inner rhythm, harmony,
24 symbolism and essence of the art production. The aesthetical process can lead to “new cognitive
25 possibilities and a sensibility that is critical of the divisions exercised by modern thought” (Cazeaux,
26 2000: xiii). In other words, experiences linked to aesthetics can prompt cognitive and emotional reactions.

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28 Such art experiences enable individuals to qualitatively open different space-time relations than do
29 common, ordinary objects. It follows that enlarging the classical instrumental rationality-approach, with
30 what we designate as an aesthetic rationality-approach (discussed in the next section), could qualitatively
31 open new spatiality and temporality in organizations. It can enable broader thinking and engagement
32 among individuals. For instance, if caring about the natural environment or other social and public issues
33 is subjectively experienced by an individual, then rational approaches can be employed to understand
34 these issue. “Aesthetics of sustainability...convey a humility towards the non-human environment” and
35 have the capacity to create patterns that connect individuals (Kagan, 2010: 1100). This ethic of care
36 toward the environment is a cognitively and emotionally driven process, on which we elaborate in our
37 model.

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In the following section, we propose a new definition of aesthetics that provides utility for organizations. For us, aesthetics may be shown as a three-step process involving subjective experience and inter-subjective communication of the experience to reach an ultimate collective understanding. The first step involves the subjective, sensory, and emotional experiences of beauty through creative forms of expression (e.g., art) such as when one views a painting or sees a theatrical performance. This marks the biological response to the encounter with the artistic expression. The second step contains an aspect of rationality and reason through the inter-subjective communication of experience. This may happen, for example, through self-reflection and in conversations with others about the art experience. Of course, this step is heavily influenced by moral values. This makes aesthetics an empirically observable process, rather than an abstract idea (Baumgarten, 1735). We observed this dimension of aesthetics in the organizational examples cited in the section of this paper. Finally, the third step involves the conclusion of the process where collective sense and understanding are elucidated. From a basis of instrumental rationality, we take these elements of aesthetics and the related moral values to form an aesthetic rationality process.

Instrumental to Aesthetic Rationality

It is beyond the scope of this paper to review the vast and long-lasting debate on reason and rationality. As social scientists, it seems worthwhile to us to first reveal at the theoretical foundations of our “rationality” positioning. The notion of rationality, which serves as the basis of our aesthetic rationality concept, refers to the theory of discursive rationality of Habermas (1997). According to him, intersubjective communication represents an important form of rationality. The general link between aesthetics and rationality is not a unique feature of our concept. This link has already been addressed in sociology, first by Max Weber, when he defined “*wertrationale*” (value-oriented) social action (Weber, 1980:12). What is new and represents one of our contributions in this piece is the fact our concept includes an expanded notion of aesthetics, not limited to a unique value dimension nor to a pure emotional dimension. Moreover, our own concept of aesthetics is not linked to a static comprehension of rationality. Rather, aesthetics is analyzed as a process where the rational aspect represents the second step of a complex dynamic progression. Emotions are considered to be implicit in the process, and common, shared values reveal themselves more nascent. Based on this clarification the following section addresses the link of aesthetics and rationality by examining the strength and weakness of instrumental rationality, as this rationality concept remains dominant in economics and management theory.

Instrumental Rationality: Assumptions and Values

Managerial decision-making models assume that humans are rational beings (Keynes, 1924; Rest, 1979). The theory of rational choice assumes that “man” is inherently instrumentally rational, and that humans are purposive and goal-oriented in their decision-making (Misangyi, Weaver, & Elms, 2008). Individuals act on the belief that their actions will lead to a rationally self-interested outcome. Rationality is orientated to fulfilling one’s specific subjective desires. Desires may be driven by base emotions, but the reason for acting is always justified by objective rational considerations of instrumentality of the decision (such as survival or productivity). They possess hierarchically ordered preferences, or “utilities” as they are referred to in economic theory. In business, “instrumental rationality seeks to make business operations profitable” (Mele, 2010: 641). In choosing particular behaviors humans make rational calculations with respect to the utility of alternatives and the predicted costs of each alternative, with the goal of maximizing the overall utility. Applying this rational choice approach to organizational and collective social situations, the theory posits that all organizational decisions are ultimately the result of rational choices made by utility-maximizing individuals. This approach is insufficient for understanding human behavior as it does not account for other dynamic aspects of the human condition (Van de Ven & Lifschitz, 2013).

Instrumental rationality limits manager’s discretion to change current perceived notions of their environment and context. While it is not devoid of moral values, instrumental rationality “reduces moral value to the status of mere desires or affections...” subjugating it to a less useful role in organizations (Moore, 2004: 75). It is rooted in the maximization of value independent of human affect and emotional states in this view. Moral values related to efficiency dominate management thinking and are based on an old set of assumptions (Alvesson, 1984). Instead, a broader conception of instrumental rationality is needed. The rationality construct needs to be made more fine-grained since it influences the quality of decisions that are made (Bouwmeester, 2013). Habermas claimed that moral values could be rationally redeemed through the justification of universal moral principles (1984). We feel that aesthetic values tap into a naturally derived moral sense for the protection of the environment.

Human behavior is also influenced by concerns for beauty and relatedness, and by collective concerns for community. These inherent motivations are guided, in part, by affect. Human behavior in organizations cannot be understood without acknowledging underlying emotional dimensions as possible drivers or moderators of behavior (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Zerbe, 2000; Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Damasio, 1994). Rationality in this sense refers to the “dualistic split between reason and emotion...” where their separation “...instinctively subordinates the former to the latter” (Kallio, Nordberg, & Ahonen, 2007: 42). But, emotion cannot be neatly separated from cognition. “Organizational conditions

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3 and processes are characterized by emotionally deep structures” (Alvesson, 1984: 68). Organizational
4 actors act in accordance with their emotional and group interests.
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7 Contrary to rational choice assumptions, we know that human behavior is not as self-centered
8 and instrumental as economic theory will have us believe (Ostrom, 1990). In traditional primitive
9 societies, people attempted to gain long-term sustainable resource yields from ecosystems on which they
10 depended. They managed their common pool resources such as forests, fisheries, grazing lands, fuel, and
11 water systems in ways to avoid collapse by short-term overuse. Here we see a natural concern for the
12 collective. This can still be seen in societies today (Davis, 2010). Ostrom’s field studies on the
13 management of pastures in Africa and irrigation systems in Nepal show how societies have developed
14 diverse institutional arrangements for managing natural resources. While these approaches may not
15 entirely prevent resource exhaustion, they avoid outright ecosystem collapse. She identified "design
16 principles" of local resource management including, clear boundaries for use, locally adapted rules about
17 resource appropriation, collective and participative decision-making, effective monitoring and
18 accountability, sanctions for abuse, and easy conflict resolution among parties.
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22 Additionally, Taylor and Hansen (2005) argue that instrumental realities need to be extended
23 toward aesthetics; that at present there is too much of an emphasis on the instruments of short-term
24 effectiveness and efficiency in organizations, as defined by the current dominant management paradigm.
25 They claim that “aesthetics for the sake of aesthetics (rather than in the service of instrumental goals)
26 may be hugely important in the long run” (p. 1216) for business thinking. If this traditional management
27 paradigm acknowledges aesthetics at all, it is mainly in an instrumental manner. “Such an approach
28 accepts and compounds a dualism between the rational and the non-rational in which the latter is
29 ‘demoted’ to a secondary interest” (Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson, 2003: 43).
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33 In the following section, we underline non-rational aspects of aesthetics to operate in *duality*
34 with reason. We use this instrumental rationality as a starting point for articulating a complementary
35 rationality based on the experience of beauty. Our approach is based on the assumption that emotions,
36 beliefs, value discourses, and aesthetic judgments are also involved in an individual’s (and,
37 organization’s) calculated, seemingly objective, rational decision-making. Thus, we posit and explain the
38 notion of aesthetic rationality next.
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41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 **Aesthetic Rationality**

52 Aesthetic experiences are, as we expound upon, evolutionarily rooted and by consequence, commonly
53 occur in organizations. They are fundamental to human nature. Thus, the tendency is unavoidable and
54 ubiquitous among members of an organization. Employees cannot simply leave their aesthetic instincts
55 behind at home, or systematically eliminate them from organizational tasks and decisions. We argue that
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3 a certain form of “rationality” is present in aesthetic experiences. Such experiences become meaningful
4 and make sense based on deep and connected sensory, emotional and cognitive processes (Griseri, 1998).
5 The arts help us discover and communicate the world around us involving “immersive experience,
6 openness, introspection...” and reflection (Mirvis, 2014: 379).
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10 In Figure 1, we illustrate this basic process. The dimension of rationality is present in the second
11 step of the aesthetics process at which time the experience is interpreted and communicated through a
12 reasoned discourse within a particular cultural context. “We need rationality to determine which
13 preferences, when satisfied, bring value into the world...” (Moore, 2004: 78). Thus we are not
14 discarding the rationality concept; rather, we are moving to a broader conception that can realize these
15 moral preferences. We believe aesthetic rationality accomplishes this.
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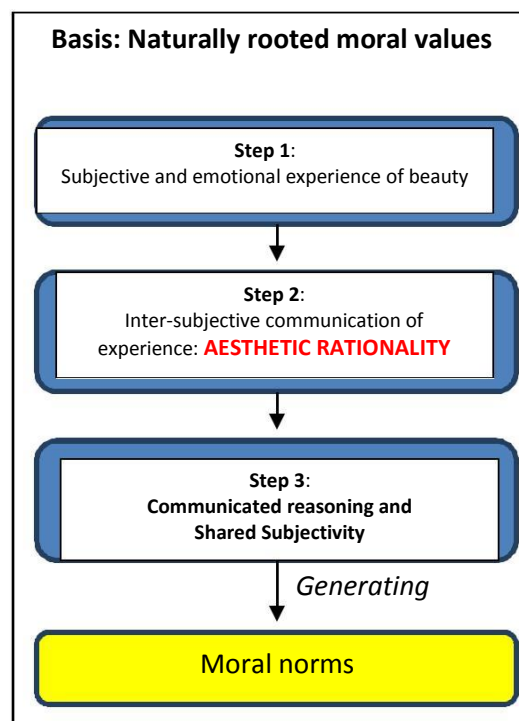
20 As previously mentioned, we view aesthetics as being a three-step process. At its base, lies a
21 foundation in moral values. We believe that these moral values are naturally derived and affect
22 individuals’ perceptions of issues. The process begins at the interface of individuals and their
23 environment, with subjective sensory and emotional experiences. These experiences are affected by
24 individuals’ moral values. Persons perceive the aesthetic trigger and experience their own personal sense
25 of the artistic medium. This experience is individually subjective and automatically generates a naturally
26 derived emotive response. The subjective reasoning employed in this step is based on the experience’s
27 relation to authentic personal moral values. The idea of authenticity “implies that past experiences,
28 current values, and future aspirations shape business leaders” (Miska, Hilbe, & Mayer, 2014: 353).
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34 In the second step, however, interpretive and social discourse reasoning operates both at emotional
35 and cognitive levels. It involves communication of the experience based on reasoning – where reason is
36 interpreted broadly. In a sustainability context, each person’s reasoning becomes value rational, where
37 “moral considerations about justice or environmental care” are discussed (Bouwmeester, 2013: 415).
38 Reasoning about decision effectiveness, including instrumental concerns can be included in this process,
39 but it will have to be based on having good reasons for acting (Elbanna & Child, 2007). The moral values
40 associated with aesthetics provide this justification. Thus, instrumental rationality is involved, but
41 reasoning does not stop at this level. Here we see intersubjective reasoning where values and norms are
42 considered (see Elster, 2006). Through dialogue, organizational members share their aesthetic experiences
43 through a communicated reasoning process. Dialogue is critical for the communication of personal
44 experiences (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996; Mauws, 2000). Communicated reason refers to a
45 “symbolically structured lifeworld that is constituted in the interpretative accomplishments of its members
46 and only reproduced through communication” (Habermas, 1984: 398). Moral values derived from
47 aesthetics are rationally communicated through a metaphorically discursive exercise. In a business
48 organization, “managers would use a metaphor/a communicative reason normally not used within the
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existing instrumental reason...and then restructure their understanding of the business system and practices using this metaphor” (Molthan-Hill, 2013: 74). A deep diagnosis based on “reflection and appreciation, in advance of action” is necessary for organizational strategies to be implemented (Harrison, 1995: 32).

The final step reflects the outcome of communicated reason where collective meaning is achieved. After aesthetic rationality is initiated, shared subjectivity is achieved among organizational members. A mutual understanding based on a shared aesthetic experience occurs in this third step. Aesthetic rationality can include environmental reasoning “so that environmental issues are subsumed under the prevalent paradigms in the business world” (Molthan-Hill, 2013: 75). Sustainability issues are restructured to become part and parcel of the instrumental rationality of organizations. Habermas even acknowledged that it is possible for the business system to be reframed to be part of the social system (1984). Justifications for acting “are requisite for mutual understanding...” (Niemi, 2008: 257). An expanded rationality, aesthetic rationality, generates moral norms that serve as the justification for sustainable enterprises. Thus, after Step 3 in the aesthetics process, moral norms are manifested out of the communicated reasoning. In the Discussion section of this paper, we identify moral norms related to sustainability that can guide real business strategies.

Figure 1: Aesthetics Process



Emotion and Reason Interaction

In order to avoid epistemological and methodological misunderstandings which could be triggered by Figure 1, it is prudent for us to clarify our position on the real link between emotion and reason, respectively between the affective and cognitive dimensions of human beings, by distinguishing two domains. The first deals with observable reality. Empirical research in the fields of psychology (Anderson, 2003), human ethology (Cohen, 1993; Markoczy & Goldbert, 1998), and social psychology (Muringhan, 1993) provide evidence that the emotion-reason links are highly complex in nature. It is impossible to establish deterministic cause-effect relations or clear chronological links between emotion and reason. Very often both dimensions seem to be simultaneously present, with constantly changing interactions within the “emotion-reason mix”. “Pure emotion” and “pure reason” seem to be more theoretical ideals of Western culture than observed empirical facts. Cognitive neuroscience research has discovered that there is indeed a neural algorithmic link between emotional expressions and functions of the brain (Salzman & Fusi, 2010; Schulte -Ruther, Markowitsch, Fink, & Piefke, 2007). Emotion is activated in the amygdala and reason is found in the prefrontal cortex.

The second domain operates at the conceptual level which addresses how to treat the links of chronology and/or of cause-effect between emotion and reason in applied management science. We acknowledge the empirical difficulty of the first domain, but propose the concept of aesthetic rationality as an explanatory construct, acknowledging its approximate (heuristic) nature, characterized by a probabilistic dimension. Thus, we do not address the philosophical backing of the link in this paper. The positioning of the affective or cognitive dimension at a particular point of a process highlights the prominence—in other words, the more influential variable within a set of variables in a given situation—of this dimension. It is not meant to indicate its absolute dominance, or exclusive (i.e., comprehensive) presence.

Despite Western philosophy’s penchant for positioning rational thought as opposite to emotions, the strict separation of thought and emotion is false (Nussbaum, 2001). Emotions are themselves a form of thought, constituted as pre-judgments. Consequently, they are part of the thinking process. Emotion-cognitions are "...ways of fully (experientially) registering the state of things and environments important for our well-being. They are forms of evaluative judgment” (22). Once the cause of an emotion is discovered (in Step 1), it becomes a part of the thought and is no longer considered an emotion, even though the thought may be still evoking emotion (Pettinelli, 2012).

In our context, works of art invite us to experience culturally shared meanings and values that are rooted in a commonly held constellation of beliefs and emotions. This experience may vary from culture to culture, but is shared within that culture (Schama, 1995). For example, when a viewer cries or laughs, or claps or yells out while watching a theatrical performance, s/he is expressing and sharing a deeply felt

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3 emotional reaction. This sensory communication may not be directed at any one individual, but conveys
4 meaning to others within the same experience (of space), and sometimes may even elicit a response
5 from them. Rational actions based on intuition about values “can be characterized as social action that
6 both responds to the immediacy of the moral or ethical demand and uses reason to protect and give
7 effect to that impulse” (Woods, 2001: 702). Thus, values affect our impulses as well as our reasoning.
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11 From evolutionary theory, emotions are often viewed as an involuntary physical reaction to
12 environmental stimuli (Ridley, 1996). Emotions are even often considered a byproduct of cognitive effort.
13 This latter viewpoint allows a place for cultural influence on individuals’ emotional responses (see
14 Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Zerbe, 2000 for a discussion). Thus, only if two people interpret the situation in the
15 exact same way will they have the same emotional experience (Fisher et al., 2013). We favor the
16 perspective that there is an interactive effect between cognition and emotions (Li, Ashkanasy, &
17 Ahlstrom, 2013). Merely concentrating on an object may not be enough to motivate the individual to
18 commit to an act (Voronov & Vince, 2012). Moral values engage others in an inclusive way, and by
19 consequence, facilitate cooperation and sharing. With the influence of emotions, aesthetics engages
20 individuals’ moral imagination (see Werhane, 1999) in the form of perceiving ethical responsibilities
21 towards the world. This can include sustainability. Aesthetics can lead to practical awareness, action, and
22 change of the *status quo*.
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31 Aesthetic rationality reveals that artistic expressions, however subjective they may be, trigger the
32 sharing of emotions, soliticiting cognitive competences and creating an intersubjective rational dimension
33 (Step 3 of our model). Aristotle considered aesthetics a logical analysis of the arts. *Rhetoric* was a method
34 of presenting arguments so as to get an audience’s attention through rational, ethical, and emotional
35 appeals. Aesthetic rationality seems to us to be consistent with his notion of emotional logic. It includes
36 attempts to reach the ‘pathos’ of individuals, since the triggering of emotions is an essential part of
37 forming a rational argument. Of course, we acknowledge the complexity of the proposed cognitive-
38 affectual process. In this present paper we are limiting the scope of the discussion in order to clarify the
39 meaning and utility of aesthetic rationality. In a parallel work, we recognize the interactive effects of
40 moral imagination (Somerville, 2006; Werhane, 1999), sensemaking (Maitlis, Vogus, & Lawrence, 2013;
41 Weick 1995), cognitive expenditure (Street et al., 2001), interpersonal communication (Pilotta, 1982), and
42 motivation (Oakley, Chen, & Nisi, 2008) to form a process model of aesthetics in organizations. Our
43 efforts here are a purposeful first step towards a major theoretical development of the concept of aesthetic
44 rationality and its implications for practice within organizations.
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53 Thus, applied to organizations we can deduce that aesthetic experience makes possible
54 human reasoning that creates new senses of reality. This experience generates knowledge useful for
55 organizational strategies (Dewey, 1934/1989). Organizational elements can be enhanced when
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3 imaginative experiences are embraced and utilized for creating new solutions. The logic behind these
4 experiences includes “an ability to creatively imagine a future different from the habituated present”
5 (Harter et al., 2008: 426). Understanding through aesthetic rationality is formed jointly on objective
6 reality (Murdoch, 1980) and also on subjective emotion-based perceptions of reality (Postrel, 2003).
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8 Individuals use “symbolic formation to discover the rules according to which the latter was produced”
9 (Habermas, 1979: 12).
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13 Aesthetic rationality is capable of initiating a dialogue about the universal importance of social and
14 natural concerns. It can reassess organizations and the “purpose of business that overcomes the
15 incoherencies and inconsistencies of the ethical or economic view of business” (Dobson, 2007: 41). Our
16 notion of aesthetic rationality rejects the dualist view of aesthetics and morality, a view commonly
17 referred to as aestheticism, which considers art and morality as separate and autonomous domains
18 (Kieran, 1997). Instead, we take an interdependence perspective of duality (Farjoun, 2010), according to
19 which two distinct essential elements can be complementary and dependent, rather than separate and
20 opposed (Farjoun, 2010: 203). This interdependence does not imply a mechanical cause-effect link
21 between both elements. Thus, aesthetic rationality under certain conditions and socio-psychological links,
22 allows for the transformation of aesthetic experience into ethical behavior in organizations.
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29 In order to avoid a misunderstanding concerning the moral implications of aesthetics, we
30 emphasize that, as underlined in the beginning of this paper, one should not confuse aesthetics and art. As
31 aesthetics is not limited to art, but encompasses also other forms of creative expressions, the fact that
32 many contemporary artists tend to favor designs that transcend moral values (King, 2006) is not a proof
33 that aesthetics, as the knowledgeable appreciation of beauty, does not involve moral values.
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37 Aesthetic judgment is based not only on cognition, but also on sensory and emotional dimensions. The
38 formation of aesthetic emotions (related to Step 1 in Figure 1) seems to be important for the development of
39 an ethic about the social environment, as aesthetic judgment taps “directly into a meaningful notion of quality
40 of life...” (Dobson, 2007: 43). As Dutton emphasizes, aesthetics expresses a universal feature of all
41 individuals—human perception. Perception is an anthropological universal that is at the foundation of
42 aesthetic judgment (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The understanding of the world takes place through individual
43 and shared perceptions. Emotions elicited from aesthetic experiences are not only derived from simple
44 perception, but also through the evaluation of the experience through discourse within a community (Maitlis
45 et al, 2013). This discourse reflects, according to our previous definitions, the rational aspect in the aesthetic
46 process. (Griseri, 1998). Thus, emotion is partially generated also through the discovery of a shared ethics (in
47 Step 2 of Figure 1), but also by the recognition that some ethics are interpreted differently. Aesthetics enables
48 individuals to communicate and expand upon their monadic understanding of the world. In other words,
49 aesthetics seems to favour a certain community
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3 between humans (through discourse), implying an aesthetic driven ethic. *Aesthetic rationality turns out*
4 *to be a vehicle (i.e., a process) that enables groups of humans to interact, and to have reciprocal*
5 *relations of an ethical nature.*
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8 These philosophical arguments alone cannot explain the conflicting and complementary sensations,
9 emotions and cognitions that are encompassed together in an aesthetic process. In the next section, we
10 focus on relating aesthetic rationality with organizational elements while acknowledging the duality of
11 both dimensions. For the purpose of a first conceptual positioning of an aesthetic rationality within
12 organizations, we reduce the complexity of the concerned dimensions, analyzed above, by aggregating the
13 affective field under the notion of “emotion” and the cognitive field under the notion of “reason”. After
14 this first conceptual positioning we will show how these dimensions are configured differently in various
15 types of organizations.
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22 **Aesthetic Rationality and Organizational Elements**

23 ***Toward a First Conceptual Positioning***

24 To specify the place of aesthetic rationality in the realm of organizations we take a duality perspective
25 and examine how varying aspects of emotion and reason are implied in different types of organizations.
26 Toward this purpose we describe a typology of organizations (see Figure 2) by positioning emotion and
27 reason as both means and objectives. Along the horizontal axis, *reasoned means* are articulated through
28 analysis, observation, scientific methods and communication, where as *emotional means* rely upon
29 contemplation, sensual experience, or aesthetic experience. Similarly, *objectives* can be *reasoned* using
30 utility, knowledge, prosperity, and responsibility concepts. They also can be emotionally anchored in
31 feelings such as empathy, pleasure, and happiness, as illustrated in the figure. This assignment of
32 objectives and means is not necessarily the result of specific empirical studies, and can be open to some
33 interpretation and possibly, cultural variation. Regardless, they fit into an explanatory perspective, which
34 does not indicate empirical proof for all notions. Our goal is merely to launch the first conceptual
35 positioning of aesthetic rationality with realistic classifications.
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45 On this basis we develop, in Figure 2, five cells which represent theoretical forms of organizations
46 (see Weber, 1980 for the “ideal type”-approach). It is a typology of organizational outcomes where
47 aesthetic rationality is likely to be realized. Efforts to employ aesthetic means and objectives vary their
48 ability to lead to aesthetic rationality based on the combination of emotion and reason. At this initial
49 stage of conceptual development of the aesthetic rationality construct, it is prudent and appropriate to sort
50 out the various theoretical types so as to formulate a better understanding of the empirical reality. We
51 briefly walk through the four cells of the typology next.
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Figure 2: Aesthetic Rationality Realized in Organizations Through Emotion and Reason

MEANS OBJECTIVES ↓	EMOTION (involving contemplation, sensual experience, and aesthetic experience)	REASON (involving rational analysis, observation, scientific method, and communication)
EMOTION (seeking end states of pleasure, happiness)	ORGANIZATION NOT POSSIBLE Individual or non-organized approach No Rationality 1	EMOTIONALLY PURPOSED ORGANIZATION AESTHETIC RATIONALITY 2
REASON (seeking end goals of utility, knowledge, prosperity, and responsibility)	INSTRUMENTALLY EMOTIONAL ORGANIZATION No Aesthetic Rationality 3	INSTRUMENTALLY RATIONAL ORGANIZATION No Aesthetic Rationality 4
REASON RESPONSIBILITY SUSTAINABILITY	AESTHETIC RATIONAL ORGANIZATION <i>Aesthetic Experience (Step 1 of Aesthetic Process) + Aesthetic Rationality linked to Sustainability</i> 5	

Cell 1 (Emotional Objectives & Emotional Means)

If emotionally dominated objectives like empathy, pleasure or happiness are pursued only by emotional means like contemplation, sensual experience or aesthetic experience, as in step 1 of the aesthetic process (Figure 1), the organizational approach remains individually focused. An example of this can be seen in the long-time practice of anchoritism—the process of settling in a secluded location for spiritual isolation. Finding peace in a solitary environment (emotion-emotion combination) is already logically not possible within a collective group. The empirical reality shows that the individual practice of anchoritism when attempted within an organization (like in a monastery) has been only realized by adding reasoned means to the affective experience. The classic example in history for this approach is the Carthusian Order. Founded in the 11th century, it combined eremitical and cenobitic life. The way reasoned means were employed by the Carthusians in England to organize this combination has been described by David Knowles (2004). The lesson for us is that in actions driven completely by emotions, the formation of

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3 collective efforts is much less likely to occur.
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7 *Cell 2 (Emotional Objectives & Reasoned Means)*

8 Here we envision social actions pursuing the end-states of empathy, pleasure, or happiness by a
9 reasoned means of analysis, observation, scientific methods, and communication. While at first glance
10 this approach may seem contradictory, it is illustrated by the contemporary examples of “scientific
11 churches” and other movements which opt for rational methods in order to obtain emotional results. In
12 such an organization, aesthetic rationality could be observed. If the founders’ objectives are
13 instrumental in nature, the so called “church” would be a form of organization as we present it in Cell 3
14 of our figure. If, however, the religious dimension, in its emotional version, is really the main objective
15 of this organization, this organization would correspond to our Cell 2. In such an organization, aesthetic
16 rationality can be observed, but the sharing of aesthetic experience will focus on end states of emotions.
17 We categorize this type of organization as an, “Emotionally Purposed Organization”.
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27 *Cell 3 (Reasoned Objectives & Emotional Means)*

28 This emotion-reason mix is typical in organizations that pursue objectives like utility, knowledge,
29 prosperity, and responsibility by employing emotional means. We refer to this type of organization as,
30 “Instrumentally Emotional Organization”. Even if this pure form is not common, we see its reflection in
31 the sports and entertainment industry, in amusement theme parks, and hobby events. For example,
32 Disney attempts to generate socially responsible outcomes for its customers through nature-linked
33 emotional experiences of the visitors to its theme parks. They promote sustainability through establishing
34 an emotional connection to the environment by exposing their park visitors to sustainable themes and
35 ecological experiences. Here also aesthetic experience, as in Step 1 in the aesthetic process, can be
36 realized. However, conceptually, this type of organization will encourage individual experience and not
37 favor a common sharing of it, as in Step 2 of the aesthetic process.
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46 *Cell 4 (Reasoned Objectives & Reasoned Means)*

47 This reason-reason combination in Figure 2 reflects the “Rational Choice” model and its fundamental
48 base: instrumental rationality. This model is common to most government and non-government social
49 organizations, as well as to business organizations. Organizational models based in this cell lack attention
50 to emotion, and focus exclusively on reasoned objectives and reasoned means. All the criticism
51 concerning the limits of instrumental rationality, mentioned above, underline the fact that this type of
52 organization, “Instrumentally Rational Organization”, represents a theoretical construct and not the
53 complete empirical reality. However, this theoretical construction represents the dominant referential
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3 point for business organizations and in organizational/management studies. This organization does not
4 consider emotions to be important but rather thinks rational decisions are made independent of a persons
5 emotions and drives. The increasing importance of the emotional dimension in contemporary life will
6 perhaps push forward the elaboration of a more sophisticated ideal type of organizations fitting to our Cell
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11 12 13 *Cell 5 (Sustainability Reasoned Objectives)*

14 The phenomenon of aesthetic rationality (step 2 of the aesthetic process) can be positioned within this
15 figure, in the isolated cell below the 2 x 2 typology. Cell 5 represents the overlapping character of an
16 *Aesthetic Rational Organization* within Figure 2. We illustrate this cell separately to highlight a specific
17 type of organization focused on particular reasoned objectives. In such an organization (illustrated with
18 examples at the beginning of this paper), aesthetic experience is employed as a tool with regard to the
19 reasoned objectives of responsibility and sustainability, but also voluntarily shared in a collective
20 communication process (Aesthetic Rationality). Here the sensitivity to the aforementioned moral values
21 is favoured. The intersubjective process is combined with the traditional processes in an organization
22 characterized by instrumental rationality. This suggests that aesthetic rationality is not in opposition to
23 instrumental rationality, but rather it is a rationality that is intimately linked to its instrumental roots and
24 expands the concept. Aesthetic rationality is anchored in *reason* due to its nature of intersubjective
25 communication, and linked to *emotion* due to its communication *subject*, which includes the emotional
26 experience of beauty. We believe that aesthetic rationality can be observed in many organizations where
27 reasoned objectives are not only pursued with reasoned means, but also with emotional means.
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37 From this discussion it is clear that aesthetic rationality can have an impact in organizations.
38 It indicates a human quality of organizations. In the next sections, we relate different human and
39 organizational elements to aesthetic rationality.
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44 **Managerial Implications of Aesthetic Rationality: Implementation and Potential**

45 Clarifying the possible ethical implications of aesthetics, analysed in preceding sections, we find out that
46 aesthetic rationality implies that it is possible to inform managerial policies through values like
47 compassion, environmental care, concern for community, and social justice. One can observe companies
48 like Apple, Google, and Patagonia who all have innovated policies of flexible work spaces and times,
49 sensorily evocative products, service experience design, integrated employee care, the freedom to pursue
50 personal passions, employee involvement in hiring their bosses, and support for community volunteering.
51 These policies are manifestations of aesthetic-derived moral values of caring and compassion.
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3 Lululemon, maker of yoga and athletic clothing, promotes a vision and lifestyle that encourages
4 employees to read motivational self-help books, and take care of their own body and well-being.
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7 Aesthetics is regularly an important factor in the process of employee recruitment. Job postings that
8 espouse aesthetic qualities are more likely to gain the attention of job seekers (Dineen, Ling, Ash, &
9 DelVecchio, 2007). People are predisposed to processing information more carefully if their attention is
10 initially drawn to the form and presentation of the material. Greater recall of information and longer
11 cognitive engagement with the organization is more likely once this attention is triggered. The “personal
12 relevance of customized messages exerts effects only when good aesthetics are also present” (368).
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16 Aesthetics is also manifested in innovative solutions for human resource development and training
17 in organizations (Gibb, 2004). By the same token, aesthetic rationality, which consists in the
18 intersubjective communication of aesthetic experience, offers possibilities for managerial policies. For
19 instance, organizations typically use conventional instructional designs of classroom presentations to
20 convey organizational processes and technologies. Such training could be enhanced with shared aesthetic
21 experiences (Step 3 in Figure 1) by utilizing narratives and storytelling, music, theatre, and painting as
22 part of pedagogical methods that could lead to creative new designs (56). Within this process, using
23 rhetoric and metaphor to convey organizational messages is effective for overall learning as well as for
24 generating shared, felt meaning among employees (Bredeson, 2003). Shared aesthetics applied to
25 management storytelling can lead to enhanced organizational learning (Boje, 2009; Taylor, Fisher, &
26 Dufresne, 2003). Stories that convey an aesthetic experience are more likely to produce a shared felt
27 meaning that produces knowledge within the organization because of the connectedness that is generated.
28 Other possibilities for managers to bring out shared felt meaning involve improvisation techniques
29 (Ivanaj, Poldner and Shrivastava, 2014; Yanow, 2001) and imaginative free role-play (Ladkin, 2011). The
30 key of all these methods is to make new routines at work that develop mindfulness and create ambiguity,
31 which gets organizational members out of their comfort zone. Managed and playful instability can lead
32 employees to challenge typical ways of thinking (Jordan, Messner, & Becker, 2009).
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36 Another example where aesthetics proved its potential for implementing innovative solutions for human
37 resource management has been studied by Witz et al. (2003) with the Elba Hotel Group. In this case the
38 aesthetic process has been applied to the management of employees so as to transform them into aesthetic
39 laborers, i.e. workers, who are embodied in the corporate landscape to express aesthetic values of the
40 organization. It is possible, beyond emotional labor, to develop and train employees to display dispositions
41 and adopt a service style that appeals to the sensory desires of customers (Warhurst et al., 2000). The Elba
42 Hotel Group case highlights the ways that the HRM of the hotel chain successfully socialized employees to
43 embody an aesthetic ideal that was portrayed to their customers for a more
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3 complete aesthetic experience. Obviously, aesthetic rationality can help in this regard by providing the
4 approach and process for achieving these organizational goals.

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6 Leadership in organizations can also be positively affected by aesthetics (Adler, 2006; Zhang, Cone,
7 Everett, & Elkin, 2011). Aesthetic leadership offers a different perspective that is focused on “sensory
8 knowledge and felt meaning associated with leadership phenomena” (Hansen et. al, 2007: 552).

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10 Discovering how affectively laden meaning is attributed and generated between leaders and followers in
11 an organization is the goal of this approach. The leader’s sensibility to aesthetics will likely be useful for
12 understanding the effects of the pressures for continuous improvement and change (Zhang et al., 2011).

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14 Following these observations we believe that by including aesthetics to leadership strategies in
15 organizations, a more harmonious workplace environment may be achieved, one that fosters mutual
16 understanding and human needs. It seems important for leaders to be able to see the entire picture of the
17 organization, especially in fast-moving chaotic environments. The arts can aid organizational leaders in
18 finding the inner meaning of events and situations facing an organization that are not necessarily captured
19 by traditional management approaches (Ashkanasy, 2006: 484). Ladkin (2008) posits that aesthetic
20 leaders develop a mastery of their own emotions and tendencies, promote an overall authentic purpose
21 (consistent with moral values) for the organization, and ensure that the purpose is coherent with the
22 messages conveyed.

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24 In workplaces dominated by instrumentally rational concerns organizational members’ ability to have
25 an aesthetic experience is muted (Taylor, 2002). Workers are not afforded the opportunity to experience and
26 discuss their work from an aesthetic perspective. Work emphasis is on instrumental, short-term business
27 concerns preferring thinking over feeling (Gardner & Martinko, 1996), stressing cognition while ignoring
28 emotion. It is up to the managers of the organization to allow aesthetics to flourish.

29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 ***Aesthetic Rationality and Organizational Elements***

42 Organizations largely focus on achieving instrumental rationality, and tend to ignore the role and
43 influence of aesthetic rationality. We suggest a more systematic examination of how aesthetic rationality
44 can affect all major elements of organizations and performance outcomes. We can imagine aesthetic
45 rationality influencing: a) the macro-strategic organizational elements of vision, strategy, and governance,
46 b) the operational elements of structure, technology, systems, accounting and control and, c) the systemic
47 level organizational inputs, throughputs and outputs. The direction of this influence is toward making
48 these elements more creative and resourceful, socially inventive and compassionate, and environmentally
49 caring. The elements also have to reflect the shared moral values of the organizational members. As a
50 practical tool to think about aesthetic rationality in organizations we depict these influences in the
51 following Table 1.

Table 1: Organizational Aesthetic Possibilities and Performance Implications

	Organizational Element	Aesthetic Possibilities	Associated Moral Values	Performance Implications
Strategic	Vision	Harmony with stakeholders, nature & community, Triple Bottomline,	Ecologizing, Responsibility	Less conflict, more cooperation, collaboration
	Strategy	Choice of clean businesses, technologies	Long-term survival, ecologizing	Improves long term sustainability
	Governance	Artistic stakeholders	Beauty	Brings in diverse perspectives/ voices into decision making, alerts organizations to potential risks
Operational	Structure	Circular and curvilinear instead of horizontal and vertical relationships, beautiful physical structures	Economizing, beauty	Opens new information flows, communicative relationships, softens power differentials
	Technology	Sensory designs of products and processes, simplified and socially appropriate technologies	Responsibility, concern for others	Enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty
	Systems	Designing systems for beauty, in addition to efficiency, Humanizing the scale and size of systems	Beauty, economizing, concern for others	Smaller less risky systems and investments, decentralized deployment to fit market needs
	Accounting and Control	Transparency, clarity, precision	Responsibility, economizing	More open communications with stakeholders, long term resilience
Systemic	Inputs (Resources + Energy)	Cradle to Cradle and waste-free resource mgt, small scale nature integrated renewable energy systems	Ecologizing	Cost savings, lowers eco-footprint, responsive to public concerns
	Outputs (Products + Waste)	Beautiful products, compassionate services, recycling	Beauty, economizing, ecologizing	Enhances product competitiveness, lowers costs
	Throughput (Operations)	Attractive work spaces, grandeur in landscape & architecture	Beauty	Makes facilities more acceptable to communities, avoids NIMBY protests

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Note in Table 1 that the third column identifies related moral values to the aesthetics possibilities we see for each organizational element. We tie the moral values of responsibility, survival, beauty, concern for others, and the natural value sets of economizing and ecologizing to these possibilities. Without a link to underlying moral values, the motivation for each of these efforts will be lost. Thus, we stress the importance of moral values to organizational aesthetics in the strategic, operational, and system levels. These moral values become realized as concrete moral norms following the aesthetic process.

Moral Norms about Sustainability

Aesthetic rationality implemented at the strategic level can make organizational vision more in harmony with a broader social and ecological stakeholders. Organizational strategies can be “aesthetized” to be in accord with traditionally conflicting stakeholders like organized labor, environmentalists, and special public interests. At this implementation level, we see abstract moral values operationalized into moral norms, or rules governing sustainability. Corporate choice within its operational domain can be focused on environmentally clean and socially creative industries. The performance implication is that this can position the organization in line with long-term harmonious relationships with its environment. We see this easily being related to the ecologizing natural value and underlying survival instincts.

Applying aesthetic rationality to operational elements of organizational structure, technology, accounting and corporate governance can make organizations smarter, more physically and intellectually appealing, and beautiful. Aesthetics in the form of “design” is a great source of added value for product design, workplace architecture, and job design. The nature of design science for organizations is linked to values of beauty as well as humanistic values (Ernst van Aken, 2007). Beyond this, even accounting and control systems, which have historically been avowedly instrumental, can pursue moral norms of transparency, clarity, and precision. The implicit moral values are related to responsibility and economizing. It can make organizational information intelligible to stakeholders, prevent obfuscation of critical information and make organization more resilient in the long run.

At a systemic level aesthetic rationality can improve the overall deployment of input resources, throughput systems and outputs, and harmonize the interrelations between elements so that improvement is holistic and systemic. Improvements in one area should not cause unintended harm in other areas. Moral norms of global equity and a circular economy could guide a system to reform, for instance. Aesthetics recognizes the importance of the thinking about the broader picture and the context of systems. It seeks holistic understanding of individuals place in the world. These are very much rooted in natural values sets of economizing and ecologizing, as efficiency and harmony with the environment are sought.

Discussion

This paper responds to recent calls for developing new behavioral strategies to establish a microfoundation of management research (Greve, 2013). The goal of this line of inquiry is to provide organizations with innovative ways to achieve collective rationality and promote adaptation to fastly changing social and economic environments (Winter, 2013). Behavioral strategies like the one suggested in this paper (in Table 1) are meso-level theoretical tools that are capable of producing insights into mechanisms operating at other levels of analysis. Thus, we are able to gain a deeper understanding of organizational processes and outcomes (Greve, 2013). Current theoretical understandings of organizations and institutions are rooted heavily in individual-level, rational assumptions of behavior (Kogut, 2008), which reveal important rational elements but conceal moral and emotional elements, thus limiting the utility of these theories. What organizational and management theories need are collective standards of reasonable behavior which can expand the current models of rationality (Van de Ven & Lifschitz, 2013). Better decisions can be reached through the use of experience, intuition, and reasoning (Hamilton, 2011). Organizational theories “need a richer understanding of how individuals locate themselves in social relations and interpret their context” (Powell & Colyvas, 2009: 2). We believe our conception of aesthetic rationality contributes to the organization theory by offering new behavioral strategies which incorporate rationality, reason, and emotion toward a comprehensive understanding of organizations.

Humans’ instinctual tendency for aesthetics can be used to change managers’ perceptions of enterprise’s needs. Different organizational scripts, symbols, and activities need to be utilized to create new norms and facilitate the formation of new institutional environments. A concern for beauty is connected to the biologically derived human desire to augment her environment (Donoghue, 2003). The motivation for beauty is a naturally formed value. The rise of “design thinking,” public art, and aesthetic architecture exemplify the public’s preference for the beautiful, and for balancing function with form. From clothing to consumer products to household appliances, aesthetically engaged objects have established a presence in the market place, and in the popular imagination. In this paper, we offer different ways of thinking about organizations that can be useful for organizational design and functioning. Organizational development and its evolution can indeed be conceived as an aesthetic endeavour. Thus, we also respond to a call in this very journal for the use of more interdisciplinary approaches for rethinking organizational development and design (Wolfram Cox & Minahan, 2006).

Organizations are well served by recognizing the aesthetic impulse and drive of organizational members, stakeholders, and social institutions. The construct of aesthetic rationality offers one conceptualization of this rather elusive idea. The linkages between aesthetic rationality and organizational elements show the pervasive influence of aesthetics in organizational contexts. By incorporating

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3 aesthetics into their decisions, organizational stakeholders can benefit in the form of more desirable
4 products and services, beautiful workspaces and landscapes, and customer and employee satisfaction.
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7 One contribution of this paper relates to our efforts to link moral values and sustainability practices
8 in organizations. Florea et al. (2013) claim that little theoretical attention has been paid to establishing
9 this critical link and that the disconnect may be one of the reasons that sustainability initiatives in
10 organizations are ineffective. We have attempted to establish a moral value basis for aesthetics which can
11 be more easily connected to sustainability through an aesthetic rationality process.
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15 We note several potential limitation of our work. First, this paper represents a preliminary
16 exploratory attempt to articulate the concept of aesthetic rationality. In this early survey, it is our intention
17 to merely lay out the key concepts, some organizational manifestations of aesthetic rationality, and the
18 construct's linkages to other organizational elements (Suddaby, 2008). It is necessary to further theorise
19 the concept of aesthetic rationality and develop a deeper understanding of the processes by which it is
20 institutionalised in organizations. Second, we realize that there are indeed perceived differences about the
21 aesthetic qualities of objects. This can result from individuals taking different aesthetic perspectives given
22 their personal and situational differences (Ritter, 2008). These varying aesthetic perspectives can
23 potentially affect the perceived role and importance of aesthetic rationality. Despite the universality of the
24 naturally formed aesthetic emotions, the type and degree of emotions evoked from a particular aesthetic
25 experience can vary from individual to individual (Dutton, 2009). The inherent subjectivity of aesthetic
26 experiences makes it a challenging subject for scientific examination. We encourage future research to
27 explore individual and cultural differences about aesthetic rationality.
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37 ***Research Implications***

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39 Organizations are subject to paradigmatic shifts of thought and strategy (Weick, 1995). People in
40 organizations operate and make decisions based on shared senses of meaning or frames of reference
41 (Shrivastava & Mitroff, 1984). But, this shared meaning evolves over time. Organizations operate within
42 protocols of communicating and paradigms of organizational culture. As we argue here, the dominant
43 paradigm in business is that of instrumental rationality. This paradigm is certainly valuable as it is geared
44 to efficiency and productiveness. But it has its shortcomings in that it largely ignores community caring
45 and compassion, sustainability issues, and the virtue of beauty. We offer a new kind of rationality for
46 organizations. Aesthetic rationality can enlarge instrumental rationality to create more aesthetic
47 organizations. An aesthetic approach can “surface meaning for different groups of actors within their own
48 context of thinking/acting” (Cairns, 2002: 799). Additional research is needed that examines how to bring
49 about holistic systemic paradigmatic shifts towards aesthetic organizations, encourage creative behavior
50 change, creating new institutional logics and new ways of doing things.
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Another opportunity for research in the management realm using aesthetics involves institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Typically, attempts in the management literature to address the creation, maintenance and transformation of institutions has involved examining what institutional entrepreneurs do to shape organizational institutions. These efforts are often affected by compliance pressures operating on organizational actors. However, Suddaby (2010) acknowledge that little is actually known in institutional research about how individuals actually experience institutions. This is an important insight for the development of the field. Voronov and Vince (2012) integrate emotions and cognitive processes into the analysis of institutional work. These components, they argue, are useful for understanding how individuals themselves fit into institutional theory. They propose a reconceptualization of human beings that goes beyond mere rationality. We believe our concept of aesthetic rationality may be useful for achieving this reconceptualization and could serve as a tool for understanding one-way emotions and cognition interact to generate a person's institutional experience.

Future research needs also to demonstrate surfacing and empirically revealing instances of aesthetic rationality and its effects on the stakeholders of an organization. We need detailed case studies of aesthetic structures, systems and strategies, and of aesthetic process designs and policies. Our conceptual model lays the foundation for future testing of theoretical relationships between aesthetic rationality elements and organizational elements, which remain to be empirically tested.

Explorations into aesthetics in organizations must also consider the cultural variations to which interpretations of art and design are subjected. First of all, cultures around the globe perceive sustainability issues different ways (Purvis, Drake, Hunt, & Millard, 2000). Thus, the extent to which the common moral values we identify in this paper are manifested in a particular society needs to be examined further. In a study on German and British managers' perceptions of environmental issues, Molthan-Hill (2013) discovered that not only do managers from these two countries perceive issues related to sustainability differently, but their rationality assumptions differed as well. Managers in each country also responded differently to efforts to reframe the instrumental goals of their organizations. We see this as a valuable area of future investigation.

Aesthetics management can be a useful tool in motivating a concern for creativity and innovation in organizations. Art communicates symbols that evoke emotion. Art provokes outrage against injustices, inefficiencies, and inhumanity. Art reveals questions hidden by our conventional answers. Aesthetics enables moral imagination about complex ethical issues that facilitates a more diversified understanding of multiple perspectives. The "cognitive dimension of the ethical decision-making process is certainly important for effective ethical decision-making, but can be complemented and enhanced by adopting processes more commonly engaged in by artists to involve the whole person in the process" (Elm, 2014: 57). Art is the means by which individuals are able to empathize with others and with nature. By

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3 triggering naturally formed emotions connected to our innate ethic of care for beauty, the environment
4 and community, aesthetics can generate a concern for sustainable enterprise.
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Aesthetic Rationality in Organizations: Toward Developing a Sensitivity for Sustainability

This paper explains the co-existence and interaction of aesthetic experience and moral value systems of decision makers in organizations. For this purpose, we develop the concept of “aesthetic rationality” which is described as a type of Max Weber’s value-oriented rationality that serves to encourage sustainable behavior in organizations, and to complete the commonly held, “instrumentally rational” view of organizations. We show that organizations regularly exhibit not only an instrumental rationality, but also an “aesthetic rationality” which is manifested in their products and processes. We describe aesthetics, its underlying moral values, its evolutionary roots, and its links to virtue ethics as a basis for defining the concept of aesthetic rationality. We examine its links with human resources, organizational design, and other organizational elements. We examine these implications, identify how an aesthetic-driven ethic provides a potential for sustainable behaviour in organizations, and suggest new directions for organizational research.

Keywords:

aesthetics; rationality; sustainability; moral values; virtue ethics

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Within applied behavioral science fields, decision-making is most often framed in terms of rationality, whereby the processes used to solve problems in organizations are rooted in practical ends/means evaluations (Mele, 2010). Choices are normally based on the short-term instrumental purposes for the managers being evaluated on such terms. However, it has become increasingly apparent that for organizations to survive managers must pay attention not only to financial performance in the short term, but also be mindful of long-term social, economic, and environmental needs that affect future performance. To achieve long-term viability, organizations must learn how to adapt to high velocity business environments and the changing natural environment. Organizations mired in the classical economics paradigm conduct their operations in alignment with short-term rational assumptions of human beings. That managers are instrumentally rational is well established in the organizational literature (Eisenhardt & Zbaracki, 1992; Elbanna & Child, 2007; Townley, 2002).

While governments and organizations have been touting the importance of sustainability for decades, real social change toward sustainability remains sluggish (Sachs, 2005). Current ways of looking at and thinking about organizations does not allow much room for serious consideration of sustainability initiatives. The adjustment of policies and regulations to present day challenges is not enough to address sustainability issues (Rasmussen, 2001). Rather, it may be useful to change the way we think about our place in the ecological environment. What we are proposing in this present paper is nothing short of gamma change, which “involves a redefinition or reconceptualization of some domain” (Woodman, 2014: 468). For sustainability to be more easily incorporated into the management mindset, the whole conception or frame of sustainability’s place in organizational functionality must be redefined. In this paper, we refer to the commonly accepted definition of sustainable development offered by the Brundtland Commission (1987): “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p.24).

Recent research underlines that apparently one of the greatest obstacles to long-term triple-bottom line thinking in organizations is the limited concept of rationality that organizations have inherited (Austin & Devlin, 2003; Savitz & Weber, 2006). While reason and rationality are highly valued qualities in organizational decision-making, they are limited to an “instrumental” rationality—that individuals’ behavior will be causally related to an objective, self-interested outcome. We believe that a fuller understanding of organizational rationality that embraces a “sensitivity” for the ecological well-being of the planet is essential for transforming existing business models to become more innovative and deploy more progressive business strategies (Cyphert & Saiia, 2003; Darso, 2004; Shrivastava & Statler, 2010). Successful sustainable innovation in business depends on how organizations rationalize and provide intellectual spaces for it to happen (Freeman & Harris, 2009; Nidumolu, Prahalad, & Rangaswami, 2009). Some scholars are convinced that indeed, 21st-Century organizations will need to “engage in new, more

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3 spontaneous, and more innovative ways of managing” given the dramatic ways in which society is
4 changing (Adler, 2006: 486). Strategic decisions need to be “based on a rationality that convinces
5 stakeholders” (Bouwmeester, 2013: 429). We respond to a call in this journal to find “new ways of
6 knowing” in organizational research (Mirvis, 2014).
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10 Surveys of organizations have shown that despite innovation and sustainable practices being
11 considered highly desirable by CEOs, organizations sorely lack these elements (IBM, 2010; Taylor &
12 LaBarre, 2006; UNEP, 2004). Practices emanating from the industrial era with the dominance of techno-
13 financial logic, use of machinery over artisanal work, preference for large-scale mass consumption, and
14 mass destruction of natural resources now appear unsuited to averting the negative impacts of business
15 enterprises on society. We advocate looking for new ways of thinking that lead to alternatives to business
16 as usual, that respond to emerging economic and ecological crises. This implies the necessity for better
17 understanding of emotional and cognitive triggers to sustainability-oriented innovations.
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21 One promising avenue for investigating fundamental factors underlying our inability to integrate
22 sustainable practices into organizations is the field of “aesthetics” (Linstead & Hopfl, 2000; Strati, 1992;
23 Taylor, 2002). In this paper we investigate this field for practical insights and clarify concepts that may
24 assist managers in building more sustainable organizations. We posit that one of the fundamental reasons
25 underlining the aforementioned creative inabilities of organizations is the lack of appreciation of aesthetic
26 processes in organizations. We argue that promoting sustainable behaviors among managers can be
27 facilitated by enabling a deeper understanding of what we call, “aesthetic rationality.”
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31 Organization theories depict organizations as instrumentally rational entities seeking to optimize
32 their goals of financial performance, technological efficiency, and operational productivity normally over
33 a limited fiscal period (Kallio, Nordberg, & Ahonen, 2007). But in practice this is not always the case.
34 Organizations are complex entities that seek to balance changing and diverse stakeholder needs. “Non-
35 monetary and non-instrumental incentives, such as leaders’ values...counterbalance pure monetary and
36 instrumental orientations” (Miska, Hilbe, & Mayer, 2014: 349). We see that organizational agents are
37 capable of exhibiting aesthetic and emotional behaviors as well (Burrell, 2013; Strati, 1992; Taylor &
38 Hansen, 2005), which is what we explore in this paper.
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42 The purpose of this paper is to introduce the concept of aesthetic rationality, which we believe
43 can be used alongside “instrumental rationality” to give a more comprehensive picture of how rationality
44 operates in organizational settings. Our approach in this paper is in line with the analytical tradition of the
45 social sciences, which also examine moral values and modern virtue ethics by combining the perspectives
46 of organizational sociology, psychology, and descriptive ethics. So this paper starts with a description of
47 the construct of aesthetic rationality and its organizational manifestations, and examine its relationship to
48 other organizational elements. Finally, we demonstrate that the construct also has ethical
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3 implications because it opens new possibilities for pursuing the moral value of *sustainability* through
4 aesthetic decision-making. Our approach taps into humans' innate affect-laden concern for beauty and
5 nature through an appreciation for *aesthetics* (Dissanayake, 1995; Dutton, 2009). An enhanced sensitivity
6 for aesthetics among organizational members can increase the likelihood of sustainable innovations.
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10 Aesthetics refers to a knowledgeable appreciation of beauty, which encompasses art - as object
11 and performance, and other forms of creative expression. This appreciation is a natural human tendency
12 of "estimating an object or mode of representation by means of a delight..." (Kant, [1790], 1952: 139).
13 Analyses of what is aesthetically pleasing are acknowledged as valid for social and organizational
14 applications. Aesthetic experience is useful for producing knowledge within organizations (Strati, 1992).
15 Recently, "organizational theory has started to include the aesthetic sphere" for addressing instrumental
16 questions regarding organizational leadership, effectiveness and efficiency (Adler, 2009; Taylor &
17 Hansen, 2005: 1211). For example, companies have used nature-based team building programs such as
18 "Outward Bound" and art museum visits and artistic events to inspire employees for design thinking
19 (Harter, Leeman, Norander, Young, & Rawlins, 2008). In some industries where originality and ingenuity
20 are essential (e.g., high fashion, architecture, luxury goods, perfumes, and graphic design), companies use
21 a variety of aesthetic experiences to create the mood and environment for creativity to occur (Hosey,
22 2012). One salient example can be seen with Google. The campus environment they created at their
23 headquarters in Northern California is widely thought of as being conducive to creative thinking for their
24 employees.
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28 We contend that an aesthetic rationality is manifested in many organizational actions and
29 elements and that aesthetics can serve very useful functions in organizations. Furthermore, we will show
30 that aesthetics, rooted in certain moral values, can motivate individuals to develop a shared ethic. A
31 related contribution is that we explain how an aesthetic concern for sustainability influences
32 organizational behavior. Aesthetic processes and rationality are introduced as factors triggering
33 evolutionarily derived human emotions and naturally developed values linked to sustainability virtues,
34 which engage creative impulses and affect the moral perception of issues. Our perspective integrates
35 critical cognitive and emotional aspects of decision-making.
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39 This paper is structured as follows: To demonstrate the presence of an "aesthetics" mindset in
40 organizations we begin with several real world examples manifesting this consideration of beauty in
41 organizational products, policies and practices. In this section we establish the link to moral values. We
42 then lay out the foundation of instrumental rationality, on which our new concept of aesthetic rationality
43 can be built. Subsequently, we examine the notion of aesthetics and its evolutionary roots, as a basis for
44 understanding the construct of aesthetic rationality. Then, we explore aesthetic rationality as a useful lever
45 to facilitate creative strategies for sustainable behavioral change. In a next step, we undertake a first
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3 conceptual positioning of aesthetic rationality with the aid of modern virtue ethics by analyzing aesthetic
4 rationality as an interaction between emotion and reason, and explore its links to other organizational
5 elements. Finally, we end the paper with specific implications for research and business practice to
6 generate long-term solutions for sustainability.
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10 11 **Organizational Manifestations of Aesthetics**

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13 Aesthetics has developed a place in organizational life both pragmatically and within organizational
14 research (Strati & de Montoux, 2002). Aesthetics refers to the knowledgeable appreciation of beauty,
15 which encompasses art, as object and performance, and other forms of creative expression. Aesthetics is
16 not new in organizational life. It is implicit in organizational life, but its manifestation may be muted.
17 While aesthetics may not be in the traditional management nomenclature, concerns for beauty have
18 endured. In fact, it could be argued that much of industrial production has not cared about beauty and
19 instead valorised standardized and mass produced products, there has always been a niche for beautiful
20 designs and uniquely crafted products. In an organizational context, knowledge is accumulated, in part,
21 through sensory perceptions of individuals involved. In short, we gather knowledge by our subjective
22 sensations associated with a particular organizational context (Strati & de Montoux, 2002). Individuals
23 assign value “to the empathetic process of knowledge-creation...” which is an “active part of the
24 aesthetic process by which organizational discourse is socially constructed...” (757). Aesthetics in
25 organizations involves the social construction of an aesthetic dialogue among organizational members.
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34 In recent years concerns for the visual and sensory appeal of organizational products and processes
35 has been acknowledged and has proliferated through “design thinking” and through explicit integration of
36 aesthetic values by engineers, designers and managers (Austin & Devlin, 2003; Darso, 2004). In a broad
37 sense, design includes architecture, landscaping, workspace arrangements, graphic design, urban design,
38 product design, manufacturing design, process design, and other intentional choices. Design has strategic
39 value in technological innovation and change (Eisenman, 2013). “Long-term value is impossible without
40 sensory appeal, because if design doesn’t inspire, it’s destined to be discarded” (Hosey, 2012: 7). This
41 implies the existence of an underlying moral standard that promotes technological advancement and long-
42 term survival. We discuss this in more depth in the next section. We briefly outline some examples of this
43 one aspect of aesthetics in organizations to provide a context for our rationality model (presented later),
44 and to illustrate the existence of a moral value substrate within aesthetics.
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52 Over the past two decades, design thinking has advanced significantly and is being adopted in many
53 facets of organizations. Aesthetics has been apparent in and has influenced many consumer products (e.g.,
54 fashion clothing, cosmetics, accessories, eyewear, jewelry, perfumes, etc. from companies such as Yves Saint
55 Laurent, Hermes, Prada, Chanel, Hilfiger) and household goods (e.g., crockery, linens,
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3 window treatments) that use beauty and sensory qualities as competitive advantage. Its implementation
4 has expanded to consumer electronics products such as, Apple's iPad, iPod and iPhone, and other cell
5 phones that use colourful and transparent designs. Sensorial and textural qualities in product design are
6 even appearing in larger sized equipment such as, coffee makers (Meile, Illy, Kahva, Brunopasso),
7 furniture (Knoll, B & B Italia, Fritz Hansen), kitchen counters (made of Onyx), and even automobiles
8 (Pininfarina, Ferrari, Toyota Prius, and Mercedes Smart Car) (Austin & Devin, 2003; Hosey, 2012).
9 Thus, we are witness to ubiquitous examples of aesthetic design thinking all around us. In this present
10 paper we do not wish to focus on design thinking as our scope is broader and exists at the processual
11 level. Design thinking involves only one aspect of aesthetics that is often operationalized in business
12 organizations.

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Aesthetics is also apparent in building architecture and design. Buildings have been subject to grand
designs for centuries not only to express beauty, but also status, grandeur, reverence, and power. The designs
chosen convey a message about the organizations associated with the buildings themselves. St. Peter's
Basilica, built in the late Renaissance period by Bramante, Michelangelo, and Bernini, conveys an intense
message about the Catholic Church through the design of its famous dome (Kuhl, 2012). The famous
Bruneschelli's Dome in Florence was designed to symbolize the moral values of the Catholic Church (King,
2006). In modern times buildings are being designed to encompass an aesthetic on a regional scale. The
Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Gehry in Bilbao, Spain, jump-started the whole regional economy
when it moved into the area. Built in 1997, it attracted 9 million visitors over the next decade, involving \$5
billion in economic activity and \$100 million in tax revenues. Eighty percent of people visiting the areas come
to see this one site to see the marvel of modern architectural process, but also to experience the aesthetic
values Gehry intended. His vision for the structure is meant to inspire creativity and reflection. He wanted
visitors to reflect on their place in the world. Here we see aesthetics and design affecting the well-being of all
stakeholders of the architectural achievement (Hosey, 2012).

Richard Florida (2008) provides numerous examples of buildings and infrastructure making
neighborhoods and entire cities more attractive. Cities around the world have rejuvenated down-and-out
neighborhoods through aesthetic gentrification. Artists are often given free or low cost access to land and
buildings. The aesthetic products and lifestyles that they generate over time attract more people, services,
and businesses. Why? Because people are naturally attracted to beauty and possess an aesthetic sense
(Dutton, 2009). This is something we will discuss in the subsequent section. For instance, the Echigo-
Tsumari Art Fields in Nigaata, Japan and the Fogo Islands in Newfoundland offer examples of aesthetic
regional development. In these places, the entire region and its economy have been rejuvenated through
deployment of art projects that include building public sculptures, artist studios and residencies,
museums, festivals and living arts activities. Aesthetic regional development seems not to be independent

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3 from a concern for the natural environment. A city that collaborates with nature using aesthetic values is
4 more likely to survive and thrive than one that exists in spite of its environment (Hosey, 2012). Jane
5 Jacobs advocated this same urban re-design to reconnect residents of cities founded on imperialism.
6 These types of cities should be re-imagined to reflect post-modern visions of time and aesthetic shape
7 for the benefit of their inhabitants (1996). For Jacobs, this involved living within a more self-sufficient
8 and ecologically efficient community that utilized resources economically. We will see moral values
9 associated with this approach surface in the next section.
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15 Finally, we point to Burrell's (2013) recent analysis suggesting that "styles of organizing" have
16 lasting affinity with styles of architecture, design and politico-economic theory. Thus, the entire enterprise
17 of "organizing" is an aesthetically driven task of sharing a "will to form" in an effort to give meaning and
18 order to the world. This position is certainly value-laden. "By creative visualization, through responses to
19 art...through contemplation...people sense values which seem to emanate from 'beyond' us" and obligate
20 us to respond (Woods, 2001: 695). Given the rising infusion of aesthetics in organizations, it is fruitful to
21 examine the institutional rationale underlying such manifestations of organizational aesthetics. Before we
22 examine the concept of aesthetics more deeply, a discussion of the moral values associated with aesthetics
23 is a necessary and worthwhile next step.
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31 **Moral Values**

32 Moral values are "the beliefs held by an individual or group regarding means and ends organizations
33 'ought to' or 'should' identify in the running of an enterprise" (Enz, 1988: 287). They are important in the
34 determination of strategic choices that agents of an organization make and influence how organizations
35 are designed and run (Amis, Slack, & Hinings, 2002). Major ideological changes in an organization in
36 terms of structure, vision, or design are accompanied by an emphasis of certain moral values (Ranson,
37 Hinings, Greenwood, & Walsh, 1980). Normative systems help to define goals of the organization and
38 guide how those goals are met (Scott, 1995). In his framework on how to motivate behavior, Locke
39 (1991) considers values as one of the most fundamental drivers of human actions. Without a strong tie to
40 stated values, organizational change is less likely to be successful. So, in encouraging sustainable
41 behaviors (our context), the importance of moral values is paramount. They are "the emotive mechanisms
42 needed to create positive, sustained ethical action in human organizational systems" (Bagozzi, Sekerka,
43 Hill, & Sguera, 2013: 70). Moral values affect a person's intentions to act and can be viewed as decision
44 tendencies (Bagozzi et al., 2013). These dispositions incline a person to behave in a certain way when the
45 situation activates them. As guiding principles (Schwartz et al., 2001), moral values can be emotional
46 dispositions toward empathy, caring, and concern for others (Bagozzi et al., 2013). The stronger the moral
47 value is felt emotionally, the more likely the person's intention to act in a particular
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3 manner is affected. Values “can be understood as human emotional responses to sources of importance”
4 (Woods, 2001: 694). This magnifies the fact that moral values are linked to individuals’ natural human
5 drives (Frederick, 1995).
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8 Any effective sustainability efforts are based, in part, on individuals’ value sets (Florea, Cheung,
9 & Herndon, 2013). There is much evidence that certain values are intimately related to aspects of the
10 sustainability area (Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004; Marcus et al., 2015; Shrivastava, 1995). Pro-
11 environmental actions have as their substrate a set of moral values (Thøgersen & Olander, 2002). We
12 attempt to identify what those values may be in this section. We begin with a brief discussion of the
13 philosophical arguments for moral values related to sustainability and then take a step back to see where
14 and how these value sets may be derived. Social actions (like sustainability initiatives) “are anchored in
15 the common human properties of the person” (Woods, 2001: 689). Insights from psychology and biology
16 are important for understanding how social actions are initiated (Archer, 1995), and how morality is
17 promoted (Joas, 1996). Individuals indeed have the ability to know what is ethical. This is likely not
18 “...the product alone of the logical analysis and reasoning about values” (Woods, 2001: 693). We
19 contend there are natural drives that aid us in determining proper norms of society.
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29 *Moral Environmental Values*

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31 As a starting point, sustainability efforts are critically related to the idea of protection of future
32 generations. Thus, there is the assumption of a long-term time horizon for sustainability. Individuals in an
33 organization must *value* the rights and protection of persons in the future. A morally valuable state of the
34 world is one that “promotes, furthers, or sustains” (Moore, 2004: 83). This cannot be accomplished
35 without the promotion of environmental integrity. The primary objective of ecological values is to
36 maintain the integrity of the environment for future generations. This relates to a sense of responsibility
37 to to society at large, which includes the environment (Molthan-Hill, 2013). They “relate to the desired
38 end state of natural systems integrity and the means of human adaptation to...the natural environment”
39 (Marcus et al., 2015: 463). The pursuit of these values would lead to environmental strength, which is
40 operationalized as a long-term organizational commitment to environmental management systems and
41 renewable processes for operating the business.
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49 Economic, social and environmental pressures in organizations tap into different values sets in
50 individuals, which can lead to varying outcomes. We posit that a balance of the values related to these
51 different domains could lead to sustainability engagement through an aesthetic process, encompassing
52 aesthetic rationality. Sagiv and Schwartz (2000) argue for self-transcendence, which emphasizes serving
53 the interests of others and being oriented toward “harmony” with the environment, rather than a mastery
54 over the environment. With this orientation, self-transcendence activates a concern for others,
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3 cooperation, and mutuality, but taken to its extreme, can detract from one's own sense of self-
4 accomplishment (Florea et al., 2013).

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6 At the other end of the spectrum from self-transcendence, we find self-enhancement (Schwartz,
7 1992). This value set motivates persons to operate in the short-term through the controlling of others (and,
8 the environment). The benefits to the individual inclined to this value set are the promotion of personal
9 goals and competitiveness. Certainly, self-enhancement does not necessarily address long-term
10 sustainability concerns. In this present paper, we argue that both value inclinations are naturally derived
11 and linked to survival instincts. At either extreme, these value sets can be detrimental to sustainability
12 efforts, so we seek a balance of the two through an understanding of our natural tendencies. Florea et al.
13 (2013) observe a missing link between values and sustainability which they try to bridge through HRM
14 practices. Our approach is different. We seek to discover possible connections between moral values and
15 sustainability through an aesthetic process encompassing aesthetic rationality.
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24 *Environmental Virtue Ethics*

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26 Environmental virtue ethics provides “an ecologically informed account of human flourishing that is
27 attentive to the full range of environmental values...” (Cafaro, 2010: 4). Building off of Aldo Leopold's
28 idea of a land ethic whereas, “a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty
29 of the biotic community...wrong when it tends to do otherwise” (1987: 224), environmental virtue ethics
30 (EVE) considers the character of the persons who abide and live by these values. In other words, it
31 focuses on how a person can live an environmentally virtuous life. The sentiment associated with
32 Leopold's principle can be viewed as an innate, natural virtue (Welchman, 2009). (In the next section, we
33 will explore the values that may be associated with such a character trait.) A land ethic involves a deep
34 consciousness that accepts economic growth, but views it in a long-term sustainable way (Shaw, 2001).
35 An appreciation of nature is essential for a good life to environmental virtue ethicists (Sandler & Cafaro,
36 2005).
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44 Environmental ethics typically is centered around actions or teleological outcomes, which can be
45 limiting (Freiman, 2006). By focusing instead on an individual's character (through virtues), the
46 assessment of costs and benefits is de-emphasized. EVE addresses the reasons why a person should make
47 an effort toward preserving environmental values (Sandler, 2010). “It provides a model of living in which
48 an understanding and a concern for the environment human is constitutive of human flourishing” (Hull,
49 2005: 89). Individuals can improve their own lives through the preservation of nature. It holds the
50 potential for the motivation of a concern for the ecological environment (Haught, 2010). The EVE
51 approach is centered more on the moral intuitions of individuals toward nature (Hull, 2005). The
52 environmentally virtuous person would be inclined intrinsically to respect human life in conjunction with
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3 the environment and other life forms (Shaw, 1997). These virtues would transcend an “innate human
4 nature” (Hart, 1994). An innate human nature “...becomes the source of omnipresent virtues that underlie
5 ethical behavior, and these virtues are presumably to be found...in all societies” (Frederick, 1995: 283).
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7 One of these virtues would include an “aesthetic appreciation of nature’s beauty” (Hull, 2005: 93).
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11 12 13 ***Natural Moral Values: The Link to Emotion***

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15 These two aforementioned orientations are not far-fetched, nor are they new to the human condition. For
16 instance, the whole idea of property rights has its origins in the natural, deeply embedded need to
17 cohabitate with each other, but within the boundaries of our natural environment (Greene, 2013). The
18 “rules” may have become socially constructed and taken the form of various symbols to communicate
19 the intended norms, but the underlying motivation to live in a community exists independently of its
20 cultural manifestation and indeed has evolutionary value. According to a social intuitionist perspective
21 (Haidt, 2001; 2013), moral decision-making is an evolutionary adaptation where intuitions about *how* to
22 act are checked by a rational step-process involving social deliberation.
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28 In an Aristotelian sense, we are born out of the earth (Eros); we are a part of nature and cannot be
29 separated or distinguished from the natural world. In short, we have an unavoidable connection with
30 nature. We believe this can be rediscovered by social actors by undergoing the aesthetic process,
31 including aesthetic rationality. The following discussion on naturally derived value sets is necessary in
32 order to link the moral values discussed in the previous section with individuals’ emotional drives. It is
33 argued that humans’ natural values are intimately tied to experienced emotions, which is a critical
34 component in our aesthetic process.
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39 Humans have the “ability to achieve an advanced form of value-sensing in which the focus is...an
40 affectual appreciation of what is important and to be valued beyond the person or between people “
41 (Woods, 2001: 695). Thus, we are values-intuitive. Where do these intuitions originate? Underlying these
42 natural emotional drives are evolutionarily formed value clusters derived from natural processes in
43 physics and evolutionary biology (Frederick, 1995; 2012). The first dominant values which drive human
44 behavior are *economizing values*. These values are representative “of natural processes that undergird the
45 struggle for life in general and the particular way in which humans have organized themselves for this
46 struggle” (Frederick, 1999: 207). Economizing values are manifest in organizations in many ways. For
47 example, Duke Energy, one of the United States’ largest coal users is in the midst of building a new coal
48 plant equipped with carbon capture and recycling technology that will save the organization money over
49 time. Even an arguably environmentally detrimental industry makes efforts to extend the life of their
50 production processes.
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But a sustainability orientation underlies the human condition as well. *Ecologizing values* are embedded in the natural substrate of human cognition and emotion and are concerned with the humans' relationship with the ecological environment (Frederick, 1995). They guide, control, and motivate individual's behavior as it pertains to one's relationship with nature. These values are "derived from an ecosystem's interlinked, highly diverse network of organisms living symbiotically with each other" (Derry et al., 1999: 641). Ecologizing values promote the tendency to work collaboratively in mutually trusting relationships (Ostrom, 1990). Companies that promote sustainable values as part of their strategic vision can be thought of as ecologizing firms. To be efficient in business processes involves not only saving the firm money, but also preserving the ecological environment in the process. Lumber mills for paper production in the Pacific Northwest of the United States have recently revised their clear-cutting techniques in favour of more sustainable methods of replanting faster growing varieties of pine as they obtain their raw product. This is a step in the right direction for maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem. An ethic based in the principles of ecology can be "self-critically anthropocentric in the sense that its agents take seriously the responsibility to understand what it means to occupy a particular epistemic position relative to those...human and nonhuman others" (Lee, 2006: 23). As indicated in a previous section, aesthetic experience possibly offers the potential for increasing the capacity to empathize with the fate of an ecosystem's constituents. Including aesthetic experience in an ecologically minded moral value compels us to consider deeper questions related to our complex relationship with nature, as well as to consider the long-term worth of environmental protection (24). Thus, ecologizing values which are widely shared among all humans can be directive in shaping pro-environmental behaviors.

Ecologizing and *economizing* values co-exist. Where economizing predominates, organisms achieve a temporary respite from entropic trends, thus surviving in the short-term. The tendency for individuals to economize often takes precedence over our less pronounced drives to ecologize. Humans economize through technological innovation. It is natural and unavoidable to human nature to strive to develop and utilize new technologies in order to survive. It became a moral imperative for our ancestors to innovate new solutions to social and ecological challenges. Thus, in order to survive, humans had (and, have) to navigate the social and environmental world. Technological developments were (and, are) necessary to overcome the threats posed by the ecosystem (including those by other individuals living in the ecosystem). Certainly, technological innovation has been a key to development, but in the recent past it seems to over-dominate all forms of innovation, which has led to one of the major problems of "progress"; it is viewed largely in technological terms (Alvesson, 1984; Rosa, 2010).

We propose a theoretical justification of moral values based on the following logic: Economizing values connect self to others (thru economic relations) and ecologizing values connect self to nature

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3 (through sustainability). But the formation of the self is increasingly moderated by technological and
4 symbolic processes within culture. Thus, it is important to distinguish between the moral values we find
5 at the root of human nature and the cultural manifestation of these values through an aesthetics process.
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7 The rules related to sustainability (our context) are the moral norms that can result from the use of
8 aesthetics. We provide tools and strategies for business that will enable a rebalancing of these competing
9 value sets in the Discussion section of this paper.
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13 Next, we describe the natural foundations of aesthetics to illustrate how our innate inclinations for
14 beauty are emotionally tied to foundational moral values linked to sustainability. Through an aesthetic
15 process (including, aesthetic rationality), sustainable practices can be promoted and spread through an
16 organization.
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21 **Aesthetics: An Evolutionarily Formed Sense of Beauty**

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23 *“When you make judgments of beauty you do not follow mere fancy, but the workings of a reasoning*
24 *faculty that is inborn in the mind.”*
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26 --Leon Battista Alberti, Renaissance architect
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29 In Western philosophy, Plato is credited with the first study of beauty. He considers it to be one of three
30 primary archetypical virtues, the other two being, truth and goodness. Ancient Greeks studied aesthetics
31 in terms of beauty, but only in relation to creative endeavors like music and poetry. The Greek root of the
32 word means ‘perception’. Pre-Socratic etymological origins of aesthetics are Greek ‘to breathe in
33 suddenly’” (Dobson, 2010: 393). Aesthetics is a field of philosophical inquiry and also considered a part
34 of science. It is not synonymous with “art”, rather, aesthetics and art overlap but are not necessarily
35 linked. Art is one important medium for realizing aesthetics nonetheless. Aesthetic “experiences are
36 crystallized in art forms...that enter into the marketplace...” (Harter et al., 2008: 432). We highlighted
37 some of these earlier in the paper.
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44 Evolutionary theory is useful in enhancing the understanding of organizational processes (Alrich
45 & Ruef, 2006; Stoelhorst, 2008; Velamuri & Dew, 2009). Some aspects of a general human value system
46 derive from evolutionary forces (Cosmides, 1989), and among these forces we find an inherent
47 appreciation of art (aesthetics) (Dutton, 2009; Fehr & Falk, 2002; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003). The
48 underlying idea is that aesthetic tendencies and abilities linked to it enhanced the long-term survival of
49 individuals (or groups of individuals) that possessed them, and therefore, have become widespread and
50 dominant through the evolutionary process of natural selection. This perspective acknowledges the role of
51 sociocultural forces (i.e., “nurture”) in the development of aesthetic inclinations. Thus, both “nature” and
52 “nurture” determine properties of human ethics and aesthetics, but the “nurture” component is itself
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3 derived, at least in part, from evolutionary forces (Wasioleski & Hayibor, 2009). “Moral standards are the
4 products of biological and cultural evolution” (MacDonald, 2001). One of the broad goals of business
5 ethics is to make organizational agents aware of the impact their decisions have on others’ lives. Included
6 in this agenda is a concern for the preservation of the future resources of the environment (Velamuri &
7 Dew, 2009).
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11 Evolutionary psychologists claim that there is a natural instinct for aesthetics. This is the position
12 we adopt here in this paper. Individual *intuition for* aesthetics, the “art instinct” served an evolutionary
13 purpose. Notions of beauty were developed in the Pleistocene Era and became imprinted in humans’
14 minds through natural selection. In his elaboration on the evolutionary foundations of art, Dutton (2009)
15 discusses how aesthetics evolved as an antecedent of human emotions naturally selected to enhance the
16 chances for survival against natural elements. For example, communities that were able to draw useful
17 pictures or tell stories of natural dangers (such as the sabre tooth tiger, or rocky cliffs) were able to warn
18 and protect their kin from those dangers. Similarly, representative pictures, stories and songs about plants
19 and animals increased the chances of obtaining and maintaining food supplies. Art elicits an affective
20 response from individuals and that emotion makes the perceiver of the art (illustrating a potential threat or
21 danger) more likely to behave in a risk-averting manner, which provided a better chance for survival
22 (Dissanayake, 1995).
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31 The art instinct is a universally held trait that is formed naturally, but is moderated by cultural
32 constructions of reality. Thus, its substrate is universal but the manifestation in behavior is culturally
33 variable. “The principal way to make sense of the universality of art is...to understand the arts
34 naturalistically, in terms of the evolved adaptations that both underlie the arts and help constitute them”
35 (221). Despite cultural differences in interpretation, aesthetics expresses basic human perceptions and
36 emotions (Bell, 1914). The universality of art and aesthetic (artistic) behaviors, their spontaneous
37 appearance everywhere across the world and throughout the history of human development, regardless of
38 culture, suggests that they are derived evolutionarily from natural and innate sources. It is clear that the
39 specific functioning of the brain is subject to environmental influences, but that our biological brains also
40 shape culture (Azar, 2010). Art falls into many disparate categories; in general it represents “separate
41 adaptations for valuing particular fitness-enhancing things” (Gaulin & McBurney, 2005: 291).
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49 Aesthetics discipline of study developed much more recently. It is a vehicle for knowing. While it
50 is linked to an understanding of beauty and is concerned with questions surrounding what constitutes
51 beauty, its scope covers other elements of human experience (Dewey, 1927). John Dewey initiated a
52 practical examination of aesthetics in *Art as Experience*, published first in 1934. It served as the impetus
53 for modern aesthetic theory and remains a powerful influence today on discussions about ethics (Pappas,
54 2008). Dewey showed the common connections between individuals and phenomena, and the relation
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4 between people and the external world. He thought that the purpose of art is to create a more “satisfying
5 experience, one that invigorates us and aids our achievement in whatever ends we pursue” (Taylor &
6 Hansen, 2005: 1224). He saw aesthetics as a way of helping persons achieve a unifying ethic emphasizing
7 shared common goals of creativity and global stability by developing and communicating an
8 understanding of humans’ place in the world. This is why moral values are a necessary antecedent. “An
9 aesthetic experience is knowledge producing insofar as it offers a heightened sense of reality pregnant
10 with possibilities, a greater depth of insight, and fuller and richer interactions” (Harter et al., 2008: 426).
11 Aesthetic inquiry is capable of providing more depth in our understanding of organizations as well as
12 offering criteria for assessing organizational members’ decision-making and meaning (Taylor & Hansen,
13 2005: 1226).

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20 In relation to art objects, aesthetics is a way of assessing beauty. Objects of beauty have
21 “purposiveness without purpose” (Kant, 1790/1954). A work of art for Kant was not an answer to a
22 problem, “but an object of contemplation in the theater of the imagination that makes up its own problems
23 and supplies its own solutions” (Dutton, 2009: 229). Kant conceived of art as having a rational structure.
24 This notion of rationality is important for our purposes in this paper. Thus, Kant’s intention was for art to
25 lead to reflection and rational discourse resulting in emotional satisfaction. The rational discourse requires
26 a progressive inquiry from the spectator, who tries to understand and to feel the aesthetically objectivised
27 emotion. The longer the spontaneous inquiry goes on, the more s/he feels the inner rhythm, harmony,
28 symbolism and essence of the art production. The aesthetical process can lead to “new cognitive
29 possibilities and a sensibility that is critical of the divisions exercised by modern thought” (Cazeaux,
30 2000: xiii). In other words, experiences linked to aesthetics can prompt cognitive and emotional reactions.

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38 Such art experiences enable individuals to qualitatively open different space-time relations than do
39 common, ordinary objects. It follows that enlarging the classical instrumental rationality-approach, with
40 what we designate as an aesthetic rationality-approach (discussed in the next section), could qualitatively
41 open new spatiality and temporality in organizations. It can enable broader thinking and engagement
42 among individuals. For instance, if caring about the natural environment or other social and public issues
43 is subjectively experienced by an individual, then rational approaches can be employed to understand
44 these issue. “Aesthetics of sustainability...convey a humility towards the non-human environment” and
45 have the capacity to create patterns that connect individuals (Kagan, 2010: 1100). This ethic of care
46 toward the environment is a cognitively and emotionally driven process, on which we elaborate in our
47 model.

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54 In the following section, we propose a new definition of aesthetics that provides utility for
55 organizations. For us, aesthetics may be shown as a three-step process involving subjective experience
56 and inter-subjective communication of the experience to reach an ultimate collective understanding. The
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3 first step involves the subjective, sensory, and emotional experiences of beauty through creative forms of
4 expression (e.g., art) such as when one views a painting or sees a theatrical performance. This marks the
5 biological response to the encounter with the artistic expression. The second step contains an aspect of
6 rationality and reason through the inter-subjective communication of experience. This may happen, for
7 example, through self-reflection and in conversations with others about the art experience. Of course, this
8 step is heavily influenced by moral values. This makes aesthetics an observable process, rather than an
9 abstract idea (Baumgarten, 1735). (We observed this dimension of aesthetics in the organizational
10 examples cited in the previous section of this paper.) Finally, the third step involves the conclusion of the
11 process where collective sense and understanding could be elucidated. From a basis of instrumental
12 rationality, we take these elements of aesthetics and the related moral values to offer an aesthetic process
13 that incorporates aesthetic rationality as an important second step.
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21 Despite our conviction that aesthetics involves a three-step process in numerous observable
22 cases, we do not posit that step 1 is always automatically followed by steps 2 and 3. We realize that
23 business organizations sometimes try to promote individual or collective aesthetic experience for their
24 purposes that impede or even prevent the passage to step 2. Since the purpose of this paper is to analyze
25 the potential of aesthetics for developing a sensitivity for sustainability among the members of an
26 organization and not to examine the instrumentalization of subjective, emotional aesthetic experience for
27 the purpose of psychological manipulation, we purposely have proposed this three-step aesthetic process
28 because we are not claiming a single, deterministic outcome. Within this process, there is the possibility
29 for multiple, less ideal motivations.
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38 **Instrumental to Aesthetic Rationality**

39 It is beyond the scope of this paper to review the vast and long-lasting debate on reason and rationality.
40 As social scientists, it seems worthwhile to us to first reveal at the theoretical foundations of our
41 “rationality” positioning. The notion of rationality, which serves as the basis of our aesthetic rationality
42 concept, refers to the theory of discursive rationality of Habermas (1997). According to him,
43 intersubjective communication represents an important form of rationality. The general link between
44 aesthetics and rationality is not a unique feature of our concept. This link has already been addressed in
45 sociology, first by Max Weber, when he defined “*wertrationale*” (value-oriented) social action (Weber,
46 1980:12). What is new and represents one of our contributions in this piece is the fact our concept
47 includes an expanded notion of aesthetics, not limited to a unique value dimension nor to a pure
48 emotional dimension. Moreover, our own concept of aesthetics is not linked to a static comprehension of
49 rationality. Rather, aesthetics is analyzed as a process where the rational aspect represents the second step
50 of a complex dynamic progression. Emotions are considered to be implicit in the process, and common,
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3 shared values reveal themselves more nascent. Based on this clarification the following section addresses
4 the link of aesthetics and rationality by examining the strength and weakness of instrumental rationality,
5 as this rationality concept remains dominant in economics and management theory.
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9 10 *Instrumental Rationality: Assumptions and Values*

11 The following concise presentation of the concept of instrumental rationality, referring greatly to the
12 theory of rational choice, does not ignore the more recent modifications and relativizations of this concept
13 due to the bounded rationality approach (Simon, 1952) or other approaches in economics integrating
14 psychological and sociological factors. As we consider that these approaches do not fundamentally
15 change the essence of the instrumental rationality concept, they are not discussed here.
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19 Managerial decision-making models assume that humans are rational beings (Keynes, 1924;
20 Rest, 1979). The theory of rational choice assumes that “man” is inherently instrumentally rational, and
21 that humans are purposive and goal-oriented in their decision-making (Misangyi, Weaver, & Elms,
22 2008). Individuals act on the belief that their actions will lead to a rationally self-interested outcome.
23 Rationality is orientated to fulfilling one’s specific subjective desires. Desires may be driven by base
24 emotions, but the reason for acting is always justified by objective rational considerations of
25 instrumentality of the decision (such as survival or productivity). They possess hierarchically ordered
26 preferences, or “utilities” as they are referred to in economic theory. In business, “instrumental rationality
27 seeks to make business operations profitable” (Mele, 2010: 641). In choosing particular behaviors
28 humans make rational calculations with respect to the utility of alternatives and the predicted costs of
29 each alternative, with the goal of maximizing the overall utility. Applying this rational choice approach to
30 organizational and collective social situations, the theory posits that all organizational decisions are
31 ultimately the result of rational choices made by utility-maximizing individuals.
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35 Instrumental rationality limits manager’s discretion to change current perceived notions of their
36 environment and context. While it is not devoid of moral values, instrumental rationality “reduces moral
37 value to the status of mere desires or affections...” subjugating it to a less useful role in organizations
38 (Moore, 2004: 75). It is rooted in the maximization of value independent of human affect. Moral values
39 related to efficiency dominate management thinking and are based on an old set of assumptions
40 (Alvesson, 1984). Instead, a broader conception of instrumental rationality is needed. The rationality
41 construct needs to be more fine-grained since it influences the quality of decisions that are made
42 (Bouwmeester, 2013). Habermas claimed that moral values could be rationally redeemed through the
43 justification of universal moral principles (1984). We feel that aesthetic values tap into a naturally
44 derived moral sense for the protection of the environment.
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Human behavior is also influenced by concerns for beauty and relatedness, and by collective concerns for community. These inherent motivations are guided, in part, by affect. Human behavior in organizations cannot be understood without acknowledging underlying emotional dimensions as possible drivers or moderators of behavior (Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Zerbe, 2000; Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Damasio, 1994). Rationality in this sense refers to the “dualistic split between reason and emotion...” where their separation “...instinctively subordinates the former to the latter” (Kallio, Nordberg, & Ahonen, 2007: 42). But, emotion cannot be neatly separated from cognition. “Organizational conditions and processes are characterized by emotionally deep structures” (Alvesson, 1984: 68). Organizational actors act in accordance with their emotional and group interests.

Contrary to rational choice assumptions, we know that human behavior is not as self-centered and instrumental as economic theory will have us believe (Ostrom, 1990). In traditional primitive societies, people attempted to gain long-term sustainable resource yields from ecosystems on which they depended. They managed their common pool resources such as forests, fisheries, grazing lands, fuel, and water systems in ways to avoid collapse by short-term overuse. Here we see a natural concern for the collective. This can still be seen in societies today (Davis, 2010). Ostrom’s field studies on the management of pastures in Africa and irrigation systems in Nepal show how societies have developed diverse institutional arrangements for managing natural resources. While these approaches may not entirely prevent resource exhaustion, they avoid outright ecosystem collapse. She identified "design principles" of local resource management including, clear boundaries for use, locally adapted rules about resource appropriation, collective and participative decision-making, effective monitoring and accountability, sanctions for abuse, and easy conflict resolution among parties.

Additionally, Taylor and Hansen (2005) argue that instrumental realities need to be extended toward aesthetics; that at present there is too much of an emphasis on the instruments of short-term effectiveness and efficiency in organizations, as defined by the current dominant management paradigm. They claim that “aesthetics for the sake of aesthetics (rather than in the service of instrumental goals) may be hugely important in the long run” (1216) for business thinking. If this traditional management paradigm acknowledges aesthetics at all, it is mainly in an instrumental manner. “Such an approach accepts and compounds a dualism between the rational and the non-rational in which the latter is ‘demoted’ to a secondary interest” (Witz, Warhurst, & Nickson, 2003: 43).

In the following section, we highlight non-rational aspects of aesthetics to operate in *duality* with reason. We use this instrumental rationality as a starting point for articulating a complementary rationality based on the experience of beauty. Our approach is based on the assumption that emotions, beliefs, value discourses, and aesthetic judgments are also involved in an individual’s (and, an

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3 organization's) calculated, seemingly objective, rational decision-making. Thus, we posit and explain the
4 notion of aesthetic rationality next.
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8 **Aesthetic Rationality**

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10 Aesthetic experiences are, as we expound upon, evolutionarily rooted and by consequence, commonly
11 occur in organizations. They are fundamental to human nature. Thus, the tendency is unavoidable and
12 ubiquitous among members of an organization. Employees cannot simply leave their aesthetic instincts
13 behind at home, or systematically eliminate them from organizational tasks and decisions. We argue that
14 a certain form of "rationality" is present in aesthetic experiences. Such experiences become meaningful
15 and make sense based on deep and connected sensory, emotional and cognitive processes (Griseri, 1998).
16 The arts help us discover and communicate the world around us involving "immersive experience,
17 openness, introspection..." and reflection (Mirvis, 2014: 379).
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23 Scholars need to examine the interpretive processes that "construct ethical issues out of social
24 stimuli" (Sonenshein, 2007). In Figure 1, we illustrate such an interpretive process using aesthetics. The
25 dimension of rationality is present in the second step of the aesthetics process at which time the
26 experience is interpreted and communicated through a reasoned discourse within a particular cultural
27 context. "We need rationality to determine which preferences, when satisfied, bring value into the
28 world..." (Moore, 2004: 78). Thus we are not discarding the rationality concept; rather, we are moving to
29 a broader conception that can realize these moral preferences. We believe aesthetic rationality
30 accomplishes this.
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36 As previously mentioned, we view aesthetics as being a three-step process. At its base, lies a
37 foundation in moral values. We believe that these moral values are naturally derived and affect
38 individuals' perceptions of issues. The process begins at the interface of individuals and their
39 environment, with subjective sensory and emotional experiences. These experiences are affected by
40 individuals' moral values. Persons perceive the aesthetic trigger and experience their own personal sense
41 of the artistic medium. This experience is individually subjective and automatically generates a naturally
42 derived emotive response. The subjective reasoning employed in this step is based on the experience's
43 relation to authentic personal moral values. When individuals acknowledge an issue with an ethical
44 component, they automatically form an intuitive judgment from their own experience as well as the
45 shared experience of others (Sonenshein, 2007: 1027).
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52 Moral decision-making research is largely dominated by rational models of behavior, stressing the
53 importance of calculated reasoning of dilemmas. But more recently, research on decision-making
54 acknowledges the interaction between emotion and reasoning (Haidt, 2001; 2007). The former is
55 connected to moral intuition. Moral intuition is a critical part of the decision-making process, one type of
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3 cognition within a dual-process model (Verschuere, Schaeken, & d'Ydewalle, 2005). It is a quick,
4 automatic affective system rooted in the evolutionary process (Anderson et al., 2015). The dual-process
5 model of decision-making can be broken in System 1, associated with heuristic processing, and System 2,
6 which is slow, deliberate and rational (Kahneman, 2011). When forming a judgment with a moral
7 component, both emotion and reasoning are involved (Greene, 2001). Certain situations or contexts serve
8 as triggers for the type of judgment processes are utilized (Greene, 2007). "If intuitions are triggered by
9 emotion, for example, individuals could manage the kinds of emotional stimuli to which they (or others)
10 are exposed" (Weaver, Reynolds, & Brown, 2014: 104). Emotion serves as a subconscious primer of
11 cognition. Subconscious primes sensitize individuals to a certain action or situation by exposing them to
12 moral content (Welsh & Ordóñez, 2014). We feel an aesthetic experience *can* serve as a priming
13 mechanism.
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21 Another way to conceptualize the connection between aesthetic rationality and moral norms is to
22 refer back to evolutionary theory. "A sociocultural-evolutionary approach to morality," moral
23 foundations theory (Haidt & Graham, 2009) contends that there are foundations of moral intuition that are
24 present cognitively, regardless of a particular culture (Weber & Federico, 2013: 109). This work posits
25 that conceptions of morality go beyond a mere concern for others in terms of justice, and that it also
26 includes concerns about maintaining community and stability in groups (Lakoff, 2008). The foundations
27 of moral intuition that are proposed by moral foundations theory (MFT) are rooted in evolutionary
28 processes to regulate group interactions. MFT proposes propose five moral intuition foundations broken
29 into two main categories: one that emphasizes protection of individuals and the other that refers to group
30 bonds (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). The former is rooted more in concerns for economic factors (external
31 goods), while the latter is more focused on social concerns (Stenner, 2009). Foundations are based in a
32 common "other-regarding" concern that served an adaptive advantage to our ancestors, resulting in an
33 automatic affective response (Haidt, 2013: 290). Thus, emotions and cognition are intimately linked.
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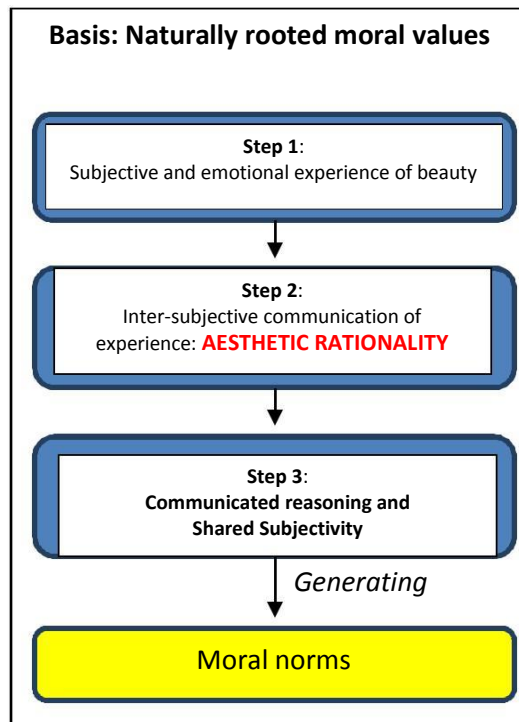
42 Thus, in the second step of our model, interpretive and social discourse reasoning operates both at
43 emotional and cognitive levels. It involves communication of the experience based on reasoning – where
44 reason is interpreted broadly. In a sustainability context, each person's reasoning becomes value rational,
45 where "moral considerations about justice or environmental care" are discussed (Bouwmeester, 2013:
46 415). Inclinations surrounding justice fit into the social bonds category of moral foundations (Haidt,
47 2013). Reasoning about decision effectiveness, including instrumental concerns can be included in this
48 process, but it will have to be based on having good reasons for acting (Elbanna & Child, 2007). The
49 moral values associated with aesthetics provide this justification. Thus, instrumental rationality is
50 involved, but reasoning does not stop at this level. Here we see intersubjective reasoning where values
51 and norms are considered (see Elster, 2006).
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Through dialogue organizational members share their aesthetic experiences through a communicated reasoning process. Dialogue is critical for the communication of personal experiences (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996; Mauws, 2000). The “negotiation of aesthetics displays and expresses the politicized organizational action of the persons involved” (Strati and de Montoux, 2002: 759). Communicated reason refers to a “symbolically structured lifeworld that is constituted in the interpretative accomplishments of its members and only reproduced through communication” (Habermas, 1984: 398). Moral values derived from aesthetics are rationally communicated through a metaphorically discursive exercise. In a business organization, “managers would use a metaphor/a communicative reason normally not used within the existing instrumental reason...and then restructure their understanding of the business system and practices using this metaphor” (Molthan-Hill, 2013: 74). A deep diagnosis based on “reflection and appreciation, in advance of action” is necessary for organizational strategies to be implemented (Harrison, 1995: 32). Evolutionary perspectives on organizational processes do not imply an underlying determinism, but they do “suggest circumspection in the retrospective moral evaluation of complex events” (Velamuri & Dew, 2009: 123).

The final step reflects the outcome of communicated reason where collective meaning is achieved. After aesthetic rationality is initiated, shared subjectivity is achieved among organizational members. A mutual understanding based on a shared aesthetic experience occurs in this third step. This shared experience does not necessarily manifest itself since new forms of organizational aesthetics are subject to various interpretations and value sharing (Strati & de Montoux, 2002). We claim here, in our model, that Step 3 is a possible outcome of the process we offer. The social context of organizations is an important dimension of aesthetic rationality. Aesthetic rationality can include environmental reasoning “so that environmental issues are subsumed under the prevalent paradigms in the business world” (Molthan-Hill, 2013: 75). Sustainability issues are restructured to become part and parcel of the instrumental rationality of organizations. Habermas even acknowledged that it is possible for the business system to be reframed to be part of the social system (1984). Justifications for acting “are requisite for mutual understanding...” (Niemi, 2008: 257). An expanded rationality, aesthetic rationality, generates moral norms that serve as the justification for sustainable enterprises. Thus, after Step 3 in the aesthetics process, moral norms are manifested out of the communicated reasoning. In the Discussion section of this paper, we identify moral norms related to sustainability that can guide real business strategies.

Figure 1: Aesthetics Process



The Interaction of Emotion and Reason

In order to avoid epistemological and methodological misunderstandings which could be triggered by Figure 1, it is prudent for us to clarify our position on the practical link between emotion and reason. Cognitive neuroscience research has discovered that there is indeed a neural algorithmic link between emotional expressions and functions of the brain (Salzman & Fusi, 2010; Schulte-Ruther, Markowitsch, Fink, & Piefke, 2007). Emotion is activated in the amygdala and reason is found in the prefrontal cortex. Emotions are more likely to become involved with cognitive processes when issues take on an ethical component (Sonenshein, 2009). The relevance of MFT to our arguments is partially related to the dual-process model. Humans use two differential processes when analyzing a situation or resolving a dilemma with (or without) a moral component. Our model claims that an aesthetic process involves both evolutionarily derived moral intuitions and the application of calculated analysis and dialogue. The moral intuitions are linked to emotion while the analysis is linked to cognition. When making categorical inferences about a phenomenon or situation, dual-process models require additional cognitive activity which can lead to more effective reasoning (Markovits, Forgues, & Brunet, 2012).

Despite Western philosophy's penchant for positioning rational thought as opposite to emotions, the strict separation of thought and emotion is false (Nussbaum, 2001). Emotions are themselves a form of thought, constituted as pre-judgments. Consequently, they are part of the thinking process. Emotion-

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3 cognitions are "...ways of fully (experientially) registering the state of things and environments
4 important for our well-being. They are forms of evaluative judgment" (22). Once the cause of an emotion
5 is discovered (in Step 1), it becomes a part of the thought and is no longer considered an emotion, even
6 though the thought may be still evoking emotion (Pettinelli, 2012). Individuals form preferences for some
7 item even before they have had the opportunity to conduct a complete appraisal of that item. The intuitive
8 reactions to objects or issues are affect driven (Sonenshein, 2007) and serve a functional role in
9 responding to problems. Emotions emerged out of an adaptive purpose of managing relationships
10 between individuals, within groups and across cultures (Keltner, Haidt, & Shiota, 2006). Thus, moral
11 emotions help regulate the ethical interactions between people.
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18 In our context, works of art invite us to experience culturally shared meanings and values that are
19 rooted in a commonly held constellation of beliefs and emotions. This experience may vary from culture
20 to culture, but is shared within that culture (Schama, 1995). As individuals gain experience with
21 something, that experience becomes subsumed into their intuition. But intuition is also affected by social
22 factors of shared experience (Sonenshein, 2007). An emotional experience "is characterized by
23 motivational, physiological, psychological, cognitive, and behavioral components" (Gooty, Gavin, &
24 Ashkanasy, 2009: 834). For example, when a viewer cries or laughs, or claps or yells out while watching
25 a theatrical performance, s/he is expressing and sharing a deeply felt emotional reaction. This sensory
26 communication may not be directed at any one individual, but conveys meaning to others within the same
27 experience (of space), and sometimes may even elicit a response from them. Rational actions based on
28 intuition about values "can be characterized as social action that both responds to the immediacy of the
29 moral or ethical demand and uses reason to protect and give effect to that impulse" (Woods, 2001: 702).
30 Thus, values affect our impulses as well as our reasoning.
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39 From evolutionary theory, emotions are often viewed as an involuntary physical reaction to
40 environmental stimuli (Ridley, 1996). Emotions are even often considered a byproduct of cognitive effort.
41 This latter viewpoint allows a place for cultural influence on individuals' emotional responses (see
42 Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Zerbe, 2000 for a discussion). Thus, only if two people interpret the situation in the
43 exact same way will they have the same emotional experience (Fisher et al., 2013). We favor the
44 perspective that there is an interactive effect between cognition and emotions (Li, Ashkanasy, &
45 Ahlstrom, 2013). Merely concentrating on an object may not be enough to motivate the individual to
46 commit to an act (Voronov & Vince, 2012). Moral values engage others in an inclusive way, and by
47 consequence, facilitate cooperation and sharing. With the influence of emotions, aesthetics engages
48 individuals' moral imagination (see Werhane, 1999) in the form of perceiving ethical responsibilities
49 towards the world. This can include sustainability. Aesthetics can lead to practical awareness, action, and
50 change of the status quo. Aesthetic knowledge can be tacit, rather than explicit. Nevertheless, it activates
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perceptive-sensory abilities in organizations (Strati & de Montoux, 2002). Aesthetic judgment is “affected by the beautiful...” which is critical to the interpretation of the knowledge being conveyed (Strati, 2000: 54). An aesthetic experience can contribute to individuals’ rational explanations of organizational phenomenon.

Aesthetic rationality reveals that artistic expressions, however subjective they may be, trigger the sharing of emotions, soliticiting cognitive competences and creating an intersubjective rational dimension (Step 3 of our model). Aristotle considered aesthetics a logical analysis of the arts. *Rhetoric* was a method of presenting arguments so as to get an audience’s attention through rational, ethical, and emotional appeals. Aesthetic rationality seems to us to be consistent with his notion of emotional logic. It includes attempts to reach the ‘pathos’ of individuals, since the triggering of emotions is an essential part of forming a rational argument. Of course, we acknowledge the complexity of the proposed cognitive-affectual process. In this present paper we are limiting the scope of the discussion in order to clarify the meaning and utility of aesthetic rationality. In a parallel work, we recognize the interactive effects of moral imagination (Somerville, 2006; Werhane, 1999), sensemaking (Maitlis, Vogus, & Lawrence, 2013; Weick, 1995), cognitive expenditure (Street, Douglas, Geiger, & Martinko, 2001), interpersonal communication (Pilotta, 1982), and motivation (Oakley, Chen, & Nisi, 2008) to form a process model of aesthetics in organizations. Our efforts here are a purposeful first step towards a major theoretical development of the concept of aesthetic rationality and its implications for practice within organizations.

Thus, applied to organizations we can deduce that aesthetic experience can make human reasoning possible for creating new senses of reality. This experience generates knowledge useful for organizational strategies (Dewey, 1934/1989). Organizational elements can be enhanced when imaginative experiences are embraced and utilized for creating new solutions. The logic behind these experiences includes “an ability to creatively imagine a future different from the habituated present” (Harter et al., 2008: 426). Understanding through aesthetic rationality is formed jointly on objective reality (Murdoch, 1980) and also on subjective emotion-based perceptions of reality (Postrel, 2003). Individuals use “symbolic formation to discover the rules according to which the latter was produced” (Habermas, 1979: 12).

Aesthetic rationality is capable of initiating a dialogue about the universal importance of social and natural concerns. It can reassess organizations and the “purpose of business that overcomes the incoherencies and inconsistencies of the ethical or economic view of business” (Dobson, 2007: 41). Our notion of aesthetic rationality rejects the dualist view of aesthetics and morality, a view commonly referred to as aestheticism, which considers art and morality as separate and autonomous domains (Kieran, 1997). Instead, we take an interdependence perspective of duality (Farjoun, 2010), according to which two distinct essential elements can be complementary and dependent, rather than separate and opposed (Farjoun, 2010: 203). This interdependence does not imply a mechanical cause-effect link

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3 between both elements. Thus, aesthetic rationality under certain conditions and socio-psychological links,
4 allows for the transformation of aesthetic experience into ethical behavior in organizations. As aesthetics
5 is not limited to art, but encompasses also other forms of creative expressions, the fact that many
6 contemporary artists tend to favor designs that transcend moral values (King, 2006) is not a proof that
7 aesthetics, as the knowledgeable appreciation of beauty, does not involve moral values.
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11 Aesthetic judgment is based not only on cognition, but also on sensory and emotional dimensions.
12 The formation of aesthetic emotions (related to Step 1 in Figure 1) is likely to be important for the
13 development of an ethic about the social environment, as aesthetic judgment taps “directly into a
14 meaningful notion of quality of life...” (Dobson, 2007: 43). As Dutton emphasizes, aesthetics expresses
15 a universal feature of all individuals—human perception. Perception is an anthropological universal that
16 is at the foundation of aesthetic judgment (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The understanding of the world takes
17 place through individual and shared perceptions. Emotions elicited from aesthetic experiences are not
18 only derived from simple perception, but also through the evaluation of the experience through discourse
19 within a community (Maitlis, et al, 2013). This discourse reflects, according to our previous definitions,
20 the rational aspect in the aesthetic process (Griseri, 1998). Thus, emotion is partially generated also
21 through the discovery of a shared ethics (in Step 2 of Figure 1), but also by the recognition that some
22 ethics are interpreted differently. Aesthetics enables individuals to communicate and expand upon their
23 monadic understanding of the world. In other words, aesthetics seems to favour a certain community
24 between humans (through discourse), implying an aesthetic driven ethic. *Aesthetic rationality turns out*
25 *to be a vehicle (i.e., a process) that enables groups of humans to interact, and to have reciprocal*
26 *relations of an ethical nature.*
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37 These arguments alone cannot explain the conflicting and complementary sensations, emotions and
38 cognitions that are encompassed together in an aesthetic process. In the next section, we focus on relating
39 aesthetic rationality with organizational elements while acknowledging the duality of both dimensions.
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44 **Toward a First Conceptual Positioning:** 45 **Aesthetic Rationality, Moral Values and Organizations**

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47 For the purpose of a first conceptual positioning of an aesthetic rationality within organizations, we
48 reduce the complexity of the concerned dimensions, analyzed above, by aggregating the affective fields of
49 “emotion” and “reason.” After this first conceptual positioning we will show how these dimensions are
50 configured differently in various types of organizations.
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55 *Aesthetic Rationality and Modern Virtue Ethics*

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4 As we have seen, aesthetic rationality is part of an aesthetic process, which itself encompasses an
5 emotional and rational dimension, operates at the individual level, and is linked to different types of moral
6 values. As we explore the possibilities for a first conceptual positioning of aesthetic rationality in
7 organizations including the described moral value-links, it appears to us that a solid theoretical foundation
8 would need to also integrate an approach focusing on the ethical dimension of processes within
9 organizations. Among the different approaches in this field “modern virtue ethics”, so named by Geoff
10 Moore (2002:19) is promising, even if the categories of “virtues” and “moral values” have still to be
11 clarified. We see several reasons that modern virtue ethics serves our purpose for linking with aesthetic
12 rationality. These ten items are outlined below.

- 13 □ First, epistemologically modern virtue ethics is compatible with the social science
14 approach followed in this paper since its purpose is to be “a theory how people *are*, not
15 how they ideally ought to be” (Solomon, 2003: 49).
- 16 □ Second, the category of “practice,” defined by MacIntyre (1985:187), includes the
17 individual, but also operates at the group level, is necessary in order to be applicable to the
18 aesthetic process.
- 19 □ Third, MacIntyre’s accent on the “cooperative” form of “practice” as human activity
20 permits us to build a bridge between the ethical dimension and step 2 of our aesthetic
21 process with its communication and dialogue components.
- 22 □ Fourth, the link between this cooperative human activity to the achievement of “internal
23 goods” (see for explanation: Moore, 2012: 365) offers the possibility to explore the relation
24 between aesthetic rationality (step 2) and the values dimension, opening the door for a
25 positioning of this form of rationality within the already established set of rationality
26 concepts.
- 27 □ Fifth, the distinction between “internal goods” and “external goods”—a fundamental
28 element of modern virtue ethics (MacIntyre, 1985: 187-188)—allows us to distinguish
29 between desirable ethical objectives from desirable objectives that do not have a clear
30 ethical component, which also helps to clarify the relation between “virtues” and
31 “values.”
- 32 □ Sixth, as “virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to *feel* in
33 particular ways” (Ibid: 185; emphasis by the authors), it is evident that the emotional
34 dimension, underlined in our preceding analysis, is addressed by modern virtue ethics.
- 35 □ Seventh, another fundamental distinction, elaborated by this ethics approach is the
36 “Practice-Institution” distinction (For explanation see: Moore, 2005b: 241). This distinction
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allows us to analyze the aesthetic process as a “practice” within an organization or institution by explicitly taking into consideration its inherent ethical dimension.

- Eighth, we also find an interaction between “practice” and “institutions.” Referring to MacIntyre’s observation that practices and institution form a “single causal order” (MacIntyre; 2007: 194), these relations have been recently the subject of empirical research (Moore, 2012). This research reveals that there exists in the long-term really an “essential circularity” (Ibid: 379), whereas in the short-term antinomistic tensions seem to dominate. These conclusions of modern virtue ethics open an avenue for analyzing to which extent an aesthetic process can be supported or neglected by an organization and which are the conditions of a mutual reinforcement.
- Ninth, the observed essential circularity of practice and institution, as well as the *character* as a “seat of the virtues” (Moore, 2008: 499) are important variables of explanation of modern virtue ethics, emphasizing the *long-term* aspect as a significant feature of observable virtue ethics. So modern virtue ethics offers us the possibility to deepen the time dimension which is linked to the implementation of an aesthetic process and of a sustainability approach within an organization.
- Tenth, by considering virtues as potentially *universal*, but practices as always *particular*, modern virtue ethics opens the door for making an organizational analysis coherent with a sociological analysis of the analogous “relations” problem between the phenomenon of “beauty” (universal ideal) and the *particular*, culturally influenced, aesthetic experience.

In order to explore to which extent the results of our preceding discussion can be “reformulated” in the terms of modern virtue ethics, it is necessary to present here, in a condensed way, the basic notions and ideas of this type of ethics. MacIntyre (1985) sets it up by applying Aristotle’s ethics to modern, free-market societies. This effort has been pursued more recently as well (see: Moore, 2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2008; 2012; Solomon, 2003; 2004; Weaver, 2006).

We start by presenting MacIntyre’s elaborated definition of “virtue” which builds on his first (presented above). “A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods”(MacIntyre. 1985:191). One finds the four cardinal virtues: fortitude (courage), temperance, justice and prudence, but also the virtues of trust and trustfulness, integrity, constancy and honesty (Hart, 1994). An important part of this virtue definition includes “those goods internal to practices,” indicating other central notions of modern virtue ethics: “practice” and “internal goods”. MacIntyre defines “practice” in the following way: “Any coherent and complex form of socially

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3 established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized
4 in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially
5 definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human
6 conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.” (Ibid: 187). Concerning the
7 “internal goods,” Moore, referring to MacIntyre, states: “...there are internal goods, such as those
8 obtainable from loving relationships, playing or listening to a piece of music, or from various kinds of
9 intellectual stimulation, which are generally derivable from the exercise of the virtues in a sense for
10 excellence within the context of a particular practice. In the context of business such internal goods
11 might include the enjoyment of the exercise of practical skills, the stimulation that the competence
12 situation affords, pride in accomplishment and the personal dignity that derives from a job well done”
13 (Moore. 2005a: 660).

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15 Working from these definitions, one can say that “internal goods” are characterized by their
16 physical intangibility in the sense that they do not readily lend themselves to quantification, and that they
17 are intrinsic satisfactions derived from some activities (Dobson, 2008: 44-45). From internal goods,
18 which also include both the excellence of products and the perfection of the individual in the process of
19 creating them (Moore, 2012: 365) (called “goods of excellence” by MacIntyre (1988: 35)), “external
20 goods” are distinguished. These goods can be achieved in a variety of alternative ways, which are not
21 linked to any particular practice (Moore, 2005b: 660) . Typical external goods are survival, reputation,
22 power, profit, and more generally, success (Moore, 2012: 365). MacIntyre calls them “goods of
23 effectiveness” (MacIntyre, 1988: 35). According to him, external goods are the concern of any
24 corporation or organization which he subsumes under the category “institution,” the definition of which is
25 not identical with those employed by institutional theory or the new institutional economics (Moore,
26 2012: 365). “Institutions are characteristically and necessarily concerned with ...external goods. They are
27 involved in acquiring money and other material goods; they are structured on terms of power and status,
28 and they distribute money, power and status as rewards. Nor could they do otherwise if they are to sustain
29 not only themselves, but also the practice of which they are the bearers” (MacIntyre, 1985: 194).

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31 For modern virtue ethicists, it would be an error to ignore this embeddedness of practice within an
32 institution and their mutual dependences. This concerns the relation between internal and external goods,
33 as MacIntyre emphasizes that “the goods of excellence cannot be systematically cultivated unless some
34 goods of effectiveness are also pursued. On the other hand, it is difficult in most social contexts to pursue
35 the goods of effectiveness without cultivating at least some of the goods of excellence” (MacIntyre, 1988:
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57 *Modern Virtues and Moral Values*
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4 On the basis of this admittedly concise presentation of basic notions of modern virtue ethics, we now
5 attempt to conceptualize our analysis of the aesthetic process (with its inherent aesthetic rationality) in
6 terms of this virtue ethics. Following MacIntyre (1985) we think that the *aesthetic process* could be
7 considered a *practice* in the aforementioned sense. As shown in the steps 2 and 3 of Figure 1, an
8 aesthetic process is not limited to a purely individual and subjective dimension, but also represents a
9 *cooperative human activity* because dialogue and communication between different persons constitutes
10 important elements of this process. This cooperative human activity is also a *socially established* human
11 activity (as already developed earlier in this paper). What types of institutions would manifest the
12 practice of aesthetics? Ultimately, this question leads us to inquire about:

- 13 a) the links between the internal goods pursued by an aesthetic process and the external goods
14 of companies,
- 15 b) which virtues seem to be present and important in an aesthetic process and,
- 16 c) how to position moral values, discussed in our paper, within the framework of modern
17 virtue ethics.

18 We now explore the real world existence and potential of an aesthetic process, as a practice, within
19 organizations.

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21 The notion of “value” is very old, employed at first in philosophy and mathematics, and then in
22 theology, before entering into the vocabulary of social sciences (economics, sociology, psychology). For
23 a long time, *moral* values have been a subject of debate among philosophers. However, the term has also
24 been developed in the social sciences with the purpose of employing an objective, value-neutral analysis
25 of social phenomena, rather than to present normative solutions. It is our intent in this present paper to
26 use the term of moral value in a social sciences sense. Indeed, it is possible to assign a “moral value” to
27 abstract constructs like justice and freedom, to certain behaviors, or to methods. So one can distinguish
28 between *intrinsic* values from *instrumental* ones. Adopting a relativistic position, it is possible to posit
29 that what one culture defines as a moral value may not exist in the same form in another one. Within the
30 framework of modern virtue ethics, this means that one is principally free to assign a moral value to an
31 “internal good” or to a “practice” or to a certain “virtue,” emphasizing that this assignment does not
32 necessarily mean the same thing. It is quite possible that not every internal good, practice or virtue
33 represents a moral value. It becomes evident that such a broad use of the moral value notion is not always
34 useful for a precise analysis of the entire aesthetic process. Modern virtue ethics seems to offer promising
35 tools for a deepened examination.

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37 Adopting this ethical framework for our research means that we consider *beauty* as the *principal*
38 *internal good* of an aesthetic process, as this practice can lead to an intrinsic satisfaction, a psychological
39 phenomenon universally described with the notion “beauty.” The main goal of referring to virtue ethics is

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3 to guide practice. In our sustainability context, a “genuine virtue includes the goal of ensuring ecosystem
4 sustainability” (van Wensveen, 2001: 233). Action guidance in virtue ethics can be accomplished by
5 applying virtue rules to a real issue, including moral education and reflective dialogue (Sandler, 2005).
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7 According to modern virtue ethics, the achievement of internal goods regularly requires virtues of
8 *integrity* and *constancy* within a practice. In our case, the virtue of *constancy* emerges as the key virtue
9 which could explain *the (sensitivity) link to the moral value “sustainability.”* Constancy allows persons
10 to feel the importance of long-term, ecology values (ecologizing) (MacIntyre, 1985). So the virtue of
11 constancy permits the rational and emotional discovery of sustainability as a moral value. The place of
12 nature in this context is complex. On the one hand, it provides an important external good for individuals
13 and institutions (related to survival); on the other hand, it provides an important basis for aesthetic
14 experience and becomes a means for the achievement of the internal good of beauty. In both cases,
15 however, nature can be considered a moral value.
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23 External goods generally can be thought of as an end, but also as a means to an end, which itself is
24 an internal good. Furthermore, the achievement of internal goods requires the achievement of some
25 external good. As practices are an important avenue for the achievement of internal goods and as
26 practices are realized within institutions, the achievement of internal goods through practices depends on
27 institutions. If the achievement of other external goods (for example, short term profit) threatens the
28 exercise of the core practice, then the survival of the corporation will be in danger (Moore, 2008). So the
29 challenge for the manager is to find the right balance within this system of interdependencies. A
30 corporation that succeeds in establishing such a balance is called a “virtuous corporation” (Moore, 2002;
31 2005b). This virtuous corporation “will be one which has a corporate character that acknowledges that it
32 houses a practice, that encourages the pursuit of excellence in the practice, aware that this is an entirely
33 moral pursuit, *and* one which pursues the external goods in so far as they are necessary to and support the
34 development of the practice” (Moore, 2002: 30). As we see Moore applies the categories of “character”
35 and “virtuous” in a metaphoric sense to the institutional level.
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44 Considering an aesthetic process a practice, we assert that aesthetic rationality is linked to the
45 achievement of the internal good of “*beauty*” through the exercise of the virtue of constancy. As one
46 normally assigns a “value” to beauty—a moral value—and since a moral value is assigned to virtues (like
47 constancy), aesthetic rationality appears to be linked to moral values. The moral value of constancy in
48 this context, takes an instrumental character to achieve the value of beauty. Analyzed in these terms, it
49 becomes evident that *aesthetic rationality* represents a possible form of Max Weber’s “*value-oriented*
50 *rationality*” (Weber, 1980: 12-13). Weber even explicitly mentions beauty as a reference value for this
51 type of rationality, emphasizing the emotional dimension involved and the fact that the sense of value-
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oriented rational social action is not anchored in the success of this action, but in the proper form of the action itself (Ibid: 12).

Institutions try to achieve external goods. The achievement of these goods of effectiveness is structured by a process which is traditionally based on “instrumental rationality”, as described in this paper. The practice-institution distinction of modern virtue ethics shows that the relation between instrumental and aesthetic rationality may perhaps be characterized by the risk that instrumental rationality threatens the achievement of aesthetic rationality. However, it also reveals that both rationalities are linked and that aesthetic rationality depends on instrumental rationality (Ibid: 13).

Aesthetic rationality and ideal-types of organizations


To specify the place of aesthetic rationality in the realm of organizations we take a duality perspective and examine how varying aspects of emotion and reason are implied in different types of organizations. Toward this purpose we describe a typology of organizations (see Figure 2) by positioning emotion and reason as both means and objectives. Along the horizontal axis, *reasoned means* are articulated through analysis, observation, scientific method, and communication, where as *emotional means* rely upon contemplation, sensory experience, or aesthetic experience. Similarly, *objectives* can be *reasoned* using utility, knowledge, prosperity, and effectiveness related to survival. These objectives are linked to external goods. They also can be emotionally anchored in feelings such as empathy, pleasure, and happiness, excellence, and beauty, as illustrated in the figure. These emotional objectives are intrinsic motivations and are thus linked to internal goods. This assignment of objectives and means is not necessarily the result of specific empirical studies, and can be open to some interpretation and possibly, cultural variation. Regardless, they fit into an explanatory perspective, which does not indicate empirical proof for all notions. Our goal is merely to launch the first conceptual positioning of aesthetic rationality with realistic classifications.

On this basis we develop, in Figure 2, five cells which represent theoretical forms of organizations (see Weber, 1980 for the “ideal type”-approach). It is a typology of organizational outcomes where aesthetic rationality is likely to be realized. Efforts to employ aesthetic means and objectives vary their ability to lead to aesthetic rationality based on the combination of emotion and reason. At this initial stage of conceptual development of the aesthetic rationality construct, it is prudent and appropriate to sort out the various theoretical types so as to formulate a better understanding of the empirical reality. We briefly walk through the four cells of the typology next.

It is quite legitimate to ask to what extent the preceeding structuring fits within the first positioning of aesthetic rationality in terms of modern virtue ethics and Max Weber’s value-oriented rationality. We think that we do not betray MacIntyre by assigning the *emotional anchored objectives* to the category of

“internal goods.” The *reasoned objectives* bear the character of “external goods,” and the ideal-type of organization presented in cell 4 would reflect an organization where the overwhelming dominance of the institutional effort to achieve short-term external goods has made practice in the long-term less likely. The reasoned objective of “responsibility” (defined in terms of the status of a person or organization, implying a form of duty for the consequences of its actions) represents an exception insofar as one can consider this responsibility as a reasoned objective, but not as an internal or external good. “Goods” in the sense of modern virtue ethics do not refer to social status. If we define responsibility as a “certain manner to behave, reasonably and prudently (Neuberg, 2004, 1680), then it becomes apparent that responsibility in terms of actions implies the *virtue of constancy* and refers clearly to the *virtue of prudence*. Or, if we approach the responsibility by the so-called “sense of responsibility,” this sense could be considered a virtue. Classifying an *aesthetic rational organization* (cell 5) as a “*virtuous corporation*” in the sense of Moore, does not depend only on the exercise of the aesthetic practice, but also from other conditions, mentioned above.

Figure 2: Aesthetic Rationality Realized in Organizations Through Emotion and Reason

MEANS OBJECTIVES 	EMOTION (involving contemplation, sensory experience, and aesthetic experience)	REASON (involving rational analysis, observation, scientific method, and communication)
EMOTION (seeking end states of pleasure, happiness, beauty, excellence) (Internal Goods)	NO FORMATION OF ORGANIZATION Individual or non-organized approach No Rationality	NO ORGANIZATION but PRACTICE AESTHETIC RATIONALITY
REASON (seeking end goals of utility, knowledge, prosperity, , effectiveness, survival) (External Goods) responsibility	INSTRUMENTALLY EMOTIONAL ORGANIZATION No Aesthetic Rationality	INSTRUMENTALLY RATIONAL ORGANIZATION No Aesthetic Rationality

<p>REASON SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>(External Good) and Responsibility</p>	<p>AESTHETIC RATIONAL ORGANIZATION</p> <p><i>Aesthetic Experience (Step 1 of Aesthetic Process) + Aesthetic Rationality linked to Sustainability (through a practice pursuing the internal good of beauty)</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>
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Cell 1 (Emotional Objectives & Emotional Means)

If emotionally dominated objectives like empathy, pleasure or happiness are pursued only by emotional means like contemplation, sensual experience or aesthetic experience, as in step 1 of the aesthetic process (Figure 1), the organizational approach remains individually focused. An example of this can be seen in the long-time practice of anchoritism—the process of settling in a secluded location for spiritual isolation. Finding peace in a solitary environment (emotion-emotion combination) is already logically not possible within a collective group. The empirical reality shows that the individual practice of anchoritism when attempted within an organization (like in a monastery) has been only realized by adding reasoned means to the affective experience. The classic example in history for this approach is the Carthusian Order. Founded in the 11th century, it combined eremitical and cenobitic life. The way reasoned means were employed by the Carthusians in England to organize this combination has been described by David Knowles (2004). The lesson for us is that in actions driven completely by emotions, the formation of collective efforts is much less likely to occur.

Cell 2 (Emotional Objectives & Reasoned Means)

Here we envision social actions pursuing the end-states of empathy, pleasure, or happiness by a reasoned means of analysis, observation, scientific method, and communication. We view these actions as being consistent with McIntyre's category of "practice". While at first glance this approach may seem contradictory, it is illustrated by the contemporary examples of "scientific churches" and other movements which opt for rational methods in order to obtain emotional results. In such an organization, aesthetic rationality could be observed. The contradiction disappears if one emphasizes that such an organization as an institution in the sense of modern virtue ethics is obliged to pursue external goods in order to survive and that focusing on the above mentioned emotionally anchored objectives remains the goal of practices. So cell 2 does not represent the ideal type of an organization, but rather illustrates a practice.

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3 *Cell 3 (Reasoned Objectives & Emotional Means)*
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5 This emotion-reason mix is typical in organizations that pursue objectives like utility, knowledge,
6 prosperity, and responsibility by employing emotional means. We refer to this type of organization as,
7 “Instrumentally Emotional Organization”. Even if this pure form is not common, we see its reflection in
8 the sports and entertainment industry, in amusement theme parks, and hobby events. For example,
9 Disney attempts to generate socially responsible outcomes for its customers through nature-linked
10 emotional experiences of the visitors to its theme parks. They promote sustainability through establishing
11 an emotional connection to the environment by exposing their park visitors to sustainable themes and
12 ecological experiences. While we acknowledge that Disney’s social responsibility record is not
13 consistent, we are merely pointing out here that they are evoking nature-linked emotions. Here also
14 aesthetic experience, as in Step 1 in the aesthetic process, can be realized. However, conceptually, this
15 type of organization will encourage individual experience and not favor a common sharing of it, as in
16 Step 2 of the aesthetic process.
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26 *Cell 4 (Reasoned Objectives & Reasoned Means)*
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28 This reason-reason combination in Figure 2 reflects the “Rational Choice” model and its fundamental
29 base: instrumental rationality. This model is common to most government and non-government social
30 organizations, as well as to business organizations. Organizational models based in this cell lack attention
31 to emotion, and focus exclusively on reasoned objectives and reasoned means. All the criticism
32 concerning the limits of instrumental rationality, mentioned above, underline the fact that this type of
33 organization, “Instrumentally Rational Organization”, represents a theoretical construct and not the
34 complete empirical reality. However, this theoretical construction represents the dominant referential
35 point for business organizations and in organizational/management studies. This organization does not
36 consider emotions to be important but rather thinks rational decisions are made independent of a persons
37 emotions and drives. The increasing importance of the emotional dimension in contemporary life will
38 perhaps push forward the elaboration of a more sophisticated ideal type of organizations fitting to our Cell
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49 *Cell 5 (Sustainability Reasoned Objectives)*
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51 The phenomenon of aesthetic rationality (step 2 of the aesthetic process) can be positioned within this
52 figure, in the isolated cell below the 2 x 2 typology. Cell 5 represents the overlapping character of an
53 *Aesthetic Rational Organization* within Figure 2. We illustrate this cell separately to highlight a specific
54 type of organization focused on particular reasoned objectives. In such an organization (illustrated with
55 examples at the beginning of this paper), aesthetic experience is employed as a tool with regard to the
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reasoned objectives of responsibility and sustainability, but also voluntarily shared as a practice in a collective communication process (Aesthetic Rationality). Here the sensitivity to the aforementioned moral values is favoured. The intersubjective process is combined with the traditional processes in an organization characterized by instrumental rationality. This suggests that aesthetic rationality is not in opposition to instrumental rationality, but rather it is a rationality that is closely linked to its instrumental roots and expands the concept. Aesthetic rationality is anchored in *reason* due to its nature of intersubjective communication, and linked to *emotion* due to its communication *subject*, which includes the emotional experience of beauty. We believe that aesthetic rationality can be observed in many organizations where reasoned objectives are not only pursued with reasoned means, but also with emotional means.

From this discussion it is clear that aesthetic rationality can have an impact in organizations. It indicates a human quality of organizations. In the next sections, we relate different human and organizational elements to aesthetic rationality.

Managerial Implications of Aesthetic Rationality: Potential Implementation

Clarifying the possible ethical implications of aesthetics, analysed in preceding sections, we find out that aesthetic rationality implies that it is possible to inform managerial policies through values like compassion, environmental care, concern for community, and social justice. One can observe companies like Apple, Google, and Patagonia who all have innovated policies of flexible work spaces and times, sensorily evocative products, service experience design, integrated employee care, the freedom to pursue personal passions, employee involvement in hiring their bosses, and support for community volunteering. These policies are manifestations of aesthetic-derived moral values of caring and compassion. Lululemon, maker of yoga and athletic clothing, promotes a vision and lifestyle that encourages employees to read motivational self-help books, and take care of their own body and well-being.

Aesthetic enhancements resulting from design thinking make a major contribution to economic and national competitiveness. Design is a way to add the beauty into products, services and organizational processes. As pointed out by Trueman and Jobber (1998), design has a facility for adding value to products. Joy et al. (2014) advocates 'the sensorially immersive experience.' Companies that produce well-designed products are commercially more successful than randomly selected companies competing in the same industries (Roy, 1994). For example, Apple credits the sleek design of their iPhone as one of the factors that has contributed to their increased market share in the mobile phone industry.

Beauty can also bring value to organizational life in other ways:

1. Sensory joy. Aesthetics brings joy and happiness to people through sensitive processes and perceptions. Nature aesthetic for example, is seen in some cultures as the most perfect and perpetual type of joy. Pope

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3 Benedict XVI in his 2009 Meeting with Artists said: 'Man can live without science, he can live without
4 bread, but without beauty he could no longer live, because there would no longer be anything to do to the
5 world. The whole secret is here, the whole of history is here.' The sensory of joy is strongly related to
6 positive feelings like happiness and the global well-being of people. Positive emotions are strongly
7 related to people motivation and with their ability to perform at work (Warren, 2008; White, 1996; Yin
8 et al., 2011).

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13 2. Improved functionality. Employees are more satisfied at work when they engage in the development
14 of products with improved functionality. Aesthetically designed products are often linked to increased
15 functionality. It follows that employees could feel a more satisfactory work experience when aesthetics is
16 a considered in the development of products.

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20 3. Health and wellness experience. This deals with sensorial treatments, permitting people to rebalance
21 their body and mind and light up their spirits (Taylor and Ladkin, 2009). Work environments offering
22 these services are often styled with beautiful art pieces, pleasing designs and charming sceneries to let
23 people feel the pleasure and the wellness. The processes by which beauty works and the value chain of
24 beautiful acts can lead to greater overall wellness in employees. Google is well-known for creating an
25 aesthetically pleasing work environment which translates to documented health benefits among many of
26 their employees.

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31 4. Emotional satisfaction. Aesthetics evokes emotional experiences in terms of what it does to make
32 employees "feel" better rather than just "look" better (Sharma and Black, 2001). An enlightened form of
33 capitalism involves organizations finding ways through the market to make a profit (external goods) while
34 maintaining the natural environment in the process. Stakeholder values change over time. It is now
35 commonplace to see stakeholders of organizations concerned about preserving the natural environment.
36 At the same time there is evidence that stakeholders are often attracted to aesthetically pleasing designs
37 offered by companies. Among these stakeholders are employees. Research has shown that relationship
38 building through an aesthetically pleasing work environment leads to greater employee satisfaction and
39 ultimately can have a positive effect on the bottom line (Swanson & Davis, 2006). "When organisations
40 invest in art, design and architecture, they need to be active in engaging employees with its meaning and
41 relevance. If employees are not engaged, the aesthetic environment will not stimulate creativity or
42 influence job satisfaction and motivation" (Bjerke, Ind, & de Paoli, 2015: 57).

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Aesthetics is also regularly an important factor in the process of employee recruitment. Job postings that
espouse aesthetic qualities are more likely to gain the attention of job seekers (Dineen, Ling, Ash, &
DelVecchio, 2007). People are predisposed to processing information more carefully if their attention is
initially drawn to the form and presentation of the material. Greater recall of information and longer

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3 cognitive engagement with the organization is more likely once this attention is triggered. The “personal
4 relevance of customized messages exerts effects only when good aesthetics are also present” (368).
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7 Aesthetics is also manifested in innovative solutions for human resource development and training
8 in organizations (Gibb, 2004). By the same token, aesthetic rationality, which consists in the
9 intersubjective communication of aesthetic experience, offers possibilities for managerial policies. For
10 instance, organizations typically use conventional instructional designs of classroom presentations to
11 convey organizational processes and technologies. Such training could be enhanced with shared aesthetic
12 experiences (Step 3 in Figure 1) by utilizing narratives and storytelling, music, theatre, and painting as
13 part of pedagogical methods that could lead to creative new designs (56). Within this process, using
14 rhetoric and metaphor to convey organizational messages is effective for overall learning as well as for
15 generating shared, felt meaning among employees (Bredeson, 2003). Shared aesthetics applied to
16 management storytelling can lead to enhanced organizational learning (Boje, 2009; Taylor, Fisher, &
17 Dufresne, 2003). Stories that convey an aesthetic experience are more likely to produce a shared felt
18 meaning that produces knowledge within the organization because of the connectedness that is generated.
19 Artistic expression can aid in the communication of powerful stories related to sustainability (Leach,
20 2016). Other possibilities for managers to bring out shared felt meaning involve improvisation techniques
21 (Ivanaj, Poldner and Shrivastava, 2014; Yanow, 2001) and imaginative free role-play (Ladkin, 2011). The
22 key of all these methods is to make new routines at work that develop mindfulness and create ambiguity,
23 which gets organizational members out of their comfort zone. Managed and playful instability can lead
24 employees to challenge typical ways of thinking (Jordan, Messner, & Becker, 2009).
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27 Another example where aesthetics proved its potential for implementing innovative solutions for
28 human resource management has been studied by Witz et al. (2003) with the Elba Hotel Group. In this
29 case the aesthetic process has been applied to the management of employees so as to transform them
30 into aesthetic laborers, i.e. workers, who are embodied in the corporate landscape to express aesthetic
31 values of the organization. It is possible, beyond emotional labor, to develop and train employees to
32 display dispositions and adopt a service style that appeals to the sensory desires of customers (Warhurst
33 et al., 2000). The Elba Hotel Group case highlights the ways that the HRM of the hotel chain
34 successfully socialized employees to embody an aesthetic ideal that was portrayed to their customers for
35 a more complete aesthetic experience. Obviously, aesthetic rationality can help in this regard by
36 providing the approach and process for achieving these organizational goals.
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39 Leadership in organizations can also be positively affected by aesthetics (Adler, 2006; Zhang,
40 Cone, Everett, & Elkin, 2011). Aesthetic leadership offers a different perspective that is focused on
41 “sensory knowledge and felt meaning associated with leadership phenomena” (Hansen et al., 2007: 552).
42 Discovering how affectively laden meaning is attributed and generated between leaders and followers in
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3 an organization is the goal of this approach. The leader's sensibility to aesthetics will likely be useful for
4 understanding the effects of the pressures for continuous improvement and change (Zhang et al., 2011).
5 Following these observations we believe that by including aesthetics to leadership strategies in
6 organizations, a more harmonious workplace environment may be achieved, one that fosters mutual
7 understanding and human needs. It seems important for leaders to be able to see the entire picture of the
8 organization, especially in fast-moving chaotic environments. The arts can aid organizational leaders in
9 finding the inner meaning of events and situations facing an organization that are not necessarily captured
10 by traditional management approaches (Ashkanasy, 2006: 484). Ladkin (2008) posits that aesthetic
11 leaders develop a mastery of their own emotions and tendencies, promote an overall authentic purpose
12 (consistent with moral values) for the organization, and ensure that the purpose is coherent with the
13 messages conveyed.
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21 In workplaces dominated by instrumentally rational concerns organizational members' ability to have
22 an aesthetic experience is muted (Taylor, 2002). Workers are not afforded the opportunity to experience and
23 discuss their work from an aesthetic perspective. Work emphasis is on instrumental, short-term business
24 concerns preferring thinking over feeling (Gardner & Martinko, 1996), stressing cognition while ignoring
25 emotion. It is up to the managers of the organization to allow aesthetics to flourish.
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31 *Aesthetic Rationality and Organizational Elements*

32 Organizations largely focus on achieving instrumental rationality, and tend to ignore the role and influence
33 of aesthetic rationality. Or, expressed in terms of modern virtue ethics, contemporary business institutions
34 favor the pursuit of external good to such an extent that the potential for certain practices is overlooked. We
35 suggest a more systematic examination of how aesthetic rationality can affect all major elements of
36 organizations and performance outcomes. We can imagine aesthetic rationality influencing:
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40 a) the macro-strategic organizational elements of vision, strategy, and governance, b) the operational
41 elements of structure, technology, systems, accounting and control and, c) the systemic level
42 organizational inputs, throughputs and outputs. The direction of this influence is toward making these
43 elements more creative and resourceful, socially inventive and compassionate, and environmentally
44 caring. The elements also have to reflect the shared moral values of the organizational members. As a
45 practical tool to think about aesthetic rationality in organizations we depict these influences in the
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Table 1: Organizational Aesthetic Possibilities and Performance Implications

	Organizational Element	Aesthetic Possibilities	Associated Moral Values	Performance Implications
Strategic	Vision	Harmony with stakeholders, nature & community, Triple Bottomline,	Ecologizing, Responsibility	Less conflict, more cooperation, collaboration
	Strategy	Choice of clean businesses, technologies	Long-term survival, ecologizing, constancy	Improves long term sustainability
	Governance	Artistic stakeholders	Beauty	Brings in diverse perspectives/ voices into decision making, alerts organizations to potential risks
Operational	Structure	Circular and curvilinear instead of horizontal and vertical relationships, beautiful physical structures	Economizing, beauty	Opens new information flows, communicative relationships, softens power differentials
	Technology	Sensory designs of products and processes, simplified and socially appropriate technologies	Responsibility, concern for others	Enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty
	Systems	Designing systems for beauty, in addition to efficiency, Humanizing the scale and size of systems	Beauty, economizing, concern for others	Smaller less risky systems and investments, decentralized deployment to fit market needs
	Accounting and Control	Transparency, clarity, precision	Responsibility, economizing, constancy	More open communications with stakeholders, long term resilience
Systemic	Inputs (Resources + Energy)	Cradle to Cradle and waste-free resource mgt, small scale nature integrated renewable energy systems	Ecologizing	Cost savings, lowers eco-footprint, responsive to public concerns
	Outputs (Products + Waste)	Beautiful products, compassionate services, recycling	Beauty, economizing, ecologizing, constancy	Enhances product competitiveness, lowers costs
	Throughput (Operations)	Attractive work spaces, grandeur in landscape & architecture	Beauty	Makes facilities more acceptable to communities, avoids NIMBY protests

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5 Note in Table 1 that the third column identifies related moral values to the aesthetics
6 possibilities we see for each organizational element. We tie the moral values of responsibility, survival,
7 beauty, concern for others, and the natural value sets of economizing and ecologizing to these
8 possibilities. Without a link to underlying moral values, the motivation for each of these efforts will be
9 weakened. Thus, we stress the importance of moral values to organizational aesthetics in the strategic,
10 operational, and system levels. These moral values become realized as concrete moral norms following
11 the aesthetic process.
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18 *Moral Norms about Sustainability*

19 Aesthetic rationality implemented at the strategic level can make organizational vision more in harmony
20 with a broader array of social and ecological stakeholders. Organizational strategies can be “aesthetized”
21 to be in accord with traditionally conflicting stakeholders like organized labor, environmentalists, and
22 special public interests. At this implementation level, we see abstract moral values operationalized into
23 moral norms, or rules governing sustainability. Corporate choice within its operational domain can be
24 focused on environmentally clean and socially creative industries. The performance implication is that
25 this can position the organization in line with long-term harmonious relationships with its environment.
26 We see this easily being related to the ecologizing natural value and underlying survival instincts.
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33 Applying aesthetic rationality to operational elements of organizational structure, technology,
34 accounting and corporate governance can make organizations smarter, more physically and intellectually
35 appealing. Aesthetics in the form of “design” is a great source of added value for product design,
36 workplace architecture, and job design. The nature of design science for organizations is linked to values
37 of beauty as well as humanistic values (Ernst van Aken, 2007). Beyond this, even accounting and control
38 systems, which have historically been avowedly instrumental, can pursue moral norms of transparency,
39 clarity, and precision. The implicit moral values are related to responsibility and economizing. It can
40 make organizational information intelligible to stakeholders, prevent obfuscation of critical information
41 and make organization more resilient in the long run.
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48 At a systemic level aesthetic rationality can improve the overall deployment of input resources,
49 throughput systems and outputs, and harmonize the interrelations between elements so that improvement
50 is holistic and systemic. Improvements in one area should not cause unintended harm in other areas.
51 Moral norms of global equity and a circular economy could guide a system to reform, for instance.
52 Aesthetics recognizes the importance of the thinking about the broader picture and the context of systems.
53 It seeks holistic understanding of individuals place in the world. These are very much rooted in natural
54 values sets of economizing and ecologizing, as efficiency and harmony with the environment are sought.
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Discussion

This paper responds to recent calls for developing new behavioral strategies to establish a microfoundation of management research (Greve, 2013). The goal of this line of inquiry is to provide organizations with innovative ways to achieve collective rationality and promote adaptation to fastly changing social and economic environments (Winter, 2013). Behavioral strategies like the one suggested in this paper (in Table 1) are meso-level theoretical tools that are capable of producing insights into mechanisms operating at other levels of analysis. Thus, we are able to gain a deeper understanding of organizational processes and outcomes (Greve, 2013). Current theoretical understandings of organizations and institutions are rooted heavily in individual-level, rational assumptions of behavior (Kogut, 2008), which reveal important rational elements but conceal moral and emotional elements, thus limiting the utility of these theories. What organizational and management theories need are collective standards of reasonable behavior which can expand the current models of rationality (Van de Ven & Lifschitz, 2013). Better decisions can be reached through the use of experience, intuition, and reasoning (Hamilton, 2011). Organizational theories “need a richer understanding of how individuals locate themselves in social relations and interpret their context” (Powell & Colyvas, 2009: 2). We believe our conception of aesthetic rationality— developed with the use of modern virtue ethics—contributes to the organization theory by offering new behavioral strategies which incorporate rationality, reason, emotion, and their link to certain moral values toward a comprehensive understanding of organizations.

Humans’ instinctual tendency for aesthetics can be used to change managers’ perceptions of an enterprise’s needs. Different organizational scripts, symbols, and activities need to be utilized to create new norms and facilitate the formation of new institutional environments. A concern for beauty is connected to the biologically derived human desire to augment her environment (Donoghue, 2003). The motivation for beauty is a naturally formed value. The rise of “design thinking,” public art, and aesthetic architecture exemplify the public’s preference for the beautiful, and for balancing function with form. From clothing to consumer products to household appliances, aesthetically engaged objects have established a presence in the market place, and in the popular imagination. In this paper, we offer different ways of thinking about organizations that can be useful for organizational design and functioning. Organizational development and its evolution can indeed be conceived as an aesthetic endeavour. Thus, we also respond to a call in this very journal for the use of more interdisciplinary approaches for rethinking organizational development and design (Wolfram Cox & Minahan, 2006).

Organizations can be well served by recognizing the importance of the aesthetic impulse of organizational members, stakeholders, and social institutions. The construct of aesthetic rationality offers one conceptualization of this rather elusive idea. The linkages between aesthetic rationality and

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3 organizational elements show the pervasive influence of aesthetics in organizational contexts. By
4 incorporating aesthetics into their decisions, organizational stakeholders can benefit in the form of more
5 desirable products and services, beautiful workspaces and landscapes, and customer and employee
6 satisfaction.
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10 Given the conceptual analysis of the process we have now found the different doors that can be
11 opened for the application of sustainability promotion. We are proposing an increased sensitivity toward
12 sustainability; focusing mainly on the intrinsic motivation. The second door concerns the degree to which
13 it is applicable to corporate leaders. Companies that are only committed to external goods will not be
14 enough to motivate sustainability, so they also need also intrinsic motivation. The second interest,
15 according to modern virtue ethics, an institution has an interest that practices (here linked to
16 sustainability) are not over-dominated by short-term external goods.
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20 One contribution of this paper relates to our efforts to link moral values and sustainability practices
21 in organizations. Modern virtue ethics provides conceptual tools for examining these links and showing
22 how aesthetic rationality as practice can be ignored or reinforced by an institution, and how the
23 constancy virtue can lead to a long-term view and the moral value of sustainability. Florea et al. (2013)
24 claim that little theoretical attention has been paid to establishing this critical link and that the disconnect
25 may be one of the reasons that sustainability initiatives in organizations are ineffective. We have
26 attempted to establish a moral value basis for aesthetics, which can be more easily connected to
27 sustainability through an aesthetic rationality process.
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31 We note several potential limitation of our work. First, this paper represents a preliminary
32 exploratory attempt to articulate the concept of aesthetic rationality. In this early survey, it is our intention
33 to merely lay out the key concepts, some organizational manifestations of aesthetic rationality, and the
34 construct's linkages to other organizational elements (Suddaby, 2008). It is necessary to further theorise
35 the concept of aesthetic rationality and develop a deeper understanding of the processes by which it is
36 institutionalised in organizations. Second, we realize that there are indeed perceived differences about the
37 aesthetic qualities of objects. This can result from individuals taking different aesthetic perspectives given
38 their personal and situational differences (Ritter, 2008). These varying aesthetic perspectives can
39 potentially affect the perceived role and importance of aesthetic rationality. Despite the universality of the
40 naturally formed aesthetic emotions, the type and degree of emotions evoked from a particular aesthetic
41 experience can vary from individual to individual (Dutton, 2009). The inherent subjectivity of aesthetic
42 experiences makes it a challenging subject for scientific examination. We encourage future research to
43 explore individual and cultural differences about aesthetic rationality.
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Research Implications

Organizations are subject to paradigmatic shifts of thought and strategy (Weick, 1995). People in organizations operate and make decisions based on shared senses of meaning or frames of reference (Shrivastava & Mitroff, 1984). But, this shared meaning evolves over time. Organizations operate within protocols of communicating and paradigms of organizational culture. As we argue here, the dominant paradigm in business is that of instrumental rationality. This paradigm is certainly valuable as it is geared to the external goods of efficiency and productiveness. However, it also often underestimates the reality of practices which are linked to community caring and compassion, sustainability issues, and the virtue of beauty. We offer a new kind of rationality for organizations. Aesthetic rationality can complete instrumental rationality to create more aesthetically sustainable organizations. An aesthetic approach can “surface meaning for different groups of actors within their own context of thinking/acting” (Cairns, 2002: 799). Additional research is needed that examines how to bring about holistic systemic paradigmatic shifts towards aesthetic organizations, encourage creative behavior change, creating new institutional logics and new ways of doing things.

The first step in applying concepts of “aesthetic rationality” to organizations is to promote the understanding of the term and its relationship to practical activities. Just as “rationality” is applied in different ways such as in accounting and control systems to rationalize financial expenditure, sales and marketing systems, to rationalize customer relations, inventory and production systems or to rationalize operations, we attempt to argue that aesthetic rationality could be used to aesthetize product design, workspace architecture, office décor, and group interaction involving both technological and social elements of organizations. We feel more work needs to be done to examine to which degree aesthetic rationality in organizations and the concept of aesthetics in organizations are linked.

Cell 5 in Figure 2 identifies what components are necessary for an aesthetically rational organization to possibly be realized. This type of organization is indeed an *ideal* type of organization, which may not readily exist in our current business environment. We would like future research to pursue discovering to which degree these elements exist to confirm the possibility of an aesthetic rational organization. To which degree does the current business environment create obstacles for achieving this type of organization. The presentation of ideal types of organizations is sometimes necessary (see Max Weber) for conducting empirical research. The “ideal” helps us evaluate real organizations for their “potential.” Perhaps building on Moore’s (2004) empirical investigation involving modern virtue ethics would be a good start for future work in this area.

Another opportunity for research in the management realm using aesthetics involves institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Typically, attempts in the management literature to address the creation, maintenance and transformation of institutions has involved examining what institutional

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3 entrepreneurs do to shape organizational institutions. These efforts are often affected by compliance
4 pressures operating on organizational actors. However, Suddaby (2010) acknowledge that little is
5 actually known in institutional research about how individuals actually experience institutions. This is an
6 important insight for the development of the field. Voronov and Vince (2012) integrate emotions and
7 cognitive processes into the analysis of institutional work. These components, they argue, are useful for
8 understanding how individuals themselves fit into institutional theory. They propose a
9 reconceptualization of human beings that goes beyond mere rationality. We believe our concept of
10 aesthetic rationality may be useful for achieving this reconceptualization and could serve as a tool for
11 understanding one-way emotions and cognition interact to generate a person's institutional experience.

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Future research needs also to demonstrate surfacing and empirically revealing instances of
aesthetic rationality and its effects on the stakeholders of an organization. We need detailed case studies
of aesthetic structures, systems and strategies, and of aesthetic process designs and policies. Our
conceptual model lays the foundation for future testing of theoretical relationships between aesthetic
rationality elements and organizational elements, which remain to be empirically tested.

Sustainability issues can be framed in terms of virtues, which affects how the social
sciences address such moral issues in organizations (Weaver, 2006). By looking at sustainability
as an intrinsically held virtue, the importance of individuals' moral identities becomes
accentuated. Virtues are end states in themselves, but they also serve to motivate individuals
toward a certain set of behaviors (McIntyre, 1985). The existence of these individual inclinations
can be traced to biological and evolutionary roots, which we link to naturally held moral values
in this paper. Aesthetics is viewed as a "practice" that can lead to the achievement of internal
goods. This link to internal goods is an important one in that internal goods that emphasize social
unity and continuity of life (ecologizing values) tap into persons' moral identities (Weaver, 2006:
344). We hope that organizational agents can use aesthetics to form sustainability-related moral
identities. Future research should examine how individual moral identities are facilitated by the
application of aesthetics in organizations.

Explorations into aesthetics in organizations must also consider the cultural variations to which
interpretations of art and design are subjected. First of all, cultures around the globe perceive
sustainability issues different ways (Purvis, Drake, Hunt, & Millard, 2000). Thus, the extent to which the
common moral values we identify in this paper are manifested in a particular society needs to be
examined further. In a study on German and British managers' perceptions of environmental issues,
Molthan-Hill (2013) discovered that not only do managers from these two countries perceive issues
related to sustainability differently, but their rationality assumptions differed as well. Managers in each

country also responded differently to efforts to reframe the instrumental goals of their organizations. We see this as a valuable area of future investigation.

Aesthetics management can be a useful tool in motivating a concern for creativity and innovation in organizations. Art communicates symbols that evoke emotion. Art provokes outrage against injustices, inefficiencies, and inhumanity. Art reveals questions hidden by our conventional answers. Aesthetics enables moral imagination about complex ethical issues that facilitates a more diversified understanding of multiple perspectives. The “cognitive dimension of the ethical decision-making process is certainly important for effective ethical decision-making, but can be complemented and enhanced by adopting processes more commonly engaged in by artists to involve the whole person in the process” (Elm, 2014: 57). Art is a possible means by which individuals are able to empathize with others and with nature. By triggering naturally formed emotions connected to our innate ethic of care for beauty, the environment and community, aesthetics can generate a concern for sustainable enterprise.

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