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Minding the gap: an analysis of hopeful, mindful organizing in the Chilean miners' underground journey from collapse to resilience

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ABSTRACT

Due to its reliance on the rational principles of strategic analysis, crisis management scholarship often operates under the assumption that the future is predictable, and therefore that the effectiveness of resilience during organizational breakdowns can be anticipated. This study presents an empirically and theoretically informed account of how hope emerges not simply as a cognitive orientation or motivational force but as a dynamic process interwoven with mindful organizing, emotional ambivalence, and collective sensemaking. The paper examines how resilience-making, as a hopeful organizational practice, is not solely the result of individual capacities or technical resources, but of psycho-social group processes activated in moments of breakdown. From a qualitative perspective, we analyse interviews to explore how collective practices in a resilience-making case -the 2010 Chilean miners' crisis- express a hopeful mode of (self-) organizing, in which not only perseverance but also imagination is put to the service of reconstructing a viable future.

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Introduction

Contemporary society is increasingly defined by overlapping crises – climate change, political unrest, economic instability, and social fragmentation – that challenge the very foundations of collective life. These conditions have created environments of persistent uncertainty and disruption, in which traditional control, planning, and stability models often fall short. Within this context, organizations are expected to survive and offer spaces of resilience and renewal. It is against this backdrop that the concept of hope has gained renewed scholarly attention. No longer dismissed as naïve or abstract, hope is being reexamined as a vital capacity for navigating adversity and envisioning alternative futures. In Organization and Management Studies (OMS), hope is emerging as a lens through which to understand how collectives sustain meaning, connection, and purposeful action amid breakdowns. Scholars have traced its roots across philosophy, psychology, and theology, while also exploring its concrete expressions in organizational life, particularly in practices of mindful organizing and collective resilience.

In this paper, hope is approached as a concrete concern, offering a path to answering a pressing question: How can organizations persevere and improve precisely when the circumstances in and around them are radically uncertain and unpromising? Since the 2010s, OMS scholars have engaged with the concept of hope (Carlsen, Hagen, and Mortensen 2012; Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997), highlighting its relational nature and its crucial role in enabling positive transformation

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in unstable environments. As Ericsson and Kostera (2019) emphasize, 'hope has nothing to do with optimism'; it is not simply an individual disposition, but a means of forging new modes of relating in the face of adversity. According to Carlsen, Hagen, and Mortensen (2012), hope is 'an organizational dynamic proper – a future-oriented and emotive quality of experiencing that interacts with other organizational processes and is contextually and situationally shaped; [it] acknowledges collectivity, emergence, and emotion'. Understanding the local social-relational and psychic processes that lead to organizational hope is of central importance because the kind of hope that emerges within a particular collective can inform and inspire processes of collaboration and resilience in other inter-related collectives. As Weick (2019) proposes, the challenge faced by organizations and society at large today, and indeed tomorrow, is finding ways to generate hope, diversely yet consistently, through practice.

In what follows, we examine how the resilience-making dynamics among workers, observed in a disaster situation that not only broke down the organization of work and workplace relations but also left workers on the verge of dying, were made possible by the generation of organizational hope. We frame and study hope as constitutive of mindful, reliability-seeking organizing in extreme contexts, that is, as an essential component of a strange-yet-synergistic combination that also includes fear and imagination, and which propels a shared disposition to endure and re-construct organization(s) amidst confusion, following instances of breakdown or decline (Sutcliffe 2018; Sutcliffe and Weick 2015; Vogus et al. 2014; Weick 2019). The extreme scenario we tackle is the collective survival effort of the 33 Chilean miners that were trapped underground for 69 days in 2010, after the entrance of the mine they were operating in collapsed. In particular, through the qualitative analysis of interviews and secondary sources, we delve into the accounts of resilience-making interactions and practices the miners deployed during the first 17 days of confinement, during which neither they nor the drilling teams (nor indeed the general public worldwide) knew for sure there was a realistic chance the 700-meter-deep shelter they were at could be effectively and adequately reached. We find organizational hope in this case to be a dynamic that both fuels and results from these practices.

First, we review the literature on the role that hopeful, mindful organizing plays in dealing with crisis and breakdown. Second, we describe the case of the 33 Chilean miners and the methodological framework that guides our research. Third, we present the findings of our empirical analysis, illustrating how hope activates resilient capacities to face crisis events. Finally, we discuss the implications of our study.

On hope as mindful resilience in organizations

The notion of hope and its relevance for understanding life in contemporary society has gained attention across diverse disciplines in recent decades. Crapanzano (2003), for example, traces the idea's anthropological and theological roots, linking them to current debates in psychology and social studies. Webb (2007) explores its varied philosophical foundations, drawing on thinkers such as Rorty, Marcel, and Bloch. His work is especially notable for proposing a framework of five distinct modes of hope – patient, critical, estimative, resolute, and utopian – each examined through dimensions like time, cognition, emotion, behavior, likelihood of outcomes, and the objective of hope itself. In organization and management studies (OMS), Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva (1997) sparked a broad discussion about the roles hope can play in organizational life and how it can help leadership navigate adversity and foster resilience and prosperity for members and stakeholders. Responding to this, Carlsen, Hagen, and Mortensen (2012) identify three main scholarly approaches to hope in OMS. The first, rooted in positive psychology (Snyder 2002), sees hope as a universal psychological process at the individual level, where motivation arises through goals, pathways, and agency to boost organizational performance. The second, pioneered by Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva (1997), shifts focus to relationality over individuality, open-endedness over goal attainment, and emotion over cognition. The third, which Carlsen et al. view as an extension

of the second, takes a phenomenological approach. It treats hope as a ‘future-oriented and emotive quality of experiencing that interacts with other organizational processes and is contextually and situationally shaped’. Here, the emphasis is on worksite interactions that help make the future understandable and co-constructable, especially under adverse or crisis conditions (Barton and Kahn 2019; Powley 2009; Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo 2021).

The concept of organizational hope becomes relevant particularly in relation to concerns about an increasing number of political and socio-economic breakdowns and to unquestionable signs of environmental collapse (Asayama et al. 2021; Kemp et al. 2022; Kirsch 2014; Masterson et al. 2014; Soriano 2018; Steffen et al. 2018). Responding to these macro-level alerts about the systemic and recurrent quality of crises, researchers have highlighted the key role that managers, policy-makers, practitioners, and other stakeholders play in promoting collective resilience, that is, the shared ability to absorb and bounce back from adversity (Stoverink et al. 2020), as a fundamental organizational capacity across industries, sectors, and regions (Pavez et al. 2022; Pearson and Clair 1998; Vogus et al. 2014). While many of these studies on crisis management revolve around the fostering of knowledge, trainable skills, and technical resources, others have focused on resilience as a social-relational, affective phenomenon, paying attention to processes of sensemaking, collaboration, and leadership distribution (Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo 2021; Vogus et al. 2014). These approaches can be linked to the concept of organizational hope because the latter stands for the human drive to initiate, direct, and improve (inter)action towards open-ended, co-constructible scenarios precisely from the site of adversity in which pain and uncertainty are being experienced (Weick 2019). Resilience-making, as an enacted organizational process, can thus be understood to only flourish when hope flourishes; as Carlsen, Hagen, and Mortensen (2012) emphasize, ‘hope is transcendent in that it stretches beyond the status quo of present circumstances toward renewing life and improving human conditions’.

As part of a broad discussion in OMS literature about the fostering of resilience and reliability, the concept of mindful organizing (Sutcliffe 2018; Sutcliffe & Vogus et al. 2014; Weick 2019) can furnish a more precise understanding of organizational hope as an embodied, relational process. Following Weick’s lead (2019), the ability of a group or a team to become mindful while working or operating, particularly under extreme conditions, reflects at a concrete, practical level what hope is as a dimension of human, and thus, organizational, existence. Vogus et al. (2014, 592) define mindful organizing as ‘a collective behavioural capacity to detect and correct errors and adapt to unexpected events’ and emphasize notable forms of group (inter)action in which such capacity can be recognized, including ‘discussing potential sources of system failure, questioning assumptions and received wisdom about their work, discussing ways to learn from errors and near misses, and drawing upon and deferring to each other’s expertise when needed’ (see also Weick and Sutcliffe 2015).

Following Vogus et al. (2014) and Weick (2019), what distinguishes mindful organizing from other conceptual approaches to organizational resilience-making is that it accounts for the central role that emotional ambivalence plays in fueling, rather than disrupting, sustained levels of cognition and effort required to deal with disorder and the unexpected. From this perspective, while a great deal of drive, empathy, and imagination is essential to survive organizational breakdown and catastrophe, it is the tense, ambivalent overlap of doubt and hope that helps collectives, in rather counterintuitive fashion, reach the highest level of reliability in their organizing. mindful organizing is grounded in Weick’s (1995) concept of sensemaking, which illustrates how individuals assign meaning to their experiences through a collective, ongoing process that is socially negotiated, situated, and focused on plausibility rather than accuracy. Organizational sensemaking plays a central role in high-risk or complex environments by collaboratively constructing, testing, and updating plausible interpretations of emerging events, thereby maintaining high reliability in the face of uncertainty.

Weick’s conceptualization of organizational hope (2019), drawn from Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy, provides insights that allow discerning how it emerges in concrete situations of crisis at the

workplace/worksites, where resilient, mindful organizing becomes urgent, but also where despair is rife. First, Weick emphasizes how mindful organizing in extreme contexts is a disposition of activity guided by a grammar or common ground of rules and conventions. Certain shared recipes that justify and guide an adaptive, hopeful disposition towards the unexpected are particularly important: perseverance, attention to detail, alertness to failures, deference to expertise, and focus on current operations. Second, Weick emphasizes how relative success in overcoming crises makes things more and not less, complicated, and hence that focus should always be placed on figuring out the operational present. For Weick (2019), the lesson is that hope works through the affirmation 'I've never seen this before, but I know what to do', that is to say, through examining both the irregularities and possibilities of the actual situation. Third and fourth, Weick emphasizes that hope is made possible by the paradoxical accentuation of thought and feeling that breakdown brings about. Weick (2019) reaffirms here the haunted equilibrium or ambivalence that makes hope possible: what impedes subjects from thinking steadily is precisely what helps them envision and pursue ways forward. Fifth and final, Weick (2019) emphasizes that alertness and attention make a crucial difference in the capacity to enact possibility out of what is troubling, and that the objects, resources, and the goals of attention should be reflected upon distinctly and simultaneously if pathways forward are to be realized.

Weick's work emphasizes the ambivalence that lies at the heart of resilience-making (see also Tekleston, Gomes, and Tefera 2023), which a mindful organizing perspective, enriched by conceptualizations of psycho-social process, allows foregrounding. In the next section, we discuss key works that discuss the latter.

Moving towards hopeful resilience *via* embracing interruption and making do with anxiety

Above mentioned studies on mindful organizing equate hope to sensemaking and a sensitivity to the needs, fallibility, and voice of others, which are all about adequately apprehending the still-unknown reality that subjects are facing. For Vogus et al. (2014), drawing from the work of Lazarus (1999), hope is conceptualized specifically as an emotion whose emergence relies on an 'appraisal of the challenges in one's environment and one's capabilities for navigating them' (Lazarus in Vogus et al. 2014). Nevertheless, as Webb warns (2007), Lazarus' estimative conception of hope can be overly conservative and rationalistic, as it ultimately promotes the conscious appraisal of the evidence or likelihood of imaginable outcomes. Following Webb (2007), an alternative take, revolving around the idea of personal resolve, signals the less objective, more profoundly subjective side of hoping. In a resolute modality of hoping the subject adopts a dogged anti-deterministic stance, assuming that 'the world is fluid, plastic and capable of being moulded by one's agency as it moves along the pathways one has identified' (Webb 2007, 76). Crucially, Webb emphasizes that resolute hope, while relying in part on cognitive reflexivity (Snyder 2002), also captures the importance of fostering an against-the-odds unconscious desire to persevere in the achievement of certain scenarios, particularly those that can be deemed unlikely or even impossible (Webb 2007). Mindful organizing can be appreciated more precisely here as a deep affective dynamic between actors at the level of lived, embodied experience.

Scholars like Pettit (2004) have stressed how the hopeful, resolute pursuit of positive imaginaries is enabled by emotional attunement and self-regulation. Expanding on these insights, it is important to take into account the unconscious, defensive (i.e. adaptive) psycho-social process that allows subjects to sustain a state of behavioral responsiveness and a sense of self-efficacy while intensely embodying the disturbing effects of organizational failure and breakdown. Indeed, elaborating on Weick (2019), it is important to acknowledge that, to generate resilience, the hope-inducing 'accentuation of feeling and thought' that adversity triggers needs to find subjects that are (already) capable of acting, and especially interacting, in an increasingly more accurate, flexible and dedicated fashion.

Heeding Carlsen et al.'s (2012) call, relationality can be understood more deeply as a meaningful, affective, and often unconscious group dynamic that underlies both the individual and collective capacity to think and feel after traumatic events (Malgarim et al. 2018). In concrete terms, this requires paying attention to the particular ways in which actors interact, and the practices they engage in as a group at the site of breakdown and disaster, to metabolize not just fear, as mindful organizing scholars argue, but also more complicated states of perplexity, anxiety and aggression in the face of destruction or death (Gabriel 2012). The relative distortion or even the splitting of the subject's self can be understood as an unconscious defensive-adaptive process against anxiety, developed since the very formation of the psyche through relating with significant others, that represents primitive and actual suffering in lived experience, but at the same time, that expresses a capacity for adaptation, creativity and hope, in both mental and practical terms (Malgarim et al. 2018; Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo 2021).

Some recent empirical findings about these psychosocial dimensions of resilience-making can inform the phenomenological, relational analysis of hope as outlined above, as they indicate that autonomous, collaborative, and mutually caring modes of interaction prove decisive in turning the shared experience of anxiety into a work-oriented group mentality.

Through the analysis of narrative accounts, Powley (2009) identifies three mechanisms that make resilience activation possible during crisis: compassionate witnessing, that is, noticing and feeling empathy for affected others; relational redundancy, that is, the effect of individual action on larger social entities within and without the affected system; and liminal suspension, that is, the (provisional) alteration of relational structures and the emergence of new relational patterns. The latter is particularly relevant, precisely because it emphasizes how the capacity for creativity and reconstruction emerges precisely via interrupting the continuity of organizational selves, space(s), and time(s). Powley's study (2009) finds that, at a concrete level, crises bring about what he calls temporary holding spaces, brief periods of inactivity and uncertainty in which organizational members are prompted to readjust and reorient themselves. These, in turn, lead to the reconfiguration of roles and relationships. Following Powley (2009), such a suspension of normal organizational reality would be spatial and temporal, but also and more importantly, affective-relational, as it would trigger an adaptive, partly unconscious effort by subjects to develop new thoughts, feelings, and roles to connect effectively with counterparts in an already-in-crisis scenario. This offers a deeper, phenomenological reading of hope as a mindful dynamic that drives organizational resilience by establishing a productive psychic-social tension with negative affects elicited by crisis.

Drawing on psychodynamic group theory, Sanfuentes et al.'s insights (2021) about the function that shared leadership plays in resilience-making coincide with the above. For these authors, the disruption of all shades of organizational normality opens up possibilities for alternative, non-vertical ways of not only preserving the integrity of groups but also of enhancing their capacity to work with, against, and through anxiety. Their observation of narratives around a shared experience of effective group resilience shows that surviving and overcoming disaster might require a forceful interruption or suspension of standing modes of relating (e.g. routines, habits, coordinations) and the active questioning of principles for the organization of work, such as hierarchy and specialization. The work of Barton and Kahn (2019) furthers this reading by providing a more encompassing picture of how anxiety is defused collectively to generate organizational resilience. Drawing also on psychodynamic concepts, these authors warn about the group brittleness that results of a purely defensive mode of activity and relations vis-a-vis adversity, in which subjects unconsciously collude with each other to neglect signs of anxiety and distress, to simplify roles, tasks and narratives, and to reinforce dysfunctional behavior that conforms to the established. Barton and Kahn (2019) find and promote an alternative, less defensive and more adaptive route to group/organizational resilience, which begins with the acknowledgement that stress and negative affects are signs of a concrete breakdown of normal operations and relations that can be useful as means to cope, learn, repair and improve; this effort to make do with anxiety they call relational pause.

The latter concept resonates with Powley's idea of liminal suspension and Sanfuentes et al.'s notions of work reconfiguration, yet it captures not only the deeper process of relational reflexivity that underlies resilience-making, but also the hopeful, mindful quality that such process has, as it implies using interruption to propel a much more sophisticated processing of emotions, cognitions and relations during crisis. Relational pauses represent an essentially hopeful gesture or tactic, as they are all about actively engaging with despair, not avoiding it, gambling on the fact that mindful, resilient-making activity becomes heightened, not thwarted, by the collapse of the normal. Following Barton and Kahn (2019) and elaborating on Fleischer's (2013: 314) insights about the notion of crisis being fundamentally tied to the idea of time, relational pauses can be seen to express a fundamental shift in how the spatial grounding and temporal unfolding of interaction during resilience-making efforts are understood. This is a shift from a chronological understanding of crisis and resilience, where organizational routines and projectable cycles of breakdown and recovery are central, to a kairological understanding, where relational exceptionality and especially opportunity are embraced; in particular, in Barton and Kahn's (2019) words, what is crucial is the opportunity to listen to present and past stories about adversity, to support and validate each other, to enact and accept more complex identities, and finally to engage in learning conversations to improve affected relations.

Overall, the key lesson is that anxiety, as a human response to breakdown and the imminence of death, emerges as a mighty interruptive force, capable of distorting and halting organizational life in its diverse aspects, and that this power of suspension is precisely what offers a window of opportunity for the adaptive sketching of effective ways of being and relating in organization that were not (easily) imaginable or acceptable before the unfolding of crisis. As Carlsen et al. contend (2012), the latter process lies at the heart of organizational hope as a means for resilience-making.

Next, we explain how the dimensions and processes elaborated in the previous and present sections can be operationalized to observe organizational hope in (inter)action.

The context of this study: mining in Chile

We now provide a brief characterization of the context in which this study takes place. The primary source of natural wealth in Chile is the extraction of copper, which accounts for approximately 11.5% of the country's fiscal revenue. Chile holds 36% of the world's reserves of this metal (Arancibia Carvaja et al. 2015; Molina 2020). Its exploitation has had a strong neo-colonial influence, as since the early twentieth century, American capital has exploited its deposits. In 1971, Chile nationalized copper production, creating CODELCO, one of the world's largest copper companies. CODELCO's state-owned production coexists with many private companies established in Chile since the 1980s, capitalizing on the country's vast reserves (Guajardo 2007; Molina 2020). Large-scale mining in Chile coexists with medium-sized mining deposits, accounting for 2.88% of the total production (Molina 2020). While this sector lacks the same capabilities as large-scale mining, it is still an essential driver of the country's growth as it is funded by national capital (Arancibia Carvaja et al. 2015).

As in other Latin American countries, Chilean medium-scale mining is subject to weak regulations and has limited enforcement capacity. Widespread service subcontracting and poor safety and health conditions make it an industry with a higher risk of accidents. Weakening unions compound this, accentuating workers' vulnerable life conditions (Manky 2019). In this context, only "brave men" are expected to withstand the risks of mining work, the harsh working conditions, and the lack of oversight by government agencies, which exacerbates precarity and lack of protection. Accidents are normally attributed to worker negligence or irresponsibility rather than precarious working conditions. Therefore, it's not uncommon for authorities to consider 'accidents and even deaths not as problems to be resolved, but as situations to evade' (Méndez y Barrueta 2011, 76). The mining industry has become a scene of increasing conflict due to the emergence of environmental groups since the 1980s denouncing the negative impact of mineral extraction on the environment. This negative impact has also affected the communities living near the mines, many of whom are indigenous

peoples with little power to defend themselves against large corporations. The defence of their cultural heritage and the demand for economic compensation for environmental damage have exacerbated conflicts among the various stakeholders (Jensen and Sandström 2020; Kirsch 2014).

In a country like Chile with a strong Catholic tradition, the harshness of mining work in northern Chile has been linked to labor struggles and a popular religiosity anchored in pilgrimage festivals and the worship of the Virgin Mary and saints. This form of worship has given miners the strength and courage to persevere through their challenging lives. Due to the late settlement of the northern part of the country, due to nitrate and copper production during the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church didn't hold the same power as it did in Chile's central and southern regions. In this area, religious practices incorporated elements of pre-Hispanic worship with a strong devotional and affective character, diverging from Catholic orthodoxy and priestly liturgy (Tennekes and Koster 1986). This religiosity maintains a strong sense of community, belonging, and a reverence for nature and is linked to dance and festivals held at pilgrimage sites. It represents a popular expression among modest and humble individuals who cultivate a reverence for human and natural life, achieved by intertwining Andean and Spanish beliefs (Fritis and Hernández 2015).

The observed case of resilience-making

On October 10, 2010, the world watched as the dramatic rescue of 33 Chilean miners unfolded on live television, drawing more than a billion viewers. The men had endured 69 days trapped 700 meters beneath the earth. On August 5, a group of 33 men went to work at the San José mine, located in the north of Chile. The group trapped comprised supervisors, foremen, mechanics, topographers, and machine operators (Tobar 2014). The entrapment of the 33 miners occurred when a rock of considerable size obstructed the ramp, the sole access point to the mine (Pino Toro 2011; Tobar 2014). While the miners were able to take shelter in a refuge chamber, typically present in mines as a resting area, its provisions were insufficient to support 33 individuals over a prolonged period of isolation. For this reason, they had to ration the scarce provisions they could find there. Initially, food rations were distributed every 24 hours, but as days passed, they only ate a small quantity every 48 hours. The group was subject to high temperature and humidity levels, which could reach 40 degrees Celsius and 98%, respectively. The miners used every resource, such as water inside drilling machines and vehicle batteries (Tobar 2014).

Prior to the accident, mine owners and executives had taken no action regarding the unsafe working conditions, which were the result of structural fragility accumulated over more than a century of operation. The authorities paid no attention to the warnings given by the miners, who reported loud noises, rock falls, and vibrations (Franklin 2011; Méndez y Berrueta 2011; Tobar 2014). Following the collapse, a settlement known as 'Camp Hope' (Campamento Esperanza) was organized by miners' relatives, friends, journalists, and rescuers, remaining in operation until the conclusion of the rescue effort (Pino Toro 2011; Sepúlveda 2010). The repeated failure of rescue efforts generated profound despair among both the miners' families and the authorities. A second landslide closed the access to the trapped miners, and the search for alternative operations (Useem, Jordan, and Koljatic 2011). Within three days of the collapse, renewed attempts to locate the miners were undertaken through the deployment of drilling machines at six sites above the mine, coordinated by Chile's foremost drilling specialists (Pino Toro 2011; Useem, Jordan, and Koljatic 2011). The possibility of finding the miners alive or dead was only a 2% chance due to the harshness of the terrain and the lack of accurate mine maps that could guide the drillers.

Methodology

To explore how hope is organized as a collective resource in conditions of extreme adversity, this study adopts a narrative case study methodology. The data is drawn from a larger research project on the 33 Chilean miners' case, and the same corpus of interviews and secondary data

was previously utilized in an analysis focused on the emergence of shared leadership (Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo 2021). The present study performs a new, distinct analysis of this data, focusing specifically on the practices and processes that fostered collective resilience through hope. This approach, situated within the tradition of management and organization studies, draws on the analysis of narratives and discourses, and is particularly well-suited for generating novel conceptual insights from unique events. The narrative approach allows for a deep investigation that can challenge and extend existing theory on crisis and emotion management (Eisenhardt 1989; Schwandt and Gates 2018; Yin 2018).

We selected the case of the 33 miners because it serves as a paradigmatic example of a successful response to a catastrophic event, where the generation of hope was central to survival (Weick 2019). Our analysis specifically concentrates on the initial 17 days of confinement when the miners were completely isolated from the outside world. This period provides a unique 'natural laboratory' to observe the micro-practices that create life-sustaining conditions in a situation of utmost precarity (Vogus et al. 2014). By examining the miners' narratives from this critical time, we aim to uncover the specific, actionable practices through which hope was organized to support their remarkable resilience.

We conducted an in-depth review of different sources of secondary data and carried out semi-structured interviews with six miners to explore their retrospective recollections of subjective experiences during confinement (Czarniawska-Joerges 2004). The analysis of these narratives enabled us to identify both differences and similarities in sensemaking across various accounts and interpretations of the organizing process undertaken for survival (Weick 1995). Narrative analysis seeks to uncover plots within these accounts, tracing a sequence of actions and events that unfold chronologically and coherently (Brown, Stacey, and Nandhakumar 2008; Czarniawska-Joerges 2004; Gabriel 2004). The coherence established by a plot reconfigures facts and events into a framework of actions, actors, and goals within a specific context, while allowing for competing interpretations as proposed by narrative analysis (Abolafia 2010). The value of narrative material does not lie in the 'accurate depiction of facts but in its meaning' (Gabriel 2004, 20).

Our analysis draws upon a qualitative dataset, first described in Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo (2021), comprising both extensive secondary materials and in-depth primary interviews. The secondary data includes a comprehensive review of media reports and documentaries, including eleven videos totaling 245 minutes (Appendix 1), and seven published books on the miners' case (Franklin 2011; Henríquez 2011; Leal Díaz 2010; Pino Toro 2011; Sepúlveda 2010, 2019; Tobar 2014). This material was essential for reconstructing a detailed timeline of events during the confinement period and for understanding the broader public context of the crisis. Although most of the gathered evidence was concentrated on the different stages of the successful rescue operation, it also revealed significant aspects of the relationships, main tasks, activities, and suffering they endured underground (Franklin 2011; Tobar 2014; Useem, Jordan, and Koljatic 2011).

The core of our data consists of semi-structured narrative interviews (Appendix 2) with six of the 33 miners focusing on the first seventeen days of confinement to complement the secondary data with a retrospective and real-time account of the catastrophe's direct witnesses (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013). The interview method was employed to collect the data through a biographic-interpretative approach based on life stories (Bertaux 1999; Hollway and Jefferson 2012). The interviews delved into some aspects of the miners' biographies and how they recollected the events of survival experienced in the complex environment of the mine. Six miners were interviewed in Spanish in the city of Copiapó, and the research team translated the transcripts into English. The interviewees signed an informed consent that authorized the audio recording of the conversations.

The logistical challenge in interviewing the miners, given the nature of their work, consisting of active labor in the mines and geographical displacement across the country, resulted in a focused sample of six participants. Nevertheless, these in-depth interviews provided crucial access to their retrospective and reflective accounts of the experience (Boje 2001; Czarniawska-Joerges 2004). They were designed to elicit rich narratives about their daily struggles, their emotional journeys,

and the specific interactions and practices they developed to sustain themselves. It was through these personal stories that we were able to gain a deep understanding of the subjective and inter-subjective processes involved in organizing hope as a vital resource for survival.

Below (Table 1), we present a brief description of each of the miners:

Our data analysis proceeded in two main phases. The initial analysis involved an open codification of all primary and secondary sources to distill first-order concepts that remained close to the miners' own narratives (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013). For the present study, we undertook a new, focused analysis of this dataset to specifically understand the practices that enabled collective resilience. For this we utilized the analytical tool ATLAS.ti (Corbin and Strauss 2015; Goulding 2002).

Through an iterative process, the research team re-examined the data, moving between the miners' lived experiences and emergent theoretical insights (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2013). To ensure analytical rigor, two researchers first analysed the raw data, followed by a series of iterative discussions with two senior researchers to reconcile perspectives and achieve a consistent understanding of the survival experience. Subsequently, we continued the inductive interpretative analysis by identifying the central plots that shape the miners' narratives and stories about the process of organizing inside the mine. In these plots, we examined the principal events, activities, sequence of actions, and interactions described by the miners that enabled them to organize themselves. We explored how the miners, as reflected in the data, made sense of survival practices in the face of an extremely challenging context, relying on ongoing improvisation and collective routines. We define practices as sequences of inherently contingent, emergent, and recursive activities that are both influenced by and actively shape the context in which they emerge (Endrissat and von Arx 2013; Raelin 2023). Practices always depend on other practices that operate as a knot or a node in the sphere of human interactions and occupations (Nicolini 2009). This second-level analysis led to the identification of four distinct yet interconnected sets of practices that were critical during the initial 17 days of confinement: Routinising, Sharing responsibility, Ritualising, and Caring. The iterative comparison revealed that hope was the central emotional and volitional process that animated these collective practices.

To systematize our inductive findings, we then turned to the literature on organizational hope, focusing on scholars (e.g. Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997; Sutcliffe 2018; Vogus et al. 2014; Weick 2019) who provide significant insights into the enduring qualities of this phenomenon in crisis contexts. We followed Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva (1997, 1043) call to generate new knowledge in this field by moving 'beyond the realist pretensions of empiricist fundamentalism', thus offering new elements for analysing and substantiating a concept that has received limited theoretical and empirical attention in organizational and management studies (Carlsen, Hagen, and Mortensen 2012). In line with Weick (2019), we classify these hope-organizing practices as active processes rather than static states, emphasizing the need to understand them from a situated and contextual perspective. This theoretical engagement allowed us to refine our understanding of how the four identified practices served as concrete mechanisms for organizing hope. In doing so, our analysis moves beyond simply describing the event to offer new conceptual elements for understanding how hope can be actively generated and sustained as a generative force in crisis contexts.

Table 1. Characterization of interviewed miners.

Name	Age	Role	Data Source
Vicente	34	Mechanic	Interview (45 min)
Raúl	47	Explosive handler	Interview (50 min)
Andrés	48	Explosive handler	Interview (52 min)
Javier	53	Driller	Interview (63 min)
Luis	57	Topographer	Interview (58 min)
Pedro	59	Driller	Interview (47 min)
Mario	40	Mechanic	Video Interviews
José	54	Driller	Autobiographical Book and video interviews

Findings

In the initial hours following the mine's collapse, the miners responded with a sense of urgency, driven by their instinct to locate other survivors and to identify a potential escape route. The unstable state of the mine and the absence of a proper security system contributed to heightened panic and irrational behaviors among them. Some resorted to burning tires, employing explosives, and honking horns to attract attention from the outside world. Meanwhile, others resorted to using their bare hands to dig holes in the earth. In a display of recklessness, a few individuals consumed a significant portion of the available food reserves underground (Sepúlveda 2019; Tobar 2014). One miner vividly recounts his emotional state in the aftermath of this catastrophe:

'I screamed like a madman. I ran without stopping, looking for mates, trying to find them all. The more I ran, the more anxious I got, and the more anxious I got, the more I ran' (Sepúlveda 2019, 79).

However, the initial turmoil and impulsive reactions eventually subsided, enabling the miners to gradually organize the limited supplies of food, water, and other essential resources available inside the mine. In the following sections, we account for the operations of generating hope as a reaction to a crisis event (Vogus et al. 2014; Webb 2007; Weick 2019). We describe the collective practices that sustained the miners' capacity to endure the catastrophic conditions underground. This paper defines collective practices as work and social engagements between subjects, enacted through the exchange of emotions and narratives, aimed at organizing concretely to deal with adverse, disastrous situations (Endrissat and von Arx 2013; Raelin 2023). We have structured our analysis to revolve around these practices, as we believe they shed light upon the relational processes that enable groups and organizations to work out a viable future and construct a hopeful stance in the face of crises (Barton and Kahn 2019; French and Simpson 2010; Weick 2019).

1. Routinising

The data analysis reveals that after the initial chaotic days, during which some miners took perilous risks attempting to find an escape route and others were paralyzed by the terrifying situation, they ultimately had to come to terms with being trapped in the mine. In this context, they recognized the imperative to organize themselves to confront adverse conditions, buoyed by the notion that 'God would guide the hands of those searching for us – a task comparable to finding a needle in a haystack' (Raúl). The overwhelming impact of anxiety yielded a spirit of collaboration as the sole means of persevering as a unified group in this profoundly distressing scenario. This sentiment was perhaps most poignantly expressed through the miners' iconic self-identification as 'The 33', a moniker they adopted as soon as they were discovered (a note attached to the successful drill bit read 'We, the 33, are OK here in the refuge chamber'). This collective disposition was rooted in establishing various routines and meetings, which enabled them to be sensitive and attentive to current operations (Sutcliffe 2018; Weick and Sutcliffe 2015). The following quotations depict the reality of those initial days:

So, from the first day, we discarded all hope of easy escape; the escape was impossible ... we had to organize ourselves for a new and different way of life to survive until rescuers arrived. Our struggle to survive began (José).

When we realised that we could not leave the mine, the need to organize ourselves arose, to join and work together as a team (Vicente).

Their hopeful response to the bleak situation was crucial in constructing a new social order that superseded the working dynamics present before the crisis. The previously highly structured arrangement, characteristic of mining operations, was disrupted. This disruption allowed for the emergence of a 'relational system' that encouraged enhanced collaboration, unity, and adaptability (Kahn, Barton, and Fellows 2013). In this context, within the supportive and mutually nurturing relations cultivated through open dialogue, the miners' hopeful organizing emerged as a response to profound uncertainty and despair (Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997; Vogus et al. 2014; Weick

2019). Through daily meetings, the miners had the opportunity to address their collective responsibilities and work through their disagreements and conflicts:

It was mandatory that we all meet between 12:00 and 2:00 p.m. And if someone had done something improper, they told him: 'You did this wrong and you need to apologise' (Javier).

Everyone collaborated on work accomplishments. Each was willing to play a role in task distribution, which showed that everyone had the right attitude (José).

Collectively, the miners made several decisions regarding task distribution and where they would settle in the mine. They divided into three separate groups, primarily based on affinity and, in some cases, family bonds. Each group established its own autonomous rules for communal living. In addition, they utilized their skills to organize the daily routine inside the mine. One group was responsible for channeling the water that flooded the sleeping area. Other miners installed and kept in operation a lighting system using vehicle batteries, and a third group ensured a supply of water by retrieving it from the tanks located above for daily consumption. 'The men survived by following a strict regime of daily activities ... the more the men worked, the more civility bloomed, as they came together as a team' (Franklin 2011, 73). These strict routines gave them a sense of purpose and helped maintain a 'commitment to resilience' (Sutcliffe 2018) that prevented them from falling again into the irrational atmosphere that followed the mine's collapse despite the increasing deterioration of their health and wellbeing. The following excerpt illustrates very vividly how this spirit of collaboration survived until they were found:

Despite being terribly hungry, we all waited until the 33 little cups had their little rations, and then we took them and left (Javier).

2. Ritualising

The daily meetings emerged within the context of a Christian religious ritual that one of the miners, José Henríquez, began directing spontaneously the day after the mine's collapse to boost the group's spiritual strength and morale. This daily ceremony not only sustained their hope for rescue but also provided a space to organize themselves and make crucial decisions around daily tasks and resource distribution:

Every day that passed, his [Henríquez] sermons and prayers felt like a lifeline, a single feature to grab on to and hold tight (Franklin 2011).

This gentleman started talking about God and saying beautiful things. That helped us feel a bit calmer, and every day we held a mass at noon until the day we were rescued from the mine (Raúl).

Prayer became the group's primary way of coping with the looming sense of disaster, abandonment, and despair brought on by their isolation and the rising likelihood of death in the mine (Weick 2019). The development of the miners' mystical aspect enabled them to transform into possibility, at least for a while, the torturous experience of being trapped with minimal chances of being rescued (Franklin 2011; Henríquez 2011; Tobar 2014). As Vogus et al. (2014) state, a hopeful stance is essential to sustain mindful organizing when the group is besieged by negative feelings of doubt and anxiety.

But we never lost hope. We always thought that they would get us out alive or dead. As I told you, we never lost faith either; on top of that, this gentleman celebrated Mass daily, so we also had more faith (Andrés).

How did we handle anxiety? ... with prayer. We prayed, asking not to be abandoned (Luis).

Through the religious ceremony, individuals underwent a 'creative regression to dependence,' which allowed them to place the grim immediate circumstances within the context of a more hopeful future (Reed 1996; Weick 2019). This regression implies an act whereby individuals place themselves in the hands of others, thus assuming the risks and anxieties involved while maintaining a hopeful stance towards the process (Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997). This regressive state,

which reinforced the miners' collective identification, operated on a symbolic and practical level. Miners transformed the ceremony's symbolic process into a disciplined activity of engaging and encountering among them, through which a productive work activity arose (Reed 1996; Sutcliffe 2018). Prayer and the invocation of God's action played a decisive role in keeping the group united and hopeful. The subsequent excerpt highlights the significant effect of ritualistic practices both in keeping hope alive and fueling a work group culture (Bion 1961; French and Simpson 2010):

Where could we gather all the small groups and work as a team? (...) When we had the time for praying, when we had the time to talk and to gather 'The 33' together, things were discussed there (Luis).

The daily religious ritual made them feel united and capable of working together to cope with everyday contingencies (Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997; Weick 2019). As the days went by, the level of desperation, hunger, and weakness increased, as did the sense of unity around their connection with God and the faith in the power of prayer.

They started referring to thirty-four: God was with them; He was the thirty-fourth miner. Even the nonbelievers began to pray ... The preacher, José Henríquez, urged everyone to hold hands and pray for the two cans of tuna to multiply (Franklin 2011, 79).

The sense of community that blossomed around this ritual finds its foundation in northern Chile's deeply rooted religious tradition, which combines different Christian and pre-Hispanic traditions. Throughout history, these traditions have provided miners the resilience to confront the rigors of their demanding lives (Fritis and Hernández 2015; Tennekes and Koster 1986). Such a profound sense of brotherhood seemed to have instilled what can be seen as an 'illusory' state of cohesiveness, which protected them, at an affective level, from the action of destructive dynamics. In this context, the notion of illusion should not be understood as referring to a false reality, but rather in Winnicottian (1971) terms, as related to the utopic construal of a reality that is 'made' true, at least partially and temporarily, by the passionate and 'faithful' action of the construing subject(s). This reading is crucial to appreciate how religious ritualism can effectively foster hopeful organizing under catastrophic conditions (Kahn, Barton, and Fellows 2013; Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997; Weick 2019).

3. Sharing responsibility

The miners endured extremely adverse conditions inside the mine, which took a toll on their physical and mental health due to suffocating heat and humidity, the lack of food, and the loss of contact with the outside world. The oppressive silence was terrifying, only broken by the encouraging sound of the drilling operations. Conflicts over scarce food supplies and cardboard for sleeping began almost immediately. Furthermore, many struggled with addictions to alcohol and tobacco, which intensified their ordeal (Franklin 2011; Tobar 2014). Despite these extreme challenges, they managed to resolve their differences, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

There were no major conflicts, just differences and discussions. If someone got upset or angry with another person, they would eventually work things out, and that would be the end of it (Raúl).

In this context, the miners developed a new relational system underpinned by the principle of horizontality. They merged into a collective of peers, sharing equal rights and responsibilities in deciding the distribution of daily tasks and managing the ever-lengthening periods without food as the days went on. This emergent self-organized system, which convened daily, allowed them to uphold a sense of unity, thereby minimizing interpersonal conflicts and disputes. The following excerpts illustrate a shared model of leadership that bolstered their capacity to maintain a hopeful outlook in the face of adversity (Gronn 2009; Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo 2021):

In the end, the 33 were leaders. All of us were strong; we fought, clung to life, had faith that we would be found, sometimes there was some depression, and then our spirits were lifted by others (Raúl).

Inside the mine, we were all equals; there were no distinctions based on family ties or roles. In fact, we were all the same (Andrés).

The practice of shared leadership within a horizontal organization further reinforced their belief that they could cope with the challenge of survival (Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo 2021). In this context, the dissolution of the pre-existing command structure that prevailed before the mine's collapse empowered the group to curb elevated anxiety levels and the fear of succumbing to irrational and aggressive behaviors (Barton and Kahn 2019; Fitzsimons, James, and Denyer 2011). The dissolution of the hierarchical structure improved the group's ability to tackle emerging problems. Such trust in the collective had its foundation in the underground assembly convened by 'The 33' as a united entity; a resonance that closely aligns with the enduring tradition of labor unionism within Chile's mining industry (Manky 2019; Zapata 2002). In their struggle to survive, the miners appeared deeply committed to the ideal of a leaderless democratic assembly (Gabriel 1991). The following excerpts illustrate their democratic decision-making process:

All the men had an equal voice. Ideas were measured by their intrinsic value, regardless of whether it was sponsored by the shift foreman or the lowliest assistant. (Franklin 2011, 51)

We thought and said, '50% plus one would be the correct choice, although the decision might not be the best.' Anything that someone wanted to do or didn't reach consensus was decided through the vote, and whether good or bad, the result was abided by (Luis).

The previous excerpt underscores the group's commitment to democratic decision-making. While the voices of the most experienced miners always carried considerable influence within the collective, they ultimately deferred to the will of the majority. This transition to a new structure was spearheaded by the shift supervisor, who, given the gravity of the circumstances and the emergence of conflicts among the group, willingly ceded his authority and influence over the collective entity (Franklin 2011; Tobar 2014). Although he had twenty years of mining experience, the others doubted his ability and authority to lead a coordinated response to the crisis. 'In the first few hours after the collapse, raging arguments erupted. Tempers flared. The shift supervisor was losing control' (Franklin 2011, 47). His testimonial offers a vivid portrayal of his standpoint:

I could become one more of the 33. I ceased being the shift supervisor because I couldn't give an order to an individual at that moment. The link was broken. We were no longer working. We were doing something that was survival, and survival implies teamwork (Luis).

The shift supervisor was no longer the shift supervisor; he was just like us. He said: 'Guys, here I am no longer the shift supervisor; I'm on the same level as all of you. It's up to all 33 of us to discuss matters and make decisions together' (Andrés).

Nevertheless, it is crucial to appreciate how the affective bond that sustained the myth of bottom-up self-organization broke up as soon as the drill found the miners, indicating a disruption to the group's collective autonomy and sense of cohesion, and the emergence of conflicts between individual agencies:

When they found us, I took my role as shift supervisor again. I talked with the people I had to talk with ... after they found us, a different leadership emerged, egos began to appear, many things that were not present during the first 17 days began to arise (Luis).

Establishing continuous contact with the rescue team brought about a significant transformation in the relationships among the miners and the work routines inside the mine. In this new context, the shift supervisor resumed wearing his white helmet, symbolizing his authority, and reinstating the previous hierarchical command structure. This transformation was in line with the group's changing needs and the rescue team's strategy to strengthen the shift supervisor's leadership role as the primary communication channel for coordinating the underground rescue activities. The support of his colleagues enabled him to regain his previous authority, effectively guiding the group (Franklin 2011; Tobar 2014).

4. Caring

The findings show that bonds of fraternity and mutual support were essential for the miners, enabling them to sustain a hopeful and resilient organizing in the face of an uncertain future (Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997; Weick 2019). Facing the complex conditions inside the mine required them to leave aside their differences, mistrust, and egocentrism to reinforce a sense of brotherhood that allowed them to overcome the psychological consequences of the traumatic event (Fischer 2012; Pearson and Clair 1998). According to the miners, this compassionate recognition of each other's vulnerabilities helped reduce stress, contain anxiety, and endure the intense suffering caused by the suffocating confinement (Barton and Kahn 2019; Kahn, Barton, and Fellows 2013; Vogus et al. 2014). The following vignettes describe how the need to coalesce around a fraternal cohesive collective body was at the heart of sustaining the belief that rescue was possible:

How did we navigate through the crisis? By supporting each other and recognizing that unity was essential – 'one for all and all for one.' It was crucial to communicate honestly because only through truth could we effectively address this complex situation (Luis).

The miners gathered in small groups as they confessed fears and shared dreams and took long walks, like couples, into the dark (Franklin 2011, 79).

As these quotes reveal, this was a sense of fraternal camaraderie that emerged as an essential value that protected them against emotional upheavals, especially when it unfolded as a dynamic where the less experienced leaned on those who had learned many different lessons over the years working in mining and knew the environment well (Gabriel 2015; Sutcliffe 2018; Weick and Sutcliffe 2015). The following testimonies illustrate how the emotional and mental strength of some senior miners played a pivotal role in sustaining the group's hope and the belief that, despite severe starvation and the absence of light, they could endure and survive:

'One day, he [another miner] approached me and asked to speak privately. We went to another level, and he cried and said: 'mate, you can't break! You can't die! I've seen you a thousand times and know you're not always well. But if you break, or something happens to you, and you die, we're all fucked up. We're all going to hell. You are the force that keeps us alive. Shit! and then both of us started to cry' (Sepúlveda 2019, 84).

One at least tries to fight, to instil in the younger that one must fight and that, if one must die, one must die fighting for life. Thank God, the message was received by the 33, and we clung to life (Andrés).

In the face of adversity, the caring attitudes among peers nurtured relationships where mutual love prevailed over divisions and conflicts arising from their inherent differences when an uncertain future loomed over them. As Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva (1997) argue, hope thrives when individuals can 'place themselves in the service of the other', thus promoting feelings of safety and security. In this regard, the case of the 33 Chilean miners serves as a paradigmatic example illustrating how the activation of collective resilience capacities can be encouraged through various practices that stem from hope.

Discussion

The analysis of the case of the 33 miners provides significant insights into how hope becomes a collective effort to generate resilience through the group's ability to coordinate their capacities, knowledge, and aspirations to face extreme conditions. In particular, the inductive case analysis reveals the collective effort to address the high levels of uncertainty through a set of practices that illustrate how hope can be organized concretely when a stable, discernible future collapses.

Our study indicates that hopeful organizing should be anchored in an attentive approach to current operations and basic tasks. In the miners' case, this approach was achieved through the collective effort to mindfully organize the scarce material and human resources available (Weick 2019).

By establishing various routines and holding daily meetings, a sense of collectivity emerged, helping them to get to know each other and collaborate to face the bleak experience of being buried alive. Findings indicate that constant dialogue provided the opportunity to address collective responsibilities and work through disagreements and disputes, thereby maintaining a healthy group spirit and preventing the eruption of destructive irrationality and rage. Interactions around rituals, particularly religious rites, resonated with the act of sketching coherent and viable futures, which is essential to hopeful organizing. For the miners, religious symbolism and practices were crucial in recreating a connection with strong (Christian) cultural traditions and giving them focus on the future (Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997; Reed 1996). The ritual grounded the miners and fostered a form of resilience-making temporal work, sustaining mindful organizing when the group was in danger of falling apart due to feelings of despair and uncertainty (Vogus et al. 2014). Here we also recognize a gesture of liminal suspension by the group, as outlined by Powley (2009), and aspects of a relational pause dynamic, as described by Barton and Kahn (2019).

In addition, expressing what Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo (2021) have conceptualized as shared leadership, findings reveal that distributing agency and responsibility was essential to keep a hopeful stance that mainly resides in the strength of the collectivity rather than in formal authorities (Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997; Weick 2019). The data shows the miners construed togetherness as an expression of destiny in the face of crisis, and of belonging to the group as the way to fulfill it. From this standpoint, we contend that 'We the 33' works as a gesture that expresses hope deeply in terms of basic human bonding. Very quickly, the group opted for a democratic way, in which the majority position would rule. The miners considered this an important value, as for them it marked how crucial it was to promote respect for each voice to grant a sense of legitimacy to efforts of self-organization in the face of adversity. The shift supervisor's resignation from his authoritative position exemplifies a mindful approach to organizing roles within the group, thereby empowering alternative leaders who possessed significant capabilities to navigate forthcoming challenges (Franklin 2011; Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo 2021). His decision to relinquish his weakened authority in addressing the group's dilemmas reflects a deference to expertise, paving the way for new avenues of imagination and problem-solving (Sutcliffe 2018; Sutcliffe and Weick 2015).

Significant figures emerged within the group, uplifting the spirits of younger and psychologically vulnerable miners, thereby creating new resilient capacities fundamental to contain heightened levels of anxiety in the collective (Vogus et al. 2014; Weick 2019). The data analysis indicates that the miners not only helped each other complete tasks, but they also took care of each other. They understood their survival required a commitment to sustain each other, and since their resources while confined were extremely limited, gestures of care consisted mostly of keeping company and listening. We observe a particular value at play here, in the form of active compassion and mutual caring (Barton and Kahn 2019; Gabriel 2015). Under stressful circumstances, the miners were able to recognize negative emotions in their peers, not just through witnessing them, but also through affirming them as valid affects that had to be tended practically. We discern in such a compassionate way of responding a solidary ethics among the miners, which they also expected from their colleagues, friends, and family above.

On the one hand, our findings indicate that micro-level reciprocal gestures aimed promoting a sense of hope can be a fundamental factor in fostering resilience and opening new horizons in a world where environmental, political, and social crises have become the norm, thus threatening future perspectives (Carlsen, Hagen, and Mortensen 2012; Weick 2019). Concretely, we observe that hope stems primarily from an active organizational process that serves to mobilize the group's resources and resilient capacities. The miners coalesced around the need to keep each other alive, revealing the predominance of a collective dynamic of hoping and the elaboration of anxiety vis-à-vis the task of helping each other survive (Bion 1961; Ludema, Wilmot, and Srivastva 1997). This cohesiveness consolidated an emerging level of organization around the action of hoping as a task-oriented mentality that sustained them under severely precarious and distressing

conditions (French and Simpson 2010). These findings stress the relevance of the affective-relational underpinnings and bottom-up dynamics in the development of resilient organizing in the face of crisis events.

While the use of technical and rational capacities facilitated by strategic management is crucial for constructing resilient organizations, it is equally important to emphasize the affective aspects that form the foundation of relational processes (Barton and Kahn 2019; Sanfuentes, Valenzuela, and Castillo 2021; Valenzuela, Sanfuentes, and Castillo 2023). In particular, it is the mindful, trustful quality of interactions that allows human relations to orient individuals engaged in them towards open-endedness, imagination and creativity, and to perceive radical uncertainty – the absolute lack of a future – kairologically as a matter that can be opportunely appropriated, stretched, twisted and reconstructed (Fleischer 2013). The simple, main lesson of the miners' case is eloquent in this regard about the alchemy that organized hope effects over crisis. The particular features and elements of the group dynamic allowed individuals to distill, and practically affirm, a sense of domesticity, in the most despairing of situations, and a sense of rhythm, continuity, opportunity, and projection, in the most uncertain of scenarios. Following Weick's (2019) reading of Dewey, the miners' catastrophe can be seen as a guiding image of the 'haunted equilibrium' or the unsteady yin-yang of hope and despair that all uncertainty-ridden crises are about.

On the other hand, at a meso-collective level, the relational dynamic analyzed in the case shows the unfolding of a mindful, reliable kind of organizing that relies on trust and operational sensitivity at both micro and macro levels to prevent oversimplification, the neglecting of failure, the undervaluing of expertise, and above all, the lack of focus on present operations (Sutcliffe 2018; Weick 2019; Weick and Sutcliffe 2015). This indicates the emergence of a particular collective, interactive, resilience-promoting disposition that can only be qualified as hopeful, as it is about a placing focus on the unrealized yet life-changing possibilities of the present in detriment of the supposedly hard reality of linear time and the burden of projectable, estimable outcomes, cycles and future scenarios (Alimadadi, Davies, and Tell 2022; Fleischer 2013). Empirical insights on the miners' dynamic corroborate what Weick (2019: 19) considers to be the defining image of a hopeful subjective stance towards organizing under crisis: 'I've never seen this before, but I know what to do'. Disasters and breakdowns rupture the fabric of manageable continuity, but it is precisely because actors cannot locate objects and tasks, or themselves and their history, within a horizon of time, that something in them, and across them, is triggered, and that hope emerges as a shared disposition. Such a paradoxical yet productive quality of organizational hope puts into question the normative, rational administration of designs that crisis management experts tend to prescribe, and calls for the recognition of hope through mindful, reliable organizing as the cornerstone of resilience promotion during crisis management efforts (Weick 2019).

Conclusion

This study presents an empirically and theoretically informed account of how hope emerges not simply as a cognitive orientation or motivational force but as a dynamic process interwoven with mindful organizing, emotional ambivalence, and collective sensemaking. Building on the work of Weick (2019), hope is shown to operate through embodied, situated practices that enable resilient responses to disruption – responses grounded in relational sensitivity, attentiveness to failure, and the shared pursuit of meaningful futures even when existing structures and narratives break down. The study further explores how resilience-making, as a hopeful organizational practice, is not solely the result of individual capacities or technical resources, but of psycho-social, often unconscious group processes activated in moments of breakdown, rife with anxiety. Concepts such as relational pause, liminal suspension, and distributed agency illustrate how crisis opens space for organizational transformation, creativity, and reconstruction. These moments – where fear, anxiety, and despair are not merely managed but worked through – provide the terrain where hope is enacted as a capacity to persevere, reorient, and reimagine. Importantly, this hopeful engagement does not rely on

certainty or positive outcomes, but on the ethical and emotional commitment to collective adaptation and care, which in turn enables new forms of organizing, relating, and living. In this light, organizational hope stands as both a conceptual lens and a practical force for navigating the profound uncertainties of contemporary life.

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