

# ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON THE MOVE

A Critical View  
of Managing  
Cultural Change

Peter van den Boom

Working paper nr 2015/1



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## A Critical View of Managing Cultural Change

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Research Centre

April 2015

Working Paper 2015-1

Wittenborg University Press



This working paper is part of Wittenborg University's Working Paper series. It has been written under auspices of the university's Research Centre and published by Wittenborg University Press.

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Translated from the Dutch language by Teun Wolters

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## INTRODUCTION

Culture is often under debate. Does that mean there is something wrong with it? We hear it mentioned in parliament when political objectives seem to be frustrated. This may, for instance, provoke a call for a cultural change in the civil service. When cooperation between particular public institutions seems to stagnate, one of the parties is said to be in need of a cultural cure. In business we see the same things happen. There, new market relationships, new technology or other things are said to require a drastic cultural change so as to reconnect the organisation with its environment. It is surprising that policy makers and supportive staff do not ask themselves what culture fundamentally is and what it means to people. Is culture similar to other management puzzles (structure, processes etc.)? And when a culture needs a change, how can that be done?

### Central question

This working paper builds on various conceptual studies. It is therefore important to be critical about normative conceptions that tell us how to manage an organisation. Management, in particular, may believe culture can be easily moulded so as to realise strategic goals. Then, suddenly, employees are proffered a new set of values and a new training programme. However, it is doubtful whether culture can be easily adapted to the wishes of the incumbent or incoming management.

This working paper's central question is: How can you keep an organisational culture flexible enough to survive?

This question is relevant as culture cannot afford to be stagnant if it is to survive. Survival is not self-evident in an environment that is complex, turbulent and perhaps even chaotic.

Not a single organisation is 'an island with white beaches, blue skies and calm waters' (Vail, 1989). Moreover, standard concepts and models developed a long time ago cannot be easily applied today (McAuley et al., 2007). To answer the central question, we will take the following steps: First, we will give a definition of organisation. After that, we will address culture. Finally, we will discuss how to keep an organisation's culture 'on the move', that is, how to keep it in step with the changing times. We will avoid the terms cultural change or transformation. Here follows a brief explanation of the concepts:

# 1 ORGANISATION AS A MULTIPLE CONCEPT

How do organisation and culture relate to each other? Between managers, but also between social scientists there appears to be disagreement about how to define an organisation. Managers tend to see the organisation as a means to make money; others emphasize the organisation as a community that, above all, considers common human values. From the first point of view culture is an instrument, whereas in the second view culture is seen in terms of workers creating a decent working environment. Under the latter, giving meaning, responsibility, self-steering and fulfilment are central values. Hence, organisation is a concept which can be interpreted in various ways depending on one's point of view. Although, the Anglo-Saxon way of thinking tends to see the shareholder as having the overriding voice in corporate governance.

In, what may be called 'Rhinelandic' thinking (on the European continent), a variety of stakeholders are taken into account and seen as equally important. It is recognised, though, that they might have opposing interests, which may cause some debate about the correct governance structure. In this context, different authors are worthwhile sources, among whom Blau & Scott (1962) and Etzioni (1964). Their ideas will be briefly reviewed alongside items such as organisational goals, workers' interests and the realisation that an organisation is part of society at large. The various opinions (which managers develop) about these items to some extent reflect the political agenda during particular time periods. Furthermore, regional cultural values such as the Rhinelandic or Anglo-Saxon way of thinking will have an influence, together with the authors' disciplinary orientation.

Beer & Nohria (2000) present a fascinating divide in the thinking about the concept of organisation: Is an organization just an economic instrument or it is a social entity directed at development? Again, we are reminded of the distinction between the Rhinelandic model and the Anglo-Saxon model. However, the first chapter of this book warns us against static modes of thinking. Everything is always on the move (DeLeuze, 2011). Therefore, each organisation evolves in a certain direction. Especially in modern times when hypercompetition, globalisation and international processes of information as well as social interaction are omnipresent, this evolution may seem chaotic (Van den Boom & De Roode, 2014). 'How to deal with chaos?' is an intriguing question. Taleb (2013) suggests developing an anti-fragile organisation. Here, anti-fragile is not just the opposite of fragile but also means becoming stronger and more intelligent than before because of previous tough experiences.

## 1.1 Organisational culture

The second chapter answers the question: What is culture? Anthropologists see culture as a basic and pre-eminently human phenomenon (Geertz, 1993). Van den Boom & Vinke (2012) and Van den Boom & De Roode (2014) emphasize that culture comprises patterns of reasoning and symbols, which have developed in the course of time. People develop these patterns to interpret their experiences, to extract meaning from them, to determine what is right or wrong, what is worth pursuing and how to behave. Patterns of reasoning involve meanings, values, ambitions and normative behavioural guidelines. Symbolic expressions visualize these patterns. For instance, a company logo symbolises what the company stands for in the eyes of the management. Behaviour (such as the way people walk in the corridors and the way employees talk about clients) are expressions of the underlying patterns of reasoning. This cultural relationship justifies the

statement that the way workers behave reveals the position of clients in their thinking. In the same vein, internal measures that managers take reveal their way of thinking.

So, culture is a man-made phenomenon consisting of patterns of reasoning and symbols. At the same time these patterns and symbols function as a social reality; in particular, they entail certain values and ambitions which the members of a group are expected to endorse. Berger & Luckmann (1991) see culture as an endless process of exerting influence on people from the cradle to the grave. That is why an organisation's own cultural identity is its most essential feature. It determines what makes one organisation different from another, even if they operate in the same domain. In other words, it can be claimed that 'organisation is culture'.

Therefore, an organisation does not 'have a culture', next to strategy, structure and other organisational elements. Within a culture people deal with strategic issues, define aims in change management and – for instance – design processes. So, the organization is its culture. Within an organisation there can be cultural differences between departments. The same applies to a country as a whole. Even in a small country like the Netherlands you see different cultures, such as between cities (for instance, between Amsterdam and Rotterdam) and between regions.

So much for a brief anthropological introduction to culture. This approach is often contradictory to a management approach. However, we envisage a synthesis between both approaches, while targeting mature relations between managers and workers. This entails a common effort to achieve both organisational effectiveness and being cognitive of the human measure. Sharing a number of core values could engender such relations. What can HRM contribute to this? To find useful answers, we will refer to the Human Assets approach of Beer et al. (1984), Paauwe (2004) and Boselie (2010). The two latter authors propose that an organisation be seen as a continuously learning and working community where participation – based on meaning and responsibility, but also organisational effectiveness – takes shape.

## Dynamic culture

The third chapter focuses on culture that is changing in order to survive. Change implies flexibility, a capacity to learn, and a capacity to address all kinds of external and internal evolutions. This working paper emphasizes that workers should participate in keeping an organisation's culture dynamic. Already in the 1960s researchers stressed that commitment, participation and self-steering capabilities are necessary ingredients of a vital organisation. Gratton (2004) refers to the positive effects of participation. This was already stated by Silverman (1974) in the 1970s, who is the founder of the action approach. In his research the following question stood central: Who are involved in what kind of decision processes and for what reason?

Of course, this question can be countered by asking: 'Who is excluded and for what reason?' In the mid-1980s a kind of strategy that hardly considered participation was emphasised. During that time, only 'high performance' was a valid purpose (e.g. Fombrun et al., 1984). As a result, the humane organisation threatened to go out of sight. However, exclusively focusing on profits and the structures and processes that produce them is not sustainable. Social systems should also be taken into account. March & Olsen (1976) state that decision-making is surrounded by rival solutions. Such solutions 'ask for concurrent problems' and a way to decide which solution (and therefore which player) will 'win'. Power and status are part of the game, implying that irrationality and dynamics may come into play, even chaos. An organisation is not just a matter of rational analysis and acting.



What do 'measures based on the human measure' look like? Two approaches can be usefully mentioned here: The first one is the model of task characteristics (Hackman et al., 1975). It stresses the structuring of tasks with sufficient scope for self-steering. The second one is the goal-setting theory which assumes that people are motivated to work for valued and accepted goals (O'Reilly and Pfeffer, 2000), stressing core values pertaining to people, culture and effectiveness. To answer the question 'how can one intervene to ensure that culture continues to be a dynamic force?', we will refer to three intervention methods: behavioural intervention, interventions focused on perspectives and reasoning patterns as well as organising 'places to meet' (space to reflect and debate) (Van den Boom & Vinke, 2012).

The latter can be interpreted as moments for contemplating, discussing situations and coming up with appropriate actions. We believe that intervention is primarily a change management strategy intended to nourish the existing organisational culture. In other words, nourishment is maintaining a culture by refreshing and therefore enabling it to move on. In this working paper, as stated earlier, we do not opt for a revolutionary transformation of culture. That would imply using big words, which only evoke resistance. A frequent nourishment of culture means maintenance by regular intervention. Within that context, providing places to meet and interrupting existing reasoning patterns are essential interventions.

### The struggle for the concept of organisation

The Rheinlandic model involves a multi-stakeholder approach when it comes to managing an organisation. It is a North-European tradition which has its origins in monasteries, ancient water management boards, noble institutions and the guilds. People were aware of their social and ecological environment. Being an 'inclusive society', people took each other's interests into account. This tradition influenced later organisational forms. In the Netherlands, it is a strong tradition which has become more sophisticated in the course of time. Part of this is the recurring public performance by the social partners. It is the game that employers, trade unions and the government play over working conditions, wages and the investment climate.

Negotiation partners sometimes call off the 'bargaining show' to maintain a degree of public excitement. After a couple of days they mobilise the media again so as to ensure the attention of a broad audience. Foreign journalists tend to see them as members of a sort of secret society, whose performances are intriguing but hard to follow. The Dutch themselves talk about 'polderen'. The 'polder model' (which developed over a period of a thousand years) is a structured, continually retaken 'discourse' in which various social groups are given an opportunity to influence decision-making processes. The inherent conflicts mostly result in a compromise-solution. The idea behind it is that consultations and negotiations lead to consensus, preventing unrest in society. It is widely believed that one-sided decisions taken by a leader, without prior consultation, will not work in the Netherlands.

We see that the partners to a 'poldered' decision tend to interpret the compromised outcome to their own advantage which may lead to new clashes and new 'poldering' sessions. 'Poldering' is therefore a social phenomenon whose rules the partners tend to adhere to. 'This is just how we do it', in this country. We see a social fabric with certain characteristics and often predictable behaviour.

The Rheinlandic Model is quite different from the instrumental approach which is contained in the Anglo-Saxon way of thinking. The latter seems to imply that an organisation can be easily controlled and focused. For that, no more than two variables are essential: the shareholders and profit. However, in the European tradition an organisation also exists for the people who work in it. For them, it offers the possibility to earn a living by doing meaningful work, foster relationships and to develop oneself.

Here, we already see two institutional concretions of the concept of organisation: An instrument to make money and a means to making sense of life and find fulfilment. Besides that, an organisation is part of society.

What are customers demanding? They want an organisation which strives to meet their expectations about a particular product range against reasonable prices. In recent years, core values such as respect and integrity have been ignored by some large financial institutions. Their incriminating behaviour also affected other organisations. The financial sector showed an astonishing lack of reflection on matters of integrity. It appeared unable to critically judge its own undertakings.

Also, society is expecting a sense of enterprise which takes into account ecological interests. The circular economy can be a major guide in this area.

### Some conceptual approaches to organisations

Theorists also approach organisations differently, depending on their own theoretical background and what they wish to emphasize (which may be typical of a certain period). Blau & Scott (1962) emphasize the goal orientation of organisations. They claim an organisation has been erected with a certain goal in mind. Etzioni (1964) implicitly underlines the social aspect: Organisations are social entities in search of certain benefits. This is an instrumental approach: people are instrumental in achieving those benefits. According to Stinchcombe (1968), certain people tend to see, involve and control other people only as useful 'objects'. This tends to create a divide between workers and thinking managers which is a matter of power. The Dutch organisation-sociologist Lammers (1983) sees an organisation as a framework for collaboration with a more or less hierachial character, operating on the basis of a formal-rational design regarding the processes of functionalization, coordination and finalisation. He then underlines collaboration between people, hierarchy, design, processes and accomplishing something. However, what do they actually accomplish? Are their own objectives involved?

Keuning & Eppink (2004) are aware of that when posing that people not only work to achieve common goals but also personal goals. If managers consider this, they will also take into account the personal interests of their employees. According to Daft (2001), organisations as such are not visible. We are talking about abstract entities; it is possible to follow different approaches towards. They can be seen as connected with the environment as open systems. The environment can be seen as (potential) customers, but also as external expectations resulting from widely accepted moral standards.

The above approaches reflect a development path over the past 50 years. It goes from reaching goals via awareness, that it is about human beings, to taking the environment into account. In other words, it starts with an instrumental approach, then follows a 'human interest' approach while eventually organisations are seen within the context of social connectedness. What does the future hold?? Perhaps more attention to networking, strategic alliances and flexible ties between professionals across the usual organisational boundaries.

## 1.2 Organisation as a multiple concept

During management conferences and courses I often ask the question: What is an organisation? A possible answer is: It is a social structure of human beings focused on the realisation of certain goals. This sounds rather instrumental while at the same time different from how Keuning & Eppink (2004) describe an organisation. Here, the environment is not included.

It appears that managers in workshops tend to emphasize structures which encourages the 'carrot and stick' method to induce people into doing a good job. Tools such as rules, processes, procedures, HRM instruments, job descriptions, competence profiles, leadership models, etc. are used.

### Instrument or soul?

A structural approach to organisations invites the launch of typologies of structure, such as the Structure in Fives (Mintzberg, 1993). It becomes much more complicated if we see an organisation as a cultural connection with a soul (Schein, 1999). A soul loses its essence if it becomes an object or instrument. Could that explain for the many soulless failures of aspired organisational changes? It was the philosopher Kant who already declared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that human beings should never be reduced to mere instruments, used to reach goals. They are always a goal in itself.

In practice, we often see the consequences of the one-sided instrumental approach: People are pushed to focus on the organisational goals. However, this approach leads to stubbornness and resistance. As a result, the majority of organisational change projects fail (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Wierdsema, 2005). An instrumental approach often falls short in integrating the interests of individual workers, the organisation and society at large.

## 1.3 Organisation as effective work community according to human measure criteria

People do not work in an organisation to sacrifice themselves freely for the sake of their bosses' profit. They work for other purposes (Nusbaum, 2010). People start working to realise their personal goals in a context that is humane. In a sense, they also work to enhance their 'curriculum vitae' (Weggeman, 1997). Then, values like humanity, responsibility, relationships, personal achievement, meaningfulness, and space to reflect applies. (Van den Boom & Vinke, 2012). Seen from this point of view, people work to develop their own talents and heighten their sense of responsibility in a meaningful context. If successful, people indirectly contribute to the organisation's survival and continuance. Besides that, the organisation is there to serve the interests of customers and the wider society; both are served by goods and services produced with minimal adverse impact on the environment. Managers following this principle will refrain from production methods that are harmful to the environment. Organisational policies which are an amalgam of such elements can be said to be Rheinlandic in nature. In the human-resource approach such policies are reflected in the human-based approach (Beer et al., 1984) and the contextually-based approach of writers such as Paauwe (2004) and Boselie (2010). They present a fit with the relevant social and natural environments, implying involving different stakeholders.

## Two paradigmatic constructions

The multitude of approaches, methods and models about organisational change can be reduced to two main perspectives: an instrumental and a developmental perspective (Beer & Nohria, 2000).

The instrumental perspective claims that above all an organisation is an economic instrument to generate profits. This construction is indicated by an I (I for Instrumental). Central direction and planned change (Bennis et al., 1976) are expected to make people strategy-driven. As one of the founders of human resource management (Fombrun et al., 1984) suggested, a good organisation is a matter of a 'high performing workforce'. Then, emphasis is on an organisation's structural elements that regulate external coordination and internal integration. This is called a HR control system. The instrumental perspective on an organisation originates in Scientific Management (Taylor, 1913); in recent times this approach has been refined towards 'measurement is knowledge' and 'the lean organisation'. According to this (Anglo-Saxon) way of thinking, an organisation is obliged to make profits to justify its place in society; this was succinctly articulated by the American economist Friedman (1993): 'the business of business is business. In this context a human being is a disciplined instrument serving shareholders' interests.

The developmental perspective looks at an organisation as a reality of work that has to be developed. Beer & Nohria (2000) call this the D approach (D for Development). Here, to effectively implement strategies, the human factor is of crucial importance. Therefore, continuous organisational development is necessary, involving people who are committed and motivated. In this approach, initiatives to change an organisation tend to occur from the bottom up. Such organisations are characterised by 'high commitment organisation cultures' (Beer et al., 1984). The D organisation is a continuously learning work community where participation is realized through the creation of meaning and responsibility. It implies that horizontal relationships are more important than vertical directives. Human beings are intrinsically motivated, because they are not treated as instruments. Organisational change is likely to be supported, as employees are given a say in the way change is organised.

A synthesis between I and D are needed to create the conditions of long-lasting success (Beer & Nohria, 2000). It is a combination of organisational rigour and considering what matters to people.

## 1.4 The dynamics of organisations

An organisation is never fully accomplished, it is always in the making. Processes of renewal make an organisation take external demands into account while also coordinating internal activities. Doing this requires a continuous consideration of the organisation's core competences, in particular human talent, business processes and IT (Hamel & Prahalad, 2002). That explains why in strategic management increased attention is given to implementing organisational change in order to reinforce an organisation's core competences (Johnson et al., 2008).

To complete the circle, meeting strategic goals make it possible to reinforce the core competences by adding new elements. Many organisations feel the heat of hypercompetition, the shortened lifecycle of technology, complexity and turbulent labour markets.

Organisations operating in such 'chaotic' conditions need to excel. In other words, it must play at "the top of the premier league". In situations such as these there is no room for an excessive-control paradigm

(Vloeberghs, 2005) as fixated procedures, processes, protocols and rules would cost organisation too much at the expense of organisational effectiveness and the human measure.

Van den Boom (2014) elaborated on the French philosopher Deleuze's ideas about dynamics (2011) in applying them to organisations. He proposes that thinking about an organisation needs to be dynamic and cannot afford to stagnate. Nothing is ever complete, including an organisation. This mode of reflection does not accept standard answers to problems (Vail, 1989), especially answers that seem to assume the 'ideal' situation in which an organisation is predictable and manageable by means of linear intervention models. Such an assumption would make an organisation fragile while organisations need to be anti-fragile, as to be resistant to chaotic pressures (Taleb, 2013).

#### Conclusions

There are different stakeholder perspectives, allowing to define and approach the concept of organisation from different angles. However, seeing and using an organisation merely as an instrument to make money will result in failure. It is far better to go for effectiveness guided by a sensitivity to others and the environment. Many organisations confront a chaotic environment. This situation requires a continuous development of an organisation's core competences: people, process and technology. You can only play on the highest level if you have excellent internal organisation. Your thinking must be in line with the dynamics.

## 2 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Let's begin with an anthropological approach to culture, mostly based on Trice (1993), Alvesson (2002), and Erikson & Nielsen (2001). This makes sense as anthropology is the science concerned with the study of cultural entities. We conclude this section by approaching culture as a 'tool of management'.

Since around the year 1800 anthropologists have been studying all kinds of social entities. Culture is a manmade product which can be captured by various observable social facts, for instance, particular ways of reasoning which are typical of a certain group. Ways of reasoning also determine how newcomers or foreigners should behave to be accepted as group members.

In fact, this is a kind of socialisation – that is, transfer of culture – implying that people internalise a set of legitimate social roles on the basis of prevalent patterns of reasoning. However, here 'facts' are not of the same kind as the facts recognised by the natural sciences; they are mental constructs.

We will now take a closer look at organisational culture and see what it means to people. If we recognise what the functions of culture are, we may understand why people will not easily abandon it. After explaining organisational culture at large, we will present a definition of it.

### 2.1 Culture of the essence

The word 'culture' derives from the Latin word 'colere', meaning: work, cultivate, transformed nature. Cicero used the word 'cultura animi' to indicate the progress in the refinement of the human spirit. He built on the Greek thinkers: A human being should evolve into a successful and civilised person. Here, one may conclude, culture reflects an ideal of human development; 'Bildung' as the German call it.

During the Age of Enlightenment, along with 'Bildung', the German philosopher Herder emphasised the processes of humanization and the stages of civilisation. Here, culture is particularly seen as a development process during which humankind refines its morals and rationalises its way of living. People create their own culture. It is not a natural phenomenon or a divine act that cannot be influenced. People live according to patterns of thinking which they invented themselves. By continuing in this way culture is maintained, while complying with group expectations. This may sound static, but later we will see that culture is also dynamic.

#### Patterns of reasoning

Patterns of reasoning are therefore emotionally charged knowledge of 'our ways of doing things here'. 'Here' is important because somewhere else (could be another department) other customs apply. Existing patterns of reasoning have evolved in the course of time with all kinds of additions to take changes into account. Therefore, culture cannot be seen as a static reality of repetitive patterns of reasoning and symbolic expressions; if that were true, culture would only refer to itself. Each culture has a kind of dynamics to it. There are two sides to the same 'cultural' coin: one is static, the other dynamic. Moreover, cultures differ between groups, there are subcultures, also within one and the same organisation. For instance, there are cultural differences between accountants and marketers; they are also judged by

different measures. However, these distinctions are a matter of emotionally charged knowledge, as noted earlier. Hence, it is not surprising it does not surprise us that someone has dubbed this knowledge a blueprint of reality as it presents itself to us (it sets us to interpret things in a certain way) but at the same time as a blueprint for taking action (Geertz, 1993).

## Symbols

Symbols compress the patterns of reasoning. Accordingly, objects such as buildings and logos refer to patterns of reasoning about what we want our organisation to represent. Therefore, there is no need to repeat an elaborate story in order to convey meaning, values and intentions. The symbol speaks for itself. For instance, in a building the directors' rooms may be distanced from or close to the operational departments. This physical arrangement suggests certain value conceptions about the proximity and accessibility of directors to the personnel. The office's outlay (furniture, wall decorations) reveals whether and how the workers matter. Symbols are normally uniformly interpreted by those who work in the organisation; however, outsiders may come to quite different interpretations.

There are also other symbolic expressions which derive their meaning from underlying patterns of reasoning. Rituals, for instance, are in fact standardized forms of behaviour. For example, the annual Christmas gathering can have a standardized meaning for staff: They know who will give a speech and what it will be about. Rituals strongly contribute to the internal social order. Who dares to interrupt a member of the board of directors during his or her Christmas address? Policy documents are also symbols: careful language and formats clarify the patterns of reasoning and organisational ambitions. Moreover, symbols are associated with stories about the organisation's past, specific jargon used by professionals, jokes, allusions and gossip circuits in the corridors. Stories that people tell may have a strong impact, especially when it is a matter of stories about past heroes and antiheroes. This theme will be discussed later.

Culture is about what is essential:

- Culture consists of patterns of reasoning and symbols
- Patterns of reasoning consist of interpretations, meaning, values, ambitions and normative indications
- Symbols compress the patterns of reasoning: physical arrangements, objects, rituals, daily behaviour, language, jargon, gossip, jokes, they all tell about heroes and antiheroes.

## 2.2 The functions of culture

Without culture we would have no idea how to behave. People are not gifted with a great arsenal of instincts. A human being has to acquire culture informing him or her of how to act according to 'how we do things here'. People seem to have ample capacity to adapt to different cultures and thrive. At work the prevalent patterns of reasoning may be quite different from those at the school board meeting, at church or in a committee. At work different situations may prescribe different codes: In the office you should only talk about work, in the company restaurant you should not talk about work while at the coffee corner you may be expected to talk ironically about the latest board decisions. Altogether, a kind of 'theatre' show emerges (Van den Boom & De Roode, 2014). More about this later.

Berger & Luckmann (1991) write about an endless process of conditioning that people undergo in the various social entities they subscribe to. This is a way to prevent chaos in the world, in the country, wherever people are. If someone accepts a job, his or her role is already pre-determined in the 'organisational theatre'. From this point of view culture offers certainty, safety and shelter. There are patterns of reasoning that function as codes, enabling everyone involved to know what constitutes good organisational behaviour. Finally, culture can give meaning to the reality of work. We will elaborate on this (based on Trice & Beyer, 1993 and Van den Boom & Vinke, 2012) and wrap up with a very special function of culture: an instrument for the management to reach strategic goals.

### Social ordering

Individuals tend to tune their own interpretations, values, norms and behaviour to the ideas of the groups they adhere to; often in an unconscious process of cognitive exchange. In this interactive way, some sort of social ordering emerges, creating a degree of behavioural stability and predictability. In other words, roles and related activities are fixed in a constructed world of ideas and its specific symbols making it clear to everyone what to think, how to act and how to express their feelings. We can agree with Berger & Luckmann (1991) that patterns of reasoning are an 'unwritten' play. This phenomenon can be clarified with an example. In our society it makes hardly a difference whether you are someone's paternal or maternal uncle. However, there are societies where an uncle from the father's side is treated as more important and therefore deserves more respect. At times he may even exert greater influence on a child's education than the biological father. For an outsider this pattern of reasoning about blood relationships may be difficult to comprehend. On the other hand, in that culture it may be hard to understand why in Western countries old people are placed in a separate care home.

### Certainty, safety and shelter

Understanding your neighbours, colleagues and the like does not imply total unification; human beings retain their individuality it is primarily a matter of social connectivity by which people can undertake a wide range of activities like others also do (Berger & Luckman, 1991). People know each other's customary behaviour and assume others in the community also aware of them. The acceptance and maintaining of the culture-bound conception of reality mostly take place unconsciously.

### Connected in integrity

Each culture contains values which define integrity. How should a person behave in the face of conflicted interests? What is righteous behaviour? How do you deal with handicapped colleagues and what constitutes fair and honest conduct?

When such questions arise, personal opinions touch on conventional wisdom. When, for instance, external pressures call for reconsideration of the organisation's transparency, sincerity and effectiveness, hanging a code of conduct on the wall is not sufficient. Then, it is crucial to draw people into dialogue (Van den Boom, 2007). In this way you can intervene in the dominant interpretation of reality when it, *inter alia*, comes to dealing with customers, colleagues, money, with existing knowledge and with society at large.



## Creating meaning

Culture can give meaning to one's life at work. Perceived coherence, one's own contribution and the organisation's goals can be sources of a meaningful experience. When people start working in a particular organisation, they want to create meaningful ties within that organisation. In this way people establish an environment that is conducive to the fulfilment of their financial, relational and developmental needs. People wish to experience an organisation as valuable and meaningful and therefore intrinsically exciting (Van Diest, 1997). Organisations that strive to be a community of workers tend to prioritise the creation of meaning. Meaning is both scarce and necessary. Scarce because more and more society and organisations tend to rationalise and economise while people are one-sidedly disciplined to contribute to profit making. For instance, the media reports on 'big data' and all the possibilities to control social processes (Van den Boom, 2014). Consequently, people's working life is being instrumentalised, distancing it from the spiritual sources which create meaning. Living a meaningful life is important; in the absence of meaning illnesses such as depression and feelings of alienation thrive. From this point of view, 'gross national happiness' seems to be a better indicator for social health than 'gross national product' or corporate profits. Managers sometimes construct certain values to make work more meaningful and effective. Unfortunately, the policy documents which emphasise the significance of core values often come to an untimely end because they do not appeal to people's imagination. Obviously, without such an appeal, people are not interested. An organisation that is meaningful to people will be able to create a world that is interesting and fascinating to people, thanks to its patterns of reasoning and symbolic expressions. When values become diffuse, people will lose that particular kind of connectedness.

The functions of culture:

- Social ordering
- Certainty, security and shelter
- Connectivity in integrity
- Giving meaning to the work existence

## 2.3 Culture as management instrument

There is another function. Organisational culture can also be used as an instrument by management to reach organisational goals. In recent years, literature on management has become increasingly interested in organisational culture. When the organisational world was still rather simply structured – stable, predictable and pliable – the control paradigm could dominate, as stated before. Consequently, a simple focus on structure was deemed enough to create order and regularity. Indeed, in this way organisational theory was about structures and people operating within them (Pugh & Hickson, 1989). This control-oriented approach emphasised organisational design. It was supported by two universal domains: management science and bureaucracy.

Management science has become universal making it easily accessible, irrespective of culture. All over the world you can follow MBA programmes which by and large have similar structures. They follow the same principles: 1) profit making is the greatest value; 2) everywhere organisations need managers and 3) therefore, there is a need for a universal management vocabulary which covers all things that might happen in an organisation. The MBA programmes make sure participants are well-versed in this vocabulary.

However, applying these universal principles of management and bureaucratic means of control undermine an organisation's uniqueness. What organisations have in common are deemed more important than what distinguishes them.

### Limits to the degree culture can be controlled by managers

A disconnection with a turbulent environment is not the only misfit we can recognise. We can see another misfit, which is a one-sided instrumental orientation towards economic goals (Van den Boom & Vinke, 2012). This orientation becomes visible where an organisation neglects to create meaning for its people; it rather focuses on efficiency, financial figures and uniform, smooth operations according to 'lean principles'. In many organisational theories the human element is conspicuously absent (De Vries, 2005). The classical control-oriented management literature primarily discusses the structures that help to control people, whilst ignoring sustainable relationships, integrity and meaning. Sociologist Elias (1987) significantly states that as societies (and thus organisations) grow more complex there will also be a rise in psychological suppression. However, in today's postmodern society you cannot fit organisations and how they should operate into a rational framework. It is organisational culture inspired by people that matters.

However, this insight remains uncommon. Where previously structures, processes and rules were used to control people in a Tayloristic manner, culture is now used as a managerial tool to do the trick. HR professionals are expected to change cultures to mould human behaviour. People have become 'manageable resources', like technology, structure and money. Nonetheless, culture as a tool of management is approaching its limits. As Vinke puts it<sup>1</sup> the human factor is a unique force that enables the organisation to deploy its core competences in the market place. The challenge for management is to let this wisdom also prevail in times of organisational change.

#### Intermediate summary

Patterns of reasoning involve interpretations, significance, values, intentions and normative directions. Culture offers social ordering, certainty, safety, shelter, connections and meaning. Patterns of reasoning indicate what constitutes good conduct within an organisation. Symbols compress these patterns. Many managers see culture as a 'tool of management'; this is the instrumental approach. Most management educational programmes seem to use the same vocabulary; this threatens the unique nature of an organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> In: Vloeberghs, D. (2005), page 21.

## 2.4 A Definition of culture

Defining culture is not easy. Sometimes culture is limited to an organisation's values and norms. However, culture can move beyond that, as demonstrated before. Moreover, an organisation has different subcultures, so talking about 'the values and norms' is problematic. Anthropologists agree that it is people who develop and preserve their own culture and live by it.

Many decades ago social scientists noted that there is 164 different definitions of culture (Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1963). However, definitions as such do not fully capture what culture as a complex phenomenon means to people, how people develop culture and how they integrate it into their daily lives.

### Metaphoric descriptions of culture

Sometimes it is easier to describe the concept of culture by using metaphors. This way of expression is used both in academia and in the practice of management. Some common metaphors are: the glue that keeps a group together, cement, genes and programming. A metaphor hints at how the user perceives culture. A person who considers culture as glue or cement is likely to see culture as a consolidating entity. However, a metaphor also reduces the meaning of culture; therefore, it should be clear that culture is more than a consolidating force. Chapter 3 will discuss organisational culture as a theatrical play (based on Van den Boom & De Roode, 2014).

### Definition

Anthropologists see culture as an all-embracing way of living, because it encompasses both symbols (art, temples, logos, office building etc.) and patterns of reasoning. The latter involve a wide range of topics such as the nature of existence, the hereafter, the meaning of work and possession, and what makes life worth living. Moreover, there are patterns of reasoning which regulate daily life, for instance, what will be expected of you when you arrive at the office early in the morning.

If you talk about organisational culture, you think of an existence around work where people use their talents. In our definition we want to emphasise what culture is and how it functions: Organisational culture is the entirety of emotionally charged patterns of reasoning and symbols (made by people in the course of time) which guides a person in knowing what is important and how he or she should behave at work (Van den Boom & Vinke, 2012; Van den Boom & De Roode, 2014).

## 2.5 A synthesis focused on mature relationships within organisations

The previous discussion presents a number of values which reflect the human measure: decency, responsibility, connecting, personal development, creating meaning and having room for reflection. If the overall organisational approach is overly-instrumental in nature, the human measure can be endangered. Even worse, it puts human freedom at stake. That is what Morgen (1992) means when he, metaphorically,

compares an organisation with prisons. This leads to the conclusion that besides integrity, pertaining to markets and ecological issues, values are also at stake when talking about moral leadership. How do management training programmes contribute to this? Fundamentally, how do you develop an effective organisation which also considers the human aspect? Instrumental approaches will be contained if there is a balance between what is effective and what is humane.

In such an organisational culture a mature way of communicating and treatment can be found. This is what Boselie (2010) also highlighted: The organisation is a continuously learning work community in which participation occurs on the basis of creating meaning and co-responsibility. "How we treat our people" is part of organisational excellence (Ulrich (1997) pag. 29). "Getting things done" is the second factor in reaching excellence, according to Ulrich. HR has a major role to play in this; therefore, really new HR is about letting the business be the business of personnel<sup>2</sup>. The message is clear: Focus on your people, realise that human resources go beyond just being resources (Vinke, 2006).

If that is true, this view should also be central in management training programmes. However, is that truly the case? Mintzberg (2004) and Stewart (2010) conclude that in many management programmes sufficient attention is not paid to moral leadership. Both express doubt about the typical MBA course and its standardised concepts. These educational programmes do contribute in building self-confidence through its many cognitive modules, but are not formative enough when it comes to personal and moral leadership. That's why, according to Mintzberg, MBA students tend to become haughtier the further they progress in their studies. They fail to take decisions based on their values and are not capable of judging the implications of their actions on society and fail to establish a link between values and leadership. It is clear that moral leadership needs to be given a far more prominent place in management education.

### Mature interrelationships

Management theory is amply associated with the free-market ideology and no longer with the humanities (see our previous reference to Nussbaum, as to 'Not for profit').

It aims to reinforce the instrumental approach to organisations in order to create 'shareholder driven organisations' and 'shareholder value'. However, it is necessary to teach future managers to respect the diverse values among stakeholders as well as the legal framework of the countries in which they are going to operate. This calls for frequent contemplation of the ethical aspects of management. In recent years we have seen the consequences in the absence thereof, especially in the financial sector. If no critical observations are allowed, the organisation seems to be marked by slavery (Graton, 2004). Similar criticism was uttered by authors who claimed that changes in the working population and technology should contribute to the reinforcement of democratic principles in organisations.

### A mature relationship between management and workers

Mature relationships between management and workers have five characteristics:

- Labour relations should be characterised by mutuality (Vinke, 2011). Workers devote their knowledge and capabilities to deliver according to their contract; they are compensated by wages, status and opportunities to develop themselves as professionals.

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<sup>2</sup> Fowler in Legge (1995).

- Open communication from both sides about policy intentions and how to achieve goals in the face of organisational change. Tolerance when it comes to pluriformity (Graton, 2004). There have always been subcultures with their own perspectives. Individuals are also unique and differ in their ability to manage their own lives. A fair working environment where the CEO does not earn disproportionately more money than the professionals in the primary process (Hamel & Prahalad, 2002). Core values which shape the processes of external coordination and internal integration (Boom & Vinke, 2012).

## 2.6 Core values as a glue

How is it possible to create order in an organisation defined by individual responsibility, freedom of manoeuvre, self-steering and a diversity of subcultural values? In reflective communities order flows from the core values that operate as glue. These common core values prevent the organisation - with its different subcultures - from disintegrating; they glue the social capital together. At the same time, these core values restrict certain liberties so as to prevent complete chaos. However, even then, an organisation can still be a rather fuzzy entity; although, that can be a strength by enabling a good fit with the outside world which is often unstructured, if not chaotic, as well (Van den Boom, 2015).

### Value driven

Core values have led the organisation to where it is now. Core values are on the one hand the result of human action and on the other hand give direction to human action. This duality is a basic feature of culture, as mentioned before. The core values release energy which influences the talents of people, the nature of processes and the use of technology.

Smit (2008) gives a dialogue between the recently resigned president of the ABN/AMRO Bank and his successor. The former (Mr Kalff) was worried about what changes his successor would bring about. When he was in office, his values were ranked as follows: first the client, second the co-workers and third the shareholders. This approach was going to be abandoned. His successor (Mr Groenink) had a different philosophy: net profits minus capital costs, because the shareholders was the first and only priority. No reflection on clients and co-workers. Mr Kalff asked his successor explicitly: Does the bank support this? Does it not damage coherence? After all, it is the people who do the job. The answer was brief and focused: It is a top-down approach, because financial value creation is all that matters.

### Conclusions about Chapter 2

Culture is the essence of a social entity. Culture tells members of a group what is acceptable thinking and behaviour, and how you deal with your feelings. Sometimes there may be some hassle about what the 'right' culture should be from both the viewpoint of the human measure and the one that sees culture as an instrument to reach strategic goals. Through processes of participation, a synthesis between the two 'extremes' must be reached. In these processes, core values may very well function as the glue that keeps people together.

## 3 CULTURE ON THE MOVE

### Introduction

The literature on management and practice seem rather quick in qualifying certain developments as cultural change or transformation. If left unchecked, there is a real danger that the old ways of doing things continue but under a new heading of change. There is a gulf between what the so-called top current and the undercurrent. Cultural change is promoted by the top current (management) who attempts to change crucial aspects such as culture with a grand story. However, especially in contemporary, postmodern times grand stories have lost their appeal (Lyotard, 1994). It is more realistic to see culture as a continuously developing phenomenon, well-aware it will never be completed. Being unfinished is inherent in culture: it is always on the move, seeking to safeguard the organisation's survival. The challenge is: how can you involve your staff in developing adequate change policies and related interventions? This is a crucial question as culture is not owned by the management. In the next section we will focus on how to organise change. Thereafter, we will discuss how to distinguish between strategy-driven approach and people-driven approaches (Sections 2 and 3). Section 4 discusses intervention with a view to keeping culture on the move. Section 5 shows the contrast the feeding of an organisation's culture with transforming a culture.

### 3.1 Research on participation while organising and changing

Thoughts on participation frequently meet resistance in today's world, which operates under the influence of the founders and followers of 'Scientific Management' - a classic theory of management. The methods of Taylor (1913) the principles of Fayol (1949) and the bureaucratic model of Weber (1921/1972) have laid the foundation of an obviously unshaken belief in the malleability of organisations. This belief expresses itself in controlling workers and work processes by rigorous analyses, directive measures and detailed rules. Here, we see the instrumental, engineering approach par excellence. Up to now this type of thinking is still alive.

#### A flavour of humaneness

In the 1930s socio-cultural scientists got a greater interest in the human measure, because dissatisfaction among workers was detrimental to productivity. The Hawthorne investigations (by the end of 1920s) have shown that labour conditions determine motivation and results. At that time the formation of groups became a central issue in the Human Relations School, because collective conceptions about work and leadership appeared to have a strong impact on work-related behaviour. Mayo (1933) indicated that rapid changes in industry led to the fading of common values and norms which kept society together. Therefore, it was left to organisations to offer social coherence.

## How to plan change?

At the beginning of the 1950s social scientists started to describe the various change models. Lewin (1951) offers guidelines as to how thinking and acting to bring about change can be placed in a dynamic context:

- 'Unfreezing' of existing conceptions and behaviours. Reflection and doubt open people to other approaches.
- 'Moving and changing' to learn new behaviour. By training and guidance people learn how to apply the new things.
- 'Refreezing'; that is, integrating and securing the new behaviour.

The thinking about malleable organisations tends to focus on how desirable behaviour can be guaranteed and anchored. Bennis et al. (1976) talk about an intentionally planned change to make the human factor more productive. Such models of change, following Lewin (1951), gained importance during the 1960s and 1970s. Rogers (1962) sees the acceptance of change taking place in five phases: becoming aware of other approaches, taking an interest, contemplation, trying out and acceptance. The workers, therefore, have to go along with the rational structuring and phasing, which does not happen automatically (Lippitt et al., 1958). Many of the recently applied models seem to be of that kind. One of the most popular models is the one developed by Kotter (2007; 2010); it is a standard approach of eight steps, applicable to all change processes.

## Organisational effectiveness and the human measure through participation

In the 1960s it was mainly the leader's attitude towards participation that mattered. That attitude is more important than mere task completion. People have to participate in the process of decision making. Likert (1961) is a harbinger of the Human Resources School; he advocated the development of talents and promoted a human-oriented, organic model rather than a task-oriented, Tayloristic model. Likert was in favour of the participative group style, in which co-workers have the biggest possible say. This enhances the organisation's self-steering capacity and its effectiveness. It is assumed that the management gives support in this to the co-workers. A great deal of interaction is needed, based on openness and trust so as to create a work climate consonant with both the human measure and reaching a high level of ambition. So, humaneness and business can go together.

## Commitment to participate

Silverman (1974) - as the founder of the action approach - gives a central place to participation. Who are involved and who are excluded? He also opposes the idea of ascribing human features to an organisation. It is not the organisation but the people in it that take decisions. It is people who interpret, argue and conceptualize to give meaning to what happens. On the basis of their conceptualizations people make decisions and take on activities. Here, the question arises: Which actors in these processes develop patterns of reasoning to defend certain organisational changes and who stays out? For Beer et al. (1984) involvement and participation are main features of his HR approach.

From the 1960s on, researchers emphasize:

- An organisation is an organic entity
- Commitment, participation and self-steering competences are needed
- Tensions can be avoided by involving people in the internal dialogue
- By doing so, the organisation will be a dynamic entity
- Participation is of interest to both effectiveness and the human measure

## 3.2 Approaches driven by strategy

Economising and rationalising have a strong impact on organisations. Shareholder value has been stressed time and again. The policy makers in large for-profit organisations are shareholders themselves. This reinforces that impact. Each subdiscipline of management science is to integrate the importance of shareholder value, including HRM. This tendency is even visible in not-for-profit organisations; executive directors tend to adopt the management paradigms and approaches (including their remuneration) from the business sector. The same question as before arises here: who is involved (and for what reason) in the policy decisions and who is left out?

HRM has failed to become a counter movement against instrumentalisation supportive of one-sided profit making. On the contrary, in many organisations the human measure has been moved to the background due to strategy-driven HR policies and instruments. HRM contains normative ideas about good personnel management. However, who determines what good personnel management is? Obviously, these are academics, consultants and policy makers who have taken the side of the neoliberal game dominated by shareholder interests. In this way HRM contributes to turning a work community into a management instrument (Guest, 1987).

### Economizing, rationalizing and disciplining

The previous HR approach is popular as it promises to let the things that can be controlled and constructed come within reach. This 'strategy first' concept was initiated by the Michigan School (Fombrun et al., 1984). It has defined four core HR instruments which in a coherent manner ensure that workers focus on performance: recruitment/selection, training, assessment and remuneration. Through these instruments, Fombrun believes, HRM will mature based on the following criteria: revitalisation, quality of work, fairness and reaching strategic goals in a harmonious organisation. In this 'high performance' model systematic control and evaluation are key to creating a smoothly running 'machinery'. We do not have problems with a deliberate coherence between the different HR instruments. The assumption, however, that these instruments can establish the looked-for linkage between strategy and human behaviour can be justifiably questioned. Without commitment and participation an organisation's culture will not be open to change.



## Limits to managerial rationality

Van den Boom & Vinke (2012) have concluded that strategic management has become a rational process embedded in rationalising, economising and disciplining society. Ansoff (1965), Porter (2004) and Grant (2005) are representatives of the managerial school in strategic management. Managers seem to believe that their decision-making process is a fully rational one (Berger & Van den Boom, 2014; Berger, 2009). Of course, there are countercurrents. Nobel Prize winner Simon (1969) emphasises that decisions are never made on rational grounds only. Rationality is limited and therefore will not lead to perfect solutions.

Also, March and Olson (1976) highlighted the limits of rationality, involving the cultural dimension. So-called rational behaviour is determined by a random interaction of issues, people and situations within a certain culture. Considering this, an organisation is not rationally designed with rational processes and rational people. It rather seems like a chaotic interaction within a (un)organised anarchy. Decision making is a matter of strengthening or changing, friendship or animosity, status, and subcultural and individual interests. Most of the time, there is no specific problem waiting to be solved. Often, a ready-made 'solution' already exists for which a problem is put forward in order to safeguard personal interests. The model of March and Olson contradicts Weber's ideal-typical bureaucracy model and the cult of managerial rationality.

The rational 'strategy first' approach:

- The human aspects have been pushed to the background
- The maxim is: 'everything is economics' and 'only profit counts'
- Standard solutions emphasise rationality

Therefore, there is one-sided focus on profitability, structure, processes and systems  
However, social systems have to play a role to set a culture into motion.

## 3.3 People-driven approaches

We are interested in HR approaches which give a central place to people, cultural values and internal sources of power. This is important because it is HRM that has to indicate what HR policies and practices should look like. We will present two human-measure approaches: the intrinsic motivation model and the value-driven approach.

### The intrinsic-motivation model as human-measure approach

In the midst of organisational change processes, managers often forget to consider what motivates people. Vinke (2004) describes motivation as the reasons why a person directs his/her energy to the creation of a particular value based on his/her unique abilities. So, Vinke strongly highlights energy. What energies emerge to accomplish change and keeping therewith culture on the move? Does that occur because of external incentives, such as better financial perspectives, or because of internal motives?

The latter refers to: responsibility, pleasure in work, opportunities to develop oneself and being appreciated. It is an internal source of power which gives energy to achieve something, to commit yourself, to learn, to change course and to be proactive in work processes. Workers tend to be less inclined (and less

educated) to mechanically fulfil a narrowly defined task without having the slightest influence on how it should be executed.

Instead, they tend to be concerned with the development and usage of their talents in a dynamic context. That, moreover, warrants that own objectives and change targets will be better accomplished (Vinke, 2004; 2011).

In the very year that the 'strategy first' approach was developed, the book *Management Human Assets* appears (Beer et al., 1984). The authors describe HRM as managerial decision making and activities which underpin the relationship between management and co-workers. Their intrinsic-motivation approach defines HRM broadly as the development of all organisational aspects which shape human behaviours. This approach – developed at the Harvard Business School – permits an array of different perspectives and most of all different kinds of participation that people need to be entitled to. Also, Paauwe (2004) and Boselie (2010) belong to this school of thinking. Boselie presented a 'balanced model' in which financial performance is on a par with societal performance.

Having the right competencies – if well developed and used – inspires a great deal of motivation and performance. Many professionals are examples of this. However, where changes are being implemented, managers often tend to dictate what course of action will followed. That is not consistent. In the case of change processes as well, you cannot ignore what people wish to contribute.

The goal setting theory assumes that people are motivated to engage themselves in reaching accepted and valued goals (Beer et al., 1984). Acceptance can be increased by participation and allowing people to control their own path towards reaching the goals. It is assumed that complex but accepted goals inspire action and good performance much better than easy-to-realise or unfeasible goals. Implementing planned organisational changes is a challenging task. Defining and implementing the goals of the change become interesting and exciting if they are accomplished through participation, because then people will identify with those goals.

### **Value-based strategies and the human-measure approach**

Organisations that can be seen as value-driven have embedded policy making and daily practice in their core values. These values most of all pertain to people and culture (O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000). In value-driven approaches it is not a new director's values but an organisation's values that have evolved in the course of time. These values are the power source from which flows of energy emerge.

Core values that give energy can be an inspiring source of power; they can unite people because they function as a glue. In addition, these core values have an educational value as they feed the organisation's ethics, driving reflection, learning and change processes. Energetic capacity will be growing if the core values are connected with an image of the future that has been created on the basis of participation. Then activities and interactions are in line with that energy as a spiritual source. If at the same time the organisation's reflective capacity is well developed, people are able to consider what is happening. The power source can then lay a link between core values and organisation history, current affairs and expectations about the future. Leaders are challenged to understand the core values and other energy giving factors as they have developed in the past while at the same being able to encourage the organisation to look forward. In such a way a culture is always on the move. Culture will never be finished; culture is always 'on becoming'.

## Keeping up an organisation's capabilities

The level of an organisation's intelligence becomes evident by measuring its collective capabilities (Van den Boom, 2007). Here, we can think of an organisation's reflective power, but also of an organisation's energetic power to keep the processes of reflection, achievement, learning and change going. It determines what is worth going for as well as the social-emotional capabilities to keep up relationships (with colleagues and clients). These capabilities also compensate for the rational, achievement-oriented overtones in certain managerial approaches. Facts and logic do not tell the entire story.

Human Measure Approaches:

- Space for pluriformity, also in terms of participation
- People can influence policies, so that they associate with them
- Core values pertain to people and culture

The human measure contributes to the development of organisational capabilities, a meaningful work life and the organisation's effectiveness.

## 3.4 Interventions making for movement

Interventions in the area of 'this is how we do things here' are needed to keep a culture moving forward. Interventions are not the sole prerogative of managers. A dynamic culture implies that also other people, by way of partnership, undertake necessary interventions. In this section we will discuss three types of interventions: behavioural interventions, interventions concerning perspectives and pattern of reasoning and finally meeting places.

### Behaviour interventions

Behavioural interventions are necessary because planned organisational change influences human behaviour. The person who intervenes observes the behaviour of someone else relative to what has been planned. Possible interventions are as follow:

- Paying attention
- Taking action
- Showing appreciation for what is good
- Admonishing people against what is inappropriate
- Setting boundaries
- Containing what is destructive
- Making agreements

These interventions will be more effective if undertaken according to the three C's: Continually, consistently and in a coaching manner. The latter means: Discussing conduct in a respectful way with a view to getting someone to reflect on his or her own behaviour. It is not judgemental, but focuses on development. Cultural change will result from making agreements based a coaching management style.

## Interventions concerning perspectives and patterns of reasoning

Interventions concerning perspectives and patterns of reasoning are also about agreement, but there need to be ample space to allow the other person to reflect on his/her own perspectives and mode of thinking. This requires continuous questioning while offering scope for reflection. These interventions are suitable when someone is overly attached to the past, without sufficient focus on the present and the future. Perspective interventions may also be appropriate when a person is consumed by his own interests and certainties while the organisation is in dire need of teamwork to address a highly turbulent situation. Perspective interventions means introducing new patterns of reasoning and behaviour. The one who intervenes confuses current patterns that people use to interpret situations and deciding how to act (Van den Boom & De Roode, 2014). By changing current perspectives and patterns of reasoning, different types of behaviour may emerge.

### Fettered reasoning

There are two contrasting models of patterns of reasoning (Van den Boom & De Roode, 2014). The first model is 'we'll continue to act in this way' which is often heard in organisations. We call this fettered reasoning, which thwarts the further development of organisational capabilities and prevents the organisation's culture from being dynamic. Moreover, it prevents the development of people themselves. In general, it represents a form of rationalist thinking, which is applied irrespective of what the issue might be. This means: show no emotions, do not appear vulnerable, don't lose face, maintain control, don't let others find out how you do the trick, fence off and limit the damage in order to maximize one's own benefits. This all represents a detached and isolated learning attitude. It implies you're not going to defy others to be candid and show their vulnerability, because then you will be defied along the same lines. This can lead to a kind of collective insensitivity. Fettered reasoning does not testify to reflective and emotional capabilities; they are not helpful in learning to develop strategic and self-steering competences.

### Leverage reasoning

Fettered reasoning blocks an organisation's collective learning capacities. Trying to come to agreement by means of coaching style of intervention makes it possible to replace fettered interventions by leverage interventions, which enable both collective and individual learning.

The foundation for this is an open and vulnerable attitude. There should be room for healthy doubt, rather than putting upfront patterns of reasoning which pretend certainty and omniscience. After all, improvement is always possible. Therefore, feedback is so important, especially if it occurs in a safe, trustful and open atmosphere. These three adjectives offer opportunities to discuss obsolete perspectives, patterns of reasoning, impediments to learning and to the improvement of interrelationships. Leverage behaviour is an excellent means to create effective discussions about emergent questions and approaches.

### Theatre performance in an organisation

Van den Boom & De Roode (2014) have recently shown how to get in touch with that way of promising reasoning in the book "De Interne Veranderaar". They see organisational culture as a theatre where people repeatedly dare to appear on stage. They may do this to either please the management or to act in a

contrary way. But, that also applies to the management that repeatedly performs sketches. “De Interne Veranderaar” is about the daily working life of people, who talk about each other, about customers and about their ambitions. Often people make use of a fixed pattern of reasoning and behaviour which is their repertoire. However, it varies of course from department to department. By way of speech, we see various small groups in the entire ‘theatre’ which the organisation represents.

Van den Boom & De Roode (2014) give an example of a theatrical performance that goes as follows: In a department, suddenly the informal leader says with a declining gesture: “Look here, did you see this mail from the board? They expect us to urgently ... etc. How could they invent such a thing? I think their understanding of the situation is worsening by the day.” While saying this, he looks around, inviting others to join ‘the play’. Will the others join? This is likely to happen because it is their pattern. The newcomer to the team is somewhat hesitant; therefore, a colleague admonishes him: “You’re just a newcomer and therefore do not yet get it. We constantly feel they are ignoring us; why don’t they consult with us in a normal manner?”

Van den Boom & De Roode (2014) present the internal changer as the spoilsport. It is someone who interrupts an ongoing show based on patterns of reasoning which do not support the organisation’s ambitions. The internal changer may be, for instance, an executive, an informal leader, a senior staff member or a programme manager.

An internal changer is not always available. And, if there is such a person, then it is possible that the co-workers just go through the motions. The internal changer has to do something with the two worlds that are reluctant to converge: organisational ambitions on the one hand and existing patterns of reasoning on the other.

There are four intervention roles that the internal changer has at his disposal to intervene as spoilsport.

The role as spectator. The internal changer looks at the performance on stage to discover where the existing pattern of reasoning does not mesh with the organisation’s ambitions.

The role as coach. The coach’s initial intervention consists of a brief description of his observations. By means of neutral questions, without any pressure to prevent people taking a defensive attitude, the coach attempts to make them reflect on their performance and to what extent the implicit patterns of reasoning are in line with their own ambitions.

The role as a jester. The jester asks ‘unreasonable and provoking questions’ about the nature of the play. He may also think through the logic of the play to the point of absurdity. He wishes to confront people with the distance between their patterns of reasoning and the organisation’s ambitions, encouraging them to step out of their comfort zone.

The role as implementer. Together with a ‘group of actors’ the internal changer makes explicit which changes and support are necessary to reach the organisation’s ambitions. Focusing on concrete results, the implementer guides the group in their efforts.

Interventions concerning behaviour, perspectives and patterns of reasoning

- Behavioural interventions and interventions concerning perspectives and patterns of reasoning have to take place continually, consistently and in a coaching manner
- Giving attention, taking action, appreciation of what is good, correcting what is inappropriate, setting boundaries, containing what is destructive and making agreements.
- Seeing through the obstructive nature of certain patterns of reasoning
- Four roles for the intervening spoilsport: spectator, coach, jester and implementer.

## Places to meet

Professional cooperation is a necessary ingredient of the human measure, organisational effectiveness and a broader social inclusion. Mature interpersonal relationships are conducive to long-term financial success as they promote an organisation's adroitness in unstable conditions. Such relationships are also helpful within strategic alliances. How do you shape mature relations?

Organisations have to continuously address issues such as the collaboration between line managers and support staff, analysing why some important customers have turned away. Having a place to meet makes it possible to discuss the various aspects of these issues and come up with solutions. Employees do not only produce goods and services, but also insights into the way the work is being organised. Therefore, they have ideas as to how to approach customers, coordinate activities, work together and, for instance, develop talents. Mature interrelations require that people are consulted. Various perspectives can be explored in the meeting places.

Depending on the subject and the type of questions, a place to meet can serve the purpose of taking stock of issues, analysing issues, developing alternative solution for an issue, agreeing on concrete actions and evaluating the effects of the actions

## The scope of a meeting place

The organisational culture can be fed with new elements to safeguard its successful continuation. The issues at hand may be restricted to a particular department, but in certain cases they go beyond one department. This is a matter of scope; who will be asked to join a meeting place (as also Silverman, 1974, put it)? If the meeting is meant to discuss why a number of customers have turned away, the meeting place can possibly be limited to members of the sales organisation.

When issues transcend separate departments, there will be, a so-called interdisciplinary meeting place. The objective of a meeting may be to analyse internal coordination problems, to develop alternative solutions or to reach agreement. Strategic implications or operational feasibility can be different perspectives that are brought together in a meeting place. In particular, the possible purport of subjective interpretations and emotions that the organisation evokes should not be underestimated (Gadamer, 2002). That's only logical, considering that an organisation is most of all a world of people's social imagination.

### Three pillars and three conditions

A meeting place consists of three pillars: reflection on issues, discussion of possible solutions and reaching agreement on improvements. Reflection is not navel-gazing. It is rather a solid process that Mintzberg (2004) termed as 'wrestling'. In this way organisational learning will be embedded in social interaction, and that is precisely what it should be. Culture is formed through interaction; it is kept alive by being fed with new things. A meeting place can be effective if it leads to greater modesty among the managers while increasing trust, safety and openness among the workers.

Van den Boom (2007) uses the word 'to dialogue' to contrast the intended process with a monologue. Both parties are served by in-depth questioning; it is the art of asking questions that can make people understand each other (Gadamer, 2002). A meeting place can be led by someone who primarily is process-oriented. This can be successful if one considers the three following conditions: trust, safety and openness. Safety ensures that people feel free to talk. Trust provides the energy to participate. Of course, also the management is expected to give its analyses and possible solutions.

A meeting place as intervention:

- Discussion based on equal footing, open questions and issues
- Objectives: taking stock, analysing particular issues, developing alternative solutions for an issue, committing to a decision and evaluating its effect.
- Topics can be confined to a particular department or transcend different departments.
- Reflection and discussion will take place if there is trust, openness and safety.

## 3.5 Feeding an organisation's culture

In many cases cultural transformation is not necessary as it means a breach with the organisation's past. This could signal that what past accomplishments hold no value, implying that an entirely new organisation is needed: a new structure, new processes, new behaviours, new systems. Is this what an organisation under pressure really needs? Can it be realistically managed?

A culture is always in need of maintenance to continue its existence. This does not mean there is a need for a transformation. Codes of conduct, guidelines for executives, dress codes, rules for the communication with customers and forms of symbolic expression need to be fed with new elements on a regular basis. We indicate this strategy as feeding a culture. It is a matter of refreshing an organisation's capabilities to deal with its dynamics.

Feeding a culture to keep it on the move means the following:

- It aims at keeping up the organisation's capabilities
- Partnership becomes visible from the degree of commitment and responsibility
- Partnership strengthens the human measure and contributes to an effective organisation
- Partnership is an expression of a mature level of interaction

A meeting place focuses on the development of a healthy running of the business.

We will conclude this chapter as follows.

Concluding Chapter 3:

- The central question was: How do you develop participation to keep an organisation's culture on the move and dynamic?
- It is people who develop and own culture; so, they are expected to maintain it.
- Employees have to be involved if one wishes to dynamise culture
- Human-measure approaches give substance to the creation of meaning, motivation and having an effective organisation.
- Widely supported fettered arguments slow down an organisation's development
- Leverage behaviour makes an organisation stronger; it feeds its culture with new elements
- Meeting places are conducive to maintaining and refreshing organisational culture
- There are interventions in the area of behaviour, perspectives and keep-off reasoning. They take place continuously and consistently.

### Questions for deepening research

This working paper is drawing to an end. Before giving the final conclusions, some questions will be asked that need further research:

- In what way is it possible to research the effects of a participative management style in terms of organisational effectiveness and human measure? It seems that here comparative research may be an interesting approach involving different types of management.
- In what way is it possible to measure the effects and effectiveness of the four intervention roles as discussed in this paper (spectator, coach, jester, implementer)? Perhaps it can involve a research design whereby some executives are trained in applying these four roles.



## 4 FINAL CONCLUSION

The introduction stated that organisational culture cannot be controlled by managers. By implication: A new manager cannot mould the culture by introducing his own value priorities. The central question of this paper is: How do you keep an organisation's culture on the move for it to survive? Considering the dynamic nature of today's reality, one thing is clear: Organisational culture cannot be taken for granted. There is no static tranquillity. Although every industry has its own specific business environment, generally speaking, the classical management approaches seem to have lost considerable relevance. 'Best fit approaches' are needed to keep a culture moving into a promising direction.

We have made an intellectual journey that led us to the question: How can one define 'organisation'? After that, we discussed 'culture'. Next, we contemplated the possibilities to keep an organisation's culture on the move. In this context, we suggested to avoid the option of cultural turnaround or transformation. We opted for organisation's culture on the move. How can you keep an organisation's culture on the move in order to safeguard its survival? The answer lies in the following argumentation.

(1) An organisation is not just an instrument to make profits; it is not just there for the sake of shareholders. An organisation should also serve the purposes of those who work in it, and should be beneficial to customers and society at large. It is most of all a cultural entity, a world of social imagination. Maintaining a culture requires efforts from those who belong to it. Classical forms of management tend to get stuck in the resistance they provoke. Conclusion: Human measures and organisational effectiveness should go together.

(2) Every culture wants to survive, but may go about it the wrong way. The various subcultures in one and the same organisation represent various perspectives of reality, the future, the need to change and how that change should be implemented to safeguard survival. Diversity makes stronger, while uniformity may lead to implosion. Conclusion: An organisation consists of subcultures which have different patterns of reasoning when dealing with various issues.

(3) Trust is fundamental in dealing in a mature way with each other. Complex organisational issues within dynamic contexts require freedom to act and a trustful environment. An organisational meeting place provides moments of reflection and discourse about how to solve certain problems while creating the conditions for making arrangements as to how changes will be implemented. Conclusion: A meeting place benefits from what can be seen as an organisation's strength: its internal diversity.

(4) Reflection, learning, change and development are major ingredients of achievement. In particular, the development of collective organisational capabilities are of crucial importance. Effective interventions make the modes of argumentation debatable. Such processes promote a further development of these organisational capabilities. Conclusion: Interventions intend to make debatable and change underlying patterns of reasoning.

(5) In the course of time certain core values have emerged. These core values may continue to be the glue that makes the work community stronger. Preservation of the core values and developing together of new approaches may be the way forward. However, if the core values have lost their power, they need to be reconsidered. Conclusion: Intervention means both seeing the organisation within its historical context and going for future-oriented change.

(6) An organisation representing an anti-fragile work community is appealing because it unites people (it is like glue) and encourages them to commit as partners. Conclusion: Antifragility is encouraged by creating meeting places and continuous interventions that make patterns of reasoning debatable.

(7) The interventions as previously discussed are behavioural in nature, or focus on perspectives and patterns of reasoning by agreement based a coaching management style. These kinds of intervention mostly aim to change patterns of reasoning. Fettered reasoning in particular tend to hinder further organisational progress. This type of reasoning can be recognized in 'the plays that people perform in the organisational theatre'. Conclusion: The prevailing patterns of reasoning appear in the plays that people themselves perform in the organisational theatre.

(8) Meeting places facilitate reflecting on what is going on, debating possible solutions and committing to the implementation of certain improvements. Conclusion: the frequent provision of meeting places testifies to mature dealings between managers and workers.

We can summarise the conclusion as follows: an organisation goes beyond just making profit. It is a cultural entity with different subcultures. Today's business environments are often dynamic and chaotic so an organisation has to be anti-fragile. Meeting places are conducive to that. Where keep-off reasoning (scepticism, 'business as usual') prevails, the internal change manager must intervene. If you wish to contribute to your organisation's survival, you have to ask yourself how you think about the relationship between people and the organisation. Furthermore, you have to involve people and allowing them to participate as that is the only way to ensure the ongoing development of an organisation's culture.

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