1. Introduction

1.1. The subject

Management and spirituality seem an unlikely combination. To many people the world of management with its robust economic values and targets stands squarely opposite to the soft world of spirituality. Management is about the daily requirements of production. In contrast, spirituality is about freedom of the soul, and detachment from work. What counts in the competitive world of management is rationality; but what counts in private is how management rationality affects the personal world.

Management is based on a scientific account of the world; spirituality is modelled after world view accounts. Management stands for empirical investigation and control; spirituality stands for inner experience and interconnectedness. Management is concerned with command and control; spirituality with listening, openness and humility. Management treats human beings as resources; spirituality treats human beings as ends in themselves. Management is preoccupied with facts; spirituality with beliefs. Management is oriented towards conquering the world; spirituality is oriented towards conquering the heart.

Much of the ambivalence about the combination of management and spirituality is related to concern about the dominance of economic interests.¹ This is especially visible when spirituality is commercialised. On the one hand commercialisation of spirituality is frowned upon; on the other hand economic principles seem to work well for spirituality. The Transcendental Meditation movement (founded by Maharishi Yogi Bhagwan), for example, saw an opportunity in Iceland’s economic crisis by suggesting that people affected by the crisis would find help in practicing TM. The commercial interest of spirituality is even more obvious in empires such as the Scientology Church. Some of the evangelical Churches in countries such as Brazil also have corporate dimensions and may command corresponding fees. On a

smaller scale, the market for spiritual conferences and magazines appears to be booming.2

Many consultants and managers insist that the world of management will be won for workplace spirituality only if the added economic value can be demonstrated. The values they tend to look for are related to the interests of the business or organisation, such as business development, productivity, flexibility or commitment. Others emphasise that spirituality is not necessarily opposed to business development and productivity, but first of all deeply concerned with the world in which we live, particularly our ecological environment. Contrary to those who ask for the added value, they insist that greater goals are served by business organisations than profit. And they suggest that spirituality’s focus on trust and humility balances the manager’s concern with ego and control.

Even when it is agreed that spirituality is deeply concerned with the world in which we live, there is by no means a common understanding of what spirituality is, and how it can be put to work by management. One of the hottest issues being discussed is whether workplace spirituality is ‘spiritual’ or ‘religious’. The key problem appears to be the fear that workplace spirituality may be used to impose a particular religious belief system on employees.3 It could be perceived as a form of religious favouritism that could easily lead to discrimination. Others emphasise that one of the assumptions of workplace spirituality is that individuals are accepted with their complete identity, including eventual religious beliefs. The issue of the connection between spirituality and religion is potentially a divisive one. Spirituality holds the promise to change organisations for the better, to become more value-driven. At the same time it holds the danger of conflict and divisiveness when it includes religious claims on truth.

Meanwhile it is remarkable that several notions from the world of spirituality – such as mission, vision, and inspiration – have become firmly established in the contemporary world of management. The two worlds meet in a concern for team

2 Google gives 176 mln results for ‘spirituality in business’ and 57.6 mln results for ‘spirituality and management’. Consulted on 14 September 2011.
spirit, inspiring leadership, and visionary organisation. Conferences, seminars and colloquia are now regularly organised where spirituality is brought to bear on management and leadership. Business schools, consulting firms and training centres are responding to the demand for mission, vision and inspiration. The number of consultants and trainers who draw on spiritual principles appears to rise, particularly in the field of human resource management. There is also an abundant literature on workplace spirituality. In 2000 the Academy of Management has created a special interest group on management, spirituality and religion (MSR) which has gained strength over the years in terms of numbers of involved management scholars and theoretical development. Many business schools have included spirituality in their leadership program. Some of the most renowned universities, such as Princeton and Yale have instituted centers for faith and spirituality in the workplace. In The Netherlands Nyenrode University has even instituted a temporary chair for business spirituality.

This encounter of the worlds of management and spirituality is not entirely new, but it has acquired wider, and public dimensions. Before the 1980s it was largely confined to entrepreneurs and managers who were motivated by religion or organisational transformation. Over the past two decades it has become a matter of interest for human resource management, strategic management, and even a profitable business in itself. So the question comes naturally: what happened for the world of management to become interested in spirituality, and what should managers make of it? Is it a new human resource instrument, a new strategic instrument, a business opportunity, a new management paradigm, or something entirely different?

1.2. The emerging literature on workplace spirituality

Most of the management literature on spirituality has emerged over the past two decades. Cavanagh reports that a bibliography distributed at the 1998 Academy of Management meeting lists 72 books on the subject of spirituality and business of

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which 54 have been published since 1992. According to Garcia-Zamor more than 300 titles on workplace spirituality flooded the bookstores in the 1990s. Since then the number of publications has multiplied. The themes range from the leadership examples set by spiritual leaders such as Moses or Gandhi to religious awakening, human empowerment, and organisational transformation. Spirituality at work has been regarded as a reaction to the corporate greed of the 1980s, as a search for meaning, or as a sign of the Aquarius Age. Within the field of management studies it is explored from a cultural, sociological, or psychological perspective. Outside the field of management it is an object of cultural anthropology, philosophy, religious studies or theology. The academic literature on workplace spirituality since 2000 is replete with attempts to make sense of the diversity of approaches in the emerging literature.

The study of spirituality by management scholars thus shows numerous definitions, approaches, themes, and motives. The field is a complex network of meanings, practices and conversations. This complexity is demonstrated by the many labels which are given to the subject. The ones which feature most often in the literature are: ‘spirituality at work’; ‘workplace spirituality’; ‘organisational spirituality’; ‘business spirituality’; ‘management spirituality’ and ‘leadership spirituality’. Each of these labels refers to a particular discourse of management: leadership, the conduct of business, the organisation as a social reality or the social practice of work. The multitude of choices with regard to object, method and values in the field may be

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considered as irritating or inspiring. In any case, there is no obvious common ground. Given the wide variety of views concerning spirituality at work, an inquiry into this field is impossible without an appreciation of their differences.

The differences which elicit most discussion are the controversy over whether the workplace is spiritual or religious, and how the phenomenon of workplace spirituality is to be studied.\textsuperscript{11} Moreover, the controversy over whether the workplace is spiritual or religious appears to dominate the discussion about how the phenomenon is to be studied. It overcasts the discussion of purpose and method like a dark cloud.

In an attempt to find common ground it has been suggested, for example, that spirituality is an inherent human characteristic, and organisations could become more successful if they thoroughly met their members’ needs.\textsuperscript{12} This suggestion is supported by the observation that work is no longer only about salary, a lease car and status, but also about passion, soul, and talent. These internal human factors are increasingly taken into consideration by management scholars at large since the cultural dimension of organisations has received wider attention.\textsuperscript{13} Spirituality appears to capture such organisational factors as commitment, values, and identity which have been found to be characteristic of visionary and long-living companies.\textsuperscript{14} The expected benefits of spirituality supposedly include a better work environment, improved quality of products and services, a satisfied workforce, and sustainable profit. This suggests that spirituality may contribute to organisational performance.

On the other hand, there is a much more demanding view that argues for spirituality at work in terms of the need for transformation. The motive of improving organisational performance has been questioned as too limited. It is said to incorporate a managerial perspective that is structurally confined to short-term

\textsuperscript{12} A. Oliveira, ‘The Place of Spirituality in Organizational Theory’, in: \textit{Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies} (Vol. 9, No. 2)
objectives and systematically fails to see the larger picture. For example, Neal, Lichtenstein and Banner observe that the management literature is replete with discussions about the need for transformation.\textsuperscript{15} They suggest that transformation is required to keep up with the increasing pace of change.\textsuperscript{16} They argue that organisational change has become almost synonymous with management: it is characterised by policy, efficiency, control, and more of the same. What is actually needed, these authors say, is not change but renewal. Renewal is characterised by entrepreneurship, creativity, courage, passion, innovation. Renewal affects the essence or core, and is thus associated with spirituality. The mindset is regarded as the biggest problem in organisational change. Hence the idea that a new ‘spiritual paradigm’ for management is evolving.

The controversy over whether spirituality at work is spiritual or religious is closely related to this debate over organisational change. From the perspective of religious studies, Paul Heelas considers transformation management, in fact, as the first ‘spiritual’ management stream.\textsuperscript{17} He argues that the new spiritual movements which emerged in the 1960s are at the root of the interest in spirituality at work. According to him these movements were initially world rejecting, resisting the established order of church and capital. In the 1970s the idea gained ground that spirituality and capital might work together to change the world for the better: the best of both worlds. Remarkably, Heelas traces the roots of this idea to a conference on spiritual transformation of organisations which was held in 1984 in California. In the best of both worlds approach the development of the community was emphasised. However, in the 1990s this idea gave way to individual development. Since then the understanding of self and personal growth are seen as the key to success. This makes spirituality unmistakeably world affirming. The material world is being embraced, and spirituality becomes an instrument for the purpose of greater welfare. In the field of organisational anthropology the Dutch anthropologist Ineke Hogema, for instance, views personal growth as the ultimate instrument for cultural change.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} J.A. Neal, B.M. Bergmann Lichtenstein and D. Banner, ‘Spiritual Perspectives’, p.7
\textsuperscript{17} P. Heelas, \textit{The New Age Movement. The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity} (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996)
The largest part of Mitroff and Denton’s influential Spiritual Audit of Corporate America is dedicated to analysing, understanding and treating organisations as spiritual entities. But they are not neutral observers of workplace spirituality. They say that the impetus for their research is their disagreement with the separation of spiritual concerns from the workplace. In fact they seek evidence to support their belief that organisations must become more spiritual in order to release their transformative force. Mitroff and Denton suggest that ‘the workplace is one of the most important settings in which people come together daily to accomplish what they cannot do on their own, that is, to realize their full potential as human beings’. This brings them to the idea that ‘unless organizations become more spiritual, they cannot reap the benefits of the full and deep engagement of their employees, their so-called most valuable resource’. The roots of transformation management in their work are evident. Hence Mitroff and Denton’s work is partly responsible for the idea of an emerging ‘spiritual paradigm’ for management.

The respondents in Mitroff and Denton’s research clearly distinguished between spirituality and religion. This led the authors to claim that spirituality is ‘not inherently part of any formal, organized religion’, and ‘profoundly nondenominational’. Whether this is true or not, management theorists arguing for transformation tend to take their reference from the new spiritual movements rather than traditional religions, which are not perceived as having made a similar shift to embracing the material world, a commitment to greater welfare, and the realisation of the full potential of human beings.

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 I.I. Mitroff and E.A. Denton, A Spiritual Audit, p. 23
1.3. The explanations of workplace spirituality

Giacalone and Jurkiewicz start their argument on how workplace spirituality is to be studied with an overview of the different explanations found in the management literature, which they offer in their *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*. They suggest three clusters of explanations: changing work environment, change in values and spiritual change.

The first cluster is *'social and business changes as sources of turmoil, which in turn spur individuals to seek spiritual solutions to the consequent tension'* . This type of explanation is concerned with the alienation of employees, including managers themselves, and the connection between employees and their work. According to Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, it holds that the interest in workplace spirituality has arisen as a response to internal stress caused by external changes. In the literature this explanation is represented in Mitroff and Denton’s study of spirituality, religion, and values in the workplace. Their research provides empirical support for what they call the experience of fragmentation.

Many of their respondents say that they are being forced to split off fundamental parts of oneself at work, being asked to give more of oneself without having one's whole self being acknowledged in return, being asked to care for the soul and its concerns on one's own rather than on company time. Mitroff and Denton interpret this as the basic need to live an integrated life. Gerald Cavanagh also refers to this need when he mentions business people working 50-70 hours a week, separating them from family life and faith. He suggests that 'the needs that [they] feel are a separation from other people, alienation from their work, and a

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23 Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, whom we shall follow in this paragraph, use the term 'workplace spirituality'. In this investigation the terms 'workplace' and 'organisation' are used interchangeably when referring to organised human collaboration in general. Where appropriate the adjective 'organisation' will be used, more specifically, when the focus is on the organisation as a 'reality' in the lives of people, whereas the adjective 'workplace' will be used when the focus is on the various situations that occur at work. Both adjectives are used in an inclusive sense, that is, it applies to the work of executives, managers, supervisors, office clerks, trainers, and any other kind of work. The adjectives 'management', 'business' and 'leadership' will be used only when the focus is specifically on managers (including executives), entrepreneurship or leadership.

24 R.A. Giacalone and C.L. Jurkiewicz, 'Toward a Science of Workplace Spirituality', in *Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Performance*, p. 3-4


26 I.I. Mitroff and E.A. Denton, *A Spiritual Audit*, p. 4
lack of meaning in their lives’. The focus of this explanation is on internal stress of the individual employees.

The second cluster in Giacalone and Jurkiewicz’s *Handbook* entails explanations concerning ‘a profound change in values globally’. In the literature this type of explanation is represented, for example, in the work of Judy Neal and Ed Tischler. Neal relates the change in values to babyboomers reaching their mid-life crisis, the uncertainty caused by downsizing and demands for increased performance, and the transition into a new millennium eliciting a new commitment to the future. Tischler relates the change in values to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, arguing that the broad economic prosperity in the ‘developed’ countries allows their societies to shift its concern to higher-order needs. The work of both authors shows that changing values are related, among other things, to the experience of fragmentation in a highly organised society. But their scope of changing values includes social responsibility, personal development and sustainability. Thierry Pauchant also makes the connection between values and needs. He points to the urgent need to respond to humanitarian and ecological crises, such as poverty. Employees and managers who are considered successful by the standards of this world, Pauchant says, often fail to see the sense of downsizing, reorganisation, outsourcing, budgetary restrictions, and shut-down. He challenges the faith in traditional theories and practices of management which propose quick solutions. The non-avowed objective of such quick fixes, he says, is the suppression of the cries of despair in the world. According to Pauchant such existential questions are rarely recognised in the management literature. The focus of this explanation is on the values which organisations strive for.

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27 G.F. Cavanagh, ‘Spirituality for Managers’, p. 149  
30 T.C. Pauchant, ‘Introduction: Ethical and Spiritual Management Addresses the Need for Meaning in the Workplace’, in: *Ethics and Spirituality at Work*  
Giacalone and Jurkiewicz’s third and last cluster consists of ‘the broader spiritual changes’ resulting from the growing interest in Eastern philosophies. Cavanagh remarks that many of those who embrace spirit in business have felt that the mainline religions have not responded to their needs.\(^{32}\) He observes that some proponents of the need for workplace spirituality argue that the modern focus on objectivity and the separation of science and spirituality leaves people separate from one another, separate from nature, and separate from the divine.\(^{33}\) Several authors have also pointed out that work is becoming increasingly central to a person’s identity and personal growth. As a result work has become an important factor in the way people define themselves as well as a source of personal growth. The interest in workplace spirituality can thus be seen as a response to the burden on individuals to develop a personal identity for themselves apart from the traditional institutions after the rejection of traditional belief systems in the 1960s.\(^{34}\) In this third type of explanation, then, attention is drawn to the intrinsic value of work in terms of identity and individual development.

In summary, the explanations provided by Giacalone and Jurkiewicz suggest that workplace spirituality has different meanings to different people. The differences among the various explanations of spirituality at work are meaningful but not easy to deal with.

1.4. The methodological diversity

Giacalone and Jurkiewicz find the differences rather disturbing, but they are not explicitly concerned with their correct interpretation. As the title of their *Handbook* suggests they are preoccupied with the impact of spirituality on organisational performance. They write about the ability of organisations to create and sustain what they call the ‘work-spirit connection’.\(^{35}\) The ‘work-spirit connection’ is conceived as the intrinsic drive of human beings to grow in skill and self-actualisation, their desire

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\(^{32}\) G.F. Cavanagh, ‘Spirituality for Managers’, p. 149


to feel valued about the contribution they are making to a group, and to experience in so doing a growth in spirit, a sense of connection to the enigma of what our purpose on earth may be. The authors believe that the ‘work-spirit connection’ is manifest at the time when we feel most alive, when we are driven to our best efforts, overlook insignificant distractions, and seek to find symbiotic methods of problem-solving.

Their view on the logic of organisational performance explains why Giacalone and Jurkiewicz dismiss the different views on the meaning of spirituality, and insist on a separation of the scientific inquiry into workplace spirituality from the suppositions of particular belief systems, including religion. They sustain their argument by referring to the epistemological assumptions of the science of management and administration: “The disciplines of management and administration are premised on a positivist scientific model and admonish against embracing nonverifiable approaches to understanding workplace behavior.” The scientific inquiry they advocate “explores methods by which workplace spirituality might be objectively studied in ascertaining its utility to work organizations and their stakeholders.” Hence the emphasis that “precise measurement, using validated instruments, can help organizations understand the utility of workplace spirituality.” Their quantitative methodology is critical about the work of authors who speak about motivational beliefs – love, compassion, and so on – without grounding these beliefs in a strong foundation of theoretical and empirical work. These authors, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz argue, are promoting a cause rather than advancing scientific knowledge.

It has been observed that most empirical studies in the field of spirituality at work have been quantitative studies. These studies by and large seek to establish a correlation between spirituality and some factor of organisational performance or leadership. Due to this empirical approach the field of spirituality at work appears to be drawn into the quantitative method aiming at spirituality as a parameter for organisational performance, while the differences of meaning and purpose are

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36 R.A. Giacalone and C.L. Jurkiewicz, *Handbook*, p. 4
dismissed. The importance of these differences is illustrated, however, by two other methods which are advocated in the field of workplace spirituality, apart from the quantitative study, i.e. the existentielist and the spiritual.

Thierry Pauchant offers an example of the first. He suggests that ‘introducing ethics and spirituality into the workplace […] could meet a fundamental human need: a need for meaning, a need for integration, a need for establishing roots, a need for transcendence’.\(^{41}\) Thus he puts the question of meaning right at the centre stage of his inquiry. As indicators of this need he considers the preoccupation with ethics, the rise of experimentation with the concepts of ethics and spirituality in the workplace, and the increase of information and training in spirituality by consulting firms and training and research centers, and the upholding of religious beliefs or spiritual renewal. As examples of the preoccupation with business ethics he mentions the emphasis on personal qualities such as honesty, trust, and integrity by corporate recruiters, and the incorporation of ethics in organisational strategy. He also observes senior managers and executives experimenting with ethical and spiritual concepts, and participating in conferences on the subject. His own book provides evidence of experimentation in different organisations, such as a financial institution, a food processing company, a municipality, and a hospital. In the area of information, training and research he mentions the proliferation of literature on the topic.

Pauchant became aware of the need for meaning, for integration, for establishing roots, and for transcendence through his earlier concern with the organisational response to the world’s crises – individual, social and ecological.\(^{42}\) He presents a number of scholars in the field of management and psychology who write on management and organisation from an existentialist perspective.\(^{43}\) They suggest that a crisis is not only negative, and does not need to be fixed quickly. The suffering brought about by a crisis, he says, permits human beings to arrive at a better understanding of their situation, and to invent different ways of acting and being.

\(^{41}\) T.C. Pauchant, *Ethics and Spirituality at Work*, p. 1
\(^{42}\) In T.C. Pauchant, *La Quête du Sens*
\(^{43}\) T.C. Pauchant, *La Quête du Sens*, p. 15
The crisis brings forth change because it leaves us empty-handed. It forces us, if we allow it, to forget our illusions for a moment and to communicate again with the hard and real issues of life.\footnote{ibid. Translation by the author. [La crise est porteuse de changement car elle nous met a nu. Elle nous force, si nous le permettons, à oublier pour un instant nos illusions et à communier, de nouveau, avec le concret, le réel et la vie.]}  

This quote demonstrates that ‘reality’ is not only found in quantifiable data, but also in inner experience. Pauchant blames the science which is at the origin of industrialisation and the dream of prosperity which it promised. As a matter of fact, he says, this science and the way it is translated in technologies produce solutions as well as problems such as unemployment, pollution, consumerism, rationalisation, over-exploitation of resources, and professional illnesses.\footnote{ibid.} The business ethicist Johan Verstraeten has interpreted this viewpoint as the hermeneutic horizon of management.\footnote{J. Verstraeten, *Leiderschap met hart en ziel* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2003)} He observed that business ethics was intended as a critical corrective of management science, but has had very little impact on management. On the contrary, he says, ethics has to adjust to the rationality of the manager in order to be accepted. He argues that the economic interpretation of the world overruns, dominates and colonises all domains of human life. Like Pauchant, he suggests that the rationality of the manager does not allow to solve the problems which present themselves in the context of globalisation and change.

Neal presents an example of the spiritual approach. She suggests that ‘spirituality and consciousness have been found to be at the core of dynamic evolutionary systems, and thus must be included in our analysis and practice of organizational design and change’.\footnote{J. Neal, ‘Spirituality in Management Education’, p.7} Within the spiritual approach, eastern philosophies appear to provide better insight in authentic renewal and the creative processes than the Christian tradition. Some authors admit that it is fascinating to approach the dilemma of change and renewal with another cultural frame of reference.\footnote{G. Broekstra, ‘Spiritualiteit in vernieuwingsmanagement’, in: *Business Spiritualiteit*, eds. P. de Blot et.al. (Eemnes: Uitgeverij Nieuwe Dimensies, 2006)} Buddhism, for example, teaches that attachment is the cause of suffering, and the Eightfold Path is the way to cease suffering. The Eightfold Path is particularly concerned with the

\begin{itemize}
  \item Attachment is the cause of suffering.
  \item The Eightfold Path is the way to cease suffering.
\end{itemize}
mindset, such as right understanding, right thought, right speech, right concern and right concentration.

1.5. Paradigms in management theory

Margaret Benefiel is a rare voice in the Academy of Management calling to probe deeper into the differences of meaning and purpose in the field of workplace spirituality. She remarks that management theorists who are working in the field of spirituality at work are divided in two camps which do not understand each other: those who are concerned with quantitative studies and its critics.\(^{49}\) Benefiel admits that quantitative studies constitute important work, especially for the dialogue with mainstream management scholars. On the other hand she suggests that important issues are going unaddressed in the management scholarship on spirituality in organisations.\(^{50}\) She refers in particular to Gibbons' argument that the desired benefits may not be as expected when spirituality is harnessed for secular outcomes such as profit.\(^{51}\) The question which she has on her mind is whether there is any hope of quantitative researchers and their critics ever learning to talk to one another.

The debate between quantitative researchers and their critics seems to have reached an impasse. The two camps speak different languages and, more often than not, talk past one another.\(^{52}\)

Benefiel elucidates the problem by situating the debate between quantitative researchers and their critics within the sociological paradigms of organisational analysis which have been presented by Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan.\(^{53}\) Thereby she effectively transcends the spirituality-religion debate among management scholars, and brings the discussion to the assumptions about the nature of the social sciences. According to Benefiel, the quantitative research of spirituality at work is a theoretical approach that fits within the functionalist

\(^{49}\) M. Benefiel, ‘Strange bedfellows’, p. 3

\(^{50}\) M. Benefiel, ‘Strange bedfellows’, p. 2.


\(^{52}\) M. Benefiel, ‘Strange bedfellows’, p. 3

paradigm. She suggests that the issues which are currently going unaddressed in the management scholarship on spirituality in organisations require a shift towards another of Burrell and Morgan’s paradigms, the interpretive paradigm. A brief characterisation of the functionalist and the interpretive paradigms and their historical background will enable us to see how the difference between them is relevant to Benefiel’s claim.

The functionalist paradigm is characterised as follows:

In its overall approach it seeks to provide essentially rational explanations of social affairs. It is a perspective which is highly pragmatic in orientation, concerned to understand society in a way which generates knowledge which can be put to use. It is often problem-orientated in approach, concerned to provide practical solutions to practical problems. It is usually firmly committed to a philosophy of social engineering as a basis of social change and emphasises the importance of understanding order, equilibrium and stability in society and the way in which it can be maintained.

The interpretive paradigm is characterised as follows:

[It] is informed by a concern to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience. It seeks explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action. [...] It sees the social world as an emergent social process which is created by the individuals concerned.

With regard to the study of workplace spirituality the distinction amounts to an outsider perspective on spirituality by management scholars working in the functionalist paradigm, versus an insider perspective of those working in the interpretive paradigm. In the functionalist paradigm spirituality is analysed as a factor in organisational behaviour. The outsider perspective thus generates objective knowledge which can be put to use towards managerial objectives in an instrumental

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54 In this connection it is important to notice that Burrell and Morgan found most organisation theorists to be working within the bounds of the functionalist paradigm. The notion of a paradigm in their usage refers to a set of particular assumptions of the nature of social science and different theories of society. Among the various paradigms they discuss, the functionalist paradigm has provided the dominant framework for organisational analysis.
55 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 26
56 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 28
way. In the interpretive paradigm workplace spirituality is recognised as a human experience, the understanding of which may help to understand organisations. The insider perspective generates insight in the various interpretations of the social world.

According to Burrell and Morgan the functionalist paradigm is rooted in sociological positivism, which reflects the attempt to apply models and methods derived from the natural sciences to the study of human affairs. The interpretive paradigm, on the other hand, is rooted in German idealism, which is based upon the premise that the ultimate reality of the universe lies in ‘spirit’ or ‘idea’ rather than in the data of sense perception. Burrell and Morgan emphasise that German idealism, as an intellectual tradition, stands in complete opposition to sociological positivism, resulting in opposing views of ontology, human nature, epistemology, and methodology in the social sciences. In their view the problem is that the interpretive paradigm is struggling to assert itself against the functionalist orthodoxy. They suggest that the chasm between quantitative researchers and their critics cannot be bridged at the level of social theory. They emphasise that each of their paradigms draws upon a long, complex and conceptually rich intellectual tradition, which generates its own particular brand of insight.

Viewing social theory and the literature on organisational analysis from the perspective of the functionalist paradigm, one has the impression that there is a dominant orthodoxy which is surrounded by critical perspectives, each of which seeks to adopt some form of ‘radical’ stance. Such a view is unduly narrow; it assumes that the perspectives are satellites which take their principal point of reference from the orthodoxy itself. It assumes that their aim and function is critique and the exposure of the limitations reflected in the orthodoxy. [...] Stepping outside the functionalist paradigm, we have had an opportunity to become more aware of the nature of the broad intellectual traditions at work. We have seen how at the level of social theory each of the paradigms, drawing upon a separate intellectual source, is in essence distinct, internally coherent, and self-sustaining. At the level of organisation studies this distinction tends to be less clear-cut, partly because theorists operating here have adopted a reactive stance with regard to the functionalist orthodoxy. [...] Their

57 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 7
58 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 7
59 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 395
reactive stance has often prevented them from realising the full potential which their paradigmatic location offers.\(^{60}\)

Benefiel is obviously concerned with the dominance of quantitative studies in the field of workplace spirituality. She admits that Burrell and Morgan have presented a compelling argument for respecting each paradigm on its own terms, but she remains dissatisfied with the notion of an unbridgeable chasm between the two. Burrell and Morgan’s claim that each paradigm needs to be developed on its own terms implies that the dominance of the functionalist paradigm remains intact with the result that important issues remain outside the scope of its interests. This means that those who are concerned with existential questions and organisational transformation will continue to struggle within its limits. At the same time any answer will be effective only if it can be heard by the functionalist orthodoxy.

1.6. Human concerns in the functionalist paradigm

In this study I will follow Benefiel’s example in arguing for a broader scope of questions than is recognised by the functionalist paradigm on spirituality at work, as represented for example in the work of Giacalone and Jurkiewicz. What these authors fail to recognise is that their ‘scientific’ approach operates just as much at the service of ‘promoting a cause’ as any other. To explain this point it will prove to be very instructive to look at some of the history of including human concerns within functionalist organisational theory.

As Burrell and Morgan remark, ‘[f]rom its earliest days the industrial psychology movement was at pains to emphasise its humanitarian as well as its managerial interests’. (128)\(^{61}\) Their analysis of the functionalist orthodoxy shows that despite the interest in human concerns there have been recurrent shifts away from social systems theory towards objectivism. (184) The human relations movement which emerged from the Hawthorne studies initially appeared to respond to human concerns in organisations, but research in the post-Hawthorne period reverted to the objectivism characteristic of the early industrial psychology. (160) Much of the

\(^{60}\) G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms*, p. 396

\(^{61}\) Numbers in the following text refer to G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms*. 
objectivistic research on work behaviour has aimed at showing that human beings are predictable. (130) Likewise, the quality of working life movement, although committed to humanitarian concern for the development of human growth and potential, was invariably geared by the functionalist orthodoxy to prove its contribution to the stability and survival of the system as a whole. (183) Burrell and Morgan say that the quality of working life movement stands as the contemporary equivalent of the much earlier industrial psychology and human relations movement. (184) The current interest in organisational culture appears to generate empirical studies, reflecting a similar objectivism as before. Even when qualitative research is conducted in this field, many managers and executives do not appear to capture the research findings. Collins and Porras’ research of visionary companies illustrates the problem well. 62 They suggest that the main difficulty in building a vision is the confusion of core ideology and change, identity and strategy.

Patrick Lencioni illustrates what happens when core ideology and strategy are confused. 63 After the publication of Built to Last, he observed that many companies took up the challenge to develop a set of principles called core values. He says that ‘managers [were] convened to stampede to off-site meetings in order to conjure up some core values of their own’. He considers many of these value statements to be quite meaningless. Empty values statements, he says, create cynical and dispirited employees, alienate customers, and undermine managerial credibility. He argues that a values statement is judged by the authenticity of its content.

1.7. The problem

Against the background of functionalist orthodoxy in the theory of management the problem with regard to the study of spirituality at work appears to be an example of a much wider discussion. Benefiel said that the discussion was between the quantitative management researchers and their critics. She framed the discussion in

terms of the subject-object split.\textsuperscript{64} There is something to say for choosing this framework, because the subject-object split is at the heart of management theory. For example, Chester Barnard embedded his entire theory of organisation in the tension between free will and determinism.\textsuperscript{65} Although the dualistic stance which he took has not remained this hard among management theorists, his stance has been very influential in the conceptualisation of the relation between employees and organisation. Many employees, including managers, say that they live their lives outside the working hours.

Barnard argued that functional view of man was imposed by the universal view required for the study of management and organisation. But he was also aware of the power of choice of human beings, the capacity of determination, and the possession of free will as necessary to normal, sane conduct. He underlined that ‘persons who have no sense of ego, who are lacking in self-respect, who believe that what they do or think is unimportant, who have no initiative whatever, are problems, pathological cases, insane, not of this world, unfitted for cooperation’.\textsuperscript{66} In his thinking both viewpoints had to be accepted as describing aspects of social phenomena.\textsuperscript{67}

It is to be expected that an analysis of workplace spirituality within the functionalist orthodoxy will only show its functional aspects for the organisation. Such research may help to integrate spirituality as another management tool, but the question which causes are served by employing these tools remains unaddressed. In the past, management theorists working within the functionalist paradigm typically have not recognised the importance of the human capacity of perception and interpretation of their situation. The interest in organisational behaviour focuses on a number of internal characteristics such as learning ability, motivation, perception, attitudes, personality, and values.\textsuperscript{68} But the empirical study of these internal characteristics keeps non-measurable aspects at arm’s length. Such characteristics as fear,

\textsuperscript{64} M. Benefiel, ‘Strange Bedfellows’, p. 6
\textsuperscript{66} C.I. Barnard, \textit{The Functions of the Executive}, p. 13
\textsuperscript{67} C.I. Barnard, \textit{The Functions of the Executive}, p. 21
deficiencies, failure and fantasies are almost entirely disregarded. At the same time, organisational behaviourists emphasise that managers can get the best performance from employees by treating them as individuals. Now the way in which the spirituality-religion debate is conducted also fails to address what managers (and management theorists) believe about the way human beings interpret their situation and orient themselves in a complex and changing world. Instead the debate tends to shift towards the ‘safe’ ground of objectivism.

Giacalone and Jurkiewicz suggest that workplace spirituality must be integrated into more traditional areas of investigation if it is to emerge as a mainstream topic of study, in particular within the context of multidisciplinary research. This would amount to an interpretation of the basic concerns of the spirituality at work movement within the same narrow focus that caused intractable problems each time when the understanding of human concerns in organisations is at stake.

Little awareness appears to have remained in management theory of the dilemma which Chester Barnard faced, namely that human beings lose their quality of being extremely distinguished when they are considered only in their purely functional aspects. Among the management scholars who are interested in spirituality, Thierry Pauchant is one of the few who refers to this dilemma. Pauchant denounces the devastating effects of the current business orthodoxy, and suggests that fragmented interpretations of Barnard’s work have been central in establishing the orthodoxy. A better understanding of the overall philosophical tradition from which Barnard has drawn, he says, could greatly influence management thought and practice for the better. He mentions in particular an organic, dialectic, transformative, and transdisciplinary view of organisations as well as integrating issues such as ecology, ethics, existential meaning, responsibility, community, and spirituality.

The explanation of the failure to address these theoretical concerns reflects Burrell and Morgan’s characterisation of the functionalist paradigm as relying on the

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69 One of the exceptions is Manfred Kets de Vries. See M.F.R. Kets de Vries, Organizational paradoxes: clinical approaches to management (London: Tavistock, 1980)
70 D. Hellriegel, J.W. Slocum and R.W. Woodman, p. 25
71 R.A. Giacalone and C.L. Jurkiewicz, p. 12 and 17
‘outsider’ perspective of social science. Workplace spirituality can hardly be understood from this perspective, for it would fall into the same pit as the managers which Patrick Lencioni observed at their off-site meetings. He said that corporate values will be no more than instruments to control the world of work when such values are developed just because their managers believe that this will differentiate them from the competition and make them successful. It is to be expected that the same will happen to spiritual practices if they are embraced (and eventually ‘developed’) for instrumental reasons. Lencioni emphasised that a corporate values initiative is judged by the authenticity of its content. Likewise, Benefiel suggests that research in the field of spirituality at work might focus on discerning authenticity in the workplace, in both individuals and organisations. Following these critics the presupposition underlying this investigation is therefore that workplace spirituality must be understood from the ‘insider’ perspective in order to obtain the benefits expected of it.

The ‘insider’ perspective necessarily involves belief systems beyond those informing the functionalist approach to management theory. But such belief systems have been systematically eliminated throughout the history of management. They are a disturbing factor in the functionalist orthodoxy. The problem with which we shall be concerned in this investigation is that workplace spirituality is very difficult to conceive from the managerial perspective without falling into the pit of objectivism. The central question is: how can workplace spirituality avoid the trap of serving as another instrument for the interests of the organisation as a system at the expense of human concerns? The purpose of this study is to reconcile the insider perspective of spirituality with the purposive use of spiritual practices in organisations. Therefore the question will be answered from a managerial as well as an insider perspective.

73 M. Benefiel, ‘Strange Bedfellows’, p. 11
1.8. An anthropological approach to workplace spirituality

Anthropologists are familiar with the gap between the ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives in the study of human behaviour. The anthropological methodology aims at connecting two ways of viewing the social world – the detached view of the observer and the engaged view of a participant in the social world. By connecting these two viewpoints they are able to arrive at a better understanding of human culture. In recent years some anthropologists, such as Hans Tennekes, have shifted their attention from isolated indigenous cultures to organisational culture. Tennekes defines culture as the way human beings ‘produce’ their own existence.\(^\text{75}\) Human beings do not dispose of a more or less complete behaviour program, like an animal, but have to acquire such a program during a long process of growing up. Without culture human beings are helpless in the struggle for life. Tennekes finds organisations interesting phenomena for the anthropologist, because they are consciously constructed by human beings for a particular purpose. As such they exemplify that human beings produce their own existence. The implication of this insight is that human behaviour is also determined by the organisational structures which they have produced. Tennekes emphasises that understanding of the dialectic relation between structure and behaviour is of crucial importance for a correct view of the cultural dimension of human existence.\(^\text{76}\)

Organisations play an important role in the lives of human beings. They provide them with commodities such as food, water, transport, communication, education, health care, social security, public government, sport, and concerts. If they are employed by an organisation, it gives them the opportunity to make a contribution towards such commodities by their knowledge or skills, to be part of a team and to get an income. Over the last 100 years they have become increasingly dependent on organisations for their welfare. Organisations have become a ‘fact’ in their lives, a relatively independent entity of society, as real to them as a tree or a bridge.\(^\text{77}\) Therefore their freedom is in fact limited by the organisations which they choose to engage in. On the other hand they continually create organisations. In the case of education and


\(^{76}\) J. Tennekes, *Organisatiecultuur*, p. 15

\(^{77}\) This reality can be found in its structure, rationality, history, and moral responsibility.
sport, they do not just have the opportunity to make a contribution to produce commodities; they actually create a common good by their involvement in a learning community or a sports club.

Tennekes suggests that organisations are being consciously constructed on the basis of ‘cultural models’.\textsuperscript{79} One of the key elements of human culture is the ‘knowledge’ which is provided by the cultural tradition of a society about the reality in which its members live and the alternatives they have for action. The ‘knowledge reserve’ concerns three realities: the natural world, the social order, and the interior world of human beings. It involves facts as well as the values which provide direction to human action. Tennekes speaks of this knowledge in terms of ‘mental equipment’.\textsuperscript{79}

Another key element is the inherently dynamic nature of human culture. Tennekes says that culture exists by the grace of action which is oriented by images of reality, frames of reference as well as the values and norms which are included.\textsuperscript{80} Thus the mental equipment provided by the culture of a society becomes a reliable source of knowledge and useful information only to the extent that it is actually used.

Spirituality can be viewed as part of the ‘mental equipment’ which employees may bring to work. The anthropological approach of organisations will be useful for the study of workplace spirituality in so far as it acknowledges both the constraining reality of organisational structures and procedures and the dynamic nature of human culture through intentional action. As Tennekes explains, the nature of organisations is such that they are embodied by the actions of human individuals with their specific identities rather than being opposed to them.\textsuperscript{81} This approach will therefore facilitate the understanding of workplace spirituality from a managerial perspective, because it transcends the opposition between the functionalist and interpretive paradigms as it has often been perceived (both within the dominant orthodoxy and among its critics).

The basic idea behind the anthropological approach is that the functionalist paradigm has no place for subjective categories such as experience, values and conscience,

\textsuperscript{78} J. Tennekes, \textit{Organisatiecultuur}, p. 14
\textsuperscript{80} J. Tennekes, \textit{Organisatiecultuur}, p. 26
\textsuperscript{81} J. Tennekes, \textit{Organisatiecultuur}, p. 13-14
communion with nature and worker self-expression. It is important to have a place for human interiority, because a number of organisational objectives depend on subjective categories. Among those objectives are organisational excellence and longevity, as well as corporate social responsibility and sustainability. This approach may therefore provide an avenue for the study of workplace spirituality in so far as spirituality is part of human experience and a creative cultural force. This allows for purposive use of spirituality while staying well away from an instrumental employ of spirituality. The anthropological approach will be given further precision by focusing on the ambiguities of work, human cooperation, and organisational behaviour. This means that we are more interested in the work of interpretation and meaning of experience than in criticising any limitations of the functionalist orthodoxy.

1.9. The program

The entire program towards understanding workplace spirituality consists of shifting between insider and outsider perspectives. The first shift will be concerned with management while the second shift will focus on spirituality.

The insider perspective of management will be concerned with the dialectic relation between structure and behaviour which is so important for a correct view of the cultural dimension of organisations. It will specifically address the question whether the personal identity of managers is characterised by the company for which they work, or is the company shaped and formed by the individuals who work for it. The answer to this question will illustrate the importance of the 'mental equipment' which managers bring to their work for dealing with the constraining reality of organisational structures and procedures. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the importance of how these constraints are interpreted by managers, rather than in demonstrating the limitations which are inherent of the horizon of the functionalist orthodoxy.

The next step involves a shift to the outsider perspective of management. The question is how human concerns are framed within management theory. Burrell and Morgan argue that the dominant framework for the conduct of academic sociology
and the study of organisations is provided by the functionalist paradigm.\(^\text{82}\) It will be shown that the sociological assumptions which are characteristic of the functionalist paradigm have a great impact on the way management theorists handle human concerns. In order to understand the difficulties of including human concerns within management theory, two early management theorists will be contrasted: Chester Barnard (1886-1961) and Mary Parker Follett (1869-1933). Barnard is considered here because of his influence on the way organisations are viewed in mainstream management thinking. Many management theorists as well as practising managers have come to share his view of organisations as co-operative enterprises of individuals in pursuit of a common purpose that require sensitive management to maintain them in states of equilibrium. Mary Parker Follett was only twenty years older than Barnard. She became involved in management thinking in the 1920s, at the same time when Barnard was engaged with the Harvard group of social scientists and working on his theory of management and organisation. Unlike Barnard and the influential Harvard group, Follett rejected the idea of equilibrium. She thought of equilibrium as a bondage that keeps humanity from advancing and progressing. Her key concept was integration, which she put forward as a way to build up joint power. In the 1920s, this didn’t make sense as a way to manage human affairs. In this investigation Follett is considered for her idea that managers should learn to discover what is already present in the situation. She said that ‘we shall always be seeking an external, and arbitrary authority until we learn to direct our efforts toward seeking – the law of the situation’.\(^\text{83}\) The word seeking is also central in spirituality. Her work has attracted little attention among management scholars interested in spirituality, and this makes it all the more interesting to contrast her conceptualisation of management to the functionalist orthodoxy.

The third step shifts from management to spirituality. The world’s religions have brought forth numerous schools of spirituality, such as Theravada Buddhism, Tai Chi Chuan, Sufism, and Umbanda to name but a few. Even within the Christian tradition, there are many models, ranging from early monastic life to the Franciscan Order, from the charisma of Augustine to Mother Teresa, and, in protestantism, from the reformed sanctification of ordinary life to the evangelical spirituality of the fraternity of

\(^\text{82}\) G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms*, p. 25

Taizé. In their own words, religious traditions are typified by the metaphor of ‘the way’. Buddhism defines itself as yana (vehicle) as it is concerned with the way towards Enlightenment. The life of Muslims is governed by the shar’iah (‘shar’ = way) and the life of Jews by Thora (= indicator of direction). Each religion, and each school of spirituality, follows a particular way. The various schools of spirituality have developed a critical stance towards their lived experience upon their way, i.e. a methodical way of reflection. This involves giving attention to whatever presents itself on the way. This is exactly what Follett means with her law of the situation. The question which is central to this investigation is how these schools have integrated the law of the situation in their governance code. Since the number of schools of spirituality is practically unlimited, the insider perspective of spirituality will focus on one of such schools, i.e. the Jesuit Order.

The last step involves a shift to the outsider perspective of spirituality. The question is what we can learn from the governance of the Jesuit Order for the management of business companies, hospitals, schools, and other organisations. The purpose of this chapter is to explain how attention to whatever presents itself in the situation can be given a place in management and organisation. This means that the central question will be answered whether workplace spirituality can avoid the trap of serving as another instrument for the interests of the organisation as a system at the expense of human concerns.

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84 K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 125
2. An insider perspective of management

2.1. Introduction

Some of the classic literature on management has emerged through reflection on personal experience of management. Henri Fayol's *Administration industrielle et générale* is an example of this literature. Fayol (1841-1925) was a mining engineer by training and spent his working life with a mining and metallurgical company in the Auvergne region, first as an engineer but from his early thirties onwards in general management. Up to now he is generally considered for his analysis of managerial activities and definition of management. As a general manager in a large industry, he was preoccupied with the lack of qualified personnel for management positions. Engineers like himself, who dominated in industrial management positions, were not adequately equipped to respond to the *general needs* of industry. In his view, the ever larger scale of industrial production required professional management. Fayol was convinced that this could not be left to technical education, nor to experiential learning, but had to be taught as a discipline in itself. The main problem with regard to management education, as he perceived it, was the lack of systematic knowledge, based on empirical study of management practice. In his book, Fayol sets out to present for public discussion the principles, rules, methods, and procedures which had proved valuable for him. As Pugh et al. emphasise, 'these are his own rules and he does not assume they are necessarily of universal application nor that they have any great permanence'.

Unlike Frederick Taylor before him, Fayol was aware that a common interest of management and workers is by no means to be taken for granted. His book breathes the importance of unity which is never achieved and always needs to be worked on. He recommends the proverb *l'union fait la force* (union creates strength) to the meditation of executives instead of the motto *diviser pour régner* (divide and rule).

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86. D.S. Pugh, D.J. Hickson and C.R. Hinings, *Writers on Organizations* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 65. Fayol’s definition comprises five elements: to forecast and plan; to organise; to command; to coordinate; and to control.
87. D.S. Pugh, D.J. Hickson and C.R. Hinings, *Writers on Organizations*, p. 63
Harmony among the employees leads to power of the enterprise; power being understood as joint power. He repeatedly shows his preoccupation with ignorance, ambition, embarrassment, egoism, laziness, irritation and other human weaknesses and passions. He remarks that anyone with some idea of management models and sufficient capital might set up an organisation if the individual factor could be abstracted. This explains why Fayol distinguishes, in the whole complex of an organisation, the material organism and the social organism. In his view the managerial function (unlike the technical, commercial, financial, and other functions) has its focus on the social organism. As a general manager, Fayol dealt with individual employees on a daily basis. His view of society may be characterised as paternalistic, but, to him, organisations are populated by real men and women. He did not make an abstraction of human beings to serve the theory of formal organisation.

In contrast, Herbert Simon’s influential Administrative Behavior is an example of management theory which is more concerned with formal arguments than with the practical problems of management. Simon aimed at developing an administrative theory which must disclose under what conditions economic maximisation takes place, while recognising the actual non-rational properties of human beings. In his own words, ‘the need for an administrative theory resides in the fact that there are practical limits to human rationality, and that these limits are not static, but depend upon the organizational environment in which the individual’s decision takes place.’ His famous concept of bounded rationality constituted a fundamental criticism of the traditional model of economic man. As he understands, ‘the task of administration is so to design the work environment that the individual will approach as close as practicable to rationality (judged in terms of the organization’s goals) in his decisions’. The nature of man is redefined to serve the theory of formal organisation: ‘administrative man’ in essence preserves rationality as the pre-eminent

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88 H. Fayol, Administration industrielle et générale, p. 69. [Si l’on pouvait faire abstraction du facteur individuel, il serait assez facile de constituer un organisme social. Ce serait à la portée du premier venu ayant quelque idée des modèles courants et disposant des capitaux nécessaires.]
90 H. Simon, Administrative Behavior, p. 240
91 H. Simon, Administrative Behavior, p. 241
concept. When Simon was awarded the Nobel prize in 1978, the Swedish Academy of Sciences acknowledged his influence on modern business economics and administrative research. This illustrates that the top priorities in the discipline of management have become more theoretical than practical.

Among the influential writers on organisation, relatively few draw upon their experience as practicing managers. This may well be the reason that management theory shows little awareness of organisations being shaped by the individuals who populate them rather than the other way around. One of the exceptions is Arie de Geus with his book *The Living Company*. His book is based upon empirical research which was executed by the corporate planning department of the Royal/Dutch Shell group, but it is first of all a personal reflection upon his own experience as a senior manager before he became head of the corporate planning department. The corporate planning department had to deal with an important company issue: what will happen when the oil runs out? The research project started with the question of the chairman of the Committee of Managing Directors to come up with ‘some examples of large companies that were older than Shell and relatively as important in their industry, who had weathered some fundamental change in the world around them with their corporate identity intact’. The research yielded a number of factors which were at odds with the dominant management paradigm. De Geus noticed, in particular, that economic criteria did not appear to determine corporate longevity, and that people seemed much more critical to a company than the economic lense suggests.

In his book he explains how this discovery changed his thinking about the nature of organisations. The originality of De Geus is that he is looking from the outside in (what can Shell learn from the example of long-living companies?) and talking from the inside out (how do we make sense of the research data?). His work reflects the

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93 Pugh, Hickson and Hinings present 33 management thinkers who they consider as influential. Among them only five draw upon their personal experience as practicing managers (Henri Fayol, Chester Barnard, Wilfred Brown, Frederick Taylor, Alfred Sloan). Another seven have an academic background who can draw on their experience as consultant (Alvin Gouldner, Laurence Peter, Lyndall Urwick and E. Brech, Peter Drucker), knowledge of public government (Tom Burns) or social work (Mary Parker Follett). See D.S. Pugh, D.J. Hickson and C.R. Hinings, *Writers on Organizations*
95 A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 4
anthropological assumption that organisational behaviour is shaped in a dialectic relation between organisational structure and individual behaviour. His work is given further importance as he brings his entire ‘mental equipment’ to bear on the dominant management paradigm. De Geus demonstrates the importance of reflecting upon personal experience in the process of management research. Without such reflection, the understanding of organisations comes to depend entirely on the theoretical perspectives of sociology, psychology, economics, or whatever other discipline. The British philosopher Stephen Toulmin explains that the problem with academic disciplines is their narrowness of preoccupations at the expense of broader and humane concerns.96 For the social disciplines the problem shows up in a concern with predicting what will happen instead of helping people to make something of their future.97 De Geus says that the economic view of organisations provides managers with a false feeling of being in control: ‘The yearning for some certainty about the future is so strong that most of us will at times act against our better judgment and demand some precise prediction of the future – from fortune-tellers and astrologers to consultants, academics and economists’.98 But by ‘reverting to predictions as a standard way of thinking about the future, the corporate powers of perception remain greatly reduced’.99 The value of disciplinary procedures is in seeing through situations (diagnosis). The reverse side of the medal is their weakness in looking at the situation.

The purpose of this chapter is to gain an understanding of the importance of both ways of looking for understanding organisations. This chapter starts with the idea of learning as a way to cope with a changing world which is central in De Geus’ book. As he explains, under the learning definition of success, people are more important than the economic lens suggests. The view of organisations as a human enterprise will be further explored in paragraph 2.3. This will show that the ability to learn presupposes the capacity to be aware of one’s stance vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

97 Toulmin observes that doctors, lawyers, and others with specialized training in an academic discipline, adopt a selective viewpoint, looking for the specifically ‘legal’ or ‘medical’ implications of any situation and ignoring those that do not count medically or legally. In contrast, occupational therapists, for example, are trained to pay attention to an individual’s actual needs and to understand his or her situation. As Toulmin says, ‘they quickly come to understand that, in talking with a client or patient or human subject (however you label them), they cannot afford to exclude anything from consideration’. (p. 153, italics in the original text.)
98 A. de Geus, The Living Company, p. 39
99 A. de Geus, The Living Company, p. 38
This capacity indicates that corporate identity is central to organisational learning. Paragraph 2.4 will look further into the importance of identity and how it is developed. As we will see the key to identity is discovery ‘from within’. De Geus testifies that such a process of discovery was resisted in the executive boardroom. As he explained, he was heard only when he started to talk from the outside in. In paragraph 2.5 the difficulty of talking from the inside out will be explained. Paragraph 2.6 will summarise the understanding of the insider perspective in this investigation.

2.2. Learning as the key to managing change

The context of The Living Company is change. The study of long-living companies had been triggered by the question what will happen when the oil runs out. It had yielded 40 corporations, 27 of which were examined in detail. It resulted in four key factors that explained why these companies were successful in adapting to the changing environment – sensitivity to the environment; cohesion and identity; tolerance of experiments and activities on the margin; conservative in financing.

- Sensitivity to the environment represents a company’s ability to react in timely fashion to the conditions of society around them. The long-living companies in De Geus’ sample only rarely gave prominence to societal considerations in the deliberations of their boards, but they seemed to excel at keeping their feelers out, tuned to whatever was going on around them.
- Cohesion and a strong sense of identity are the source of strength beyond the strength of the constituent parts. De Geus gives the example of Unilever as seeing itself as a fleet of ships, each ship independent, yet the whole fleet stronger than the sum of its parts. He emphasises that ‘This sense of belonging to an organization and being able to identify with its achievements can easily be dismissed as a ‘soft’ or abstract feature of change. But case

100 According to the subtitle of his book, De Geus is concerned with company survival in a turbulent environment. In general terms, he shows an interest in ‘all the forces that will affect the future of [the] company’. (p. 22) In his usage, change involves economic, technical, political, cultural, demographic, ecological and many other factors. Throughout this investigation, change is understood in this broad sense. The various aspects of change make no difference for the analysis of workplace spirituality, except for cultural factors that affect the understanding of corporate identity.

101 A. de Geus, The Living Company, p. 6-7
histories repeatedly show that strong employee links were essential for survival amid change.

- Tolerance is manifested by outliers, experiments, and eccentricities ‘within the boundaries of the cohesive firm’ which kept stretching their understanding of possibilities.
- Conservative financing appears to be closely related to cohesion and identity. De Geus believes that having money in hand gave these companies flexibility and independence of action. They could pursue options that their competitors could not, because they did not first have to convince third-party financiers of their attractiveness.

First, De Geus realised that the four key factors are in stark contrast with the dominant management paradigm as he had learned it at business school.

It did not take us long to notice the factors that did not appear on the list. The ability to return investment to shareholders seemed to have nothing to do with longevity. The profitability of a company was a symptom of corporate health, but not a predictor or determinant of corporate health.\(^\text{102}\)

Second, he tells how these factors kept resonating in his mind and changed his thinking about the real nature of companies – and of what it means for the way that managers run those companies. He came to see the factors which his team had identified as abilities of living companies as distinct from ‘economic’ companies: the ability to learn and adapt, the ability to build a community and an identity, the ability to build constructive relationships, and the ability to govern their own growth and evolution.\(^\text{103}\) All four factors appeared to be important. His team then considered which one was the most ‘accessible’ among all the abilities which the four key factors indicated. They decided to further focus on the ability to learn and adapt.\(^\text{104}\)

The essence of learning is that solutions are found to deal with changes in the external world. Once these solutions are implemented, the company is no longer the

\(^{102}\) A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 7
\(^{103}\) A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 9
\(^{104}\) A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 24
same. Therefore an important aspect of learning is internal change. There are two ways to change internally: by necessity or anticipation. The first way is imposed by a crisis; the second requires learning. The research team reported that many of their long-living companies had switched away from their original natural resource base or their original business. The question was whether this switch was the result of a crisis or learning. As De Geus put it: ‘Had any of our large, longstanding companies changed in fundamental ways – not because they were forced to, but because they anticipated the need for changes?’ It appeared that they had indeed. The insights gained from their study led De Geus to conclude that a learning definition of success is more suited to the current challenges of corporate life.

Companies could act according to the economic definition of success when managers felt that they were in control of their world. But rare is the manager who feels in control of today’s turbulent environment. Therefore, to cope with a changing world, any entity must develop the capability of shifting and changing, of developing new skills and attitudes: in short, the capability of learning. [...] the essence of learning is the ability to manage change by changing yourself – as much for people when they grow up as for companies when they live through turmoil.

Anticipation begins with perception. Yet corporate managers, enmeshed in the details of their changing business efforts often think about their outside pressures only in the vaguest terms. ‘They do not see’, De Geus says, ‘they do not develop the careful sensitivity to the signals of pressures outside the firm, and how those pressures are changing’. With this phrase he indicates that the organisational ability to perceive the signals of the external environment is not developed. From his previous experience (as managing director of Shell Brazil) he knew that company learning is not the sum of individual learning of the employees. The analogy with a living being, for De Geus, opens the possibility to think about an organisation as being capable of learning beyond the learning of individuals.

105 A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 27
106 A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 23
In order to see how companies can learn beyond the learning of individual managers we have to try thinking of every company as a living being.

This metaphor of seeing the organisation as a living organism is the result of resonating with the four key factors that explained longevity. For De Geus, this metaphor stands in contrast to the economic view of organisations. The economic definition of success has great clarity, he says, but it is short-sighted. The language of economics is in conflict with the conditions for longevity, because it leads managers to choose the path of survival on a short-term basis rather than managing for the long run. In this way no serious attempts are made to consider the potential for future proceeds by means of anticipating a changing world.

The study of long-living companies taught the Shell team that they are working from the inside out while being attentive to the changing environment. They make continuous fundamental changes in their internal structures in order to meet the changing pressures from the outside world. This idea of learning as a way to cope with a changing world led him to a different imperative for corporate success: ´a successful company is one that can learn effectively´. De Geus emphasises that, under the learning definition of success, people are much more critical to a company.

2.3. The company as a human enterprise

Long before the research project on long-living companies, De Geus appears to have been aware of the importance of understanding people for business organisations. Having been educated at the Rotterdam business school, De Geus had acquired the economic lense to view the world of business. As he says, the major subjects at his time were economics, finance, and organisational structure. He wondered why so much time was spent at university in understanding systems and figures and so little in understanding human beings. In fact, he had a first inkling that the economic lense

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109 As De Geus remarks, when decision-making is driven by economic objectives, decision-makers focus attention on the immediate prospect of cost reduction, rather than considering the consequences of loss of human potential, experience and loyalty which will be required in the long term.

was inadequate at his first job at the Shell refinery near Rotterdam after graduating as an economist.

The theories back at business school had mentioned labor, but there had been no talk of people. Yet the real world, the refinery, seemed to be full of them. And because the workplace was full of people, it looked suspiciously as if companies were not always rational, calculable, and controllable.\textsuperscript{111}

One instance, when his company appeared to be out of control, occurred during the 1973 oil crisis. This became a moment for deeper reflection on his experience. De Geus qualifies this moment as ‘a personal turning point – a moment of intense soul searching that, in retrospect, defined the rest of my working life and career’.\textsuperscript{112} Just two years earlier he had been appointed as general manager of Shell Brazil. In the court of public opinion, he says, oil companies were accused of ‘abusing their power, creating artificial shortages for their own egoistic purposes and manipulating the marktes to increase their already-obscene profits’. Within the Brazilian context, the oil crisis rekindled calls to remove the foreign companies from the market.

De Geus reports that he was hit personally by the public scorn over oil companies. He had been working with Shell for over 20 years, he says, and his father had worked for Shell as well. He had always experienced the company as a family.

Where I came from, getting employment in such a solid, large-scale organization had always been an occasion for celebration, not calumny. Moreover I had worked for Royal/Dutch Shell in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and now South America. I had come to know hundreds of my colleagues at nearly all levels of the hierarchy. I did not recognize myself or my colleagues in the descriptions the press and politicians were giving.\textsuperscript{113}

De Geus knew that his colleagues felt similarly startled, hurt, and misunderstood. Why would we be acceptable as members of a church or a club, he asks, but socially suspect because we worked in a large company? Contrasting the ‘insider experience’ of Shell with what he perceived as the outsider view, De Geus realised that the

\textsuperscript{111} A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 19
\textsuperscript{112} A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 78
\textsuperscript{113} A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 79
company was seen as a unit in its own right, with its own purposes and its own characteristics.

Outsiders could not fathom its intentions and machinations [...] To outsiders, a company like Shell had the mysterious power of making its employees do things which those individuals would never do acting in their own right. It all added up to an image of Shell as a sort of giant phantom in the forest – difficult to see, with no specific contours, but with enormous, uncontrolled, undefined powers that might well do us harm. Moreover, it was a silent phantom. The multinational did not tell a story about itself. Outsiders could only guess why it existed, what it did for a living, why it came to Brazil, and how the world would be different if the company did not exist at all.114

Outsiders seldom feel the innate spirit that moves and propels a company. This contrast between the insider and outsider views made De Geus embark on his ‘soul searching’.

Many managers at Shell, and at other multinational companies, ignored this outsider’s perspective; they were too busy managing the company, perhaps, to pay attention to the rantings of politicians and the press. From my Brazilian perspective, however, it was impossible to ignore. It made me wonder whether the stereotype of me as a Shell man was true. Was my personal identity characterized by the company for which I worked? Or was the company shaped and formed by the individuals who worked for it?115

De Geus concluded that neither was true. Joining an institution involved to some extent submission to a set of views and beliefs he might otherwise not have taken on, he says, but it did not mean surrendering his capacity for judgment or critical opinion. De Geus recognised that not the employees, but Shell as an entity in itself was on trial. This recognition led him to conclude that:

If we were going to come up with a fitting response, we would have to find a way to express the entity’s needs and spirit. We would have to find a way to develop a healthy relationship between the entity’s persona and its environment.116

114 A. de Geus, The Living Company, p. 80
115 A. de Geus, The Living Company, p. 80
116 A. de Geus, The Living Company, p. 81
In looking for a corporate response to the public scorn over oil companies in Brazil, De Geus didn’t shift towards the ‘safe’ ground of objectivism. He attempted to see the larger picture, drawing on William Stern’s concept of *persona*. De Geus says that he was drawn to Stern’s thinking because of his systemic way of looking at human beings. Stern proposed looking at an entity’s behaviour, sociological environment, psychological history, and, by extension, economic life as components of one existence, all related. The central argument of Stern’s book *Person und Sache*, on the nature of the distinction between persons and things, made sense to him.

‘Things’ are all the dead objects in the world, objects without a will or a life force. Things are impacted by events, but do not decide to make things happen. [...] Homo economicus was thus a thing. It did not have a goal or a will; it existed only to react to other forces (such as supply and demand). [...] By contrast, the members of Homo Sapiens – the real people who work in real jobs or attend real schools – are unfathomable precisely because they are wilful. They act towards their own purpose, which economists cannot predict. A living entity, such as a human being, is not merely a passive object, buffeted by outside forces. As people, we make choices. Our behaviour cannot be explained solely cause-and-effect relationships.

This insight led De Geus to realise that Royal/Dutch Shell was alive. Stern said that a living being always has a hierarchical structure. He conceived of living entities nesting within each other, like Russian dolls. Thus a corporation like Royal/Dutch Shell is composed of various entities (companies, divisions, work groups, teams, and individuals) which are all alive. De observes that the implications of this insight are ‘a bit harsh’ for most business people, who would prefer the world of business to be like the world of things: just waiting for the manager to give it a push, which would then produce a predictable and measurable result. However, with this understanding of organisations, De Geus began to see the way that Shell Brazil could stand for itself while remaining open to its outside environment. The key was what Stern called

117 William Stern was a German psychologist who became one of the pioneers of developmental and learning psychology. He is best known for developing the intelligence quotient formula. He is also considered as the founder of the Personalismus school of thought. (See A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 82-83)
118 A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 85-86
119 A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 90
‘introception’: the ability to be aware of one’s own stance and position vis-à-vis the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{120}

2.4. The importance of identity

One of the reflective managers who has had a great influence on mainstream management thinking, Chester Barnard, asserted that ‘persons who have no sense of ego, who are lacking in self-respect, who believe that what they do or think is unimportant, who have no initiative whatever, are problems, pathological cases, insane, not of this world, unfitted for cooperation’.\textsuperscript{121} Awareness of self, beliefs, and initiative are basic conditions for human cooperation. As Barnard said, ‘nearly all of us believe in the power of choice, the capacity of determination, the possession of free will as necessary to normal, sane conduct’. When these are lacking in a person, this is considered a disability because it affects the capacity of choice in a negative way. De Geus observed that the power of choice is reduced by the economic view of human cooperation, because it is short-sighted. The problem is that the economic view of organisations overrules the capacity of choice, and thereby creates a state of organisational disability.

The problem is illustrated by the public reaction to a statement of the CEO of the French TV channel TF1 in \textit{Le Monde} about the purpose of his company. He declared that ‘there are many ways to talk about television, but from a business perspective the bottom line is to help Coca Cola, for example, to sell its product’. And he added that ‘the vocation of TF1 television programmes is to make the mind of the spectator receptive to commercial advertisements’.\textsuperscript{122} His vision aroused a lot of indignation among the public at the time. A few months later the same CEO retracted by saying that he did not recognise the business of TF1 in the words he had employed, but affirmed that ‘the logic of TF1 is a logic of power. […] We sell our clients a mass audience, a number of individuals sensitive to commercials’.\textsuperscript{123} According to the newspaper article, his words were perceived by the public as cynical, contemptuous

\textsuperscript{120} A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 91
\textsuperscript{121} C.I. Barnard, \textit{The Functions of the Executive}, p. 13
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Le Monde}, 11-12 July 2004. Translation by the author.
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Le Monde}, 8 September 2004. Translation by the author.
and arrogant. The statements of the TF1 CEO were interpreted as a sign of the degradation of television in the consumer society. He had nothing to say about what TF1 aspired to become, to achieve, to create – in other words its purpose beyond just making money. It represented no intrinsic value and importance to the individuals who make up the organisation (or, for that matter, to the larger society).

The Shell study of long-living companies generated four factors that explained why these companies were successful in adapting to the changing environment, including cohesion and a strong sense of identity. The importance of identity as an organisational success factor in handling change is underlined by the famous study of visionary organisations by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras.\textsuperscript{124} As Collins and Porras explain, the essence of a visionary company is the dynamic of preserving the core and stimulating progress.\textsuperscript{125} De Geus believes that the findings of the Shell study were corroborated by Collins and Porras.

They didn’t set out to find long-lived companies, but, as it happens, most of the firms that the CEO’s chose had existed for 60 years or longer. [...] The visionary companies put a lower priority on maximizing shareholder wealth or profits. Just as we had discovered, Collins and Porras found that their most-admired companies combined sensitivity to their environment with a strong sense of identity: ‘Visionary companies display a powerful drive for progress that enables them to change and adapt without compromising their cherished core ideals’.\textsuperscript{126}

In fact the Shell study had emphasised the importance of sensitivity and ignored the importance of identity. As De Geus reports, his team came to see the four explanatory factors as ‘abilities’ of living companies: the ability to learn and adapt, the ability to build a community and an identity, the ability to build constructive relationships, and the ability to govern their own growth and evolution. Of all these abilities only one was pursued – the learning ability – because it seemed to be more ‘accessible’. The ability to build a community and an identity was left aside. Thereby the team ignored that the four factors are interrelated. The point is that organisations, like individuals, can make a difference in a changing environment only when they

\textsuperscript{125} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, \textit{Built to Last}, p. 82
\textsuperscript{126} A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 8
take a stand vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Collins and Porras argue that the organisational capability to have an impact on their environment depends on the core ideology. Without such a core ideology, they find themselves subject to the changing forces in their environment. They become so busy with predicting what will happen that they do not see. This is demonstrated by the example of the TF1 CEO.

Collins and Porras consider the dynamic of preserving the core and stimulating progress as the essence of a visionary company. 127 They argue that visionary companies are not simply impacted by events, but make things happen. The importance of the interplay between core and progress was not well understood in management circles. Collins and Porras initially published their research in 1994. Since then the case that visionary companies adhere to a core ideology has attracted worldwide attention, and even developed into a management hype. 126 Observing the hype which their book had provoked, they concluded that many executives and managers did not capture the meaning of the original research findings. In an article which was published two years later in *Harvard Business Review* they showed their concern about the way in which the concept of vision was taken up in practice:

> Vision has become one of the most overused – and least understood – words in the language. The word vision conjures up all kinds of images. We think of outstanding achievement. We think of deeply held values that bond people in a society together. We think of audacious, exhilarating goals that galvanize people. We think of something eternal – the underlying reasons for an organization’s existence. We think of something that reaches inside us and pulls out our best efforts. We think of the dreams of what we want to be. And therein lies a problem. All of us know vision is important, but what exactly is it? 129

Collins and Porras believed that the reason for so many executives missing the meaning of their research findings is the confusion of core ideology (the timeless core values and enduring core purpose) which should never change from their

127 J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 82
operating practices and business strategies (which should be changing constantly in response to a changing world.\textsuperscript{130} Therefore they reiterate that the interplay between core and progress is the key finding from their research, and they expand on the understanding of change as they found it in visionary companies:

\begin{quote}
In truly great companies, change is a constant, but not the only constant. They understand the difference between what should never change and what should be open for change, between what is truly sacred and what is not. And by being clear about what should never change, they are better able to stimulate change and progress in everything else.\textsuperscript{131}
\end{quote}

The distinction between what is truly sacred and what is not enables companies to act as a change agent. This distinction is at the root of what Stern called ‘introception’: the ability to be aware of one’s own stance and position vis-à-vis the rest of the world. This distinction is also at the heart of what Collins and Porras consider to be a well-conceived vision.

A well-conceived vision consists of two major components – core ideology and an envisioned future. Notice the direct parallels to the fundamental ‘preserve the core/stimulate progress’ dynamic. A good vision builds on the interplay between these two complementary yin-and yang forces: it defines ‘what we stand for and why we exist’ that does not change (the core ideology) and sets forth ‘what we aspire to become, to achieve, to create’ that will require significant change and progress to attain (the envisioned future).\textsuperscript{132}

Core ideology defines the enduring character of an organisation, what Porras and Collins call its self-identity. They compare core ideology with ‘the principles that held the Jewish people together for centuries without a homeland, even as they spread in the Diaspora’ or ‘the enduring ideals and principles of the scientific community that bond scientists from every nationality together with the common purpose of advancing human knowledge’.\textsuperscript{133} Core ideology consists of two distinct sub-components: core values and core purpose. The characteristic of core values and core purpose is that they have intrinsic value and importance to those inside the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{130}{J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 220}
\footnotetext{131}{ibid.}
\footnotetext{132}{J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 220-221}
\footnotetext{133}{J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 221-222}
\end{footnotes}
The meaning of core values is explained by a quote from Ralph Larson, CEO of Johnson & Johnson:

The core values embodied in our Credo might be a competitive advantage, but that is not why we have them. We have them because they define what we stand for, and we would hold them even if they became a competitive disadvantage in certain situations.\textsuperscript{135}

While the concept of core values has attracted most of the attention, Collins and Porras believe that core purpose is even more important for guiding and inspiring an organisation.\textsuperscript{136} As they say, it gets at the deeper reasons for an organisation’s existence beyond just making money. The characteristic of core ideology is therefore that it requires no external justification.\textsuperscript{137} Collins and Porras emphasise that:

You do not ‘create’ or ‘set’ core ideology. You discover core ideology. It is not derived by looking to the external environment, you get it by looking inside. It has to be authentic, you can’t fake an ideology. Nor can you just ‘intellectualize it.’\textsuperscript{138}

The authenticity of a core ideology depends on the question whether it has intrinsic meaning to the organisational participants, that is, a core ideology is self-implicating. Therefore core ideology cannot be confined to ‘statements’, it must be embodied. As Collins and Porras say, ‘the point is not to create a perfect ‘statement’, but to gain a deep understanding of your organisation’s core values and purpose which can then be expressed in a multitude of ways’.\textsuperscript{139} Collins and Porras say that it is absolutely essential to not confuse core ideology with strategy (or other noncore practices).\textsuperscript{140} Confusing core ideology and strategy has a devastating effect on the organisational ability to anticipate change because the core ideology inspires change. A strategy, on the other hand, has to change many times in 100 years.

\textsuperscript{134} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, \textit{Built to Last}, p. 222
\textsuperscript{135} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, \textit{Built to Last}, p. 222
\textsuperscript{136} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, \textit{Built to Last}, p. 224
\textsuperscript{137} For a further explanation of core values and core purpose see J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, \textit{Built to Last}, p. 222-228
\textsuperscript{138} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, \textit{Built to Last}, p. 228. Italics in the original text.
\textsuperscript{139} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, \textit{Built to Last}, p. 230-231. Italics by the author.
\textsuperscript{140} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, \textit{Built to Last}, p. 82. Noncore practices include product lines, goals, competencies, administrative policies, structure, and reward systems.
Whereas you might achieve a goal or complete a strategy, you cannot fulfil a purpose; it is like a guiding star on the horizon – forever pursued but never reached. Yet while purpose itself does not change, it does inspire change. The very fact that purpose can never be fully realized means that an organization can never stop stimulating change and progress in order to live more fully to its purpose.  

When the distinction of ideology and noncore practices is neglected an organisation has no other means to anticipate change than by prediction of what will happen. However, the distinction between what is truly sacred and what is not is not the essence of a visionary company. As Collins and Porras point out: ‘a company can have the world’s most deeply cherished and meaningful core ideology, but if it just sits still or refuses to change, the world will pass it by’. In their own words, ‘to pursue a vision means to stimulate progress toward an envisioned future’. As with core ideology, the drive for progress requires no external justification.

In a visionary company, the drive to go further, to do better, to create new possibilities needs no external justification. Through the drive for progress, a highly visionary company displays a powerful mix of self-confidence combined with self-criticism.

This mix allows an organisation to anticipate change before the outside world imposes the need for change and improvement. This requires organisational as well as strategic alignment. By confusing core ideology with strategy, companies can cling too long to things that should be changed in order for the company to adapt and move forward.

2.5. Identity as a process of discovery

Following the idea that learning begins with perception, De Geus concentrated on the question why companies fail to see the signals of change ahead of time. For an

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141 J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 224-225
142 J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 81
143 J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 221
144 J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 84
145 J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 221
146 J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, *Built to Last*, p. 81. They quote Sam Walton, the founder of Wal-Mart, as saying that ‘You can’t just keep doing what works one time, because everything around you is always changing. To succeed, you have to stay out in front of that change’.

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answer he considered several options. The answer which appealed most to him was the one that he found in the work of the Swedish neurobiologist David Ingvar.\textsuperscript{147} Ingvar suggested that the human brain is constantly attempting to make sense of the future. The implication of this idea is that we perceive signals in the environment as meaningful if it fits meaningfully with a memory that we have made of an anticipated future. For example, when I have to take a plane this evening I am bound to pick up information about an air traffic control strike in another country which other people would easily miss. We pick up information because it is relevant to our plans for the future. The importance of this answer was that saw a means of improving a company’s powers of perception. It provided an alternative to the economic instruments, which could only predict. De Geus embarked on the development of tools for foresight. However, these tools did not succeed in improving the learning capability of his company. De Geus explains that the tools for foresight were embedded in the financial department where they served in the cycle of planning and control. This only helped to increase the capacity of prediction. When planning became a vehicle for decision-making, the power of perception was almost entirely lost to the need for control.

An alternative tool for looking at the future, scenario planning, could not be sustained either. As De Geus says, ‘we could see no discernible influence, from this advance knowledge, on the major decisions that had actually been taken during the previous decade’.\textsuperscript{148} The scenarios generated a widespread attentiveness to changes in the outside world, but there was no evidence that the Shell group, as a whole, had become more adaptive. That is when De Geus shifted his attention to the decision-making process.\textsuperscript{149} At first, the team started to think about the role of planning in the decision-making process, but gradually it dawned on them that decision-making could be a learning process.\textsuperscript{150} The work of the Swiss education theorist Jean Piaget helped them to understand that corporations, at least successful ones, have a form of learning. Piaget distinguished two types of learning: assimilation and

\textsuperscript{148} A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 53
\textsuperscript{149} A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 54
\textsuperscript{150} A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 55
accommodation. Learning by assimilation means being exposed to fact, taking in information, and assimilating it intellectually. This type of learning occurs in the traditional lecture halls and classrooms. The other type of learning is not so much an intellectual as an experiential process. It involves an internal structural change in beliefs, ideas, and attitudes by which someone adapts to a changing world. This type of learning is pursued in military training or professional schools. De Geus recognised that organisations also learn by accommodation.

After all, what happens in decision-making meetings? People talk. Analytical techniques, such as net present value, earning power calculations, and optimization models, may be included in the preparation of information for meetings. But in themselves these are barren soil for decisions. Decisions grow in the topsoil of formal and informal conversation – sometimes structured (as in board meetings and the budget process), sometimes technical devoted to implementation of specific plans or practices), and sometimes ad hoc. […] Ideally, we talk freely and openly. If we have any hope of reaching a decision, we know the meeting can’t be dominated by one person – certainly not by the boss. We know that nobody in the room has the solution at hand. We still have to struggle together to find an answer to a situation that concerns us all. If the meeting is to be effective, therefore, none of us can lose patience with the thought processes of our colleagues.

De Geus arrived at a twofold conclusion. First, true decisions, in which a new understanding is reached and an action is taken, are all examples of learning by accommodation. Every act of decision making is a learning process. Second, there is no need to ‘build’ a learning organisation; you already have one. He observed that it was not difficult to talk about a learning organisation in the executive boardroom, and about the reduced powers of learning resulting from an economic definition of success. On the other hand talking about decision-making as learning was off-limits. De Geus attributes the difficulty to the feeling in management circles that leadership depends on ‘knowing’. De Geus himself heeded the advice of one of his colleagues and started to talk from the outside in. He wrote an article in the Harvard Business Review, which ‘stayed prudently in the area of planning and only touched obliquely

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152 A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 57
153 A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 61
on [...] decision-making and the nature of companies'.\textsuperscript{154} And, he exclaims: it worked! The word ‘learning’ could be heard in speeches from senior Shell managers.

Interestingly, Collins and Porras were bothered by ‘the image of something called a ‘visionary leader’ (often charismatic and high-profile) [which] lurked in the background of nearly all discussions and writings about vision’.\textsuperscript{155} Therefore they explicitly searched for visionary companies, not visionary leadership.

The key point is that a visionary company is an organization – an institution. All individual leaders, no matter how charismatic or visionary, eventually die; and all visionary products and services – all ‘great’ ideas – eventually become obsolete. Indeed, entire markets can become obsolete and disappear. Yet visionary companies prosper over long periods of time, through multiple product life cycles and multiple generations of active leaders.\textsuperscript{156}

They found no evidence indeed ‘to support the hypothesis that great leadership is the distinguishing variable during the critical, formative stages of visionary companies’. On the contrary, they found that ‘some of the most significant chief executives in the history of visionary companies did not have the personality traits of the archetypal high-profile, charismatic visionary leader’.\textsuperscript{157} Collins and Porras acknowledge that vision may have its roots in specific individuals, but they stress that highly visionary companies institutionalise them – weaving them into the very fabric of the organisation.\textsuperscript{158} Visionary companies do not pay lip-service to their ideology, preaching values and leaving them up to chance; they institute policies, set goals, install structures. Collins and Porras say that ‘the difference between becoming a visionary company or forever remaining a wannabe’ is ‘the translation of those intentions into concrete items – mechanisms with teeth’.\textsuperscript{159} Their Harvard Business Review article suggests that executives and managers are focused on the external forces which require continuous adaptation – looking from the outside in – and

\textsuperscript{154} A. de Geus, The Living Company, p. 74
\textsuperscript{155} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, Built to Last, p. 11
\textsuperscript{156} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, Built to Last, p. 1-2
\textsuperscript{157} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, Built to Last, p. 32
\textsuperscript{158} David Maister make the same point in his analysis of professional firms. See D. Maister, True Professionalism (New York: Touchstone, 2000), p. 75-83
\textsuperscript{159} J.C. Collins and J.I. Porras, Built to Last, p. 87
ignoring the importance of discovering what is already present in the situation – by looking from the inside out.

2.6. Summary and conclusion

In this chapter the story of the Shell study of long-living companies as it is told by De Geus has been read as a process of discovery. His ‘soul searching’ enables him to discover, first of all, that his personal identity and the identity of the company are interrelated. Joining an institution involved to some extent submission to a set of views and beliefs he might otherwise not have taken on, he says, but it did not mean surrendering his capacity for judgment or critical opinion. Thereby he illustrates the anthropological insight that human beings create their own lives while being conditioned by the structures which they create on the way (see paragraph 1.8). Second, he discovered that the dominant management paradigm as he had learned it at business school did not reflect the real nature of companies. Rejecting the economic lens as suitable for achieving long-term corporate success, he argued for a learning definition of success. Third, he discovers that there is no need to ‘build’ a learning organisation, you already have one. He comes to view every act of decision making as a learning process. This leads him to give attention to the way of proceeding with decision-making at Royal/Dutch Shell. Finally, he discovers that the men and women in the executive boardroom resist viewing decision-making as learning, and that he was heard only when he started to talk from the outside in. He attributes this to the feeling that leadership depends on ‘knowing’.

The process of discovery would not have been possible without the mental equipment that De Geus disposed of, in particular the work of William Stern on the nature of the distinction between persons and things. The key was what Stern called ‘introception’: the ability to be aware of one’s own stance and position vis-à-vis the rest of the world. He came to realise that Shell was a living being in the sense articulated by Stern as distinct from an ‘economic’ company. The story of the Shell study shows that De Geus practised ‘introception’ in the sense that he repeatedly reflects on his experiences. It starts with the experience at his first job that the refinery appeared to be full of people, whereas the theories back at business school had just mentioned labour. It continues with the experience as managing director of
Shell Brazil that the company didn’t respond to the public scorn over oil companies during the 1973 oil crisis, whereas he knew the employees had some answers available. De Geus demonstrates ‘introception’ on many other occasions at work which allows him to learn from his experience. Thus he demonstrates that ‘introception’ is a way of proceeding at work. Therefore it is surprising that it took him so long to discover that decision making is a learning process.

The explanation is that De Geus, in interpreting the factors that were generated by the Shell study of long-living companies, took his lead from the metaphor of a living being. The study had generated four factors that explained why these companies were successful in adapting to the changing environment. He came to see these factors as abilities of living companies. The ability to learn and adapt was considered to be the most ‘accessible’. The other abilities, including the ability to build a community and an identity, were ignored. De Geus believed that the findings of his research team were corroborated by Collins and Porras’ research of visionary companies. They argue that visionary companies combined sensitivity to their environment with a strong sense of identity. However, their research suggests that the four factors in the Shell study are interrelated. As Collins and Porras explain, the essence of a visionary company is the dynamic of preserving the core and stimulating progress. They also found that this was particularly difficult for managers to understand. They believe that managers confuse core ideology with strategy. Thereby they underline the importance of identity as an organisational success factor in handling change.

In order for organisations to become more adaptive, it was not sufficient to be attentive to changes in the outside world, it also needed to be attentive to the movements going on internally. This kind of attentiveness requires a strong bond among the organisational participants. In fact, the Shell study had drawn attention to the importance of strong employee links for corporate survival amid change. To the team this signified that cohesion and a strong sense of identity are a source of strength beyond the strength of the constituent parts. Collins and Porras argue that the core – which is made up of core values and core purpose – has intrinsic meaning to the organisational participants. By this they mean that the core does do not sway with trends or shift in response to changing market conditions; it does not need external justification. This implies that an organisation needs to understand itself
´from within´ in order to develop its core. In this investigation, the insider perspective is precisely concerned with understanding organisations ´from within´ while being attentive to the changing environment. Thus all four factors in the Shell study of long-living companies depend on the insider perspective being operative.

Since Collins and Porras say that the difference between becoming a visionary company or forever remaining a wannabe is the translation of intentions into mechanisms with teeth, the difficulty is to get the insider perspective operative without any external justification which might be obtained by objective criteria or reference to an external authority.
3. Human concerns in the functionalist orthodoxy

3.1. Introduction

The insider perspective of management reveals that people are more important to organisations than the economic lens suggests. There is a growing consensus in the field of management that the bottom line of business is not just self-interested profit. As a result, the relation with the environment is not only perceived in economic terms; it also includes contributions to people and planet. People and planet are not just resources for an organisation; they require as much dedication as economic performance. The environmental, social and cultural impact of companies are all part of the broader picture. With the introduction of economic principles in education, health care and public government, the recognition of the broader picture has taken on an even greater importance. Therefore the limitations of the economic lens are increasingly recognised in the world of management. However, the economic lens is only part of the problem. The science of business administration also makes use of such disciplines as psychology, sociology, law, and cybernetics. Most managers are accustomed to using several lenses. The problem is that all these lenses represent outsider perspectives, and the insider perspective is almost completely neglected in management theory. In the field of organisational behaviour, for example, it is said that managers can get the best performance from employees by treating them as individuals.\textsuperscript{160} At the same time the study of organisational behaviour neglects the importance of identity, diversity and dissension. The insider perspective of management suggests that this neglect hampers the capacity of organisations to make things happen beyond surviving and making money.

From the beginning the science of business administration has embraced an objectifying outsider perspective for the analysis of organisational behaviour. Frederick Taylor sought to convert the process of management from ‘an art form based upon experience and rule of thumb’ to ‘a true science, resting upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles, as a foundation’.\textsuperscript{161} Henri Fayol believed that management education is bound to fail without systematic knowledge, based on

\textsuperscript{160} D. Hellriegel, J.W. Slocum and R.W. Woodman, \textit{Organizational Behaviour}, p. 25
Chester Barnard argued that the functional view of man is imposed by the universal view required for the study of management and organization. Nevertheless, the outsider perspective in the science of business administration does not mean that management has no interest in human concerns. Far from turning a blind eye to human concerns, management theory has been moved forward by the on-going confrontation with human concerns throughout the 20th century. This is exemplified by such early management theorists as Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol and Chester Barnard.

Contrary to what is commonly assumed, a genuine human concern was at the root of scientific management. The management historian James Hoopes observes that Frederick Taylor was committed to resolve the antagonism between management and workers in 19th century industry. The problem was that the operators worked on a piece-rate system. It was supposed that this gave them an incentive to work hard. As Hoopes says,

Wrong, wrong, wrong, as every foreman knew. If workers raised their output, management almost invariably 'broke the rate'. As pay per piece fell, workers ended up having to maintain the new high pace to earn the old daily wage. Naturally, pieceworkers stuck together and held down production.

Taylor was determined to solve the vicious circle of pressure on workers to increase productivity and counter-pressure on management to secure their income. Interestingly, therefore, scientific management was committed to the cause of

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162 H. Fayol, *Administration industrielle et générale : prévoyance, organisation, commandement, coordination, contrôle* (Paris: Dunod, 1950) Originally published in the Bulletin de la Société de l'Industrie Minérale, 1916, Nr. 3. Fayol was concerned with the poor managerial performance of engineers, who knew all about technical operations but were deficient in the required attitude, knowledge and skills to handle people. His *Administration industrielle et générale* was basically written in response to the need for qualified managers that was emerging in the process of industrialisation. The ever larger scale of industrial production required professional management. Its growth was jeopardised by the lack of general principles that ensured coordination of the efforts of many people involved in production in such a way that there is harmonisation of behaviour and efficient performance. He was convinced that this could not be left to technical education, nor to experiential learning, but had to be taught as a discipline in itself. He considered the lack of scientific knowledge about management as the main problem for management education.

163 C. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 21


165 J. Hoopes, *False Prophets*, p. 36
altering inhumane labour conditions. Taylor saw those conditions as counter-productive.

Henri Fayol found Taylorism significant in so far as it provided for the transfer of know-how of the production process from the workers to management. But he considered this to be only part of the knowledge required for general management. Like Taylor, he believed in a ‘scientific’ approach of management. But to a far greater extent than Taylor, Fayol was aware of the social aspect of an organisation and the fact that a common interest of management and employees is by no means to be taken for granted.

Chester Barnard's primary interest was in the problems that coordination of activities in pursuit of the general purpose of an organisation posed in terms of the motivation of individual members and the relationships between people. He was concerned with such questions as why human beings are ready to engage in dull or dirty tasks, why executive decisions are accepted, and so on. One of the most pressing problems was his experience that in complex organisations the objectives of cooperation do not correspond with personal motives.

Most of the efforts in cooperative systems are easily seen to be impersonal. For example, a clerk writing on a report form for a corporation is obviously doing something at a place, on a form, and about a subject that clearly never could engage his strictly personal interest.

These few examples from the early history of management demonstrate the interest in human concerns – an interest that has continued in socio-technical approaches of organisation in the 1950s, the quality of working life movement in the 1970s and, more recently, workplace spirituality. The scientific approach of management has greatly contributed to the creation of wealth. However, it has proved to be extremely difficult in management theory to give a place to human concerns that emerge in the process of creating wealth. The quality of working life movement, for example, takes its lead from the awareness of a growing crisis in the post-industrial era that calls into

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166 H. Fayol, *Administration industrielle et générale*, p. 84
168 C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 77
question the viability of present relationships between work, economic production, man and society, and the ability of organisations to adapt to the rapid pace of environmental change.\textsuperscript{169} The solution is seen in an improvement of the quality of working life. For this end the quality of working life movement appeals to public and private responsibility. This is supported by the argument that humanisation of work ‘far from imposing economic costs, yields societal, personal and economic gains’.\textsuperscript{170} By emphasising the economic benefits, the quality of working life movement is geared to the contribution that this will make to the stability and survival of the system as a whole. Burrell and Morgan say that the quality of working life movement’s stance is essentially ‘a regulative one, concerned to make piecemeal adjustments designed to improve the viability of the technological society characteristic of the present era’.\textsuperscript{171} They observe that the notions of ‘social responsibility’ and ‘individual responsibility’ are often summoned in management theory to bridge the gap between organisational and personal interests on the one hand and societal interests on the other.\textsuperscript{172} Human concerns are treated as a ‘functional imperative’.

The assumption that a more humane working situation is imperative to sustain society as a whole fits with the contingency model that has become widely accepted in management theory as the contemporary equivalent of classical management theory. It is also relevant with regard to workplace spirituality since the economic benefits have also been raised in this field. The purpose of this chapter is to explain why a more humane working situation is considered as a mere ‘imperative´ in the functionalist orthodoxy. In other words what has happened in the functionalist orthodoxy to view human concerns in such a way that they are not an integral part of work?

The programme starts with the issue of objectivism. As the examples of Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol and Chester Barnard show, an objectifying view of organisations has been characteristic of the scientific approach of organisations from the beginning. Organisations are simply assumed to ‘exist’. As Arie de Geus observed,
there had been no talk of people at business school, yet the workplace seemed to be full with them. The question ‘What is an organisation?’ is seldom posed. According to Burrell and Morgan, management theorists located in the functionalist paradigm ‘are committed to a view of the social world that regards society as ontologically prior to man and seek to place man and his activities within that wider social context’. 173

The issue of objectivism will be illustrated by the famous Hawthorne studies. The Hawthorne studies refer to a research project that was conducted between 1927 and 1932 at the Hawthorne works of the Western Electric Company in Cicero, Illinois. They have had a massive impact upon management theory, but not for their insights in the importance of the frame of reference of the employees. Most business students are to some extent familiar with the Hawthorne studies, in particular the importance of social relations and the informal organisation. However, few of them are made familiar with the model that the researchers used to explain the results of the experiments. And most of them remain unaware of the process by which the functionalist orthodoxy reverts to objectivism, each time when human concerns are at stake. Since the Hawthorne studies have had such an impact on subsequent management thought, in particular human resource management, they are well suited to illustrate the issue of objectivism. This is the subject of paragraph 3.2.

As Burrell and Morgan observe, the majority of social theorists interested in the study of work behaviour remained largely uninfluenced by the systems notion until the idea of ‘socio-technical system’ began to hold sway. 174 They characterise research in the post-Hawthorne period as a continued search for causal relationships between new variables identified in the Hawthorne work. The theoretical insights relating to the employee’s interpretation of his situation were actually not developed. As a result the human relations movement which emerged from the Harvard group who conducted the Hawthorne studies took its lead from the results of the Hawthorne work, and the studies were used largely as a source of new hypotheses for informing and guiding further empirical enquiries in the traditional mould. However, this yielded little

172 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 106
174 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 143
understanding of work behaviour. As a result, the attention shifted to understanding the process of motivation at work.

The problem of motivation was central in the work of Chester Barnard. His work has been very influential, in part through his association with the Harvard group of sociologists who conducted the Hawthorne studies. He shared with this group an interest in Pareto’s equilibrium theory. Pareto’s notion of a system in equilibrium provided an organising framework for the research. The biochemist Lawrence Henderson was particularly responsible for the Pareto-cult in the Harvard group. He had been induced by Elton Mayo to become head of the Harvard Business School’s Fatigue Laboratory. The Fatigue Laboratory protected the human relations group from any charge of scientific softness. Henderson was aware that the notion of equilibrium provided a powerful analytical tool for research in the physical sciences. But he was also attracted by Pareto’s ideas on how elites preserve social order. Through his involvement with the Hawthorne studies, he was particularly interested in the potential contribution which Pareto’s equilibrium analysis could make to sociology, particularly as a means of studying complex social phenomena comprising many variables in a state of mutual dependence. The distinction between ‘facts’ and ‘sentiments, derived from Pareto’s work, plays an important part in guiding the Hawthorne analysis. The consequences of Pareto’s equilibrium for the theory of organisation have not been carefully considered. In this respect the interpretation of the Hawthorne studies by Elton Mayo played a key role. Mayo argued that psychological knowledge and therapeutic skill were the tools by which the modern elite would preserve social order. In Barnard’s idea of the executive as a moral leader, the human relations group found a way to extend its ideas on therapeutic

175 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 144. The essentially objectivist nature and orientation of industrial psychology in the post-Hawthorne is underlined by the attempt to identify and test through empirical research the validity of different models of man. Burrell and Morgan suggest that this attempt can be understood as a search for a substitute for Taylor’s ‘economic man’. In other words, much of the objectivist research on work behaviour has aimed at showing that human beings are predictable.
176 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 139
177 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 144
178 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 145
179 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 62
180 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 138
181 See G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 139. Whilst Pareto’s notion of a system in equilibrium provides an organising framework for the Hawthorne studies, Durkheim’s analysis of social change receives central attention in Mayo’s interpretation.
182 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 145
management from the shop floor to the executive suite.²⁸³ As a result human concerns are always perceived to be at odds with the needs of the organisation. Barnard was willing to resort to manipulation to maintain the organisational equilibrium. This is the subject of paragraph 3.3.

In paragraph 3.4 Chester Barnard will be contrasted with Mary Parker Follett. Her ideas help to explain how human concerns can be included in the theory of management. Her most important concept – integration – appeared to be difficult to understand. However, she understood the inevitability of power. As Hoopes says, she brilliantly analysed its limitations and the reasons why leaders must also follow.²⁸⁴ The concept of integration contradicts the common assumption that organisations are purposive, goal-seeking entities that need to maintained in a state of equilibrium.

3.2. Objectivism

The investigations that were conducted in the Hawthorne facility of Western Electric, the manufacturing subsidiary of AT&T, are a classic example of the dominance of objectivistic research in organisational behaviour, even in the face of the importance of the employees' frame of reference. Western Electric had concentrated production of its telephone equipment in this facility, with 40,000 employees, in order to achieve economies of scale. Western Electric pursued ‘personnel research’ with a view to increase productivity. One of the questions that concerned industrial engineers at Hawthorne was whether employees worked better under natural light that came free from the sun or under costly electric light. The initial experiment to establish a relationship between variables in the physical work conditions and employee performance and efficiency proved nothing. Productivity rose with more light and also with less. Hoopes remarks that Hawthorne’s technical superintendent, Pennock, saw personnel research ‘as his best chance to distinguish himself within science-orientated AT&T’.²⁸⁵ He began to test the effect of changes in working conditions other than light – rest breaks, shorter hours, and mid-morning meals. He wanted to

²⁸³ J. Hoopes, *False Prophets*, p. 165
²⁸⁴ J. Hoopes, *False Prophets*, p. 98 and 115
²⁸⁵ J. Hoopes, *False Prophets*, p. 146
study the effect of changed working conditions, not extra effort. But he gave the women in the test group a strong economic incentive for extra effort. As a result he was unable to figure out the causes of extra output. He had no interest in the obvious explanation that output was raised because of higher wages, presumably because this would not lend credit to his scientific approach. At that point Elton Mayo of the Harvard business school was consulted to interpret the results of the experiment. In 1928 the Hawthorne studies were actually taken over by the Harvard human relations group under the supervision of Mayo.

Hoopes argues that Mayo quickly set about using the initial results of the Hawthorne studies to prove his own preconceived ideas about a therapeutic style of management that would make corporations into organic communities. His ideas resonated with the dean of the Harvard Business School, who wanted business students to aspire to the same professional status as lawyers and doctors. A profession’s claim to high social status rests, of course, on its dedication to human service. According to Hoopes the dean warmed to the idea of Elton Mayo that the manager’s mission was to promote social harmony. Substantial grants of the Rockefeller Foundation allowed Mayo to engage gifted young people, including Henderson, who became collectively known as the ‘Harvard human relations group’. As we have seen, Henderson was attracted to the ideas of Italian sociologist Vilfredo Pareto on how elites maintain social order. Mayo claimed that psychological knowledge and therapeutic skill were the tools by that the modern elite would preserve social order. Hoopes writes that ‘it all came together in the 1930s cry of conservative Harvard faculty for a therapeutic elite for American business’. As the dean of the Harvard business school put it, ‘either we must strive for a rational coordination of impulses and thoughts, or […] see the collapse of the upward striving of our race’.

Burrell and Morgan draw attention to the fact that the human relations theorists, among whom Mayo figures prominently, did not assume a conflict of interest between

186 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 148
187 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 149
188 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 142
189 D.H. Maister, True Professionalism. See also J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 142
190 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 145
191 Quoted in J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 143 of 145
managers and workers. It is this brand of sociology that is at the root of contemporary human resource management.

Away from objectivism

The Hawthorne experiments were supervised by Mayo, but actually conducted by Roethlisberger and Dickson. They initially cast the experiments in the objectivist mould that characterised Taylor’s scientific management and early industrial psychology. The experimenters were simply concerned to identify cause and effect relationships between physical work conditions and employee performance and efficiency. As the British philosopher Stephen Toulmin put it,

> The employees were a small group of immigrant women recently arrived from Eastern Europe. Initially the researchers gave the things they said about their work little more attention than ornithologists give to any incidental noises made by the birds they are watching.\(^{192}\)

The results of the experiments were confused, and the controlled experiment approach was replaced by an attempt to describe and understand the social situations under examination as ‘a system of interdependent elements’.\(^{193}\) Through this attempt the attention of the researchers gradually shifted from the physical characteristics of the work environment towards factors such as supervision and the attitudes and preoccupations of employees. The turning point was an interviewing programme with the employees.\(^{194}\) This leads them to set out their systems model which represents a new way of thinking about the worker and those things about which he complained. Burrell and Morgan remark that the theoretical insights of the Hawthorne researchers were clouded by their euphoria about the importance of the social organisation.\(^{195}\) This led them to view meaning and significance as arising primarily from within the context of the internal organisation, rather than as a mix of factors from both outside and within the work situation as well as within the individual

\(^{192}\) S. Toulmin, *Return to Reason*, p. 98
\(^{193}\) G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms*, p. 133
\(^{194}\) G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms*, p. 133
\(^{195}\) G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms*, p. 137
More important in terms of their contribution to theory was that the theoretical insights relating to the employee's interpretation of his situation were actually not developed and, largely buried under the deluge of empirical research generated by the study.\textsuperscript{197}

The Hawthorne model as developed by Roethlisberger and Dickson emphasised that employee attitudes and work behaviour can only be understood in terms of a complex network of interacting elements both within and outside the work situation and also within the individual himself.\textsuperscript{198} It is quite explicit in rejecting the utility of the traditional approach of scientific management and industrial psychology as a means of investigating social situations in organisations. The importance of this point is that the researchers turned away from the managerial perspective by allowing for the frame of reference of the employees. They elaborated a conceptual scheme for understanding employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction. They emphasised that explanations must be adequate at the level of meaning to the individual involved.\textsuperscript{199}

These theoretical insights were not pursued in the social analysis of organisations.\textsuperscript{200}

This is explained by Mayo's interpretation of the Hawthorne studies.\textsuperscript{201} As Hoopes says, in Mayo's analysis, employee complaints 'never reflected a supervisory problem but instead revealed a need for therapy for some problem in the workers home, family, or love life'.\textsuperscript{202} Mayo's interest was to prove his own preconceived idea about therapeutic management.\textsuperscript{203} In addition he was willing to dodge the data generated by the experiments, leaving his colleagues Roethlisberger and Dickson to struggle with their interpretation.\textsuperscript{204}

Burrell and Morgan emphasise that

\begin{quote}
... it seems less important to discuss the Hawthorne studies in terms of their results than in terms of the theoretical approach upon that they were based. This is important because, despite all the criticism that has been levelled at the Hawthorne studies, the model that the researchers finally adopted for explaining their results has been used in more or less unchanged form by numerous subsequent theorists and researchers.
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{196} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 137 and 135
\textsuperscript{197} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 138
\textsuperscript{198} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 135
\textsuperscript{199} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 137
\textsuperscript{200} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 138
\textsuperscript{201} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 139
\textsuperscript{202} J. Hoopes, \textit{False Prophets}, p. 151
\textsuperscript{203} J. Hoopes, \textit{False Prophets}, p. 149
\textsuperscript{204} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 153-156
\end{footnotes}
This point has been clouded by the smoke screen generated in the debate about their ideology, results and methodology.\footnote{G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 132}

The Hawthorne studies have had a massive impact upon subsequent developments in industrial psychology and sociology, but not for their insights in the importance of the frame of reference of the employees. The Hawthorne studies are probably best known for the emergence of ‘social man’, as Mayo intended. However, according to Burrell and Morgan, the main significance of the Hawthorne studies lies not so much in drawing attention to ‘social man’, as in the shift to social systems theory.

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\text{… the explanatory model presented by Roethlisberger and Dickson moves away from the narrowly behavioural and deterministic approach characteristic of scientific management and early industrial psychology and towards a mechanical equilibrium systems model based upon the ideas of Pareto. It represents a conscious shift from objectivism to social system theory, albeit of a limited kind, that contains within it core notions characteristic of what later came to be known as socio-technical systems theory. [...] The Hawthorne experiments are thus of principal significance, not so much because they focused attention upon ‘social man’ as because they constitute an important landmark in the application of the systems approach to organisational situations.}\footnote{G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 132}
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The model that Roethlisberger and Dickson elaborated was a first step away from the strictly managerial perspective in the theory of management. In the post-Hawthorne period this step was reversed.

\textit{Return to objectivism}

From its earliest days the industrial psychologists were at pains to emphasise their humanitarian as well as managerial interests. They were particularly anxious to dissociate themselves from any connection with Frederick Taylor and scientific management.\footnote{G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 128} Initially, therefore, the psychological study of work behaviour promised to take another approach to human concerns than classical management.
The psychological approach carried the hope for human concerns to be better addressed than in classical management theory. But Burrell and Morgan’s analysis suggests that the industrial psychologists largely shared the managerial perspective.

The work of the industrial psychologists, like Taylor’s, was based upon the assumption that objective actors in the work environment have a major influence upon behaviour in organisations. […] The world of work is treated as a world of hard concrete reality characterised by uniformities and regularities which can be understood in terms of cause and effect. Given these assumptions, the individual is accorded an essentially passive role; his behaviour is regarded as being determined by the work environment. The main difference between Taylorism and the work of the early industrial psychologists is thus one not so much of principle as of detail. They differ in the sophistication of their determinism. Within the context of Taylor’s scheme it is crude; man is no more than a machine. Within the industrial psychologists’ scheme man is a more complex psychological entity; the relationship between his environment and his behaviour can only be unravelled and understood through the use of a more complex psychological model.208

Burrell and Morgan thus find the similarities between scientific management and the industrial psychology movement more important than the differences.209 They argue that the history of industrial psychology largely reflects a sequence of attempts to plug different models of man into an essentially deterministic theory of work behaviour.210 In so doing the industrial psychologists made the first move to adapt their view of human beings to the managerial perspective and neglected the uniquely human capability to see from within, to create their own existence and to have an impact on their environment.

The attempts to identify and define what constitutes job satisfaction were carried by the need to understand the process of motivation at work. The absence of a clear relationship between factors in the work environment and job satisfaction led to an increasing focus upon the nature of man.211 The classical view of economic man, of course, had been increasingly discredited. Burrell and Morgan say that the attempt to identify and test through empirical research the validity of different models of man

208 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 129-130
209 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 129
210 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 130
211 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 144
can be understood as a search for a substitute for Taylor’s ‘economic man’. Much of the objectivistic research on work behaviour, they say, has aimed at showing that human beings are predictable.\textsuperscript{212} The attempt to identify and test through empirical study the validity of different models of man has been underwritten by the assumption that the nature of man can be revealed through systematic empirical investigation of his attitudes and behaviour. Industrial researchers have made much use of the work of humanistic psychologists, such as Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and Frederick Herzberg. The inability of such models to provide consistent explanations of work motivation and behaviour has led to an increasing interest in cognitive models, particularly ‘expectancy theory’.

Somewhat paradoxically, it turns the wheel of industrial psychology right back to the days of Taylorism, in that in place of rational economic man it seeks to substitute rational, calculative, hedonistic man.\textsuperscript{213}

This course of development underlines the essentially objectivist nature and orientation of industrial psychology, even in the post-Hawthorne era.\textsuperscript{214} The industrial psychologists have come to see the nature of man as increasingly complex and problematic as far as explaining behaviour in organisations is concerned. However, the further development of the human relations movement shows that this insight was not pursued to any great extent within the context of organisations.

After the Hawthorne studies the majority of social theorists interested in the study of work behaviour remained largely uninfluenced by the systems notion until the idea of ‘socio-technical system’ began to hold sway.\textsuperscript{215} This idea represents a direct development of the theoretical insights generated in the Hawthorne research, and had a major influence upon the theory of job design.\textsuperscript{216} The post-Hawthorne objectivism continued to dominate the human relations movement throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The difference between the early industrial psychologists and the post-Hawthorne period is that research on the relationship between work, fatigue,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{212} Arie de Geus argued that by ‘reverting to predictions as a standard way of thinking about the future, the corporate powers of perception remain greatly reduced’. (A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 38)
\item \textsuperscript{213} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 145
\item \textsuperscript{214} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 145
\item \textsuperscript{215} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 143
\item \textsuperscript{216} G. Burrell and G. Morgan, \textit{Sociological Paradigms}, p. 125
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
monotony and performance was replaced by research on the relationship between work, satisfaction and performance. This shift fitted with the attention for social factors and the informal organisation.

Although organisational psychology recognises that human beings are unique, human resource management has largely focused on external influence rather than internal factors. The major exception is in the field of leadership. Leadership training programmes acknowledge that human beings are objectified in organisations, but at the same time assert that organisational vitality and the power of innovation depends on leadership. This will be explained by the influential theory of organisation that was developed by Chester Barnard, to whom we shall turn now.

3.3. Chester Barnard

Chester Barnard (1886-1961) was for many years President of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company before he became a director of the Rockefeller Foundation. On two occasions he was seconded for duty as State Director of the New Jersey Relief Administration, a government organisation that allowed him many opportunities for contrasting the functioning of an established organisation with one created ad hoc under conditions of stress. During the Second World War he developed and managed the United Service Organizations, an alliance of YMCA, YWCA, National Jewish Welfare Board, National Catholic Community Service, and the Salvation Army, to provide morale and recreation services to the U.S. military. James Hoopes describes him as 'the most intellectually gifted businessman of his generation, [living] a double life as worldly manager and ascetic scholar, reading voraciously in several languages and staying up to date in the social sciences'. He had a great deal of contact with the Harvard group of sociologists during the 1930s. They encouraged him to set out his thoughts on management and organisation. The lectures he gave at the Harvard business school form the basis of his famous book *The Functions of*

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218 J. Hoopes, *False Prophets*, p. 165
The Executive.219 This represented one of the first attempts at developing a comprehensive model of an organisation, not just organisational behaviour. It also reflected the dominant perspectives and orientations of the Harvard group, in that it is underwritten by a concern to analyse organisations as social systems whose activities can be understood with reference to the concept of equilibrium.220 Hoopes says that the Harvard group benefited from their interaction with Barnard for transmitting their ideas about the psychological forces of human behaviour to the executive boardrooms.

Even more than Mayo, perhaps, he thereby lifted the school out of its then low status as a trainer of money-grabbers into a high-prestige educator of socially conscientious administrators.221

Mayo’s ideas would help to substantiate the claim of management to professional status. Hoopes argues, however, that ‘Mayo suffered from a shortfall in intellectual integrity that led him draw conclusions his evidence did not justify’.222

The problem of motivation

Barnard’s theory offered a perspective of organisations that differed substantially in emphasis from the approach of the classical theorists.223 Unlike Taylor and Fayol, Barnard was not particularly interested in the formal and technical aspects of organisations in terms of structure and process. As we have seen, his primary interest was in the problems posed by the coordination of activities in an organisation in view of the motivation of individual members and the relationships between people. Barnard believed that personal motives cannot be satisfied through cooperative action except as there comes into the action an intermediate, distributive process.224 He found an answer to his problem in Pareto’s equilibrium theory. The explanation why employees continue to participate in dull or dirty work is that the

220 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 148
221 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 165
222 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 99
223 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 150
224 C.I. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive, p. 32
organisation provides ‘inducements’ to satisfy individual objectives in return for ‘contributions’ to the organisational objectives. Thus the task of managers is to get them to do the ‘right’ things through creating a work environment that is conducive to cooperation, and to keep them satisfied. The distributive process ensures the capacity of the cooperative system to maintain itself by the individual satisfactions it affords. This is called ‘its capacity of equilibrium, the balancing of burdens by satisfactions that results in continuance’. Barnard’s ideas have been extremely influential as an attempt to overcome the limits of the scientific and rational models of organisation.

Cooperation

Barnard views cooperation as a means of overcoming the limitations restricting what the individual cannot do. He argues that it is the natural state of affairs for human beings to cooperate. His analysis of cooperation starts with the limitations of an individual person to improve his life. Limitations are also central in his explanation of common action.

Although the limitation is a joint effect of all the factors in a situation, from the point of view of attack to serve a purpose it may be ascribed to one factor. This then becomes the strategic factor. The only way to affect the whole is by effort applied to the part. We pick out one factor or another for change as a means of securing the appropriate result. The situation as a whole must be analysed into parts that may be specifically coordinated by organisation activity with detailed ends. These when accomplished become means toward the final attainment. The analysis of the total situation is the beginning of purposive action.

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225 C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 57
226 C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 23
227 C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 51
228 C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 47
229 C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 136
230 C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 239 and 202
Barnard remarks that ‘without a purpose there is no meaning to limitations’.\textsuperscript{231} Purpose is defined as ‘the attempt to limit the conditions of choice, so that it is practicable to exercise the capacity of will’.\textsuperscript{232} But purpose does not only serve to exercise the individual capacity of will. It also serves to increase the possibilities of cooperation. Barnard argues that, from the executive point of view, the immediate end of cooperative action is to facilitate the cooperative system, i.e. to increase the possibilities of cooperation. Barnard is very concise in his argument why this is so important.

It is evident that much of the accumulation of capital, the invention of mechanical, electrical, optical, auditory, and chemical machines and processes that transcend ordinary human limitations, and the combination of both capital and invention, have for their primary result advances in the power of cooperation. They enormously expand cooperative systems both spatially, that is, over great areas, and temporally, that is, through long time, even many generations. The technique of this general method of expanding cooperative possibilities is widely appreciated, and its economic aspects have received great and relatively excessive attention and development.\textsuperscript{233}

Barnard argues that a formal system of cooperation requires an objective, a purpose, an aim. Such an objective is itself a product of cooperation and expresses a cooperative discrimination of factors, upon which action is to be taken by the cooperative system.\textsuperscript{234} Purpose is the unifying element of formal organization.\textsuperscript{235} The problem is that Barnard does not give attention to the choice of purpose in a changing world or to the processes of formulating goals and objectives for the organisation.\textsuperscript{236}

Burrell and Morgan observe that purpose, as viewed by Barnard, can only serve as an element of a cooperative systems so long as the participants do not recognise that there are serious divergences of their understanding of that purpose as the object of cooperation. Barnard himself says that an objective purpose that can serve

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\item \textsuperscript{231} C.I. Barnard, \textit{The Functions of the Executive}, p. 23
\item \textsuperscript{232} C.I. Barnard, \textit{The Functions of the Executive}, p. 14
\item \textsuperscript{233} C.I. Barnard, \textit{The Functions of the Executive}, p. 54
\item \textsuperscript{234} C.I. Barnard, \textit{The Functions of the Executive}, p. 42
\item \textsuperscript{235} C.I. Barnard, \textit{The Functions of the Executive}, p. 137
\end{itemize}
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as the basis for a cooperative system is one that is *believed* by the (potential) contributors to be the determined purpose of the organisation. He stresses that the inculcation of belief in the real existence of common purpose is an essential executive function.\(^\text{237}\) Barnard argued that ‘the endurance of organization depends upon the quality of leadership; and that quality derives from the breadth of the morality upon which it rests’.\(^\text{238}\) His elaboration of the executive function ends in a consideration of leadership as the personal capacity for affirming decisions that lend quality and morality to the coordination of organisational activity and to the formulation of purpose. As Kenneth Andrews observes, Barnard was willing to rest his theory of cooperation upon an ethical ideal to the extent that this particular executive function is made necessary to give meaning to the rest of the environment, to serve as a unifying principle.\(^\text{239}\) However, his theory of executive functions is based upon somewhat contradictory assumptions. As Burrell and Morgan remark,

> His theory of ‘inducements’ and ‘contributions’, which is developed to explain the continued participation of members of the organisation, seems particularly paradoxical within the context of an organisation characterised by a common purpose. Similarly Barnard’s view that one of the functions of the executive is to ‘indoctrinate’ those at lower levels of the organisation with its general purposes seems to be equally paradoxical. Again his view that ‘the final test’ of his ‘conceptual scheme is whether its use will make possible a more effective conscious promotion and manipulation of cooperation among men’ also contradicts his basic assumptions about the co-operative nature of organisations.\(^\text{240}\)

In other words, the common purpose is a necessary condition of the cooperative efforts of men, but it is not a sufficient condition. The outcome of the subjective assessment of the costs and benefits of cooperation within a given organisation, made by every individual, is not guaranteed to be positive. The individual acceptance of the purpose as defined by the executive function is not assured, nor is the willingness of employees to be manipulated.

\(^{\text{237}}\) C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 87 and 233  
\(^{\text{238}}\) C. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 282  
\(^{\text{240}}\) G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms*, p. 149-150
The strength of Barnard’s concept of cooperative systems and of his explanation of the essential conditions for effectiveness and efficiency lies in the idea that purpose is central. Purposive effort can change the course of events. On the other hand, the paradoxes indicate that his concept is problematic. This is all the more important because many management theorists as well as practising managers have come to share his view of organisations as co-operative enterprises of individuals in pursuit of a common purpose that require sensitive management to maintain them in states of equilibrium. At root, the problem is that the question ‘What is an organisation?’ is rarely given very much attention. The dominant approaches within the field of organisational analysis are all built around the common sense, ‘taken for granted’ assumption that organisations are purposive, goal-seeking enterprises.

In order to understand the importance of this question two issues arising from Barnard’s theory of organisation have to be considered in more detail: the choice of Pareto’s mechanical equilibrium and the ethical ideal of leadership.

**Mechanical equilibrium**

The main problem with the notion of equilibrium is that the influence of the environment, whilst recognised as important, is necessarily reduced to a secondary and very limited role. In systems theory the use of a mechanical equilibrium analogy severely constrains the openness of the system under investigation. Environmental change is of principal significance as a source of disequilibrium. The possibility that environmental change may influence the very structure and essential nature of the system is negated to some extent by assumptions that equilibrium will eventually be restored. Mechanical models are therefore considered to be of very limited value as methods of organisational analysis where the environment of the subject of study is of any real significance.

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242 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms*, p. 61-62. As Burrell and Morgan explain, similar problems relate to the use of biological analogies in systems analysis. For a more extensive discussion of organisational analogies that are consistent with the functionalist paradigm, see G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms*, p. 61-68).
It appears that Barnard became aware of the limitations of Pareto’s mechanical equilibrium only after the publication of The Functions of the Executive. In an article published in 1945, seven years later, he suggested that formal organisations should be conceived as organic systems, at least with respect to understanding the field of human relations.

I should like to make clear my reason for emphasis upon formal organizations as organic and evolving systems. It is that we persistently think about such systems in terms of mechanical, rather than biological, analogy. Our widespread use of mechanical and electrical systems makes this convenient. It results in regarding organizations as static and fixed, like a machine, instead of something that is living, that has to grow up, and that is ever progressing or regressing with changing states of equilibrium of the human forces involved.243

In The Functions of the Executive Barnard appeared to be less interested in a living, growing person than in the abstract ‘activities’ or ‘forces’ of cooperative behaviour. As Kenneth Andrews says,

[Barnard] is not much concerned about personal involvement. His analysis of motivation suggests responsive behavior rather than full participation in the administrative process; it makes no room for the development of individuals, for the maturing of their needs, and for the dilution or strengthening of their commitment.244

In Barnard’s concept of organisation human beings have in fact been abstracted to ‘activities’ or ‘forces’; they are only supposed to make ‘contributions’ in return for ‘inducements’. He argued that a ‘dual-aspectual’ relationship with employees is legitimate for managers, one based on a personal relationship where the ‘whole of the individual’ is taken into account, the other ‘from the more nearly universal point of view’ where individuals are regarded only ‘in their purely functional aspects’.245 The idea of a ‘dual-aspectual relationship’ is based on his observation that the perception of human beings depends on the context.

245 C.I. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive, p. 16-17
On the one hand, the discrete, particular, unique, singular individual person with a name, an address, a history, a reputation, has the attention. On the other hand, when the attention transfers to the organization as a whole, or to remote parts of it, or to the integration of efforts accomplished by coordination, or to persons regarded in groups, then the individual loses his preeminence in the situation and something else, non-personal in character, is treated as dominant.\(^{246}\)

Barnard’s observation that the way human beings are perceived depends on the context can be easily recognised, but is problematic nonetheless. Barnard struggled with the problem of free will. His entire theory of organisation is embedded in the tension between the functional view of man (imposed by the universal view required for the study of management and organisation) and the discrete, particular individual.

I undertake no reconciliation of the opposition in these philosophies or whatever scientific theories they may rest upon. For the present, at least, the development of a useful theory of cooperative systems and of organization, and an effective understanding of the executive process, require the acceptance of both positions as describing aspects of social phenomena.\(^{247}\)

Thus, even in *The Functions of the Executive*, Barnard was well aware of the limitations of the ‘more nearly universal point of view’ that he adopted for his theory of management. He argued that a dogmatic belief in freedom of the individual would prevent all formal cooperation beyond that imposed by the most obvious immediate opportunities and necessities; and a dogmatic belief in complete coordination would stifle all development of individuals. The issue, as he saw it, was not a conflict of beliefs in cooperation, but the paradoxical nature of human beings. He believed that the expansion of cooperation and the development of the individual are mutually dependent realities, and that a due proportion or balance between them is a necessary condition of human welfare.\(^{248}\) Barnard added that

\(^{246}\) C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 8-9
\(^{247}\) C.I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, p. 21
Because it is subjective with respect both to a society as a whole and to the individual, what this proportion is I believe science cannot say. It is a question for philosophy and religion.\textsuperscript{249}

While Barnard accepts both viewpoints, the impossibility to reconcile them within a theory of management and organisation means in fact that the functional view comes to prejudice his ideas about the executive function.

\textit{Moral leadership}

In Barnard’s thought, the expansion of cooperation and the development of the individual are distinct realities. From the managerial perspective, the expansion of cooperation is predominant. This explains why human concerns are relegated to a secondary place. As a direct result managers who share Barnard’s view find themselves struggling with the reconciliation of the needs of the organisation and human concerns. The struggle is well illustrated in a speech for the Global Forum Conference by Mark Moody-Stuart, a former managing director of the Royal/Dutch Shell Group. In this speech he shows his concern with the assumption that business people are committed to financial gain only.\textsuperscript{250} Like Arie de Geus before him, he emphasises that financial gain alone does not explain the commitment, the effort, and the belief that so many people put into their work. As he says, ‘[a]t times of crisis our people do not just walk out, because their sense of self – their identity – is tied up in their work and in their community’. Moody-Stuart’s speech demonstrates that the problems of leadership are concerned with convincing people that profit is not the only motivation of business companies, that is, the problems are concerned with trust. Hence the importance of ‘ethical’ values.

Moody-Stuart argues that ‘it is only by balancing material and ethical values that we can work together to bring real progress and peace to the world’.\textsuperscript{251} This statement

\textsuperscript{249} ibid.


\textsuperscript{251} M. Moody-Stuart, \textit{It’s more than just business}, p. 7
reflects Barnard’s distinction of cooperation (that is evaluated in economic terms) and individual development (that is evaluated in ‘ethical’ terms). This distinction creates dilemmas, of course. Moody-Stuart observes that companies, like individuals, have multiple roles and obligations, and some of the demands created by these roles can be contradictory. In order to reconcile these contradictions, Moody-Stuart resorts to the same tactic as Barnard did: evangelizing. His own words are that ‘[i]n business we have to convince people that profit and profit alone is far from being our only motivation’. His speech also demonstrates that human concerns are considered as a functional imperative: ‘[business must uphold] certain values that are completely separate from purely commercial considerations’. Moody-Stuart’s line of reasoning suggests that the integration of economic considerations and the broader picture of companies are a matter of moral leadership.

Moral leadership reflects Barnard’s ethical ideal of human cooperation. It may be considered as a symptom of the problem that Barnard believed science could not resolve: reconciling the expansion of cooperation and the development of the individual.

Barnard chose not to undertake a reconciliation of the expansion of cooperation and the development of the individual, leaving it up to philosophy and religion to provide an answer. Before Barnard, however, the problems of reconciling individuals and social groups had already been addressed in an altogether different way by Mary Parker Follett. As we will see, her approach had significant advantage over the one taken by her successors, most of whom did not know her work however. Barnard studied human cooperation within the framework of top-down purpose. From Follett’s point of view, however, purpose was an uncertain outcome of human interaction in that many elements played a role.

3.4. Mary Parker Follett

Follett was perhaps more of a philosopher than a management theorist, but she had a practical mind nonetheless. She was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1868. She

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252 M. Moody-Stuart, *It’s more than just business*, p. 2
studied philosophy, history and political science and wrote a number of works on political science before embarking on management. Like many other young women interested in politics and social reform at the end of the 19th century, she went in for social work, taking a leading part in establishing evening classes and recreational centres for young people, and developing youth employment bureaux. She also worked for years with the Boston School Department on a career-counselling program, researching needs for different skills in different industries. Through her exciting and satisfying experiences in working on the civic committees that got community centres and career guidance started in the Boston schools, she found that ‘the group, because it means a larger life than our single, separate lives, thrills us and raises us to new levels of efficiency and power. This thrill will come to us just as completely as we learn to identify ourselves with the interest of all’. Eventually, the city funded her ideas and created the Vocational Guidance Department in the schools.

Her effectiveness in civic groups made Follett a logical choice to serve as the public representative on Massachusetts Minimum Wage Boards, created in response to reformers’ arguments that predatory wages for women had hidden social costs – prostitution, illegitimate births, and child neglect. Through her work with progressive businessmen on the Minimum Wage Boards she knew that managers in industry were facing the same problems of control, power, participation and conflict as did administrators in the public services. She felt that these problems were being more actively tackled by managers than by public administrators. She became interested in business administration when her vision of a new state built of small groups collapsed in the face of the problem how to engage an entire country in the ‘collective thought and collective feeling […] that produces true community’. Hoopes says that corporations seemed a lot better suited to her idea of the group as a person. Follett thought that the corporation has the potential to achieve some of the same kind of spiritual unity among employees that an individual human being can

253 Quoted in J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 111
254 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 110-111
255 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 112
256 D.S. Pugh, D.J. Hickson and C.R. Hinings, Writers on Organizations p. 102
257 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 114
258 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 114
Urwick thought that Follett’s ideas could be used not just to manage companies but to keep peace in the world.

Follett had high expectations of the capacity of management to solve the social problems at the end of the 19th century in American society, such as immigration, unemployment, and poverty. Thus her approach of management was inspired by a wider social concern, rather than profit. Follett said that

A business man should think of his work as one of the necessary functions of society, aware that other people are also performing necessary functions, and that all together these make a sound, healthy, useful community.

Among all management theorists of her time, Follett stands out for her appreciation of relationships and her drive for progress. Rosabeth Moss Kanter observes that Follett attached great importance to relationships and process.

Throughout her diverse commentaries on so many matters of concern to today’s managers, Follett sent one principal message: relationships matter. Underpinning all her work is the importance of relationships, not just transactions, in organizations. She pointed to the reciprocal nature of relationships, the mutual influence developed when people work together, however formal authority is defined. She applied general systems theory to organizations, demonstrating the intermeshing of cause and effect, arguing that actors and activities cannot be examined in isolation, but only in relationship to other actors and activities. Her ideas about the dynamic nature of organizational processes are well suited to the world of constant motion...

Follett did not walk away from the difficulties of conflict and control. On the contrary, she was driven by a vision of management as a change agent.

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259 J. Hoopes, *False Prophets*, p. 98
260 Quoted in J. Hoopes, *False Prophets*, p. 101
261 M.P. Follett, *Dynamic Administration*, p. 134
From unifying to purpose

Follett built her ideas upon an analysis of the psychology of the individual, his instincts, habits and desires. Metcalf and Urwick explain that '[c]onsequently she saw the individual and human relationship as the bedrock foundation of business organization, and business organization as simply a part of the whole human organization that makes up society.'\(^{263}\) It is important to recognise how Follett conceives of the relationship between individual people and their organisations. This relationship is not instrumental for a specific desired outcome. The outcome is the result of interaction. In *The New State* she argues that purpose is generated by the social process.

> Every teleological view will be given up when we see that purpose is not 'pre-existent', but involved in the unifying act that is the life process. It is man’s part to create purpose and to actualize it. From the point of view of man we are just in the dawn of self-consciousness, and his purpose is dimly revealing itself to him. The life-force wells up in us for expression – to direct it is the privilege of self-consciousness. […] Our task is not to ‘find’ causes to awaken our loyalty but to live our life fully and loyalty issues. […] Loyalty to a collective will that we have not created and of that we are, therefore, not an integral part, is slavery. We belong to our community just in so far as we are helping to make that community; then loyalty follows, then love follows.\(^{264}\)

Follett also applies this principle to organised activity: ‘Group activity, organized group activity, should aim: to incorporate and express the desires, the experience, the ideals of the individual members of the group: also to raise the ideals, broaden the experience, deepen the desires of the individual members of the group.’\(^{265}\) In her words the purpose of organisation is to increase individual and joint power.

\(^{263}\) M.P. Follett, *Dynamic Administration*, p. 21
\(^{265}\) M.P. Follett, *Dynamic Administration*, p. 275
You cannot coordinate purpose without developing purpose, it is part of the same process. Purpose is always the appearing of the power of unifying, the ranging of multiplicity into that that is both means and ends, the One holding the Many.\textsuperscript{266}

Whereas in mainstream management thinking diversity in the workforce is a problem, Follett insists that diversity made to work for us is the core object of business administration. ‘What I think we should do in business organization is to try to find the machinery best suited for the normal appearing and uniting of diversity so that the difference does not stay too long crystallized…’.\textsuperscript{267} In The New State Follett had already shown the meaning of diversity.

… the essence of individuality is the relating of self to other difference, that difference is not something static, something given that is also involved in the world of becoming. This is what experience teaches me – that society needs my difference, not as an absolute, but just so much difference as will relate me. Differences develop within the social process and are united through the social process.\textsuperscript{1, 268}

Diversity is an asset, it brings forward new perspectives and values. Follett argues that we have a common interest in interacting with people who are different from ourselves because it increases our joint power. ‘Conflict as the moment of the appearing and focusing of difference may be a sign of health, a prophecy of progress’.\textsuperscript{269} Much of what Follett suggests about resolving conflict by integration is reflected since the 1990s in the managing diversity movement.\textsuperscript{270}

Follett and her ideas may have been culturally feminine, but she certainly had a problematic history in management thinking because they do not fit the managerial perspective very well, especially as far as she calls into question the primacy of

\textsuperscript{266} Quoted in P. Graham, \textit{Mary Parker Follett, Prophet of Management}, p. 56. Graham explains that giving people a share in carrying out the purpose of the plant also involves a share in creating the purpose of the plant.
\textsuperscript{267} M.P. Follett, \textit{Dynamic Administration}, p. 34
\textsuperscript{268} M.P. Follett, \textit{The New State}, chapter 7. Quotes refer to the website publication by the Mary Parker Follett Foundation, see http://sunsite.utk.edu/FINS/Mary_Parker_Follett/VII.txt. Consulted on 19 May 2011. See also P. Graham, \textit{Mary Parker Follett, Prophet of Management}, p. 257.
\textsuperscript{269} M.P. Follett, \textit{Dynamic Administration}, p. 34
organisational purpose and their determination at the top of the organisation. Yet this is exactly what Follett did. One of the most fundamental of her propositions was that ‘organizational process evokes purpose, not the reverse…’.

The concept of control: uniting diversity

If the purpose of organisation is to increase individual and joint power, then there are some implications for the concept of control. Follett argued that control on the basis of organisational purpose entails a loss of the capacity to generate joint power. She did not reject that the aim of organisation is control. But she stresses that the object of control is precisely the power-generating unifying process. ‘The aim of organization engineering is control through effective unity. If, therefore, we wish to understand control, we should begin by trying to understand the nature of unities.’

Drawing again on biology, psychology and philosophy, Follett emphasizes not merely the totalness of the situation, as Barnard did, but the nature of totalness. She reasons that unities are determined not only by their constituent parts but by the relation of these parts to one another as well as the relation of whole and parts. In her discussion of the nature of reciprocal activity, she argues that unity is always a process, not a product.

The degree of control over a certain situation in the process, according to Follett, will depend partly on how far you can successfully unite the ideas of all the people involved in the situation. That is to say, the interacting is the control, it does not set up a control. Authority, she says, should arise within the unifying process.

A political scientist says in a recent book that authority coordinates the experience of men. It does not. It is just the other way around. Legitimate authority flows from coordination, not coordination from authority.

M.P. Follett, Dynamic Administration, p. 184
M.P. Follett, Dynamic Administration, p. 204
The reciprocal activity, the nature of totalness, is its self-regulating, self-directing character.

This means that the reciprocal activity of the parts changes the parts while it is creating unity And it also means that activities of the parts are making the whole while being influenced by the whole. Follett gives the example of a discussion that is familiar to most managers: whether general business policy should dictate departmental policies or departmental policies contribute to general policy. Her answer is ‘that it is the same activity that is making the whole and the parts simultaneously’. 274

Integration

When authority flows from coordination, rather than the other way around, what does this mean for the direction of an organisation? One person should not give orders to another person, Follett says, but both should agree to take their orders from the situation. If orders are simply part of the situation, the question of someone giving and someone receiving does not come up. Both accept the orders given by the situation.

I think it is told in the life a some famous American that when he was a boy and his mother said ‘Go get a pail of water’, he always replied ‘No, I won’t’, before taking up the pail and fetching the water. This is significant; he resented the command, the command of a person; but he went and got the water, not, I believe, because he had to, but because he recognized the demand of the situation. That, he knew he had to obey; that, he was willing to obey. And this kind of obedience is not opposed to the wish to govern one’s self, but each is involved in the other; both are part of the same fundamental urge at the root of one’s being. We have here something far more profound than ‘the egoistic impulse’ or ‘the instinct of self-assertion’. We have the very essence of the human being. 275

The job of managers is not how to get people to obey orders (that entails manipulation), but how to devise methods by that we can best discover the order integral to a particular situation.

274 M.P. Follett, Dynamic Administration, p. 196
275 M.P. Follett, Dynamic Administration, p. 61-62
My cook or stenographer points out the law of the situation, and I, if I recognize it as such, accept it, even though it may reverse some ‘order’ I have given. [...] I do not say that we have found the way to a frictionless existence, far from it, but we now understand the place that we mean to give friction.276

The word order is not to mean any longer external authority, arbitrary authority, but the law of the situation. From one point of view, Follett says, one might call the essence of scientific management the attempt to find the law of the situation. With scientific management the managers are as much under orders as the workers, for both obey the law of the situation. The method of scientific management, however, was not suited to build up power-with. The question is by which methods we can discover the law of the situation. Follett suggests that this is by way of integration. She defines integration as one of three ways of dealing with conflict; the other two are domination and compromise.

Domination, obviously, is a victory of one side over the other. ... The second way of dealing with conflict, that of compromise, we understand well, for it is the way we settle most of our controversies; each side gives up a little in order to have peace, or, to speak more accurately, in order that the activity that has been interrupted by the conflict may go on. ... Yet no one really wants compromise, because that means a giving up of something. Is there then any other method of ending conflict? There is a way beginning now to be recognized at least, and even occasionally followed: when two desires are integrated, that means a solution has been found in that both desires have found a place, that neither side has had to sacrifice anything. ... Integration involves invention, and the clever thing is to recognize this, and not let one's thinking stay within the boundaries of two alternatives that are mutually exclusive.277

The notion of integration is difficult to understand. Perhaps its meaning for the management of human affairs can be grasped, if the word ‘integration’ is replaced by ‘discovery’. One of the keys to discovery is the recognition of diversity. In order to discover, it is necessary to be present to the situation, and to look and listen deeply to the differences involved in the situation instead of denying them, assuming that we

276 M.P. Follett, Dynamic Administration, p. 59
277 M.P. Follett, Dynamic Administration, p. 31-36
all want the same or wanting to go on with our normal activities. None of those approaches to diversity will facilitate the process of discovery.

It is often difficult to decide whether a decision is a true integration or something of a compromise … But signs of even partial integration, signs even that people want integration rather than domination or compromise, are encouraging. Compromise does not create, it deals with what already exists; integration creates something new… Thus we see that while conflict as continued unintegrated difference is pathological, difference itself is not pathological. 278

Follett had found a formula that implies the possible reciprocal influence of subject and object. 279 This resonated with her experience that human interaction is a process in which many different factors of an evolving situation are interweaving. She realised that this reciprocal influence, this evolving situation, was fundamental for politics, economics and jurisprudence.

What physiology and psychology now teach us is that part of the nature of response is the change it makes in the activity that caused so-to-speak the response, that is, we shall never catch the stimulus stimulating or the response responding. The importance of this cannot be overestimated. Stimulus is not cause and response the effect. Some writers, while speaking otherwise correctly of the behavior process yet use the word result – the result of the process – whereas there is no result of process but only a moment in process. … We get completely away from the fallacy that dissected experience and took the dead products, subject and object, and made them the generating elements. 280

Follett conceives of response as reaction to relating. She called this the law of circular response or circular behaviour. Her ideas about integrative behaviour are underwritten by the law of circular behaviour.

278 M.P. Follett, Dynamic Administration, p. 34
279 Follett’s source was the work of Edwin Holt, a professor of philosophy and psychology at Harvard from 1901 until 1918. Holt was engaged in research on the psychology of vision. (American Journal of Psychology (Vol. 59, No. 3), pp. 478-480
Circular behaviour is the basis of integration. If your business is so organized that you can influence a co-manager while he is influencing you, so organized that a workman has an opportunity of influencing you as you have of influencing him; if there is an interactive influence going on all the time between you, power-with may be built up. Throughout history we see that control brings disastrous consequences whenever it outruns integration.\textsuperscript{281}

The essence of the notion of ‘integration’ is to develop power-with. And the first condition to build up power-with is to take friction seriously. When the interactive influence is based on openness and trust and respect for the many dimensions in that people differ from each other, then we can make agreements and contracts. Problems arise when management by coordinating objectives takes on the character of management by imposing objectives. In terms of business administration this is exactly the difference between domination and integration. Domination requires recourse to motivation techniques.\textsuperscript{282} Integration honours intrinsic motivation.

Only integration really stabilizes. But by stabilization I do not mean anything stationary. Nothing ever stays put. I mean only that that particular conflict is settled and the next occurs on a higher level. ... Social progress is in this respect like individual progress; we become spiritually more and more developed as our conflicts rise to higher levels. ... One test of your business organization is not how many conflicts you have, for conflicts are the essence of life, but what are your conflicts? And how do you deal with them? ... It is to be hoped that we shall not always have strikes, but it is equally to be hoped that we shall always have conflict, the kind that leads to invention, to the emergence of new values.\textsuperscript{283}

Against this philosophical and psychological background Follett is convinced that jointly developing power means the possibility of organic growth in social systems, social progress, creating new values. In her book \textit{Creative Experience} she explains the dynamic of growth:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{281} M.P. Follett, \textit{Dynamic Administration}, p. 105
  \item \textsuperscript{282} This point is illustrated by Reinhard Sprenger in his book \textit{The Motivation Myth}. Sprenger draws on his experience as a manager of personnel development at L’Oréal. He says that it has never become clear to him, why it is necessary to motivate employees when they have a contract involving agreements on objectives. See R. Sprenger, \textit{De motivatie mythe: manieren om de impasse te omzeilen} (Amsterdam: Addison-Wesley, 1996), p. 196
  \item \textsuperscript{283} M.P. Follett, \textit{Dynamic Administration}, p. 36
\end{itemize}
... while many political scientists and economists as well as statesmen and labor arbitrators have stuck to the theory of the balance of power, of the equilibrium of interests, yet life continually escapes them, for whenever we advance we slip from the bondage of equilibrium.  

Thinking in terms of equilibrium, of balance, is like a bondage that keeps us from advancing, progressing. Follett’s business philosophy is, clearly, to advance, to bring more into existence, to innovate. The way to do that is by developing power-with.

**The social function of management**

Peter Drucker argues that Follett made no sense to the management people in the 1930s and 1940s because she talked about management as a social function. To them, it was “a tool box to ‘fix’ immediate problems”.

Those decades saw a good deal of work on management, but it was on procedures, techniques, methods, and practices. It was work on organizational rules such as the span of control, on specific behaviour, on problems of personnel management such as compensation, and so forth. No one asked what they were doing, let alone why they were doing it. The question was always ‘How do we do it?’

The preoccupation with tools and techniques in the world of management stands in the way of discovery. This is illustrated by Maarten Stapper, who works as a farming systems agronomist in Australia. In his work he became aware that most problems start with the soil, and thus the search for solutions should commence there. He says that the current approach of soil problems only treats particular symptoms and not the wider cause of soil degradation. It ignores the delicate balance of microbes, trace

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285 Follett explains that when two people desire the same thing, there can usually be no integration.
286 The same point was made by Arie de Geus with regard to the qualities of long-living companies. He draws attention to tolerance for outliers, experiments, and eccentricities ‘within the boundaries of the cohesive firm’. See A. de Geus, *The Living Company*, p. 145-146
minerals and nutrients in the soil. He argues that human beings ´have to look at the whole farming system – where everything is linked to everything else´. As he says, the scientific approach leads agronomists to impose solutions to the situation. In his view the main problem is the power of will. ´We have to do away with our power of will in order to discover the power of nature in food production systems.´

Thereby he illustrates Follett’s emphasis on the nature of totalness as well as her concept of the law of the situation. The job of agronomists is not how to get farmers to obey to the laws of science, but to devise methods by that they can harness the power of natural healthy soil processes. This amounts to discovering the order integral to the situation. In order to discover such methods, Stapper teaches farmers to understand the natural processes, for example by looking at how plants are growing their roots. He emphasises that this can only be done in small groups, because the process of discovery requires full attention for what is already present in the situation. Stapper’s example shows that this way of working, what Follett called integration, is not easy to achieve. Follett herself signalled various obstacles to integration:

- a preference to fight: integration requires a high order of intelligence, keen perception and discrimination, more than all, a brilliant inventiveness.
- the enjoyment of domination: integration leaves no ‘thrills’ of conquest.
- a tendency to theorize over the matter instead of it being taken up as a proposed activity.
- the language used.
- manipulative leaders and the suggestibility of the crowd.
- lack of training.

Stapper testifies that, after completing 30 years of being employed as scientist his skills were deemed to be “surplus to requirements” by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Australia’s national science agency. He was made to understand that his work did not fit the purpose of the organisation.

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292 M.P. Follett, *Dynamic Administration*, p. 45-49
293 CSIRO states its purpose as ‘By igniting the creative spirit of our people we deliver great science and innovative solutions for industry, society and the environment’. It further says that

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himself points to several obstacles that Follett recognised, in particular the need for emotional intelligence and the role of hierarchy.\textsuperscript{294} As he says, there is no room in the human mind when emotions are taking over. Since Australian culture attaches great importance to hierarchical position, that entails fear of the power of superiors, docility was required of him rather than curiosity in the soil. Thereby he also illustrates the problems that are involved in Follett's concept of integration.

What distinguishes power-over from power-with at the practical level is the attitude taken by differing sides in a conflict. Controversial sides are fighting, expecting antagonism, arouse the impulse of self-protection. Integrative sides represent different points of view, from the perspective of what is good for the business as a whole.

In any conference between managers and workers the representatives of the workers should represent the workers' point of view, but, as has been pointed out by one of our most thoughtful manufacturers, the workers' point of view of what is best for the plant as a whole. There is a vast difference here. And this principle holds good not only for conferences between managers and workmen, but in any committee or conference in the business. In a meeting of superintendents of departments, each should consider, not merely what is good for his department, but the good of the business as viewed from his department. Please notice the last phrase; I do not say that he should consider what is good for the whole business and end my sentence there, as is so often done. I say what is good for the whole \textit{as seen from his department}. We do want sides in this sense.\textsuperscript{295}

Whether we develop power-with or not, whether we reach integration or not, depends on the attitude taken by those who are engaged in a conflict. Follett wants to do away with the fight attitude, but not to get rid of sides. She recognises that sides are a necessary ingredient in the process of resolving conflict.

\textsuperscript{1}People are at the centre of everything we do. We work to create the right environment to amplify our talent’. See http://www.csiro.au/org/vision-purpose-beliefs.html. Consulted on 21 April 2011.
\textsuperscript{294} In a conversation that I had with him in Dumbéa, New Caledonia on 21 April 2011.
\textsuperscript{295} M.P. Follett, Dynamic Administration, p. 73-74. Italics in the original text.
3.5. Conclusion

The central question in this chapter was: what has happened in the functionalist orthodoxy to view human concerns in such a way that they are not an integral part of work? For an answer we have turned to the early stages of management theory. Of course management theory has evolved in important ways since then. Nevertheless the course of events has been such that management theory has further developed on the basis of some choices that were made in the 1920s. One of these choices regards the importance of top-down power. Peter Drucker suggests that the conception of power-with is intelligible only for those people who believe in conflict resolution, not in unconditional surrender. Follett was ignored, he says, not because she was a woman but because her ideas were rejected. Follett’s idea that the best way to resolve a conflict is not ‘victory’, not ‘compromise’, but integration was unintelligible in the 1930s and 1940s.

Politically those decades were dominated by men and creed that knew the proper use of conflict was to conquer. They did not believe in conflict resolution; they believed in unconditional surrender. Their goal was not peace but war. And society was dominated – permeated, in fact – by a profound belief in class war, in that the very attempt to understand what was important to the other side was a sell out.296

Drucker underlines that assumptions about the nature of society play an important role in management thinking. It may well be that the time is indeed ripe to see cooperation, based on the concept of power-with, as a more useful approach.297 However, the sociological assumptions of management theory have to be recognised as well. The dominant approaches within the field of organisational studies are built around the common sense, ‘taken for granted’, assumptions that organisations are purposive, goal-seeking enterprises. The question ‘What is an organisation?’ is rarely given very much attention. Social scientists have generally reached for some simple mechanical or organismic analogy in advance of any study of the system to that it is applied. In doing so, ‘they have meted out rough justice to the essential nature of the social phenomena that they are investigating’.298 This is especially true with regard to

296 P. Drucker, ‘Introduction’, p. 4-5. Italics in the original text.
298 G. Burrell and G. Morgan, Sociological Paradigms, p. 68
handling social change and the capacity of human beings to bring about change to improve their situation.

Barnard was well aware of the limitations of the functional view of human beings. But he gave more weight to the need for social order than to the importance of conflict.\textsuperscript{299} The strength of Barnard’s concept of cooperative systems and of his explanation of the essential conditions for effectiveness and efficiency lies in the idea that purpose is central. Purposive effort can change the character of events. The problem with his theory is that the expansion of cooperation and the development of the individual are considered as distinct, though mutually dependent, realities. As a result the functional relation with employees comes to predominate. In this way human beings become resources to the organisation whose utility is determined by management. The tension is resolved by appealing to moral leadership. Barnard believed that leadership is indispensable to achieve cooperation. He was willing to rest his theory of cooperation upon an ethical ideal. Henceforth the problems of leadership are concerned with trust. The characteristic way to handle these problems is to handle them as moral dilemmas. Johan Verstraeten says that business ethics was meant to address these dilemmas. However, he found that business ethics has to adapt to the managerial perspective in order to be accepted. This leads him to argue that the problems of leadership are not primarily ethical, but pertain to the conditions for moral responsibility.

They are related to unarticulated assumptions and the creation of conditions for moral responsibility, that is, before ethics are in play, there have to be people who are formed in such a way that they are enabled to take moral responsibility.\textsuperscript{300}

In order to conceptualize this need of ‘formation’ that precedes ethics, Verstraeten introduces spirituality as a condition for moral responsibility, which is a move we will pursue in the remainder of this study. In this connection it is interesting to note, as we saw in the introductory chapter, that several business schools have included spirituality in their leadership program.\textsuperscript{301} Spiritual elements have also found a place


\textsuperscript{300} J. Verstraeten, p. 17. Translation by the author.

\textsuperscript{301} For example Santa Clara University, Yale, University of Scranton.
in management development and leadership training. However, as concerned as Verstraeten is with the conditions for moral responsibility, his argument does not get to the root of the problems that are generated by the view of cooperation and the development of the individual as distinct, though mutually dependent, realities. In my own consultancy work I have found that managers are more than willing to exercise moral responsibility, but they feel that the work environment does not give them sufficient leeway for choice. At the level of management theory, the problem is elucidated by contrasting Mary Parker Follett and Chester Barnard. The key differences between them are equilibrium, purpose and regulation of conflict.

Follett rejected equilibrium as a model of society, whereas Barnard found a solution to the problem of motivation in Pareto’s mechanical equilibrium. Pareto was also popular with the Harvard group of sociologists, who took over the Hawthorne studies in 1927. Elton Mayo had been willing to dodge the data in order to prove his own point about the importance of human relations. The influence of Barnard and Mayo can still be seen in the current managerial view of human beings as resources. Follett, on the other hand, did not choose any analogy. As Metcalf and Urwick say, Follett’s philosophy is that any enduring society must be grounded upon a recognition of the motivating desires of the individual and of the group. Any form of government – the direction of the many by the few in the interest of common order and unified action – must, in the long run, rest on consent. Follet’s approach of the problems of government, whether of business or of society, was underwritten by the psychological analysis of that consent and the conditions under that it can be made spontaneous and effective. Her contribution to the management literature is that she opens up the possibility of executives and managers identifying not only with the interests of stockholders, consumers and employees, but also with ‘the deep, flowing currents of opinion that are shaping the society of the future’. She shows that work

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302 See for example T.C. Pauchant, *Ethics and Spirituality at Work*.
303 I am indebted to the Federation Christelijk MBO, a national association of professional schools with a Christian identity in the Netherlands, for allowing me to interview executives and senior managers about their view on values in management. The research was conducted in 2009 and 2010. One of the results was that the decision-making process was dominated by what the managers called ‘the day’s fashion’ and any choice could be reversed the next day. The issue of choice will be elaborated in chapter 4.
305 *ibid.*, p. 14
306 *ibid.*, p. 22
groups can come together in a way that delights the soul. In all this Follett makes clear that organisations, to the extent that they function as communities, do not ‘have a purpose’ but structure the common purpose of its members and stakeholders.

Follett emphasised that unity is always in process. To her, purpose was basically an uncertain outcome of human interaction; not the outcome of a decision-making process at the executive level. Yet this is exactly what Barnard made a purpose look like. He believed in the common purpose as a premise of the cooperative efforts of human beings, as a unifying element, but he did not give attention to the choice of purpose or the process of formulating goals and objectives for the organisation. To Barnard, the definition of organisational purpose was peculiarly an executive function, and a necessary condition to increase the possibilities of cooperation. It was all-important to him that the employees believed in the purpose as defined at the executive level. He was even willing to resort to manipulation.

Follett believed that control on the basis of purpose involves a loss of capacity to achieve joint power. The object of control is precisely the power-generating unifying process. Diversity is not the problem, but the way we deal with differences. Follett argued that business organisations should find the machinery best suited for the normal appearing and uniting of diversity. Instead of domination or compromise, she found a solution in integration. The essence of the notion of ‘integration’ is to develop power-with. Its meaning for the management of human affairs can be grasped by replacing ‘integration’ by ‘discovery’. In order to discover, it is necessary to be present to the situation, and to look and listen deeply to the differences involved in the situation instead of denying them, assuming that we all want the same or wanting to go on with our normal activities.

The degree of control over a certain situation in the process depends, of course, on how far you can successfully unite the ideas of all the people involved in the situation. Barnard argued that unity depends on the executive function. He was willing to rest his theory of cooperation upon an ethical ideal, moral leadership. He recognised that expansion of cooperation and individual development are mutually dependent, but he believed that science could not say what the proper balance was.

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307 J. Hoopes, False Prophets, p. 120
Contrary to Follett, he argued that a dual-aspectual relationship is legitimate for managers, one based on a personal relationship, the other where individuals are regarded only in their purely functional aspects. In Barnard’s time the ‘dual-aspectual’ relationship was considered an advance over the earlier model of economic man, because it took the ‘non-rational’, emotional and unconscious elements in human behaviour into account. However, his solution has not yielded all that might have been expected since it gave the opportunity for human beings to become ‘resources’ to the organisation.

Barnard’s construction of a ‘dual-aspectual relationship’ had a deep impact upon the way human beings relate to organisations today. Many employees today define their relation with the organisation in terms of a contract, and allow the organisation to determine how they behave within the terms of employment. They tend to emphasise that life is lived outside the organisation. This attitude towards the organisation is a perfect reflection of Barnard’s theory and contradicts Follett’s ideas about community development. One of the arguments that is frequently raised against workplace spirituality is precisely that life is lived outside the organisation. This implies that work is not considered meaningful in itself; it just provides the means for living. The ‘dual-aspectual relationship’ with employees makes employees into objects of management. This way of viewing the relation between the individual and organisation severely limits the possibilities of organisations to handle change and to have an impact upon the environment. The remedy is to explore the human possibilities for ‘discovery’ of what is already present in the situation and to build management theory further upon the insider perspective.
4. An insider perspective of spirituality

4.1. Introduction

Managers, management consultants and management researchers are generally interested in workplace spirituality for the benefits which are expected. Among the researchers, for example, Mitroff and Denton are preoccupied with reaping the benefits of the deep and full engagement of employees; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz with organisational performance; and Neal with organisational transformation. Thus an instrumental relation between spirituality and organisation is presumed at the outset. The methodology is always the same: it is a matter of finding the proper ‘tools’ and implementing them. In this chapter we will pursue a different approach that takes the lead from Mary Parker Follett’s concept of integration. She suggests that integration is the method by which we can discover the ‘law of the situation’. In chapter 3 integration was understood as a process of discovery which requires full attention for what is already present in a situation in which agents seek cooperation and coordination of their activities with those of others. Viewed in this way, as a process of discovery, Follett’s concept of integration is comparable to spirituality. Avis Johnson, who regards Follett’s ideas as anticipating current thought on workplace spirituality, observes that

> Overall, discussion in the literature of the means that can be used to increase spirituality in the workplace lack the characteristic of holistic integration that is present in Follett’s means of ‘circular response’. Follett provided a process for getting to spirituality, rather than techniques.\(^{308}\)

As we saw in chapter 3, Follett’s ‘law of circular behaviour’ refers to her conception of response as a reaction to relating. She saw reciprocal influence as the basis of integration. Johnson argues that Follett’s argument for relating goes beyond the understanding of workplace spirituality as an instrument. The essence of relating, he says, is that it occurs through daily awareness of what happens in interactions with other people, through awareness of the ultimate effect in the environment.\(^{309}\) In


\(^{309}\) Cf. A.L. Johnson, ‘Mary Parker Follett’, p. 436-437
contrast, the predominant approach to spirituality is that of a tool, so that – in line with their supposition of the instrumental relation between spirituality and organisation – management scholars are interested in finding techniques to ‘foster’ or ‘achieve’ spirituality at work. Thus the awareness that workplace spirituality starts with being attentive to what is already present in the situation is by no means to be taken for granted.

Follett draws the attention to perception, notably the different perceptions of the situation in which people find themselves. Although she suggests that the ‘law of the situation’ is discovered by way of ‘integration’, it is not quite clear what this suggestion involves in terms of an approach to management other than organising a company in such a way that managers and workers are stimulated to work together.

In this chapter I will start my constructive argument by showing how spirituality is generally understood as a way towards God (in theistic religions), Enlightenment (in Buddhism) or a cosmic principle of unity (in various philosophies such as Taoism). That is how it occurs in the context of a wide variety of religious traditions, as we will see. Next, I will focus on how discernment is understood and practised in schools of spirituality in the Christian tradition. As we will see, all schools of spirituality have a form of critical reflection in order to find the way. For reasons to be explained in the following paragraph, I will look at two of these schools, the Benedictine and the Ignatian school. As we will see, particularly the Ignatian school understands spirituality in a way that is similarly structured as Mary Parker Follett’s conception of discovering ‘the law of the situation’. That is to say, Ignatian spirituality is concerned with making the best choice in the situation. What we will gain from studying these traditions, in particular the Ignatian tradition, is an account of the various activities involved in discovering ‘the law of the situation’ that goes well beyond what we found in Follett’s account.
4.2. Understanding spirituality

If one looks into the nature of spirituality in various religious traditions, one will see that they all share the notion of following a ‘path’ in practicing their religious teachings. In their own words, religious traditions are typified by the metaphor of ‘the way’.310 Judaism is founded on Thora (= indicator of direction). The life of Muslims is governed by the shari‘ah (‘shar’ = way). Buddhism defines itself as yana (vehicle) as it is concerned with the way towards Enlightenment. In the Christian tradition, Jesus is referred to as the Way. What all these traditions share is the teaching of a path that must be followed in order to find the proper way of living one’s life in the world. Spirituality is broadly the practice of following this path.

There are two dimensions to the ‘path’. One is the dimension of discernment of truth about the world as external reality. Thus the various paths are evaluated in terms of good or bad, true or false, divine or diabolic, life-giving or life-taking. The other dimension regards a matter of personal character. A precondition of finding the path is whether one’s way of learning is marked by love and compassion, or by self-centeredness. Taken together, the ‘path’ is thus evaluated in terms of an internal disposition that is required to properly assess the various aspects of the external world.311 Furthermore, all these traditional accounts of finding ‘the path’ have in common that they involve systematic reflection within a community of practicing believers. In other words, the systematic reflection upon spirituality as an embedded and contextualised discipline presupposes the context of lived spirituality.

In all religious traditions this systematic reflection starts with the learning dialogue which provides the opportunity to reflect about the issues which arise as part of the way.312 Buddhism has the abhidarma schools. Judaism has the talmudic learning community. In Christianity there are the disputatio of the desert monks, the collatio of monastic communities and the deliberatio of the Jesuit Order.313 In the 20th century

310 K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 125
311 K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 490
312 K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 770-776
313 John Cassian used the word "Collationes" or Conferences to refer to the training of the inner man and the perfection of the heart as opposed to what belongs to the outer man and the institutes of monastic life. Originating from Bethlehem, Cassian traveled extensively among the desert monks and, after his ordination as a deacon (in Constantinople) and as a priest (in Rome), founded two monasteries in southern France. He is considered as the liaison between
the practice of revision de vie was adopted by small Christian communities. All these forms of learning dialogue aim at gaining insight in the particular way which is followed by the school rather than at achieving consensus.\footnote{K. Waayman, \textit{Spiritualiteit}, p. 799} Thus there is an intimate link between lived spirituality and the study of spirituality. This applies to the understanding of spirituality in religious traditions as well as to ‘individualised’ spirituality. As Mary Frohlich says with respect to the study of ‘individualised’ spirituality:

\begin{quote}
I have become convinced that ‘lived spirituality’ is, and must remain, the key point of engagement for any study of spirituality. In saying this I am clearly taking a stand for the ‘self-implicating’ character of such study. What we study, how we study, what we learn, is rooted in our own spiritual living. In this context, ‘spiritual living’ does not necessarily mean adherence to a defined religious or spiritual tradition. It does mean, however, that one attends with as much authenticity as one can muster to the truth of one’s own experience.\footnote{M. Frohlich, ‘Spiritual Discipline, Discipline of Spirituality: Revisiting Questions of Definition and Method’, in: \textit{Spiritus} (Vol. 1, 2001)}
\end{quote}

In this study the word ‘spirituality’ is not confined to religious traditions. Spirituality is understood in the context of human experience, the experience namely of facing the task of organising and orienting one’s life toward a horizon of ultimate concern.\footnote{Cf. S.M. Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy’, in: \textit{Theological Studies} (Vol. 50, No. 4), p. 684. Schneiders argues that two basic approaches can be discerned among authors discussing the meaning and use of the term ‘spirituality’: a dogmatic position supplying a ‘definition from above’ and an anthropological position providing a ‘definition from below’. The understanding of spirituality in this study refers to the anthropological position, which is described as a way of engaging anthropological questions and preoccupations in order to arrive at an ever richer and more authentically human life. An example of such questions and preoccupations that arise in the workplace is the conflict between corporate interests represented by the managerial perspective on the one hand and ‘human concerns’ with regard to the organisation on the other (See par. 3.3.). In using ‘ultimate concern’ as a point of reference I intend to say that people tend to reflect upon the meaning of work in the perspective of their existence rather than their role as an employee.} Whether this task is faced in the context of a religious tradition, or in the context of an individualised worldview, in all cases there are some aspects in common that are worthwhile investigating. This chapter is concerned with one aspect in particular: critical reflection upon the path of workplace spirituality.\footnote{In the Christian tradition, the paradigm of critical reflection is \textit{discretio}. I shall return to this subject in paragraph 4.3.} Giving that this is not an

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empirical study in the social-scientific sense, I will draw on the knowledge that has been concentrated over the centuries in schools of spirituality. This approach enables me to identify a method of critical reflection that acknowledges the importance of personal character, and, in that sense, fulfils Frohlich’s demand of studying ‘spirituality’ from an insider perspective.\footnote{318 As indicated, what I hope to gain from this investigation is an account of spirituality as an inter-related set of practices of discernment aiming at proper understanding of the situation at hand.}

Schools of spirituality are organisations that are governed by certain rules, as any other organisation. In the Christian tradition, the essence of the particular ‘path’ of schools of spirituality is laid down in a Rule. In the field of workplace spirituality there has been little interest in these Rules. One of the exceptions is Paul de Blot, who has studied the Constitutions of the Jesuit Order.\footnote{319 To my knowledge no other governance codes have been studied by the scholarship on workplace spirituality. My account of the Constitutions will concord with De Blot, but it will have another focus.} He encountered those problems in his pastoral work, as a Jesuit, on the campus of Nyenrode Business University in The Netherlands. He believed that Ignatius had an answer, and wondered why so little attention had been given to Ignatius’ executive power. De Blot’s search led him to the architecture of the Jesuit Order and its Constitutions. But his reading of the architecture has its focus on individual development as a condition for organisational renewal. He never thought about analysing the Constitutions as a way to illuminate the spiritual dimension of corporate deliberation and decision-making.

The purpose of contrasting the Rule of St. Benedict and the Constitutions of the Jesuit Order lies in their different understanding of the concept of obedience. In discovering the path, one must be ‘obedient’ if one wants to succeed. But the

\footnote{318 The problem is that individualised spirituality has a diffuse character which takes various forms at different times. It draws on various sources and is not committed to a particular way. This spirituality cannot be properly studied from the insider perspective because there is no group to which the researcher can relate. See E. Koster, ‘Storende subjectiviteit?’, p. 136-137.}
\footnote{319 P. de Blot, Vernieuwing van organisaties in een chaotische omgeving door vernieuwing van de mens. De organisatieleer van Ignatius van Loyola., diss. Nyenrode University (Breukelen: Nyenrode University Press, 2004)}
\footnote{320 P. de Blot, Vernieuwing van organisatie, p. 10-11}
question that crucially differentiates the two schools is: ‘Obedient to whom, or what?’ Thus the concept of obedience will turn out to be crucial in understanding these schools.

However, because of its connotations of ‘authority’ – not to speak of ‘authoritarianism’ – a brief comment is in order here to indicate the meaning of the notion of obedience. As we already saw, the ‘path’ of discernment is evaluated in terms of an internal disposition that is required, in any given situation, to properly assess the relevant aspects of the external world in order to deal with the question or decision at hand. This requirement is framed in terms of ‘obedience’. Obedience is the requirement to shape one’s own dispositions in such a way as to be able to ‘see’ what can and needs to be done in the external world. The notion of obedience in the spiritual schools has often been informed by voluntarism rather than realism in so far as it means responding to someone else’s will. In the Christian tradition, the Ignatian school has been the first to struggle with this tension.

The program of this chapter takes an insider perspective of the Benedictine and Jesuit Orders in order to understand their governance codes from within. The program is as follows. In paragraph 4.3 the Rule of St. Benedict will be explored. In paragraph 4.4 the Constitutions of the Jesuit Order will be explored. The understanding of obedience by the Benedictine and Jesuit Orders will be contrasted in the concluding paragraph (4.5). The contrast will serve to explain how obedience facilitates the process of discovery.

4.3. Benedictine spirituality

Benedictine spirituality is concerned with the perfection of life in the ascetic tradition.321 The step from anachoretic towards cenobitic monasticism is made when obedience replaces ascesis as the way to follow Christ. In ascetic terms, obedience is understood as withdrawal from the world through the abandonment of one’s own will. This was regarded as an even greater sacrifice than continuous prayer, control

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321 For a description of the ascetic tradition, see John Cassian, *Conferences* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985)
of one's passions, loneliness, mortification, poverty and fasting. Furthermore, the step towards cenobitic monasticism involves a shift from individual perfection to the perfection of the community. For St. Benedict, cenobitic monasticism is the ideal form of monastic life. The Rule of St. Benedict is the result of long tradition of personal experience with monastic life and study of the monastic literature. In the Benedictine tradition it served two purposes. It allowed to restrain the excesses of ascetic life, which had been a model for following Christ since early Christianity. It also met the need for regulation of community life. Both these purposes were served by the concept of obedience.

Thus obedience has a central place in the Rule of St. Benedict. Obedience is required of the monks because the abbot mediates the will of God. The abbot's responsibility is to embody moderation, and to make prudent choices with regard to the monks. But it requires docility of the abbot in the first place. Docility (in the sense of readiness to listen) is considered indispensable for acquiring discretio. Discretio is the Christian paradigm of critical reflection upon lived spirituality. As a metaphor, discretio refers to the perception of difference, sensitivity to tension, awareness of division, and further: judgment, discernment, and the ability to make proper distinctions. In contrast to Ignatian spirituality, Benedictine spirituality practices discretio as moderation.

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323 K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 338
324 F. Dingjan, Discretio, p. 82
325 K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 483.
326 From the 2nd century onwards four varieties of critical reflection have been transmitted in the Christian tradition. Critical reflection is compared to the actions of money changers. His first action is to verify whether a coin is made of gold; his second action is to verify the head of the coin; then he verifies where it was made; and finally he verifies whether the coin has kept its weight. Each of these stages stands for a matter which requires critical attention in lived spirituality as well. (a) The first action is concerned with discerning the difference between the dead-end way and the way of life. The motive of two ways is founded in the human capacity to notice difference. Where all difference falls away, here is nothing to discern. (b) The second action is concerned with interpreting events and situations to gain insight in the interior dimension of the particular way. It makes a difference whether an event or situation is interpreted as creation or as fate; as deviations from a psychological or social ideal or as sin; as socio-cultural constructs or as traces of the relation with God; as projection or as transformation. (c) The third action is concerned with the discovery of the Middle Way (to avoid excesses). Cassian observed that ascesis is not more than a means, an intermediary goal. Discernment in this sense is reflection on what happens in the interior of human beings from the point of view of the ultimate end. (d) The fourth is concerned with trying someone's present state of being and his or her full growth. See John Cassian, Conferences (New York: Paulist Press, 1985). See also F. Dingjan, Discretio, p. 22. and K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 484
Benedictine spirituality is no different from Ignatian spirituality in emphasizing that obedience involves listening to people, to situations, to whatever presents itself in the community.\textsuperscript{327} Obedience involves more than taking note of what we hear or observe; it is concerned with making sense of a situation in order to respond. As we will see later, the questions faced by Benedictine monks are quite different from those faced by members of the Jesuit Order. As we have seen, Benedictine spirituality belongs to a monastic community that lives according to the \textit{Rule of St. Benedict}. Therefore it practices discretion as moderation. Later I will show that Ignatian spirituality, on the other hand, belongs to a religious order that is dispersed around the world in apostolic service. Therefore it practices discretion as interpretation of events and situations. In both cases, however, listening is crucial.

In the \textit{Rule of St. Benedict} this is, in fact, the first word:

\begin{quote}
Listen, O my son, to the precepts of thy master, and incline the ear of thy heart…\textsuperscript{328}
\end{quote}

The Dutch Benedictine oblate Wil Derkse emphasises that obedience as required of each monk should not be understood in a submissive sense: it is related to sensitivity, the ability to learn and respond.\textsuperscript{329} Obedience is an internal positive response. Disobedience is not simply noncompliance with instructions, rules, orders and commands; it is rather not responding, being absent, missing signals, letting opportunities pass. This is required of the abbot as much as of the other monks, if not more, because his role is to embody moderation, and to make prudent choices with regard to the monks. It is for this reason that the \textit{Rule of St. Benedict} has been put forward as an example of leadership.\textsuperscript{330} Derkse, for example, starts by saying that the abbot has to listen in order to make an adequate decision. He further shows the practical relevance for managers by drawing attention to five elements of the

\textsuperscript{327} The root of the Latin word ‘obedientia’ is ‘ob-audire’, a stronger form of audire, listening. See W. Derkse, \textit{Een levensregel voor beginners}, p. 48
\textsuperscript{328} \textit{The Holy Rule of St. Benedict} (St. Benedict’s Abbey, 2009), chapter 1
\textsuperscript{330} See for example W. Derkse, \textit{Een levensregel voor beginners}; and A. Grün, \textit{Bezielend leidinggeven: impulsen vanuit de Regel van Benedictus van Nursia} (Baarn: Ten Have, 2002)
Benedictine consultation and comparing them with current tendencies in corporate decision-making.\footnote{W. Derkse, \textit{Een levensregel voor beginners}, p. 55-57}

In order to explain the difference with the Ignatian tradition, I will briefly summarize Derkse’s account of these five elements. The main subject is the nature of the consultation of the monks by the abbot. In the \textit{Rule of St. Benedict}, the consultation is treated in chapter 3, of calling the brethren for counsel.

Whenever weighty matters are to be transacted in the monastery, let the Abbot call together the whole community, and make known the matter which is to be considered. Having heard the brethren’s views, let him weigh the matter with himself and do what he thinketh best. It is for this reason, however, we said that all should be called for counsel, because the Lord often revealeth to the younger what is best.\footnote{The Holy Rule of St. Benedict, chapter 3}

First of all, the members of the community are called together whenever something \textit{important} is going to happen. In other words the less important matters can be handled by the abbot himself, or with the help of some members of his management team such as the prior, the economist or the master of novices. But in more important matters, that is when the interest of the entire community is at stake, the larger the number of persons to be involved in the deliberation. Derkse observes that the corporate practice of consultation appears to be just the reverse: fewer persons are involved to the extent that the matter is more important, often not more than the management team, the executive team or the CEO alone.

Second, the abbot says what matters. Derkse suggests that it is tempting for a superior \textit{not} to say what matters, and to leave it to someone of lower rank to make the point. Such a way of proceeding has two advantages, he says. The other person will take the blame if the point is not well taken. And it saves time for the CEO not to have to consider the matter carefully beforehand. Another tactic is to outline some vague contours of the matter, and to hope that the exchange of thoughts will be productive in some way. \textit{The Rule of St. Benedict} takes another view. The abbot must consider whether a matter is important enough to call the entire community

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item W. Derkse, \textit{Een levensregel voor beginners}, p. 55-57
\item The Holy Rule of St. Benedict, chapter 3
\end{thebibliography}
together, and he must say what is the matter. What is important about it? What conditions are imposed on a solution? What ideas does he have himself?

Third, after having made his point, the abbot must listen. Derkse notices that it is not easy to open oneself to other people’s views and to be sensitive to their signals, both explicit and implicit. But the abbot has to discern which of these may bear weight in the decision-making process. It may be tempting to let everyone speak as a formal compliance with the requirement without being seriously interested and attentive to what other have to say. The Rule of St. Benedict wants the abbot to listen as seriously as a simple monk or novice.

Fourth and fifth, the abbot considers the matter and then he does what he judges the most efficient. The Latin phrase ‘tractet apud se’ that indicates the nature of this consideration marks that the consideration involves the abbot’s cognition as well as his heart. Having made up his mind, the most efficient solution is the one that contributes most to the growth and blossoming of the community. The exhortation to listen to the young monks underlines that the persons who are new to the community, unfamiliar with the habits and mores, are often in the best position to give advice.

Having explained these lessons for leadership, Derkse emphasises that the decision-making process under the Rule of St. Benedict is not democratic. The abbot must take personal responsibility for his decisions, and cannot hide behind a majority of votes or unawareness of alternative choices. The abbot is responsible for his decisions because he must respond to the situation. In this sense the abbot has a

333 W. Derkse, Een levensregel voor beginners, p. 57
334 K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 154. Italics by the author. The Catholic Encyclopedia draws attention to the dependency of the monks on the abbot to respond to the situation: "The chief point in which St. Benedict modified the pre-existing practice is his insistence upon the stabilitas loci. By the special Vow of Stability he unites the monk for life to the particular monastery in which his vows are made. This was really a new development and one of the highest importance. In the first place by this the last vestige of personal freedom was taken away from the monk. Secondly it secured in each monastery that continuity of theory and practice which is so essential for the family which St. Benedict desired above everything. The abbot was to be a father and the monk a child. Nor was he to be more capable of choosing a new father or a new home than any other child was. After all St. Benedict was a Roman, and the scion of a Roman patrician family, and he was simply bringing into the monastic life that absolute dependence of all the members of a family upon the father which is so typical of Roman law and usage. Only at the selection of a new abbot can the monks choose for themselves. Once elected the abbot's
function in the Benedictine Order which is comparable to the executive function in other organisations.

4.4. Ignatian spirituality

The Rule of St. Benedict did not suit the purpose of the Jesuit Order in so far as the first Jesuits wanted to follow Christ by rendering service to the Church, not by leading a monastic life. The deliberations of Ignatius and his first companions show that they were particularly apprehensive of taking a vow of obedience to one of them, because they might be compelled by the pope to live under a Rule which might interfere or even frustrate their commitment to apostolic work anywhere in the world. So, they decided to anticipate this expectation.

The Jesuit Order was established in the first half of the 17th century, at a time when new forms of apostolate were required in order to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The period from 1605 to 1650 was, in fact, one of the most troubled in the history of Europe. It was a time of urbanisation with a new way of life, increasing religious and cultural diversity, Enlightenment and secularisation. The changing social and religious landscape required organisational change. Transpersonal organisations were needed to meet the challenges of the modern world, which would allow for the transfer of individual persons and the composition of units to serve particular purposes. The first Jesuits responded to these needs.

Instead of an abbey with a greater or lesser number of monks under the authority of the abbot, the members of the Jesuit Order are organised in provinces and regions,

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power becomes absolute; there is nothing to control him except the Rule and his own conscience which is responsible for the salvation of every soul entrusted to his care.” (Catholic Encyclopedia. See http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10472a.htm. Consulted on 25 February 2011.


336 S. Toulmin, Cosmopolis: The hidden agenda of modernity (New York: The Free Press, 1990). Toulmin argues that the 17th century philosophy and science can be best understood as answers to the economic and religious crisis. The theological situation was far more oppressive in this period than it was in the middle of the 16th century. As a result, the humanistic concerns of the 15th and 16th centuries were overruled by the theoretical concerns of the 17th century philosophers.

337 Cf. K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 155
local communities and apostolates. \(^{338}\) In what follows I will explain the sense in which the rules of conduct they considered appropriate for their organisation stand in contrast to the *Rule of St. Benedict*. The point of this explanation will be to show that Ignatius faced the task of reconciling individual freedom with hierarchical order.

In order to appreciate the *Constitutions* of the Jesuit Order as a model for finding the 'law of the situation', two elements have to be addressed. The first element is key to the understanding of its life-giving spirit. Without this understanding the Constitutions are easily read as a dry legal code. \(^{339}\) This element regards knowledge of Ignatius' worldview. \(^{340}\) The second element regards the way of proceeding by the first Jesuits in deciding to form themselves in a new religious order. Without this historical background the Jesuit understanding of obedience will not be meaningful as an example of integration. In order to gain access to Ignatius' worldview, paragraph 4.4.1 describes his spiritual development. Paragraph 4.4.2 describes his worldview. Paragraph 4.4.3 describes the way of proceeding of the first Jesuits. These two elements provide the basis for the understanding of obedience in the Jesuit Order, which will be described in paragraph 4.4.4.

4.4.1. Ignatius' spiritual development\(^{341}\)

The Jesuit Order draws on the mystic experience of Ignatius of Loyola which started with a crisis in his life. In an attempt in 1521 to defend the Spanish border fortress of Pamplona against the French artillery, his right leg is shattered by a cannon ball. His French captors, impressed by Ignatius' courage, carried him on a litter across northern Spain to his family home in the village of Azpeitia where he began a long period of convalescence. During his convalescence Ignatius loses his orientation in life. His ideal as an *hidalgo* (knight) in the service of the royal court is shattered, and

\(^{338}\) All members of the Society of Jesus, even though dispersed in various local communities and ascribed to individual provinces and regions, are inserted directly and primarily into the single apostolic body and community of the whole Society. (Complementary Norms, Part VII, Chapter 3, No. 255)


\(^{341}\) I am indebted to a lecture by W. de Mahieu in the Jesuit residence in Bruges, Belgium on 23 March 2007. Unpublished.
his dreams about the future are taken away from him. He would prefer to die.\footnote{P. de Blot, \textit{Vernieuwing van organisaties}, p. 219} However, as De Blot says, in this lowest point in his life he will embrace new ideals. The crisis is the end of a career but also the beginning of a new adventure.

Ignatius recovers slowly after a long process of confusion, despair and despondency in which light is shed upon the remains of his knightly dream.\footnote{P. de Blot, \textit{Vernieuwing van organisaties}, p. 140} In \textit{A Pilgrim's Testament} Ignatius provides an account of the process that he describes as a process of conversion.\footnote{\textit{A Pilgrim's Testament} was dictated by Ignatius to his secretary, Luis Goncalves da Câmara. It is considered as his autobiography.} In his account three stages are distinguished, which are often entangled: inner emptiness, inner confusion, and inner certainty. The first stage begins with the confrontation of loss. Loss of his ideals and dreams, he experiences his life as empty and meaningless. This stage is marked by feelings of guilt and boredom. Ignatius fills the time with dreams and fantasies. In his Autobiography he says that he had fantasies, sometimes about serving the Spanish court and at other times about serving Christ. He must have been a man with great imagination. While the dreams and fantasies leave him confused, he does observe his inner life with great attention. In order to find diversion during the long hours of recovery, Ignatius had asked for romances of chivalry, his favourite reading. But there were none in the castle, and instead they brought him the Spanish translation of the Life of Christ and a book on the lives of the saints.\footnote{\textit{A Pilgrim's Testament}, par. 5} This reading marks the second stage. He says he was easily swept away by these books for hours. They made him dream about the great things he would do for Christ. He was dreaming likewise about the great things he would do in the service of the Spanish crown. His dreams and fantasies left him confused. De Blot says that it was as if two 'spirits' are struggling with each other in Ignatius.\footnote{P. de Blot, \textit{Vernieuwing van organisaties}, p. 141-142} At first everything seems to be unrelated but after some time he begins to see a wonderful order in the confusing movement of his moods. He noticed that the dreams about his service to the royal court made him happy for a while but he was left with a sense of emptiness. The dreams about his service to Christ made him happy too and left him satisfied and cheerful. This stage of the conversion process is marked by introspection.
Finally, he arrives at an unexpected insight. The consolation and desolation after the alternate fantasies appeared to be of fundamental value as a criterion of certainty on which decisions can be based. He discovers that the key guide to sensing the ‘rightness’ of direction is attention to what he called ‘consolation’ and ‘desolation’. In the *Spiritual Exercises* he explains that a directional sense of correctness is suggested by a sense of increased freedom, inner peace, a sense of an increased capacity of goodness following prayer and action. If, by contrast, there is agitation, anxiety, fear, a diminishment of peace, there is desolation. In the Ignatian tradition, paying attention to these inner affective movements is important for decision-making. De Mahieu explains why this so important.

By giving attention to our feels in this way, and to our emotional reaction in certain situations, Ignatian spirituality stands in stark contrast to certain current forms of spirituality and prayer, which predominantly draw from the East. These [philosophies] emphasise the importance of becoming silent, ‘silencing’ your feelings. You are asked to abandon everything, and the emptiness is filled by fixing one’s gaze on something outside: a mantra or a short prayer. This is called apophatic spirituality as opposed to cataphatic spirituality. Ignatius spirituality – and the prayer that expresses it – is essentially oriented towards life, towards all that we do and leave to do, everything that concerns us in our daily life.

The insight into his feelings leads Ignatius to a twofold conclusion. First, God works directly with him. Ignatius assumes that God makes himself known through his feelings. He does not only speak to the reason, but to the ‘whole’ person. From the human perspective, in the search of what really matters to us and in making the best choice, both reason and feelings are important. Second, the emotional world has different layers. Some feelings are superficial, changeable and unstable – similar to shallow waters. These feelings can be misleading. But there are also deeper feelings with greater constancy – similar to an undercurrent in the ocean. In their constancy they can provide an indication of what is good for us, even when the superficial feelings point in a different direction. This stage is marked by discernment.

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348 ibid. See also *Spiritual Exercises*, 176.
349 Again, I am indebted to Wauthier de Mahieu for this explanation. See footnote 340.
The certainty at which Ignatius arrived with regard to his alternate fantasies brought about a conversion. His longings were transformed into a decision. Ignatius’ conversion led him, not to give up the ideal of service, but to find a new ‘Lord’. He decided to put himself at the service of Christ. At first he had in mind to serve Christ in a way that was rather worldly – not to say belligerent and competitive. “St. Francis did this, therefore I have to do it!” But he changed his mind, and arrived at a different understanding of service, which was to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The most obvious way appeared to him to leave Spain for Palestine.

De Blot observes that Ignatius is freed of the burden of his past, but he is still tormented by unrest, despair and anxiety. His inner certainty, his strong desire to serve and his reason are not sufficient to guide his action. Ignatius realises that he is often at a loss, and requires the help of others. He needs an external point of support in whatever form. De Mahieu says that Ignatius demonstrates a strong growth in the way of taking recourse to an external point of support, an objective criterion for decision-making. At first, he let his decision depend on chance; later he asked for the judgment of persons who knew him such as a spiritual counsellor. But these points of support did not suffice when he was confronted with the reality of externally imposed limitations. De Mahieu gives the example of Ignatius embarking on the ship that would take him from Barcelona to Palestine. He wanted to travel without money and food, depending only on God. The captain, however, insisted on his taking some biscuits on board. Ignatius would submit to this demand. Likewise, when Ignatius was expelled from Palestine by the Franciscan authorities upon his arrival, he would submit to their authority. He will return to Spain, where he leads an itinerant life. When he repeatedly clashes with the ecclesial authorities, he decides to study in order to become less vulnerable to the suspicions of the Inquisition. De Mahieu says that Ignatius built objective criteria into his decision-making by submitting to them to the extent that they are related to God. This will become an important element in the Jesuit understanding of obedience.

Ignatius’ process of conversion is the basis of his Spiritual Exercises, which are a characteristic element of Ignatian spirituality. They create a process through which a

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350 A Pilgrim's Testament, par. 7
351 P. de Blot, Vernieuwing van organisaties, p. 145
352 A Pilgrim's Testament, par. 36
person changes his or her behaviour. In order to guide others in these exercises, Ignatius had a sheaf of notes, which was expanding through his experience and study. In 1548 this became a published book, the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatius probably knew the word ‘exercises’ through the *Exercitior de la vida espiritual* of the abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat, who copied many texts from the movement of the Modern Devotion. The Spiritual Exercises consist of meditations which make use of imagination, memory, intelligence, will and desire. De Blot characterises the method of the Spiritual Exercises as a narrative learning method, because of the evocative power of the stories which are an integral part of the meditations. He describes it as an experiential program involving experiments with inner forces.

The *Spiritual Exercises* can be considered as a powerful instrument for learning to listen. Ignatius attaches importance to listening, because in order for someone to be able to learn he or she has to learn to listen with one’s ears, one’s heart and one’s soul. The exercises focus on thoughts, feelings, values and action. The link between experience and action is actualised through reflection. Someone who exercises him- or herself to find inner certainty is better able to exercise one’s power of choice.

In this respect the attitude towards the changing world which is developed by the Spiritual Exercises stands in complete opposition to prediction. Ignatius emphasises that care must be taken of the interior gifts in order to make more effective use of

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354 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 178
355 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 173
356 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 175
358 In the management literature, André Delbecq says that discernment of the internal movements is about freedom, freedom to be the best one can possibly be. See A. Delbecq, E. Liebert, J. Mostyn, P. Nutt and G. Walter, *Discernment and Strategic Decision Making: Reflections for a Spirituality of Organizational Leadership*, ed. M.L. Pava, *Spiritual Intelligence at Work* (Amsterdam/London: Elsevier, 2004), p. 149
De Blot gives an example of the importance of attending to the interior gifts: *How do you know that you have listened well? – The answer is simple: you experience consolation.* This attitude contributes substantially to developing sensitivity to pressures from the outside world, and how those pressures are changing. Ignatius uses the Spanish word *sentir*, which has rich connotations with regard to the inner life. In English it is usually translated as ‘inner feeling and tasting’.

The ideal of greater service, which was engrained in his formation as an *hidalgo* will be the star that guides the steps of Ignatius for the rest of his life, starting as a pilgrim, then as a student, and later as the founder and the first General Superior of the Jesuit Order.

### 4.4.2. The vision

Sometime after his conversion, when Ignatius was freed of the burden of his past, but still tormented by unrest, despair and anxiety, he received an extraordinary grace. De Blot says that the process of conversion did not stop with Ignatius’ recovery but continued throughout his life. It is a journey of discovery, physically as well as spiritually. Ignatius will find his way from Loyola to Palestine as a pilgrim. In the Catalonian village of Manresa, not far from the Benedictine abbey of Montserrat, he finds consolation in an insight which strikes him while musing by the *Cardoner* river. In *A Pilgrim's Testament* he describes this experience as ‘understanding many things and obtaining knowledge, in spiritual matters as well as in faith and science’. It was an existential experience. Jacques Lewis suggests that Ignatius drew from this experience a practical wisdom, a general sense of the relationship between God and men and the integration of the divine and the human. Ignatius learned in one comprehensive view how to understand the world and how to act on it. Jeronimo Nadal, who had been charged by Ignatius with the implementation of the

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359 *Constitutions*, 813  
360 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 176  
361 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 144  
362 *A Pilgrim's Testament*, no. 30  
363 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 145  
364 J. Lewis, ‘Le Gouvernement Spirituel’, p. 103-104  
Constitutions, described the experience at the Cardoner river as an architectural vision.\textsuperscript{366}

The Ignatian worldview was illustrated in a fresco representing the Biblical story of the Annunciation.\textsuperscript{367} It showed not only Mary and the angel, but it depicted the whole inspiring panorama which Ignatius presented in the contemplation of the incarnation: the Trinity, all of creation and mankind, with Mary and her fiat in the centre.\textsuperscript{368} The fresco used to be found in the church of the Roman College at the Piazza S. Ignazio, but it was demolished in 1626 to make room for the present church of S. Ignazio. Only the detail of Mary was conserved. Isolated and taken out of the wider perspective of salvation history, it is now known as the Madonna of the Prima Primaria.\textsuperscript{369}


\textsuperscript{367} The story of the Annunciation is rendered in Luke 1, 26-38

\textsuperscript{368} \textit{Spiritual Exercises}, 101-109

The original fresco illustrates Ignatius’ vision. In the thought of Ignatius, the Holy Spirit acts directly in every individual soul. But he interprets this action within a hierarchical framework.\(^{370}\) The insight of the Cardoner showed him that spiritual reality starts from above and that the world as a whole is its object. It is a vision that starts from God, and ends not in a swarm of individual entities but in a hierarchically organised body.\(^{371}\) Ignatius was convinced that God is not absent from this world and that his active presence is always working and filling the whole universe. We can only discover this by means of a vision of faith and with eyes of love. In all things God makes himself known but it is necessary to be sensitive to his presence. To be contemplative is precisely to have this capacity to see all things in the light of faith.

Following this vision, the *Constitutions* are in fact the application of Ignatius’ worldview to the government of an apostolic religious order.\(^{372}\) There is a single chain from the experience of discernment of spirits to the *Spiritual Exercises* to the *Constitutions*, which explains Ignatius’ view on spiritual government. In his comment on the vision that Ignatius received at the Cardoner Lewis says that Ignatius probably wanted to realise his ‘organic’ vision of the universe, on a reduced scale, in the religious order that he founded.\(^{373}\) De Blot appears to concord with this interpretation of Ignatius vision when he suggests that Ignatius saw in his mind the architecture of his organisation as in a blueprint.\(^{374}\) Understood in this way, as the architecture of an organisation, the *Constitutions* show the importance of a worldview for the governance of organisations. In the following paragraph I will show what we can learn, moreover, from the way of proceeding of the first Jesuits.

### 4.4.3. The governance of the Jesuit Order

In applying Ignatius’ vision to the government of the Jesuit Order, two distinct elements had to be reconciled: the inspiration of the individual members on the one hand and the hierarchical order on the other. In this paragraph I will show the place

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\(^{370}\) J. Lewis, ‘Le Gouvernement Spirituel’, p. 119  
\(^{371}\) J. Lewis, ‘Le Gouvernement Spirituel’, p. 115  
\(^{373}\) J. Lewis, ‘Le Gouvernement Spirituel’, p. 119  
\(^{374}\) P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 144
of individual inspiration in the governance of the Jesuit Order. In the following paragraph I will show how individual inspiration and hierarchical order are reconciled. The process of reconciliation starts with Ignatius’ repeated troubles with the Spanish Inquisition.

From his frequent harassment by the Inquisition, Ignatius learnt that apostolic service requires knowledge of doctrine. Therefore he decided to leave for Paris, where he took up his studies in the humanities and philosophy. He considered Paris (with its practical approach to human concerns) to be the best academic environment in the Western world as opposed to the universities in Spain with their theoretical approach. Ignatius lived his ideal with so much purity and intensity that it could not fail to become contagious. During his studies Ignatius is appointed as the mentor of a fellow student, Pierre Favre, who feels attracted to his ideas. Ignatius succeeds in winning some other students for his *Spiritual Exercises* as well. The group finally consists of seven members, including Ignatius. In spite of their differences of age, nationality and temperament, they develop a strong bond, and decide to remain together as friends in order to dedicate themselves to the welfare of the world. The men agree on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In case they would be refused permission to remain in Jerusalem their alternative is to go to Rome to offer their services to the pope, who could oversee from his position where their services were most needed. They were to meet in Venice for the journey to Palestine. Three other men were going to join them, at the invitation of Pierre Favre. They spent a year in Venice without finding an opportunity to embark, so they decided to go to Rome.

In Rome they dedicate themselves to the care of the poor. They receive recognition for their work, and are increasingly demanded to render services. When the kings of Spain and Portugal ask for their services the question arises how they can remain together and at the same time spread around the world. The group came together to deliberate on this question, as they were used to in all matters that regarded them together. The deliberation took three months. They didn’t want to put their normal work aside, so they only came together in the evening hours in a prayerful atmosphere. They followed a strict procedure, based on the discernment of their interior movements according to the *Spiritual Exercises*. They finally agreed that they

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375 De Blot compares the function of the pope to the function of the United Nations in our time.
would live under obedience in order to remain together while being at the worldwide service for the more urgent and universal human needs.

Their affirmative decision led them to seek papal approval to live under their own Rule, rather than one of the four Rules which were imposed by the 4th Council of Lateran in 1214 and the Council of Lyons in 1274. Therefore they incorporated their pattern of life into a first sketch of their own Rule, which is known as the Institute of the Society of Jesus or the Formula of the Institute. They submitted this document to the pope, who approved it with minor changes. The Formula of the Institute is the Jesuit Order’s fundamental inspiration and code, comparable to the Rule of St. Benedict. As one of Ignatius’ contemporaries remarks, they contain the essence of the Jesuit way of life, that essence which other Orders call the Rule. The Formula of the Institute establishes the fundamental structure of the Jesuit Order and authorises its general superior to establish, with advice from his companions, more detailed statutes. Within a few years, Ignatius was working on the detailed statutes, which are comprised of four volumes and known as the Constitutions. Just as the Formula of the Institute contains the essence of the Jesuit way of life, the Constitutions describe the way of proceeding with practical matters. Thus the Constitutions describe how candidates for the Jesuit Order are questioned and informed; how new members are incorporated, tested and, eventually, dismissed; how the members who are retained are involved in the corporate mission, and how

376 The mission of the Jesuit Order is to serve. The precise location and the ‘business’ are open to the changing world. Flexibility was of the highest importance to the first Jesuits. Over time the Jesuit Order has had ‘business’ with the reformation of the Roman Catholic Church, with evangelisation, colonisation and de-colonisation, refugees, theology, education, research, assistance to diocesan priests, and so on.

377 Both Councils sought to prevent a multiplication of religious institutes and required future founders of religious institutes to adopt one of four Rules, i.e. the Rule of St. Basil, the Rule St. Augustine, the Rule of St. Benedict or the Rule of St. Francis. As I explained before, none of these Rules suited the missionary spirit of St. Ignatius and his companions.

378 G.E. Ganss, ‘The Life-Giving Spirit within St. Ignatius’ Constitutions‘, p. 21
379 G.E. Ganss, ‘Technical Introduction on the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus‘, p. 45. The Formula of the Institute is the legal foundation of the Jesuit Order, which was approved first by Pope Paul III in 1540 and, in slightly revised form, by Pope Julius III in 1550.
380 Exhortationes, I, 1, no. 5, cited in G.E. Ganss, p. 45
382 The volumes are: the General Examen, the Declarations on the Examen, the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and the Declaration on the Constitutions. In this study, following Ganss, the word Constitutions (in italics) refers to the four treatises together.
383 Ganss emphasises that Ignatius did not write in logical order, setting forth the end and then treating the means to attain it. Instead he treats step by step the means to attain the end, and then sets forth the end or finished product as a kind of résumé. See G.E. Ganss, ‘Technical Introduction on the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus‘, p. 37
they are helped to maintain their unity. The process of incorporation, for example, includes so-called ‘experiments’, which provide for a number of existential experiences through serving the sick and dying, teaching the uneducated, and the acceptance of simple and humble tasks. These experiences help to unmask the illusions of wealth and power. De Blot emphasises the importance of the existential foundation of the Constitutions. The Constitutions are summed up as ‘our way of proceeding’.384

In writing the Constitutions, Ignatius is concerned to transmit his own experience of decision-making to the Jesuit Order. Ignatius was well aware that every new generation has to take decisions whereby the best choice is made in a world which is continually changing. He did not state any purpose for the Jesuit Order other than to serve. Thus the Constitutions share Follett’s notion of evolving purpose. The Constitutions are principally open to adaptation, change and renewal.385 De Blot emphasises that both the legal structure and the principal adaptability are to be considered as constitutive elements of the organisation, and both elements must be viewed together in order to understand the governance of the Jesuit Order. What we can learn from the Constitutions in terms of finding the ‘law of the situation’ is explained by the motive of Ignatian spirituality: the concern to take decisions whereby the best choice is made, objectively and subjectively.386 In the Constitutions we read the way of proceeding which Ignatius and his companions found suitable for making the best choice in the process of decision-making.

384 P. de Blot, Vernieuwing van organisaties, p. 228 See also W. Lambert, Aus Liebe zur Wirklichkeit (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1991), p. 169
385 P. de Blot, Vernieuwing van organisaties, p 230. De Blot views the Constitutions as an open window towards the future rather than the conclusion of a deliberation. The Complementary Norms which have been added by the 34th General Congregation do not put an end to the deliberation either. (See De Jaer) On the other hand Ganss remarks that chapter X of the Constitutions presents the finished product or fully constituted Society. (G.E. Ganss, p. 331, footnote 1) Ignatius formulates the purpose of the Constitutions as ‘preservation and development’ of the Society as a whole and also its individual members. (Constitutions, 136) In Ganss’s words, this is the basic formula which opens the window towards the future. Ignatius emphasizes that ‘the Constitutions [...] treat of matters which are unchangeable and ought to be observed universally; but they must be supplemented by some other ordinances which can be adapted to the times, places, and persons in different houses, colleges, and employments of the Society [...].’ (Constitutions, 136)
386 De Mahieu says that the concern to take decisions whereby the best choice is made is the main motive of Ignatian spirituality, because it is the motive in the life of Ignatius. Ganss remarks that writing the Constitutions was Ignatius’ main occupation from 1547 until his death in 1556. See G.E. Ganss, ‘Technical Introduction on the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus’, p. 21
The dominant feature of the Jesuit Order’s way of proceeding is discernment, both individual and in common. De Blot remarks that the search for alternatives, priorities, the better choice, and weighing of pros and cons in all important views on the matter of choice belong to the core of the governance code. For Ignatius facts are not self-evident; their value depends on how they are evaluated. For this reason they are subject to discernment. But discernment is only a feature of the way of proceeding. The way of proceeding in planning, executing and redirecting the Jesuit Order’s mission is also marked by deliberation, which Ignatius referred to in the *Formula of the Institute*. In the following paragraph we will see how deliberation serves as a method to find the ‘law of the situation’.

### 4.4.4. Obedience

In the Jesuit Order, deliberation is not only a way to show that the opinion of individual members is valued and to gain support for executive decisions – it is a way to make the best choice in matters that concern all. I will show that the understanding of obedience plays a key role in the deliberation. In the genesis of the *Constitutions*, deliberation comes before obedience. In fact, the deliberation of the first Jesuits shows that obedience to a superior was far from evident. They wanted to obey to one of them in order to be able to remain united while being dispersed around the world, not to remain in a monastery. Underlying the deliberation was the vision. The problem was how to reconcile two distinct elements in the vision: the inspiration of the individual members of the community and the hierarchical order.

Deliberation is therefore a cornerstone of the Rule of the Jesuit Order, which differentiates it from any other Order in the Roman Catholic Church. The importance of deliberation as a distinctive feature of Ignatian spirituality appears to be often ignored.

Obedience in the Jesuit Order has a twofold character. On the one hand every member of the Jesuit Order owes obedience to his superior; on the other hand it is also required to the pope. In this investigation we are concerned only with the vow of obedience to the superior. Obedience to the superior and to the pope should not be understood as a single line of authority. Much of the misunderstanding has been due to the assumption that Ignatius gave the highest authority to the pope as vicar of Christ. De Blot explains that Ignatius had functional rather than dogmatic arguments for the twofold obedience. Ignatius wanted the Order to be available for any mission wherever in the world. The pope could provide for an external point of support in making choices with regard to the mission. For a more extensive discussion of the vow of obedience to the pope, see P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 158-166.

J. Lewis, ‘Le Gouvernement Spirituel’, p. 7-8. Lewis describes the problem in the introduction to his book on spiritual government: “… we attempt to establish that, in Ignatius’ thinking, the role of the superior is to permit the action of the Holy Spirit in the community. […] In fact, within
Ignatius views the Holy Spirit as acting directly on all the members of the community. On the other hand, he views the hierarchical church as the body being directed by the Holy Spirit. The hierarchical conception of government was as dear to Ignatius as his respect for the divine action of souls. This vision (rather than the traditional authority of the Benedictine abbot) would determine their understanding of obedience.

Both Lewis and Knauer draw attention to the fact that Ignatius compared his hierarchical conception of the universe with the hierarchical order that he saw in well-organised societies. But unlike the hierarchical order in civil society in Ignatius’ time, Knauer says, the superior in the Jesuit Order is not conceived as an authoritarian ruler. Lewis, who wrote 50 years earlier, is less outspoken in this respect but he underlines as well that Ignatius insisted on the freedom of subjugated superiors to govern in their own sphere. In any case, Ignatius resisted a tendency towards centralisation. Both Lewis and Knauer built their argument on Goncalves da Câmara’s observation of how Ignatius governed the Jesuit Order. Goncalves da Câmara was Ignatius’ personal secretary, and he testifies that Ignatius wanted the provincial superiors to have the greatest possible freedom in their decisions, and they should not take such freedom from their subjugated superiors.

Knauer explains that Ignatius attaches more importance to consultation with the superior than to simply observing rules, because the latter would only hollow out the freedom of the superiors. He gives two reasons, referring again to Goncalves da Câmara in the Constitutions (719). The divine Spirit operates in two apparently opposed directions. On the one hand, she expresses herself through the institution, for example in its constitutions, its commitments to fulfill its purpose, the instructions given by the Church; on the other hand, the same Spirit reveals her designs through the personal inspiration of the members who form a religious organism. Translated by author.

Spiritual Exercises, 15. See also J. Lewis, ‘Le Gouvernement Spirituel’, p. 18 and 112.

This is because the ideal of the hidalgo (knight) in the service of a royal court remained an important source of inspiration to Ignacio throughout his life. His conception of hierarchy thus involves a sense of loyalty – not just naked power. (See par. 4.4.1.) This ideal will also inform his understanding of obedience.

Lewis refers to the letter on obedience (Epistolae Natalis IV, p. 680) and Knauer to the Constitutions (719).

P. Knauer, ‘Hoe de jezuïetenorde bestuurd wordt’, p. 45

J. Lewis, ‘Le Gouvernement Spirituel’, p. 81


L. Goncalves da Câmara, Memoriale, 20. Cited in P. Knauer, 42. See also J. Lewis on Ignatius’ way of giving directions, p. 29

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Cámara. First, Ignatius understood that there are no general rules to resolve moral matters. Second, centralisation may lead to lessened obedience, which Ignatius regarded as a principle of control. \[397\] The second reason provides a particular insight into Ignatius’ sensitivity about external power in human relations.

When one imposes limitations on the provincial and takes from him what belongs to his function, he will jump on the rector’s function, and the rector will jump on the minister’s function, and so on, which largely interrupts the system of control which the Holy Spirit bestowed upon our blessed Father. \[398\]

Ignatius wanted more space for the initiative and the judgment of individual Jesuits in their various activities, without endangering the unity of the Jesuit Order as a whole. Therefore he aimed at the greatest possible freedom for the subjugated superiors and so on down the hierarchy. The governance structure stands under a simple principle: that every individual has the power to promote the good, but everyone has to submit if he or she does anything wrong. \[399\] This principle is operational in the deliberation. At all levels of the organisation the characteristic way of proceeding is to discuss the problems which the members have among them. Ignatius did not consider a full hour of mutual sharing each day as a waste of time, but rather as gain of time.

Every evening we shall spend an hour to share with each other what has been done that day and the objectives for the following day. [...] Every evening one of us will ask the others to correct him in everything that seems fit to them. The one who is thus corrected shall not answer, unless one instructs him to account for the matter. The next evening the second one will do the same, and each of us in turn, in order for everyone to be supported for greater love and a perfume for everyone. \[400\]

\[397\] In the context of Ignatian spirituality the word ‘control’ refers to the influence of the Holy Spirit.
\[399\] “In addition to the choice of the superior general and the subjugated superiors, it is also highly important that the individual superiors should have much authority over the subjects, and the general over the individual superiors; and, on the other hand, that the Society have much authority over the general [...] This arrangement is made that all may have full power for good and that, if they do poorly, they may be kept under complete control.” (Constitutions, 820, 4 edited by author). Quoted in P. Knauer, ‘Hoe de jezuïetenorde bestuurd wordt’, p. 47.
\[400\] Letter to the Jesuits who were sent as advisors to the Council of Trent. Quoted in P. Knauer, ‘Hoe de jezuïetenorde bestuurd wordt’, p. 46. Translation by the author.
When understood in this way, obedience allows to strengthen authority at the lower levels of the Jesuit Order. De Jaer speaks of obedience as an ‘opportunity’, no doubt to set it off against the idea of centralisation of power. The opportunity is to liberate oneself from dreams and uncertainties and to find inner freedom. Thereby he puts human concerns on the foreground.

The more we are involved with the reality of human concerns, the more the opportunity of obedience ensures that we will be led by the good spirit.

This provides a particular insight into Ignatius’ sensitivity about the treacherous currents of the internal world. De Jaer emphasises that such a missionary obedience requires a long period of preparation. In the way of proceeding with the incorporation of new members, Ignatius has incorporated the ascetic and monastic understanding of obedience.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter we have pursued an understanding of workplace spirituality which takes the lead from Mary Parker Follet’s concept of integration. She suggested that integration is the method by which we can discover the law of the situation. Her philosophy is ‘that we shall always be seeking an external, and arbitrary authority until we learn to direct our efforts toward seeking – the law of the situation’. We have looked at the Ignatian understanding of spirituality to gain an insight in the various activities involved in discovering the law of the situation. In pursuing this insight, this chapter has taken an ‘insider perspective’ of spirituality by drawing on the experience of the first Jesuits while trying to determine how to organise and govern themselves in accordance with their overall goal.

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401 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 367. De Blot remarks that there are diverging opinions as to the way of obedience in the Jesuit Order is to be viewed. The history of the Jesuit Order also shows periods where a hierarchical interpretation of obedience predominated. However, these tendencies have always been reversed by referring to the *Constitutions*.


403 M.P. Follett, *Dynamic Administration*, p. 112
Ignatius was as sensitive about external power in human relations as Follett. And, like Follett, he was concerned with making the best choice in situations. In writing the *Constitutions*, Ignatius was well aware that every new generation has to take decisions whereby the best choice is made in a world that is continually changing. He was concerned to transmit his own experience of decision-making to the Jesuit Order. The search for alternatives, priorities, the better choice, and weighing of pros and cons in important views on the matter of decision-making belong to the core of the *Constitutions*. Therefore the *Constitutions* emphasise the organisation in process. Ignatius did not state any purpose for the Jesuit Order other than to serve. Thus the *Constitutions* can be read in the light of Follett’s notion of evolving purpose.

The Ignatian understanding of obedience is central to the concept of integration in Follett’s sense. For this reason the *Constitutions* have been contrasted with the *Rule of St. Benedict*. The Ignatian understanding of obedience is no different from the Benedictine understanding in that all members are required to listen to one another, to other people, to situations, to whatever presents itself in the organisation. Obedience is essentially concerned with seeking the best response to the situation – by listening to whatever is present in the situation. The Benedictine understanding of obedience, however, emphasises the responsibility of the abbot to respond. The *Rule of St. Benedict* has been put forward as an example of leadership by drawing attention to the importance of listening in order to respond to the situation. In this sense the abbot’s function is comparable to the executive function. In contrast, the Ignatian understanding of obedience is specifically concerned with arriving at the best decision in the situation at hand.

Ignatius is aware that the superior is unable to oversee the details in every situation. Ignatius himself always aimed at the greatest possible freedom for the subjugated superiors and so on down the hierarchy. He wanted more space for the initiative and the judgment of individual Jesuits in their various activities, while being aware that top-down power is most adapted to decision-making under time pressure. For Ignatius, obedience was not about centralisation of power but about strengthening authority at the lower levels of the Jesuit Order.

In this connection it may be recalled that Follett used the example of the cook to explain the law of the situation (3.6). Ignatius used the same example to explain his
view on obedience: he insisted that everyone who works in the kitchen, or is related to it, is required to listen to the cook even if he has a higher rank.\textsuperscript{404} The Ignatian understanding of obedience takes the importance of hierarchy into account as much as individual freedom. This is explained by Ignatius’ worldview. His vision at the Cardoner river starts from God, and ends not in a swarm of individual entities but in a hierarchically organised body. Two distinct elements had to be reconciled: the inspiration of the individual members of the community and the hierarchical order. In line with this vision, the architecture of the Jesuit Order is not based on top-level decision-making in a strongly disciplined hierarchy. The Ignatian understanding of obedience highlights the relationship or activity going on between the people who are involved in the situation.

Follett suggests that the degree of control over a certain situation in the process will depend partly on how far you can successfully unite the ideas of all the people involved in the situation. She considered reciprocal activity as the key control mechanism. The mechanism that Ignatius adheres to is deliberation. Through deliberation he ensures that the Jesuit Order is so organised that every member can influence all the others. The governance structure of the Jesuit Order stands under a simple principle: that every individual has the power to promote the good, but everyone has to submit if he does anything wrong. The creation of power is understood as a dialectical relation between unity and freedom. The governance code of the Jesuit Order thus reflects Follett’s idea that unities are determined not only by their constituent parts but by the relation of these parts to one another as well as the relation of whole and parts.

The \textit{Constitutions} are summarised as a way of proceeding. We have seen that the way of proceeding is characterised by deliberation, which ensures that joint power is generated. This does not explain in itself how one arrives at the best decision in the situation at hand. Decision-making presupposes that the situation is assessed in one way or another. In the Jesuit Order this is achieved through discernment. For Ignatius facts are not self-evident; their value depends on how they are evaluated. In the search of what really matters to us and in making the best choice, Ignatian spirituality considers both reason and feelings important. The Spiritual Exercises are the way to

\textsuperscript{404} \textit{Constitutions}, 84-85
assess the various aspects of the external world in order to make the best choice in the situation. This practice of discernment engages thoughts, feelings, values, and action. It can only be learned by doing them, that is, as lived spirituality. In the next chapter we shall be concerned with the question whether discernment can be learned (as part of the way of proceeding in workplace spirituality) without subscribing to the Ignatian worldview.
5. Towards an organisational spirituality

5.1. Introduction

Our approach of workplace spirituality has circled around the way that human concerns are handled in the discipline of management. We started by taking an insider view of management. Arie de Geus, who represented this view in chapter 2, found learning important as a way to handle change, as opposed to prediction. He observed that it was not difficult to talk about a learning organisation in the executive boardroom, and about the reduced powers of learning resulting from an economic definition of success. On the other hand talking about decision-making as learning was off-limits. The work of Collins and Porras on visionary organisations suggests that the ability to learn is bound up with a sense of identity. They said that the essence of a visionary company is the interplay between core and progress. But they felt that managers missed their message because they confuse ‘core ideology’ and ‘strategy’. De Geus had a similar feeling when he talked about decision-making as learning. His message was that there is no need to build a learning organisation; you already have one. He felt that managers missed his message because their leadership depends on ‘knowing’.

The insider perspective on management thus provided an important insight: it is not sufficient for organisations to be attentive to changes in the outside world, they also need to be attentive to the movements going on internally. (2.6.) In other words, the organisational capacity to respond to the changing environment depends on how organisations understand themselves ‘from within’. In this connection we saw that organisations are constructed on the basis of ‘cultural models’. (1.8.) As Tennekes explains, the organisational culture provides knowledge about ‘reality’ and the best way to uncover the ‘real’ state of affairs, about the relation with the environment, about the value of work and the meaning of human efforts, and about the way that power and individual and group interests are handled.\(^{405}\) The cultural knowledge about ‘reality’, for example, prescribes whether the organisations puts its faith in experts to find out what the reality is or in discovering the reality through experience and open discussion. Likewise, the cultural knowledge about the value of work

\(^{405}\) J. Tennekes, *Organisatiecultuur*, p. 59-63
prescribes whether money, profit and return on investment are considered to be the ‘bottom line’ or these are merely means towards another horizon of concern. We have also seen that organisational culture implies the constraining reality of the ‘system’ as well as the dynamic process of intentional action. The insider perspective of management shows that the organisation’s identity (which includes its basic cultural assumptions and values) plays a key role in the way that the changing environment is ‘read’. Apparently managers find this difficult to understand. They are used to understanding decision-making as a deliberate process ‘from the outside in’ – which means to ‘read’ the situation the organisation finds itself in through an economic, political or other lens. Explanations for this limited perspective have been found in the theory of hermeneutics. For example, Johan Verstraeten explains the difficulty for managers to understand themselves ‘from within’ in terms of a ‘hermeneutic horizon’. As we saw before (1.4) Verstraeten suggests that instrumental reasoning often applied in managerial decision-making does not enable problem-solving in a changing environment because of its lacking capacity for ‘interpretation’. This capacity remains underdeveloped, according to Verstraeten, because of the dominance of “the one-dimensional language” which is used to assess the external world. He refers in particular to the language of economics, the language of ‘facts’ and ‘experts’, and the language of planning and control. In contrast, the capacity for interpretation is enhanced by relating directly to one’s experience of reality – the encounter with other people, nature, and one’s inner world. He therefore suggests that the language of spirituality, poetry and fiction are suitable for learning to view the external world in a different perspective than the one-dimensional language that dominates in management theory. Other explanations have been found in the theory on rational decision-making. According to Delbecq and others, this theory does not offer much help because it does not pay attention to

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406 J. Verstraeten, *Leiderschap met hart en ziel*, p. 11
407 In this connection, Verstraeten confides that he has been deeply influenced by the *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius* (J. Verstraeten, *Leiderschap met hart en ziel*, p. 9). His approach of the *Spiritual Exercises* is similar to De Blot’s (4.2.) Like De Blot, he views the *Spiritual Exercises* in relation to leadership. In chapter 4 we have seen, however, that Ignatius faced the task of reconciling the inspiration of the individual members and the hierarchical order. In this sense my focus is different from De Blot’s and Verstraeten’s focus on leadership.
Ignatius of Loyola himself, that we learn from their writings. Ignatius had learned the fragility and emptiness of ‘brute’ power from personal experience, an experience he never forgot. He translated this insight into a notion of leading his organisation as a daily apprenticeship of power. Therefore the Ignatian approach to the use of power will be explored in paragraph 5.2.

Next the focus will be on the Ignatian way of proceeding with decision-making. As we have seen, the main motive of Jesuit spirituality is concerned with adequate decision-making that integrates both objective and subjective points of view. The dominant feature of the Ignatian way of proceeding is ‘discernment’. Ignatian discernment draws on the experience of Ignatius when he had lost his orientation in life. Through introspection he arrived at the insight that both reason and feelings are important in the search of what really matters to us. Therefore the meaning of discernment for leading his organisation will be explored in paragraph 5.3.

Finally, in paragraph 5.4 the focus will be on Ignatian deliberation. Together with the insights drawn from Ignatian spirituality on power and discernment the result will be put together in a way of proceeding with decision-making in organisations.

5.2. Power

As we have seen, Ignatius was highly sensitive about external power in human relations. He showed this in the way of practicing leadership as General Superior of the Jesuit Order as well as in writing the Constitutions. In this connection De Blot says that Ignatius was confronted with the interior weakness of wealth and power in his own life and that he had learned to make a difference between ‘false’ and ‘authentic’ power. The event that made a deep impression on Ignatius in this connection was the fall from power of Juan Velásquez de Cuellar, contador mayor of the king of Spain and member of the highest court of justice. Before we turn to his understanding of power, however, it is important to first briefly consider Ignatius’

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409 A Pilgrim’s Testament: The Memoirs of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, ed. P. Divarkar (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources), par. 1
410 P. de Blot, Vernieuwing van organisaties, p. 127
views on governance and leadership and thus provide the context in which he understands the proper use of power.

As a young man Ignatius had spent his youth in the household of Velásquez, where he was taught classical languages, poetry and calligraphy, and learned to handle weapons, to dance, and to play music. He probably attended the Spanish court from time to time, and became familiar with the way of life at the royal court. In 1517, when Charles V assumes the Spanish crown, Velásquez de Cuellar was sacked. Ignatius has to leave his familiar environment at the age of 25, and takes service in the army of the viceroy of Navarra, who charges him with handling precarious political situations as a negotiator. The viceroy achieves a peace treaty in Navarra, but this does not last because the former king of Navarra attempts to regain power with the help of France. It is in the ensuing battle that Ignatius got his right leg shattered by a cannon ball, and, as we saw, had to find a new orientation in life.

The years that Ignatius lived in the household of the contador mayor nourished the ideal of the hidalgo. The foundations had already been laid before, in the family home, where everything spoke to him of service – the pursuits of his brothers, his family traditions, the service of the peasants as they worked and tilled the fields, the service of ‘loyal servants’ rendered by his own family to the royal court. The idea of service came as naturally to Ignatius as the air he breathed. His concept of service was a knightly one that included honour, fidelity, courage and the desire for glory. The ideal of the hidalgo remained an important source of inspiration to Ignatius throughout his life.

This biographical background explains why service came to be a key element in Ignatius’ understanding of leadership and governance. As his vision at the Cardoner river indicates, the context of leadership as he saw it was a world of chaos and corruption. Accordingly, in the Spiritual Exercises, new members of the Jesuit Order are made familiar with the destructive forces in the world.\textsuperscript{411} These forces are represented by the image of the Enemy of the King. To explain this move, De Blot points out that Ignatius draws his ideal of leadership from the image of the King in the

\textsuperscript{411} Spiritual Exercises, 138-139, 142, 146
Christian tradition that he took as his key to transformative leadership. Thus the *Spiritual Exercises* contrast the Enemy’s strategy with that of the King. The contrast between these two characters serves to gain insight in the various deceptive ways that the Enemy is operating, and to understand the King’s strategy as the foundation for the way of proceeding in the Jesuit Order. De Blot explains that the contrast between the King and the Enemy reflects the double face of leadership, that is, it is concerned with ‘achievement’ on the one hand and with ‘conversion’ on the other. The essential difference between the two is revealed in time of crisis. Only transformational leadership is capable of turning crisis into regeneration. But it is only achieved by overcoming failure, the acknowledgement of which is therefore inherent to this transformation. This implies that transformation is an on-going process of working through failures, understood as the inability to prevent an organisation from running into crisis.

In De Blot’s account, this is where Ignatius’ experience may help. When managers are faced with a crisis, he says, they are losing their grip. Anticipating the possibility of being sacked they try everything in their power to maintain control. De Blot suggests, however, that in this situation managers have to relate to a crisis at an existential level. They need to be asking different questions: What am I doing? What do I want? Who am I? In looking for answers, they have to be aware of being related to others and to the entire network of life. In Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises* failure is not the end of an episode in life; it is the beginning of renewal. Ignatius did not back away from crisis, but let the pain into his heart, as De Blot puts this. This sense of reality requires humility. Ignatius took it as a fundamental attitude for organisational transformation and renewal, which according to De Blot implies the view that humility enables human beings to serve better. Including the notion of humility in his theory of management of organisations, De Blot points to the reality of human beings and the need of taking their weaknesses and limitations into account.

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412 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 199-200
413 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 200
414 De Blot emphasises that failure is an inherent part of renewal because it enables conversion.
415 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 186
416 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 190
417 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 248
418 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 348
The need for humility as the acknowledgement of one’s own weaknesses and limitations is bound up with the fact that managers sometimes find themselves with empty hands. In this connection we may think of what Pauchant said about a crisis bringing forth change. The crisis forces us to communicate with the hard and real issues in life, and thus to forget about quick fixes for a moment, which will only occur if we allow it. Humility enables one to be present in situations where one finds oneself empty-handed, when one has to accept things as they are. In terms of the Ignatian notion of obedience to what is present in the situation, humility enables to remain obedient in the confrontation with the reality one finds oneself in, including the reality of one’s own failure, rather than look the other way.

In view of this account of the place of ‘humility’ in management theory, it is interesting to note the suggestion found in De Geus and others, namely that the organisational principles which have been adopted in the course of the 20th century did have an impact on the self-understanding of managers, but it produced a very different self-image: ‘they can see themselves as the Marlboro cowboy, riding the corporation like a horse and steering it into the sunset’. Similarly, Margaret Benefiel notices that the ‘Lone Ranger’ mentality sits squarely against the wisdom of spiritual traditions. Spiritual teachers, she says, know that human beings need one another to flourish. These contrasting images are reflected in the concern with the physical and spiritual wellbeing of managers that we find in the literature on workplace spirituality.

Benefiel underlines that the typical business environment “does not help to form the soul – on the contrary it de-forms the soul”. In response to this need she has...
drawn attention to the role of spiritual care in leadership. Likewise, Mitroff and Denton’s *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America* signalled that managers feel the need to bring their “soul” to work.

Concern for the spiritual wellbeing of its leaders is also what we find in the *Constitutions* of the Jesuit Order, particularly with respect to the General Superior. As we already saw, Ignatius is acutely aware of the danger of corrupting power, for which he creates an internal safeguard. The General Congregation that elects the General Superior also elects four Assistants whose position enables them to keep an internal balance of power. Apart from this concern, however, Ignatius sees their task also within the process of transformation and renewal. Therefore the Assistants are charged with the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the General Superior, which is why obedience and humility are among the main virtues he considers necessary in the leadership of the Jesuit Order. Furthermore, to build in safeguards against abuse of power, the Order is familiar with so-called ‘experiments’ as part of the ongoing apprenticeship of power. These ‘experiments’ seek to install habits – such as humility – necessary in the unmasking of illusions of wealth and power. They include exercises in becoming familiar with the language of uneducated people, as well as the acceptance of simple and humble tasks. A sense of humility is therefore developed through all these experiments. In the literature on workplace spirituality the importance of such experiments has been recognised by Robert Ouimet, who is the CEO of a holding of food processing companies in Montreal, Canada. Ouimet lived through a personal crisis that changed his views on management. He came to the conclusion that external rules and regulations are not sufficient to respond to such weaknesses in economic life as fraud, poor governance, a de-humanising workplace and a growing gap between ‘super rich’ and ‘super poor’. As a CEO he found that he could do more to address human concerns in the workplace, and developed his views in his company as *Our Project*. Ouimet’s project entails a number of practices that can be viewed as equivalent to the Ignatian ‘experiments’

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426 I. Mitroff and E. Denton, *A Spiritual Audit*, p. xiv
427 P. de Blot, *Vernieuwing van organisaties*, p. 333
and are applicable in any organisation. Among the managerial practices that he suggests are the *Gesture* and the meeting with personnel following dismissal.

The *Gesture* is a way of sharing with and contributing to the surrounding community. The specific action can take various forms, such as serving meals to homeless people, working in a prison or hospital, or collecting clothes, toys and food for distribution to those in need. The *Gesture* is conducted in small groups. The participants are asked to spend thirty minutes, immediately after the *Gesture*, sharing their experience. Ouimet observes that such an experiment rapidly transform human relations in the workplace. As he says, they highlight such values as solidarity, human dignity, courage and humility. In contrast to companies that have adopted similar practices as part of their reputation management or with a view to team building, Ouimet refuses to give an external justification for the experiments which he has implemented in his company. He motivates the *Gesture*, as all other experiments, by referring to the inherent weaknesses of 'economic management'.

The meeting with personnel following dismissal regards each manager who has laid off personnel or has dismissed someone. In each case, the manager is required to meet with the person who has been dismissed at least twice in the six months following the person’s departure. As Ouimet testifies, most of the time the first meeting is very hard and tense. In the second meeting a different atmosphere is generally felt, one of reconciliation and of an authentic, humble and human relation. Ouimet observes that such meetings do not only provide moral and spiritual support to the former employees but also enable managers to grow morally, humanly and spiritually.

5.3. Discernment

Discernment is a human faculty that is related to judgment and the ability to make proper distinctions. For example, the way Ignatius arrived at the distinction between false and authentic power provides an example of discernment. Discernment has always played an important role in the tradition of Christian spirituality. Already early in that tradition, the desert monks attached primordial importance to discernment in order to avoid excesses in their ascetic lives. In his second conversation with abbot
Moses in the Egyptian desert, John Cassian was informed about several dedicated monks who were misled and fell.\textsuperscript{430} To be capable of being truthful to their vocation, monks need to develop a capacity for discernment. When asked how to acquire this capacity, abbot Moses replied: “by humility”.\textsuperscript{431} He added that the first step to acquire discernment is to share one’s actions and even thoughts with other people. Likewise, Ignatius attached importance to sharing. As we have seen, he did not consider a full hour of mutual sharing each day as a waste of time, but rather as gain of time. (4.4)

Discernment is essentially an internal disposition that enables one to assess one’s experience and to make appropriate decisions. The question of discernment surfaces when human beings face alternative options for courses of action. In this connection it is important to understand why Ignatius made a distinction between ‘choice’ and ‘decision’.\textsuperscript{432} Falque and Bougon explain that the French word\textit{ choisir} originally meant ‘to see’ in the sense of ‘fixing your gaze’.\textsuperscript{433} This is exactly what Ignatius recommends when someone faces the option of alternative courses of action. The idea of ‘fixing your gaze’ is the idea of an intensified focus in order to contemplate on the situation, which requires discipline in the turmoil of daily affairs.\textsuperscript{434} Therefore it needs to be included in the way of proceeding with decision-making. It generates sensitivity to the environment beyond the facts and clarifies the options that are available in the situation. In the following paragraph I shall explain various ways of developing this sensitivity in the way of proceeding.

\textsuperscript{430} John Cassian, \textit{Conferences} (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 2
\textsuperscript{431} John Cassian, \textit{Conferences} 2, 10
\textsuperscript{432} Spiritual Exercises, 169-188
\textsuperscript{434} Many spiritual teachers have insisted on the importance of awareness, in particular awareness of one’s inner responses. This sense of awareness is illustrated by Arie de Geus, when he uses the word ‘rumination’ to describe the effect of his meeting with the Angolan minister of energy. (A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 95) The same word is used to explain the Benedictine practice of daily spiritual reading, \textit{lectio divina}, where it stands for the activity of attentive listening, a listening with the heart. (W. Derkse, \textit{Een levensregel voor beginners}, p. 61-62) Derkse describes \textit{lectio divina} as ‘the very slow reading of a text, preferably aloud, so as to really take the words in your mouth and taste them’. The point is to take the content of the words in, so that you get the maximum of nutrition out of a text. In Benedictine spirituality, \textit{lectio divina} is considered nourishment that cultivates the conditions for growth. The experience of De Geus in listening attentively to the Angolan minister of energy can be read as a condition for growth in interpreting events and situations.
In the tradition of Christian spirituality, Ignatian discernment is specifically concerned with the interpretation of events and situations. Here again the experience of Ignatius himself is the source of the practices developed in this connection. In the course of a long healing process he had learned to find in himself the source of certainty to guide his own decision-making. Accordingly, the Ignatian practice of discernment is firmly rooted in the experience of the Spiritual Exercises. The Spiritual Exercises are a school in finding certainty through being attentive to the inner movements. As David Coghlan says in theistic language,

Attention to the movement of the Spirit is the key to the reflective process. Individuals take their total experience – the reality around events, their feelings and cognitions, and evaluate them in the light of the Gospel, consider options, weigh alternatives, make judgments, take action, and then review it in the light of experience.  

Leaving his theistic language aside for the moment, what Coghlan characterises here is a process of the Spiritual Exercises as a normative re-educative process that is guided by the inner movement of thoughts and feelings. In general one can say, however, that this ‘spiritual’ approach to managerial decision-making has remained underdeveloped in the theory of management. That is to say, developing awareness and acquiring sensitivity to inner responses that are evoked by people and situations is not given much attention in management education or in corporate life. To improve management theory at this point, the practices of discernment in the Ignatian tradition have received some attention among scholars of workplace spirituality. In this regard Margaret Benefiel, André Delbecq and Laurent Falque have been at the front of presenting discernment to the Academy of Management in the US. Each of these

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435 D. Coghlan, ‘Good Instruments’, p. 29
436 The normative re-educative approach is considered as one of three strategies for organisational change. See R. Chin and K. Benne, ‘Strategies for Effecting Change in Human Systems’, in: W. Bennis, K. Benne and R. Chin, The Planning of Change (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1987). As explained by Chin and Benne, the normative re-educative approach is ‘a family of strategies that center in the notion that people technology is just as necessary as thing technology in working out desirable changes in human affairs’. (p. 33) One of the assumptions underlying the normative re-educative approach is that human behaviour is guided by normative culture. They emphasise that the theory of changing is still crude. Coghlan argues that ‘the normative re-educative approach accords well with the Society’s way of proceeding, both individual discernment and apostolic discernment in common’. See D. Coghlan, ‘Good Instruments’, p. 77. I will return to the point of theistic language later in this paragraph.
437 A. Delbecq and M. Benefiel, Awakened Spiritual Thirst Among Organizational Leaders: How Then Shall We Serve Them?, symposium presented to the Academy of Management annual
authors is concerned with decision-making in the light of the practices of discernment in the Ignatian tradition. Their arguments suggest that discernment can be integrated in the workplace. They differ in their immediate objectives, however. Benefiel says that discernment can help managers to navigate through the dangers of leadership and can help them to cut through the usual distractions and attachments that obscure accurate perception, and to see reality clearly. Falque and Bougon argue that no matter what situations a manager is confronted with, the capacity for discernment will help them see their decision-making as an opportunity for changing the course of events. In this approach they seek to do beyond understanding decision-making merely as a problem solving capacity. Accordingly, both authors view discernment in the context of leadership.

In the same connection, Delbecq and others propose to look at ‘discernment’ both from the perspective of individual decision-makers, as well as from the perspective of the organisation. They argue that not unlike individuals also institutions must answer to what they call “questions of identity”:

Why is this institution in existence? For what purpose was it founded? Does it still serve that purpose, or has it strayed from it? In the areas that it has strayed, how can it (or can it) be called back to its divine purpose? What does the institution leave behind as its inheritance? What goods or services does it contribute? At what cost is this done? Who pays and who gains?

These authors regard the theory of rational decision-making and the practice of discernment as complementary approaches. They explain that the complexity of situations means that decision-makers cannot only rely on analytic tools, but also must confront the limits of what these tools enable them to see. Decision-making requires moving beyond risk control and uncertainty models into the domain of meeting (Seattle, 4 August 2003); A. Delbecq and L. Falque, Practicing Discernment in Decision-making, paper presented to the Academy of Management annual meeting (Honolulu, 7 August 2005)

438 M. Benefiel, Soul at Work (New York: Seabury Books, 2005), p. 50
441 ibid.
442 A. Delbecq, E. Liebert, J. Mostyn, P. Nutt and G. Walter, ‘Discernment and Strategic Decision Making’, p. 147
judgment and intuition. They illustrate their argument with the pitfalls of contemporary decision-making theory, following Paul Nutt’s analysis of failing decisions. The strength of discernment, they claim, is the reflective inner disposition, patience in the discovery of the underlying nature of the decision issue, and a readiness to sit with tentative decisions with openness until some kind of confirmation occurs. As they explain, discernment allows for freedom to discover ‘truth’ without distortion and to assess whether the organisation is moving in the right direction. In their words, discernment is about freedom, freedom to be the best one can possibly be. As seen through the lens of the organisation, the practice of discernment enables those participating in the process of decision-making to find the freedom to guide their organisation by means of generating ‘power-with’ instead of ‘power over’.

For our present purposes, however, the problem with the approach taken by Delbecq and others is that they adhere to a religious worldview. It shows in their talk of organisations as ‘divine creations’, a ‘divine purpose’ of organisations and the manifestation of organisations as ‘the fruit of the Spirit’. At a theoretical level, what is at stake here is the understanding of freedom. They explain that human freedom is the touchstone of Christian discernment, but human freedom is very different than the ability to do what one wants, constrained only by other individuals’ parallel rights to their own unfettered action, for which they refer their readers to a Pauline understanding of freedom.

The problem arising from their account, therefore, regards its reliance on a religious worldview for the practice of discernment. The issue is directly relevant for this study because of its orientation on the Ignation tradition for thinking about workplace spirituality. To explain my own position with regard to this problem, it is possible to

443 A. Delbecq, E. Liebert, J. Mostyn, P. Nutt and G. Walter, ‘Discernment and Strategic Decision Making’, p. 146
446 Delbecq et.al. refer to the work of Karl Rahner. (p. 148) Rahner is an exponent of the so-called transcendental approach in accounting for faith. This approach involves a religious a priori, i.e. the view that religion belongs to human nature. However, a transcendental foundation of faith is no longer an obvious choice in Western society. See W. Stoker, Is Faith Rational? A Hermeneutical-phenomenological Accounting for Faith (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), p. 114-115
447 See the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians, Gal. 5, 16-21.
distinguish between a stronger and a weaker claim regarding the relation between ‘discernment’ and ‘worldview’. The stronger claim entails a necessary one-on-one relationship between the two. For example, with regard to the Ignatian tradition, Jean-Claude Dhôtel argues that ‘any decision that, in one way or another, would not refer to the ‘design of God’ would have to be excluded’. This means that one cannot enter into the Ignatian deliberation unless one subscribes to the Ignatian worldview and has decided to participate in it, a worldview described by Dhôtel in terms of the world seen through the eyes of God as he looks out over the rich and the poor, the powerful and the oppressed, the ones without a home, the hungry and needy. On the weaker position, no such necessary relationship exists. Although doing away with a worldview in any account of ‘discernment’ is impossible, because interpreting events and situations necessary presupposes a controlling framework, it does not follow that the relationship is one of entailment.

In this respect my approach is similar to the one followed by Falque and Bougon who have suggested an approach of discernment that appeals to a worldview in the making. Their method addresses the issue of freedom, but does not require the participants to subscribe to a particular understanding of freedom. In fact these authors focus on the cognitive aspects determining the decision-maker’s inner disposition to envisage different options. Their aim is to neutralize a tendency in decision-makers to adhere to a single option based on personal preferences. The strength of their method is that it leads decision-makers to become aware of their inner world, and to make proper distinctions in view of this self-reflection. Falque and Bougon situate their method of discernment in the context of leadership, as we already saw. In the following paragraph we shall look in more detail at discernment as integrated in the process of organisational decision-making.

450 Here I follow Wessel Stoker who argues for the inevitability of a worldview a priori: “Some adhere to a particular secular worldview with an organizational structure, such as humanism (…), or to a religion. Others have a more fragmented worldview and are members of one-issue movements such as the environmental or peace movements. There are also people who say that they have no worldview. They mean that they do not have a particular worldview or religion, nor are they members of one-issue movements. I would claim – on the basis of my assertion that worldview is an anthropological a priori – that they do have a worldview, which is unarticulated and consists of a mixture of prevailing norms and values, borrowed from the existing culture.” (W. Stoker, p. 117)
5.4. Deliberation

We have seen that the dominant feature of the Ignatian way of proceeding is discernment, both individual and in common. Since integrating the various elements entering into the decision-making process includes, among other things, integrating the views of other people, discernment becomes an integral part of collective decision-making. The decision-making process that includes other people will be described as ‘deliberation’. Deliberation in the Jesuit Order is concerned with collective decision-making that pays attention to the thoughts and feelings of all involved in the decision-making process. In order to appreciate the particularity of the Ignatian deliberation, it may be contrasted with discussion and dialogue.

Discussion, dialogue and deliberation are all concerned with taking into account different views of various people in a given situation. Discussion can serve various purposes, ranging from an exchange of ideas to persuading others of the superiority of one’s ideas. When used as a tool by the decision-maker in order to gain support for his own view on the matter at hand, this implies that the decision-maker’s view is central rather than ‘reading’ the situation together.\(^{451}\) In contrast, dialogue aims primarily at understanding other people. For this to happen, the free flow of words and meanings (from the Greek: *dia-logos*) is necessary.\(^{452}\) In a dialogue the participants show a primary interest to understand one another. Dialogue reflects an interest in the other person in order to value his or her ideas or beliefs. In a dialogue participants tend to suspend judging the other person’s views. This implies an openness towards that person. Without this openness – as when some conclusions are set out in advance – a free flow of words and meanings is impossible. Whereas discussion could involve persuasion, dialogue aims at understanding.

Deliberation in the Ignatian sense differs from dialogue in that it is not merely exchange. It seeks to arrive at ‘truth’ but in a different way than discussion. Not only does it involve recognising difference, it also seeks to address unexpressed thoughts...

\(^{451}\) Paul Nutt considers a rush to judgment as one of the causes of failing decisions. He says it is reasonable for decision-makers ‘to try to move things along and to push for results. But the outcome is often a rush to judgment’. See P. Nutt, ‘Expanding the search for alternatives during strategic decision-making’, in: *Academy of Management Executive* (Vol. 18, No. 4).

and feelings of the persons who are involved.\textsuperscript{453} In other words: deliberation includes discernment. In this connection the Irish Jesuit and organisation development theorist David Coghlan has suggested two ways of proceeding with decision-making, one of which he characterises with the term ‘corporate reflection’; the other he characterises with the term ‘review’. Both these ways allow the organisation (as distinct from individuals) to be attentive to whatever is present in the situation at hand. As we shall see, they both require humility of managers. The corporate reflection process is concerned with the decision-making process, whereas the review is concerned with the process following the decision to act.

\textit{The corporate reflection process}

The following steps are proposed for the way of proceeding with decision-making.\textsuperscript{454}

\textsuperscript{453} For a discussion of expressivism in relation to Burrell and Morgan's interpretive paradigm see: C. Taylor, \textit{Hegel} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1975)

\textsuperscript{454} D. Coghlan, ‘Good Instruments’, p. 37. Adapted by author.
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The prior conditions for deliberation are that a collective question is posed which calls for a collective response, all the participants agree on the fundamental objective, and they are willing to take a constructive attitude towards any differences among them.\textsuperscript{455} However, this condition draws attention to the constructive attitude required of the participants towards their differences. Disagreement is not disunion and, even if it is settled deep, is not an obstacle to mutual esteem. Different views can be the source of new creativity in changing the course of events. The process of discernment furnishes the context for generating such creativity.

\textit{Review}

Whereas the corporate reflection process is part of the decision-making process, review is part of the process following the decision to act. Coghlan views review as a significant complement to planning, because it means that important learning can take place.\textsuperscript{456} He refers in particular to (a) Dealing with contingencies occurring during the execution of the plan. (b) Developing sensitivity to pressures from the outside environment as well as from within. (c) Learning from experience. (c) Ensuring that executive decisions (at whatever level of the organisation) are evaluated in light of the core ideology of the organization. (e) Allowing for conversion.

In this sense the learning that is enabled by review is quite different from learning in the cycle of planning and control. Basically, planning is concerned with taking intelligent, rational action.\textsuperscript{457} There are various ways of planning, but the dominant feature is a cycle of analysis, anticipation, design, action and evaluation.\textsuperscript{458} Arie de Geus says that planning is typically seen as the work of reducing uncertainty through prediction.\textsuperscript{459} The PDCA cycle is a good example.\textsuperscript{460} The cycle starts with making a plan which consists of objectives, targeted output and the means to achieve them. The plan is executed, and the results are registered. The results are compared to

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{455} Cf. J.C. Dhôtel, ‘Discerning Community Decisions’, p. 19-22
\bibitem{456} D. Coghlan, ‘Good Instruments’, p. 48
\bibitem{458} J. van Doorn and F. van Vught, \textit{Planning. Methoden en technieken voor beleidsondersteuning} (Assen/Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1978)
\bibitem{459} A. de Geus, \textit{The Living Company}, p. 41
\bibitem{460} PDCA stands for: Plan Do Check Act. It was introduced in management for the purpose of quality control.
\end{thebibliography}
targets in the plan, which may lead to a change in the plan. The differences are analysed in order to determine their cause. Then the cycle starts again. Learning is an integral part of the cycle. However, learning is focused on improving the plan. It is primarily concerned with keeping the operations under control. In the field of public administration Wim van de Donk observes that the growing uncertainty of executives and managers goes along with an increasing amount of numbers, with the effect that all that they know are numbers. Delbecq and others recognise that attention to outcome evaluation is deeply embedded in the statistical quality control movement, and the continual setting of stretch standards. Although decision theory stresses evaluation and double loop learning, they say, many unanticipated consequences could be avoided if early voices and warning signals were sensitively listened to by decision-makers.

The reason for complementing the cycle of planning and control with review is to interrupt the pattern of control (which means, in fact, the discourse of functional orthodoxy) and thereby to transcend the functional order. Review creates a space for systematic reflection upon lived experience in the organisational process. Review may be compared to revision de vie as a spiritual conversation. The criteria of a spiritual conversation are (a) a critical community that considers all aspects of the matter; (b) a common language; (c) a process of comparison and testing; and (d) in search for the truth of the matter. Revision de vie literally means ‘looking back on life’, i.e. the life of the world which is the context of my life. It is a methodical way comprising the following steps.

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462 A. Delbecq, E. Liebert, J. Mostyn, P. Nutt and G. Walter, ‘Discernment and Strategic Decision Making’, p. 169
464 K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 776-777
Awareness Each member of the group brings up an event in which he or she was directly involved and which touched him or her. One event is chosen for further reflection in common.

Developing sensitivity The event is analysed. How did it come about? What are the implications? How did persons or groups react? What changes are going on?

Interpretation The group searches for the meaning of the event. Which motives were revealed? How did the persons or groups interpret the event?

Deepening of faith The group evaluates the event in the light of worldview accounts in order to purify the analysis and to sharpen the ear of faith.

Listening to the call Each member is invited to share how he or she feels called or invited by the event. The events, as analysed, are understood as an appeal.

Meditation The meeting is closed with personal reflection and/or meditation.

Waayman emphasises that revision de vie is a contemplative way suited for men and women who are committed to ‘building up the world’ because it enables an authentic contemplative life at the heart of this commitment. As Waayman says, the events of life are the main text that must be ‘decoded’. This can be applied also to the events that occur at work. Conditions for conducting such an inquiry are an attitude of inner silence, postponing judgment, and openness. A learning attitude is important also, because other people can open one’s eyes and show things that one would never see from one’s own point of view. Understood in this way, review helps to expand the group’s horizon and to develop sensitivity to the external environment. Review will also help to persevere in the face of disappointment, failure, loss and stagnation.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter workplace spirituality was presented as a way of proceeding. The leading principle was provided by the notion of a ‘path’ that must be followed in order to find the proper way of living one’s life in the world. As any other school of

466 K. Waayman, Spiritualiteit, p. 777
spirituality, workplace spirituality is concerned with finding the proper way of living one’s life in the world.

As we have seen, the ‘path’ of workplace spirituality is evaluated in terms of an internal disposition that is required to properly assess the various aspects of the external world. One dimension of this disposition is the discernment of truth about the world as an external reality. The other dimension is one’s way of learning. Following our understanding of Ignatian spirituality, this chapter focused on the way of proceeding with decision-making, that is, with taking the decision whereby the best choice is made in the situation. Two elements of the Ignatian way of proceeding have been highlighted: power and discernment. Our study of Ignatian spirituality has shown that the internal disposition of the participants is an important aspect of both these elements, as explained by the notion of obedience.

With respect to the way of proceeding with power, the key issue is reconciling individual freedom and hierarchical order. In *The Functions of the Executive*, Chester Barnard argued that a dogmatic belief in freedom of the individual would prevent all formal cooperation beyond that imposed by the most obvious immediate opportunities and necessities; and a dogmatic belief in complete coordination would stifle all development of individuals. He believed that the expansion of cooperation and the development of the individual are mutually dependent realities, and that a due proportion or balance between them is a necessary condition of human welfare. But he found it impossible to reconcile them in his theory of management. Our study of Ignatian spirituality suggests that the understanding of power plays an important role in Barnard’s dilemma. The Ignatian way of handling power attempts to resolve this dilemma through a daily apprenticeship of power. This implies that using power in a balanced way is something that you learn. The internal disposition required for learning about power is humility. As we have seen, the management literature provides some evidence for the importance of humility, in particular with respect to visionary companies.

The need for humility is reflected in the fact that managers sometimes remain empty handed, which may lead to the acknowledgement of weakness and limitation. In that case humility enables managers to be present in the situation without resorting to problem-solving, and to face their failure. In this sense humility helps managers to
communicate with the hard and real issues of life, which tend to be neglected by the predominant focus on control as the main characteristic of effective management.

Our study of Ignatius showed that he did not underestimate the temptations of power. The structure of governance in his organisation provided for an internal safeguard against the abuse of power by the General Superior by creating a function that is charged with seeing to the correct use of power. This goes well beyond the current standards of ‘good governance’. This function is tied up with the Ignatian worldview. In the literature on workplace spirituality, Benefiel shows that such a function is conceivable without reference to the Ignatian worldview.\textsuperscript{467} She gives the examples of HealthEast in Minnaepolis/St. Paul, Mercy Medical in Iowa, and Our Lady’s Hospice in Dublin. Both HealthEast and Mercy Medical have instituted a corporate mission office at the executive level whose responsibility is the integration of the mission throughout the organisation, and to raise questions of faithfulness to the mission in every deliberation. While these examples are not explicitly concerned with the correct use of power, they do show that current standards of good governance can be exceeded by creating an executive function that can ask difficult questions. The frame of reference in each case is the organisation’s mission. The second element of the Ignatian way of proceeding, discernment, is also tied up with the Ignatian worldview. Management literature suggests, however, that discernment can be learned in practice without subscribing to the Ignatian worldview. The difficulty with assessing whether the organisation is moving in the right direction is that it entails a worldview, that is, a controlling framework of inner convictions and beliefs that provides one with orientation in the external world. The Ignatian worldview cannot be imposed in the workplace, of course, be it for legal reasons, or because of respect for the worldview of other persons. In our conclusions for workplace spirituality, we will therefore have to take into account once more the role of worldviews.

The perspective on workplace spirituality ‘from within’ that has been explored implies the central importance of character and disposition. In the Ignatian tradition the internal disposition that is required is a sense of freedom. Our study of Ignatian spirituality shows that freedom, like power, is something that can only be learned.

Unlike power, freedom cannot be ‘possessed’. We have seen that Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises* were conceived as a school of freedom. We have also seen that Ignatius had discovered that both reason and feelings are important in the search of what really matters to us and in making the best choice. Developing awareness and acquiring the sensitivity to the inner responses that are evoked by people and situations is not given much attention in management education or in corporate life.

Both power and discernment are integrated in deliberation, which aims at taking the decision whereby the best choice is made in the situation. Deliberation is viewed as the characteristic way of proceeding with decision-making. It requires discernment and humility. For Ignatius facts are not to be taken at face value; their value depends on how they are evaluated. He knew that the truth can easily be distorted. In corporate decision-making, two tasks present themselves appropriately for deliberation: decision-making (as in planning) and the process following the decision to act. This implies that deliberation is part of a decision-making process that involves various other stages. Deliberation is appropriate, under conditions, in those situations that require particular attentiveness and sensitivity.

By focusing on the way of proceeding with decision-making, workplace spirituality is viewed as a process of gaining insight by learning, rather than a ‘technique’ or ‘tool’. As with any other school of spirituality, a ‘path’ must be followed. I have proposed that deliberation is such a path. However, it is a path that must be discovered. It cannot be implemented in the traditional way, by putting organisational procedures and mechanisms into place. Finding the path in the concrete circumstances of a particular organisation involves systematic reflection as an embedded and contextualised discipline. The practice of review is a good way to start, as it is attentive to the various effects of decisions that have been made that concern the employees, and it provides ground for the discipline of spirituality. Review will also help employees to persevere in the face of disappointment, failure, loss and stagnation. In spiritual terms, review can be considered as a form of *revision de vie*. We have seen that *revision de vie* is a contemplative way suited for men and women who are committed to ‘building up the world’. By systematic reflection upon the

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468 Paul de Blot emphasises that the *Spiritual Exercises* are a school of learning. Our views are not discordant.
practice of review, insight is gained in the particular way that is followed by the school of workplace spirituality.
6. Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

The discussion of workplace spirituality in this investigation was located against the historical background of the organisational response to human concerns in the course of the 20th century. It turned out that the interest in human concerns has been difficult to align with the overwhelming force of functionalist orthodoxy in management theory. We have also seen that the study of workplace spirituality is usually discussed in instrumental terms. As much of the literature on workplace spirituality suggest, spirituality is important for the organisation because of its functional aspects, which ‘translates’ spirituality as just another management tool.

It has proved to be extremely difficult for management theory to deal appropriately with human concerns from the perspectives of the individuals involved. Whether the issue is motivation, health, unemployment, poverty, over-exploitation of resources, environmental pollution, or a financial crisis – whatever it is that concerns employees in ways that may affect their work, tends to be treated as a problem that needs to be fixed as quickly as possible. Little attention is given in the management literature to understanding the reality of these concerns in the lives of people and to find a better way to respond.

The dependence on management theories that propose quick solutions has been challenged. The dominance of the economic interpretation of the world has been criticised as being unable to solve the problems that present themselves in the context of globalisation and change. To the extent that the study of workplace spirituality is related to this context, the question is how it can avoid the pitfalls that have occurred each time when human concerns were at stake in management theory over the last century. Otherwise important issues are bound to remain outside the scope of interest of researchers of workplace spirituality.

This study has focused on the question how to put spirituality to work without turning it into another instrument of management to foster efficiency and productivity in the organisation. The answer we have been pursuing was shaped by an anthropological approach to both management and spirituality. The distinction of ‘insider’ and
'outsider' perspectives was central to this approach. In this investigation the insider perspective represents the engaged view of a participant in the social world, whereas the outsider perspective represents the detached view of the observer of the social world. This concluding chapter will show how workplace spirituality is understood both from the perspective of management and the perspective of spirituality. Next we will consider in what way the anthropological approach can help to connect insider and outsider perspectives of workplace spirituality. Finally the question will be answered how workplace spirituality can avoid the trap of serving as another instrument for the interests of the organisation as a system at the expense of human concerns.

6.2. Insider and outsider perspectives in management

From the managerial perspective, workplace spirituality is understood in the context of change. In the most general terms, change involves all the forces that affect the future of an organisation, including economic, technical, political, cultural, demographic, ecological and many other factors. By shifting between insider and outsider perspectives in management, it appeared that adaptation to the changing environment requires organisations to be attentive to changes in the outside world as well as to the movements going on internally. Although managers are accustomed to using multiple lenses to perceive changes in the outside world, all these lenses represent outsider perspectives. The insider perspective is almost completely neglected in management theory.

The insider perspective of management was carried by the account of Arie de Geus, who worked for many years as a senior manager of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group. In his book *The Living Company* he demonstrates a growth in understanding the importance for organisations to understand themselves from within in order to adapt successfully to the changing environment. I read his story of the Shell study of long-living companies as a process of discovery. The first discovery that he made was that long-living companies showed sensitivity, a sense of identity, tolerance, and financial autonomy. He realised that these characteristics were in stark contrast with the dominant management paradigm. This led him to change his thinking about the nature of organisations: De Geus began to argue for a learning definition of success.
Then he discovered that there is no need to ‘build’ a learning organisation, you already have one. This led him to talk about decision-making as learning. He came to view every act of decision-making at Royal/Dutch Shell as a learning process. Then he discovered that it was difficult for the men and women in the executive boardroom to view their own decision-making process as learning. They could talk about a learning organisation, and about the reduced power of learning resulting from an economic definition of success, but they resisted talking from the inside out.

In the management literature we encountered a plausible explanation for the difficulty of understanding organisations ‘from within’ in Collins and Porras’ book *Built to Last*. They argue that visionary companies are not simply impacted by events, but make things happen. The essence of a visionary company, they say, is the dynamic of preserving the core and stimulating progress. However, they found that the importance of the interplay between core and progress was not well understood in management circles: managers tend to confuse core ideology and change, identity and strategy. Collins and Porras claim that the organisational ability to have an impact on their environment depends on the core ideology that shapes its corporate identity. Without a firm and lasting commitment to its core values and core purpose, companies find themselves subject to the changing forces in their environment. Contrary to what managers often aspire to do, however, one cannot invent a set of core values as a tool. Since they are expressive of the organisation’s corporate identity, they can only be discovered. Collins and Porras argue that the core has intrinsic meaning to the organisational participants. By this they mean that the core does not sway with trends or shift in response to changing market conditions; it does not need any external justification. This implies, however, that an organisation needs to understand itself from within in order to develop its core. The confusion of core ideology and business strategy indicates that understanding the organisation ‘from within’ is not at all evident in mainstream management thinking.

The outsider perspective on management was described by looking at the history of including the interest in human concerns in management theory. Following Burrell and Morgan’s *Sociological Paradigms of Organisational Analysis*, the difficulty to develop an approach enabling theorists to understand organisations from an insider perspective was explained in terms of certain sociological assumptions in management theory. In their analysis, functionalist sociology provides the dominant
framework for interpreting human concerns. Burrell and Morgan say that the dominant perspective within the field of organisation studies is characterised by a close and interactive relationship between social system theory and objectivism. The systems approach was first adopted by researchers in the Hawthorne studies enabling them to include the frame of reference of the employees. However, the Hawthorne studies have become better known for the emergence of ‘social man’ than for the importance of the frame of reference of employees. As a result, human concerns are given a functional explanation: by giving attention to ‘social man’ and the ‘informal organisation’ managers can improve organisational performance. The question how employees are related to the organisation has been discussed time and again throughout the 20th century. The result, however, was always the same: managers have to attend to human concerns because it contributes to the stability and survival of the organisation.

According to Burrell and Morgan the problem with functionalist sociology is that the question ‘What is an organisation?’ is rarely given very much attention. The dominant approaches within the field of organisational analysis are all built around the common sense, ‘taken for granted’ assumption that organisations are purposive, goal-seeking enterprises. In other words, social scientists have generally reached for some simple mechanical or organismic analogy preceding the study of the system to that it is applied. In their words, these scientists have meted out rough justice to the essential nature of the social phenomena that they are investigating. This is especially true with regard to handling social change and the capacity of human beings to bring about change to improve their situation.

The implications of functionalist sociology’s assumptions in management theory were illustrated by contrasting the work of Chester Barnard and Mary Parker Follett, both of whom were concerned with human cooperation. Follett’s ‘law of the situation’ draws the attention, again, to the importance of discovery. Barnard viewed cooperation as a means of overcoming the limitations restricting what the individual alone cannot do. He believed in the common purpose as a premise of the cooperative efforts of human beings, as a unifying element. Follett said that unity is always in process. In her view, purpose was basically an uncertain outcome of human interaction. It was not the outcome of a decision-making process at the executive level. Follett argued that control on the basis of organisational purpose
entails a loss of the capacity to generate joint power. She did not reject that the aim of organisation is control, but she emphasised that the object of control is precisely the power-generating unifying process. The method to increase individual and joint power is what she called 'integration'. She defines integration as one of three ways of dealing with conflict; the other two are domination and compromise. In chapter 3 I have argued that integration entails a process of discovery.

Follett's notion of integration has been difficult to understand within the frame of functionalist orthodoxy due to the unquestioned assumptions underlying management theory. Chester Barnard's theory of cooperation reflected the dominant perspectives and orientations of the Harvard group, in that it was underwritten by a concern to analyse organisations as social systems whose activities can be understood with reference to the concept of equilibrium. Follett rejected equilibrium as a model of society. As she put it: whenever we advance we slip from the bondage of equilibrium. Her business philosophy is to advance, to bring more into existence, to innovate. Her ideas about integrative behaviour are underwritten by her conception of response as a reaction to relating (what she called 'the law of circular behaviour'). To her, relations were the bedrock foundation of organisations. The Hawthorne studies, on the other hand, led to an entirely different view of human relations in management.

The Harvard Business School was concerned with the social turmoil in the 1920s. Elton Mayo claimed that psychological knowledge and a therapeutic style of management would not just help employees getting along better with each other but creates a bottom-up community where there is no conflict of interest between managers and workers. His idea matched with the Harvard Business School's preoccupation with social order. Moreover, the Harvard Business School aspired towards professional status of business students The human relations movement that emerged from the Hawthorne studies conceived the manager as a psychologist, therapist, or moral leader of employees. The result is that human concerns are manipulated, as is evident in the current view of human beings as 'resources'.
6.3. Insider and outsider perspectives in spirituality

Looking at the recent discussion in the literature on workplace spirituality in view of this history, we can see that its main objective is to rethink our management theory’s approach to organisational change. It is understood as a way to change the course of events in such a way that human concerns are served. In order to achieve this, workplace spirituality is conceived as a process of discovery that requires full attention for what is present in the situation.

To explore this conception further, the distinction between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives has been applied to the field of spirituality as well. From an insider perspective the notion of spirituality is understood in the context of human experience, the experience namely of facing the task of organising and orienting one’s life toward a horizon of ultimate concern. Whether this task is faced in the context of a religious tradition, or in the context of an individualised worldview, in all cases there are some aspects in common that are worthwhile investigating. This study was concerned with one aspect in particular: critical reflection upon the path of spirituality. In all religious traditions, spirituality involves a ‘path’ that must be followed in order to find the proper way of living one’s life in the world. The ‘path’ is evaluated in terms of an internal disposition that is required to properly assess the various aspects of the external world. One dimension of this disposition is the discernment of truth about the world as an external reality. The other dimension is one’s way of learning.

Since it is not possible to take an insider perspective of all spiritual traditions, this study has focused on two schools of spirituality in the Christian tradition: the Benedictine and Ignatian schools. The reason for contrasting these two schools is that they have a different understanding of obedience. The Ignatian understanding of obedience is central to the concept of integration in Follett’s sense, in that it highlights the relationship or activity going on between the people who are involved in the situation. The question that crucially differentiates the Benedictine and Ignatian schools is: ‘Obedient to whom, or what?’

In Benedictine spirituality obedience replaces ascesis as the way to follow Christ which implies the abandonment of one’s own will. The abbot’s responsibility is to
make prudent choices with regard to the monks. Therefore Benedictine spirituality emphasises obedience to the abbot. In Ignatian spirituality, on the other hand, obedience is essentially concerned with seeking the best response to the situation. Instead of an abbey, the Jesuit Order is spread over the world in apostolic service. Unlike Benedict, Ignatius faced the task of reconciling individual freedom with hierarchical order. For Ignatius, obedience was not about centralisation of power but about strengthening authority at the lower levels of the Jesuit Order. He aimed at the greatest possible freedom for the subjugated superiors to govern in their own sphere, and so on down the hierarchy. Therefore the situation to which someone has to respond is central, rather than the response of the superior. In this respect we have interpreted Ignatian spirituality as an example of Follett’s ‘law of the situation’.

Our study of Ignatian spirituality shows that deliberation plays a key role in reconciling individual freedom with hierarchical order. Deliberation in the Ignatian sense involves a strict procedure, based on the Spiritual Exercises. In fact, deliberation is the characteristic path of Ignatian spirituality which enables the Jesuit Order to take the decision whereby the best choice is made in the situation. Deliberation can serve as an example of what Follett called integration. Through deliberation Ignatius ensures that the Jesuit Order is so organised that every member can influence all the others. It is a concrete example of building up joint power. It is also a constitutive part of the governance structure. In writing the Constitutions, Ignatius was concerned to transmit his own experience of decision-making to the Jesuit Order. The Constitutions are, in fact, summed up as ‘our way of proceeding’.

The outsider perspective of spirituality took its lead from the notion of a ‘path’ that must be followed in order to find one's way in the external world. The outsider perspective was specifically concerned with understanding workplace spirituality. As with any other school of spirituality, workplace spirituality must follow a ‘path’. In order to discover such a path in the workplace, I focused on the way of proceeding with power and the way of proceeding with decision-making.

With respect to power, Ignatius struggled with the tension between realism and voluntarism. On the one hand, Ignatius valued individual freedom to a great extent. On the other hand he was concerned with maintaining the unity of his organisation. He also knew that top-down power is most adapted to decision-making under time
pressure. The tension between realism and voluntarism is reflected in the principle that every individual has the power to promote the good, but everyone has to submit if he does anything wrong. In accordance with this principle Ignatius gave attention to the internal disposition of the members towards the exercise of power (their ability to promote the good) as well as providing for an internal safeguard against the abuse of power (a mechanism of submission in case anyone does anything wrong). The internal disposition is given attention in a daily apprenticeship of power, which starts with the incorporation of new members and becomes part of the way of proceeding with decision-making. This implies that power is something that you learn. The governance code is explicitly concerned with unmasking the illusions of wealth and power. In Ignatian spirituality, the internal disposition required for learning about power is humility. The internal safeguard against the abuse of power consists of a ‘mechanism with teeth’ to ensure that the superior remains obedient in the confrontation with the deepest concerns of his own ‘workforce’: the General Congregation that elects him also elects four Assistants. Their primary responsibility is seeing to the correct use of power. But they are also charged with the physical and spiritual well-being of the General Superior.

With respect to decision-making, Ignatian spirituality is concerned with making the best choice in the situation. Ignatius considered both reason and feelings important in taking decisions. He had learned in his own life that thoughts and feelings need to be discerned. The Spiritual Exercises are the typical ‘path’ to make the best choice. The Ignatian practice of discernment engages thoughts, feelings, values, and action. In chapter 4 I have argued that the practice of discernment does not require that one subscribes to the Ignatian worldview. However, as discernment is concerned with the task of organising and orienting one’s life toward a horizon of ultimate concern, worldviews are necessarily included.

The insights about the way of proceeding with power and decision-making are brought together in deliberation. Deliberation in the Ignatian sense is more refined than discussion and dialogue in so far as it does not only make use of the differences among the participants that are expressed, but also of the unexpressed thoughts and feelings. Two ways of proceeding with decision-making have been suggested that include discernment: the corporate reflection process and the review. Both these ways require humility of managers. The corporate reflection process is concerned
with decision-making, whereas the review is concerned with the process following the
decision to act.

I have suggested that the practice of review is a good way to start with workplace
spirituality, as it responds directly to the concerns of managers about the various
effects of decisions that have been made and allows to include the concerns of other
organisational participants in the process. Review will also help managers to
persevere in the face of disappointment, failure, loss and stagnation.

6.4. The anthropological approach

By shifting between insider and outsider perspectives of management and spirituality
an answer was pursued to the question how workplace spirituality can avoid the trap
of serving as another instrument for the interests of the organisation at the expense
of human concerns. The anthropological approach allows to connect two ways of
viewing the social world – the detached view of the observer and the engaged view
of a participant in the social world.

The anthropological approach was suggested by Burrell and Morgan’s *Sociological
Paradigms of Organisational Analysis*. This investigation aims at connecting their
functionalist and interpretive paradigms, because important issues are going
unaddressed in the scholarship on workplace spirituality. Burrell and Morgan’s view
that each paradigm needs to be developed on its own terms has been challenged by
Benefiel. In contrast to Benefiel, who talked to the scholarship on workplace
spirituality from the outside in, this investigation works from the inside out as well as
from the outside in. The context of workplace spirituality in this investigation is
change. In the discipline of management as well as in the discipline of spirituality the
changing environment provides the context that organisations have to relate to; it is
not an explanatory factor.

In the anthropological approach to the organisations, as explained by Tennekes. (see
par. 1.8.), the relation between individuals and the organisational structures that they
create is central. His view of culture is premised on the intentional action of human
beings. As he says, his view follows from the idea that human beings ‘produce’ their own existence. Culture provides them with the frameworks to interpret events and situations, including the ‘normative and pragmatic rules’ about the most appropriate way of acting in the situation.

Tennekes further explains that organisational culture provides the participants with knowledge about the proper way to understand ‘reality’ and the best way to uncover the ‘real’ state of affairs, about the relation with the environment, about the value of work and the meaning of human efforts, and about the way that power and individual and group interests are handled. The cultural knowledge about ‘reality’ prescribes whether organisations put their faith in experts to find out what the reality is or in discovering the reality through experience and open discussion. The cultural knowledge about the relation with the environment prescribes whether organisations feel that they can change the course of events or do best to adapt to the changing forces acting upon them. The cultural knowledge about the value of work prescribes whether money, profit and return on investment are considered to be the ‘bottom line’ or these are merely means towards another horizon of concern. All this is tied up with the nature of the organisational contribution to its environment and its market position.

Tennekes considers organisational culture as the ‘product’ of corporate problem-solving. Thereby he intends to say that the scope of organisational culture is more limited than the culture of a society. In his view the content of organisational culture is determined by what human beings do with the cultural luggage that they take into the organisation in the context of their work. This explains why workplace spirituality is typically approached in terms of what it contributes to organisational performance – usually understood as a ‘tool’ to solve problems. Although Tennekes admits that meaning is an aspect of organisational culture, he is reluctant to speak of meaning in terms of a horizon of ultimate concern. In fact he is concerned that what is expressed as ‘mission’ or ‘identity’ should not be too easily identified with ‘the’

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469 J. Tennekes, Organisatiecultuur, p. 35
470 J. Tennekes, Organisatiecultuur, p. 59-62
471 J. Tennekes, Organisatiecultuur, p. 57
472 J. Tennekes, Organisatiecultuur, p. 80
473 J. Tennekes, Organisatiecultuur, p. 129-130
organisational culture. In his view the horizon of ultimate concern of organisations is laid down in the mission and identity of an organisation, and these are often not meaningful. In this sense his position is comparable to Lencioni’s (par. 1.6 and 2.4). It follows from these considerations that the analysis of workplace spirituality is affected by changes in the cultural frameworks that pertain to the definition of the organisational identity.

By taking an anthropological approach to understanding workplace spirituality this study showed that workplace spirituality, in so far as it represents a paradigmatic shift in management theory, is situated in Burrell and Morgan’s interpretive paradigm. It attaches importance to the way that events and situations are interpreted. It does not necessarily imply a shift to any ‘spiritual’ paradigm. There is a growing recognition in the management literature that management rationality does not allow to solve the problems which present themselves in the context of globalisation and change. As we have seen, Verstraeten has interpreted this viewpoint as the hermeneutic horizon of management. The typical way to overcome the limitations of management rationality is by making a distinction between management and leadership. Verstraeten is no exception. The understanding of workplace spirituality that was developed in this study rejects this distinction in that it tackles the problem that Barnard believed could not resolved in the science of management: reconciling the expansion of cooperation and the development of the individual. Managers who share Barnard’s view find themselves struggling with the reconciliation of the needs of the organisation and human concerns. In this investigation moral leadership was interpreted as a symptom of the problem that Barnard left for philosophy and religion to resolve.

The question how workplace spirituality can avoid the trap of serving as another instrument for the interests of the organisation at the expense of human concerns was answered by understanding workplace spirituality as a way of proceeding with decision-making, that is, with taking the decision whereby the best choice is made in the situation. The leading principle was provided by the notion of a ‘path’ that must be followed in terms of an internal disposition that is required to properly assess the

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474 As an anthropologist, Tenneke’s interest was not confined to organisational culture; he is also considered for his study of religion. See E. Koster, ‘Storende subjectiviteit?’
various aspects of the external world. The path has a direction, which allows for purposive use in organisations. The trap of instrumental use in management at the expense of human concerns is avoided by introducing some mechanisms with teeth in the governance code that envisage the internal disposition of decision-makers at all levels in the organisation, including a deliberate way of proceeding with power that exceeds the current standards of good governance. One dimension of this disposition is the discernment of truth about the world as an external reality. The other dimension is one’s way of learning.

The anthropological approach to workplace spirituality in this study leads to the conclusion that workplace spirituality is neither a new human resource instrument nor a new strategic instrument, but a way to respond better to the various events and situations that present themselves at work.
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