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ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AS REFRAMING

by

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Abstract
Organizational Change as Reframing
by Bjørn W. Hennestad

This is a study of management of change from a cultural perspective. It develops a model for reframing organization by exploring what happens when attempts are made at changing the way members of organizations define and enact their tasks. The problem was focused through the lens of the concept of organizational frames. They are defined as collective models of and for organizational action that channel interpretation and enactments of work situations.

The notion of organizational frames draws attention to the fact that organizations tend to stay on their course. When organizations face a need to do other things or things differently, organizational frames sustain obsolete orientations and hinder the implementation of new ones. Organizational reframing, a change in the system of organizational frames, was seen as necessary for organizations to change the way they operate. A model of reframing organizations should highlight important aspects of the reframing task and propose along what lines they could be dealt with.

The process of inductive- and grounded-oriented research drew upon data from key informants in a joint setting of seven case organizations. A set of reframing concepts emerged; anchoring deals with the quality of the active support from leaders, integration deals with the quality of consistency in trying to implant the new in the old, top management vs. local solutions deals with the location of formulation of new solutions, and inductive vs. deductive learning deals with the way people learn the new solutions. The choices made or avoided in the issues reflected by these concepts should create a reframing momentum for the reframing endeavour to succeed.

The study further suggests that a reframing rationale must be created or exist, and that the reframing efforts must be handled so as to create a process of structuration continuously enforcing new performance. The conceptual findings are further discussed and put forward as a set of propositions. In analyzing their interrelationships four modes of reframing organizations are suggested. The respective modes of convincing, directed dialogue, constitution and consolidation each attend to a particular concern of the reframing process. Consequently their approaches to formation; finding and learning solutions, and integration ; implanting the new in the old, are different.

The study contributes to the body of knowledge on management of change. The findings are based on actual change attempts and the process of research integrated various practical validity checks. It provides a source for further research questions as well as guidelines and ideas for reflection for the practitioner. It is also valuable because it demonstrates an application of a cultural perspective to the study of organizational change.

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In a merciless way Rolf Lundin thoroughly pointed out flaws, weaknesses and lack of clarity. Always constructive and helpful, he far exceeded what could be expected of him as a member of a dissertation committee. Sigmund Grønmo, also a member of the committee, put his finger on the essence of things in my struggle to get the methodology right and at the same time helped to build on the strengths.

Through his ability to fluctuate between extreme creativity and the deepest criticism of conceptual ideas as well as between practical and theoretical perspectives, Patrick Verde has inspiring my work and thinking. Anne Grete Schiøtz has helped by constantly confronting my ideas with sound and relevant practical experience. The numerous people that have helped in bringing in data and exploring and scrutinizing tentative ideas and conceptions remain masked in the report. They have, however, a critical part in this. Their insights, interest and persistence have been of crucial importance for its birth.

There are important roots to the work that are difficult to omit. My ideas about change started to form when working on a thesis on technology and organizational change supervised by Sverre Lysgaard to whom I owe a lot. Stein Bråtens work, especially on Model Monopoly, and the work with him on cognitive mapping has been important for the formation of my perspective. I have also benefitted from his persistent encouragement over the years as well as his constructive criticism of an earlier version of the manuscript.

Per O. Berg convinced me to profit by the conception of a cultural perspective, and SCOS, standing conference on organizational culture and symbolism, the international network of which he was one of the founding fathers, has provided me with fresh ideas on constructive dialogue through the last years. Discussions with Jan Erik Karlsen about the content of meaning of a cultural perspective was influential and fruitful at an initial stage. A research stay at the Center for Study of Organizational Change and Development at the University of Bath, who graciously received me, was vital to the formation of my interest in and basic ideas about

change.

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Bjørn W. Hennestad

Chapter 1: The Problem of Reframing Organizations.

The aim of the study

Management of change is an important area of knowledge today. Seeking to expand this knowledge, I have made use of the notion of organizational frames, drawing attention to the fact that organizations are channelling attention and energy in a persistent way. Organizations develop collective systems for defining and enacting work situations. The models for interpretation become embedded in the social structures of the organization, and in doing so they become self-sustained.

When organizations face the need for doing other things or doing things differently, the established ways of seeing things become both inappropriate and represent a hindrance for change. The strength of the conception of organizational frames is that they highlight these funneling, persistent and hindering features. Organizational frames are defined as collective models of and for organizational action that channel interpretation and enactment of situations. Organizational frames are consequently seen as becoming embedded in the social structures of the organizations thereby sustaining their own existence.

The implication of the notion of organizational frames is that for organizations to change their orientations they must change the established organizational frames. These both channel and sustain the obsolete orientations and hinder the implementation of new ones. Organizational reframing is defined as the planned change of system of organizational frames.

Therefore, the interest in organizational change is one of reframing organizations. The aim of the study is to develop a model for reframing organizations. This chapter outlines what is meant by that. As the aim of the study rests, to a large extent, on its key concept of organizational frames, I shall start by explaining the choice of this concept and how it relates to the nature of knowledge that is being sought.

The key concept

The choice of the concept of organizational frames is essentially a personal one. Experience has inspired me to put it into a more systematic use as they are fruitful for the understanding of organizations. The conception has, however, also been quite widely used in the literature:

Terms like “individual frames”, “frames of references”, “frames of understanding” or “interpretation” as well as “organizational frames of reference” can for example be found in literature on cognitive psychology (e.g. Newcombe 1943), psychotherapy (e.g. Watzlawick et al. 1974), management (information) behaviour (Churchman 1971, Shrivastava and Mitroff 1983), organizational theory (Cyert and March 1972) and design (Tushman and Nadler 1978) strategy (Nadler and Tushman 1989) and strategic decision making (Shrivastava and Schneider

1984) and organizational change (Snyder 1988).

All these terms deal with the framing of understanding and knowledge. There are also a host of other concepts referring to knowledge structures in organizations. A recent inventory counted 53 (Walsh 1989), in spite of omitting several such as “organizational paradigms” (Brown 1978) and “interpreting systems” (Daft and Weick 1984).

The notion of frames, or frame of reference, is employed at an individual as well as an organizational level in the literature. In the latter case it is used as a rather broad term referring to characteristic manners of selective organizational information processing (Shrivastava and Schneider 1984).

Furthermore, it is used as a key word for the understanding of how problems in human affairs develop and can be solved by Watzlawick et al. (1974). Their field is psychotherapy, but their work has inspired many writers in fields like organizational change and organizational learning. Their notion of frame draws attention to the systemic and circular character of problems within and between human beings. Communication becomes framed because it is formed by the rules of the system that emerge between people that reciprocally influence each other. The origin of these rules becomes implicit or irrelevant. Frame and reframe are key concepts because when the frame is inappropriate it is impossible to solve the problem(s) within it. This calls for “reframing” - putting new frames on old situations.

This notion of “frame” is appealing. Applied to an organization it seems to highlight that organizations tend to stay on their course in spite of external changes. The concept of “organizational frames” encapsulates the fact that people in organizations tend to define tasks and situations in particular and recurrent ways. It also suggests that this tendency is hard to change, it represents a pattern, a “frame”, to break out of.

As I see it, this is due to its metaphorical strength, because it is often used in everyday language to connote constraints on the way people see reality. “We have to try to step out of the frame” is, for example, a phrase one comes across which means that people have to think outside established patterns. Frames are also used to connote entrapment both in the concrete and abstract sense. “I am framed” or “it is a frameup” represent phrases well known from, for example, gangster movies.

Finally, the notion of organizational frames encapsulates essential and relevant insights that follow from the cultural perspective taken in organizational understanding. According to this perspective organizations can be envisaged as being characterized by a system of interpretations (Daft and Weick 1984) or meanings (Smircich 1983). In line with social anthropology such a

system can be seen as being constituted by models of and for action (Hanssen Bauer 1983). These models are seen as collective, taken for granted and socially constructed. When enacted they become embedded in the social systems of the organization: "Meaning resides in the acts," as Geertz says (Geertz 1973).

In conclusion, the notion of organizational frames is fruitful because it highlights essential problems of organizational change. It also implies that reframing is called for if organizations are to change their tasks and the way they operate. Establishing legitimacy for reframing as a practical problem is one thing. It is also needed to justify the choice of the research problem as one of developing a model for reframing organizations. Doing so demands a clarification of the theoretical perspective as well as the way the problem is seen.

A Cultural Perspective on Organizing

The need for organizational change can be caused by many factors of technological, market oriented or structural nature. The result, however, is that the foci and priorities in organizational processes and functioning must be altered. People have to do other things or do the things they do differently. They have to define their roles, tasks and/or situations in different terms. Change is in other words related to the issue of collective interpretations of situations, events, actions, etc. that are guiding the actions of the organizational members. A common notion for this is the system of meaning (Smircich 1983).

In the literature on organization culture this is seen as an important, perhaps the most important, source of energy and direction to the actions, and lack of actions, of the organizational members (e.g. Jelinek et. al. 1983, Daft and Weick 1984). The system of meaning represents solutions to common problems encountered by the members of the organization (Gibb Dyer 1982, Schein 1985). These have developed through a historical process and become the way of seeing and solving problems, making decisions, etc. Shaping interpretation and organizational action also makes the system of meaning a crucial factor for the quality of the performance of the enterprise (Wilkins 1983).

The system of meaning is defined as models of and for action that are learned, shared and taken for granted by the members of the organization (Hanssen- Bauer 1984). People do not usually realize that their ways of responding to and acting upon situations and problems are socially constructed by themselves (e.g. Bate 1984). New organizational members learn these models by processes of socialization (Louis 1980).

Figure 1.1 below illustrates that there is a duality in the system of meaning. Duality because it exists as as ideational models on the one hand (Goodenough 1961), and because the social patterns reflect the enactments of these models on the other (Geertz 1974, Maruyama 1980).

This “objectivation” of ideational models is important for the understanding of the persistence and resilience of the system because it implies a self reinforcement process. This point will be discussed in the next chapter.

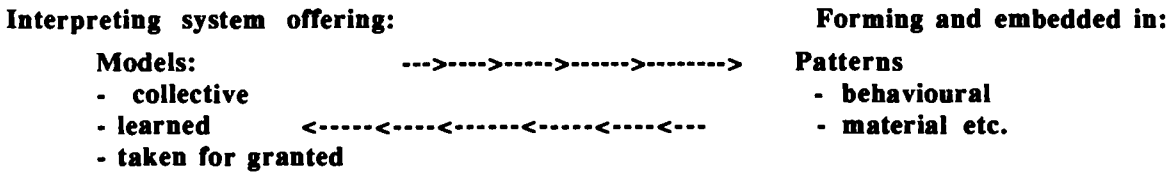


Fig 1.1 ORGANIZATIONS AS SYSTEMS OF MEANING.

This is not meant to imply that the organization is a homogeneous system. It is also characterized by tensions and variations (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984). There are tensions between, for example, the ideas behind new systems and those embedded in established systems (Schwartz and Davis 1982, Smircich and Morgan 1982). There are variations between subgroups who are sometimes antagonistic to each other and who sometimes have something in common but differ on other aspects (Siehl and Martin 1983, Hennestad 1988). In other words, although representing a pattern, a system of meaning does not necessarily imply complete identical ways of interpretation.

From a management point of view the system of meaning is important because of the functions it fulfils. It strongly influences the organization’s operations and results by being descriptive (define the reality), controlling resources (time, efforts and other resources), and maintaining the system (stabilizing) (Dandridge et. al. 1980). This also implies that it represents the source of solutions collectively drawn upon when problems are to be solved (Feldman 1986).

This represents an essential problem when change is on the agenda. There is a general - psychologically inspired - understanding in the organizational sciences that organizations develop several mechanisms that escalate commitment to a (organizational) course of action (Staw 1981). The meaning aspect of organizations represents an additional explanation for the tendency to stay on the same course. It can be seen as a reservoir of old models offering solutions to new problems. One aspect of the system of meaning is consequently that it is conservative in nature and constitutes a major blockage against attempts to change (e.g Lorch 85).

All in all, this leads us to the conception of the system of meaning as constituted by organizational frames when organizational change is the focus. The organization is seen as a framework in the sense of a system of organizational frames. The notions of frames and framework connotes both that shaping and the rigid aspects of organizations. Organizational frames put the organization on auto pilot not only by shaping how organizational members

define and enact situations, but also because these in a sense become locked up. That is, as the context of the organization changes, the organizational frames stay the same. Reframing is the term for the process of moving from organizational frames developed under certain conditions to frames more suited for new and/or changed conditions. This is a problem for all members of the organization. In this study it is seen primarily from the management perspective.

Problem and contribution

It makes sense to develop a model for reframing organizations as the task of reframing frequently confronts organizations and management. Taking on this ambition places the work in what has been called the context of discovery (Starrin et al. 1984). I have seen the need for this kind of knowledge and also been encouraged to explore it by the writings of other authors.

That means that I have relied on some authors more than others. The number of contributions, concepts and dimension are quite plentiful in the area of management of change. The picture seems quite complex, but, of course, the problem of change is quite complex and reflects basic issues. The approaches and assumptions therefore vary and the ambitions differ. It is not the sort of field characterized by coherent knowledge. There is even a question whether it ever can be, given the nature of the field.

In spite of the amount of contributions, there is reason to put considerable weight on the view held by two prominent organizational researchers Child and Bate (1987): "The plain truth of the matter is that we just do not know what is actually happening within the planning and design processes of organizations,..".(p. 44). Other researchers point out that there could be severe limits on the extent to which anyone can achieve planned organizational change. Nicholas claims, for example, that the single most apparent finding of the research is that no single change technique, or class of techniques, work well in all situations (Nicholas 1982).

He probably has a point. But again it would depend on what is meant by technique, work well and all situations: For example, I do not share the view that no useful knowledge about organizational change exists. On the other hand I think Mangham is fairly realistic when he claims: "There are great variations between the planned and the actual models of change, a lack of congruence between what people claim to be doing in organizational interventions and what they actually do, and despite an understandable proclivity towards concealment, a high proportion of failures" (Mangham 1978). I, therefore, follow Friedlander and Brown (1974) who claims that there is a continuous failure in developing a theory of change that emerges from the change process itself. In reviewing the literature on organizational change and development ten years after their statement, Pettigrew (1985: 10,15) makes a similar conclusion that "there is

a paucity of research on change which actually allows the change process to reveal itself in any kind of substantially temporal or contextual manner."

The truth value of these statements can probably be disputed. This is not a subject area characterized by broad agreement on "where we stand", what are accepted knowledge and truths, etc. On the other hand I have not come across any substantial or comprehensive model of change within a cultural oriented perspective that has been generated from (a) change process(es). So, I rely on these views as indications that theory development generated from change processes can contribute fruitfully to the existing body of knowledge. And that there is a need for such a study based on a cultural perspective on organizing.

That is the kind of contribution I am going to make, develop a model of reframing organizations by exploring actual attempts at changing the way the members of the organizations define and enact their tasks. This will be done by developing a conceptual model that highlights important aspects of the tasks of reframing organizations and proposing along which lines these aspects could be dealt with.

The findings of the study are intended to identify what, in a sense, can be seen as a set of strategic variables for the task of reframing organizations. These will have to reflect important aspects of the reframing process. Furthermore, the results have to include insights about the relationship between these variables. This will strengthen their applicability as well as their fruitfulness for management practice and reflection as well as be a source for further research.

These findings will contribute to the general understanding of organizations and organizational change. They have a special value by representing a practical application of a cultural perspective to the problem of organizational change. Conceptualized as reframing, the perspective will be operationalized as conceptual tools through the findings. These will constitute tentative knowledge that can inform and assist further research in the area. The elements of the model can be put to a test and the whole model further explored. Finally, the findings should offer guidelines along which to seek solutions for managers and others engaging in reframing endeavours.

The elements of the conceptual model will to some extent have to reflect the process by which it is generated. The plan is to reveal critical issues by comparing aspects and incidents in relevant change projects. These issues should reflect choices that have been made or avoided in questions that matters for the prospects of a reframing to take place. By giving the issues appropriate labels, they can be seen as a set of reframing concepts. Building on these and their normative implication, the next step will be to develop a set of reframing propositions. Doing so means drawing on academic speculation and other researchers' contributions. Even more so,

I have taken a “creative leap” (Mintzberg 1977) when using the propositions as supporting beams to put forward ideas for a comprehensive model.

Plan of the thesis

One thing is the process of research, another thing is the presentation of the research and its findings. In a piece of research like this, the presentation also has to demonstrate essential aspects of the process. In this respect I shall emphasize the grounding of the reframing concepts, and explain how the data was collected and analyzed and how the findings emerged. In practical terms this means that:

Chapter 2, “Organizations as Framework,” presents a deeper understanding of the key concept and the perspective behind it.. The chapter has three agendas. It outlines a cultural perspective on organizing as a basis for presenting the key concepts of framing and reframing. It presents and explains these concepts as reflecting this perspective and as relevant and fruitful for working with change. Finally, it outlines how it is connected to the empirical investigation of the study.

Chapter 3, “Context, Data and Methods,” outlines the design of the study. It presents the research setting and the reframing agendas studied. The methodological guidelines are discussed and their practical application is presented. The trustworthiness of findings produced by the research design is also discussed.

Chapter 4, “Concepts for Organizational Reframing,” along with the following two chapters present the empirical study. It deals with the empirical generation of issues that highlight critical and fruitful aspects of the process. The grounding of these concepts is demonstrated by presenting and comparing empirical glimpses. The chapter suggests a set of concepts for organizational reframing.

Chapter 5, “Counterforcing the Reframing of Organizations,” deals with the issue of organizations counterforcing change, helping to understand the nature of reframing organizations. It presents a revision of the reframing task as one of gaining foothold for the reframing idea in a period of “liminality”.

Chapter 6, “Conditions for Establishing a Reframing Momentum,” develops and suggests two basic conditions for establishing a movement and momentum, underpinning a reframing process.

Chapter 7, “Propositions for a Model of Reframing Organization,” is based on the findings and the empirical grounding of the previous chapters. With this as a starting point, a working

hypothesis and a set of propositions for reframing organizations are suggested.

Chapter 8, "Towards a Model for Reframing Organizations - Ideas for Further Construction," discusses the relationships between the propositions presented in chapter 7. Based on this discussion, it suggests a more comprehensive model for reframing organizations.

Chapter 9, "Contribution and Limitations," discusses the findings in retrospect. It seeks to concretize the most important aspects of the study and its findings. It also comments on the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Organization as Framework

The chapter has three underlying agendas. It outlines and specifies what is meant by a cultural perspective on organizing. The key concepts of framing and reframing are presented and explained as reflecting this perspective and as relevant and fruitful for working with change. Finally, it outlines how the perspective and key concepts connect to the empirical investigation of the study.

Some examples from a case study are used as foundation in the formation of the perspective. It is not a longitudinal study, but it leads up to conceptualizations that are relevant and helpful for the issue of change because they reveal forces of dynamism and stability.

The study was done on INC, a research institute that produces knowledge and makes analyses for oil search outside Norway (Hennestad 1988). It was originally formed by the government to play a role in the Norwegian oil exploration policies. In that respect the official signals seemed to shift quite often. At the time of the study the organization was in fact market dependent, due to the fact that the institute had grown considerably on its own initiative. Trying to understand the organization made us aware of “meaning” as in organizations. It also seemed to reveal, and illustrate, to us various characteristics of that phenomenon. Let us start at the moment we first arrived at the site.

Meeting an organization - an example.

After leaving the taxi outside a group of buildings in the outskirts of the city, we had to choose between several entrances. In the hallway we spotted a modest sign picturing a snail with the initials “INC” inscribed on it.. The snail proved later to be a petrified octopus. Following the direction indicated by the sign, we traversed a corridor with a small post office and a small bank and finally entered the door of what we beforehand knew to be a highly successful market oriented research institute in the oil exploration industry. However, as with the octopus, INC had its feet inside a lot of doors; buildings we later came to know as the garage, the church building, the barracks and others.

Upon arriving, the scene changed dramatically, and we remembered how Maccoby (1976) compared the sensation of being inside a corporation for the first time with walking into a Mexican village for the first time. We were kindly and efficiently received, and people we were set up to meet knew who we were and roughly why they should meet us. Everybody seemed to answer openly and bravely even rather touchy questions. Meetings seemed to take place in an open and straightforward style judging from the direct speech. This was also underlined by the fact that during our very first days, we were immediately invited to ad hoc meetings of a highly confidential nature. They were arranged because of government

initiatives of crucial importance to the institute. The meetings were, however, thought to represent a useful source of information to us. People as a matter of course even helped us rearrange our schedule by cancelling interviews and making new appointments. All major groups of the organization were represented in these meetings, and, during the assessment of the situation and possible alternatives for action, the managing director seemed more like an attentive listener asking follow up questions than being the one running the show. The atmosphere was rather one of a collective seeking solutions in spite of minor confrontations and disagreements.

The general impression from seeing how these meetings were arranged was one of vital energies unfolding and forceful action taking place. We got the same feeling from formal and informal discussions with members of the organization and from taking part in other meetings. It certainly seemed a busy place at all times of the day, and night; week days as well as week ends. Seriously, as well with humor it was also pointed out to us that being busy was important; details are not to be bothered with, a desk top should be messy and the relevant departure times for flights was something to be remembered by heart!

The members of INC also expressed pride and self esteem on behalf of the company. They emphasized that INC and working at INC was something really special. They also expressed the view that it was an excellent company in its field; its researchers were outstanding and the delivered products were good and better than those delivered by their competitors - an opinion, it proved later, that was not always fully shared by their customers. Not only was INC held to be an excellent company, but it was also seen as performing a function that was an important one to the nation.

We were told continuously that it was a sad thing that the company was so scattered. It had experienced rapid growth, and many people thought that there were too many employees that they did not know and too many unfamiliar faces. After telling us about the relatively substantial amount of organized sport activities and the numerous formal and informal parties, people tended to reflect upon the importance of sticking together in view of the continuous risks of being split apart that INC faced. Some of the members also told us about the fun and hardships involved in the data collecting sea expeditions. The long-term impact these expeditions had on interpersonal work relations were also emphasized. We were told about "the building". The personnel had always been scattered in different buildings and seemed to think a building that could house them all would solve "all" problems. We heard about "the clarification" which would make everything easier. This expression referred to it that the government never seemed to amek up their mind about

which role the institute should play.

The organization as an ideational system

In the first days, we sensed a group of people that were characterized by confidence in themselves and who displayed a lot of vital energy within some kind of common frame, and we knew that the company had proved successful in business terms. It seemed doubtful that a pure formal perspective on organizations (Blau and Scott 1962) would help in understanding better the dynamics of such an organization. The behaviour we observed seemed to indicate that it expressed something. We found that this was a view supported by for example Silvermans (1970) position that "action arises out of meaning". The same view is nicely put by Geertz (1973) who said that social actions are comments on more than themselves; that "meaning resides in the acts".

To make sense of the observation that what we observe means something more than the pure act, we get some help from the writings of Kroeber and Parsons (1958). They suggest that an analytical distinction has to be made between social system and systems of meaning (cultural system) (see also Pfeffer 1981). This view is now reflected in emerging literature on management and organization. In different ways it is argued that there is an underlying structure of meaning shaping experiences, channelling behaviour and thereby affecting the performance of the organization (e.g. Dandridge et.al. 1980, Daft and Weick 1984, Jelinek et.al. 1983, Wilkins 1983).

What is then the system of meaning in organizations? A system of meaning is a system of collective interpretation. It offers models for interpretation and action, as it is also defined in the literature on social anthropology (Hanssen-Bauer 1984). Naturally the concept has a foot in a phenomenological perspective advanced by Schutz (1972) building on Weber's (1964) postulate of subjective interpretation. We can say that INC is made up of subjective meanings held among organizational members. We must understand what we observe as socially constructed interpretation. This is in line with the view that "the essence of the social world rests in those patterns of meaning that shape and sustain human action and interaction" (Smircich 1983 b).

The subjective character of organizations have been highlighted in the fields of organization and management theory. The functional character of symbolic aspects of rites and rituals (Deal & Kennedy, 1983), organizational language (Evered, 1983), prevailing metaphors and myths (Gahmberg, 1983; Pondy, 1983), organizational stories (Martin et.al., 1982), sagas and dramas (Clark, 1972, Pettigrew, 1979) and material symbols (Dandridge et.al., 1980)

has been emphasized.

While these highly visible symbols have been focused upon, less emphasis has been put on the issue that subjective meaning resides in every aspect of everyday life (Geertz, 1973). The models mirrored in these acts play a role in the social construction of the organizational reality, being both product and process as precarious factors in the ongoing social process by which they are constituted. As pointed out human beings might, however, forget their authorship to the manifested meanings that play this crucial role in the ongoing process of organizing. The socially constructed reality is apprehended as something other than a human product (Berger & Luckman, 1967).

The point to make from this is that social organization depends on shared interpretative schemes, expressed in language or other symbolic constructions developed through social interaction. What was observed was the expression of local meaning. Smircich makes this point by saying that it is through such schemes that elements in a potentially vast perceptual field are differentiated from the wider context and interpreted, and that this process provides the basis for coherent organization of perception and experience. "Such schemes are the foundation in shared systems of meaning that allow day to day activities to become routinized or taken for granted," (Smircich 1983: 160).

It is easy to understand that behaviour displayed to the organization members and its observers basically reflects the human need for meaning when thinking like Geertz: "There is "an information gap between what our body tells us and what we need to know in order to function, there is a vacuum we must fill." Pettigrew helps us by saying it a bit differently: "People need a continuous sense of what the reality is all about" (Pettigrew 1979). The reality; the world external to the individual, has no meaning in itself, and people therefore need something to help perceive, organize and make use of experiences - things, actions and events that they are exposed to.

It is this gap between the raw data of life and our minds that has to be bridged by some kind of models for perceiving, organizing and acting. This view has been stressed by many (e.g. Goodenough 1961, Keesing 1981). Simmel put it this way; "aspects of reality can be grasped only as possible objects of experience only if they fall under some constitutive form" (Oakes 1980). But form here must also be understood in the sense of being embedded in the external reality. By shaping and sustaining human action and interaction these models or forms are enacted and in a way become the social acts and relations. This is what is called the system of meaning.

To make the conception of an organizational system of meaning somewhat more concrete,

an account of the one at INC is presented.

A tentative description of the system of meaning in INC

The epistemological problems of conceptualizing an organizational system of meaning for exploration are considerable due to their elusive and taken for granted character (Bate 1984). It is difficult to find a focus. Wilkins (1983) offers some help here by proposing that assumptions about work means and work ends as well as reward assumptions are fruitful areas to focus on for the purpose of capturing essential aspects of the organizational system of meaning.

It is also suggested that a set of basic assumptions is tied together like sort of an organizational paradigm by Gibb Dyer (1982) and Schein (1983; 1984) which builds on work by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961). Categories that reflect important basic assumptions are proposed to be such as about human nature, human relationships, the nature of human activity, the nature of reality, truth, and the relationship to the environment. The idea is that these kinds of assumptions reflect human problems for which people at all times and all places have had to find solutions - also coined the "universal but variable" thesis (Bate 1984). Every organization is, therefore, in principal, special or idiosyncratic.

The interpreting process was built upon data from observing the staff in a variety of situations, observing staff meetings and planning sessions, interaction with the members of the organization through casual conversations and loosely structured interviews and through the study of documents from the organization, company (external and internal) newsletters, etc. The themes that were explored emerged through cycles in which data collection, data analysis and feedback were interwoven (Glaser and Strauss 1968; Bråten et.al 1983; Smircich 1983b). Nontraditional techniques like the use of animal metaphors (Berg 1983) and the writing of a imaginary letter to a friend that should take over the job of the informant were also employed to elicit assumptions.

From these cycles of data gathering and data analysis emerged the woolly contours of a picture. It was not clear cut nor was it expressed in slogans as suggested in the management literature. It is also doubtful that the models and concepts people use that are contained in the mind are clear cut concepts ready for presentation. This is also pointed out by Eden, Sims and Jones (1979). Neither would we expect the meaning embedded solely in words (Marshall and MacLean 1985) to be the main medium of the researcher. We would expect that is implicit in a whole range of symbolic means, as well as in the wholeness of the

situation; meaning is "being in relation", as Linda Smircich puts it (Smircich 1983 c). The content of the organizational paradigm and its set of basic assumptions are accordingly based on "interpretations" of interpretations, but are grounded in the everyday world of the organization members and are validated or rendered some credibility through feedback cycles.

We did not find slogans that embedded the essence of meaning in the organization as, for instance, suggested by some of the relevant literature. Neither did we find any evidence of well known stories in which core values were implicit, the existence of which is claimed by some researchers in the field (Clark 1972, Martin 1983, Martin et.al. 1983). Meaning was rather found to be elusive and implicit in the mundane, enacted and spontaneous realities of the organization. This does not, however, exclude the existence of ritualistic functions as performed by such things as meetings (Smircich 1982), feasts and celebrations (Deal and Kennedy 1983), aspects we also found to play a role in forming and sustaining the system of meaning. A pattern of assumptions which dimly emerged from our interactions can loosely be described as follows:

The shaping of experiences and channelling of behaviour at INC seemed to rest upon an assumption of INC and INC'ers as performing important tasks. The knowledge produced and the services delivered by INC are considered to be of utmost importance to the oil exploring industry and consequently to the welfare of the nation. INC is, however, operating in an environment that is, according to prevailing assumptions, characterized by latent and occasionally manifest hostility. Especially influential actors in the governmental research systems do not share INC's perception of their own roles, and at times are even considered to envy INC's success. INC'ers pretend they do not like, or at least are tired of wars, but simultaneously they hold it to be important to master their own destiny, and that it is possible to fight back.

When it is possible to master their own destiny, it is mainly because INC and INC'ers are outstanding in what they are doing. With excellent researchers as their crucial resource they deliver high quality products that are better than those of their competitors. INC'ers consider work to be fun, that being busy is fine, and that there are no sharp division between work time and spare time. It is the executing part of work that is appreciated; doing rather than planning. However, the performance and the results should correspond to high professional standards of quality.

Results are achieved, to a large extent, because people are willing and able to take on responsibility. This ability, and willingness is however felt to presuppose and justify freedom - at least from the feeling of being checked and controlled. Furthermore, and partly related to the assumptions about freedom and control, INC'ers do not take on responsibility for the sake of others, unless others take the initiative, and in that case "doors will be opened." Therefore newcomers have to learn the hard way. It is therefore seen to be important to give feedback, or to confront, when something is felt to be wrong. This should, however, be done without screaming too loud, or being too nasty about it, even if that is accepted from some people.

Although this description has validity in the sense that it channels the interpretation and

consequent enactments of the members of the organization, it does not give a full and accurate description of the interpretation system of the organization. This is especially so because the focus of the account is rather general in character. The description of assumptions as models of interpretation could have been more focused on certain types of tasks and situations. However these would be related to, and within the logic of, those presented.

One issue is the substance of the interpretation system these assumptions are supposed to reflect. Another point they implicitly demonstrate is that organizations are unique. The idiosyncratic aspect of meaning in organizations is demonstrated explicitly by Schein. Seeing shared meanings in organizations as a set of interlocking assumptions he presents the GEM company observed by Gibb Dyer (1982). It seems to operate on one set of interlocking shared assumptions (organizational paradigms) which is different from another company observed by Schein operated on a different paradigm:

GEM Corporation

- ideas come ultimately from individuals;
- people are responsible, motivated and capable of governing themselves, however;
- truth can only be pragmatically determined by "fighting things out" and testing them in groups;
- such fighting is possible because the members of the organization view themselves as a family who will take care of each other. Ultimately;
- this makes it safe to fight and be competitive.

"Schein Corporation"

- truth comes ultimately from older, wiser, better-educated, higher-status members;
- people are capable of loyalty and discipline in carrying out directives;
- relationships are basically lineal and vertical;
- each person has a niche that is his or her territory that cannot be invaded;
- the organization is a "solidarity unit" that will take care of its members.

FIG. 2.1 THE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS IN TWO ORGANIZATION S

Schein points out that the manifest behaviour in these two organizations and the way they tackle their tasks and challenges are different. In the first case, one observes mostly open office landscapes, few offices, open doors, a high rate of milling about, intense conversations and arguments, and a general air of informality. In the second organization, there is a hush in the air; everyone is in an office with closed doors. Nothing is done except by appointment

and with a prearranged agenda. When people of different ranks are present, real defence rituals are apparent, as well as obedience, and a general air of formality permeates everything (Schein 1984).

The living history

INC's system of meaning was presented as an unique set of shared assumptions. There are, however, several impressions and observations that makes us modify the conception of a completely unified system.

IT WAS stipulated that the system of meaning was socially constructed by past actions and interactions (Berger and Luckman 1967). Consequently, the symbolic forms of today include the sediments of past interactions. The system of meaning was held to 1) provide continuity, control, integration and identity to its members (Louis 1983) and 2) offer solutions to problems of external adaptation (Schein 1984). In INC's system of meaning we could dimly recognize the struggles of early days. These days the company leads an insecure existence, new threats pop up continuously and the company IS forced to change locations several times. There also seem to be traces of the many other struggles against integration with other institutions during recent stages of its history:

One of the previous managing directors put it this way; "INC has acquired the shape of a raindrop always having to move against the stream. During the insecure existence of the first five - six years of its life, INC moved to another town, but also in the following ten year period its offices became scattered and the frequent change of some of its locations has resulted in a desire for reunion in one house. The amount of parties and celebration, the high degree of participation in organized INC sporting activities alongside the espoused obsession of keeping together is seen as a reflection of these partly externally imposed threats. All in all a phrase coined by Malinowsky seem to capture the situation: The system we observe is "a piece of living history."

Creating and recreating forces

There are other aspects of INC that modify the picture of a unified system of meaning. In one way INC exists as some kind of totality. As a company it is an institution by law, it possesses structural arrangements which are enforced to varying degrees and these, as well as management activities, serve as points of reference (Smircich and Morgan 1982) for the development of native understanding. These features loosely encapsulate INC as a totality.

However, there is still an allowance for a variety of organizational situations to develop. The common ways of perceiving and organizing experience can be seen as some sort of unity in the foreground, whereas there are contradictions that to some extent exist "in the background" of that unity. These contradictions are found in the various kinds of

variations in the INC system of meaning which seem to be related to the different nature of relationships that exist between different groups of members of the organization and the system of meaning.

Variations in the system of meaning

Members of INC are for example at any time also products of and members of various settings. This is wisely put by Sorrokin:

"It represents the coexistence of cultural systems - partly harmonious, partly indifferent, partly contradictory to one another - plus the coexistence of many congeries that have somehow entered the individuals local culture and settled there"
(Sorrokin 1966: 32,33).

INC'ers differ socially, educationally and geographically. They are parts of different settings; unions, families and neighbourhoods again encompassing other members inhabiting other complex realities. One variation at INC was constituted by underlying assumptions in different departments. These probably derived from such factors as differences in task and office location and also expressed themselves in different styles and rituals. The most obvious to detect and identify, however, were those related to educational and professional background factors.

Group differences are known to exist among researchers and product developers in high tech companies (Gregory 1983). At INC there were two types of researchers; the chartered engineer and those having a research degree from a university. Both types are found in all departments, fulfilling, generally speaking, the same kind of functions and occupying the same kind of positions. But INC'ers are very aware of the differences between the two groups. Indeed, they make friendly jokes about it. A common attitude seems to be that the chartered engineer is more readily able to adjust his or her ambitions and professional standards according to the economy of a particular project, whilst the university type of researcher is geared towards academic standards and finds it harder to adjust. The chartered engineers are also more at ease with group work projects, whilst the other group tends to prefer to work alone humorously pictured by others as the old fashioned geologist carrying a rucksack with hammer and chisel in hand.

The marketing orientation sustained by the present top management and some of the most influential old stagers, was also met by greater skepticism from the research oriented group, who argued that the market orientation would easily result in a repetitive work situation and a less interesting professional knowledge base. This argument was challenged by the view that a marketing orientation would create an economic platform for the interest in academically rewarding projects. Those supporting this stand were - apart from the managing director - those acknowledged by others as the entrepreneurs, often with

backgrounds as chartered engineer. This acknowledgement could partly account for the contradiction between these different orientations which seems to represent latent rather than manifest tensions, as there seem to be little heavy disagreement resulting in bitterness related to the actual decisions in this area.

The veterans or old stagers, a group of researchers who have stayed with the company and occupy a special status, constitute another type of group. They are mentioned - by name - as good informants and as typical INC'ers by organizational members. To some extent they are held to be different, as the newer members tend to state that, "things do not matter so much to me as to them". With some frustration they are also said to operate as if the company still had only 50 employees (it now had more than three times that number). The old stagers are formally, and also through informal networks, heavily involved in the management of the company. They possess important positions, for instance as heads of departments, or perhaps even more importantly, they replace the heads of department when they are away, which is very often. The old stagers tend to have a chartered engineer background, their INC identity is very strong, and they are concerned with freedom of action for INC, and are often in favour of growth. The adherence to the INC assumptions is strongest in this group; which would correspond closely to what Martin and Siehl (1983) have labelled an enhancing subculture with the exception that the authors assume this to be an organizational enclave, whilst at INC, the members are scattered in several departments.

The individual and the system - beyond unity

When analyzing the issue of unity in the system of meaning, the relationship between the system and the individual comes in quickly. This reflects one of the most basic issues in social science. It is, however, also quite clearly reflected in the observations. Some examples will be given initially, then the issue will be discussed in relation to some of the relevant literature. Various modes of integration between the individual and the system were spotted when tapping into the variations in the system of meaning at INC. At INC the old stagers could - by exaggeration - be characterized as "cultural replicates", somewhat like Whyte's Organization Man, or Maccoby's Company Man.

On the other hand those members of the organization that perform supportive or help functions, secretaries, technicians, laboratory assistants and the like seem to relate to the system of meaning in a different fashion. To a large extent the INC'ers occupying these kinds of positions espouse the same assumptions and share the same overt behavioural style as the above mentioned. They do, however, tend to talk about INC and related issues in more rarefied and distant terms. It is also particular among these people that one finds the emphasis on a typical INC'er being a researcher. Furthermore, it is organizational members from this category, especially their most vocal spokespeople, that point out that the work environment at INC can be rather tough, and one of them stated that working at INC

was "no ... Sunday school".

When thinking conceptually about the issue of various modes of integration between the system and the individual, this issue seems closely related to the one concerning the location of culture. This has been a matter of basic dispute in the social sciences. Is culture located in "the system" of the individual? Goodenough, a leading anthropologist in ethnoscience of the cognitive school, for instance holds culture to consist of whatever one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to society members, and defines it as "a system of standards for perceiving, evaluating, and acting" (Goodenough 1971:41). Clifford Geertz, a leading anthropologist in the symbolic school, however, strongly opposes the idea that "culture is located in the minds or hearts of men", a view he holds to be "the main source of muddlement in contemporary anthropology" (1973:11). "Culture is public, because meaning is".."it does not exist in someone's head", is an arguments he puts forward, emphasizing that meaning is public, not private (Geertz 1973:10,12). Following Weber, Geertz states that "man is an animal suspended in a web of significance he himself has spun".

Other authors in the field point out that Goodenough has a conception of culture as a composite of what is shared and public (Keesing 1973:85) and will not acknowledge that the difference between the two is significant as claimed by Geertz (Sanday 1979). One says for example that "Culture must be thinkable and learnable as well as livable" (Keesing 1987:86). In suggesting a framework for the study of organizational culture, Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) chose a way around this epistemological problem; they rely upon a symbolic perspective, but compromise by proposing and emphasizing the (Goodenough) term "cultural competence" to connote the various modes of personal integrations of the public system of symbols. The complete lack of such competence would indicate some kind of cultural alienation.

Looking again at the type of INC'er who would say that INC was no Sunday School one could ask whether they had a estranged relationship to the organizational system of meaning. I think not. Their espoused theories and overt behaviour were the same. Furthermore it is a point that there does not exist any vivid alternative; the subgroups seem more or less to reflect variations of a theme (Martin and Siehl 1983). Furthermore, important features are being imposed by dominant members of the organization who operate a kind of model monopoly (Bråten 1973). However, it should not immediately be inferred that the individual's relationship to the system is straightforward.

One example that might serve to illustrate this is of a technician who was a union spokesman and who had served a relatively short time with INC. He was amongst those most critical to the values and ideas he saw as representing INC, emphasizing that it was a researcher

oriented culture, and that it had a dark side with many negative factors. Shortly afterwards - on a very nice spring Friday - we found that on his own initiative he worked overtime until nine o'clock in the evening before visiting a friend in another town by plane. He had to finish some important work!

Another puzzling problem was the relationship between meanings and their manifestations. The researchers at INC had, for example, adopted a seemingly easy going "style"; a bit messy and woolly, but extremely hard work periods during times of a project deadline. It is possible that this rhythm, or lack of rhythm, follows from, and also suites, the nature of their work - creative periods at times, but more straight forward and routinized at other times. However, some, but far from all, participants in other occupational groups adopted the same behavioural style. It is doubtful whether this had the same meaning to them as to the researchers. Possibly they adopted this behaviour because it attracted them, or doing so made the work here different from that of other organizations. However, even if this style might suit the work of a researcher, it did not suit the work of the administrator. And to some extent this also seemed to be a source of strain.

In INC it seemed to be the old stagers who had the most integrated relationship to the systems of meaning as described. It reflected their own history, and there seemed to be some sort of congruency between the models they used and those that were embedded in the artifacts of INC. What we see here is a representing of an issue that shall be dealt with in more detail later on. The system of meaning is the source for the search for solutions to problems. In a sense that means old solutions to new problems if the sources of problems change.

The old stagers did not for instance seem to realize the need for a formal administrative structure in the shape of better management information and control systems. This was a need underlined by management as a consequence of heavy growth and some cases of over expenditure on several projects. The growth in size was realized in terms of rational understanding, and therefore, an understanding of the need for such systems was espoused. New systems were, however, met by a ritualistic sort of reaction and ways were found around them. The younger generation on the other hand, seemed to be more understanding of the needs behind more formality when it came to the use of resources. Some of them also expressed the view that the old stagers thought and operated as if INC still had only 50 employees, but now the actual number had increased to three times that much.

Another side of the issue of not seeing new problems evolved around the assumption of being good and better than the competitors related to what the customers tended to think. Whereas this established assumption seemed coincident and stable, the customers gradually seemed to be more critical. obviously this would create a problem sooner or later if allowed

to develop. This problem will also be discussed in the section on “unity and variation”.

Structural system and system of meaning - contradiction or congruity?

The issue of the old stagers, as opposed to the younger generation, now seeing the need for tighter administrative systems connects to the INC assumption of, “Taking on responsibility justifies freedom”. It also relates to another issue concerning the degree of unity in and around the system of meaning. New management information and control systems were supported and enforced by an outsider hired as Administrative Manager, and even the old stagers espoused support for the aims of tighter controls, but in actual practice organization members did not seem to consider control legitimate. The filling in of forms, and accounting for minor expenses explaining the need for this and that, were rather seen as an insult. Organization members felt that they were productive, clever, profitable and hardworking and therefore were entitled to be seen as responsible persons capable of making judgments. This situation was creating manifest, as well as latent, tensions in the organization.

This observation throws light on the claim that the social system and the system of meaning are conceptually separate. In this case there is a tension between them. This is in line with Geertz saying these systems are capable of a wide range of modes of integration of which the simple isomorphic mode is but a limiting case (Geertz 1973:144). Others have taken this further by suggesting that the relationship between them can be characterized by degrees of tension or legitimation. The social structural system can for example be or not be legitimized by the system of meaning (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984).

In the INC case there was a tension between these systems. Even if the study was not a longitudinal one, resilience of the system of meaning could be spotted by focusing on this tension. At the time of the study the administrative procedures to some extent seemed to be developing towards something one did because one had to. In other words, the point was to fill in the forms rather than to have them reflect something correct and important. The resilience and power of the established assumptions seemed, however, to lead to enactments finding the way out of the basis organization and into the project organization. By this is meant that the various research projects had their own budgeting and control systems and the employees found ways to use these in a more flexible way.

Unity and variations - stability and change

So far a coinciding system of meaning have been described and some factors that modifies the conception of a static unified system have been pointed at. It has been demonstrated how it could be seen as a piece of “living history “ and showed how the image of unity and homogeneity should be understood towards a background of variation and differentiation. This is observed from several positions; there were various group variations, and there were tensions between the structural system and the system of meaning, etc.

It would seem that these tensions and variations would create some kind of change and development. Tensions could be seen as constituting the organizational vitality by representing, for example, a latent interpersonal dialogue (Bråten 1983) as well as an individual reflexivity (Winch 1958). On these grounds new perspectives could emerge and new paths be discovered and from these the organization might develop some kind of requisite variety (Ashby 1968).

What is striking, however, is the perceived stability of the system of meaning in spite of the before stated possible prospects for change. There was an impression of persistence in the system of meaning. This was to some degree implicit in the sense that what was communicated to us as what is, was simultaneously communicated as what has been. When people explained the situation to us this was almost always done through some sort of historical glimpse"; "this is how it is" was illustrated with examples reflecting that it had been like this for quite some time. The situation today is not only the living history in the sense that it reflects past experiences, but also in the sense that it lives on.

This point must also be understood against the background of the organization going through a considerable degree of change over the last years. It moved for example in a few years from being totally government dependent to being self reliant, at the same time as it increased the number of employees by at least 60 %. Quite clearly some of the variations described increased in this period. Still the system of meaning seemed resilient. Old practices found, for example, new ways when new administrative systems made the established ones "impossible".

There is a general and psychologically inspired understanding in the organizational sciences that organizations develop several mechanisms that escalate commitment to a (organizational) course of action (Staw 1981). The existence of an organizational system of meaning is one more reason for organizations tending to keep to the established direction. The system of meaning offers solutions that have developed in response to previous problems. This becomes a barrier to change. The system of meaning appears as conservative (Starbuck 1981, Lorsch 1985) and self-prohibiting in nature (Argyris and Schon 1978, Herman-Taylor 1985). The collectivity of organizational models implies predictability, but that predictability implies, on the other hand, conservatism. Channelling the way collectives interpret and enact their environment in a sense also means having "blinders" on. "Seeing is also not seeing", as it is said.

Organizational frames

It is at this point that there is a need for a term. The notion of organizational "frame" seems handy to focus on the objective. That is, to relate the outlined theoretical perspective to the

problem of organizational change. And to do so in a way that captures the implications of the perspective for the problem in question. "Frame" is usually understood as giving shape to something at the same time as it is the borderline between that something and other things. It includes and excludes. At the same time frame is also understood as something that is rigid and does not vanish easily. Organizational frames connotes the organizational quality of channeling attention and energy in a persistent way, as per the following explanation.

By using examples from INC I have developed and explained a perspective on organizations focusing meaning as an important aspect of organizations. This means that organizational actions can be seen as being rooted in some kinds of "models" of tasks, conditions, problems and relationships in the environment. These models allow people to pose questions and obtain tentative answers before the external world is acted upon. It is essential to note that meaning is taken for granted, meaning that people to a large extent do not realize which meaning they attribute to the language, body language or behaviour style they are confronted with. They "just do it". The phenomenon might be illuminated by the old Chinese saying: "The fish is the last one to discover the water". A substantial amount of people's actions and interactions are carried out as if they are on automatic pilot. This is possible because people to a large extent share models with others (Geertz 1973, Schein 1985).

This constitutes a paradoxical phenomenon: By providing interpretation the system of meaning comprises preconditions for human creation and activity. However, they also constitute a barrier on learning, self reflection and consequently on peoples (inter)actions. This is so because it is shared, taken for granted and embedded in social patterns. "To see is also not to see." We can now return to the beginning of this section, because this is the main reason for choosing the notion of organizational frames. The interpretation models of the organizational system of meaning actually frame organizational thinking and acting and thereby organizational processes.

Organizational frames is therefore defined as collective models of and for organizational action that channel interpretations and enactments of situations. Organizational frames become embedded in the social structures of the organization. Organizational frames provide meaning and direction, but are also barriers to change.

Before relating organizational frames more clearly to organizational change, I want to discuss two issues. First, how do we conceive of an organization characterized by organizational frames? Second, what is the relationship between frames and the organizational territory.

Organizations as frameworks

Now, what is the conception of an organization? Does the view presented imply that

organizations are something one wouldn't find by looking for them; that "organization" is a myth, somewhat like when Weick describes organizations as "bodies of thought" or "sets of thinking practices"(Weick, 1979)? In a way it is. I would, however, like to add a few points. First, it is important to realize that the organization is a collective undertaking created and developed through human interaction, where both knowledge and the environment are created by the participants interactively. An organization exists as meaning that is enacted in a setting of other enactments.

As has been pointed out, meaning resides in the prosaic (inter) actions constituting the ongoing pattern of organizational life. The frames mirrored in these acts play a role of both product and process as precarious factors in the ongoing social process by which they are constituted. As pointed out, man might, however, forget his authorship to the manifested meanings that play this crucial role in the ongoing process of organizing. The socially constructed reality is apprehended as something other than a human product (Berger & Luckman, 1967)

It is important that this idea is not to be understood in the sense that the organizational frames exists as perfect and total replications in the individual. In the creation of these frames there is dialogue and reflexiveness involved. People's personal and social backgrounds and their participating in other "organizational territories" matters. But we see historical processes of interaction in and outside the focal organization are most important. Actions, events and things in this context constitute " the point of reference" (Smircich and Morgan 1982) for the development of organizational frames. The way newcomers are socialized into the organization is important for the degree to which frames become shared (Van Maanen, 1977; Louis 1981), and length and intensity of the common experiences of a group, as well as homogeneity and stability of group membership also seems to be important factors in this respect (Sathe, 1983; Schein,1985).

Against this background the mode of integration between individual and organizational frames is seen as what Allaire and Firsirotu calls partial replication (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984:212). This means that there evolves and subsists a communality of frames among the various organizational actors. This facilitates their interaction and serves to make sense of their situations. And, the communality is strong enough to conceive of them as organizational frames.

In the case of INC, there is another phenomenon of relevance here. It was pointed out that differences in frames existed between different groups. What was observed was characterized as variations of a theme. In other words, that the mentioned partial replication varied between different groups. This is the most common case. It can, of course, also mean that groups have frames related to issues that reflect subject matters that are not

relevant for other groups. But in that case they must relate to the shared one in some logic or supportive way. The possibility that there are "countergroups" in an organization can not be excluded. That would quite obviously create a special issue for the organizational dialectics. A few would even argue that some organizations are so loosely coupled that the group rather than the organization would have to be the main unit of analysis. That would be a case of exception.

It should be underlined that the conception of organizations characterized by organizational frames should be understood against the background of these sources of tension and variation. Previously it was indicated that there was a tension between the system of meaning and that of social structure, and this shall be discussed in more detail in the next section. It will now be suggested that the idea of organizational frames points towards the idea of an organizational framework. The term "living metaphor" has been used in relation to organization. It is supposed to connote that there, in a sense, is no such thing as an organization (Berg 1983). At best, it is said, the term organization applies to the state of organizational processes at a particular point in time.

Organizations should for many purposes rather be understood as "organizing" (e.g. Weick 1978). On the other hand, essential aspects of these processes are constituted by organizational frames. "Organization as framework" is suggested to connote that organizations are constituted by a variety of frames. Framework implies the channelling aspect discussed related to frames. It also suggests that these frames fit together in a supportive system.

It is necessary, however, to discuss how the system of organizational frames relates to change. Especially because it was indicated that variations and tensions could be a source of framework change. A special issue of relevance is the relationship between "the map and the territory", which needs discussing before focusing on change.

Organizational frames and the territory

What does the subjective character of organizations imply for the relationship between meaning and the social system. It has already been claimed that meaning become embedded in the social patterns of an organization. In fact a strong argument for choosing the notion of organizational frame was made. What does this mean for the epistemological meaning attributed to that notion?

Does the concept of organizational frames indicate that Thomas is completely relied upon in the assertions about the relationship between "the map and the territory"? Thomas phrased it like this: "If people define situations as real, they become real in their consequences," a statement having an obvious relationship with Merton's concept of "self fulfilling

prophecies". The territory is neither subjective nor objective in the usual sense. This is implied by the suggestion that meaning is created interactively, which was suggested earlier on. Let us still consider the question of status of the means of interpretation. Weick has been concerned with this issue, arguing that it is not the environment as such that constrains actors and organizations, but enacted environments created by the organization. He holds maps to constitute essential vehicles in the creation of reality and suggests that.

"Maps do structure the territory sufficiently so that someone can initiate activity into that territory, activity that may introduce order..."

He goes on to comment on Hayakawa who rejects Thomas in his statement that "the map is not the territory". Weick's view is that in spite of there

"...being grains of truth in the display confronted by the member, ...additional objects of thought include maps of the organization that are treated as if they were territories, beliefs through which people see the organization, and acts that provide the pretest and raw material for sense making."

"(Weick, 1979:46)

This means that people are confronted by a complex fabric of physical objects, events and actions, where meaning is embedded in this "display". These meanings, or more specifically, these frames, result from historical processes of interaction and represent seeds for new maps. In the next phase, it is these maps that shape, or bear upon, action and interaction. From this one can also understand that following positions like "the map is the territory if we treat it as such" (Ball, 1972), or conceptions of organizations as "artifacts of individual ways of representing organizations" (Argyris and Schon 1978), does not imply that organizations are just "projections of people's thoughts".

Using popular terms one could turn the old saying "I'll believe it when I see it" upside down: "I'll see it when I believe it". To keep to their terminology, the map is an important part of the territory, and the territory is often adjusted to the map, rather than the other way around. Organizational frames are frames also in the meaning of being embedded in the "territory".

Still, it must be remembered that the system of meaning is conceived of as conceptually separate from the actual network of social relations. This is both difficult to grasp and express. It means that organizational frames are both embedded in the social patterns, but are still conceptually different from them. This results from the fact that there are also other factors influencing the social system. The environment can act on behaviour and groups so that their actions are other than what would follow from their frames. In organizations this can for example happen as a result of formal structure or some sort of coercion. (Although this does not mean that those forming structure or using coercion can "program" the

behaviour they want).

Meaning is seen as lying behind the realm of observable events. Still this should be understood in light of the possibility that discontinuities can exist between the system of meaning and the social structure of an organization. The formal organization is a formal setup that can be manipulated and influence organizational frames that develop over time. It will, in different ways, function as a point of reference for their construction.

The nature of framework change

It has been argued that organizations channel interpretation and action, and it has also been suggested that variation and tension are characteristics of organizational processes. What then is the nature of change processes inherent in the framework? This is a relevant question since variation can be seen as playing an important part in the organizational dialectics: The dialogue can be held to be the basis for conscious processes (Mead, 1934). Accordingly, the crossing of frames, rather than the monolithic situation, is held to constitute the basis for organizational vitality (Bråten 1983).

Participants' enactments have been described as partly automatic responses and partly reflexive actions based on actors frames. Participants frames as important factors in the social process of organizing are also seen often to be hidden or taken for granted. Furthermore, there is also often a discrepancy between the theories people say they use and those that actually govern their behaviour (Argyris & Schon 1978). This could call for a conception of a double character of organizational life (Hennestad 1990). An illustration of one aspect of this conception is beautifully illustrated by Meyer's and Rowan's (1977) already classic article "Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony". They demonstrate how formal structure might be decoupled from technological requirements but fulfil ritualistic and legitimizing external and internal functions; rational arguments are put forward to account for structural requirements - people say what is expected of them.

Therefore, it can be argued that organizational processes in a sense tend to take place behind the back of the participants (Hennestad 1987, 1990). There is, therefore, a tendency for organizations, in spite of rational attempts, to develop rather by accident. There is no real crossing of perspectives. New challenges, problems and ideas are met with solutions and reactions drawn from the reservoir of yesterday's problems and solutions. People do not realize, however, that this is the case.

This seems to bear similarity with other authors who have conceptualized in various ways that organizational processes tend to remain within the same basic logic (e.g. Watzlawick et al. 1974 and Argyris & Schon 1978, Starbuck et al. 1978). In practical terms this is illustrated by the saying that it is (in spite of everything) easier to learn to "do things right

than to learn to do the right things". This self-sealing dynamic is also hypothesized to be amplified by mechanisms of model monopoly. The theory of model monopoly draws attention to the power of mental models. It suggests that when a model weak actor interacts with a model strong actor about a certain agenda, the model strong will increase its control over the other, even if both parties wish to reduce the differences between them (Bråten 1973).

The conclusion is that organizations as a framework tend to reject change that exceeds the existing basic organizational logic. The organizational frames tend to remain the same, or making it clearer, what does it mean that organizational processes tend to remain within the same logic? How does that relate to the issue of organizational reframing?

Reorientation and reframing

Organizations relate to their environments and perform their tasks in different ways. The way they do this is essential for their quality of performance and degree of success. A loose term for this inclination to cope with tasks and subsequent problems in specific ways is known from popular use as well as the literature as orientation (e.g. Nystrom, Hedberg and Starbuck 1981). The term implies that the organization provides specific ways of interpreting things, events and actions and enacts those interpretations. For instance one can say that a particular organization are market oriented or production oriented. Or one can more explicitly describe the orientation of an organization as like this or that. This suggests that the organization follows a special direction, but orientation also suggests that the organization has certain biases and emphases when choosing actions that adds up the direction.

The phenomenon of organizational orientation is clearly related to the framing properties of organizations. It is the channelling quality of organizational frames that creates organizational orientations. This is important because changing the tasks of an organization, or the way an organization copes with this, implies that foci and priorities must be altered; again implying the members of the organization must reorient their collective interpretations and enactments. The problems related to the task of managing this is then related to the nature of such organizational orientation(s).

It is, however, organizational frames that are channelling the way organizational situations are defined and enacted. This implies that the organizational framework is "producing" the organizational orientation. I suggest that the organizational orientation is continuously produced and reproduced by the fact that organizational frames are channelling organizational processes. Reorientation of organizations will consequently be dependent upon the organizational framework to change.

The thrust of the argument has up to now been that organizational frames not only channel collective understanding and action, but also that organizational frames are inherently conservative, a feature that is reinforced by their taken for granted nature. Organizational frames are enacted, and in the words of Clifford Geertz, frames “reside in the acts” of the organizations. Not only is this seen as the situation where the pattern of action confronting people reflects the established framework, it is also embedded in and reflected by organizational features like structures and systems. For instance, reward and information systems influence the way people think about and actually cope with their situations. This makes a reorientation task a reframing problem. The organizational framework has to be altered in order for reorientation to occur.

As outlined in chapter one the term reframing is known in the literature. Within the Palo Alto school on system-oriented psychiatric treatment it is used as a metaphor for enforcing a change on a particular kind of a situation in order to break up the implicit reciprocal expectations that causes a vicious circle in communication (Watzlawick et al. 1974). When using the term here, it is used slightly differently. Whenever, and for whatever reason, there is a need for reorienting organizational processes, the organization is faced with a situation that the established organizational framework will enforce the established orientation. This means that when management makes an effort at reorientating the organization they are, in actual fact, up to a reframing task as the established framework will “reject deviating” organizational thinking and acting. Organizational change, in the sense of reorienting organizational processes, is therefore a case of reframing the organization. The issue at hand is, therefore, how to accomplish reframing of organizations. The situation can be seen as follows:

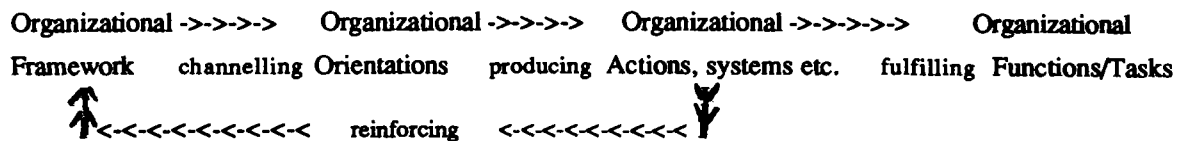


Fig. 2.2 ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL ORIENTATIONS

Organizations develop a persistent framework of organizational frames. By channelling interpretations and enacted understanding these frames form or produce the organizational orientation(s). By this is meant that the collective thinking and acting related to the organizational situations is created by the organization trying to accomplish its task(s). In doing this the organizational structures, systems and patterns of actions are produced, again strongly conditioning the degree to which the organization is fulfilling its functions and task(s).

Organizational reframing is defined as a change in the organizational framework - understood

as the system of organizational frames - in order to accomplish a reorientation of the enterprise. The problem is the lack of a "feed back loop" from the fulfilling of functions and tasks. As we can see from the figure that would demand a needed change in the task as reflected in ideas for new frames. It would also demand a breaking up of the reinforcement, or reproduction, of the established organizational frames.

Towards an understanding of reframing organizations.

This is a study of the management of change in order to accomplish a reframing of the organization. How can the issue be dealt with? What are the relevant and fruitful issues in this matter? We know that writers in related fields of interest have suggested, for instance, a focus on specific aspects in order to influence the processes of meaning production. It has been suggested that the system of meaning could be influenced by myth making, since myths define reality (Boje et al. 1982), by introducing language or producing stories for the same reason (Martin 1982, Evered 1983) or by collective self reflection (Marshall and MacLean 1985).

Attention has been drawn to the symbolic aspect of management by suggesting, for example, that managers are important role models (Peters 1978, Pfeffer 1982). Others have pointed towards the routines and standards of the organizations, suggesting, for example that the Rites de passage(s) constitute a medium for changing organizational interpretation (Trice and Beyer 1985) or for influencing the foci and priorities by manipulating the reward system (Sethia and Glinow 1985).

Such contributions reflect specific and interesting issues, but do not yield much help when considering the problem of developing a model for reframing organizations. Furthermore, looking at it from the practical side, I have over the years observed various kinds of measures taken to reorient organizations. I have seen managers relying on informing about change needs and appealing for renewed and changed action. This has been seen in the form of pamphlets and papers, pep talks and kick-off seminars signalling and pointing out a new time and a new course, as well as videos and internal TV used to spread the message. "Change and culture meetings" aimed at getting people involved in the ideas of a new course - sometimes also in giving it shape have been observed, as has the use of change groups formed to drive new solutions to the foreground as well as special sessions in established meetings focusing on new needs. Furthermore, the optimistic approach of redrawing the organization chart in order to create a new orientation has been observed. Surely, a combined selection of these measures can be observed, as well as new ways based upon top management judgment solely or upon various degrees of local involvement and dialogue.

Against this background the challenge seems to be one of finding a rationale for what and where to focus given our problem and position. One can of course think of particular questions

to ask, like, what kind of messages should be sent to the organization, and in what form? What kind of analysis should be carried through? What kind of change organization should be set up? What kind of groups should it consist of, etc.? The kind of change processes we referred to are complex processes where results are hard to predict, if possible at all, and there are probably "...a high proportion of failures" (Mangham 1978) or a lot of changes that "did not happen" (e.g. Frank and Hackman 1984, Hennestad and Janssen 1989). Such questions therefore tend to be rather limited considering the overall problem.

There is some help, however, in the simple fact that what change efforts have in common is that they, in a sense, are external to the existing and on-going organizational processes (although they might influence and in some sense become part of them). Change efforts can aim at making the enterprise function differently. They can aim at producing other results by restraining (socio) structural aspects of the organization. Or, they can influence peoples ideas about what they do. In all cases they deal with the issue of redirecting organizational processes. Change actions are external to organizational processes and they are launched to change these processes internally.

This is a concept that is in line with the observations made by Fiol and Lyles (1985). They argue that a distinction should be made between organizational adaptation and (change) learning. Adaptation is seen as pure behavioural change with no associated learning. Learning presupposes cognitive (associative, knowledge) processes. This is taken to mean that adaptation can happen and be sustained as a result of external contingencies as, for example, a structural pressure of force. Learning, however, implies that cognitive changes over and beyond mere adaption has taken place. In the terms here this means reframing. To realize this, the external change activities must result in internal effects in line with the intended new orientation.

This analytical distinction is naturally more complex in the empirical reality. It is, however, useful as a loose guideline. Change efforts, as well as the enforced adjustments resulting from them, are seen as external processes. Organizational learning accomplished by them is seen as the internal aspect of the process. The focus of the study will consequently be on the relationship between external change efforts and the established organizational processes. What happens when efforts are made to influence and (re) shape organizational frames? What issues capture critical factors in this relationship? The aim is to identify some sort of strategic variables conceptualizing such factors.

Summing up, the organizational framework is seen as forming the organizational orientation. Reframing is necessary for organizations to change their orientations. The focus of the study is therefore the relationship between change efforts made to accomplish reframing and the established organizational processes. It is an endeavour to identify and conceptualize issues that

are of strategic importance when engaging in a reframing attempt . This is the first part of the problem. The other part of the problem is to propose guidelines for handling these issues, and to see how these propositions relate to each other and the task of reframing organizations.

In the next chapters, the approach to the first part of the problem, the development as well as the content of the findings are presented. The second last chapter develops and presents propositions and in the last chapter some ideas for how the propositions relate in a model of four modes of reframing organizations are put forth.

Chapter 3: Context, Data and Methods

The aims of this chapter are to present and discuss the design of the study. The setting of the study is first introduced and then the choice of appropriate methods is outlined and discussed. The choice of methodological guidelines are discussed before demonstrating how these were used in the actual collection and analysis of data. This is followed by a discussion of the issues of trustworthiness raised by the design of the study

The design of the study should reflect its purpose. To develop a model of and for reframing organizations should be understood in line with what Normann (1976:19) and Brunsson (1981:105) see as the innovation, creation and construction of concepts and language which should be fit for relating to and changing the social reality. This means that it is a problem of generating rather than testing theory. The conceptual knowledge the study seeks to develop should also consequently be empirically grounded in the sense of emerging from the empirical field.

It is necessary that the concepts and the following model that is developed are fruitful both for understanding and working with organizational reframing. They should be valuable for further research as well as for the actual task of reframing organizations. This is to be understood in the sense of highlighting fruitful issues to observe, suggesting guidelines to follow in approaching the problem, and tentative questions to ask, rather than giving stepwise instructions for "how to do it".

This is a problem because many organizations need to change the way they operate. For organizations to do so, their members must define and enact their tasks in new ways. When organizations identify and face a need for a major change, like a reframing task, they tend to define it as a change project, as an issue of priority, etc. Very often, but not always, management of organizations see a need for external help in cases like this. The reason for this is because of the lack of resources and/or competence. In both cases the task is seen as something extraordinary. This was also the situation in the cases of this study.

The setting

Management in these organizations had identified a particular need for change and they had also seen a need for extraordinary efforts to be invested in that task. They had consequently defined that as a change project and also called for external (expert) help by contacting a consultancy firm. This means that this is a study on the sort of reframing process which involves external (consultant) help. This is a fairly common sort of situation as external help is very often involved when facing change needs of different kinds. In principle this implies that the model generated from this setting is one which concerns reframing organizations with external consulting help. This kind of situation is probably not that qualitatively different from one

characterized by the lack of external help in terms of what critical issues confront the reframing endeavour. This will be discussed later.

This sample of cases can be characterized as purposeful rather than random. They can be seen as yielding fruitful information about the problem challenged by the study. A purposeful, or theoretical, sample is generally seen as most suitable since the purpose is one of generating rather than verifying theory (Patton 1980:105, Glaser and Strauss 1967:48). This particular sample is purposeful since the cases are characterized by serious change attempts relevant to the problem of the study. They are also purposeful considering the fairly general character of the problem. Relating to this there is nothing extraordinary or very special about these organizations that would make the issue of relevance for other settings particularly problematic. The sample is composed of business organizations of different sizes and industries, etc.

Another criteria for choosing the sample is the somewhat pragmatic, or convenience, element involved. The cases were actually available for research. This is due to the fact that the same consultancy firm assisted in all the cases. It supplied a consultant as project leader, one for each organization, occasionally assisted by other consultants. The meaning of the notion of project leader would vary in the various organizations, but in all cases they were supposed and expected to fill a central role in the project. And in all cases their role as project leader in one firm occupied most of their time. The project leaders were integrated into the change efforts, activities and functions in each particular organization. As such, they were actors of the organizational field.

It is also essential, however, that they took part in the learning activities of the consultancy firm. It had laid down a policy of establishing a collective process of learning and knowledge development. That the consultancy firm constituted their professional platform and network also had attracted some of the case organizations. Both the project leaders and the other consultants had a responsibility in contributing to this process and also to using the experiences and knowledge produced in their work.

It was the role of the author to organize, assist and push this process for a period of slightly more than two years. In the first phase, four consultants were assigned half time to assist the process. In the second phase, that is most of the time of data collection, one consultant was assigned full time for the same purpose. The data was collected and analyzed in collaboration with the project leaders and other consultants. It was in a sense an interactive study. The process of research was designed to have new understanding evolve in the interaction between the researcher and the actors of the field. This issue will be discussed in further depth in the section on ecological validity.

Before going into detail about the principles and procedures used for collecting and analyzing data, however, what is called the “reframing agendas” shall be introduced. By that is meant the change needs and intentions of the various case organizations. This is to help in understanding what kind of change endeavour is reflected by the examples and quotations that will be used in generating the reframing concepts in the next chapters.

The reframing agendas

The kind of changes the firms wanted to achieve are described below. We have used the term “reframing agendas” to label the various change aims and ambitions. We have tried to give a presentation of the essence of what the firms wanted to achieve. The labels used in the firms for this vary. The notion of reframing was used very rarely by the members of the organizations. The reason for using the headline “reframing agendas” is that the change ambitions that management aimed to achieve implied a reframing task. This follows from the discussion in the previous chapters. The various reframing agendas and situations drawn upon in the empirical search can be described as follows:

Guaranteed delivery at Transport: The reframing agenda in Transport was to change the company from being characterized by inward orientation (move tons) towards a customer-oriented situation offering guaranteed transport services. Being able to deliver such services presupposed a change in focus and priorities at all levels supported by substantial structural alterations in the production system, the division of labour, responsibility, as well as other aspects of the organization.

The company was doing well at the beginning of the reframing project, but they then had to fight for short-term survival due to a significant drop in the market.

Order orientation at Furniture: The reframing agenda in Furniture was to change the company from being characterized by a traditional production orientation towards a situation with a higher degree of flexibility in the delivery/marketing system. The production had already shifted from traditional mass (series) production towards more order-oriented production. It was acknowledged (by management and union officials) that cultural, rather than structural or technical issues, constituted the main hindrance for making this shift effective; there was what we could call a “cultural lag”.

When the change effort started, the aim was towards solving future problems as the company held a strong market position and was doing quite well. After some time, however, the market changed considerably and the company found itself facing a crisis.

Local responsibility at Airline: The reframing agenda in Airline was to change the company

from being characterized by segmentation, centralization as well as functionalized orientation, towards a situation focusing on a higher degree of quality emphasizing responsibility for results and customer needs at all levels.

When the change efforts started, the driving force was future oriented in the sense of continuing current improvements in the company's situation which had been accomplished by strategic market actions. This changed, however, as the market dropped, competition increased as a result of change in government regulations, and costs increased more than had been estimated and more than were bearable.

Customer quality at Car Retailer: The reframing agenda in Car Retailer was to change the company from being characterized as "hard selling" towards focusing on customer quality. In more practical terms this meant going from pushing sales to developing an image based on a new organizational orientation of taking care of the customer after the sale. To do so would demand another orientation from the sales as well the service staff. It would demand an overall increased concern with long-term customer needs as the basis for new sales, and also increased revenue from services.

When the change efforts began, the firm was in a strong market position which it wanted to improve. The market had, however, started to drop considerably, a development that continued and got worse. This became particularly critical for several (geographically spread) independent sales and service units, whereas the central import unit to a larger degree adjusted its costs to the actual level of activity.

Production flexibility/integration at Electric Industry: The reframing agenda in Electric Industry was to change the company from being characterized by a traditional hierarchical production (technological) orientation towards focusing on a higher degree of integration of production, maintenance and planning. An important motivation for this was to reduce costs caused by fluctuations in demand.

The need for this was emphasized by an anticipated change in the almost monopolistic situation held by the firm which was now being threatened by an anticipated rationalization in the structure of this particular business sector.

Collective orientation at Money Market: The reframing agenda in Money Market was to change the (part of the) company from having an individualistic orientation characterized by ambiguity and myths concerning what and who created costs and income. Instead they wanted to create a more collective orientation characterized by consciousness and clarity about what and who caused, and were responsible for, costs and income.

Money Market was under significant pressure to reduce costs considerably.

Line orientation at Banking: The reframing agenda in Banking was to change the company from being characterized by a focus on centralization combined with a strong staff underpinned by a routine and procedure orientation rather than goal orientation among its members. They wanted to create a situation characterized by market orientation, profit orientation and change orientation at all levels. Within the established frame, market orientation seemed to mean “what the central marketing department does”, profit orientation meant “for which only the CEO can be held responsible” and change was seen as something which could only be initiated from the top.

When the change efforts started, the company was troubled by heavy losses.

Methodological guidelines

A context of discovery

The choice of methods for studying these reframing endeavours should reflect the theoretical perspective and the problem that is researched (e.g. Alvsson 1989). The problem of developing a model of reframing organizations is similar to what, in evaluation research, is called the black-box problem (Mehan 1979). Variables that can be defined in simple terms in advance tend to be so rough that they in a way would inherently conceal important issues and problems.

The problem is also characterized by being in the context of discovery rather than verification (Starrin et al. 1984). The aim is to discover or generate concepts that are able to highlight and distinguish relevant and important aspects of reality when engaging in a reframing endeavour. The foci and emphases are therefore qualitatively different from the kind of studies which aim at verifying concepts and testing propositions. The approach of the study and its choice of methods must reflect that it is within the context of discovery.

The choice has therefore been to have the focus on the process of generating, constructing and suggesting theory. The focus has been on the identification of important phenomenon and conditions when trying to accomplish a reframing of organizations. The identification and grounding of patterns have been emphasized in favour of the provisional testing by, for instance, constantly confronting the findings with negative cases and provisional testing of the findings. This means that the design has relied more on grounded-oriented research than other inductive approaches for theory development (Glaser and Strauss 1967:104).

Other ways of looking for what did not hold up can be integrated into the process of research. First, concepts suggested during the process of research should be dropped when they do not demonstrate empirical grounding when inspected further. Second, when patterns are identified, the understanding of them can be increased by considering in what way instances diverged

from them (Patton 1980: 328). This is in line with the recent view held by Strauss, who states that the focus when looking for what does not hold up is on qualifying questions and statements of relationships thereby adding variation and depth of understanding (Strauss and Corbin 1990:107-8). The various distinctions of the reframing concepts presented in Chapter Four were, for example, generated in this way. Third, as will be outlined in the section on analyzing the data, the research procedures included various forms of practical validation that will be outlined in the section on analyzing the data. The scrutiny following from the confrontation between observations, working concepts, etc., and potential users with field knowledge and experience filled, to a degree, the same function as the search for negative evidence would have.

When designing a study in the context of discovery, one should bear in mind that the planning of the study has to be present at all stages and it must be a reflexive process (Hammersley and Atkinson 1947:49). It must more or less continuously reflect the preliminary findings. Collection and analysis of data must be strategically governed by the emerging theory. This is what is called an emerging design in naturalistic inquiry (Patton 1980, Lincoln and Guba 1985 and Lincoln 1985).

The parallel drawn to this approach is also quite relevant since it deals with evaluating human interventions as they naturally appear. The change programmes explored in this study are such interventions, and the study evaluates, in a sense, what are important issues and variables in a natural context of managed organizational change. The study is naturalistic oriented in the sense that a situation is sought were the processes studied are not set up or intended to be influenced by the researcher. The methodology chosen should not demand concentrating on a restricted or small number of variables, a demand also considered a prerequisite for ensuring ecological validity (Hammersley and Atkinson 1987:27,31).

The meaning of an emerging design, however, is not that it is performed in a completely pragmatic manner. It should be directed by basic guidelines reflecting the characteristics of the problem and the theoretical perspective as well as the emerging findings. It has already been argued that the problem reflects a need for the generation of empirically grounded concepts. It is implicit that this means the application of inductive analysis in the sense that the findings should emerge from the data. Furthermore, these guidelines, together with characteristics of the setting, seem best served by an emphasis on qualitative oriented methods. What is meant by these three interwoven and overlapping guidelines is discussed below. Their practical application will be outlined in the sections on collecting and analyzing data.

A qualitatively-oriented approach

It is generally acknowledged that quantitative and qualitative methods have different advantages

(e.g. Jick 1979), but also that they can supplement and support each other. Qualitative methods were chosen in this particular case with key informants as the main source because they seemed best suited to capture what the study was after. The raw materials of qualitative research are, as Van Maanen puts it, “generated in vivo, close to the point of origin (Van Maanen 1979:520). Given the quest for unknown variables in a set of different organizations, a qualitative approach seemed a natural choice, best suited for grasping aspects of unstructured situations in relation to their wholeness (e.g Enderud 1984).

Lincoln and Guba argue that humans have properties that makes them particularly well suited to the task of being the major research instrument in a research like this one (Guba and Lincoln 1981:129-150). Human responsiveness and adaptability in relation to the particular situation being researched, the ability for holistic emphasis, the ability to make use of tacit knowledge (Polany 1966), and the possibility for using and following up their own knowledge base are all mentioned. These all seem valuable qualities for making use of the research setting in question with the purpose of discovering what are critical issues in the reframing endeavours, especially because many of the informants were, as is outlined in the next section, more than sources in the limited sense. It was continuously possible to utilize their human assets due to the meetings, in-depth interviews, informal contacts and prolonged engagement.

The choice of putting the stakes on a qualitative-oriented methodology is not a principle one in the sense of excluding that quantitative techniques could have been made use of, for instance, in pursuing particular problems in more detail and depth. The choice must be seen as closely related to the whole of the design issue, the other guidelines as are presented below, and the priorities that had to be made in view of these and the overall possibilities of how much it was possible to do.

An inductive and grounded process of research

Inductive analysis is used as a term in different approaches (Znaniecki 1934, Hammersley and Atkinson 1987). In this study it is used in line with how it is applied in modern evaluation research as mentioned above. In this kind of approach it is applied as it relates to the ideas of Grounded theory research. Following these two guidelines therefore means that the analysis is moving from data towards sensitizing categories and working concepts or hypotheses. This process aims at developing constructs which, in the words of Glaser and Strauss (1967:3), are intended to “fit the situation being researched, and work when being put into use”. The study starts with observations that key informants find interesting. These are then, as shall be outlined in the next section, compared to other observations. Through this process reframing concepts are generated. They are grounded in the sense that they are induced from data and also because procedures are followed in order to secure that they fit the situation being researched.

This means that there had to be a mutual interplay between the collection and analysis of data. The data collection should, in a sense, be strategically governed by the emerging theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967:43, 109) held the opinion that collection, coding and analysis of data should be done together as much as possible. They saw a definite separation as hindering the generation of theory. The procedures, for example, fed back to the key informants allow for both new interpretations to emerge and new data to be collected. This implies a sort of funnelled shape process in which the concepts develop from being sensitizing oriented towards being more clearly defined (cfr. Blumer 1954). This process of research, in line with Glaser and Strauss (1967:6,3), not only means that the concepts emerged from the data, but also that they were worked out to “fit the situation being researched and work when being put to use”.

The procedures used in the process of research were also designed to secure the credibility of data and interpretations. Tentative interpretations were confronted with key informants in meetings and interviews. These procedures were intended to be social tests (Enderud 1983) or a sort of practical validation (Arbnor and Bjercke 1977). They aimed at ensuring face validity, fruitfulness or merit (Lincoln and Guba 1978) as well as fit with the relevance system (Normann 1976). In other words, along the lines of Glaser and Strauss, they fit the situation and also could be used to improve understanding (Brunsson 1981). It was also intended that the procedures should add variation and depth to the conceptual understanding (Strauss and Corbin 1990) as well as constitute an opportunity for critical examination and reinterpretation (Hagg 1981).

Outlining the various forms of data collection will demonstrate that they involved some sort of triangulation as data were collected from different sources, by different methods and by investigators, thereby strengthening the credibility of the study (e.g. Kalleberg 1982). As you recall, the study involved a long-term engagement with the field. This was a prerequisite for the patterns described, and it allowed for funnel-shaped cycles between data collection and data analysis integrating the reinterpretations emerging from validation procedures as implied by grounded theory and recommended by, for example, Hammersley and Atkinson (1987). Although the processes of data collection and data analysis therefore overlapped and were partly integrated, we shall present the two aspects of the process of research separately so it will be possible to understand the research process in practical terms.

Collecting the data

The data were collected over a period of a bit more than two years. Five of the projects, Airline, Transport, Furniture, Money Market and Electric Industry had been in progress for about six months when the study began. The Car Retailer and Banking projects began some months after the study had started. The Furniture project was terminated a bit more than a year after the study started, the Money Market project some months before that as was the Electric

Industry project. In the Furniture case this was because the manager got into some problems and had to leave. In relation to Money Market the consultancy firm preferred to work with a competing enterprise, and the relationship between Money Market and the consultancy firm was terminated in mutual understanding. In Electric Industry there proved to be a different understanding between the consultants and the CEO on the degree of involvement needed by the CEO in the project.

Data collected from the project leaders in the various projects was the crux in the process of the research. Data was, however, also collected from other consultants working on the particular projects. In some cases data was also collected from key personnel in the various organizations. There was a sort of cybernetic relation (Burns 1967:155) between the author and the researched which was both complex and interactive; a relationship termed by some as clinical rather than analytical (cfr. Berg and Smith 1985). The presentation of the practical ways of collecting the data will make this relationship clearer.

Main foci in the two phases of data collection

The process of collecting data can be seen as having two phases. In the first phase, which lasted about four months, four employees (one was responsible for two firms) with some research experience cooperated with five project leaders to collect the project history because the projects concerned had been started before the research policy was launched. They were supposed to work half time for this purpose and half time assisting the project leaders. The strategy for data collection was changed in phase two, with a focus now on the present. One full-time employee was assigned to the author in order to help organize and carry through the data collection and analysis described in the following. Additionally, all other consultants were expected to take part in the process.

In the first phase the focus was on describing the initial situation of the firm as well as change activities and effects so far. This task was conducted by the consultants assigned to the research activities interviewing project leaders and all consultants that had been involved in the project as well as key people in the organization. Written material from the change activities and relevant management meetings, etc., were also examined. To a certain extent these consultants also were integrated in the organizations by assisting the project leader, so they could also use observational data. The group of people collecting this kind of data had regular meetings headed by the author to discuss methodological issues as well as to explore their observations and other pieces of data. In figure 3.1 we call this "Historic Data".

In the second phase information provided by the project leaders constituted the main source of data. Every second or third month each project leader wrote an observation report. When other consultants had been involved in the project in that particular period of time, they took part in

procuring the report. The report was supposed to give insight into challenges, problems, and progress of the project with a special emphasis on what was puzzling and creating after thoughts. They were instructed to keep a diary as a basis for their reporting. The project leaders were under heavy pressure, and they easily could have become victims of Gresham's Law; that the here-and-now activities tend to win over the long-term aspects. The notes were always produced although they were sometimes somewhat delayed. The exception was Banking. Due to several factors, such as a shift in project leaders, the reporting was poor in that particular case.

Meetings between leaders of the various projects provided another source of data. In these meetings the reports were presented for assessment and discussion in a meeting consisting of all the project leaders and supplemented by other consultants involved in the particular project that was discussed. These meetings served the joint purposes of learning from their own as well as others experiences and allowed the project leaders to get advice on how to perform better. They represented a forum for joint exploration. The other project leaders confronted what was presented with their own experiences, they asked for clarification and questioned when they did not understand or agree. The author participated in the discussions as a resource person, presenting tentative interpretations as well as synthesizing the discussions.

Notes from these meetings, together with the project leader reports, formed the platform for more focused in-depth interviews with the project leaders. The theme of the interviews were the concepts that emerged from the reports and subsequent discussions. The focus was on confronting them in more detail and depth with the different projects in order to produce or check empirical examples.

Additional sources of data

The collective meetings where tentative and suggestive conceptually-oriented papers were discussed were another source of data. The focus was on confronting reflections, issues and concepts with the experience of the whole group of consultants. Additionally, tacit knowledge acquired by the author as a member of the group of consultants was valuable to the understanding, interpretation and analysis of data. Taking part in the data collection in the diagnoses outlined below was valuable for the same reason. Sporadic formal and informal contacts with the field also provided such information. They occurred because people from the various case organizations dropped in, took part in meetings and seminars, etc., and also because some members from several of the firms took part in a management-development programme run by the consultancy firm. In figure 3.1 we call all the above kinds of data "Process Data".

Useful information was also provided by two organizational diagnoses that were carried

through primarily to support the change actions. This was done in Car Retailer and Banking for the purpose of identifying various barriers to change and where resources had to be concentrated in the change work. The author was involved in the designing and planning of these and also took an active part in the project group carrying one of them through. The descriptions and accounts provided by these diagnoses were helpful and fruitful in the further process of research. In figure 3.1 these have been called “Initial Diagnosis”. This is because “Closing Diagnosis” also was produced fed into the process of research. In Transport and Airline these were carried through when the project formally were closed as projects with external help (some minor activities were continued in Airline). The author drew up the guidelines and took part as a member of the project groups carrying these through. They focused on identifying what sorts of effects had been produced by the reframing efforts so far.

A special sort of Closing Diagnosis was made at Furniture. This project was terminated unexpectedly. This was due to a particular and, in as sense, unfortunate episode. The manager implemented some structural changes that caused riot among the employees, and the CEO decided to sack him. The diagnosis was based on interviews and a meeting held with the major actors involved in order to analyze and assess the processes leading up to the incident.

This means that some sort of initial organizational diagnosis existed for all projects; The Historic Data included a minor organizational diagnosis. This was more extended at Furniture which we have indicated in the figure. A closing diagnosis exists only from two of the cases. These all provided valuable background information that helped in understanding and asking questions about other pieces of data, and also provided descriptions of incidents and situations that were used in the generation of concepts.

	Historic data	Process data	Initial diagnosis	Closing diagnosis
Airline	x	x		x
Transport	x	x		x
Furniture	x	x	(x)	(x)
Money Market	x	x		
Electric Industry	x	x		
Car Retailer		x	x	
(Banking)		x	x	

FIGURE 3.1 TYPES OF DATA FROM THE CASES

We have indicated that “Banking” played a minor role in the study, and only a few examples from here are drawn upon. This is because data, as mentioned earlier, was scarce. The Airline, Transport and Furniture cases are those used most in the development of concepts. This is

because data that exists from these cases are the most extensive, due to such factors as the length of involvement, the degree of dedication from the project leader, special diagnosis and degree of collective attention in the consultancy firm. The (few) examples from Electric Industry reflect that there were problems in getting the project started.

Analyzing the data

The overall logic of analyzing the data was, as already mentioned, that themes and issues emerged and were adjusted, changed and integrated in a spiralling process between (data) reports, meetings, seminars, in-depth interviews and, of course, reflections. Issues reported as puzzling or important were compared to situations in other cases. What was done was very much along the lines suggested by Glaser and Strauss;

“In discovering theory, one generates conceptual categories of their properties from evidence, then evidence from which the category emerges is used to illustrate the concept. By comparing where the facts are similar or different, we can generate properties of categories that increase the categories’ generality and explanatory power.”
(Glaser and Strauss 1967:23/24)

In comparing the incidents and situations that were reported the focus was on identifying and establishing patterns that could be worked out as concepts. When similarities and differences discovered in this process seemed important for the prospect of the project to succeed then an issue, in a sense, became distinct.

The phases of analyzing data

The process of analyzing the data is interwoven in the process of collecting them. In the first phase several consultants were assigned the job of collecting and analysing data. The analyses were presented in papers on the project history of the five firms. The guidelines for the analyses were, however, laid down in research meetings chaired by the author, who also supervised the production of the five papers. These formed the basis for investigating all of the data from all of the firms. Differences and similarities in the different projects were searched for in order to discover any problematic issues or foci. The issues that emerged from this process were thereafter presented and discussed at workshops where all the consultants participated. The reactions and discussions qualified, supported and enriched the observations, interpretations and issues that were presented.

In phase two the dominant procedure was based upon the reports from the project leaders. The issues from phase one gave clues to what to look for in addition to giving a more general focus on what caused problems, what seemed surprising, etc. The author, assisted by one of the consultants assigned for such purposes, studied reports, reflected on them related to previous reports and reports from other projects etc. Based on these tentative issues, concepts, questions, etc, were noted and to some extent focused the attention in the further analysis as

well as they were compared to accounts given by other, for example in the project leader forum.

In that forum the reports were discussed with a fairly open agenda to see what was catching attention, and also with particular themes from the report focused on because they bore relationships to themes that had been observed in other cases. Based on the themes and issues from this process, the project leaders were interviewed in-depth about their report. In this process comparisons were continuously made across reports and projects. The analytical points were in confronting the issues in more detail and depth with the different projects and to producing or checking empirical examples.

On this basis notes were written outlining issues and categories that seemed to be fairly well grounded. These were again informally discussed as well as discussed and scrutinized in collective seminars. These seminars were, in other words, more conceptually oriented than the project leader forum, which had an emphasis on a particular project. The point was therefore to have a broad social check on the concepts presented to see if they made sense and seemed relevant in relation to the organizational realities of the various participants.

Integrated scrutinizing

The collective seminars offered the sort of forum where researchers would have been quite clearly told if the observations did not seem interesting or in any way attention catching, and they would probably have lost the engagement if this happened repeatedly. This corresponds to what Arbnor and Bjercke (1977:219) call practical process validation. These people would also tend to yield to what Arbnor and Bjercke call practical result validation. In other words, they would judge the usefulness of the tentative concepts for their work in the field as change agents. What is presented in this report are refinements of what escaped these processes, to a certain degree also providing new, and perhaps modifying or enriching, examples.

All in all this implies a spiralling process of reflection, an identification of issues and a confrontation between the reports, meetings and interviews. Issues were found not to be of interest or valid, or they were adjusted and enriched and formed and labelled as reframing concepts. The research process aimed at identifying patterns. Still, the process of research would mean scrutinizing the interpretations in several ways. The process was inherently a social test for face invalidity. If issues did not prove to have empirical support they would in a sense just disappear from further research. The issues that were judged valid were tested for ways they did not hold up in a sense that added variation and depth to the understanding, an important aspect of the search for negative evidence in this kind of research (Strauss and Corbin 1990:107-8).

Presenting the analysis

What is presented in the next chapters builds upon the process of research outlined in the previous sections. In a sense it is a phase three in the analysis that is presented. It utilizes what was developed in this process and draws upon written documentation from the various research activities presented. The choice of issues presented is consequently informed by the process of research described above. The above description outlines how the reframing concepts presented in this study emerged. This process is only to a limited extent demonstrated in the following chapters.

These chapters present the final analysis which builds on the process of research described. Chapters Four to Six demonstrate how the reframing concepts were grounded. Data are presented, to paraphrase Van Maanen (1979:520), by figuratively putting “brackets around a temporal and spatial domain of the social world to demonstrate the grounding of the various issues”. This makes it possible for the reader to follow the learning process of the author, which by some is considered crucial for the issue of trustworthiness (e.g. Normann 1976:66). In doing so, however, the content of the concepts are also explained as well as their grounding demonstrated. There is also a confrontation of the concepts with the data to see if they fit. In spite of this being two operations it appears in the report as one.

The empirical glimpses are examples from episodes or are limited parts of a change effort presented to show how the concepts are generated and grounded. They are grounded by the means of quotations from the participants, who are, as is evident from the above description, mainly the project leaders and other consultants. To some extent there are also quotations from other actors from the field. Two to four empirical glimpses, usually three, are presented because they demonstrate similarities or differences, and because these seem to reveal issues of central importance to the effects of the reframing efforts.

A set of empirical glimpses is presented as we explain how these, and the relationship between them, develop and ground one or more reframing issues. Sometimes a set of related issues are developed in sequence. This logic of presentation is somewhat deviated from in Chapter Five “Counterforcing Reframing Organization”. This is based on empirically-grounded participant speculations combined with theoretical and conceptual contributions from other authors. This chapter is written to meet a felt need for a conceptual clarification of the nature of the task of reframing organizations. This conceptual understanding developed in parallel and is related to the development of the reframing issues. By helping making more precise the understanding of the kind of situation from which the “reframing issues” emerge, this conceptual understanding assists in the overall ambition of developing a model for reframing organizations.

The beginning of Chapter Seven is a bridge between the empirical analysis in the previous

chapters and the more theoretically oriented analysis follow in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight. It starts by summing up the findings of the study so far and then ties back to the initial theoretical perspective. Whereas these findings are well grounded in the empirical field, it is now time to move a step forward and (under)take what Mintzberg calls a “creative leap” from the platform of the “detective work”.

A working hypothesis will be suggested, followed by a set of propositions. The relationship between these will be analyzed in Chapter Eight. The discussion will be geared towards seeing how they relate to each other and the task of reframing organizations. The purpose is to sum it all up in a tentative model for reframing organizations. In order to do this as well as to work out the propositions in Chapter Nine, it will be necessary to analyze, reflect, speculate and look to other authors. The basis, however, is the grounded reframing concepts which then should be embodied by the ideas put forward in the last two chapters.

Issues of trustworthiness

Research is always a search for knowledge and truth. Of course there can be disputes about what is truth, and what kind of truth is attainable, in fact it is probably the dominant issue in the philosophy of science, and of course truth is a different matter in the context of discovery than in the context of verification. Still it is an unavoidable issue. Good research must have some kind of truth or truth value attached to it. The question is what is the quality of truth produced by the application of this design?

The study has been in the context of discovery. The aim, and the consequent choice of methods, has been on developing a conceptual model that is fit for relating to and changing the world as a social constructed reality. The focus has not been on picturing or measuring the “true” organizational world. How valid, or rather trustworthy (Lincoln and Guba 1985:290), are the results given the aim and ambition of the study?

The core of that issue deals with how credible the findings are. That is a question of establishing confidence in the truth of the findings of the inquiry for the subjects with whom the inquiry was carried out (Lincoln and Guba 1985:290). It is a question of how well the data, concepts and propositions, to use the words of Glaser and Strauss (1967:3), fit the situation being researched and how well they work in practice. The general aspect of how credibility was ensured, as well as some specific aspects of this issue, will be discussed on the following pages. Trustworthiness is, however, also a question of applicability; (how) can the findings be transferred to other organizations? This issue will be dealt with at the end of the chapter. It is, however, conditioned by the degree credibility. Findings that are not credible cannot be applied in other settings.

Ensuring credibility

The procedures for collecting and analyzing data were set up with credibility in mind. The research engagement took place over a considerable span of time to get to know the field(s), and also to be able to establish a dynamic perspective. In addition to the contact with project leaders and consultants this was ensured by the various forms of diagnoses in addition to informal contacts with the field. Various forms of "social tests" (Enderud 1983) and practical validation (Arbnor and Bjercke 1977) were employed by means of the various discussions and meetings. There were "member checks" meant to check for face (in)validity (e.g. Cook and Campbell 1978), as well as the fruitfulness, merit (Lincoln and Guba 1978) or relevance by confronting the preliminary findings with the relevance system (Normann 1976).

One possible threat to the credibility of the study is, however, that there is a lack of systematic social tests or member checks with other audiences in the organizations than project leaders and other consultants, except in case of the diagnoses. It was not possible to arrange such sessions. It was one trade off that had to be made in order to get access and arrange a practical realistic situation for getting hold of the data. From a practical point of view such checks were seen as interfering in the change process in a possibly diverging way, and also it was simply seen as taking up too much time in a stressed situation. The research activities had to comply to this view whether right or wrong.

An emphasis on procedures for this purpose could, on the other hand, possibly have weakened the degree of ecological validity, an aspect to be discussed in a later section. The lack of formal procedures in this area was furthermore partly outweighed by the fact that such checking was done on an informal sporadic basis, and that there was an element of indirect checking due to the project leaders and consultants starting to use the emerging conceptual knowledge in their cooperation with others in their respective host organizations. The implications of these possible weaknesses must, however, be reexamined when discussing the possible fitness or applicability of the findings to other settings.

Credibility was further supported by the use of a variation of methods. Triangulation has been recommended by a large number of methodologists in qualitatively-oriented approaches (Kalleberg 1982). Triangulation of methods is seen to increase the degree of validity (Weller and Romney 1987). Its most common use is with the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. It is, however, also used when referring to combinations of sources, methods, investigators and theories (Denzin 1978). As outlined above this study employed different data and methods from different sources like project leader reports, interviews with project leaders, project consultants, full-time employees, data from discussions and meetings, written documentation from the change projects, data from observations in the field, etc. This kind of triangulation is given a dominant role by several researchers in the quest for credibility

(e.g. Patton 1980). All in all, these measures allowed for and involved a continuous examination of observations and findings strengthening the credibility of the final findings (Hagg 1981).

All in all the credibility of the study is seen to be good. There are, however, reasons to focus separately on some specific but interrelated issues of relevance. First, some aspects of the fact that the principal research instrument is made of “flesh and blood” and, second, how to handle the claim for objectivity of neutrality. Furthermore, how can one be sure the findings are correct, what has been called the replication problem. Finally, by using the notion of ecological validity it is discussed whether the results are produced by the research situation as much as the change situation.

The issue of human instrumentation

On the list of possible threats to internal validity we find the issue of instrumentation (Campell and Stanley 1963). This is found to be particularly relevant for the discussion of credibility since it would influence whether the various measures mentioned to secure credibility would work according to the intention. The single most important instrument in this study is the human one. Human beings mean human problems like fatigue, variation in experience, shifts in concentration and focus, etc. Guba and Lincoln (1981:113) find that “this loss of rigour is more than offset by the flexibility, insight, and ability to build on tacit knowledge that is the peculiar province of the human instrument”.

There is, however, one aspect that deserves particular attention and which also connects to the issue of neutrality in the study. Guba and Lincoln themselves mentioned cooptation as one of the possible weaknesses attached to the human instrument. For example, Myrdal (1970) takes this further by suggesting that objectivity as such in research is unrealistic since interests and perceptions are involved in every aspect of life.

There is one question related to this particular design that follows from this view: What kind of weaknesses could be inflicted by the fact that the project leaders as well as the other consultants are both actors of the researched field as is the consultancy firm? Could the fact that the latter is a political system bias their reporting in a way that weakened the credibility? Credibility is not understood as reflecting what is objectively true. Still, it is understood as what in a sense is locally true. Could it be that the consultants reported in way that was intended to strengthen their position at the consultancy firm by deducting or adding to what they actually observed? And would that in any way weaken the credibility?

On the one hand they had an interest in increasing their own status in the consultancy firm. It cannot be ruled out that this could make them bias their reporting. On the other hand, the

reporting was not to be on measurement of achievement and results, but rather on important incidents and situations, etc. This probably diminishes the potential risk for strong biases due to opportunism. There was also an incitement for being a good informant or reporter as this was company policy. This could, however, also have a potential risk for opportunism by them reporting more than they had seen.

These problems are, however, not found to be significant for at least four reasons. 1) The reasons for opportunistic bias were not very strong given the nature of the task. 2) If it occurred it would be outweighed by the social tests and scrutinizing procedures that were followed. 3) The various conceptual findings do not seem to be of such a kind that they would be created if this kind of behaviour was common. 4) Finally, the author's personal knowledge of the people and the field does not raise any suspicion about opportunism taking place in this issue.

The issue of neutrality

Even if the collection and analysis of data are neutral in the sense of not being biased by the kind of opportunism described above, there are reasons to take Myrdal's point seriously. Asplund (1972) also argues, for example, that data is as much constructed as collected due to such factors as the perspective(s), pre-understanding, concepts and methods used in the research process. If that is the case it is also impossible to be faithful to the ideals of Glaser and Strauss and to start the research process completely from scratch with no preconceptions. All conceptions should emerge from the process of research.

The notion of theory-independent ways of constructing theory is held to be more or less impossible by many scholars (e.g. Revang 1981:20, Kuhn 1970:206). Naturally it is an ideal to reach for neutrality, to try not to let your own interests, attitudes, preconceptions, etc., bias the research. But a research problem and a research process are always approached from a position of an understanding of reality. Other positions would have yielded other conclusions and choices in the research process.

At the end of the day, the most important thing is probably to be clear about what you do and why. In this study this issue was handled by outlining the perspective by which the author was guided in defining the problem and conducting the study, in addition to being explicit about perspectives, assumptions, research steps and procedures. This is also the major solution suggested for handling the neutrality or objectivity issue in this kind of research because it allows others to evaluate the premisses on which the findings are built (Guba and Lincoln 1981).

The replication problem

For an observation to be true, it is considered that other people should make the same

observation under identical circumstances. This kind of reliability, or constancy, is hardly possible in this kind of research. Replicating the research process in a literal sense is not possible. It is not possible to find identical cases under identical contexts like the ones researched in this study. Too many things change as time elapses. And even if that was possible, it is in the nature of this kind of research that the research process might have produced other foci with other researchers. The consistency problem can, however, be coped with in several ways (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

The issue is to ensure that sensible choices and interpretations have been made during the process of research. In practical terms this boils down to much of the same thing as the issue of neutrality, namely being explicit about what has been done and choices that have been made. This makes it possible for the audience to assess the sense of what has been done. In naturalistic research it is even suggested to integrate an audit of this into the study itself.

The same function can, however, to a certain degree be fulfilled by integrating into the research procedures overlap methods or stepwise replication; parallel research teams. Resources did not allow for the latter. An example of overlap methods used in the study, however, are the researcher reports with the subsequent presentation, questions and discussion in project leader meetings followed by interviewing the project leaders. In effect, overlap methods represent an aspect of triangulation. This shows how integrated the various principles of rigour are in this kind of research. The various aspects of credibility must therefore in practice be seen as a whole.

The issue of ecological validity

The human instrumentation issue was discussed as related to the problem of neutrality. It also raises another problem which, for instance, is brought to the surface by the notion of ecological validity (Brunswick 1956, Brach and Class 1968). Observations made from "artificial situations" created by, for instance, experiments, the interview situations, research procedures and instruments may be difficult to transfer to real-life situations. The research situation does not represent the kind of a whole(ness) one wants to say something about. In that case the findings are not characterized by ecological validity, a prerequisite for credibility of special relevance for the issue of applicability of the findings to other settings. The notion focuses in a sense the bridge between credibility and transferability.

This seems all very logical and unobtrusiveness is consequently held to be an esteemed quality by many researchers (e.g. Bogdan and Taylor 1975). Obtrusiveness can and should be minimized by the choice of sources, techniques and thorough training of observers. Others see this as problematic. There often are ethical problems related to those methods that are approximately unobtrusive like contrived observations. Observing something is seen as

influencing what is being observed. When people in the organizations know that they are studied, their perception of what the study is all about is likely to influence what they communicate to the researcher(s). For instance, fear of what is going to happen, interests in potential courses of action, etc., might colour their message. One view of this is clearly formulated by Lundin and Wirdenius (1990): "...the researcher cannot undertake an active research in a system and at the same time avoid being part of that system." Their point is that researchers are part of the dynamics they want to study, and that this is a natural sort of situation. As Lincoln and Guba (1985:94) say, "...knower and known are inseparable." "The investigator and respondent jointly create the data of research". The conclusion is that one should realize that research is interaction and act accordingly.

This study was based on a collaborative-oriented process of interaction with the field. It was collaborative in the sense that the author and the consultants cooperated in a search for knowledge and insight. It was interactive in the sense that this meant interaction with the field. In this case this is somewhat particular since the consultants were both actors of the field and the learning environment of the consultancy environment. They were key informants collaborating with the researcher in a joint exploration of data provided by them.

This was therefore interactive research in the sense of designing for allowing the understanding to evolve in the interaction described, but not in the other sense recommended by Lundin and Wirdenius (1990) of making a point of capturing the changes that was caused by the interactive research. Clearly, it is likely that the consultants were influenced also as actors in the field by the process of research in which they took part. In fact that was more or less intended by the learning policy of the consultancy firm. Since there was no focus on capturing this particular aspect of the change, the question is what this means for the nature and quality of the findings.

First, what is the general feeling of being studied in the organizations. The answer to that is that although key personnel to a varying degree would know that the consultancy agency had "doing research on their processes" as their policy, the idea about what this meant would be very distant and vague. It is not very likely that it would raise any particular reaction. Second, on the other hand the different project leaders participating in the research process could be infectious, or would their behaviour be inobtrusive from the perspective of the research objective? This aspect of their work was seldom if ever on the agenda. They used little or no instrumentation related to the research interest. So, this kind of effect would primarily be related to their general project leader and consultant behaviour.

It is, as stated above, quite likely that this behaviour was influenced as a reflection of research interaction. It is likely that the consultants expanded and clarified their conceptual tools and also became more conscious about what they did and the situations in which they took part. In terms

of how this would influence what was studied and thereby the nature and quality of the findings, the question is whether this did anything else than make them better change agents. Since the quality of change agents, like for instance project leaders, always will vary in different ways, it is difficult to see that this kind of influence was significant for the nature of the findings.

In other words, the degree of ecological validity is in principle weakened by the project leader and consultant behaviour being influenced by the research process and by the fact that there was no explicit focus on capturing the nature and effect of these influences. In practical terms, however, this probably meant little to the nature of the findings. In fact, it seems that the issue of ecological validity has been handled in a fruitful way. The research process took advantage of the point that it intervenes in the system studied but isolates the visibility and reduces the negative effects.

Applicability

All in all, various member checks, triangulations and corroborations as well as phenomenonal recognitions that have been described and discussed are judged to provide credibility. This is a good basis for discussing how useful the findings are. In addition to dealing with a useful problem in a credible way, the findings have to be relevant for other settings. The problem initially was identified as of being of public interest, and the question remains whether the findings can be applied to other settings. This question now seems a bit unfair. Cronbach's view that, "When we give proper weight to the local conditions, any generalization is a working hypothesis, not a conclusion" (Cronbach 1975:124-5) is naturally particularly relevant since the aim of this study has been to generate rather than to verify theory. Still, there are at least two ways of discussing whether theory that has been generated can be applied in other settings.

First, the possibilities for transferring the findings of a credible study to another setting and applying them there is in principle an empirical and relational question. The applicability can not be established without knowledge of both settings and their characteristics. The establishment of applicability consequently demands a fairly good description of the characteristics of both the sending and the receiving setting. In this case the study has relied on bracketed examples and empirical glimpses. Good conditions for the future establishment of applicability or not are composed of thick description (Geertz 1973, Guba and Lincoln 1981:327). In this case this exists at best within the limits of these glimpses, so in a sense it is a lack of empirical depth when considering the ideal wish for possible judgment of applicability.

This is a consequence of trade-offs made to make it possible to pursue the problem of the study. According to Thorngate's discussion of his postulate of commensurate complexity, it is impossible for a theory of social behaviour to be simultaneously general, accurate and simple

(Thorngate 1976:406). The more accurate a general theory, the less simple it is, etc. The study was not intended to be another story of details in organizational life, but was aimed at pursuing a more general problem. To improve the conditions for assessing the transferability the study would have had to be more focused on accuracy. According to Thorngate that would have made an even less simple model. On the other hand, the restrictions on possibilities for assessing the applicability constituted by the degree of accuracy - the degree of general merit - can be seen to be counterbalanced by the degree of generality of the problem as such.

The other possible way of assessing the degree of applicability is the logical rather than empirical way related to the kind of setting that produced the findings. Can it be characterized as typical for the kind of setting the study is intended to say something about? This issue is related to what kind of sample has been chosen. Since the purpose was to generate theory rather than to establish the verification of it, the logical choice is purposeful or theoretical rather than random sampling (Patton 1980:105). The main purpose is to maximize information helpful to illuminate the research problem. In this study cases were chosen because they were available and yielded relevant information and because they represented serious and relevant change attempts. As organizations they can hardly be seen as representing something particularly exceptional. Some variation is also present in the ordinary when it comes to size, type of industry, etc.

In sum, there seems to be something typical, or at least ordinary, about the sample when considering the task of reframing. There are two exceptions. First, the focus has been on private rather than public enterprises. In fact, all the case enterprises were private ones. In principle this makes the findings relevant for private organizations only; if there are significant differences between the two. Again, the meaning of significance is relational, as these differences must be relevant for the nature of the findings. That can only be assessed in retrospect. But there are reasons to believe that there are basic similarities between such basic social processes as those related to reframing in private and public organizations.

Second, it is in principle a study of reframing endeavours involving external assistance, although the project leaders as the major part of this assistance became almost full-time members of their host organizations. Still, they had an additional point of reference. Additionally, the credibility has chiefly been established in relation to the audience of the project leaders and consultants. In principle this reduces the relevance of the findings to such settings. That kind of situation is, however, a quite common situation. And, it would probably hardly be all that different from one which had internal experts supporting the change project. The main difference is that the project leaders participated in the learning process of the consultancy firm. In the section on ecological validity it was doubted that this would matter for the nature of the findings. It is also a question of whether the nature of the findings is such that

it matters that credibility primarily has been established to a particular audience.

From a principle point of view the applicability is restricted to private enterprises using external help in reframing attempts and is of use for these helpers and for the use of these helpers. In practical terms it is not that restricted. First, the relevant differences between the case organizations and those relying on their own resources are probably not all that great. Second, there can even be expected to be basic similarities between public and private enterprises in this respect. Both these issues are in principle relational. They can only be settled in relation to a particular setting. But they can, quite sensibly, be evaluated logically. That is, when considering the nature of the actual findings, is it probable that the kind of differences discussed above will mean anything?

Conclusion

The challenge has been to find and develop methods that take advantage of a unique possibility. The setting allowed for exploring reframing endeavours in flux. This was a valuable and rich situation considering the problem of developing a model of reframing organizations. It was also quite difficult because taking advantage of the situation would, to some extent, mean integrating the process of research into the operation of the consultancy firm. What still made it possible was the fact that the research in a sense still was separated from the change projects in the sense that the project leaders were almost full-time actors of the field. This allowed for some kind of distant interaction with the actual change endeavours. It allowed for both "hands on" data combined with detached reflection, individual derived data combined with joint exploration, and it allowed for building on established understanding for further search, etc.

By using what could have been a problem from a research point of view, the interest in the group for a continuous process of reflection and learning, it was possible to implement several effective research procedures. It was possible to routinize a combined process of collecting and analyzing data, and it was possible to integrate various kinds of member checks, etc. These procedures are seen to produce relevant and fruitful data that are processed in a way that yields credible findings.

Of course there are trade offs and weak points. The question is whether they have been handled in an acceptable and fruitful way. The design of the study have been aimed at making the best out of an interesting situation. The wholeness of the procedures are seen as yielding data of quality, especially in consideration of the value of the setting. Credible findings produce by exploring reframing organizations in this kind of setting can be of interest and are relevant to a much wider audience. First, it is a problem of general relevance. Second, although this kind of study is not based on a representative sampling, there are reasons to assume that the potential applicability is fairly substantial.

Chapter 4: Concepts for Organizational Reframing

The aims of this chapter are to develop and present a set of concepts for organizational reframing in order to reveal critical and fruitful issues in the process of reframing organizations. The issues that are presented have caught attention because decisions made or avoided in these issues seem to matter for the chances of the reframing endeavour to succeed.

The presentation is built upon "empirical glimpses" from the various change projects, which were chosen to demonstrate the empirical grounding of the various issues. These are identified by showing two or three glimpses that demonstrate specific similarities or differences in the handling of the different projects. The presentation will consequently bracket and explain in what sort of situations the issues appear.

Four issues are presented. The first deals with the role of managers and leaders in forwarding and supporting the new direction. The second deals with the relationship between the new and intended ideas and the old and established ones. The third refers to the learning strategies employed, and the fourth refers to the locus for forming new solutions.

The Role of Management and Leaders

If you want to wash the stairs,
you have to start at the top.

The need for change was identified by the top manager - in some cases in cooperation with the top management group - who initiated a change project. It was also the top manager who "called in" consultants for help in all the cases. All the projects therefore basically follow a more or less top down pattern. Different patterns could be observed, however, when it came to how the steering of change efforts was organized and what parties were involved in what way. By relating and comparing some empirical glimpses we shall demonstrate the issues that emerged to us in this field:

Variations in top management roles

The reason for this division of the enterprises is that in Transport, Airline, and Banking the top management group took responsibility for the change project or change operations. No steering group was set up because the change operation was seen to be top management responsibility. Decisions concerning change direction as well as change activities - as other important decision - were seen to be within the discretion and responsibility of top management. Progress in the change project was reported to the top management group. There were, however, considerable variations in the way this position was tackled in the various individual firms.

Transport had already worked with change for 1-2 years when "the change project" started, initiated and run by a new top manager. New goals and strategies were developed with a

general focus on Organizational Development (OD) and restructuring Head Quarter (HQ). After some time it was felt that the change process needed a clearer focus (“what kind of OD process are we up to?”). Contacts were established between Transport and the consultancy firm. The human resource manager, who was part of the top management group, played a central role in establishing and spelling out the terms for the relationship.

In this process the premises for the “change process” were laid down. Seminars involving key people in the organizations were to play an important role in starting up the process, and these were later to be transformed in to a regular follow up/confrontation and learning forum. The aims of these seminars were interrelated: Consciousness raising, creating acceptance and commitment among managers and opinion leaders for the vision, goals and strategies, and also creating a basis for systematic, disciplined long-term ways of working with reorientation and business improvements. Consultants accordingly played a dominant part in these first meetings. People also committed themselves to personnel development tasks.

Although important and meaningful issues came up and were discussed, the participants did not seem to get really involved. This brings us to the question of the anchoring of the process. In practical terms the seminars were initiated by one of the external consultants in collaboration with the Human Resource manager. The impression was that the members felt it was not “their process”, but that of the external consultant and the HR man. This is supported by the fact that the CEO manager sensed the same thing and that he more or less took over in the first of the second round of meetings. One of the consultants said about this:

“People perceived the seminar(s) and the change process as something these two (the HR man and the external project leader) had initiated with the support from the CEO. When the CEO intervened, took the chair of the seminar and played a central role in the planning and running of the next, it seemed that he stressed his ownership to the change endeavour. It also resulted in the other managers involving themselves much more strongly in the seminars”.

The CEO taking a more significant part in the planning of meetings and activities made the consultants move from the foreground to the background, still playing an important part as advisors and in management training/development (coaching). Apart from the practical aspect of this change in the steering of the project, the signal (symbolic) effect was understood as being the most important aspect for generating involvement among the participating managers. His ownership was also underlined by the the Human Resource manager resigning. From one of the consultants:

“From x/x 198x the HR department was assigned to the department under the Vice President for Finance. This was a result of the fact that the Vice President for HR “chose” to resign. The resignation was the result of a period with “yellow card” due to his (lack of) relationship to the operational side of the enterprise, and the failure to create his own power base in the organization.””The signal-effect (way it was perceived) was probably two sided: On the one hand it was a signal that not only the number of workers, but also the top management

group was reduced in an economically difficult period, and also that the reorientation process was more closely connected to the budget and planning systems. On the other hand this could also cause the reaction that the only thing that now counted was money and not the talk about "culture" and (strategic) visions".

All this probably strengthened the impression of a top management (manager) driven process. Perhaps the two seemingly contrasting organizational interpretations of the change in status of the Human Resource (HR) department adds up to the same: In the end it is the operational results that count - and therefore the CEO is backing (or rather fronting) the reorientation process. Perhaps what happened in Transport can be seen as a process leading up to - or clarifying the need for - top management driving the change ambitions.

In Airline, as in Transport, there was a "before process" in the sense that the firm had worked with change before this particular project was established. A lot of consciousness-raising seminars had for example been carried out, and there was some frustration that "nothing had come out of it". One of the first things to do therefore was to set up a "strategic management group". This was partly in response to a heavy degree of segmentalistic/functionalistic malfunctioning, but it was also done to give the change activities renewed force. As illustrated by the project leader, emphasis was put on establishing a unified and visible top management effort:

"The first thing that had to happen was to establish a central and uniform strategic leadership group. The aim was clearly to increase the powerbase - and thereby the energy invested in the change efforts - in the organization through coordinated leadership signals. A lot of time and energy was therefore invested in consolidating the group, coaching and increasing the awareness of symbolic (signal) effects. To help me with efficient coaching, part of my role was to seek information about the inner life of the organization, to catch how and what local meaning attributed to management actions etc."

In both these cases we can see that something is leading up to the realization that the top management visibly and clearly has to represent the new ideas in order for them to be realized. Perhaps there is something in the old proverb that "the past is a prologue". In the first case this is seen through what happens in and around the seminars. In the second case it is the interpretation of the past frustrations that leads up to the steps of building the new project around the top management group. It is therefore interesting to observe the situation of the relationship between top management and change projects in other cases.

A different top management role

In Electric Industry a steering group was set up for the project which consisted of two line managers (but not the top manager), two union representatives, one personnel consultant, and a project leader (external consultant). The responsibilities for the reorientation process and activities were delegated to them. After some time, a change seminar with the middle and top management was set up to provide a mile stone and move the "process" ahead. The first change

seminar that was carried through with the middle management was, however, considered a failure by the top manager. He was very disappointed that it did not go as it should and that it was not as concrete as it should have been. The programme was designed to clarify success factors and the new manager role. Success factors were lectured on with a focus on business and not organizational factors, the new manager role was only touched upon. In addition, in the discussion of "success factors", a focus on "openness" evolved (much to the frustration of the top manager). One of the consultants reflected on this focus:

"Talks I had with people during and closely after the seminar revealed that the middle managers had a conscious will to adapt "the process". They were, however, concerned with a criticism of the top manager not being involved, demonstrating where he stood, etc."

He also said that this was the same kind of dissatisfaction that was expressed by the top managers after the seminar, and goes on:

"The responsibility of the steering committee was vaguely defined as "process responsibility" for implementation in the whole organization. Commitment among the managers was seen as a minor problem - if one at all. Nothing that the steering committee worked with was realized - a management training seminar was cancelled at the last minute due to "more urgent" business, an evaluation programme was seen as uninteresting and rejected, so was a seminar programme - more action orientation was called for, etc. While the mandate focusing on implementation was formally valid, the project leader's attention was focused on generating (enough) commitment."

The top management group (except the top manager) gathered afterwards to assess why the seminar did not go well. They ended up discussing the role of the top manager related to the project. They saw him as not having "ownership" in the process and focusing on other matters, in a way signalling that it was not important. The reaction in this meeting resulted in the restructuring of the management of the change process. The steering group was now to be made up of "the board of division" (divisjonsutvalg), which is an organ set up as a consequence of the agreement (hovedavtalen) between the central union and federation of employers (LO and NAF (NHO)). It consisted of the top management - including the top manager - of the division and two union representatives. This group was supplemented with two middle managers. However, the top manager never got involved. The project leader commented on this:

"...considered commitment in the top management group to be an irrelevant issue and chose not to get involved in the concrete process. On the one hand, he said that reorientation (activities) was very important, but he chose to focus on other and different issues."

In the two first cases, the process enforces, in a sense, top management taking a more visible and explicit role in the change efforts. In the last case we see the same tendencies, and perhaps even stronger, but they are rejected by the CEO. As we shall see later, the change project broke down after some time.

The situation was again somewhat different in Furniture: The top manager here was in front of the change efforts from the very beginning. However, some peculiarities deserve to be commented upon: Together with the director of personnel he sat up a steering group that consisted of the top manager for this particular division (he himself had been promoted to CEO for the concern), himself, the director of personnel, the director of marketing and four union spokespersons. One of the consultants commented upon this:

“They chose to leave several of the managers out of the steering group and also include the “old” boss in the further work”.

According to the project leader this was;

“...because it is better to include the real than the formal leaders, because it is their commitment and support that is needed in the change process ...”

The consultant that was involved in an organizational culture assessment of the firm added that the evaluation of persons this view is based upon seemed right:

“They were, in a sense, pretending to be bosses and enjoyed little confidence in the organization, especially in the production department(s). The union (representatives) also had little confidence in them. Still, this had the dubious consequence in that the production manager, responsible for the practical changes in the far largest group of employees, was not represented on the steering committee.”

The anchoring of the process and the creation of commitment among a larger group of key personnel was supposed to be handled through a series of seminars carried through before implementation. We can observe two things related to who owns or drives the project: First, the new division manager did not seem to be “socialized” into the ideas of the reorientation effort. The project leader said in retrospect that he had said he was “hanging in thin air”, and that he didn’t get integrated in his management group; neither did he have much contact with his own boss, the “old leader”, apart from a monthly meeting where he reported on results. He related this to the organization structure, in which he saw needs for change both in view of his own situation, but also as a consequence of the needs for a more market orientation and a related need for a more decentralized organization. He designed structural changes to accomplish this - a solution that involved relocating (and degrading) a couple of managers.

This resulted in a great deal of resistance, a lot of it “behind the curtain activities” and in the new division manager being fired (we shall return to this episode in the section on “integration”.) The CEO said

“I have never seen anything like it” and that “the two days were completely chaotic”. The division manager, on the other hand, held the resistance he had met to be “not more than you had to expect.”

This must also be seen against the background that all actors in one way or the other could be perceived as accepting the changes in advance because they had been informed. The union, as well as the CEO, even thought they were necessary. What was wrong, they said in retrospect, was that it was carried through in an “authoritarian and world champion like way” (from the union) or advanced too quick with too little “anchoring” (from the CEO).

The other aspect to observe here is the strength with which the change efforts were pursued. The change seminars ended with agreements as to how the single managers should pursue reorientation in the coming six months: Informing or motivating the process among subordinates, starting quality improvement work and also designing an individual action plan for improving management practice and informing the subordinates about it. Progress should be reported at training and follow up seminars. The comment made by the project leader as a response to his own question about how much committed driving force there was in the management group seems fairly illustrative:

“Not much had really happened before the first meeting (seminar). Peter had done ‘nothing at all’. He had, however worked his ass off with other tasks. For Fred and Adrian it was difficult to see that “anything” was done. In Ian’s case, however, there seemed to be some action, whereas the trainers do as agreed upon.This could be typical for the situation that constantly will emerge. Things that are more ‘important’ than the strategic programme pop up....it will be difficult to break old habits.”

What was supposed to be the implementation phase occurred during the first months of the new manager. The various managers did not pursue the change activities that were expected of them. The general feeling seemed to be at the side line of the organizational reality and did not “count” in the everyday situation. This was even more the case when the market dropped and the company ran into economic difficulties. The focus was on cost reductions, even if it verbally was stressed that the “process” was important. The reframing efforts got stuck and the managers did not seem to follow up their commitment in this area.

Another thing that got stuck was an attempt at getting change started at the lower levels of the organization. Seminars were carried through in order to teach the foremen and department leaders how to develop goals and standards to improve quality in collaboration with their subordinates. These seminars were also intended to reflect and motivate the basic message for change. Whereas the courses (seminars for leaders, foremen, department managers) in methods for developing new quality goals seemed to be well received and go well, the practical efforts got started but then were stopped. In the beginning it went quite well, but met some skepticism:

“Will this result in something, or will the efforts vanish once again? It seemed like quality circles, and nothing came out of that. We have problems in meeting the deadlines because of increased orders and a lot of over-time. How do we cope with that? Such things will always happen. It takes more time than we expected.”

After some time the project leader says that “the goal development work has broken completely down in the production department”, which was the major part of the organization. The project as such broke down later following a particular incident involving a conflict between the division manager and the organization. We shall return to that later. Now we want to discuss in more general terms issues emerging out of the examples above.

The issue of anchoring the reframing efforts

Neither Transport nor Airline had any special steering group for reorientation projects. In Airline this was the strategic management group, although the previous history might have led to this choice of solution. In Transport the project was, to some extent, driven by consultants at the side line of the line of command, so to speak. However, the top manager sensed this to be wrong. His taking over the responsibility, fronting the project and also underlining its “line nature” also seemed to revitalize the change efforts. In Electric Industry a special steering group was set up, without the top manager, but with some line connection. It was observed that a reorganization of this steering group - including the top manager - in a sense enforced itself and the project.

This was most likely because both members of the top management group as well as other lower level managers found the first arrangement confusing and difficult. The top manager did not get involved in spite of the reorganization of the steering group, and the project also “died” quite soon. It seemed that one reason was the lack of clear and convincing signals about its value and direction. Although he might have had pressing reasons for concentrating on other subjects, the effect seemed to be that the other managers didn’t see him as owning the process. Why should they then choose to see it as important, especially when this also led to confusion?

In Furniture there was a steering committee which included the top manager but none of the line managers (if you don't consider the marketing director “line”). The line managers were, however, supposed to push and direct the necessary change activities. They didn’t seem to push very strongly. The question is whether they could be expected to grasp and commit themselves to new ideas at an early stage while not involved in their birth or concretization? Line managers are important agenda setters in the everyday life of the organization. What is the effect of keeping them out of the group defining and supposedly being the driving force for the new agendas? At least in this case the new ideas, the new orientation, seemed to have problems in getting implanted in the organizational processes even at an early stage.

In these different examples the role of top managers in relation to the reframing efforts varies significantly. Furthermore, there is a variation in the integration of the other (top) managers and top line managers with respect to their relationship to the change programme in question. These variations also seem to matter for the prospect of the efforts to be fruitful. We are

struggling to find a notion for this issue. In a sense it deals with the way the project is fastened in the formal power structure of the organization. The term anchoring connotes just that; to fasten or be fastened securely. It is also a term we occasionally run across among managers and consultants and used for similar purposes. More concrete anchoring can be seen as the issue in who “owns” the endeavour of changing the organizational direction. Which groups or persons are fronting - and backing - the decisions and activities that are carried out in order to pursue this endeavour? Management anchoring refers to whether top management takes such a role in relationship to the change project.

The term suggests that how this relationship is formed and performed is important for the prospects of the project to succeed. This is a view that grew stronger after observing the change efforts at Transport as seen in the next section. In principle, this project can be seen as both having top manager and line anchoring. This particular incident, however, represents an attempt to vitalize the change process by, in a sense, passing the line and creating a pressure for increased change efforts at all levels.

Change leaders

An attempt at “change management” in Transport evolved around the idea of internal change agents. Internal “change leaders”- as they were called - should in a way “spread the gospel of change”, or be an essential part of what today is called internal marketing. We use this term with this example, because it represents an approach which solely is represented in this particular case. It is, however, contrasted with other approaches for forwarding change in order to put the impact of this approach in perspective.

The project leader said that “ the idea behind the change leaders was to strengthen the internal marketing to achieve commitment for change. The aim was to create understanding and engagement in the change work by mobilizing resources “out in the organization” that could assist in the local efforts”

The change leaders were originally thought to travel two and two in various regions of the geographically scattered organization. The selection process of people was very thorough, but only internal people were being recruited. Progressive candidates that were expected to believe in - and were able to advocate the new ideas - were sought. They were expected to motivate and explain the new direction to the grass roots, but not from a line position. They were educated through a series of seminars teaching and training them on the strategies of the process of change.

These change agents - or intended opinion leaders - seemed, however, to create resistance, or at least unrest in the organization. The union seemed rather neutral in the beginning, but as a consultant said, they would not take part in the interviewing and selection “because this is not where the fight (for the future) stands now”. They said, however, that they very much would

like to present their view on the future of the firm for the change leaders. The attitude seemed, however, to change.

“The chairman for the most influential union called unexpectedly and said he would come to the seminar. He had a meeting with the change leaders that belonged to his union and tried to make them withdraw. They refused, however, on the ground that they was engaged in this as individuals”.

When the leaders started on their mission, the relationship to both the local union and local leaders became difficult.

“The local climate got harder with confrontation between the local union representatives and the change leaders. This also spread into harsh discussion in the whole system. In their eagerness to get started, change leaders also got into conflict with local managers. It seemed they were considered competitors to the local union at the same time as they defended management views in several conflict issues also considered competitors by the local managers. The change leaders generally had more insight than they did into change plans and issues. And, in line with this, the local leaders were not involved in discussions about how the change leaders could support them”.

The reason for the small amount of information to local leaders was that top management did not want to generate too optimistic expectations about what the change leaders could accomplish. However, instead of helping generating resources in the new direction, these roles seemed to lead to politicking and a waste of resources. At least, the whole arrangement was perceived to create such a level of tension that it was stopped. The hope was that these people would constitute a valuable resource for the company in the future, but as an arrangement it was stopped.

Change leaders and the issue of anchoring

Perhaps this level of conflict and suspicion could have been avoided. Still, what happened constitutes valuable experience for reflecting about the issue of management and line anchoring. The change leaders represented people outside the responsible part of the organization, they were not responsible for results like the line managers. They did not have power over the everyday agenda of the employees like the line managers had. Still, they had strong support from top management. That accounts for some of the insecurity that was created; the local leaders felt that they controlled and evaluated them and also could “tell on them”.

The change leaders would, however, still lack the opportunity to change something concretely (work systems, information systems, evaluation criteria etc.) What they could and should do was to “spread ideas and thereby create commitment.” That, of course, could create dissatisfaction, putting pressure on the local managers and perhaps the union, which again accounts for their skepticism. Still, they could not directly create harmony between what they preached and the rules after which people lived. The question would therefore probably be whether the amount of increased information and consciousness that would or could result

from their activities was worth the level of conflict created?

These experiences support the suggestion that the way the reframing ambitions and change efforts are anchored in the management system constitutes an important and fruitful issue. The overall issue seems to evolve around whether or not change and reframing should be driven similarly or differently from other important business activities; from top management and through the line.

Reframing efforts and union representatives

What about the union? It is the other important organization of the enterprise. The role of the union varies. It is for instance represented on the steering group in some cases but not in others. Related to this issue, it seems relevant to note that union representatives are "leaders". This idea was part of the thinking of many of the external consultants. Union leaders are, in a sense, the normative leaders of the union members in issues that guided their enterprise behaviour. Union members comply with norms and rules and to some extent share views for the way they perceive and perform their tasks. Union leaders play an important role in how these norms, rules and views are (re)formed.

The idea that union representatives are leaders was reflected - to different degrees - in some of the cases. This is best illustrated by using examples from Furniture, Airline and Transport which represent different ways of relating change projects to the union. In Furniture the union representatives were considered by the top managers to be leaders in that two representatives were included in the top management group alongside the line managers. They were also very positive to the programme of changing the organizational direction, and were, in the initial phase, seen by both the project leader as well as the CEO to be a driving force. They were especially positive to the idea of achieving a more decentralized and flexible organization. A project consultant said:

"The union chairman helped us inform some of the other union representatives about central issues in 'process'. The way I have come to see it, resistance and holding back will be stronger among the managers than among the union representatives. The chairman even suggested himself that the top management group, together with the union representatives, should inform the employees to make it clear that they all were behind it."

However, the consultant was skeptical to the idea that everybody stands together. He pointed out, for instance, that the union rated the managers - except the top manager - very poorly. And that they even considered the changes to come as an opportunity to put pressure on the union, perhaps even get rid of some of them.

"I think it is important to realize that the union commitment and motivation are different from that of the (motivated) managers. They agree to the ideas and plans that are presented, but I sense that there are problems behind this where they disagree strongly with top management".

He explained this with reference to power and interests saying more or less that the union did not accept the management view that we are all in the “same boat”, so that their commitment to the plans and ideas should be seen as contingent. In this there is, for example, a conflict of interest between whether improvements should be to the advantage of the customer or the employee. At one occasion it was in fact also stated explicitly that if the “process” did not mean an improvement for the employees, then the union would withdraw its engagement immediately.

In Airline the situation where union representatives were also considered leaders was handled somewhat differently. This difference could reflect another idea of how to tackle the dilemma above; they are both leaders as well as vehicles for special interests. In Airline they were not included on the steering group, which was a strategic management group. The line managers were therefore also left out of that group. In addition to the CEO, the steering committee was the managing director for the largest sector, the manager responsible for development and the one responsible for information. However, both the top line managers and the union representatives were represented in meeting structures set up for the purpose of following up and learning. Such meetings were also introduced local level, also with union representation. The central meeting also had systematic talks with union representatives from all over the country. This gave an opportunity to present the views and worries of the union on the present and planned change efforts.

The project consultant, trying to reflect the management view upon the situation, said:

“The earlier polarization has been significantly reduced, feedback about goals, strategic projects and the progress in activities has been of considerable importance for deciding on the course of action in the project. The commitment of the union representatives is also seen as crucial for the implementation of the new orientation. It is for them difficult both to be ‘counterpart and partner’. It seems, however, justified to suggest that the participation of the union increases the quality of the ongoing discussions also because of the representatives having other perspectives on society than the average manager.”

The union representatives, on the other hand, felt that the actual way their representation and presence was tackled, meant being taken seriously in relation to the management function of the company. The project leader saw disputes as having positive effects:

“Contradictions and counterforces (referring to the disputes with the union within the frame of the change project) is a positive phenomenon. When handled right it has constituted a constructive basis for creative thinking, new solutions and new energy to emerge.”

Also, in Transport a ruling idea seemed to be that union representatives were leaders. They were not included in the top management group, but they were included in the meeting structure set up to accomplish change. In these meetings - the “Smiths” - the premises of the new

direction were to be formed (although often prepared in advance). They were also for the purpose of following up commitments as well as learning from experience. The actual participation of the union representatives followed, however, the pattern reflected by the quotations from the project consultant:

“The union representatives were skeptical to the whole approach to reorientation. One managed, however, to create a more positive atmosphere, and at the end of the seminar the ‘toughest’ union representative characterized the CEO in positive terms, and also said he looked forward to working with us...”

“In a later (separate) meeting with the union more skepticism was expressed, and they wanted to discuss visions and goals in a larger societal perspective. The atmosphere was somewhat more unstable and explorative, but far from warfare.

The project leader commented on a later “smith” saying that the union representatives said that the change process did not have their support. They would not actively take part in the change work (the seminar meetings). They said that they felt “raped” by the management and the consultants, and they would only participate in order to be informed. This took place in parallel with their resistance against the “change leaders” and this made the change process heavier and more complicated.

The issue of union anchoring

The different roles of union representatives in the projects call for reflection. Looking at Airline we also need to look at the role of the top line managers to put that of the union representatives in perspective, because neither the top line managers nor the union representatives were included in the top management group. This does not necessarily mean that the project lacked line anchoring, neither does it mean that the unions were not related to the steering of the project. Airline was a much larger enterprise than, for example, Furniture which included the union representatives as well as line managers. The number of line managers was so large that it was not on the agenda to include them in the strategic management group. In this sense the union was in the same situation as the line managers.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the top management seemed attentive to the special situation of the union representatives being both counterpart and partners. It would be impossible for the union representatives not to see themselves as representatives of a special interest, even if they took a responsible attitude to the task of shaping the future of the company. That would have undermined their own power base and legitimacy.

The situation in Transport was different. Here the union, although invited and formally included, did not want to take part as “responsible” members. There are probably a lot of reasons behind this, however the dominant union was basically very left-wing oriented, “anti capitalistic” and conflict oriented with a strong leadership and, according to the consultants,

rather passive members. In this context the CEO had on at least one occasion expressed himself in such a way that the union could understand him as thinking there was no need for unions, or that he wanted them replaced by some local independent union.

In additions to usual disputes over pay and pay systems, the union made concrete claims with reference to the future strategy that was turned down - this dealt with, for example, not going international, not actualizing a proposition of a system with employee shares, plus a number of issues related to how the operations were structured, and so on. This can also be seen against the background that management wanted union representatives to take on "full responsibility" more or less in the same way as the managers. The unions did not see their input as being given equal weight in the change process. They also probably anticipated difficulties in taking care of the members' interests in a situation like that. In retrospect, we know that management at a later stage did, and felt they had to, undertake a considerable reduction in manpower. This is probably a more difficult kind situation for a union to handle if it is involved in management loyalty.

The situations described deal with relationships between the union and the change project. The union consists of people that are objects for the reframing intentions, and the union represents them. We see that this issue is handled differently in different projects, and the way it is handled seems to matter for the prospects of realizing a reframing process and for the premises of how to handle it. An important point is that union representatives are leaders in relation to the employees, even if their degree of power and influence vary. Consequently, they play a role in the attitude and action the employees take in relation to change efforts. Should not the union representatives be involved in the formation and performance of the reframing efforts thereby giving the reframing efforts some kind of active support?

The notion of union anchoring seems appropriate to highlight this important issue. It refers to the role of union in relation to managing the reframing of the organization.. Different models are offered when management realizes this and there are also different patterns of reactions on the part of the union. This probably reflects that balancing consensus and conflict as well as the representative aspect is not easy.

A trivial issue?

It can seem somewhat trivial to suggest that the various aspects of management anchoring represent an important reframing issue. We have explored organizations where the change endeavours have been initiated by top management. They therefore have the initial ownership of a problem or solution and need to push it forward. Furthermore, it seems somewhat self evident that those at the top must show the direction.

The issue still emerges as a problem. In the cases here, one of the things observed is that even

though it was the top management who initiated the project, some kind of organizational problem evolved around the issue. Furthermore, top management related differently to change endeavour in different organizations, and the differences seem to matter for the prospects of the project to succeed. In other words, the matter of management anchoring does not seem to be trivial considering the practical reality.

One reason for this could perhaps be due to the fact that managers often take a fairly instrumental oriented view on the organizational territory. They see change as a task that can - and even should be - delegated once having been decided on. Top management needs, they feel, to concentrate on other matters than having a focus on change processes. Even parts of the OD literature leaves us with the impression that change is the responsibility of the personnel/human resource department since they are the experts in the field. Most contributors today would add that support from top management is needed in OD activities. This is argued because political support is seen as necessary, or because symbols and signals are seen as critical, like in the "Management by walking around" argument. Others would add - more in line with the indications from this study - that change cannot be seen as separated from general management responsibilities.

The point is, however, as we have seen, that this issue emerges when exploring change projects. Therefore, it is important to suggest the various aspects of management anchoring as a reframing issue. The different kinds of situations that brought the issue to the surface also help explain and clarify it in a way that makes it useful. This will be explored further later in the study.

Union anchoring can also appear as somewhat strange to bring forward as an issue. It is perhaps taken for granted that the union has a role in change activities, like in any important aspect of company life. What is observed, however, is that this is understood and handled in different ways in different companies. These differences seem pretty much to evolve around ideas about what kind of management interests, tasks and responsibilities union leaders can and will take in reframing endeavours, and also, of course, what difficulties these ideas cause when attempted to be practised in an actual context. The material here suggests that union anchoring in this meaning is an important reframing issue. But there is little in the material to suggest exactly how the issue of union anchoring should be handled.

The various aspects of anchoring reframing efforts

The notion of anchoring emerged from observations of the way top managers and union representatives were - or were not - included in management of the change programme. This refers both to the formal set up of the change project, which varied in the different projects, but also the degree of active support in the performance of the management role, which so clearly was missing in, for instance, Electric Industry.

It seemed to matter whether or not there was an active coupling between the formal (basic) management structure and the running of the project. This is also seen as applying to other top managers at the same time as it is seen as suggesting that this is also a question of a relationship between the “line” - the basic management organization - and the running of the project. In a sense, the undertow here seems related to the fact that what is focused on by the line represents a strong agenda for the daily activities of the organizational members:

Management anchoring: Active and supportive coupling between management and the reframing efforts - in rational and symbolic ways

- Top manager anchoring: The top manager actively supporting the reframing efforts

- Top management anchoring: Other top managers actively supporting the reframing efforts through;

- Line anchoring: Tight coupling between the line and the management of the reframing efforts

Union anchoring: Active and supportive coupling between union representatives and the reframing efforts

FIG. 4.1 ANCHORING OF REFRAMING EFFORTS

By suggesting this it is meant that the issue of anchoring is central in thinking, planning and working with reframing organizations. Furthermore, there are critical choices to be made when it comes to the anchoring of change efforts. These evolve around the questions of how to design the management of the project and how that design relates to various leadership roles.

There is an underlying normative suggestion in this. The top manager seems the central (or at least very central) person in setting the agenda for organizational activities both in the rational as well as the symbolic sense. How can new ideas and priorities become important if he or she is not seen as finding them important? A similar line of argument is applicable to the situation of the line managers. They control - or are powerful agenda setters for - the everyday activities and priorities performed to fulfil the task(s) of the enterprise. Lack of understanding and/or support from them in a claim for pursuing a new course of action would probably serve the existing order.

The role of the union representatives seem to be brought to the foreground for a similar reason as in the case of management anchoring. They are also influential with respect to employee ideas, priorities and actions, although the source of their authority is a different one. There is, however, not the same degree of empirical support when suggesting that union anchoring is needed or positive for the reframing efforts to succeed.

In other words, the material suggests support for the old slogan that “leaders should walk in the front”, especially in times of change. Reframing efforts should be anchored in the top

management and also seek anchoring with the union. This implies that reframing endeavours, at least the “main frame of the new direction” should be driven through “the line”.

The old and the new

There is creation
in destruction -
and destruction in
creation!

Management and change actions

The following situations deal with the relationship between the new and the old. By that is meant an organizational direction characterized by certain tasks, standards and definitions of the situation, etc. Changing the organizational direction involves having new ideas ruling the individual and collective (inter)action. These tasks, standards and definitions must be altered. The new ideas must be infused in organizational processes that are ruled by other - “the old” - and established ideas. The following situations emerge around this relationship between the old and the new. By focusing this relationship when new ideas in various ways are enacted or enforced upon the organization, it is assumed that relevant reframing issues are revealed. This should become clearer as three overlapping subjects around which this issue emerge: Management signals, arenas for change efforts, and organizational elements:

Signalling the new direction?

The quotation below from the project leader in Car Retailer illustrates one important side of how this project developed at that stage. It is focused on what happened in a meeting between the top management group and the local managers. The aim of the meeting was to clarify the strategy with an emphasis on the issue of moving towards a higher degree of customer loyalty. A consultant report assessing the main hindrances was supposed to constitute the basis on which the reframing efforts were to be built. The project leaders said:

“Only the CEO familiarized himself with the written report. The rest had, at the most, briefly read it. Still, he did not seem to understand the way of thinking change process.

In the first strategy presentation to the retailers the document outlining the practical part of the strategy was supposed to be explained step by step by the CEO. When the meeting started, however, he handed it over to the information manager who was not very willing to explain the content of - and premises for - the strategies. It all ended with the document being handed out without any kind of discussion. In a meeting the local managers held between them shortly after, they reacted quite sharply to this behaviour and attitude”.

The top management group referred to here had been established as a result of an organization assessment performed by the external consultants. The top management group had been considered to be too numerous. In retrospect, the project leader thought that the new group was constituted by selecting the most “central boxes” from the organizational chart. More time and more effort should have been invested in assessing functions and people, because the

existing group did not consist of people of sufficient understanding and competence for the task of changing the organization. One of the indicators for this judgement seemed to be the observation that after some time the group thought too much time was spent on long-term issues. They didn't have time, for example, for meetings on these kind of issues. The project leader commented:

“The managers continued to work exactly the way they did before. We have, for example, been asked to extend the “coaching” to the evenings, because they have too much work to do at day time. This is of course understandable, because neither did they seem to have increased the degree of delegation in order to be able to change their priorities.”

He goes on commenting on the degree of focus on the new direction:

“It is a problem that management in a sense runs a process in addition to the planned one, without seeing how what they do relates to these efforts. This seems connected to the fact that the culture is very ‘activity’ oriented - the more (new) activities the better. So, at the same time as they think too much time is spent on development work, we must hold back on their tendency to implement a lot of short-term oriented activities aimed at improving the functioning of the organization”.

The project leader based these kinds of problems on the general attitude among the (top) managers, and said that this was reflected in the focus of meetings on change issues and problems. It is revealed through what was focused on as well as what was not focused on: Information meetings (chaired by the top manager) were much more sales than service oriented and the customer relation issue did not seem to get more space on the agenda or more force in the organization. This was also reflected in the fact that at the same time as the internal message was supposed to put forward the focus on long-term customer loyalty, intense and high profile national, hard selling advertising campaigns were being carried out.

The problem of giving space on the agenda for the issue that was supposed to be developed as the future focus - customer relations and customer loyalty - is reflected in the following example. A bit more than half a year after the project had started, a new model car was introduced in a major European city. Sending people there was expensive, but there was a tradition for sending a lot of sales people to travel as reward or bonus for good performance. The project leader said:

“There was no moderation; lobster, the best meat, cabaret shows, champagne were central ingredients in these gatherings. In addition you found pep talks, people embracing each other and expressing that they were longing for the past. The service people carry the burden of these difficult times. The sales people stare at the wall, whereas people work hard in the service and parts department....support the long term relationship with the customers, and ask themselves whether the firms should not rather have bought decent tools rather than spent money on sending the sales people to such events”.

Old habits and old tracks were followed by the management of the organization. This was so in

spite of the espoused will to reframe the organization based on analytical considerations of the firm's situation, and in spite of this having been communicated to the organization. The organizational members, however, were also confronted with the fact that their managers, to a strong degree, followed the old tracks.

This is an issue that can be seen in Furniture, although the situation was somewhat different. A considerable number of key personnel took part in a series of consciousness raising and commitment seeking seminars. They were chaired by the top manager who was seen by the consultants as

“...a driving force who not only demonstrated commitment for the new ideas and change models, but who also processed and transformed them in a way that made them clearly appear as his own.” He was seen as demonstrating “a high degree of commitment to ideas as well as efforts towards implementation”.

They saw him as a person perceived as having a high degree of integrity and were therefore very optimistic to the development of the project. The commitment among the rest of the management group was seen as more unclear. However, the new ideas met no resistance.

“Commitment seminars” for leaders and key personnel were carried out for those that had not been present at the first series of seminars. According to the project leader, they were seen as:

“...gaining good response and the ideas presented were winning support among the participants. The managers giving presentations and leading sessions were also seen as giving a good performance”.

The next change activity was a “kick off” day planned by the marketing people, signalling to the organization that something big was about to take place. An amusing, but still to the point, brochure had been distributed, picturing the typical company man in the new firm. The punch clock for the workers had been removed when the workers arrived in the morning and their reactions were filmed for use in the internal marketing. A few weeks later, the first “training” seminar (learning and following up) was done for the top management group. Among other things, they reported on local progress (e.g. training and job rotation). According to the project leader:

“The reporting showed that the different managers had not done much of what they should in this area, which gave the group the impression that they were not getting any further.”

One of the actions taken was to arrange a series of seminars for department leaders, developing local quality goals. This was also done in response to an anticipated need to do something “concrete”, and it was done to raise the consciousness about reframing needs and issues also at the grass-root's level. The feedback was that the seminar offered “practical,

simple, fruitful and necessary tools.” With this as a background the various departments started the task of developing local goals (LGD). The project leader tried to keep track of the development.

“It seems to work, the reception of this is positive, although it is met with some skepticism. There are comments like: Will this make any difference? It looks like “quality circles” and there never came anything out of that.”

Another example was people saying they would have problems complying with the deadline because of a lot of overtime. A few weeks later the project leader stated in an interview that “the LGD work has broken down.”

In parallel with the LGD sub project, a serious drop in the market was experienced. At the same time it was discovered that the management information system on economic status was very bad, revealing the the situation was even worse than believed. The top manager (who at that time had become top manager at HQ concern) demanded cost reductions and intensified marketing efforts. The project leader said:

“He jumped behind the wheel and screamed: Cost reductions! Get out in the market and get orders! Ensure the result! Every month he called the various managers to his office and examined them forcefully on activities and results in this area. I am afraid a division has been created between development efforts at the business side and the culture side; between cost reductions and ensuring results on the one hand and quality development, training, rotation and team organization at the other”.

He therefore took steps to

“increase the frequency of the training seminars to once a month. This was to create a stronger focus on the organizational development efforts and to balance them in relation to the following upward economic results. We also think the name of the seminars should change from “training” to reporting on results.”

However, although the experiences with the LGD effort varied, somehow it “died”, especially in the production departments. The project leader saw this as being related to bad timing, but also because:

“the top manager now was perceived only to be concerned with short-term economic results, although he earlier on had said that it should not happen that short-term economic considerations should come before a long term-priority. He exerted pressure on the area managers who stressed the various unit leaders, and so on. How is it possible to endure homogeneous management signals when the enterprise is under considerable strain?”

The project leader became critical about the approach that had been followed and raised the question whether reorientation rather should be pursued through concrete operational projects that related to short-time solvable problems.

The issue of management integration

In the examples from the change efforts of Car Retailer and Furniture presented above, we observed that top management gave the members of the organization conflicting signals. Sometimes they communicated the new but then sometimes the old direction. What are the signals from the top management? The members of the organization experienced a lack of coherence. It must have been hard for the members of the organization to know what was really expected of them, what it was that counted at the end of the day. Was it the espoused (and often unclear) new values and goals or was it performing their everyday tasks - perhaps harder and better? This illustrates that there is rich potential for mixed management messages as one kind of lack of coherent direction given in change processes. Therefore, the term (lack of) management integration can be used to coin this phenomenon appearing in change efforts

We find conflicting or mixed management signals in different forms. The most obvious is perhaps when managers say one thing and do another. Like, for instance, in Car Retailer when saying that long term customer relations is what is to be emphasized, while at the same time in other ways and by other means emphasizing and honouring the short-term sale aspect. Like, for instance, in Furniture when the top managers in many ways pursue long-term improvements, but at the end of the day it is short term economic results that is followed up most forcefully. Or, the more general observation that top managers espouse delegation but exert control both by examining the subordinates decisions and/or by making decisions that interfere in their possibilities for creating the results for which they are responsible.

Some of the examples given in last section on “anchoring” also have some relevance here. Recall once again the example with the top manager of Electric Industry who abdicated from the change work. He expected the external consultant, the project leader for the change process - with the help of an internal project manager - and the steering committee to be responsible for that. This attitude also manifested itself in the original set up of the project, the steering group consisted of two line managers (but not the top manager), two union representatives, one personnel consultant, and a project leader (external consultant). The steering committee did not accomplish anything except some formal planning that never got beyond that stage. Criticism of the top managers role in relation to the change project also came to the surface in and around a change seminar. The other top managers as well as middle managers were confused about “what to do”. They felt it necessary to include the top manager in the steering committee to establish conditions for creating clarity

This observation helped moved the focus to the assumption that lack of management integration can be created by different managers in the management group demanding different things from the members of the organization. Sometimes they do see this is the case, sometimes they don't, but the effect can be the same. The top manager in Furniture seemed for example to forward the

new ideas with a lot of enthusiasm, whereas there were indications that some of the managers at the level below did not follow this up at all in their departments.

In other words, the degree of management integration is related to the consistency of the single manager as well as the consistency between different managers. Such situations are probably created by power games, lack of common understanding, lack of competence due to personal or cultural factors, etc. In any case, lack of integration means that there is not a consistent management message pointing out a new direction.

Arenas for change efforts

The idea that others than the top manager can be responsible for change endeavours is found in other examples. The Human Relation manager in Transport play, for instance, a central part in setting up the project in collaboration with the consultancy firm involved. At one instance - one large meeting - he showed the meaning of this in a "living" metaphor by carrying the transport manager on his shoulders. The other managers had no significant part in the planning, nor carrying through of, the different activities of the change efforts. It was within this frame of understanding that the concept of change leaders for spreading "the gospel of change" emerged.

In the section on anchoring, the top manager of Transport in the middle of a seminar session "understood" that something was wrong. He decided to take the responsibility for the change efforts himself to demonstrate that it was "his project", which he at that time thought necessary both to create commitment and to lay down rational premises.

In addition to taking the chair in that particular seminar, he also got heavily involved in the planning and carrying through of change efforts thereafter. In fact his involvement resulted in a changed understanding of these change seminars. Instead of separating the focus on respectively change issues and issues related to the running of the business, the issues were tighter knit together in the same arena. It became the arena for laying down premises and following up change as well "business". They were no longer seen or treated as separate types of issues. It developed, as the project leader phrased it, towards what was seen as "a new form of budgeting process".

"All important decisions were to be taken at these kinds of meetings, and thereby the decision processes also became easier to grasp and were more consistent. Making money and carrying through change were not seen as separate activities."

The problem of separation of change issues from business related ones was also observed at Furniture. "The development efforts are at the side line" was an expression used by the project leader to illustrate what happened. He also found that "change work is heavy and that there is a lack of driving force in the implementation efforts". This can be understood concretely, the

change efforts took place in an arena apart from the everyday life of the organization, as well as abstractly meaning that they did not influence the agenda for how the members of the organization performed. He meant both.

As we remember, the change efforts were focused on a series of change seminars, followed by “training seminars” that were supposed to follow up the change ambition agreed upon by the top managers. Notice two things. First, unexpected problems made the top manager press very hard for economic and market results. This was not done in the training sessions where change was still emphasized. The top manager had individual meetings with the different managers for the purpose of following up profit and market share development. Second, very little seemed to happen in the area of efforts to support the change. At least the managers could not report much progress. And the attempts to develop local and concrete goals reflecting the reorientation ambition got stuck in a large part of the organization.

The project leader reflected on the new division manager being frustrated over all the projects, plans, dead lines, etc. in which he could see no clear connection and coherence:

“This reaction is probably not only being caused by him being new in the job”. Commenting on this issue he looks back. “Stressing quality for the customer was a natural consequence of Furniture’s business idea, with the consequent need for quality in and between the members of the organization and in the leadership. Culture and leadership were therefore defined as the most important strategic issues in the nineties. Then comes “Black Monday” and a drop in the market - also for Furniture. Related to last year the turnover (in x month) was reduced by 50 %.... There is now a pressure for cost reductions and ensuring results... I am afraid a division has been created between development efforts at the business side and the culture side; between cost reductions and ensuring results on the one hand and quality development, training, rotation and team organization at the other”.

What is observed is the organizational difficulties in dealing with the new in a way that it is not pushed aside by a more concrete focus on the established business activities. An episode from Money Market illustrates the point from a somewhat different angle. Here the managers were at one time paid extra for taking part in change preparation activities. The project consultant said about this that

“There was no tradition for personnel management in the company. What counted was to be best at the dealing table. Many experienced therefore the change process to be without importance. I think the management reinforced this attitude by paying NOK 10000 as bonus for participating in the management seminar focusing change”.
(There was no tradition for paying overtime in this organization).

The issues of integrating change efforts

There is an important point here related to the issue of how the “new” tasks are perceived by organization members, and how that issue is related to how change efforts are organized and carried through. What are the arenas for explaining new tasks and priorities and making their

importance clear, and how is this related to the ongoing organizational life? New ideas, tasks, priorities etc. have to be integrated into the life of the organization in order to become real in their consequences, if new ideas are to become realized. In Furniture, for example, there was a tendency for the change effort(s) in a sense was to lead a life of its own at "the side line of" the organizational life related to operating the business. Whereas Transport switched from such a situation to a situation where the arenas were integrated.

The problem indicated by these examples is that activities concerned with change very often are perceived to be perhaps important but irrelevant, that they are not "what really counts". The "here and now" activities constitute more concrete pressures. It is according to the established agenda and through the established formal - and informal - structures that people are continuously evaluated and visibly and invisibly rewarded and punished. It is not according to how well and when they perform at the change arena. In a way it is Gresham's law at work. The battle between the old and the new raises the issue of the integrations of the two arenas, or rather integration of reframing efforts in organizational processes. That would mean that doing new things and things in new and intended ways would count. The greater the lack of such integration, the less convincing it is for the organizational members that the new and intended direction is the one that counts.

Change and the complexity of organizations

Apart from anchoring and this kind of integration there are other aspects of the organization that seem to bear heavily upon how change effort are and can be received. Looking at the situation in Car Retailer we become aware of another issue. Car Retailer wanted to develop closer relations with the customers. The aim was customer loyalty, to now focus on the second sale rather than the first and the customer should experience attentiveness and quality also after the purchase, feeling that he or she was taken care of in a for them uncomplicated and efficient way. This meant changed work roles for sales as well as technical/service people. The reflections of a project consultant illustrate this:

"The reason for the weak service orientation among the sales persons (as indicated by a survey) is probably related to the pattern of recruitment to these positions. However, there are organizational conditions that probably reinforce this. The largest proportion of their salary is for example related to number of sales. This is forwarding a short-term and individual network oriented service attitude. The development of goals is prognostic. It is not seen as an opportunity to involve the sales force in planning of service and marketing activities as a precondition for a good long term sale". He goes on commenting on the following up mechanisms of the organization: "The salesforce experience strong goal orientation (indicated by a survey). However, the area manager is following the sales manager from week to week focusing almost entirely on number of sales...using a high proportion of their time and energy on such pushing of cars."

In addition to this, the sales force did not seem to have sufficient system support for following up or getting information about customers and customer groups. Additionally there was a sharp

organizational division (from the top to the bottom) between the sales part of the organization and the service part of the organization. The service people at the shop floor level never met or were in any way confronted with their customers.

“There seems to be a general agreement that this part of the organization is crucial for customer loyalty, but nobody (referring to management) is willing really to follow it up. The pay systems vary, but do not seem to influence the speed of work, but rather the distribution of the jobs that give a bonus. At the same time a feed back of quality complaints to the “responsible person” is seldom practiced. The overall signal seems to be that management priority is speed. In my opinion this reinforces the effect of having customer contact as a separate function”.

This is another quotation that reflects the problem that an organization is a complex historical product. In this case we see that systems as sediments of past priorities reinforce the “old” orientation, or at least must be seen as barriers to realizing the new and intended.

Another aspect of the situation can be found in Airline where the pay system appears as a crucial factor for the chances of reorienting the organization. For the purpose of improving customer service and for the purpose of utilizing resources in a more efficient way, the idea was to implement multifunctional work units (teams). People within these groups were to have joint responsibility for a set of tasks. They were therefore to rotate between the tasks dependent on where resources were needed. The needs could, of course, fluctuate as different tasks had different cycles and also because of unforeseen rushes. This was to be developed for example within the various sales units: Historically different functions were grouped around different jobs like, for example, answering general phone calls, facing customers at the counter, handling special requests, making out the tickets, and so forth. Such functions were to become a joint responsibility, eventually grouped around customer groups. Similar changes were to be made in other parts of the organization between such functions as checking in passengers, giving information, guiding passengers at the gate and perhaps (but not likely) handling the luggage etc. There were some obvious restrictions to these plans: Some of them had to do with a need for competence - sometimes combined with safety problems - that made it unlikely that a lot of employees could be expected to include the necessary exams, certificates, etc. in their repertoire of possible tasks to take on.

Another problem was pointed out by the project leader:

“There are several unions in the company which have their own wage agreements....The implementation of an efficient team structure is necessary to ‘move across’ the borderlines created by these agreements. To do so, negotiations and new agreements are needed, and the establishment of such a new organizational structure is not within the straight forward management rights of the company and becomes increasingly difficult when the negotiations are being handled outside the division, and/or are related to national union interests...all groups and types of positions must be renegotiated”.

One of the union representatives explained this by pointing out two particular groups of employees that could be integrated in the same "team". "They have different salaries, and the group with the highest salary will not accept less pay by (partly) doing different tasks than today. The company will not like to pay those earning the least salary more for rotating the other way".

Although such problems are caused by changing the formally accepted principles for the organizational structure, this does not necessarily mean that people have difficulties in seeing the logic behind the new thinking. One of the project consultants said:

"There are considerable local variations where the informal divisions go. Locally there might be considerable rotation between jobs within the same sector of wage agreement, sometimes (in periods of stress) also across such border lines".

When it came to formally laying down new principles we see several levels of the problem reflected in the examples mentioned. First, the pay and career systems need to be rethought. The single most important issue to change in this context is that these systems have to honour breadth (joint responsibility orientation) rather than depth (function orientation). Second, this indicates that the agreements between the different unions (in this case two major ones were involved) and the company about the premises on which they build must be renegotiated. This places the possibility for solution outside the organization. Third, and to complicate the matter further, the present situation is cemented also by the fact that some of the groups involved have members in different unions. All this could call for coordination and negotiations also between unions, which again could face problems of prestige and legitimacy.

In Transport there were also problems with patterns of problem solving created in the past. An essential element in the reorientation process was to offer guaranteed transport services. In essence that meant that if the customer delivers the goods before a certain time one day, it is guaranteed to arrive for example at noon on day two. If it does not, the customer pays nothing. A lot of established work patterns and systems at the terminals would make such an arrangement difficult.

One of the project consultants commented on this:

"As an example we can take the routines related to the unloading of goods. Traditionally goods were received and unloaded all day. They were now forced to work more variable hours since all goods arrived at one particular time of the day (depending upon the geographical location). That causes peak periods. Furthermore, the procedure around the checking of goods against the papers (bills) had to be changed. 3-4 people used to work with that, a time consuming task that often became a bottleneck in production process. This procedure has now been completely eliminated. It has to be right the first time."

He also drew attention to the pressure that emerged for work pattern and tools (technology) that

supported the new product (service):

“This (Guaranteed delivery) demands a different and frequent communication between the drivers, terminal workers and the office to keep track over where the various shippings are. By car phone it is continuously checked whether they are on schedule or not, and what measures, if any, have to be taken to be able to meet the guarantee. The communication also had to be improved between the terminals, and they get for example immediate feedback by fax if goods have been sent to the wrong place. In some places a system has been implemented that gives the workers responsibility for certain particular destinations. Both the drivers and the workers express a feeling of “ownership” following from this system, which again helps fulfill the guarantee.”

The issue of integration of organizational elements

These examples are indications of the complexity of organizational reframing; in a way changes call for changes. Organizations are complex, historic products and can be described as being constituted by various types of elements, like organizational culture, organizational structure and systems, etc. These different elements and their relationships have developed over time, and as a result of the problems the organization has had to cope with. So have the pays systems at Airline and so have the unloading routines at Transport.

Different kinds of organizational elements naturally have bearings on organizational action. It was, for example, indicated by the examples that the established communication patterns at Transport and the reward systems at Airline had to be changed if new organizational ideas should become realized. The existing structure might not be consonant with the ideas for authority and responsibility reflected in the new direction. It is a question of different elements of the organization speaking the same or different “languages” related to the issue of following up the new and intended or not.

We suggest conceptualizing this issue as the integration of organizational elements in reframing efforts. The greater the lack of such integration, the less bearings seem to be brought upon the organizational members to reorient their thinking and actions. New ideas and new actions can be rejected because old elements of the organization underpins the old ideas.

Summing up: Consistency and integration of reframing efforts

Reframing deals with infusing the new in the old. Although the old in various ways opposes and contrasts the new, the new still has to be implanted in established and ongoing social processes. To say it bluntly this cannot be achieved without taking action. Actions are the means for making people grasp and enact ideas that are new and different for them. By actions, however, we mean talk as well as other kinds of action. New ideas are implanted in organizational processes by taking actions. Looking at it this way several problems seem to evolve. They evolve around the issue of the way the relationship between these new actions and the established patterns of handled. Problems have been identified related to how the

managers tackle this, to the characteristics of the arenas where the new is pursued, and to what is done with how old organizational features relates to the new ideas:

Issues on reframing integration

Management integration: Deals with the relationship between the managers' actions and the intended ideas. Is there consistency between

- what managers say and do?
- what they say and do in different context?
- what different managers say and do?

Integration of change efforts: Deals with the relationship between the change actions and the existing organizational context. Is there consistency between

- the reframing message in the various reframing arenas and
- the message received in the everyday organizational situations ?

Integration of "organizational elements": Deals with the relationship between the various elements and the new ideas. Is there consistency between

- the new ideas and
- the ideas embedded in organizational elements bearing on organizational (inter)action?

FIG. 4.2 ISSUES ON REFRAMING INTEGRATION

One thing is being able to define and implement actions that forward the new direction at all. The problem we spotted was even when doing so it seemed that managers had a problem. Managers of Car Retailer and Furniture said, for instance something, but communicated other messages through actions. Or they communicated the new ideas only in some settings. In others they kept on sending the messages which reflected established patterns. There were also indications that different managers in the top management group were seen as sending different messages about the importance of following up new ideas. Management integration, or lack of management integration, was seen as a good label on this problem in reframing endeavours.

Another aspect of the problem is what we observed in Transport, Furniture and to some extent Money Market. There seemed to be a division in the conception of responsibility for pursuing going concern and pursuing change respectively. At least these kind of tasks were tackled as different and had in a sense separate arenas. In the beginning the Human Resource Manager was responsible for pursuing change in the change seminars at Transport. This became visible as a problem because the top manager sensed it did not make people feel the responsibility. In Furniture this kind of division was even reflected in the label "training seminars". What was pursued in the other arenas did not communicate the change message. Integration or lack of integration of reframing efforts was seen as an appropriate label for this problem in reframing endeavours.

Finally, we face the problem that we confront a complex and established system. The various elements have emerged or been constructed to meet problems, fulfill values, etc. of the past and

will therefore not necessarily support what is pursued in the reframing endeavour. The reward systems at Airline were not fit for multifunctional teams. The communication systems and unloading routines at Transport were not fit for guaranteed delivery. Integration or lack of integration of organizational elements was seen as an appropriate label for this problem in reframing endeavours.

Formation and learning of new solutions

Executives *can* control the rules of relevance; but the rules of *ir*relevance - the paradigm as it is tacitly used- are not so amenable to managerial control.(Kuhn 1962:376);

Just as jealous husbands are the last to know of their wives' romances, so authoritarian leaders often learn of plots and punches only when it is too late.

All the change projects observed are, in principle, run after a top-down concept. In spite of this basic similarity, critical differences can be observed between the change projects with respect to how these top down efforts were performed. How much for instance, was decided centrally and in what ways were solutions found? Different patterns concerning how the new ideas were exposed, concretized and imposed on the members of the organization are also revealed by examining some glimpses from four of the organizations. They are presented before discussing the conceptual implications.

Participant problem assessment and solution formulation in Money Market

The project in Money Market had been going on for about a year with "Kick off" seminars being held, management coaching carried through, and goals developed for the organization. The efforts did not seem, however, to gain a foothold. An important factor could be unclear expectations. Management seemed to have "bought an improvement process" aimed at making them more achievement oriented.

The external consultants played a very heavy part in the change work being carried out by planning and chairing the meetings and seminars. What was said about one of the seminars can serve as an example to illustrate their participation:

"The change seminar was based on more material being presented by consultants than was usual at these sorts of meetings. The top management group was involved very little in the planning, and it was the consultants who controlled the content and actual design of the seminar".

One important aim of the seminar in question was to give some input on the subject of management and organization as there was seen to be a need for doing that. Also, when it came to the top management group, one of the consultants said about this particular seminar :

“We were deadly scared that management should open their mouth and spoil the whole thing.” This attitude constituted an important part of the reasons for it being the consultants rather than the management that defined the agenda.

At one stage it became clear that new life had to be brought into the change project. The manifest reason for this was general mistrust between the project leader and one of the important managers. A new project leader took over, and he managed to bring the project to a “turning point” in a seminar that, in a way, started the renewed process.

“We managed to bring the situation to a”turning point” at the meeting where everybody took part by taking a high risk and investing all our forces in one chance. We succeeded in my opinion because of the simple fact that we introduced and integrated all the budgeting work into the seminar and the process. We therefore became unpleasantly concrete and placed ourselves in the midst of the nerve system of the organization.”

The project leader thinks this contributed strongly to establishing the project, and it also established confidence with the new manager. After this, several activities were carried out - theory oriented and consciousness raising seminars for employees with leadership responsibilities, improving the information policy, revealing extremely poor MIS (management information systems) by trying to go through a process of breaking down the goals of the organization, etc. However, it was seen as urgent to rethink the form of organization. This brings us to another critical observation about the way the rethinking of the organization was carried through. The project leader said:

“The work put into organizing the bank as a team was carried through in a more forceful way than we thought at first. We have “driven” the organization through a destabilizing process called “p 40”, where the management forcefully have communicated that costs must be reduced by 40 %, whereas the income must remain at the same level or be increased. To make this possible it was necessary to rethink the way the enterprise was organized. Fortunately, many members of the organization picked up this challenge, and a process was developed where the unions were invited to assess the problem and suggest alternative forms of organizations. This process was run by the management and the trade union in cooperation, and it resulted in two alternative ways of “team organizing” the enterprise. These models are extremely exciting.”

These solutions were also considered very interesting by the management . Those involved had gained considerable insight into the situation of the company as well as an understanding of problematic issues and challenges, and the employees had “ownership” of the new solutions. It was not a new ready-made work structure enforced upon them, or, to use the words of the project leader:

“The work carried through in connection with the suggested models for “team organizing” has resulted in a considerable amount of learning. First, we have established quite another (self) understanding in the organization. We have, among other things, used questionnaires. The organization is now relating to its real problems. The work involved designing the two team concepts has also resulted in a larger proportion of the employees being committed”.

The way this process was handled in terms of involvement is somewhat in contrast to the situation at Airline.

Centrally formed solutions in Airline

The first thing that was done to revitalize the reframing efforts in Airline was to establish a strategic management group. This was partly an answer to a fairly complicated and rather ambiguous situation that the top management of the company discerned. The strategic management group was, however, also supposed to constitute the steering group for the change project. Their arena for change efforts was primarily the learning and following up forum (FUAL) that included the strategic management group, important staff people and all the local (area) managers. This was the arena for following up results as well as for initiating new activities and new ambitions. A major tool for accomplishing change was considered to be a process of breaking down goals; a long-term ambition was to do this all the way down to their team and individual levels. A project consultant's report shows that it would

"1. Make the organization draw in the same direction because of a common understanding, and it also would constitute an effective means of communications across the levels. 2. Represent a structural pressure necessary to identify the organization as a whole. 3. Represent a democratic element allowing for the management of one's own situation and 4. Constitute a driving force for the allocation of resources."

The process was planned to gradually cover deeper levels of the organization in some kind of cascade effect. The strategic management group took the responsibility for defining economic and market goals with what the single unit (area) should contribute. According to the project consultant:

"This has been going on for a long time in fact, all autumn. At the FUAL meeting in November the local managers presented their results, plans and experiences with the process. I refer from the meeting: A general impression was that the process by and large had worked in a positive way and created: openness/commitment in the the development of ideas, broad participation in problemsolving are, increased understanding for the enterprise as a whole, "cost consciousness", motivation for action, a tool for management and control. However, the efforts in this process have also revealed that it is sometimes difficult to formulate understandable values and goals, it is not always easy to gain acceptance and understanding, and there is not always enough power base at their middle manager level."

The consultant pointed out that it was quite clear that the process had not reached deep enough and efforts had to be put into this issue before the next meeting.

The following up was based on these goals, and the process of doing that was quite tough, and was felt as rather authoritarian. "Terror management" is a phrase that was used by one of the local managers in a later follow up interview. His view that the process became more learning and exploring oriented and less of an inquisition as the local managers, in the eyes of the top,

fulfilled the expectations of working more systematically and goal oriented, seemed fairly common.

The goal-oriented way of approaching problems of change seemed to set a standard. For example costs were to be reduced because of a drop in the market and the contribution of the single unit was set and followed up on this basis, leaving some discretion as to how this was achieved, for instance, costs equaling a certain number of jobs, etc. The problems identified in the November FUAL meeting mentioned above, could, however, have been fairly widespread as a number of interviews one and a half years later indicated.

“It is quite uncertain how widespread the development of lower level goals is, or if it is only common in the sales organization. This is especially the case when it comes to other types of goals (organizational, process). It is a reasonable assumption that considerable local variation exists, this again being connected to such issues as a difference in managers, the degree of local development in the area of teams, local FUAL, etc.”

Organizational changes were introduced more or less after this model. The strategic management group found that a team-oriented (multifunctional work units) organization should be implemented. The schedules were presented for commitment at the central FUAL (follow up and learning) seminar. The project leader said that:

“At the same meeting there was a presentation about ‘why a team’, what it is, and also there was a discussion of the experiences gained by the management of ER (a special department), in addition to the experiences made by a local unit in preparing for implementation of teams. Based on these inputs, a plan was formed that should serve as a guideline for the preparations to be undertaken by the strategic management group as well as the local managers before the team seminars were carried through in all regions. An important point was the information that should be given to all employees. The local managers were responsible for that.”

Team seminars were carried out mostly as extended management meetings (20-25 participants) sometimes for all the employees. Most of the input was given by external consultants that, however, knew the organization very well. The progress was frequently discussed by the strategic management group.

The seminars seemed “to work more or less quite well,” There was some general (union) resistance to the team idea due to, for example, the relationship to the pay system, and a process was started to handle that. The seminars were also met with some skepticism probably because of several reasons. The project leader pointed out several :

“The team idea was introduced right after an extensive cost reduction and the employees therefore perceived the project as primarily to be intended to save costs. Second, quite a few employees had the understanding of always having worked in ‘teams’ and considered that they had nothing to learn. Third, there was a general impression that new projects were constantly started without old ones having been terminated and evaluated.”

Gradually he also came to see transfer of competence as an essential problem:

“What we discovered and did not pay enough attention to in the beginning, is that there was a need for close follow up and transfer of competence at this stage.”

All in all, this led to the project leader having to travel around and teach, involving himself in finding general and local solutions to problems that arose, a process that proved to take more time than anticipated. The project leader said about the progress in implementing teams:

“Especially because of the complexity in establishing new structures and the accompanying lack of competence, the establishment of teams in the organization has taken more time than the time limit given in advance.”

He then pointed out that this was not surprising; such processes are so complex that they have to take time. But he also pointed out that “tempo” seems to matter when it comes to the breed of counterforces:

“In some places where they had not gotten very far it was quite clear that the interest was decreasing. It was far too easy to make propositions that in reality were identical with the old department model.”

It must be noted here that the process took even much more time than he estimated at this stage. More work had to be done in the area of informing and transferring competence, and more local variation emerged than was planned.

In the Money Market and Airline cases different approaches can be seen regarding who is given the initiative at what stage in the change process, and also in what way the premises of the central and local level are allowed to influence the change process. There are also differences as to the way the members of the organization are meant to learn and use the ideas for the new direction. Before trying to conceptualize these different approaches, we should also picture how this is done at Furniture.

“Teaching” the new direction in Furniture

There was a tendency in Furniture to focus the change efforts on a, in a way, separate change arena. There was, for example, a series of two (2•2) seminars for those considered to be the power base, including union representatives. These seminars focused general and local change issues and were supposed to constitute a “preparation phase”. The top managers chaired but several consultants contributed actively. The top manager and the project leader were so satisfied with the consciousness raising effect and so convinced that it was crucial to prepare well and secure commitment for implementation, that they planned and carried through a third one:

“Paul (the top manager) considered the consciousness raising that was created in the seminars

so important that he wanted to extend them with a step three, rather than to slur over important issues. The aim of this step was to create understanding for the consequences of new goals and ideas for management and organization of the enterprise, to create insight into the coming course of the project, and to map strategic issues for developing and designing a program of concrete actions to be taken in the months to come”.

These activities turned out to be more of the same: Commitment seminars for the rest of the managers, union representatives, etc.; “kick offs” symbolizing and informing about “the new”; seminars to train foremen and local leaders in how to develop quality goals and standards (creative techniques) etc. Also intended was to start the development of such goals, local training, job rotation, and team organizing. The seminars were seen to:

“be a tool that also could be used in adjusting the use of resources, but where the pedagogy also could be used to create acceptance and involvement, which traditionally is a problem in this kind of work”.

They were also, in a sense, intended to “reproduce” the process the others already had been through: Communicate the need for change and its direction, what ideas should rule, etc. These seminars, as with the seminars for managers and key personnel, were well received and “went well”. They were, however, met with some skepticism: “We have done such things before, does it matter? Will something happen, or will the ideas just vanish”? Furthermore, the concrete work with developing goals was only carried through for half the company, and very little of it had any impact in practical terms. Neither were the other concrete activities given much attention, as we have seen in previous sections. The following seems to be rather illustrative of what the project leader observed:

“Not much had really happened before the first meeting (seminar). Peter had done “nothing at all”. He had, however worked very hard with other tasks. For Fred and Adrian it was difficult to see if anything was done. In Ians case, however, there seemed to be some action, whereas the trainers did as agreed upon. This could be typical for the situation that constantly will emerge. Things that are more ‘important’ than the strategic program pop up...it will be difficult to break old habits”.

The change activities were not pursued as presupposed. This could be seen as related to established thinking:

“Perhaps a tougher attitude is necessary to make people do their homework. In this enterprise it seems to be a widespread syndrome that things do not have consequences, so it is not that dangerous not to do your homework”.

The lack of emphasis on the new can also be seen in connection with the fact that a market drop took place in this period. The activity that followed from trying to cope with that in practical terms squeezed other kind of activities aside. However, the approach has emphasized “teaching”, in a classroom fashion, the organizational members which way to go. The idea seemed in a way to be that they should “go out and do it” themselves, which of course also left

discretion as to how one should do it. At least there was no significant pressure on doing things in distinct and new ways. This was very different at Transport, especially for the shop floor workers, but also for the managers.

Enforced experiences at Transport

The change program had several essential components in this enterprise. Change seminars involving key personnel - consciousness raising and concept teaching sessions aiming at preparation and commitment - played, as indicated earlier, a central role early on in the change work. These seminars were in the beginning driven by staff and external consultants, but the top manager changed the character of the seminars by "taking over" and also making them more "business oriented". After some time, they were also integrated in the plan and budgeting work cycle. Or the other way around, change work was integrated in the running of the business, and it ran from making strategic choices and priorities through different phases of planning to resource allocations of the budgeting process and then implementing through following up what was agreed upon. The project leader said:

"The plan/budgeting process is a systematic integration of business and culture. The aims of this process are multiple: To obtain a systematic approach to change, to commit managers to critical policy decisions, to make managers more market and decision oriented, to motivate, and to strengthen them as leaders."

This take us to the changes in the management structure and practice undertaken to support the reframing process. Several structural measures were taken. The infrastructure of the enterprise was rationalized considerably. The number of terminals was reduced considerably making the management structure simpler. This was reflected and supported at HQ where the hierarchy was made less steep, and an extensive exchange of managers also took place. The top management group was reduced from five to two, with five regional managers reporting to them. Coaching of managers was done at HQ as well as at the local level.

The form of management seemed to change. A project consultant characterized the "old culture":

"...or lacking or unclear goals, there is no point in following them up. When taking part in making a decision, he is quite sure that it will not be put into practice, and in a few months it will be forgotten."

Another project consultant found things to be changing one and a half years later:

"Top management now seems to practice a confronting management style with reference to direct following up and giving feed back. Have you done what we agreed upon? now seems to represent the style".

Guaranteed deliveries was a service or product that reflected the new strategic direction of the

firm. It seemed to bear heavily upon the reframing efforts: Delivery is to be effectuated before 10 o'clock day 2, if it is sent before a certain time day one, otherwise the customer will not have to pay. The concept for this was presented to the organization by top management, but it was further developed and implemented by an interplay between project work in the local units and the meetings in the change forum. In the local units project groups assessed the problems in introducing the new product and how it should be introduced. A manager at HQ was responsible for coordinating this interplay, and he was also conscious that as many as possible should have a share in the final solution.

"This created room for influence from various groups. The product became better, and people had a sense of having created it themselves", is what one of the consultants observed after having talked to people.

It was, however, introduced successfully in spite of bad test results. The project leader commented:

"The result of the test period would have made us run into the ditch within a few weeks. The results improved, however, week by week, and when the product was launched the results were satisfactory, representing a degree of quality few had thought would be possible to reach within such a short period of time".

How the new product came to bear upon the organizational process was illustrated in the section on "the old and the new". It was pointed out how various system changes evolved as necessary tools to make the guarantee possible. The project consultant also pointed out other ways of seeing this:

"It worked as a structural pressure, enforcing upon the employees another way of working and therefore also new experiences. This was supported by the guarantee working as a collective goal, motivating most people. For once you got simple and understandable feed-back on whether or not you did a good job. In this way there was also more focus on finding out who and what caused delays. What made it a driving force was that it also was an operationalization of the vision. It made it concrete....the arrangement helped release unrealised values. It appeared as good morale and a way of "doing the job properly", which also undermined the old ideas of what was a fair day's work".

The starting point was described by one of the consultant as

"... a volume orientation where people do not care about economy and accountancy. Judging the achievements of the company is made in terms of tons and not in terms of profit."

Another consultant related to this observation about one and a half years later:

"It now seems very well accepted and understood that we have to operate according to business principles. This means making money. We now know "tons" is not something we can put in the wallet, as somebody said the other day. At the end of the day it is from the customer we live".

Another aspect of the starting point was described as:

“the traditionalist has always done things his way, and he fears suggestions from others, and any suggestion about changes is seen as an attack on the way he does his job...he doesn't really like to leave his office to check how things really are”.

According to one of the consultants one and a half years later:

“Today the shop floor workers start to react if the containers are half empty, or if goods remain at the end of the working day, or to a way of sending parcels that seems complicated etc. The employees say today we try to find a solution before asking the boss.”

The project leader reflected on the same aspect :

“The foremen report increased enthusiasm and feelings of responsibility among the employees. When the train broke down, the workers themselves suggested to rent trucks, and the whole operation was completed within two hours. This kind of initiative did not occur in the past. If now, for example, goods are left at the floor/platform, the destination station would immediately try to find out what had happened and the customer could not be invoiced for that shipment. Consequently, the workers in the warehouse had to communicate more closely with the drivers, people at the office, other stations and change their work routines during the day.

In sum, people seemed to shift gradually towards becoming more conscious about the organization being a business having to satisfy customer needs rather than “moving tons” at a profit, and also consequently were more concerned with the results rather than procedures of what you do; Did the shipment get there on time?

Two interrelated dimensions are revealed by comparing these cases. These dimensions are implicit in the actual approaches and do not necessarily reflect conscious choices. The first deals with the way the organizational members learn, or are supposed to learn, the new orientation. It deals with the pedagogical nature of change actions. The second deals with the extent to which the practical formation of the orientation is made from or by the top, or whether lower levels are involved. It deals with what are the loci for the formation of change solutions.

Pedagogic approach: Ideational vs. experience enforcing

A heavy emphasis on change seminars was observed in Furniture. The aim was to prepare for the new by teaching and informing, and was intended to create commitment to the new direction. The manager and project leaders were very concerned with the power of conviction. By being conceptually well prepared with a high degree of intellectual consciousness about the new organizational direction and its rationale, the key personnel of the organization should be prepared to implement it - “to go out and do it”.

The organization in a way first learned and then did it. This as an example of an approach

relying on what can be seen as ideational-oriented or deductive reframing efforts. By that is meant that the underlying assumption seems to be to change practice by changing the ideas about practice. The idea at work seems to be that when organizational members have comprehended the “new ideas”/ideas for a new organizational orientation, they are ready to implement these ideas. They are then expected, and are supposed, to change their everyday action programs (the way they perform tasks and relate to each other).

This kind of approach is also illustrated in, for example, the early phase of the Transport change program. Concept-oriented and consciousness raising-oriented seminars planned and arranged by the external consultant and HR managers had a central place in the project. There was, however, as you recall, a turning point in the project as the CEO noticed that “something was wrong, the participants did not really seem to take the seminars seriously as a reorientation process, and they did not get involved”. He “took over” the seminar and it was also more strongly integrated into business issues.

There are also elements in the Airline project of such a deductive-oriented appearance. In fact, the history of the project was of a very ideational nature dominated by concept-oriented seminars. The revival of the reorientation efforts was started by the establishment of a strategic top management group that assessed and examined the situation of the firm. On this basis the managers of the different units were given motivated (sub) goals. There was, of course, an element of discussion, perhaps negotiation in accordance with the top management evaluation of this assessment.

When it later proved that exceptional cost cuts had to be made, the approach and procedure were the same; they were also told to get rid of costs equaling a certain number of jobs while being left the discretion to find other solutions. Furthermore, it was centrally decided that the form of organization for the new organizational direction was a “team organization”. Ideas and models were then taught to the key organizational members, who were then expected to transform these into practice. This can be seen as a deductive-oriented approach, although the reframing efforts in this case are more integrated in the organizational life than in the other examples.

This observation is perhaps symptomatic for the next point. The change efforts in Airline also demonstrate another aspect of organizational learning approaches. After new actions supporting the new organizational direction had been explained, motivated and conceptually supported, they were also “enforced” on the members of the organization. After communicating the message, structural pressure was exerted making the participants having to perform according to the new demands. From the point of view of learning the new orientation there was, in this context, an emphasis on learning the new ideas by having to comply with and practice them. This emphasis stresses the implicit or rather “inductive” way of learning new ways.

This point is also illustrated by focusing on the guaranteed delivery in Transport. Essentially, if the goods were forwarded before a certain time one day, they would arrive at the door of the receiver before 10am on day 2. This visualizing of the new strategy to the members of the organization enforced upon them other ways of performing and relating, and it constituted a clear and simple goal with a measurement system underpinning this enforcement process. Additionally, this again constituted a pressure for additional changes by creating a focus on the functionality of existing structures, systems and tools. Such an approach could be seen as action oriented, or rather experience-enforcing reframing efforts. The essential point is, however, to grasp that these actions could enforce upon the participants the kind of experiences illustrating and supporting the new orientation. The ideas for the new direction are implicit in and can be induced from these experiences.

In the same enterprise another aspect of such inductive oriented learning can be seen. The service product was designed in a process involving a considerable part of the organization. By making the new concept - the idea for the new product - concrete in relation to the decentral and local (their own) situation, the ideas behind the new organizational direction were also apprehended by the participants by the assessments and the exploration they had to make. The same approach was observed in the case of Money Market. The members of this organization were to define the situation and find solutions by examining information describing the economic and market related situation. By doing so, they apprehended the new direction by being exposed to a situation, rather than having a new concept or a new solution imposed upon them. The learning effect resulting from having to examine a situation either based on the frame of a new concept (guaranteed services) in the one case, or "facts and figures" about the organizational situation in the other, is different from being told what new ideas to enact.

Inherent in the various reframing endeavours are two qualitative approaches to learning. One approach deals with trying to infuse the new orientation by way of, for example, communicating ideas or models in different kinds of meetings and seminars by various types of presentations and discussions. Written communication could also be involved, although this has not been very visible from the examples here. This approach is deductive oriented, emphasizing the ideas underlying the intended new orientation as a deductive-oriented approach characterized by change actions of an ideational nature.

The second approach deals with the new orientation being enforced upon participants who are put in new situations that make them perform differently. This situation can be one of having to see your own and the organizational task from another perspective by having to assess it and find new solutions within a new frame. Or, the situation can be one of new or other tasks, relationships, systems, emphasis, (enforced) agendas, etc. constituting a structural pressure reflecting the new frame. People experience new ideas by way of enacting their understanding

of the new context. When this is “successful”, from the point of view of management, this means that they enact the new orientation. This is seen as an inductive oriented approach characterized by reframing actions of an experience enforcing nature.

Learning the new frame

- Inductive-oriented approach; experience enforcing reframing efforts
- Deductive-oriented approach; ideational or “teaching” oriented reframing efforts

FIG. 4.3 LEARNING THE NEW FRAME

The Transport project switched from an emphasis on the one approach to an emphasis on the other. The Furniture project had a main emphasis on one approach but still elements from the other, and the Airline project shifted between the two. In other words, they are approaches mostly in the analytical sense. In concrete projects, we expect to find elements from both and also that the emphasis might change over time, although the overall tendency might be more in the direction of one of the approaches.

Loci for solution formation: Top management vs. locally driven

The change endeavour in Furniture was started from the top. A new understanding and definition of the situation of the organization had been developed at this level. The ambition was to “repeat” this kind of process at the lower level. In concrete terms the intention was that the work groups themselves should develop their ambitions and goals within the framework of the new direction. This should be signalled and explained by the project management through the various change seminars mentioned. The lower levels of the organization were, in other words, left with the discretion of developing decentralized or locally driven solutions.

Such discretion was also observed in Money Market. Based on their own assessment of the situation from economic and market information, the organizational members were expected to define and suggest new solutions. Their input would contribute to concretizing the new organizational direction and reflect their local situation and practical problems. By giving such input they influenced the form of the emerging new organization. Local influence on practical solutions in the development of guaranteed deliveries who also planned in Transport. The design of the process was intended to involve the local levels in producing solutions that reflected their definition of the situation. The final solution and the practices used to produce it should reflect the situation for those involved in producing it. In this particular case we could also identify a dialectical element, as the process was designed as an interplay between the various local and the central levels, giving various groups a share in the final solution.

In Transport as well as in Airline we find reframing efforts that contrast with the locally driven solutions. Significant cost cuts were effectuated in Transport, and at one stage the local units

were told the exact number of employees by which to reduce their workforce to save a certain amount of money. This was seen as necessary to survive in the short term and also as part of long-term survival and the new strategic direction. Suggestions to save money by other means coming from the local level were rejected. We are faced with a situation which is a "management driven change solution".

In this case it would have been a little less management driven if the local managers, for example, had been told to reduce their costs with an amount equaling a number of employees, which in fact was the case at Airline. It was, however, fairly top management driven when - in "Airline" - it was decided that all organizational units were to be reorganized like teams after a certain definition. Centrally decided, locally implemented. It must be said, however, that in this particular case, the tactics were changed towards allowing for more decentralized initiative and local variation in the solutions being formed.

Solutions forwarding the new frame

- Top management driven; being formulated at the top - at central level
- Locally driven; being formulated locally - at decentral level

FIG. 4.4 LOCI FOR SOLUTIONS FORMATION

Goals, models and solutions representing the new organizational direction can either be identified, formulated and imposed from the top, or they can be identified and formulated locally. This issue deals with the degree of (de)centralization in giving the basis for, as well as the solidifying of, the new organizational direction. The stronger the degree of solidity in a decision or solution formed at the top, the higher the degree of centralization; the more holistic solutions that have to be found locally, the stronger the degree of decentralization. The issue is to what degree the approach to formation of solutions supporting the new orientation is centralized and decentralized. This is a question of top management vs. locally driven change solutions.

Conceptual clarifications

What are the relationships between the issues that have been introduced?. Are they analytically separate categories? All the cases had for instance a tendency towards "top management driven solutions". Quite naturally since the projects were initiated from the top. It is the degree to which this was modified and accompanied by locally driven solutions which seemed to make a difference. There are some indications that a local emphasis can create "ownership" and more relevant solutions judging from the development in, for example, Money Market and Transport. In these cases the change ambitions seemed to be advanced by people taking part in the formation of solutions. This is also indicated from the local initiative and local variation that enforced itself on the reorientation process in Airline in spite of the initial design, although that

could also reflect nothing more than an expression of other motivated resistance.

There is, however, a relationship between the approach for learning and the degree of locally driven solutions to be noted. There is an empirical overlap between inductive learning from assessment and locally driven solutions. Furthermore, inductive learning resulting from enforced new task performance could constitute a driving force for new solutions underpinning the reframing process. The two dimensions are related but not overlapping:

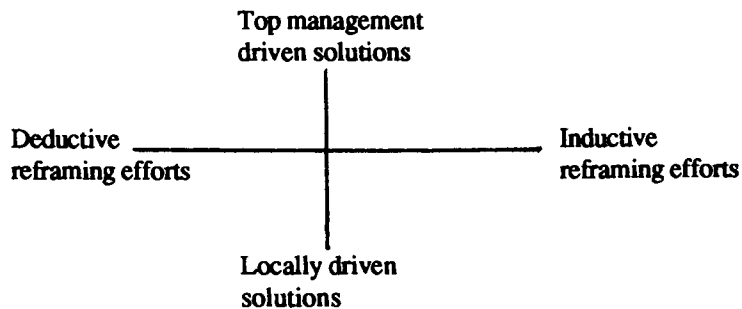


FIG. 4.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING AND SOLUTION FORMATION APPROACH

The relationship between the two dimensions is not an isomorphic relationship. There is reason to believe the two sets of issues can be seen as fruitfully analytically different. There is a tendency for some kind of overlap. Like when there is an emphasis on generating local solutions, like in the case of guaranteed deliveries, there is an inductive learning approach. The same relationship is indicated between top management-driven solutions and the deductive-learning approach. However, we can also see a combination of top management-driven solutions and a main emphasis on inductive learning. This seemed to be the case in the overall approach of Transport after the top manager “took over”. And, in Airline, the process was top management-driven in the distributing of the goals and their rationale, but the learning was forwarded by managers being forced to comply to these new standards through the learning and follow up structure.

The “bridges” - the closest interrelation - between the two dimensions can, however, be suggested. The (sub) issue of inductive reframing efforts that deals with assessing and finding new solutions within a new frame, like in the Money Market case, comes close to an empirical overlap with “locally driven solutions”. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to suggest that the “follow up” aspect of the learning arenas constitutes an example of a bridge between “top management driven” and “inductive oriented reframing efforts”. This is so because it forces upon people the top management-driven solutions (given consistency).

Furthermore, we can see a “teaching” aspect of “top management driven solutions”, that is, the

verbal communications of management-defined solutions that take place in change arenas or when change is put on the agenda. This aspect is empirically close to aspects of “deductive reframing efforts”. Finally, we can see that change seminars, planned as well as unplanned, also deal with discussing the new ideas being presented. The dialogue between new ideas and peoples’ reactions based on their local understanding bridges the “locally-driven solution” and “ideational change actions” .

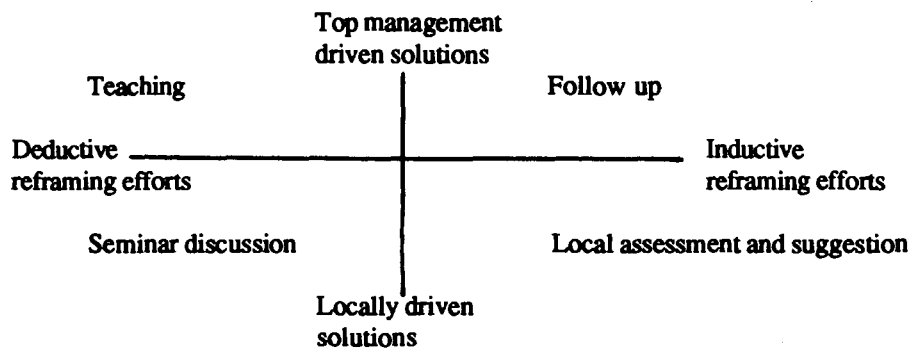


FIG. 4.6 BRIDGING THE APPROACHES FOR LEARNING AND SOLUTION FORMATION

Furthermore, there is an empirical overlap in examples grounding “integration of reframing efforts” and “inductive reframing efforts”. The first deals with taking care of “what counts”, or counts as new in everyday situations. The second deals with how people are supposed to learn the new ideas. One aspect deals with learning by assessing one’s situation. The other deals with learning by complying to new standards. This seems close to what integration of reframing efforts means. The difference is represented by the focus. Integration stresses the possibilities for conflicting demands between the new and the old. This point is further stressed in management integration and the integration of parts; the handling of the relationship between the old and the new. Whereas, for example, the issues in formation of solutions focus on the construction or formation of the new. In other words, there are reasons to see the issues as analytically different.

This kind of relationship is also seen between management integration and the management aspect of anchoring. The first deals with consistency in management signals and the second deals with ownership of the reframing ambitions. However, there is no clear, at least in the eyes of the receiver, ownership of the new orientation if there are mixed management messages. The other aspects of this issue does not seem to tend to overlap or have such clear relationship to the other issues.

Concepts for reframing organizations

Conceptually different foci

The presented reframing issues are to be seen as concepts for reframing organizations. It is

important to realize that these issues are meshed together in the same empirical field of action. In that sense they are separate concepts only analytically. Still, they highlight subject matters on which decisions that make a difference in the strive for change can be made, and they are therefore important for the possibilities to succeed.

The aspects focused by the issues can be tackled in many ways. The way they are tackled matters for the progress of the reframing process and creates different contexts for the next “move”. The issues should therefore be seen as highlighting aspects that are central to thinking, planning and working with reframing organizations. They are concepts for reframing organizations and, in a way, they can be seen as building blocks in a language for reframing.

The concepts naturally deal with abstractions of the same territory. Although they are interrelated, at some points more than others, they are conceptually different. They do have analytically different foci. The different foci can best be understood as follows:

Conceptually different foci:

- Anchoring: Focuses power in the sense of the rational and symbolic support
- Integration: Focuses competition between the different reframing efforts and between the old and the new
- Top management driven vs. local driven solutions: Focuses the loci of forming and making concrete the new orientation
- Inductive vs. deductive reframing efforts: Focuses the way the ideas representing the new frame are communicated and supposed to be learned

FIG. 4.7 CONCEPTUALLY DIFFERENT FOCI

Normative suggestiveness

In other words, the issues have emerged because the support of the new ideas, the way they are treated in relation to the old, the way they are made concrete and the way they are taught - supposedly learned - seem to make a difference. This observation implies a normative suggestiveness. What do the data tell about the way the issues make a difference?

“Anchoring” emerged, for instance as an issue because a project would seem to get into trouble if it lacked anchoring. A normative suggestion was made at the time of discussing the issue that the lack of anchoring would create problems for the reframing efforts.

Integration very much emerged for the same reasons. It appeared as an issue because lack of integration seemed to create problems for observed reframing efforts. The examples demonstrating integration seemed to create a more fertile soil for that progress than did the lack of integration. Also in this case there is an underlying normative suggestion that lack of

integration would create problems for the reframing efforts.

The remaining two issues are more difficult to account for in this vein since they appear as a pair of concepts. First, it is clear that we are not faced with dichotomies. A reframing project is, for example, not based either on top management or locally driven solutions. There can be a mixture and there can be some kind of dialectic. The same is quite obviously the case for the relationship between ideational oriented (deductive) and experience-enforcing (inductive) change actions. We are faced with a situation where the cases differ when it comes to what is the emphasis in the dimensions represented by these issues. This also seems to make a difference, but we are told less in what sense it makes a difference.

Deductive means exist in all the projects. There is, however, some justification for the view that inductive oriented learning approaches are creating conditions that are favourable for the change project. This is indicated by the lack of progress in Furniture which was dominated by a deductive kind of approach. And also by comparing that observation with the impression that the introduction of inductive means brought about a revival in the reframing efforts in Money Market and Airline as well as the shift of focus in Transport.

The same can be said about the locus of solution formation: Top management-driven solutions seem insufficient as a basis for the formation of new solutions, although they are necessary to point direction. And an acknowledged need for locally driven solutions can be identified in all these cases. This might not be obvious in Airline, but local influence emerged in the course of the process. In Furniture this need was admitted and activities were started (but died out).

All in all, there seems to be a need for deductive as well as inductive reframing efforts; top management-driven as well as locally driven solutions. They probably attend to different needs or aspects of the change process, and that issue shall be reiterated in the next chapter. The main point so far is that there is a normative suggestion that the lack of what these issues represent would create problems for the reframing efforts.

Concluding so far

A set of concepts for reframing organizations had been generated. This means basically that the “anchoring”, “integration” and “ideational” vs. “experience enforcing” change actions as well as “top management” vs. “locally driven” that have been explained and defined in the respective sections, reflect and highlight important aspects of such an endeavour. A summarization follows on the next page:

Anchoring reframing efforts

- **Management anchoring: Management driving and supporting the reframing efforts in rational and symbolic ways**
 - Top manager anchoring
 - Top management anchoring
 - Line anchoring
- **Union anchoring: Union leaders driving and supporting the reframing efforts**

Integration in reframing efforts

- **Management integration: Deals with the relationship and degree of consistency between the manager's actions and the intended ideas.**
- **Integration of change efforts: Deals with the relationship and degree of consistency between the change actions and the existing organizational context**
- **Integration of "organizational elements": Deals with the relationship and the degree of consistency between the various elements and the new ideas.**

Learning the new frame

- **Inductive-oriented approach; experience enforcing reframing efforts**
- **Deductive-oriented approach; ideational or "teaching" oriented reframing efforts**

Solutions forwarding the new frame

- **Top management driven; being formulated at the top - at central level**
- **Locally driven; being formulated locally - at decentral level**

4.8 SUMMARIZATION OF REFRAMING CONCEPTS

The reframing concepts reflect issues on which critical choices can be made or omitted. There is an underlying normative suggestiveness in them. The lack of the conditions they conceptualize are suggested to create problems for the reframing efforts to succeed. What kind of aspect of the reframing process the different concepts focus on has been specified. To move further in the search for a model for reframing organizations, a conceptual understanding of characteristics of the reframing task that these aspects reflect needs to be generated.

Chapter 5: Counterforcing Reframing Organizations

The aim of this chapter is to explore the issue of organizations counterforcing change in order to help understand the nature of reframing organizations. These reflections have developed largely in parallel with the work presented in the previous sections. They are for practical reasons presented at this stage. The reflections lay the foundation for a more precise understanding of the task of reframing organizations. It is inherent in the theoretical perspective that reframing will tend to be rejected. This stems from the excluding and persistent nature of organizational frames. The issues identified in the last chapter also reflected problems in realizing new ideas.

The chapter suggests that organizations are characterized by momentum sustaining the past and rejecting the new. The suggestion is based on empirical observations, participants speculations and theoretical contributions. It is largely the interrelationships between rational, political and cultural reasons for counterforcing change that account for the development and existence of an organizational momentum.

The concept of liminality is used to help understand the reframing situation. Liminality is the betwixt and between situation when previous patterns have been terminated, but new ones have not yet been established. Change actions cause such a threshold period to emerge in which forces of both conservation and renewal are released. It is therefore argued that the task of reframing organizations should be conceived of as one of gaining a foothold for the new frames in a period of liminality.

Rejecting the new

It is a fairly common situation when people and groups of people often want to - and strive hard to - change, but don't achieve the wished for results. Managers have, for instance, meetings and seminars on the need for change. They verbally commit themselves to a new direction, whether new leadership styles, basic values, or new orientation for the performance of tasks, for instance an increased degree of customer orientation. The employees enthusiastically - or sometimes reluctantly but nevertheless agreeably - leave information and motivation meetings having received information about the new direction, the new firm. They agree to be the "best", they agree to become a better, more decentralized and customer oriented firm for the 90s. Still, the customers experience little difference; the efficiency does not change substantially, the improvements do not occur, the employees become frustrated waiting for another kind of leadership, or at least something "new", and the managers become disappointed with their employees whom they don't see as understanding seriousness of the situation because they do not grasp the new signals or change their behaviour. Simultaneously, there are individuals who feel that their new plans, suggestions, etc. that supported the new direction do not gain a foothold. They do

not get support but are rejected or silently overseen or forgotten. The new intentions remain, but the old practices survive. Even if people in the ideational sense learn the message it is not transformed into a new collective practice.

It is not hard to imagine that organizational features developed under one set of conditions could tend to reject rather than support the practice of new ideas. Structures and systems are, for instance, not always revised to suit a new situation. In the attempt to develop local branch managers into responsible managers in Banking, a lot of the established organizational features seemed to work against this. Traditionally the design of products, customer terms, marketing issues as well as branch location, etc., had been decided by central staffs. The local managers therefore did not have an opportunity to control the variables that, to a large extent determined their results. Furthermore, the employees felt that the computer system also represented report and control systems, but was a bad fit for integrated information processing, which they thought of as a prerequisite for responsible and professional local action.

Taking the perspective developed here seriously would, however, imply that it is not only the tangible, fairly accessible and easily available aspects of the organization that counterforces "the new". An incident from Furniture helps explore in greater depth what goes on when new ideas do not get a foothold. This is followed by a comparison of an aspect of the change efforts at Electric Industry which will help suggest a conceptual understanding of the nature of reframing an organization.

The rejection of a new organizational arrangement

One morning, the project leader at Furniture received a phone call from the top manager: "The CEO has intervened in the restructuring process, stopped it and fired me with immediate effect. This probably also means that you are out". At the time of this incident the top manager (the division manager) had been in the job for a bit more than half a year. His predecessor, who initiated the change programme, was now CEO of the concern of which Furniture was part.

The new manager had been exposed to heavy expectations from his boss, the project leader and to some extent from the union to make "something happen". He was especially expected to improve the commitment of the management group to the change project. After the last top manager left to take over his new position, the internal pressure for change had diminished. The expectations were that some structural as well as personnel changes should be made in the top management group at Furniture. The project leader claims that

"these changes had been discussed for a long time, and also the union representatives had demonstrated a positive attitude towards them, the aim of the changes was seen as a step in the overall reframing process and as necessary adjustments to the difficult situation of a

falling market, for example: 1) The organization had to be adjusted to a more market-oriented business concept as well as in the forms of distribution. 2) A few leaders were seen as not good enough and should be moved. 3) Achieve rationalization and synergy effects by, among other things, implementing a 'main user' principle in the design and organization of staffs. 3) A flatter pyramid and also that the division manager felt a need to get himself better integrated in the management group."

The changes involved some specialization of production between the different production sites and a restructuring of management responsibilities, meaning that two managers would in actual fact be degraded.

The month before the incident in question the division manager had meetings with several key people. He said in retrospect about this,

"I understood that the CEO accepted what I was about to do. I perceived that he gave him a "good - go!" message. The two most involved managers - one of them after one day of reflection - said they supported the solution. Furthermore, I think that the protests the CEO received were not more than the normal "screaming and shouting" you have to expect in situations like this".

The situation was characterized by the two managers being informed for the first time about the consequences for them on a Thursday. The day after, the top management group discussed this as well as the structural changes. The two managers were frustrated but agreed to the changes, one of them saying that he "had no choice", but that he gave his support. The other wanted to think about it, coming back the next day however and expressing his support. From Monday to Wednesday, the management groups of the various departments were informed. The union chairperson was informed, and gave the impression of finding this to be a very positive solution.

During these information meetings it was emphasized by the division manager that it was the overall structure that had been decided, and that the consequences of the changes still had to undergo further discussions with the various units as well as with the unions. Having done this, the division manager went abroad, but was called up and instructed to meet the CEO on Friday morning. He was fired there and then. Most of the changes were also nullified; this was important to regain stability and peace, so it was said.

It turns out that the superior had been exposed to very heavy pressure on Thursday, having received angry calls from all over the organization. Contrary to the division manager, the CEO says that

"I couldn't risk such a level of unrest in the still most profitable part of the concern. It was like a "witch nest". I supported the changes in principle, but I thought that they were introduced too fast; that the new manager acted too quickly, authoritarily, immaturely and so on, and that he lacked support from one of the key people who was informally very strong, and who I had underlined for the division manager that he needed active support from. I do,

however, realize that the division manager had been under pressure to make something happen.”

According to the division manager, however, he had received support from the union chairman in a meeting with him. The union turned against him after he had officially informed them about the decisions. Something that was said in one of the information meetings was interpreted to mean (probably wrongly) that the union was now left out of the management group, a position they had felt a tremendous victory in obtaining. They also expressed that the changes were carried through fairly quickly and authoritarily “He behaved roughly...he declared war”. A lot of action now took place behind the scenes, and a lot of pressure was put on the CEO. In addition, it was argued that the new solution was too poor and that the division manager was unfit as a manager because of the leadership style he had. The CEO fired him even though he found his new structure to be very good.

“The division manager no longer had an organization to lead”, he said.

An organizational diagnosis carried through one year before the incident had suggested that the Furniture culture had similarities with what has been called a clan. Everybody knew each other, and a lot of the employees also had relatives that worked within the company. The members of the organization were characterized by the thinking that

- nobody should dominate or
- take themselves too seriously or
- stick their neck out and they should
- avoid conflicts,
- find the scape goats and
- stay where they were

Furthermore, the organization was seen to be constituted by a lot of small “kingdoms” and “play behind the curtains” or “guerrilla activities”. They were also used to change attempts evaporating. “Good at planning but not at carrying through decisions”, as some of them said. “Here you will get old before your decision is implemented” it was ironically phrased by one of them. People - especially on the shop floor - were very skeptical towards managers; especially those with a “capital M”, as they said. The CEO was exempt from this negative characteristic, and seemed to be seen as both “one of the boys” and some kind of a father figure simultaneously.

Understanding the organizational (re)action

Shortly after this incident, a meeting was held between the CEO, the division manager, the project leader and two other external consultants. The aim of the meeting was to learn from what happened. There were, of course, different opinions as to whether it was a good solution

to fire the division manager. There was a common view that the following issues were important factors in explaining what happened: First, what could be called “cultural rejection” was at work here. This was especially because the division manager behaved in a way that was contrary to the prevailing cultural code(s).

“You were seen to behave like you considered yourself world champion”.

Second, he lacked support, a “power base”, both because he had misjudged the support from his superior and also because he lacked acceptance and understanding from his subordinates. The espoused “yes” was given under some kind of perceived pressure, or the actors understanding of the situation changed because of the way he was perceived when giving the official information:

“To the others it seemed like you proceeded directly from a decision generated by yourself to implementing it.”

Third, this was seen to be a case of what was characterized as “political games”. The division manager had been in contact with, for example, the official spokesman but not the (informally) most influential union spokesmen.

“You know I told you that you would not get anywhere without support from the Union. And you provoked them with your style, and by also going abroad after giving the information.”

It came up that the CEO had been asked by the Union “whether he was behind all this”. It seemed that he would not like to have that stick to his reputation after having worked among them for many years. Additionally, he got a call from one of the degraded managers saying he felt “raped”. A lot of other people called defending this man. The CEO said he hadn’t slept at night, and also “I told you you had to have active support from him” directed to the division manager concerning the degraded manager mentioned above. All taking part in the meeting, however, agreed on the general impression that there had been a lot of activity behind the scenes both within and across various groups. There was also a discussion whether the way the CEO tackled this represented a “leakage of power” by not referring people that contacted him in this matter to the division manager. By accepting their calls, he verified a manifest view that it was he that was their actual leader (“father”) and in that way accelerated the process, it was said. In principle, the CEO also accepted this view, but rejected that he could have acted otherwise in this particular situation because of the risks involved.

The meeting concluded these factors had been different aspects of the process leading to the firing of the manager and were interrelated. The CEO’s historical roots in the organization were experienced as an important factor in all this, together with the division manager’s lack of cultural anchoring and perhaps understanding. Before discussing what this incident could

suggest in more general terms, let us turn to another case which was also aborted. Together, these can help us understand and (re)conceptualize the nature of the problem of reframing organizations.

Reasons for rejecting a new direction

As we recall from previous sections, the attempts to carry through a reframing process at Electric Industry were quite problematic. These problems, to a large extent, evolved around the top manager. He saw it as an implementation project that did not need his particular attention while other managers experienced his absence in the “change fora” as problematic. Some saw him as abdicating whereas others seemed to be bewildered about the seriousness of the project. However, it was observed in what got started that marketing quickly developed action plans for their area of responsibility. The production departments, however, had hardly started. The production leaders also argued against such changes as increasing coordination of production planning and analyses of sales by using such arguments:

“The existing possibilities for material administration, shift work and so on do not allow for a top adjustment of production and shifts (cycles) in market demand/market situation”.

The project consultant was very concerned with the resistance that appeared. Drawing upon his observations he reflected upon this from different a angle, and grouped them around “rational”, “political” and “cultural” reasons for counterforcing change.

Rational reasons:

“The most obvious explanation could be that the production managers are right, in the sense that what is expected of them is wrong. The ideas for change are perhaps not sufficiently thought through or tested at their operational level. It could be that what is suggested simply represents bad solutions, or cannot be introduced at the existing level of competence. If this is the case, their resistance, whether espoused or not, is rationally motivated also from the perspective of management. Such resistance could be interpreted by those who meet it as bad will, incompetence or worse. By doing so, a creative (dialectical) source for reinterpreting and improving the new direction could be lost. Top managers cannot fully be expected to be able to anticipate the consequences at an operational level when deciding a new direction”.

He further suggested that this account of resistance on the part of the production leaders could be challenged by suggesting that it was grounded on:

Political Reasons:

“One could for example assume that the production managers are beginning to fear for their jobs. They cannot fully see or understand what is expected of them as a consequence of the new frame. What does it really mean to their situations? What is expected of them in the coming situations? What kind of qualifications are needed and favoured, and consequently who is going to have good or bad prospects for their qualifications and interests? And - in the worst case - after a reorientation would there be room for people like them or with qualifications such as theirs? Even if not experiencing the situation as so dramatic, I think they could fear that their power base will be reduced as a consequence of the reorientation. In addition to lost status that could mean less money and also less career possibilities, it could also be that the new direction will imply working in ways that are contrary to their professional

values.

From their perspective this kind of resistance is also 'rational', but it is not so from the perspective of managing the firm. Somebody will lose and somebody will gain. The new direction will favour other kinds of qualifications and thereby other persons and groups than the established and existing ones. They will be given access to the better positions and will improve their opportunity for money, power, status, careers and exerting their professional ideas and values than the "old" or existing groups. This kind of resistance can be seen to be politically motivated in the sense that individuals and group interests form the platform for the reactions."

He added that: "Opportunistic motivated behaviour can, however, also be fairly complicated to understand and detect. In this case it seemed for example that the unions tried to create a negotiation advantage for another issue by being negative to this particular attempt at change. Union resistance, it seemed to me, was based on the general suspicion towards the management. It did not want to go along with anything that would make management succeed in a way that could give them more power. Furthermore, the unions opposed a project that should be set up to explore how sales and production could be more integrated. The most obvious explanation for this, it seemed to me, was that it could involve more shift work, which was perceived to be contrary to the welfare of the employees. It would, however, be interesting to know what kind of information the unions got and from whom. These particular ideas had only been discussed in a small group of managers. Somebody could have leaked the information in a way that made the union perceive the ideas as concrete plans and the leakage could have been made through an informal network in the company. It could be that one or several managers felt that their autonomy - or small kingdom - would be threatened by what could come out of exploring the new ideas. Knowingly, or unknowingly, the union actions therefore also represented the political interests of various managers."

Cultural reasons:

The consultant suggested that there was a third perspective on this counterforcing that also seemed fruitful. He felt that informal conversations revealed, for example, that the employees in question - as well as others - felt at unease because the language of the marketing people seemed more relevant in the eyes of top management than the "production language". They felt alienated by the "sociological" language used by external consultants. All in all they didn't like the new "style" in the management meetings.

"Imagine", he said, "that the case could be that the production managers think that the new direction is good, but when they were supposed to perform tasks differently, or take on new tasks, they simply didn't. They even talked negatively when one of them tried. It did not feel natural, or something within them said "no", or they simply did not manage. Neither did they feel any particular need to explain why they did not act in new ways. However, if somebody accused them of being irrational or political, they defended themselves. And, from their perspective, I think they were right in the sense that what they did, and what they did not, felt natural. It was hard for them to conceptualize why they did not comply with the expectations of others. They could even sometimes see that nothing new happened at the same time as they defended status quo. To a certain extent they felt, however, that they had a communication problem. Their usual language wasn't understood the way it used to be understood. And they didn't quite understand the top management as they used to; in some way or other their language - and priorities - had changed. When they tried to attend more to matters they thought now were expected of them by their superiors like planning, developing new systems, etc., their subordinates were less satisfied. Even if they had expressed a wish that these matters should be taken care of they seemed more satisfied when the production managers helped them

solve their immediate problems”.

In other words, the resistance of the production leaders could be culturally motivated.

The relationship between counterforces.

The production managers defined their interest in light of the established frame. When they tried to analyze what solutions seemed good for the company, they also did so within the models of reality imposed on them by this frame. Their interests and future position could have been served by using their competence in production and production planning to take a proactive part in the design of a new production planning system. This planning system was supposed to integrate and reflect the fact that the demand in the market was characterized by shifts and cycles. However, the established frame constituted a barrier for them to define the issue in those terms.

The incident at Furniture can also be seen as reflecting these reasons. It was noted that the resistance that developed was being caused by, among other things, cultural and political processes. It would probably also be understandable and defensible to assume that the new arrangement could be perceived simply as a bad solution. A considerable number of people also felt it to be against their present or/and future interests. The reasons that it was not understood to be a good solution for the firm and or that the rationality of the new arrangement was not acknowledged could, however, be due to the frame of reference of the members of the organization.

The point seems to be that there are reasons to believe that there are several understandable grounds for counterforcing change inherent in the same situations and in the same actions and also that these factors work interrelatedly. We can also trace this in other examples:

There is one rather humorous example from Car Retailer. In a strategy seminar in one of the largest retailer units there was a focus and agreement on the need for long term efforts in securing customer loyalty. This again was based on the realization that this was not the way the “culture” worked now, that there was a discrepancy between the existing and the needed frame. This was discussed from different angles for one day. The seminar ended in the afternoon. The top manager suggested a trip to a huge second-hand car sales exhibition that the firm arranged just outside the city which was interesting. Arriving there, it was found that practically all the other participants in the seminar had had the same idea. The issue was now: “How many did you sell? Of the x- kind? Of the y- kind?”

It seemed that they “finally” could focus on issues that felt natural to them, which in a way verified the “organizational culture” problems they themselves had agreed existed. This illustrates a more general observation that there were problems in leaving the hard selling

“counting” focus. “We have to sell more to afford to go along with the new”, was another saying frequently overheard. Of course this is not to suggest that car retailers should not focus on selling cars. The point - also made by themselves - was that the “hard selling” focus was on the sale as such, but that it was insufficient if long-term customer relations were to be strengthened and it also seemed to counteract the development of a long term focus.

Cultural as well as rational aspects can be assumed to be reflected in people’s inability to perform in new ways and in line with others way of defining their tasks, as well as in the question “what is in it for me”? When reflecting on that issue, it perhaps strikes people that, although perhaps favourable to the company, the new direction does not favour the kind of knowledge and competence they have established. In other words, it would be reasonable for them to expect that the future would favour other people with a different background from their own. The political motivation can be assumed to be melted in with their rational and cultural based reluctance to help forward the new organizational direction.

Similar ways of thinking could be employed for other organizations in assessing why they seemed to be counterforcing change. In spite of the employees talking about Airline becoming a Team organization, and in spite of them being able to give a reasonable account for why this was sensible for the company, there were often rational arguments for why things were as they were. Employees individual and collective experience, it could be argued, strongly influenced their assessment of the potential arrangement as good or not good. Furthermore, their access to a good future situation is dependent upon how their competence is asked for in the future organization. It would be understandable if their judgment was that they would be better off with a status quo. Again, similar to the production leaders at Electric Industry facing other demands and qualifications (as already indicated), the local managers in Banking faced the prospect of being judged by management results rather than professional skills, the employees of Money Market faced a future with increased clarity about who generated the profit, replacing the old situation in which a lot of myths existed in this field, and the worker at Transport was certainly faced with being judged by other, customer- oriented standards .

A question that now remains is whether rational, political and cultural factors interrelate in a particular way. There is not much help from the data in this issue, so we turn to other researchers for help. Pettigrew (1985: 41/5) proposes and emphasizes a cultural-political perspective. He finds it fruitful and rewarding to use this combined perspective to understand stability and change. To some extent this idea bears similarities with Weicks suggestion that the notion of rational vs. irrational is replaced by the notion of multiple rationalities (Weick 1969). Pettigrew, however, sees organizational culture as framing the attention, whereas people and groups are naturally also motivated by their interests. In other words, how they see their interests served depends on their organizational and group cultures. That also includes what they see as status, rewards, etc. Different groups have different rationalities as he sees it. He

therefore holds the product of legitimation processes shaped by political-cultural considerations to be the content of strategy expressed in rational/analytical terms.

The question is then of the "What comes first, the chicken or the egg"? kind. It is possible to suggest an answer to the question of which factors come first. There is, for instance, reason to believe that when the organizational members of Car Retailer actively do not support initiatives taken to forward a customer orientation, it is first of all because it is felt to be alien. They are used to being judged according to sales quantity; the new criteria will be different, more complex and something with which they are not familiar. It is in this light that they understand and formulate the idea that it is perhaps against their personal or group interest. It is in this light that the rationality of concrete steps, solutions and actions taken to forward the new organizational direction are argued against.

Furthermore, when the employees discover that the practical solutions launched or suggested to forward the new organizational direction will mean that their work structure will not be formed according to old occupational barriers, that they shall rotate, perform other tasks, be evaluated for pay raises and promoted according to other criteria, or that their coffee rooms shall be used by people coming from other groups, etc. They find reasons to argue that these solutions are not sensible. It is consequently from the perspective of their accustomed collective ways of thinking and acting that they evaluate what best would serve themselves and their interests.

Counterforcing reframing: Organizational culture and organizational rationality

The cultural type of counterforce therefore seems to be the most basic. Recall the idea of making local bank managers "mini" executive managers with overall responsibility for the results of their units. An examination of their structures and decision systems, however, revealed that a lot of decisions were taken by central staff. In fact, the local managers couldn't control the variables that influenced the results for which they were responsible. One could say that the cultural artifacts of the organization represented an earlier rationality than that forwarded now - a sort of ossification of past rationality.

Past rationality becomes the way of doing things. It is seen as rational and was defended as such. How people in organizations define the situation is culturally channelled. In the next vein, however, their definition of the situation also "works back" on the culture (e.g. Ball 1972). One could say that participant rationality is a result of, and existent within, their culture. This view is strongly supported by Gagliardi's (1986) culture fan of option. According to this view the organizational culture is constituted by several levels, a view he largely has adopted from Schein's (1984) interpretation of Kluckhohn (1953). Rationality is seen as a consequence of the prevailing basic assumptions and values. More precisely, he says that the basic assumptions and values are the basic level of the cultural fan of options. The next level is

constituted by what he calls the “primary strategy” which should be understood as the drive for survival. The expressive as well as instrumental strategies are formed on this basis again framing the modes of implementation. The modes of implementation represent what seems to be rational within the cultural fan of options; the organization is not able to produce practical solutions that are outside what follows - the frame of - these basic values and assumptions.

Modes of Implementation

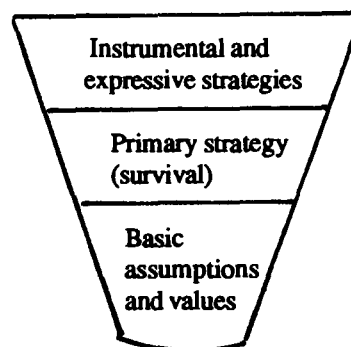


FIG. 5.1 GAGLIARDI 1986: “FAN OF OPTIONS”

Basically this line of argument is in line with for instance Brown’s (1978) conception of organizational paradigms and Spybey’s (1984) frames of meaning. According to such views, organizational rationality is seen as a cultural phenomenon.

Counterforcing reframing: Organizational culture and organizational politics

It has been demonstrated that the rational arguments are formulated within a cultural frame. The political dimension is not included in Gagliardi’s model. It does, however, seem to have an obvious relationship to the cultural. How do, for example, the Sales people in Car Retailer assess the new direction from the perspective of their own career and interests? It seems rather clear that their "old" qualifications won’t count that much any more. Their qualifications were to go out in the show room and simply talk a person into buying one of their products.

It was quite similar in Airline. People were experiencing having to broaden their area of competence. In the planned team organization people were to be honoured for a broad scope of competence, whereas in the past the demand was for specialists. The product manager in Electric Industry must become aware of that what he was rewarded for doing in the past would not have the same value in the future, etc. To many people, a new organizational direction will appear as a manifest or latent loss. As touched upon above, the view that there is a distinct relationship between cultural and political systems is strongly supported by Pettigrew (1985, p.42) who states that

"Indeed, a key part of the political processes of the firm may have to do with which issues become a focus of individual or group interest and attention and move onto the stage of decision-making, and which issues are suppressed and otherwise immobilized and left in the wings..."

Furthermore, Pettigrew (p. 44) finds that the acts and processes associated with politics as the management of meaning represent conceptually the overlap between a concern with the political and cultural analysis of the organization. He therefore finds the central concept linking the two to be legitimacy. The management of meaning refers then to the attempt to create legitimacy in one's actions and ideas.

Counterforcing reframing: Culture, politics and rationality

It seems, in other words, quite defensible to claim that both political and rational ideas, views and judgments seem to result from, or be heavily influenced by, the organizational culture. Gagliardi's fan of options, it seems, could also be expanding and adjusting to include the political dimension. We have to be aware that this model is not an explicit model of forms of resistance. It is, however, a model developed to help assess what kind of solutions can be implemented in a particular organizational culture. It therefore seems defensible to use it to discuss the relationship between the different forms of bases for counteractions to reframing organizations. In view of the discussion above, a rationally-oriented resistance to change would reflect a political undertone. However, the organizational culture would bear heavily upon these political motivations



FIG. 5.2 EXPANDED FAN OF OPTIONS
(Hennestad et al. 1990; Adapted from Gagliardi 1986)

It is illustrated that organizational culture bears heavily on what is defined as the interests of individuals and groups. Organizational culture also bears heavily on what is seen as rational and what is not. Consequently, organizational culture can be seen as having a primary role in constituting counterforces to change.

Self reinforcement

Gagliardi suggests, in line with Schein (1984), that collectives or groups learn from their positive rather than negative experiences. The model he forms on this view is helpful in grasping the implications for reframing organizations following from the ideas presented

above. It suggests that cultures are formed on the basis of the ideas that “work” for the group in coping with their environments. Constructively learning from negative experiences seems to be a less likely pattern for organizations (e.g. Starbuck et al. 1977, Starbuck & Milliken 1988).



FIG. 5.3 ORGANIZATIONAL SELF REINFORCEMENT
(Gagliardi 1986)

The exertion of a distinctive competence, like a new line of products, new ways of cooperation, etc., is the basis for a process of organizational development. If the result is success which is experienced by the members of the groups, “this is a good way of doing things” and, after some time, “this is the way of doing things” or “the thing to be done” is the kind of collective interpretation that will emerge.

The idealizations will cause a stabilization of organizational values and the development of symbols supporting them, which again will rationalize collective thinking and behaviour, implying increased cohesion and organizational efficiency leading to an even more effective exertion of the distinctive competence. This is a virtuous circle as long as there is a need for the distinctive competence, but the same circle becomes a vicious one when there is no longer a need for that distinctive competence: the organization will go on doing what it did before in spite of the changes in the environment.

A computer firm established by one or several entrepreneur(s) to develop and produce very advanced computer products can serve as an example. Imagine that it is successful by having a loose, informal “let a thousand flowers bloom” sort of style. Imagine also that the firm grows considerably and that its organizational and management style is a critical success factor. The market changes, however, after some years. Customers now want information processing

problems solved rather than state-of-the-art products, resulting in demands for punctuality, service, following-up delivered products, etc. The company's "let a thousand flowers bloom" style of management and organization does not make the changes a natural and easy thing to implement. In fact, if and when the company runs into problems due to the market change mentioned, the (Gagliardi's) prospect is that it will try even harder to do what it did before the way it did it before. This idea is also very much in line with some of the ideas in the field of organization learning (e.g. Starbuck et al. 1977). Gagliardi's model pictures a development that is circular and self reinforcing. In essence, Nystrom and Starbuck draw the same conclusion, but phrase it somewhat differently:

"Organizations learn. Then they encase their learning in programmes and standard operating procedures that members execute routinely. These programmes and procedures generate inertia, and the inertia increases when organizations socialize new members and reward conformity to prescribed roles. As their successes accumulate, organizations emphasize efficiency, grow complacent, and learn too little." (Nystrom and Starbuck 1984:1)

The Creation of Organizational Momentum

The exertion of a particular distinctive competence can be seen as a chosen form of rationality. It is chosen by the person or group of people who get the activities started or it simply represents their way of defining things which they have comprehended during various forms of experience.

The point is that after some time this will appear as the way of doing things. It follows, however, from previous discussions that a certain distribution of compensation, power, future opportunities, etc., will be one of the effects of the development. It is to be expected that people will tend to defend their interests according to the situation that has emerged. This can serve as an additional explanation for why the circle of organizational culture is a fruitful way of describing the formation of organizational culture and why it is hard to change. Within the framework of Gagliardi's original model, we could integrate this aspect as follows:

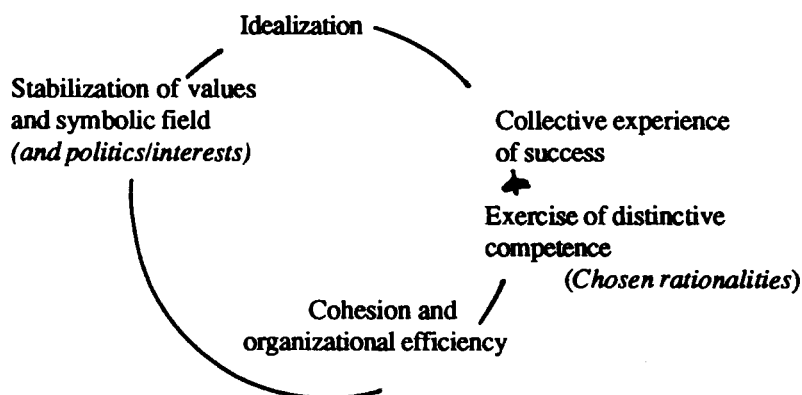


FIG. 5.4 ORGANIZATIONAL SELF REINFORCEMENT REVISED

The starting point of the model is the exercise of a distinctive competence. We could therefore, in contrast to what has been suggested before, say that in a sense "rationality comes before culture". However, when established or formed, the cultural aspect has become the most basic aspect of the three forces forms and motivations resisting change. The model also illustrates that one particular form of rationality becomes the rationality. In other words, that rationality is culturally defined.

The idea is that the counteracting tendencies of organizations imply that organizations result from some kind of development logic. What is presented is probably close to the phenomenon labelled by Crozier (1964:187) as a "self-reinforcing equilibrium", a stationary and persistent set of patterns and structures that prevents change from taking place. This kind of social mechanism can be related to the "circular character of culture" that has been demonstrated in earlier chapters. It means that organizations tend to continue along the same line of development rather than reversing it, even when environmental changes imply that it should. Such processes are described by Donald Schon (1973) as "dynamic conservatism", processes that reproduce infinite variations of the old but very little that is new.

Miller and Friesen (1980) even claim to document that a centralized, mechanistic kind of organization will tend to grow more centralized, whilst a decentralized form of organization will tend to grow more decentralized etc. What they actually are saying is that organizations tend to be morphostatic rather than morphogenetic (Smith 1984); the existing types of activities, operations, and decisions tend to be reinforced and reproduced in spite of changes in the environment and attempted management change.

The organizational culture plays an important part in this because it implies that the participants of the organization are "victims" of self confirming interpretations of the organizational reality. They are part of "vicious circles" (Crozier 1964, Masuch 1985) or "games without end", which lead to a reproduction and reinforcement of past behaviour in the future. This is especially the case since organizational culture also mediates what is defined as politically interested and rationally sound.

The notion of the creation of an organizational momentum conceptualizes (Miller and Friesen 1980) the phenomenon explored here. It is here seen as connoting that once established it sustains the established past and rejects the new. Sustaining the past and rejecting the new is, in a way, two sides of the same coin. In both cases, organizations are characterized by momentum in favour of the existing organizational direction. The basic aspects of the organizational momentum are chosen rationalities, organizational culture and organizational politics. It is their relationship that creates and constitutes the circular and self reinforcing tendency giving organizational processes a momentum.

Organizational momentum - counterforcing reframing

The aim of this chapter is to achieve a better understanding of the nature of the task of reframing organizations. It is already implicit in the perspective that there is a certain self conserving tendency in organizational frames. "Seeing is also not seeing" to put it bluntly. It is also quite evident that power and politics will play a role in resisting new frames becoming realized. Organizations imply a certain distribution of resource and status. In addition to various individual reasons for rejecting change (e.g. Greiner and Schein 1988, Staw 1981) and the consequent use of existing power bases (Pfeffer 1981, Bråten 1973) in pursuing these interests, political processes will breed forming coalitions for opportunistic purposes (Pettigrew 1985).

In addition to understand the rejection of new frames as being explained by cultural and political reasons, it has also been suggested that new frames might be rejected for the simple reason that they do not represent good or rational solutions. The interrelationships between these reasons were discussed, and a conception of organizational momentum was developed around the relationship between these three reasons for counterforcing reframing organizations. By that is meant that organizations develop forces and mechanisms which sustain the established organizational direction.

In the introductory chapter organizational frames were seen as channelling organizational thinking and action. They were seen as reflecting organizational culture and manifesting themselves in the organizational orientations. The task of reframing organizations is therefore, in a sense, a task of confronting the power of organizational frames. These reflect the organizational culture, which plays an important part in constituting and sustaining organizational momentum. It leans heavily on how people define the situation in both rational as well as political terms. The counterforcing of reframing organizations is represented by a complicated texture of cultural, rational and political reasons. It still seems to make sense to say that they develop a organizational momentum that is culturally based, rationally argued and politically motivated. In this sense "man is an animal suspended in a web of significance he himself has spun", as Geertz puts it.

Obtaining reframing momentum in the period of liminality

We know it is possible to break out of established organizational frames. Quite a few organizations that have lived for a long time have had to relate to qualitatively different conditions. To manage this they necessarily have had to go through extensive shifts in their way of functioning. Still, we also know it is not an easy task to manage. Attempting to break the organizational logic can easily become victim to the logic they are trying to break. Furthermore, organizations (organizational cultures) do not change overnight by decree. This follows from their complex and interwoven nature. The establishment of a new organizational

direction of development therefore implies a transition period in which the attempt to gain foothold, "win or lose". There is a need to characterize what kind of a situation we are facing when attempting to reframe organizations by change actions; trying as described in an earlier chapter, to obtain "internal" effects by "external" means.

Turner's work on cultural and structural change (e.g.1980) can offer some help in this respect. It is built around a concept characterizing this period, or situation. He introduces the term "liminality" to describe the betwixt and between position which develops when previous structural arrangements have terminated, but new ones have not been established or gained a foothold. Turner himself says about the concept:

"I have written at length about the threshold or liminal phase of ritual and found it fruitful to extend the notion of liminality as metaphor beyond ritual to other domains of expressive cultural action (161)".

The concept was originally used to describe rituals when people in "primitive" societies entered a new stage in life and status in society. Originally it referred to what transformed the individual, but conserved the established form of society. The rituals however took the participants out of the structure and rules of everyday life. Liminal conditions were, by van Gennep, referred to and characterized as "being betwixt and between more stable and predictable social arrangements. Liminal conditions create an "as if" reality where wish, desire and hypothesis reign". It is here that the creative potential resides.

Turner points out that in the modern society religious rituals have lost their significance. Other media - for example stories - have conserved the possibility for liminal experience, they create meaning and are important means for grappling with ambiguity and change. He finds that liminal reflexivity creates some form of "consciousness of consciousness" by which important aspects of life, for instance roles and relationships, can be reconsidered. Liminal reflexivity is found in sense-making processes dealing with new social arrangements or new cultural constructs. They form creative processes in which new meaning is being constructed to integrate the new social arrangements or cultural meanings.

Feldman has studied organizations based on Turner's idea that stories relate to change and conflict as a mediating force that works to resolve political conflict and cultural contradiction. It is here that stories exercise their transformational power. By representing events in terms of past experience (culture) and political interests, stories evaluate and distort what they represent. The synthetic nature of stories goes beyond saying what did happen, to implying what should happen or what can happen. In this way, they not only influence thought, feeling and will, but the construction of social reality itself. Turner concludes that stories are a form of cultural creativity that can be used to mediate conflicts and contradictions that arise from changing circumstances, and that stories, despite the fact that they are a form of cultural change, can

have an anti-transitional influence on the process of organizational change. He concludes that (pp. 29 and 29/30)

“For the transition to be structurally transformative, the liminal phase must carry through its alchemy of social roles and relations in such a way as to create new and legitimate structural conditions. For the creativity of the liminal phase to be transformative, the powerful and important must support it”.

Feldman analyses what happens in a period of leadership change through the idea of liminality by studying stories produced in this period. He uses the term to connote a period of unclear authority and conflict where new cultural constructs are created to make sense out of, and to act on, the new situation, but before new structural arrangements have become clear and stable (Feldman 1989:2). He also shows that things can happen during this period, in his case the creation of organizational stories, that can have an anti-transitional influence on the process of organizational change. By doing so, he introduces the concept of liminality to a different field than its origins. He stays, however, close to the original meaning of the concept by sticking to the media of stories, underlining their potential of taking the participants out of the everyday situation and thereby creating liminality and its creative potential. Furthermore, he shows how they function to support transformation and how they also can function anti-transformationally.

It seems fruitful to use the concept (metaphorically) in the more general situation of attempting organizational change. This is justified because, in a situation of attempted organizational change, the members of the organization, in addition to the possible production of organizational stories, are exposed to a multitude of new stimuli like information on an organizational crises, new ideas about the tasks of the company, visions, new concepts and scenarios as well as various means of internal marketing. Additionally, organizational members may be exposed to new demands and new ideas because of structural changes, etc. Taken together this means a sort of between and betwixt position in which the new is not established and the old is not completely valid, and in a way the period can also be characterized as an “as if” organizational reality where wish, desire and hypotheses reign (Feldman 1988:7).

The term liminality can be used to connote a situation that is created when change actions have started to have effects that put the established organizational direction in a new perspective, but when the intended organizational direction has not become concrete and valid to the organizational members. In this ambiguous “betwixt and between situation” counterforces will be released and the effects of the change actions are not clear. They can have an intended effect, or to be “overruled” so that a transformation of the organizational direction does not take place.

The battle for reframing organizations must be won in the period of liminality, meaning that the new direction must gain foothold during this period. The conditions for new organizational frames must be cultivated during this vacuum period in such a way that it obtains momentum.

Only in that way can the process of reframing get started and result in a real shift. This process can, as pointed out, hardly take place as a sudden or overnight shift from one frame to another. It is therefore necessary to examine the conditions for how new ideas gain momentum during the period of liminality so that the period of liminality becomes a period of reframing.

Commitment for the new; an incremental process

The idea of a period of liminality implies that reframing organizations is a process, it can not be a sudden shift from "one day to the next". To clarify, structural change can, of course, to some extent, take place overnight. The formal structure of decision authority can be altered from one day to another. Departments can be removed, tasks can be moved from one department to another, the information flow - especially the kind facilitated by computer means can be changed, etc. Such changes do not, however, necessarily accomplish changes in collective thinking to support their intended purpose, and certainly not overnight. On the other hand, structural changes can always be expected to influence the way organizational members interpret and enact their situation, but certainly not always as intended by the structural changes. The structural changes are usually launched to accomplish or to help a new direction develop. If this direction is to become realized through a process of organizational reframing, organizational commitment is needed.

In a way it seems a bit risky to introduce the term "commitment". It has probably been subject to as many definitions as there are researchers using the term. Still, there seem to be two major ways of using the term. Roughly half the users use it as an attitudinal construct analogous to motivation, involvement, or identification. For the second group of users it represents something different from attitude and personal conviction. For this group commitment refers to structural conditions in which a behaviour is irrevocable or difficult to change, the act of staking additional consequences or side bets to an original course of action, or a state of mind that makes it difficult to change attitudes or behaviour. (Staw 1981: 101). Commitment in this sense is, in a way, the glue that holds individuals in a line of behaviour. This paper more or less follows this second conception of commitment. Organizational commitment refers to organizational members - in some cases a subgroup of members - being collectively committed to the new.

It follows from this view that, from one perspective commitment represents the forces that make the organizational members stick to a course of action. From another perspective, commitment therefore represents the counterforces. In a way, commitment is both what the organization or management needs and what it should fear. What is an advantage at one moment in time turns against you at another moment in time when change for one reason or the other is needed.

Of course, this way of using the term organizational commitment causes definitional as well as operational problems. Here organizational commitment is used when the organization as a collective is characterized by a certain way of thinking and acting in relation to a specific set of issues or problems. This means that organizational commitment to organizational frames can be developed to a certain width, depth and extent.

By degree of width is meant that the set of ideas representing the new direction are shared fully or only partly. By degree of depth is meant that the commitment can prove to be reflected in organizational behaviour to different degrees. It can prove to only be only lip service, or only ideational, or it can prove to have greater depth by being reflected in behaviour, and it can go still deeper by being reflected in altered organizational systems and structures. If this is the case, we are close to the kind of organizational commitment representing cultural change. The extent of organizational commitment does, however, also vary since the new direction can be found to have commitment only in the top management group, or in the top and middle management, or in these groups and the union representatives, or it is possible that the new direction only finds commitment in the headquarters.

The point of this short examination of the complex nature of organizational commitment - as a prerequisite for organizational reframing - is to demonstrate that obtaining organizational commitment for a new direction cannot be done overnight.

Incremental and transformational change

In the literature on organizational change and the incremental and the transformational theories, or theses, of change are often considered contrasting (e.g. Dunphy and Stace 1988). According to incremental change theory, often associated with the OD tradition, effective organizational change is seen as a result of management moving the organization forward in small logical steps (e.g. Quinn 1980, 1981). However, the contrasting transformational view, that perhaps can be considered to have emerged as a result of growing discontinuity in markets and societies (e.g. Drucker 1969), considers effective organizational change to take place as extensive, large-scale organizational transition involving total structures and management processes rather than only components of the organization (e.g. Kimberly and Quinn 1984).

How does this fit with the view that organizational reframing has to be an incremental process? This view does not rule out the possibility that structural changes can be of a sudden character. In fact, it can not be ruled out that such changes can be a necessary step in the reframing of organizations. Of course, an extensive structural change can lead to a major shift in organizational frames without other actions from management. However, if this shift is supposed to be in line with intended ideas for a new direction, it is likely to assume that other actions must be taken. By actions is meant other structural or system adjustments, motivation, information and explanations, creations of ruling myths etc.

Organizational frames represent such a complex and pervasive social phenomenon that they consequently cannot be programmed by structural manipulations. The cultural influences and implications of an extensive structural change are dependent upon the meaning the participants of the focal social system attach to it, which again is a highly complex social process dependent on the interrelationship between historical, environmental, subcultural and also personal factors. Consequently, the process of gaining organizational commitment to a new direction is by its nature, a step-wise - or incremental - process, in spite of the possibility that transformational structural change could constitute a crucial step in this process.

Gaining foothold for a new direction

In attempting to manage organizational reframing, there is a period of liminality in which conflicting social processes unfold. In simple terms, there exists in this period tensions, conflicts, and contradictions between the old and the new. The result of this struggle could be that the new direction or frame gains foothold, it could be "more of the same", but it could be something new and unforeseen, perhaps, but not necessarily, unwanted. What happens when direction will "win" is the result of conscious as well as unconscious social actions of the actors involved. From the point of view of wanting to introduce a new organizational direction, one way to see it is that the challenge is to start a movement in an environment of hostile, historically anchored forces of cultural content and manifestations.

During the period of liminality, momentum must be gained to develop organizational commitment to the new frame. Such reframing momentum - the establishment of social forces working towards the new direction not depending on (structural) forces exerted by the top management or people in power - must be socially constructed by intentional incremental steps in the period of liminality. It is not only a question of frame-breaking, but also a question of making the new frame stick (Pettigrew 1985, Kimberley and Quinn 1984). It is not only a question of forcing people into new behaviours representing a new direction, but also a question of getting them to be committed to do so. These are not questions of yes or no, but of degrees.

Still, the assumption is that at one point in time the new direction gets or can get a foothold in the sense that the interplay between people and their structures and systems starts to (re)produce actions, artifacts and meanings consonant with the intended new direction, and, it starts to do so "from within". This is not just because they are forced by some superior agency; the new direction no longer relies solely on enforcement, persuasion and seduction. When such a social force is constituted, reframing momentum has been established, according to this view.

Obtaining reframing momentum

The discussion implies a need to be more precise about the nature of the task. Reframing organizations implies that a momentum for change has to be created. There are especially two ideas that have led to this understanding. Organizations tend to develop a momentum implicitly counterforcing attempted organizational reframing. Furthermore, the period of change is one of liminality. These conceptions imply that a foothold for change has to be gained standing on the threshold between the old and the new with different forces pulling in each direction. Although some change actions have been taken, and a period of change therefore developed, it is still yet unsettled whether the organizational processes will move towards a new frame producing a new direction or whether they will “fall back” into the old.

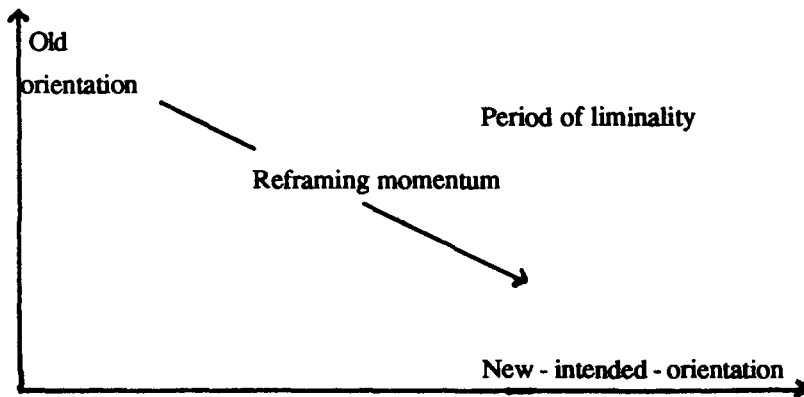


FIG 5.5 REFRAMING MOMENTUM

Organizational change as reframing should therefore be seen as related to establishing a momentum. The reframing concepts that were identified in the last chapter should be understood in this perspective. They emerge as organizational issues reflecting the problem of gaining a foothold for the reframing process. The task of developing concepts and a model for reframing organizations is one of identifying concepts and a model for establishing a change momentum. The next chapter shall identify, explain and discuss some basic conditions for establishing a change momentum.

Chapter 6: Conditions for Establishing a Reframing Momentum

The aim of this chapter is to identify basic conditions for establishing a reframing momentum. Conditions are properties that, when established, will underpin the development of a reframing momentum. These conditions should suggest in which direction we should focus the energy in order to accomplish a reframing of organizations. But they will not tell us what activities exactly to undertake.

Rationale and structuration have been identified as two such conditions. Rationale refers to basic motivation for changing the organization. Structuration refers to mechanisms for controlling change efforts so that they generate a continuous focus on the contingencies for a reframing momentum to be established.

These two notions are seen as necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for a reframing momentum. The relationship between them, and how they relate to the various organizational situations is discussed. The section begins by demonstrating how the notion of structuration was developed. It emerged when comparing certain aspects in Transport and Airline, where grains for a reframing momentum were implanted, and the same aspect in Furniture where the reframing process was aborted.

Structuration as a condition for establishing a reframing momentum

The controlling effects of a new product at Transport

The situation in Transport was that there had been two (2•2) preparation and commitment seminars for key personnel including union representatives. After the CEO sensed the need for him to demonstrate the importance of these efforts by “taking over the seminar”, it seemed as if the participants committed themselves also to individual development tasks. These seminars were then transformed into a regular meeting structure - “Smiths” as they were called - for following up and learning. Furthermore, the management structure at HQ had been simplified, the hierarchy made less steep with coaching of managers at central and local levels and managers resigning. A restructuring of the nation-wide structure of terminals had started and the total number had been reduced. In addition, the firm also had considerable layoffs due to the need for future investments and cost reductions caused by a serious drop in the market.

What is to be noted is particularly related to the introduction of a new service product. It represented an operationalization of the strategy of offering guaranteed transport services and was supposed to improve the image of the company and also speed up the pace of change. To understand what is special about the new it is necessary to repeat that the firm was “traditional” in its work orientations. It was, in a sense, bureaucratic and inward oriented thinking “tons” rather than market, efficiency and profit (economy).

“A real company man within the old frame”, said one of the external consultants somewhat ironically, characterizing the company orientation in the very beginning of the project. “does not care about economy or accountancy. If he is to judge the achievements of the company, it will be in terms of tons rather than surplus and profit...The company man perceives any suggestion about changes coming from another as an attack on himself and the way he is doing his job...he does not really like to leave his place to check how things really are. His security is based on his operational competence.”

In retrospect, one of the other consultants described the dominating work orientation to be “ritual” rather than “problem-solving”. In practical terms that would also mean a “what we don’t manage to do today, will have to be done tomorrow” sort of an attitude. .

The new product reflected the new strategic direction of the firm and was based on a concept of door-to-door delivery and guaranteed services. In this particular case the delivery was guaranteed to be before ten o’clock day two, if it was sent before a certain time day one. If the goods were not delivered before deadline, the customer would not have to pay! This kind of promise contrasted with the prevailing company orientation quite dramatically.

The concept for the new product was presented to the organization by top management. The processes of concretizing the product at the operational level and preparing for its implementation, related to the change meetings mentioned above and was performed in an interplay between project work in the local units and this forum. In the local units project groups assessed practical problems in introducing the new product. Their assessments were given to a manager at HQ responsible for coordinating the formation and introduction of the product and who also prepared the discussion in the forum.

“We tried to make as many as possible of the local work groups recognize some of their thinking/assessments in what gradually emerged as the final product”, he said.

The project leader added to this

“ ... goal development processes were carried through in all departments, and goals and action plans were related to the demands raised by the new product. The result of a test period was, however, 7% failures, a result that would have brought the firm to the level of bankruptcy within a few weeks if the guarantee (new product) had been active at that time. This led to an assessment of all internal routines, a mapping of possible problem and actions taken to improve them; in short a genuine internal “clearing action”. The result improved week by week and at the time of implementation we were under 1% failures.”

This result seemed to be sustained. Although there were, of course, periodical problems and variations across terminals.

One of the consultants drew attention to the visibility and immediate feed back of not

succeeding in the job that had now emerged. Cargo that should have been sent a particular day would visibly remain on the floor or platform if they failed. Furthermore, the destination station would immediately try to find out what had happened and the customer would not be invoiced for that shipment. He also drew attention to the pressure that now was created for work pattern and tools to support the new product service:

"This (Guaranteed delivery) demands a different and frequent communication between the drivers, (terminal) workers and the "office" to keep track over where the various shippings are. By car phone it is continuously checked whether they are on schedule or not, and what measures, if any, have to be taken meet the guarantee. The communication also had to be improved between the terminals, and they get, for example, immediate feed back by fax if goods have been sent to the wrong place. Some places a system has been implemented that gives the workers responsibility for certain particular destination. Both the drivers and the workers express a feeling of "ownership" following from this system, which again helps fulfill the guarantee."

He also observed how bottlenecks in the production were now focused on by pointing out:

"The procedure around the checking of goods against the papers (bills) that used to occupy 3-4 men, a time-consuming task that often became a bottleneck in production process, has now been completely eliminated. It has to be right the first time."

"The orientations of the employees seemed gradually to change", he summed up after investigating the organizational effects with two others. One way of phrasing that is that a volume orientation (moving tons) seemed to have been replaced by a business orientation (making money/survive), and a ritual work orientation (this is how it is done) seemed to be replaced by a more problem-solving orientation (getting the goods there according to the customer needs)." One of the employees simply put it this way, "We now know that we cannot put tons into the wallet". Another said "In the end it is the customer that gives us our bread and butter". Others said things like, "Today we try to find solutions before asking the boss". (They did!) "Previously it did not make much difference whether you performed the tasks that were given to you. It did not have any consequences". "People are much more effective today - today you cannot expect to be left in peace."

The above example also presents a case in which seeds for the establishment of a reframing momentum have been sown. This is also the case in the next example, which demonstrates another approach for exerting pressure on the work patterns of the members of the organization.

The application of a goal structure at Airline

There was a strong emphasis on developing and following up goals in the Airline approach. The idea was that emphasizing goals would: 1. make the organization draw in the same direction because of a common understanding, and that it also would constitute an effective means of communications across the levels, 2. represent a structural pressure necessary to

identify to the organization as a whole, 3. represent a democratic element allowing for the management of ones own situation, and 4. constitute a driving force for the allocation of resources. The process was planned to gradually cover deeper levels of the organization in some kind of cascade effect.

The aim was to develop a more market-oriented enterprise characterized by decentralized total responsibility. The idea was that the new direction should be demonstrated by form as well as content. The structure for working with change was formed with the intention of forcing managers to take on responsibility for results demanded by the emerging situation of the company.

“The plan was clear”, stated the project consultant, “The establishment of goals, strategy for action, and breaking down goals at lower levels were first and foremost at area levels. The expectation was that this process should influence the attitudes towards change among the members, increase the insight and understanding for the process, etc. The process was supposed to gradually cover lower levels of the organization through some kind of cascade effect. This would also manifest itself in the change of ideas, structures, systems and activities”.

The strategic management group, also the acting steering committee for the project, had the initiative and was driving this process with the follow up and learning meeting (FUAL) as the primary arena. Gradually local goals concerning economic contributions and level of sales were formed in an interaction process where the sum of unit goals were given. The unit goals were consequently followed up in the change structure (FUAL) by the top management.

It was a general impression that the working style had contributed to creating openness and commitment in the development of ideas, broad participation in problem solving, increased understanding for the enterprise as a whole, "cost consciousness", motivation for action and became a tool for management and control of the change endeavour. The efforts also revealed and clarified difficulties like problems in formulating understandable values and goals, lack of economic knowledge in the organization and problems in establishing a power base at middle manager level. The project leader said, for example:

“This process demands result (responsible) units. This again demands efficient economic management information systems, which again seems difficult to establish. Technically competent and capable accountants are not good at asking key questions from this perspective”.

“However, through the breaking down of goals a new understanding of reality emerges”, the project consultant remarkd. “New operational goals concerning economic contribution and level of sales offer meaning and direction to work efforts ...Little by little a crisis consciousness developed through this process.”

“In an early phase”, said one of the external consultants after having talked to several of the

involved managers, "top FUAL was experienced as tough. Terror regime is a phrase that was repeatedly used, but gradually developed towards a more open style...the net effect seems to be that this phase is seen in relation with the need for getting things started. The forum has gradually moved towards focusing and following up goals and economic issues emphasizing a more trusting atmosphere".

This now became the way of introducing and enforcing new activities, be they major cost reductions or team organization. The overall goal was proposed (set) by the top manager/strategic management group and then broken down through a process in the learning and follow up meetings, where progress and results were also very forcefully followed up, performance also constituting a basis for evaluation of the single managers.

"In addition to contributing to a more responsible management style of culture", said the project leader, various effects were generated through this process. When it came to the nature of goals in the organization the need for people to influence the goal-setting was increasingly acknowledged, and also for them to have some freedom in deciding how to reach the goals. Like, for example, instead of ordering lower units to reduce costs by laying off a certain number of people, they should decide how to do it themselves. The need for what was considered to be indirect goals became gradually apparent. It was for instance seen as necessary to establish goals for absence because of sickness (signalling leadership or quality of work defects) and wrecked material (signalling ineffective work patterns or routines). The idea also became more conscious that goals should concern results that people can influence, and they should have a say in the realism of these goals (ownership). Steps were taken for goals to be developed at team (multi functional basic organizational unit) level concerning economy, efficiency (cost pr. unit/deliverance), damages, organizational climate, development of level of competence, etc., in addition to the centralized standards for performance."

There is an indication here that goals represent structure when being followed up. They clarify where to go and represent a means of checking and confronting individuals and groups as to whether or not the right course is being followed. A structure of goals can therefore impose upon people experiences that represent new kinds of ideas and a new direction. At the same time, the persistence of this structure ensures the reinforcement of these ideas, thereby generating a focus on the conditions for the practice of these ideas. A question is, however, if pure economic goals are "black-box" types of goals that offer no direction to new ways of approaching tasks, and, consequently, whether goals that concern variables affected, more or less, directly by people's actions expose people more clearly to new experiences.

Before going more into these examples, let us look once more at Furniture.

Lack of structural pressure at Furniture

Two seminars were aimed at securing the understanding of the need for change and the direction in which to go. A third one was also planned and carried through partly because the top manager and the project leader saw their functions as crucial and partly because the first seminars were so successful. The change project was run by a steering group which was

chaired by the top manager, however the other members of that group were not from the top management group. There were two union leaders, the personnel managers and the sales manager. These were people believed by the top manager to be progressive and dynamic enough to give the project a "driving force". The line managers were left out of the steering group.

The seminars focused on various aspects of the change needs: to transform the company from a traditional production oriented frame towards a frame forwarding a higher degree of flexibility in the deliverance/marketing system. The production had already shifted from traditional mass (series) production towards more order-oriented production. The challenge was primarily seen as a "cultural lag".

"The seminar must be characterized as very successful when it comes to establishing a dialogue about goals and plans for action", said the project leader. Several proposals resulted in changes in the company goal. Furthermore, the discussion resulted in a revised marked concept - the quality wheel. At the end of the seminar, concrete 6-month plans were formed....At the end of the seminar the participants clearly expressed that the process was theirs. The seminars worked as a consciousness raising process for several persons in the management group. The commitment and courage to bring forward disagreement has increased, but there was no basic resistance against the suggested efforts, and several participants expressed a need for structural changes."

An observation made by another external consultant is also of interest:

"The union had participated in formulating the strategy and contributed to it in the seminars by encouraging others to take a stand. The union chairman proposed, for example, that the management group and union representatives jointly should arrange an information meeting about the new direction to symbolize that they were all behind it."

"Commitment seminars" for leaders and key personnel were also carried through for leaders and key personnel who had not been present at the first series of seminars.

These seminars gained solid response and support in the eyes of the project leader, who also held the opinion that, "the message seemed to be in resonance with participants ideas. It was seen as the right way to go."

This phase of the project, in a sense, culminated with the "kick off" day mentioned earlier. It was supposed to signal to the organization that something big was about to take place. An amusing, but still to the point, brochure had been distributed and the punch clock was gone when the workers arrived in the morning, their reactions being filmed for use in the internal marketing, etc.

At this time the project proceeded to what can be seen as an implementation stage. The steering group was terminated and "a change structure" set up consisting of the top management

group, including union representatives who were considered “managers”. The “training sessions” were, as might be recalled, held every second month for the purpose of establishing action plans for change activities, reporting on and following up of such plans, and exchanging experiences as well as reflecting about change issues for the purpose of learning.

The comment made by the project leader as a response to his own question about how much commitment or driving force there was in the change efforts supposed to take place seems fairly illustrative:

“Not much had really happened before the first meeting (seminar). Peter had done “nothing at all”. He had, however worked his ass off with other tasks. For Fred and Adrian it was difficult to see if anything was done. In Ian's case, however, there seems to be some action, whereas the trainers do as agreed upon.This could be typical for the situation that constantly will emerge. Things that are more “important” than the strategic programme pop up....it will be difficult to break old habits.”

The various managers did not pursue the change activities that were expected of them nor seemed to follow up their commitment in this area. Around this time frustration started to generate in the organization because “nothing happened”. Partly in response to this, but also in response to an emerging idea that the change project had to attend to practical “here and now” problems, a method for getting the reorientation started at the lower levels of the organization was introduced. Seminars were carried out in order to teach the foremen and department leaders how to develop goals and standards to improve quality, as a basis for doing exactly that in collaboration with their subordinates. These seminars were also intended to reflect and motivate the basic message for reorientation. Whereas the courses (seminars) for leaders (foremen, department managers) in methods for developing new (quality) goals seemed to be well received and go well, the practical efforts in developing new them got started but then stopped.

In the beginning it went quite well, but met some skepticism like:

“Will this result in something, or will the efforts vanish once again?... It seems like quality circles, and nothing came out of that..... We have problems in meeting the dead lines because of increased orders and a lot of over-time.... How do we cope with that? Such things will always happen. ..It takes more time than we expected.”

“The development of local goals, standards and action plans was meant to have different functions”, says the project leader, “It was supposed to train people in developing local goals on a the specific issue of quality, it was to implement the “think, plan and follow up” style of working in the whole organization, and it was of course to improve quality. The experiences varied. Activities got started in “marketing”. In the “production” timing seemed bad. This kind of work was demanding, people had to gather in the evening, the department managers had a lot of groups to deal with, etc. The implementation stopped seemingly due to strong pressure for production that developed in this period.”

After some time the project leader said that “the goals development work has broken completely down in the production department”. (The major part of the organization.)

Looking at the premises for the change structure and the change efforts, we do observe the following: The top manager of the unit who initiated the change process, but who now has been promoted to HQ, was seen as doing the following:

“Previously he had in written words informed the organization that “we do not let short term economic thinking come in the way of our long term efforts”, observed the project leader...”He is, however, squeezed by the owners and has limited time to demonstrate profitability. He squeezes the area managers, who squeeze their department managers.”

This is also related to a serious drop in the market that was experienced in this period. A lot of activities were initiated to help save costs and increase sales. Managers were followed up intensively on their business improvement: Every month, the various top managers in the unit have to meet and be examined about their business result and progress. At the same time they were told that the change efforts were more important than ever when taking part in the (change) training seminars.

They did, however, manage to succeed in increasing sales and reducing costs. They did not manage to implement the change ideas. The managers did not seem to follow up their commitment in this area. The action focus was on other things, that is the sort of things they were used to, in addition to working harder and also - it could seem - more efficiently. In any case, the change activities and commitments were not followed up. The change project as such ended with the incident that was described in the (last) section on counterforcing change: The new division manager tried to follow up what he perceived as being ideas behind the change project by implementing some structural changes and also moving managers around. This caused a “revolt”, he was fired and the change project stopped.

Discussion

There is creation in regulation.
There is confirmation in novelty”

What do these examples say? Comparing the last example with the two others, it seems that one difference between them is the amount of structural pressure that is put on doing new things or doing things differently. From Transport is an example of how the implementation of a new product exerted a pressure on the employees to change their work pattern by imposing new work patterns on them. They experienced the new ideas that constituted the new direction by having to put them into practice.

From Airline is demonstrated how the establishment and following up of a goal structure put pressure on the managers to change their work pattern and to focus differently. Both of these

organizations seemed to cope with the issue of having as a heavy pressure on the change activities as on other activities. In Transport we could even observe the generative aspect of this pressure as people started to focus on the conditions and contingencies for them to comply to and follow up on the new standards. Contrasting these situations with the one in Furniture, we observe that the latter in a sense had established a structure for change activities that proved inefficient, in fact did not work as a structure. There was a structural pressure on going concern business activities downgrading the pressure put on change activities.

The preparation and introduction of the new product at Transport was clearly also considered relevant for business and the work situation. This was underlined by the fact that it was proved that this kind of approach worked: they were able to deliver time guaranteed transport services. They experienced so themselves by coping with the new demand. They could also read in the press that the public was favourable. The successful implementation of guaranteed products seemed to be an important factor in the creation of a new company image. It was not only a nice, and perhaps intellectually necessary idea, but it meant that the new idea became concrete at the level of the individual organizational member. New work orientations, patterns of interpretation and (inter)action developed and could be seen to develop. The self-reinforcing tendencies of old work orientations seemed to be broken up.

There are some conditions that most probably ensured that the introduction of the product had the described effects. First, a similar product service had successfully been introduced half a year before, but on a much smaller scale. It affected only a small proportion of the operation and of the manpower. This "early victory" demonstrated to the rest of the organization that it "was possible". So there was a concrete model as an example both of what should be done and what was possible. Second, the more extensive product described above had been developed interactively with representatives of the different local units. This process seemed to develop a feeling of ownership with the product. Third, we would also guess that the product capitalized on imprisoned professionalism (craftsmanship) - imprisoned due to poor systems and management. Previous attempts to increase efficiency have perhaps been perceived as demands to "sweat more", for instance because goals for improvements (as well as recessions) were expressed in distant and perhaps alien figures. The measurement of professional success had not been very concrete or understandable to people on the shop floor.

Nonetheless, there are certain similarities between the nature of a goal system, as described from Airline, and the enforcing nature of the new product presented above. In fact, the new product can be seen as representing a goal structure, as the goal structure can be seen to reflect aspects of the product. Both emphasize clear directions and possibilities for feedback. The new product seems to capitalize on frustrated professionalism in the sense that people get the chance to do a good job - and see that they do so - and that they previously have been deprived

of that opportunity by the system. Or, to view it from another angle, people just do not like to do stupid things, and the new product made a lot of common sense they immediately could see whether they succeeded or not.

A goal structure can have the same type of elements in it, even if the measuring of results cannot be as concrete and visible. It seemed that the management by goal structure functioned that way in the case of Airline. It must, however, be pointed out that the settings are different: Figures and percentages about sales and finances might be distant and alien when it comes to the perceived relevance for the work situation of a shop floor worker, as opposed to middle line managers. And the other way around, "no excuse arrangements" might be felt as very relevant to the performance of the shop floor worker, but it is the effects in figures and percentages that are of interest and felt as relevant to the managers.

The issues identified in the similarities between Transport and Airline on the one hand and Furniture on the other dealt with the amount and kind of structural pressure involved in making people comply to new ideas and new standards. The next sections discuss and suggest what are the conceptual implications of these observations.

Structure controls

The point to note in the section above was the role of structural bearings in situations of change. At this stage there could be a point in recapsulating the challenge we are up to. Even having intellectually comprehended the new direction, people and collectives of people still do not tend to change their behaviour. Old habits are, as common sense also would tell us, hard to change. Organizational frames, it has been pointed out, tend to be preconscious and self-reinforcing. This is due to the fact that seeing is also not seeing. There is additionally the fact that "people know what they have got, but not what they are going to get". The new ideas and the new direction have not proved their legitimacy. People even react against the new because they suspect that maybe they will lose status, power and/or rewards as a result of the new direction. And, of course, some will. It has been concluded that we are up against an organizational momentum. In order to break that, it was claimed, a reframing momentum had to be created.

It is in this context that the importance of structural bearings should be understood. Due to the strength of an organizational momentum, it becomes necessary that behaviour and energy are channelled - or controlled (Nadler 1981) - in the desired direction. It is suggested from the observations presented above that structural bearings reflecting and communicating the new ideas can be designed and imposed upon the experiences of the organizational members. In addition to the examples mentioned, we recall one consultant outlining a few experiences from trying to reorient a bank. This bank was dominated by the central staff to a degree that was

considered to be unproductive and ineffective. He said it was decided that all the major staff should be assigned to their most dominant principal user as part of a plan to redesign HQ. This was to reduce their role in influencing and dominating other organizational units. It was claimed that it seemed to force both the staff department and the rest of the organization into a new role where they were exposed to new experiences that underlined and clarified their new roles.

A somewhat similar example can be taken from the activities in Transport. It indicates that the structural measures taken control organizational efforts in new and intended ways.

"The reduced number of hierarchical layers - as well as management positions - forced managers to relate differently to problems, subordinates and each other", said the project leader. "They seemed to be more directly confronted with the market and the problems of operation. A smaller number of managers also enforced a more direct dialogue, and also made agreement and disagreement more visible."

These examples represent single structural changes enforcing upon organizational participants new experiences and thereby new models. They visualize new demands and solutions that are in accordance with new ideas. The changes seem to enforce and seduce the organizational members to practice patterns of leadership and cooperation consistent with intended ideas, thereby imposing on them experiences that make the new direction more concrete and realistic, preferably proving its viability.

Controlling by structuration

Although the above discussion has been focused on structure and structural pressure, "structure" as a term does not seem to cover the phenomenon identified. The task we are up to deals with how a constant pressure can be brought upon the established momentum. In the last chapter we identified that as an inherently incremental problem. In the examples from Transport and Airline we have seen seeds for succeeding in establishing such a generative counterpressure. People did not only start complying to new standards demanded of them, they also started focusing on the contextual contingencies for managing to do so.

In order to grasp this kind of social mechanism the term structuration seems to come in handy. We take the chance of borrowing it from Giddens (1976), who used it to refer to the existing frame bearing on the ongoing production of that of tomorrow. Structuration for reframing is here taken to mean any mechanisms enforcing the new direction by controlling that new things are performed and that things are performed differently. The point is also to create a counterbalance to the inherent organizational tendency towards the old way of thinking and doing things. As demonstrated earlier, "new behaviours" in an "old culture" are not what counts nor what pays. Mechanisms for structuration visualize and put pressure on what new is needed and whether or not new goals and standards are being followed.

Squeezing the example a bit further for meaning, we can try to ask a few questions about how mechanisms for the structuration of change could work. In the examples presented earlier, we see mechanisms more or less extensively embodying and channelling energy in the new direction. In Transport it was demonstrated how the “no excuse” product reflected the new strategy and forced upon the organization patterns of behaviour that underpinned this new and intended organizational direction.

By succeeding, the organizational members also learned about the quality of that direction. By restructuring its management structure the new form imposed new experiences upon its participants that were in line with the new organizational direction. In Airline one managed to embody both the form and content of the new organizational direction by goal orienting through a management and control structure also aimed at learning from results. Furthermore, the major staff functions at Banking had to relate to the business issues differently and more constructively by being assigned to the principal user of their services.

We can induce several characteristics for structuring change from these examples. The mechanisms might represent, be in line with, or in any way signal the intended new direction. Or, they could demand new (inter) action and priorities by intervening in or putting pressure on the existing organizational frame. The examples also illustrate how it is possible to measure if tasks have been carried out in accordance with the new direction in terms that are understandable from the perspective of the individual job. This also makes it possible to see if the new direction works. When this kind of pressure develops and also generates a focus on the contingencies for people to cope with new demands and new ideas it is seen as structuring.

Rationale as a condition for creating a reframing momentum

The reasons for running a change project varied in the different enterprises. All projects started with the purpose of improving the organization and developing a better match with the overall task of the organization. In three of the organizations, however, the situation changed after some time and change now also seemed necessary for survival reasons. Or, at least the organization was seriously threatened if one did not manage to change the situation that had emerged. In the following sections it will be demonstrated that there are different basic reasons - rationales - for change in different projects, and that this also makes a difference for the reframing efforts' prospects to succeed.

Reframing rationale and reframing efforts at Transport

Transport had already worked with change for 1-2 years when “the change project” started, initiated and run by a new top manager. New goals and strategies were developed with a

general focus on OD and restructuring HQ. After some time it was felt that the change process needed a clearer focus (what kind of OD process are we up to). Contacts were established between Transport and the consultancy firm.

It is probably symptomatic that it was the human resource manager, who was part of the top manager group, who played a central role in establishing and spelling out the terms for the relationship. In this process the premises for the change process were laid down. Seminars involving key people in the organizations were to play an important role in starting up the process. The aims of these seminars were interrelated: Consciousness raising, creating acceptance and commitment among managers and opinion leaders for the vision, goals and strategies, and also creating a basis for systematic, disciplined, long termed ways of working with reorientation and business improvements.

What has been outlined in the earlier section on anchoring is that the CEO understood that there was a lack of involvement among the participants because they thought that it was the HR manager and the external consultants who owned the process. So he took over and also very consciously chose to chair most of the sessions. At a somewhat later stage the HR manager was also fired, due to his lack of involvement in business (operational) issues and a lack of power base in the operational departments of the firm.

In sum, this meant an underlining of the management and the line responsibility for the reframing efforts. As pointed out earlier, the reorientation efforts were also integrated in the cycles of planning and budgeting of the company. The change seminars were transformed into learning and follow-up meetings and included a focus on planning and budgeting. It also seemed as if the new direction gradually gained commitment, at least in the sense that seeds for a change momentum seemed to grow in the sense that collective reorientation began to develop.

What is worth noticing is that a change situation emerged in parallel with the strengthening of the integration of the reframing efforts which were being linked stronger to business operations: Whereas the project was started in a situation that seemed reasonably safe and sound in terms of economy the firm was exposed to a falling market and heavy cost problems. The firm did not seem to be able to survive without substantial lay-offs. At least this was the case when the problems caused by a falling market were seen related to the needs for investments to be competitive in the future. It became clearer that the planned strategic changes were needed in order to ensure survival in the long run.

“The stick”, observed the project leader, “was the fall in the market, the lack of activity. The changes in Transport seemed to develop at a slower pace when there was no crisis. The organizational vision, however, can be seen as the carrot as can the crisis be seen as the stick.”

There was, of course, a considerable amount of information which explained the situation to the organizational members. The question is whether the crisis contributed to the realizing the new direction. Furthermore, an admittedly depressing question is whether the personnel reduction contributed to the effective communication and understanding of the crisis.

“The last point on the agenda”, reflected the project leader, for example, “was the discussion of how to deal with the coming lay off of 120 employees, and how this number should be divided between regions and terminals. It seemed to me that it is when concrete problems as these are discussed that the seriousness of the situation becomes clear to the present members of the organization.”

The organization succeeded in effectively sustaining its reframing efforts at the same time as it managed to cope with its immediate problems. In fact, it was asked whether the immediate problems helped in pursuing the long-term ideas. What we possibly observe is that the change activities at Transport were based on what seemed to be a clear vision and strategy for the future, and that these efforts were integrated into the general management function of the company. Simultaneously the firm was exposed to a fall in the market, perceived by management as a crisis, meaning that the company had to reduce their costs by laying off employees. Let us compare these features of the change activities and change process at Transport with the equivalent aspects of the change efforts at Furniture.

Reframing rationale and reframing efforts at Furniture

We recall from the section on structuration that the initial emphasis was on change seminars from key personnel. The information and motivation to the rest of the people with leadership responsibilities were performed through a commitment seminar and to the organization at large at a “kick off day”. Later on, the steering group was terminated, but the top management group was to have training sessions to follow up the change efforts every two months. In addition, two union representatives were included in the top management group. The implementation of the reframing ideas did not, however, develop as intended. People did not follow up on what they were supposed to do and commit themselves to in this area.

Partly in response to this the local goals development effort was initiated with seminars for teaching a method, followed by group meetings for developing such goals. The aims were, as can be recalled, both to meet the need for doing something concrete, handle some here and now problems that also made sense in a longer perspective, and to implicitly reflect and motivate the basic message for reframing the organization. These efforts had problems and were more or less stopped. This was seen as related to the CEO squeezing his managers very hard for results. There is also another factor this can be seen as being related to.

“At this time”, said the project leader, “things started to go worse for Furniture, increased costs and decreased margins of results. But there was little awareness of this among the managers.

We had no hints that the situation was like this, and due to inferior management information systems we didn't get to know until months later, when the market really dropped "

"The top manager (who at that time had become top manager at HQ), demanded cost reductions and intensified marketing efforts", the project leader said, "He jumped behind the wheel and screamed: Cost reductions! Get out in the market and get orders! Ensure the result!... Every month he called the various managers to his office and examined them forcefully on activities and results in this area ..(Stressing) Quality for the customer was a natural consequence of the Furnitures business idea, with the consequent need for quality in and between the members of the organization and in the leadership", he also remarkd. "Culture and leadership were therefore defined as the most important strategic issues in the nineties. Then comes black Monday and a drop in the market - also for Furniture. Related to last year the turn over (in x month) was reduced by 50 %....There is now a pressure for cost reductions and ensuring results."

This resulted in a strong focus on reducing costs and getting new contracts, even if the top manager stressed the need for long-term development, especially at the training sessions. He said it was more important than ever. The employees, however, expressed the view that there was no time for change activities. The firm eventually succeeded in improving the immediate situation, cost reductions were achieved and new orders obtained. In fact, they turned out to have problems in meeting the demand. The result of this was that there seemed to be increasingly better arguments for not pursuing the long-term change efforts.

Whereas the change efforts at Transport seemed to have a serious impact on its operations and the collective orientations of the company, this did not, in the same way, seem to be the case at Furniture. The change efforts in this company did not seem to any have serious impact on the collective orientations. Change efforts seemed to remain as espoused theories explored during the change (training) seminars. The change process that so many talked about and referred to was hard to detect outside the seminar rooms. It seemed as if it was defined and experienced as something different from operations or the daily work. In a way, we could say that it did not manage to reach the agenda of the organizational life of the organization. The planned and desired change activities - and changed modes of operation - did not seem to be "what counted" in the organizational definition of the situation of the organizational members.

Whereas it could seem as if one managed to utilize the confronting crisis in Transport as a driving force in the reframing efforts, it seemed to get in the way of such efforts at Furniture. The crisis emerged and was coped with, but rather by "striving harder" within the old pattern of operations.

Finally, let us also look into the main feature of the change efforts at Airline and also take into consideration the "basic living conditions" of the firm.

Reframing rationale reasons and reframing efforts at Airline

The overall change agenda was, as you might recall, to change the company from a segmented and a functional-oriented, centralized frame towards a frame focusing on a higher degree of quality at the same time emphasizing responsibility for results and customer needs at all levels. This was, however, initially motivated by improving a favourable situation for the company, even though improvements were necessary in view of future investment needs.

However, this changed as the market dropped, competition increased as result of change in government regulations and costs increased more than was estimated and also more than was bearable. This meant that in addition to the need for long-term improvements, there was also a need for short-term improvements in sales as well as costs. The efforts to cope with these more immediate problems were handled through the same structure as the long-term oriented changes. The level of cost reductions that had to be achieved by a certain unit was defined in the learning and follow-up forum (FUAL) , and also followed up in that setting:

“Through the breaking down of goals a new understanding of reality emerges”, the project consultant remarked. “ New operational goals concerning economic contribution and level of sales seemed to offer meaning and direction to work effortsLittle by little a crisis consciousness developed through this process.”

We could say that the new and intended ideas to some extent are practiced in the way the firm coped with immediate problems. They are translated into an alteration of the management mode of operation which is enforced upon the management function, for the strategic issues and also for the relationships with the managers at operational level, for example, coping with the cost problem. These immediate problems were seen as having such grave importance that they had crisis-like characteristics. Rather than stop the reframing efforts, it is the observation of the project leader that the following way of handling the problem seemed to underpin and support them:

“By pressing for higher goals, by showing that if not we had to go to the banks for money next year due to increased costs, competition and a stagnating market, new insight developed. The new understanding of reality also included a consciousness of this crisis...I don't think we could have achieved this by just focusing on the existing situation, but rather on developing the situation to come.”

The point seems to be that it is the understanding of the firm's external situation that helps unfreeze or destabilize old definitions of the situation, thereby preparing for the new. One of the local managers who took part in the learning and follow-up meetings put it this way:

“The existing understanding seemed to be destabilized, or could be destabilized, when there was variation in the external world. The economic situation - and implications - were easier to explain and understand when we had competition from more actors.”

The project leader explained this in more detail by pointing at two factors. One is how the understanding of the situation was transformed into demanding economic goals and what effect this had on the managers. The other factor is how the consequent cost reductions effected the reorganizing efforts.

“The pressure for 13 % contribution leads to insecurity....However, whereas it was previously considered in negative terms, it is now perceived more as a positive incitement, even if the atmosphere and attitude of the single individual members of the management group may vary.The team organizing process has come close to the cost reduction process, and it has consequently been identified with it. Team has become a threat just as cost reductions and lay-offs. This does not seem to be paralyzing, and I think the preparation for and the implementation of teams have come at a favourable time.....it is experienced as a constructive way of turning a destabilized situation around.....increased market and customer understanding seem to permeate the organization. You can see this, among other things, from the kind of questions that are asked at the team seminars...”

Discussion

Espoused ideas for a new direction existed in all firms. In the three firms presented here, the project got started in a situation where there seemed to be future, but not immediate, pressures for change. In both Transport and Furniture, however, this changed radically as significant falls in the market occurred. The gravity of the pressures seemed to be strongest at Transport because it seemed impossible for them to cope with the situation without cost reductions on such a scale that could only be achieved by a significant reduction in the work force. Perhaps the market fall also signalled more basic and underlying structural changes in the market, and, in any case, the immediate crisis, together with the anticipated needs for future investments, made these reductions even more urgent.

In the case of Furniture, however, it was possible to cope with the immediate crisis by working harder, saving costs within the established mode of operations, and selling more by selling harder. In Airline, the crisis did not appear as so manifest. Still, the situation put a pressure on the organization that was perceived as quite serious and the consequences of serious cost cuts had a wide impact on the organization. It was carried out, however, without laying off permanent employees. The process of cost reduction was performed through the same mechanisms as the general change efforts. What we observe is that the reframing efforts in Transport seemed to be helped by the seriousness of the immediate situation.

This is contrary to the situation in Furniture. Here the perceived crisis did not seem to help working with change. In fact, the case seemed rather to be the contrary. The danger of the situation was coped with successfully but without any new or changed measures being put into force. It was not handled in a way that clarified the reframing needs and underpinned the reframing efforts. In Airline, the crisis, although probably not acute, still seemed to be perceived and tackled in such a manner as to underline the need for change and helped develop

mechanisms for coping with that need. It can be seen as a reminder that the environment constituted a threat to survival and had to be adjusted to, and that by coping with it through the same management functions/mechanisms that were set up to both reflect the new organizational direction, as well as to forward it, these mechanisms were proven to work.

A question is therefore whether the existence and awareness of crisis has stronger power of conviction than ideas for a new and improved direction alone - even in cases where reframing is accepted to be a future necessity. It is difficult to capitalize on a future crisis or a feeling of the situation being unsatisfactory. A future need appears as distant and vague, even if this dissatisfaction is increased by the consciousness of having better means of coping with that future situation than are apparent today. A rationale for change can be seen to consist of two dimensions; crisis motivation and idea(tional) motivation.

Crisis motivation refers to the sort of situation where the "figures are red" and moderate cost reductions won't save the situation. The gap between what is done and what is needed is considerable. The very existence of the enterprise is threatened if substantial measures or changes are not carried out. Ideational motivation means that a relatively clear picture of another direction, purpose, or way of functioning has been developed. The implicit alternative frame could be constituted by other ways of serving needs in the market and/or other ways of organizational functioning for fulfilling the new or changed tasks caused by new products and services. The ideational motivation implies a tension is created between what is and what could be.

Crisis motivation and ideational motivation

Accepting that they live in turbulent environments quite a few organizations try to prepare for future changes in their working conditions and consequently elaborate or develop alternative courses of development. They want to change before they find themselves in a crisis, and they develop new strategies and new ideas for their organizational tasks. They want to "be better", to improve their overall situation and be prepared for external changes. Missions are clarified, goals revised, strategies developed, policies for modern management formulated as well as principles of how to organize. To some extent that was the initial situation in the cases used as examples above; to some extent the management in Furniture as well as Airline perceived the challenges to motivate a good organization to become better - even though it would have to involve considerable changes in collective practices. The initial challenge in Transport was probably seen as somewhat more existential, but not as immediately dramatic.

The question that could be asked in all three cases was why the various individuals and groups started to impose on themselves - as well as others - another modus operandi, other criteria for how to perform their tasks and (co)operations? There was no immediate and urgent need to do

so. Perhaps the organizational forces preserving the present way of functioning were more forceful than a vague need for future change, even if excellent and convincing ideas for a better organizational direction had been worked out and intellectually understood and even accepted. If an organization is in such a situation it has to base the motivation for change on a dissatisfaction with the discrepancy between the existing situation and what could be. Another way of putting it is that it must capitalize on future crisis.

This seems to constitute a weak rationale for change, but it is not nonexistent since it could be that the reframing efforts had some effect in the beginning of the Airline and Transport project. However, this was not the case in Furniture. The difference between the first two and Furniture is, of course, also related to the differences in reframing structuration. However, the ideational motivation for change seems to constitute a weaker basis for the establishment than the situation where a crisis exists in parallel, therefore, it is "possible, but difficult". Such a situation - ideational motivation, but no crisis - probably demands stronger change efforts than a situation in which external pressures threaten the existence of the organization.

Perhaps the reason that crisis represents a forceful motivation is that it clearly signals that things cannot remain as they are. The organizational members are offered an alternative route for survival when ideas for a new organizational direction exist as a possible solution. This situation represents a considerably stronger potential for persuasion than only being offered an alternative route that might improve a future situation. Transport had, for instance, developed clear and relatively trustworthy ideas for a new direction both as far as the company/market relations are concerned and also concerning how to get there in terms of managing and organizing the enterprise. The need for following this direction became more convincing when the market dropped dramatically and the firm was faced with the need for immediate action. At least it became clear that something had to be done; that the existing organizational direction was not good enough as the situation had developed relative to the environment.

This is also probably the experience underlying the classical OD thinking that the main phases in change are unfreeze - change (or move) - freeze (Lewin 1951, Lundberg 1984). More basically, it also is in line with the study of paradigmatic change which according to Kuhn is seen as changing in the set of assumptions, usually implicit, about what sort of things make up the world, how they act, how they hang together, and how they may be known. Paradigms may be understood not only as formal rules of thought, but also as rhetoric and practices in use (Kuhn 1962: 373). Kuhn suggests that :

“Confronted with anomaly or crisis, scientists take a different attitude toward existing paradigms.” (91) He also says: “It is, I think, particularly in the periods of acknowledged crisis that scientists have turned to philosophical analysis as a device to unlock the riddles of their field (88). To sum up, it is when the existing tools cannot help us solve our problems and execute our tasks any more, that we are receptive to new perspectives on our tasks and

relations.”
(Kuhn 1962)

Kuhn saw this view as valid for organizations: “We propose that formal organizations be considered paradigms in operation, different in degree and content, but not in essence, from scientific paradigms in use...Like scientific disciplines, formal organizations have histories, undergo internal and external changes, and experience strains“ (374)

Ideational and crisis motivation should be seen as sort of analytical dimensions. In practice, these factors will exist in different degrees and could also be represented by the same phenomenon. A crisis could, for instance, contain the beginnings of new ideas, since the crisis means that one can't go on in the same way. Simultaneously, ideas for a new direction could also, for instance, clarify the perceptions of a crisis as well as represent the capitalization of a future crisis. It could be said that crisis motivation represents a reactive and repairing element, and ideational motivation a proactive and opportunistic element in the creation of a change rationale. These two elements can, of course, also be blended and found in different proportions. However, for the sake of illustration and exploration, the combination of the two rationale elements can be seen as four ideal types of conditions. It will be discussed in the next section whether each of these situations constitute a reframing rationale:

Rationales for creating reframing momentum

1. Crisis and ideas for a new direction
2. Ideas for new direction, but no crisis
3. Crisis, but no ideas for a new direction
4. No crisis, no ideas for new direction

We have already explored the first two situations. Situation 1 constitutes a sound rationale for organizational reframing, and situation 2 would be a difficult, but possible situation as a basis for developing a change momentum. In situation 4 no crisis, no ideas for a new direction - the environment is not experienced as posing a threat to the existence of the firm. It manages OK, but neither clear nor espoused strategic alternatives exist. There is no manifest tension related to the present way of functioning. This situation clearly does not offer a basis for efforts aiming at establishing a new direction or change momentum for such a direction. It is a qualified guess that attempts at deviating from the present situation/direction will be arrested. With the lack of a crisis as well as espoused ideas for a new direction, there will hardly be many such attempts taking place. "Don't rock the boat." The paradox is that this could represent a virtuous circle as long as the environment does not change its demands on the organization and as long as the tools of the paradigm work.

However, when the characteristics of the environment change, the virtuous circle turns into a vicious circle. Sooner or later this happens, and the organization then finds itself in a crisis. If

neither management nor any other significant agency has been prepared for this, the organization finds itself in a situation of crisis but with no clear and espoused ideas for a new direction - situation 3. Many organizational crises strike like lightning from a clear sky. It strikes whole business sectors, like the banking business in 1987/88 and the car retail industry in 1988/89, or individual firms of which there are numerous examples.

Even if a crisis emerges, it is usually only retrospectively that it did not strike suddenly. Still, it is quite likely that individual members - and sometimes groups - of the enterprise have foreseen that things would go wrong, and even voiced this through internal channels. But they have not been heard. There has been no collective awareness of the coming crisis. When it strikes, it is always unpleasant because its consequences are not only organizational, but also private in character. People can lose their income and status, and if they have to be "on the dole" they can have other grave psychological as well as social problems.

The point to make is that such organizational crisis is characterized by anomaly; old models no longer work. However, when an organization - especially an old enterprise - experiences crisis, the members do not realize that anomaly is the problem. New models do not emerge and old circles are not broken even if a crisis is being experienced. Crisis alone does not constitute a reframing rationale. More often, the organization is paralysed (Bate 1988) and characterised by the "more-of-the-same phenomenon" (Watzlawick 1974) - it takes more of the medicine that caused the illness. One of the obvious reasons for the paralysis is that the members of the organization do not see a lifeline; they do not perceive an alternative course of action. Experiencing crisis, but not seeing what can be done to get out of it, leads to a perception of threat and insecurity which contributes to organizational paralysis and a self reinforcement of the old culture.

It is therefore suggested that if crisis is to contribute to the development of a change rationale, the way out of the crisis must be pictured and seen in a trustworthy way. A foundation on which to build the future must at least in vague outline be perceived by the members of the organization. If not through a complete set of ideas for a new direction, the participants must see that through a series of actions, cut-downs and savings they can gain a foothold for survival.

Rationale for reframing - summing up.

In the last section the need for establishing a change momentum in the period of liminality was identified. It was argued that two factors should be focused on in the efforts to establish a reframing momentum: rationale and structuration for reframing. The notions of ideational and crisis motivation are also seen as conditions for constituting a rationale for organizational reframing. Also identified and presented were four different blends of these two kinds of

motivation and their potential.

A combination of crises and ideas for a new direction is the best rationale with the strongest power of conviction. Ideas for a new direction, could constitute a possible rationale based on the possible "future crisis" it could capitalize on by demonstrating the inability and inadequacy of the existing frame. Crises alone would not constitute a constructive rationale for reframing since such a situation does not include a direction for frustration and dissatisfaction. The point is, naturally, that there is a potential in this situation for developing fruitful ideas for where to go.

Rationale and structuration for reframing - making the seeds grow?

If an organizational situation is characterized by a rationale for change and mechanisms structuralizing change, then the organizational members should have obtained an intellectual picture of the new direction and they are simultaneously "forced" into experiencing that direction. We can see, however, that this situation is liable to cause problems for the members of the organization.

Take, for example, the warehouse worker in Transport. To be able to perform in the new way, he will need more and different kinds of information. Take the local branch manager of Banking. To be able to take on autonomous responsibility he or she will need a qualitatively different decision system in the relationship between Headquarters and the local branch, he or she will need another budgeting and accounting system. Imagine also the teams being implemented in Airline. To be able to function in a multifunctional way they will need information on how they perform on different variables. It is also a prerequisite that in order for them to function in a new way the reward system should not bar the members from performing the "new" functions.

Systems and structures must consciously must be changed and adjusted to support the new direction if the seeds for change momentum are to grow. To make a goal structure function as described it must, for instance, be supplemented by information systems. Organizational members need to know how they perform in relation to the goals being set up. They need to know early enough to correct their actions if organizational learning is to occur and sometimes they also need to know other things in order to be able to perform their job differently. The transport worker in the warehouse should know more about when the different trucks are expected and with what cargo. He should know what goods are expected and when they are due, etc. The structural pressures represented by new products and goal structures should also, as fast as possible, be supported by changes in the career/status and compensation system. The progress and lack of progress towards the new direction must be consequently followed up. If the old direction is the one being honoured this is not possible for it does not pay.

The point is that establishing a change momentum is a dynamic and complex process. Many aspects must be attended to in parallel. The establishment of mechanisms representing structuralization of change-oriented activities in parallel with a change rationale may well start a movement. Together they represent sort of seeds for a change momentum. For a change momentum to be established they must develop towards self reinforcement; the structuration mechanisms must be generative; or it must generate more structural and system adjustments along the lines of the new direction.

One of the first obvious factors is developing supportive information and reward and sanction systems, etc. This is, however, only the beginning. The basic purpose of the structuration of change is to generate changes that embed the direction it is set up to forward in the basic structures and systems of the enterprise. In a sense what we basically should aim at is generative structuration. The aim for its functioning is that it should become embedded in the action system of the organization.

By reflecting the rationale for change, the change structure should in a way contain or constitute the seeds for the thinking and acting of the new organization/organizational direction. It should contain and forward the creation of the programmes for the new organizational direction. Consequently, its functioning should result in the continuous reformulation and reformation of the distribution of authority and tasks, the information and decision systems, career and reward systems, etc, so as to channel resources, energy and interpretation towards the new direction. The point is that the different aspects of structure and systems should establish reciprocal and reinforcing interactions toward the new direction beyond the precarious change efforts based on the reframing rationale and the initial mechanisms for the structuration of the reframing process.

Conditions for reframing organizations - four types

For the sake of simplicity we shall imagine that rationale and mechanisms for structuration can be represented by two variables each with two possible values. This is quite clearly a simplification. It follows from the previous discussion that it is not obvious when we, for instance, face the situation of a change rationale having been constituted. The two categories crisis motivation and ideational motivation, are both rough and relative categories and their interplay has only superficially been explored. Still, we can reassess the suggested conditions for momentum for change to see if they work as conceptualizations. That would leave us with the table at the top of the next page showing four ideal types of possibilities:

CONDITIONS FOR CREATING A REFRAMING MOMENTUM

		Structuration	
		Yes	No
Rationale	Yes	Favoured	Ideational dead end
	No	Impossible or ambiguous	Disfavoured

FIG. 6.1 CONDITIONS FOR CREATING A REFRAMING MOMENTUM

It follows from the discussions that the "Yes/Yes" situation would offer the best possibilities for a momentum for reframing to be established. Similarly that the "No/No" situation would represent the least likelihood for a change project to gain foothold:

Structuration and rationale for reframing: Among the organizations observed, Transport seems most clearly to fit the yes/yes situation. It was characterized by both clear ideas for a new direction; a strategy both for what to do and how to do it. A significant drop in the market situation in parallel with changes in the competitive situation constituted a crisis that manifested itself into considerable reductions in the work force. However, it seemed to succeed in establishing a significant momentum for reframing. The organizational members started changing their orientation towards tasks and problems significantly. For an outsider the most visible was the success it had with guaranteed deliveries of goods, a kind of performance that seemed more or less antagonistic to its initial orientation. It was summed up as a shift from a ritualistic towards a problem-solving orientation related to work performance. It was also concluded that a shift from a "volume" orientation handling goods towards a business/profit like orientation.

The other example here could be Airline. The change rationale is suggested to be weaker, established primarily through clear ideas for where to go and how to do it. There was not an acute crisis, still there were heavy economic or cost problems that put significant pressure on all levels of the organization. The strategy was (in a specific way) to be more market oriented and go for a very specific market segment with a certain concept. It was also to be more

business oriented at all levels by infusing "holistic" responsibility at all levels, that is responsibility at the lowest possible level. This was done by clearly delegating responsibility to local managers combined with the development of a multifunctional decentralized organization in the shape of semi autonomous work teams.

The goal-oriented management structure that was set up was supposed to be implemented downwards in the organization in a linking pin sort of structure. The process of doing so was started but to a varied degree and form in different parts of the organization. The management structure followed up the managers according to the new standards thereby embodying and reflecting the new direction. Some new organizational features like decentralization of management responsibility and the emerging teams can also be seen as a change structure.

It seemed as if Airline had established significant seeds for a momentum for reframing. Managers and management systems seemed - and were perceived to be - functioning differently, in the sense that management, and thereby also organizational members, were taken more seriously. The language of the company now included words that reflected the new direction like, for example, teams, although there is a considerable variation in how people conceive of this particular concept. However, there also seemed to be an emerging shift in the orientations of the individual members of the organization that included a higher awareness of the meaning of market dependence as well as costs and profit.

Neither structuration nor rationale for reframing: In contrast to these two cases there are two examples in the "No/No" situation. Electric Industry is quite clearly represented among them. If clear ideas for a new direction existed at Electric Industry, it was only with the top manager, and perhaps grains of them with some of the others in the top management group. They did not, however, get expressed in a consequential way; there was some sort of an agreement among the members of the top management that the new direction should be developed along the lines of a quality focus in the line (management) structure. These ideas were not very clearly formulated and represented, therefore there was a rather ambiguous concept for a new direction, the ambiguity being increased by the lack of homogeneous understanding and commitment in the top management group. The top manager more or less abdicated from the change work, which brings us to the question of crisis or no crisis.

The company did actually do quite well as it was. However, the top manager foresaw fundamental structural changes in this business sector. These changes would probably lead in several years to (this part of) the company being closed down. One could say that a rationale for change existed for the owners that would lead them to reestablish the firm under other conditions. For the collective of people constituting the present organization, however, this was not so. Neither did the management and the external consultants succeed in establishing

effective mechanisms structuring change effort. This was mainly due to several management problems that became manifest when they tried to implement a new direction that was perhaps somewhat unclear. The management of the project was redesigned as a result of employee reactions to the top manager trying to stay out of it. The change project, however, never got a foothold. At some point it was redefined - it was supposed to be as a break preparing the ground for more fundamental change work - towards a more technical operational angle. Not long after the whole project faded away.

Furniture is somewhat more difficult to categorize, but we see it basically as being in this category. It was demonstrated that effective mechanisms for structuralizing change was not established. There was, however, a rationale for change that was weak in the beginning of the project: fairly clear ideas for where to go. There were, however, reasons to believe that the commitment to this consciousness was rather halfhearted, or only espoused, when it came to the line managers. At a later point in time the firm experienced a crisis, which they in fact managed to cope with. The reframing rationale did not seem to be strengthened through this period, mainly as a result of the fact that the company managed to control the situation with the use of old means. In a way it was initially perceived as a crisis, but since it was managed in the short run, the inadequacy of the established frame was not proven.

The structure set up for reframing purposes - the steering group and the change seminars - seemed very successful in the beginning. The managers taking part in the seminars discussed vividly and there seemed to be a realistic understanding and acceptance of the new direction. They even wanted more seminars than scheduled because they were so successful and were useful for the purpose of being completely prepared for going in the new direction. However, the reframing process did not, as you remember from above presentations, get beyond the ideational-oriented stages of preparation. The various change efforts more or less faded away.

When the firm faced major difficulties, the management didn't cope with the challenge of capitalizing on the crisis for developing a reframing rationale. One could rather say that an antagonism between the change project ("the process") and operations developed. When the new division manager tried to implement some structural and management changes that he saw as sustaining and strengthening the change ambitions, he was, as seen in the section on counterforcing change, fired. The reasons given from the top manager was that it was especially the way he had presented and implemented the changes that was wrong and had caused the organizational reactions. Additionally, they could not afford unrest in this part of the firm that, in profit terms, was going well. All in all, we see the situation at Furniture to be one in the category of neither structuration nor rationale for reframing.

Conditioning a reframing momentum

Situations characterized by both a reframing rationale and mechanisms for reframing structuration favouring a reframing momentum have been discussed. Examples from Airline and Transport were used for this purpose, as Money Market could have been. Situations characterized by neither structuration nor rationale in which a reframing momentum did not seem to emerge were also discussed assisted by examples from Electric Industry and Furniture. Two categories have not been discussed. Car Retailer seem to fit one of the remaining ones. It was characterized by the existence of a reframing rationale. Mechanisms for establishing an effective structuration of the reframing process did, however, not seem to have been established: Neither was did a reframing momentum seem to develop. Among the cases there is no example illustrating the situation characterized by structuration, but no reframing rationale. It was labelled “impossible or ambiguous” in figure 6.1. The point is that a managed reframing process established as a process of structuration but with no basic motivation or content more or less seems like a contradiction in terms.

In sum, relating the situation of the various cases to the notions of structuration and rationale for reframing supports the idea that they could be conceived of as basic conditions for the establishment of change momentum. These are proposed to be seen as necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for the establishment of a reframing momentum. The combination of a reframing rationale (content) and a reframing structuration (form) is suggested to condition a reframing momentum (process).

Reframing organizations - towards a model

So far a set of empirically grounded working concepts for reframing organizations has been suggested. The concepts of anchoring, integration, inductive vs. deductive learning approaches and centrally vs. locally driven reframing solutions were seen as reflecting central aspects of reframing processes. The task of reframing organizations was reformulated to one of establishing a reframing momentum. The concepts of rationale and structuration for reframing organizations were seen as reflecting basic conditions of the reframing endeavour.

Little has been done, however, to clarify the relationships between these concepts and how they are related to the endeavour of reframing organizations. This is the agenda of the next two chapters. What Mintzberg calls a “creative leap” shall be made from the platform of the “detective work” in order to suggest a set of propositions and and suggest further ideas for a model of reframing organizations. The empirical anchoring of the reframing concepts shall constitute the basis, but analysis, reflection, speculation have to be undertaken and the work of other authors will be drawn upon.

Chapter 7: Propositions for a Model of Reframing Organizations

The aim of this chapter is to develop a set of propositions for a model of reframing organizations. These propositions are based on the conceptual knowledge developed in the previous chapters, and they will constitute the platform for the further construction of a model undertaken in the next chapter.

It seems appropriate to underline that the notion of a model is used in a limited sense. It should be conceived of as sort a set of interrelated strategic variables. Rather than literally developing a model for “how to do it”, the intention is to suggest a model that directs attention in a fruitful and helpful way. It should highlight aspects of the task that can be handled in different ways and suggest guidelines along directions to cope with them.

By doing so the study is moving “towards a model”. There will be limitations to its use and applicability, especially limitations originating from the way it was developed. Furthermore, the model is rather general in character and its various parts can be researched in further depth and detail. Also, the phenomenon which it is supposed to reflect and refer to is of such a nature that the idea of a general and final model is not realistic. It will always be necessary to stretch further.

Suggesting a set of reframing propositions needs turning back. It is necessary to recapitulate and sum up the findings so far. The essence of these will be seen as a working hypothesis of which the various propositions represent a specification and interpretation. In practical terms, however, the construction of the reframing propositions is to a large extent built upon the various grounded reframing concepts. This also means that the empirical roots of the propositions are implicit in the fact that they are built upon these concepts.

Reframing organizations - task, issues and conditions

In the first section of the empirical part of the study, a series of emerging reframing issues were identified. It was suggested that these issues reflect important aspects of the reframing process that can be handled in different ways, and that they constitute useful and fruitful reframing concepts. The organizational tendency of rejecting new orientations was then analyzed. This was done because the reframing concepts were seen as reflecting organizations counterforcing change.

The suggestion was then that organizations could be conceived of as being characterized by a momentum sustained by the interrelationship of rational, political and especially cultural factors. On this basis it seemed natural to see the task of reframing organizations as one of creating a reframing momentum. Identified next were the notions of rationale and structuration as conditions for organizational reframing. We have therefore arrived at a situation where a series

of concepts for reframing organization are suggested:

Concepts for reframing organizations:

Reframing momentum: Reframing organizations implies the creation of a momentum for reframing

Reframing conditions: The creation of a reframing momentum is based on reframing conditions:

- **Rationale:** basic motivation for reframing the organization
- **Structuration:** mechanisms enforcing and reinforcing the new orientation by controlling that priorities and activities are according to the new frame

Reframing issues: The creation of reframing momentum implies a set of issues that can be handled in different ways, again of crucial importance for whether it is created or not:

- **Anchoring:** Focuses the possible existence of active and supportive and rational as well as symbolic coupling between management as well as union representatives and the reframing efforts
- **Integration:** Focuses the relationship or competition between the old and the new frame
- **Top management driven vs. local driven solutions:** Focuses the loci of forming and makes concrete the new frame
- **Inductive vs. Deductive Change Efforts:** Focuses the way (the ideas representing) the new frame are communicated and supposed to be learned

FIG. 7.1 CONCEPTS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL REFRAMING

These working concepts do not represent either or categories. All the projects have, for instance, a strong overall top management change solution - a centralized tendency. There is mainly because the studied change projects were initiated from top management. However, all the projects still have decentralized aspects. Identifying the single project case as being in either one or the other category would be either impossible or very difficult. That would at least imply some sort of an average evaluation. A managed reframing programme would, for example, normally tend to have an initial ideational tendency in its orientation; at least the management groups of the organization would be told and taught what to do and also why to do it. An exploration of what was actually done throughout the project would reveal ideational elements as well as elements of enforced experiences. Furthermore, the question of whether or not they confront an integrated change programme would usually be impossible to answer by a yes or a no. Also, the question of whether or not the change project is based on top management anchoring can rarely be answered by yes and no. At least it is a matter of degree and, furthermore, the answer could vary according to what aspect of the project one was focusing upon.

This brings us to the point that little is known about the interrelationships between the different concepts. What is implicit is that we face complex social processes. So, the kind of organizational learning (internal process) that occurs as a consequence of a change activity - or sequence of activity - can hardly be perfectly predicted in advance. It is tempting to listen to what Richard Normann says: "Strategic change is not so much an analytic deductive process as an open ended, inductive, synthetic process" (Normann 1985:220). We shall return to that point after the next section.

Working hypothesis

The following is a discussion of the relationship between the perspective and the findings which suggests a working hypothesis. The "perspective" constitutes the conceptual understanding that informed the perception of the problem as well as the empirical search. Organizational frames were seen as taken for granted collective models channelling collective interpretation and (inter) action. They were seen as (re)created in interaction and in the tension between the social system and the system(s) of meaning, as embedded in social system(s) and artifacts, and with a heavily self-sustaining nature due to the above characteristics.

When relating this to the findings, it is necessary to draw attention to one of the first things needed: to distinguish between reframing efforts (the external change process) and their effects (the internal change process). By doing this, we can move further in identifying, and in a way revealing, the inherent organizational counterforces to change. Rational, political and cultural factors are seen to constitute an organizational momentum with the cultural factor as the central one, implying that the reframing task is one of creating a reframing momentum in the period of liminality.

This is well and simply put by Biggart, who says that "change is an act of destruction as well as creation" (Biggart 1977:410). "Destruction" therefore must precede, or take place in parallel with the establishment of the new organizational direction. "Destruction is an inherent part of successful change; without destroying competing forms, the organization allows its competitors to flourish unimpeded" (Biggart 1977:424).

In a sense the paradox is that the new in some way or other has to be implanted or grow out of the old which is to be destroyed in the same process. This is so because most organizations must perform - fulfill their tasks - at the same time as they go through the process of change. Firms must produce products, bring them to the market and also perform the administrative functions, at the same time as they are changing. Furthermore, we see growing out of the old as meaning that not literally everything - every habit, procedure or thinking practice concerning work - becomes obsolete. It was, for example, revealed that several systems at Transport and

Airline would counteract the new organizational direction. The reward system at Airline would underpin other qualities than what was need for the new frame to be realized, and a new communication system more or less enforced itself in Transport in order to be able to follow-up the new concept. Even though there were probably more aspects of these organizations that needed to be revised, there are no reasons to believe that this was the case for every established pattern and practice. It is the inconsistent and counterforcing patterns that must be destroyed for the new to take root.

For the new to be able to grow out of the old, destruction and creation must be parallel and interwoven processes. The period where the strongest forces are settled, has been coined “the period of liminality”. This is the period where the organization is still on the threshold between the old and the new. Whether it will proceed into the new “room” is not yet settled, and in fact the new does not yet exist as a concrete form. As Feldman (1989) says, this is an “as if” sort of reality where myths, wishes and hypotheses rule.

It therefore makes sense to picture it as Biggart does when he says that change work takes place within a “dynamic push and pull between contradictory forces, where change is a multidimensional process that destroys as it creates” (Biggart 1977:425). One might add that the challenge for management is to establish a foothold for change that makes this process take place. However it is within such a “push and pull” that one seeks to establish an impetus to the reframing efforts - a reframing momentum:

>----->-----CHANGE EFFORTS----->----->

Period of liminality. Establishment of Reframing Momentum?

<-----<-COUNTERFORCES - ORGANIZATIONAL MOMENTUM-----<---

FIG. 7.2 ESTABLISHING A FOOTHOLD FOR REFRAMING

It is appropriate to not consider counterforces as “barriers to change“ that should be run over; they are integrated into the natural processes of the organization and it is into these processes that the new are infused or implanted. In the light of this perspective, the point is exactly that organizational frames have emerged over time during a process of interaction about tasks related to the environment in an interplay mediated by established structures influenced by this interplay (“the living history”). This point is related to the conception of structuration as a condition for organizational reframing. It reflects the need for persistently influencing organizational processes towards the new and intended organizational frame. The need for a reframing rationale could simply be related to the fact that the process of reframing means

changing or shifting the “meaning in the system of meaning”. The reframing process must consequently include a reason for this change as well as a new agenda for new meanings to develop.

When integration is identified as a reframing concept it is seen as related to the same process-oriented view and especially to the point that meaning is created interactively and that it “resides in the acts”. The process of reframing is consequently faced with an issue of implanting the “new” in the “old”. Whereas the identification of inductive as well as deductive approaches for learning the new frame can be accounted for or at least seen, in light of the duality of organizational frames as a system of meaning or ideas on the one hand and as created through a process of interaction and embedded in the patterns of interaction on the other hand.

The identification of top management (central) as well as locally (decentral) driven solutions reflects the same sort of dilemma. Organizational frames are created interactively and thereby locally on the one hand. On the other, managed change demands “new” ideas as raw material for the reframing process. Consequently there is a need for central solutions to fulfil such a need. In natural reframing processes these ideas are imported or created during the interplay with the environment which also inflicts circumstances that impose change. In artificial change these bearings must be intentionally created by anchoring.

Searching for the essence in this, one can find reason to suggest that there is an undertow in the issues reflected by the working concepts. The duality between frames as ideas and as embedded act(ion)s seems to constitute the main challenge to handling the management of reframing organizations. This view is accounted for by seeing that organizational momentum is constituted by the ideas of the prevailing frame being reinforced and reproduced by established structures and systems of the enterprise. Structuration reflects this duality because it mirrors the process-oriented nature of organizational frames, as integration mirrors the duality by reflecting the issue of confronting new ideas with ongoing organizational processes.

The duality is furthermore represented by the coining of inductive vs. deductive means of learning the new organizational direction. Deductive oriented deals with communicating ideas as ideas, whereas inductive oriented deals with imposing the new ideas through new patterns of (inter) action. However, as interests are related to - and invested in - the existing frame, there is a need for anchoring the change efforts. In addition to the central initiatives for a new organizational frame, decentrally (local) driven solutions are identified. This is related to the duality mentioned because of a need to connect the ideas to the situation of the individual. If ideas are to channel interpretation and be reflected in actions they must be worked out in relation to the situation where these actions unfold.

Considering the totality of what is reflected by the working concepts as discussed above, a working hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

A reframing momentum is based on a rationale. Reframing momentum is accomplished by integrating change efforts into the processes of the organization. This is done by consistently altering the premises for (inter) action in accordance with communicated ideas representing the intended frame. Members of the organization are involved in the concretizing of this frame.

Propositions - “the supporting beams”

The working hypothesis weaves together and also constitutes the foundation for more specific working propositions of how to work with reframing organizations. Whereas the working hypothesis constitutes a rather general and fairly descriptive synthesis of the insight reflected by the “reframing concepts”, the working propositions are supposed to be a fruitful guide for working with organizational change for the purpose of reframing organizations. Additionally, they are supposed to reflect and concretize the hypothesis. They shall, however, be rooted in the working hypothesis but will be more specific in how to focus change efforts. The working propositions must be seen as a whole.

1. Organizational reframing demands a rationale for reframing

A reframing rationale is seen as various combinations of facing a crisis and having ideas for a new and better organizational direction. The concept connects the issue of reframing organizations to the environment; it points towards a connection between the relationship between the organization and the environment on the one side and the conditions for accomplishing change on the other. It deals with the basic kind of motivation for tackling the existential problem of the organization: “When you don’t know where you are going it is hard to get there.” Or, as someone supposedly said: “If you don’t know where you are going, you might end up somewhere else.” Efforts and activities for establishing a new frame for organizational thinking and action should relate to a basic reason. The proposition refers to motivational as well as directional aspects of the change process, two factors seen by others as essential if change is to be realized (Nadler 1977).

In the terms of Jønsson and Lundin (1977) the motivational and directional aspects are provided by what they call a ghost myth, which we also find close to the idea of a reframing rationale. They find the surviving organization as being characterized by subsequent myths or leading ideas guiding the behaviour of the organizational members. A crisis is creeping up when the prevailing myth demonstrate tangible anomalies. “For a crisis to be resolved,” they say, “a new prevailing myth has to appear from among alternative ghost myths.” A ghost myth represents a different perspective on reality providing new answers to what, why and how questions must find support/replace the existing one and stems from possible explanations to why anomalies appeared.

This is quite essential because “if there is no good reason to leave, you might as well stay.” Why should the members of the organization engage in change? In the literature on organizational development there has been a concern for the need to “unfreeze” organizations (cfr. Lewin 1951). In the literature on the philosophy of science, Kuhn (1962) has been concerned with the influence of crisis. His thesis is that anomalies following crises are the basic driving force in fundamental - paradigmatic - changes in the scientific community. Kuhn, as well as other authors, has also pointed out that this view can be valid for other institutions (Kuhn 1962:374, Brown 1978). Whereas new ideas point out the probability that there are “better places to be”, crises make it evident that you have to move; they make you look at the establishment with different eyes.

2. Reframing efforts are driven by structuration

The concept of “structuration” is generally understood as referring to the existing frame bearing on the ongoing production of the frame of tomorrow (Giddens 1976). In this context structuration is meant to refer to a requirement for mechanisms controlling change efforts enforcing the new direction, that new things are performed and that things are performed differently, so as to give the reframing efforts persistence. This is also a view held by Quinn and Kimberly (1984:311/12) and underline the need for creating a structure supporting the change, a view which they express by saying, “there is creation in regulation. Don’t abdicate. There is confirmation in novelty”

An important conceptual background for this proposition is the understanding of organizational frames as a process in which the production of meaning cannot be changed by ideas as such but is constrained by the socio-structural system (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984). This is related to the nature of meaning, as Geertz put it saying that “meaning resides in the acts”, and that “man is an animal suspended in a web he himself has spun” (Geertz 1973). He also demonstrates that if the interpretation of a situation implies actions that no longer are possible, tensions forwarding social change will arise. In a sense a sort of an unfreeze situation is created. New understanding will have to develop. Structuration is suggested to utilize this kind of a situation systematically to infuse the new and intended frame. Structuration means both breaking up the established network of meaning existing in the form of collective practice and concretizing new ideas by enforcing new practices.

There is also a symbolic argument here as new practices and systems signal what kind of action the locus of power wants from the members of the organization. However, the reason for using a notion of structuration is not justified only by this. First, structuration must be formed in consideration of the existing organizational patterns, it must, as Jim March puts it, be done by “attuning to the natural processes” (March 1981). We also bear in mind the need for persistence

in this matter derived from the nature of organizational momentum. The point is therefore to embed the ideas of the new organizational direction in the structures and systems of the organization as the new organizational frame finds its concrete form(s). This should be applied in a generative way: When new action and thinking are emerging they should continuously be underpinned by mechanisms controlling them.

Therefore, this proposition can be seen as guiding the execution and practice of the change efforts. In other words, the practical implementation of reframing efforts following the other working proposition should be designed so as to forward structuration.

3.1 and 3.2 Organizational reframing demands anchoring and organizational acceptance

One can conceive of organizations as also being political systems where what is decided and what happens are connected to the existence of shifting dominating coalitions. New initiatives can consequently be met by various counterforces which implies that they will not be realized. In a way, change can be seen as a redistribution of power (Greiner 1967), indicating that actual reframing must find political support and that it must be seen as legitimate. Consequently, this supports Pettigrew, who sees “politics as the management of meaning” and as an essential aspect of a change process (Pettigrew 1985:44). It seems reasonable to suggest that the establishment of a reframing momentum demands the existence of a nucleus of political support for the changes (e.g. Warmington et al. 1977).

The issue of anchoring change actions emerged as an important issue in the analysis on this background. In sum, it is justified to suggest two (sub)propositions, one concerning the top management and one concerning key leaders:

3.1 Top management anchoring:

By top management anchoring is meant top management giving active and visible support to the reframing efforts. Top management refers to the top manager as well as others that would naturally be considered part of the top management group. Top management have a strong bearing on the agenda of the organization through their instrumental distribution of resources, but also through how their actions are symbolically interpreted by the organizational members (Pfeffer 1981). Reframing attempts will not get going if top management does “not lead the way”, and the change attempts will fall apart when/if it becomes known that top management does not lead.

Why should organizational members buy the new ideas if top management does not? And, even if they do, why should they practice them if they do not believe that top management will do so? In that case the new ideas will not be reflected in the actual priorities and choices of the top management. It won't pay to follow the espoused new direction because it won't be rewarded

and because it won't be supported by the important allocation of resources. Top management in a sense is identified with and personifies the "right" organizational direction even when it is no longer a good one for the company (e.g. Starbuck et al. 1977, Hedberg and Nystrom 1984). Feldman (1989:29/30) puts it this way, "For the creativity of the liminal phase to be transformative, the powerful and important must support it. Otherwise the only reaction will be blame."

3.2 Organizational acceptance:

Organizational acceptance refers to understanding and accepting the new ideas by key leaders of the organization. Key leaders are formal as well as informal leaders and opinion leaders, including union ones. Organizational acceptance is needed in order to get the reframing endeavour started and to be able to take the concrete step in question. It was suggested that "anchoring" was demanded from top management. When it comes to other leaders it is suggested that anchoring only from a "critical mass" is called for (Schon 1983).

It seems in line with the observations leading up the reframing concepts to suggest that reframing efforts must be supported by those constituting the power structure of an enterprise, otherwise they will work against the new ideas and their implementation. However, this is quite an impossible demand. First, it is not in the interest of all those in power positions to support the new ideas since the new frame will bring about changes in the power structure. Second, it is also unrealistic since it should indicate that the reframing more or less had to be completed before the process started - therefore the proposal for the demand for "organizational acceptance".

The point is that even if the the project is not completely anchored with these leaders, an organizational acceptance will make it possible to do something to move in the intended direction. "The train can get rolling, and when it rolls it is much harder to stop." When started, other mechanisms get a chance to work. It would, for example, be possible to design and implement a follow-up and control structure. This means pressure on doing things the new and intended way, leading to new experiences and also changing the power relationships. Organizational acceptance can make it possible to implement a new compensation system, new information systems or a new distribution of tasks. This again exposes people in the organization to new situations and experience and it changes the initial conditions for the task of reframing organizations.

3.3 Organizational reframing should be based on consistency and integration

By this proposition it is meant that reframing momentum should be created through reframing efforts that are based on consistent signals and integrated in ongoing organizational processes. Several issues emerge under this label that have one thing in common: Problems for the

reframing ambitions will arise if the members of the organization do not think that the new ideas really count. To include the new ideas in their situational understanding and programmes for action seems little likely if they feel, sense, think on and experience, that it really is the old frame that still is the real agenda in the organization. They can't be expected to be convinced that the new ideas really count. This issue has several aspects. Two of them concern top management. The other two focus on the structural aspect of the change efforts and their relationship with the organizational processes.

a) Top manager consistency:

Top manager consistency means top managers being consistent in what they say and do. In the earlier chapters we saw difficulties when the organizational members faced conflicting signals from top management. Top management is a strong source and sender of signals as it represents the locus of power for the material distribution of the organization. Top management dispositions are consequential for the premises of how organizational members perform their job and also for their life in the organization in more general terms. Top management also represents important role models for what is worth while.

Ambiguity can be inflicted by the top manager when he or she, for example verbally expresses one set of priorities for the organization - the new organizational direction - while at the same time expressing another set of priorities through actions and dispositions which follow the old organizational direction. It seems reasonable to assume that the organizational members in the best case will go on as before. If their interpretation is that the top managers await the organizational responses, we can hypothesize that this would nourish opportunism and political games. If this situation of mixed messages is felt to be undiscussable, there exists a situation where one cannot talk about the real premises underneath organizational interaction and, consequently, the basic conditions for learning and changing are not present (Hennestad 1990).

b) Top management consistency:

Top management consistency means that reframing efforts must be supported by consistency in the signals from the various members of the top management group. Organizational members also experience mixed messages when the top management as a group send conflicting messages, or when different top managers demand different things from the organizational members. This might be due to a lack of a coherent understanding in the top management group or the lack of a common language on relevant issues. When the organizational members witness different messages from different members of the top management group, they might also witness a political game. Members of the top management group might have verbally complied with the new organizational direction inside the group, but outside the group they go on as before, or in some other manner, because they think the new ideas will not be put into practice

or because they actually try to sabotage them.

The point is that the effects for the change efforts are as destructive as when mixed messages are experienced as coming from the top manager. They might even be worse, because experiencing different positions in this issue from the top management group can give rise to the formation of coalitions based on assumptions of possible directions of development. Such a situation will certainly weaken the prospect of the reframing efforts.

c) Integration between change structure and operational structure:

If the new ideas are to become effective it must be assumed that they have to be felt as "counting". Since the existing frame of an organization is "embedded in the acts", meaning, as Smircich says, "being in relation", the new ideas - the prospective new frame - will have to deviate from "what already counts" and be taken for granted in the organizational life. There are therefore reasons to believe that (even if it is experienced as being supported from top management) members of the organization will experience some sort of mixed messages when/ if they try to practice the new ideas or do new or old things differently. What they try to do will tend to be negatively sanctioned in the daily organizational life.

The new organizational frame will be realized in the mundane everyday life of the organization. Consequently its ideas must be brought to bear upon the everyday situation. This means that the ideas must be put in a position in which they can "compete" with the established ones for the attention of the organizational members. Of course there is sort of a paradox in this: The new is brought to bear upon the old in the sense of being implanted in the same processes underpinning the old. "There is creation in destruction". By breaking up established practices and making new needs and demands explicit, organizational members can experience anomaly and crisis in their everyday situation, thereby being more critical to what is established and open to new ideas. Replace the word scientists with organizational members and see what Kuhn says: "Confronted with anomaly or crises, scientists take a different attitude to existing paradigms" (Kuhn 1962:91).

This seems to presuppose that the new ideas and their derived solutions and activities have to be followed up with the same intensity as the running activities (operations) of the firm. This means that there has to be a close connection - some sort of integration - between the change structure and the operational structure of the organization.

Moss Kanter realizes the same phenomenon when she says: "Throughout, I have marshalled evidence to show the importance of integration to the innovation process, close structural connections between potential innovator and users, between functions and departments, between the innovation project and use" (Kanter 1988:205).

Our observations indicate that change structure groups and committees mandated to have leading role in a change process and who follow the development and take initiative for new solutions when problems arise, etc, must consist of actors who have responsibility for the implementation of the new ideas. This means that line managers should have a central role in change structure/ organization and that this must not be separated from the line. Although it, of course, can draw on supplementary resources. Such an integration and connection also seems necessary from the point of view of feeding back to the change process the effects of the efforts already put into force. This is essential for relating new efforts to the organizational processes.

d) Integration of structures and systems:

As observed in the chapter on emerging reframing issues, systems and structures also seem to be sources of signals to the organizational members, influencing their interpretation of the situation. "Old structures and systems" might symbolize other situational understandings than are necessary to support the development of the new frame. When embodying other ideas and encouraging other interpretations and solutions than forwarded by management as the new organizational direction, the organizational members experience mixed messages. Supporting the new frame presupposes systems that comply with it.

This also seems necessary to preserve what is gained. When people start to think and act in the intended way, it is always a risk that they can revert to old habits, as suggested by the concept of liminality. Moss Kanter observes the need to "take care of what is gained. She identifies as an important cause for change programmes that fail to "insufficiently develop vehicles to institutionalize the programmes." She says, for example, that "programmes need to be institutionalized in the sense that they become a part of common work practice, supported and rewarded throughout the organization" (Kanter 1984:213).

Systems and structures are important symbols or senders of signals in the organization in addition to bearing on thinking and acting. The organizational structure connects individual and groups to specific parts of their environment, and the information system selects certain aspects of the reality.

3.4 Organizational reframing must be based on organizational direction by top management (centrally) and concretized locally (decentral)

This proposition means that reframing organizations must include and be supported by an interplay between centrally formulated direction and locally designed solutions. The dilemma of centralization vs. decentralization is well known in the literature on management and organization (e.g. Carnall 1990). This dilemma also seems to be reflected in the efforts of reframing organizations. In all the companies in the sample the reframing efforts were centrally

initiated. However, we observed a good proportion of locally formed solutions also seemed to help the change on its way. These observations seem in line with Mintzberg when he points out that the actual strategy in use is created in an interplay between the one that is intended and ideas that are emerging.

It is impossible to design in full detail solutions at all levels and for all circumstances as to how the new direction is to be practised, though it is how the new ideas are enacted that decides what it is becoming. An old proverb says that "the one wearing the shoe knows best where it squeezes." In line with this, we feel Rosabeth Moss Kanter rejects the idea that the profit of participation is commitment. She says: "The real merit of participative mechanisms is that they generate concrete ideas, make it possible for these ideas to be taken advantage of, connect people to situations and solutions of critical problems, increase the likelihood that people's relevant capacities will be utilized, and increase the probability of effective performance" (Kanter 1983:214).

The need for participation through the design of local solutions is based on the need for new solutions to relate to local situations. By participating, individual organizational members will be able to relate his or her job situation to the new direction and thereby also develop an understanding of what the new direction means in concrete terms. Furthermore, if meaning is created interactively, it seems justified to assume that it must be recreated interactively (Bate 1990:40).

3.5. Organizational reframing is endowed with meaning by inductive as well as deductive means

This proposition means that reframing demands that the ideas are both motivated and explained, and also realized by the learning imposed experiences.

Most change projects seem to start with consciousness-raising and or conceptually-oriented seminars, internal marketing or other ways of "teaching" or getting the message through. Some even seem to want to complete the change in the seminar rooms before it is implemented. Others throw the organizational members into deep water and expect them to swim. We have seen here different patterns in how such inductive and deductive learning styles are combined, and expect that there are reasons for both to be used. I shall further explain why I propose a combination of the two. It seems, however, that reflected in this issue is the duality between culture as ideas and as being embedded in the action system.

a) The inductive aspect

The conservative power reflected in the statement "meaning residing in the acts" has previously been pointed out. Bateson reflected that "an explorer can never know what he is exploring until

it has been explored" (Bateson 1972:xvi). Ideas for a new organizational direction are in the abstract before being experienced. It can be difficult for organizational members to proceed in the new direction, even if it seems intellectually the right thing to do. In a way the new ideas have not proved their superiority. Not before looking back on some kind of experience is it possible to see what ideas for a new organizational direction imply.

Drawing a parallel to system-oriented psychiatric research it must be kept in mind that Watzlawick et al. (1974) hold higher order learning to presuppose measures taken to break the old frame. They prescribe changing the premises for the kind of situation that needs to be reframed. New experiences make people look upon the situation with "other eyes" and learning can take place. There is a parallel here to the concept of "unfreezing" and the significance of anomaly for forwarding change. Imposed experiences can be seen as a new frame for old situations and contribute both to unfreezing the situation and creating opportunities for learning the new ideas that are offered.

b) The deductive aspect

There is also a need for motivating and being explicit by formulating the ideas for the new, something the organizational members can relate to and confront. Weick throws light on and gives our puzzle depth when he says:

"The explorer cannot know what he is facing until he faces it, and then looks back over the episode to sort out what happened, a sequence of retrospective sensemaking...But the act of exploring itself has an impact on what is being explored, which means that parts of what the explorer discovers retrospectively are consequences of his own making. Furthermore, the explorer is guided by preconceptions of some kind even though they may be generic preconceptions such as 'this will have made sense once I explore it although right now it seems senseless'" (Weick, Gilfillan and Keith 1973).

This supports a view that experiences (inductive learning) do not result in unambiguous ideas. When members of an organization are put in a situation which forces them to relate differently to the tasks and each other, there are several possibilities as to what they learn from it. The interpretation arises in retrospect. However, what they experience is still influenced by their preconceptions. Experiences following enforced new situations will need "interpretation assistance" if they are to reflect and support the intended organizational direction. Communication and clarification of the ideas reflecting the intended frame is needed to influence preconceptions with which the organizational members meet new situations and consequently what they experience. Since experiences with this as a background are still open to retrospective understanding and interpretation, post explanation and communication also seem appropriate to influence the new situation emerging and to be supportive of the intended organizational direction.

Summing up

It is proposed that:

1. a condition for the reframing efforts to have such an effect is that they are based on a reframing rationale representing content and motivation.
2. a condition for the reframing momentum to become established is that the reframing efforts constitute a process of structuration given the change efforts form.
3. this can be established and maintained by the reframing efforts
 - 3.1 being anchored in top management as well as
 - 3.2 having organizational acceptance - accepted by a critical mass of key leaders,
 - 3.3 basing them on consistent signals and integrating them in ongoing organizational processes,
 - 3.4 formulating them as organizational direction centrally (by top management) and concretized locally (decentral solution) and
 - 3.5 endowing them with meaning by inductive as well as deductive means by explanation as well as (imposed) experience.

It should be underlined that these propositions have a somewhat different status, as 1 and 2 express some kind of necessary, but not necessarily sufficient, conditions. The first one must exist or be established as a basic condition. The second is some kind of an overall requirement for the reframing efforts to work according to the intentions. Whether it is realized or not is seen as being dependent on how the reframing efforts are handled. The other propositions propose which guidelines to orient the reframing efforts in order for these efforts to result in the establishment of a reframing momentum. Guidelines mean that they point towards what should be pursued.

Towards a model

The need for organizational reframing is created by the nature of organizational frames. It refers to the view that organizational understanding becomes embedded in the social patterns and artifacts of the organization in a self-sustaining manner. This naturally constitutes a problem when the agenda is reorienting organizations in the sense of pursuing another direction by emphasizing other values, customer needs, ways of meeting them, etc. By observing attempted reframing endeavours I have developed a set of reframing concepts, which encapsulate and reflect central issues when this kind of organizational change is pursued. By relating them to the initial perspective a working hypothesis that is intended to constitute a renewed conceptual platform is suggested.

By presenting propositions for reframing organizations the study moves one step further and reflects slightly more freely with some references to other peoples relevant research and ideas. The propositions are, however, supposed to reflect and concretize the working hypothesis. Thererby they prove to be close to a normative “translation” of the reframing concepts and have a clear relationship to the empirically grounded findings of the study.

The propositions can be considered a rough model for reframing organizations. However, as guidelines they immediately raise new questions: How are they related to each other and to the task of reframing organizations? The data offers us little help to answer these questions systematically. I would still like to offer some ideas or tentative answers, therefore we must depart somewhat from the empirical grounding and reflect, speculate, and draw more freely on other contributions.

In doing so in the following chapter on “Towards a Model: Ideas for further construction”, we move, in Mintzbergs terms, even further from the “detective work” and undertake a “creative leap” (Mintzberg 1978). The relationship with the ideas that are empirically grounded are kept, however, by considering the propositions as the “supporting beam” for the model.

Chapter 8: Towards a model for reframing organizations - ideas for further construction

The aim of this chapter is to construct and suggest a more comprehensive model for reframing organizations. It will be based on the exploration of the relationships between the propositions presented in the last chapter and some ideas for how these can be conceptualized. Speculation and reflection based on other people's writings will be undertaken more freely than in the preceding chapters. Using the propositions as "supporting beams" should, however, help us keep our feet on the empirical ground.

Shifting concerns

A sequence of phases?

If the working hypothesis and propositions are to be fruitful guides for working with change as well as generating deeper knowledge, there is a need for a framework to arrange them in relation to each other and the change situation. The same need is reflected in the focus on steps and phases in the literature on organizational change. Although most of this literature is based on a conception of change far more instrumental and mechanistic than what follows from the perspective here, there are common themes.

The classic one is Lewins (1951) "unfreeze", change (or "move") and "refreeze", which reflects needs that have been touched upon in previous chapters. This is understood as destroying the old as a whole in the sense of loosing it up as a system rather than destroying every part of it, and also the need for freezing which is understood as conserving, preserving or stabilizing the new. Lippit et al. (1958) conceives of the process of managing change as developing needs, establishing relationships, working towards change and then evaluating.

There are other such planning oriented conceptions of change: Bechard (1969) identifies the phases as diagnosis, strategy, plan, educate, consult and train, whereas innovation literature identifies characteristics of the innovation process as evaluation, initiation, implementation and routinization (Hage and Aiken 1970). Zaltzman, et al. (1977) suggests the phases knowledge attention, decision, preparatory implementation and continued and reinforced implementation. They say: "In the process approach, innovation is viewed as an unfolding process consisting of stages in which characteristic factors not only appear in greater or smaller degree, but also in a certain order of occurrence." The stressing of "the processual" in parallel with the spelling out of sequential phases is not unusual in the literature on change (e.g. Warmington 1977).

Concerns of change

This view seems, however, to be increasingly modified by some of the leading contemporary writers on the theme. Lundberg (1984) brings Lewin's framework further by suggesting that all transitions go through the phases of induction, management and stabilization, but that planned

change should cycle through diagnosis, planning and action within each of these phases. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, in her well-known contribution to the understanding of innovation and change, The Change Masters finds the prototypical successful innovation to be made up of by three waves or iterations - problem definition, building of coalitions and, mobilization.

Her conception of waves of change is interesting, as it represents an understanding of overlap and interconnections. This view is taken even further by Pettigrew. In commenting upon Johnstone's fourstep model of change, development of concern, acceptance and understanding of the problem, planning and action and stabilizing of the change, Pettigrew takes care to stress that the notion of phases should not be understood in the narrow sense. He says,

"these phases, of course, do not occur over similar time periods, neither do they necessarily follow the sequence indicated. Concerns are raised and problems acknowledged get blocked, the context changes, new concerns appear and the processes accelerate through to action, using solutions made available by previous debates" (Pettigrew 1985:457).

The sequence myth is suggested in the literature to connote the tendency of - and interest in - the change literature of conceiving of the change tasks as a set of separate and predictable steps or phases (Normann 1985). The alternative process image is suggested to be is a spiralling one, an image that, as we shall see later, also Lundberg (1984) was close to.

The phases proposed and discussed often reflect essential issues or concerns in a change process. In a sense they represent functions that have to be filled, states that have to be reached, aspects of needs that have to be attended to, etc. There are reasons for conceiving of such issues as concerns rather than phases. This is a justified modification in view of the process-oriented nature of organizational culture. This makes it feel right to join Normann in his rejection of the sequence myth. Although preferring to conceive of these issues as shifting concerns rather than phases, I do not fully depart from the idea of some kind of sequence, and return to that issue after presenting a set of concerns which are essential to the issue of reframing organizations.

Proposing a set of concerns

The four-step model introduced by Johnstone (1975) is supported by Pettigrew's comprehensive and longitudinal study of "Continuity and Change in ICI". Pettigrew also finds that the descriptive-oriented framework is fit to organize more prescriptive guidelines or propositions for managing organizational change. As indicated by the quote in the last section, he does not conceive of these phases as phases in the strict sense of the word.

There are similarities with the conceptualization developed by Kanter, who, however, does not stress stabilization as a concern. A set of concerns in line with these is: Anchoring,

organizational acceptance, new action and stabilization. The first two reflect worries that were identified through the search for reframing concepts, and the anchoring aspect was also reflected in one of the propositions presented in the last chapter. Suggesting it as a concern represents a further qualification of the propositions.

Anchoring deals with the issue of top management identification and support. Anchoring is the situation where top management, or others that constitute the power elite, is identified with and personifies the intended organizational direction. In this situation the top management in symbolic as well as practical and material terms, behaves supportive towards it. Anchoring as a concern reflects the proposition of the need for anchoring change efforts in top management. This proposition is consequently seen a condition for managing the change process successfully. Thus there seems to be reason to suggest that it constitutes an element in the framework ordering the relationship between the other propositions.

Organizational acceptance deals with establishing a “critical mass” of support for the intended organizational direction and having the organization as a whole accept the new. By that is meant that a significant and sufficient number of leaders, formal and informal, accept the change actions chosen to forward the reframing process. Acceptance means that they exert sufficient understanding and support as to make it politically possible to implement these change actions. This is taken to mean that indifference, implying the lack of resistance, sometimes can constitute organizational acceptance in this sense.

This is a contingent concern in the sense that what is a critical mass will vary with what actions are planned. It reflects the proposition that organizational reframing demands acceptance by a critical mass of key leaders. Organizational has been added to acceptance. This reflects a rather pragmatic prolongation of the view that top management anchoring is needed because organizations are political systems, but that can be done with acceptance from lower level leaders. This also means that the organizational members should know what is going to happen and why. A critical mass of key leaders plus other informed organizational members are seen as organizational acceptance. This interpretation also considers the need for deductive learning - being informed.

New action - enacting the new ideas - deals with new and changed performance on the way to realizing new ideas and is materialised in roles and tasks. The members of the organization do new things or old things differently. The abstract ideas are to be implanted in the local situation of the members through new demands expressed in action programmes. In a way this is a rather obvious concern since it focuses on the actual change from a management and organizational point of view. On the other hand, this is also why it is considered an important concern. It is in the transformation of ideas, ambitions and plans into action that so many

change ambitions are aborted. Also, from the point of view of changing the meanings of the organization, we must bear in mind the axiom that meaning resides in the acts.

Stabilizing deals with "making the change stick". That means underpinning, consolidating and cementing the changes that are emerging. Again, this means taking care of both the ideational as well as the structural aspects of what is happening. It is about post interpretation; What is the meaning of what has happened in view of what is going to be? It is also about post-structuring; (re)structuring to establish bearings to underpin the intended ideas and actions that are in the process of becoming integrated in the organization.

I do not have a conceptual parallel to, for instance, Jonstone's and Pettigrew's development of concern or Kanter's problem definition. This is because the focus here is primarily on the process of reframing and not on the process by which the organization becomes aware of what is wrong, what to do, or in which direction to change. The closest to this in the conceptual understanding here is identifying the need for the reframing rationale as a necessary condition for managing the process of reframing organization. Otherwise there are parallels. When these authors focus on recognition and understanding of the problem as well as building of coalitions, also in line with Quinn (1980, 1982), I focus on and conceptualize anchoring and organizational acceptance as two separate concerns for change. When Johnstone conceptualizes planning and action and Kanter mobilization we are concerned with new action, and, as with Johnstone, there is a need to conceptualize stabilization as part of the change process.

Cyclic sequences of shifting concerns

What is the relationship between the concerns if they are not step-wise phases? The answer is a dubious one in that they both are and are not. Step-wise the challenge is to conceive of the relationship without becoming a victim of the sequence myth. Conceiving of them as "shifting" concerns has already been proposed. But in what sense do they shift? In spite of preferring to use the notion of shifting concerns instead of steps of phases, it is a fruitful initial guide to conceive of the shifting concerns as occurring in a sequence, but in a circular fashion.

The idea of shifting concerns following a circular sequence is also in line with the ideas of Quinn and Kimberly (1984:304). That is, an effective and complete reframing process might have followed a sequence from anchoring, acceptance, and new action to stabilization in terms of the main emphasis in the different periods. However, if we consider the process of directing efforts aiming at reframing the organization, the image should be considerably more complex and contingent.

The sequence of concerns has to be run through several times. This is because a reframing process will consist of various aspects. It is necessary to focus and work with the different

levels of the enterprise, as well as different departments and functions (sales, logistics, etc.) as they will need a special focus and/or project. It can be assumed that a special project launched to help take care of one of the concerns has to consider all the concerns proposed. This could, for example, be an alteration of the reward system to stabilise other changes. Even if this does not represent a complete reframing process, it represents a shift that reflects the issue of meaning residing in the acts.

Another reason for sticking to the image of a cyclic process is the idea of self reinforcement reflected in the the notion of organizational momentum. This draws on the ideas of Pascal Gagliardi who pictured cultural formation as virtuous and vicious circles, as presented in chapter five. The circle of anchoring, organizational acceptance, new action and stabilization follows to a large extent the same logic: Anchoring and organizational acceptance - as described above - make it possible for new ideas (the parallel to “distinctive competence”) to be exercised. Successful exercises (new actions) are followed by idealization and stabilization. The natural formation process presupposes success as a condition for idealization and stabilization - that the new ideas work. When new arrangements work they can also be used as models (it is possible) for other parts of the organization. Whether organizational arrangements work or are a success - is not an objective issue. The point is whether they are perceived to work. The perception, however, can be influenced by various things, as indicated in the above section on stabilization.

The notion of organizational reframing as several cyclic sequences of focusing on shifting concerns should, however, allow for seeing them as shifting and interrelated. Sometimes one of them can be skipped or at least have a very weak focus. The period focusing on anchoring can, for example, be thought of under certain circumstances as accelerating through to action. Stabilization can influence and increase the degree of acceptance, etc. At the same time, the various concerns very often will overlap, like the focus and efforts on stabilization before the concern for new action is completed, etc.

Starting the cycle

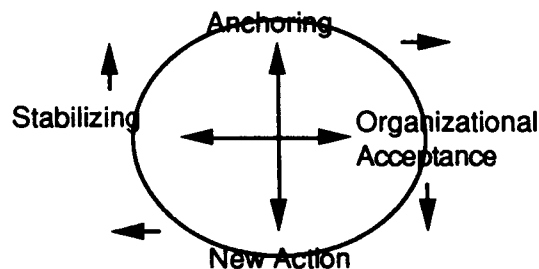
Where does the overlapping cycles of shifting concerns start? Usually by anchoring. First, since the focus is on managing organizational reframing it is somewhat evident that management starts as well as directs, the directed process. Second, an essential aspect of a reframing process is, as outlined previously, a political one. This, as argued, implies a primary role for the symbolic as well as material disposition of top management. Pettigrew, conceiving of change as phases says, “...neither do they necessarily follow the sequence indicated..”, and emphasizes the anchoring role of leadership in initiating strategic change in his study of ICI (Pettigrew 1985:457).

“...one pattern that is evident is the central role of leadership in initiating strategic change. George Bridge in the Agricultural division, John Harvey-Jones in the Petrochemical division, structure change and the corporate change process of the 1970’s and early 1980’s, and Tony

Woodburn in the Mond Division, all started change processes by sensing, and at first imprecisely articulating, concerns about mismatches or performance gaps between aspects of their organization and what they saw as a changing environment”, (Pettigrew 1985:45 7/8) Pettigrew also goes on to specify in what way they initiated the change process.

The conclusion supports the view that top management plays a central role in the organization’s ability to adjust and learn (e.g. Starbuck, et al. 1977, Nystrom and Starbuck 1984) and indicates that change is not realized without top management support (e.g. Greiner 1967). The cycle of shifting concerns should start with or be based on anchoring.

The model that is closest to this description is shown below, although it misses the point that the overall reframing process is not only repeated cycles of overlapping concerns, but is also at several cycles in parallel:



Anchoring- - - Organizational Acceptance - - - -New Action - - - -Stabilizing

FIG. 8.1 CYCLES OF OVERLAPPING CONCERNS

The relationships between concerns and propositions

Propositions and concerns

A reframing rationale constitutes a basic condition for the establishment of a reframing process; it is some kind of ground on which to design and tackle this kind of process. The reframing efforts also must be designed and implemented as to create and reinforce a process of structuration. A set of propositions that should serve as guidelines for working with reframing organizations has been suggested around this. In this chapter it is also suggested that the process of reframing organizations is facing a set of shifting concerns. A remaining question is: What are the relationships between these propositions and concerns?

The remaining three propositions about to be discussed relate to approaches to the issues of integration, formation of solution (decentral and central) and learning (inductive as well as deductive). In discussing the meaning of the propositions related to the major concerns of the process, it is necessary to focus more closely on their operational implications.

necessary to focus more closely on their operational implications.

Anchoring: When anchoring is the focus the issue is that the reframing efforts are connected to the organizational power structure so as to get active support. Otherwise the seeds won't be able to take root. This will not happen if the top manager is perceived to send mixed messages to the organizational members. In a way this deals with managers as models (e.g. Peters 1978). Therefore, the proposition on integration should mean consistency between word and acts and from situation to situation on part of the top managers - especially the CEO.

When it comes to the issue of defining solutions at this stage, it seems natural to suggest that top management must take the initiative. This is almost tautological since the focus is on managed change. Furthermore, for a reframing process to have active support it must have an identity, it must clarify where the organization now is meant to go, and it must show what kind of reframing is needed and intended. This is still not to be understood as a completely top-down process. In other periods of the process, decentral initiative will be needed. But this suggestion implies that this will take place in interrelationship with the initial frame.

The next question deals with learning and the dilemma of a proposed need for inductive as well as deductive learning approaches. When concerned with the anchoring of the process it seems that the members become aware of what the intended frame is all about, and that it is supported and forwarded by the top. This being the case, it seems reasonable to suggest that the main approach to learning should be deductive in trying to convince the members of the superiority of the intended frame.

Organizational acceptance: When this is the focus it is important that a critical mass is formed and that the members of the organization understand that a critical mass favouring the new direction is emerging. This implies that top management focus in this area therefore should be perceived to be relatively homogeneous and that the attitude of top managers towards the intended organizational direction must be experienced accordingly.

The question of who has the initiative in forwarding solutions should, in this situation, be answered slightly differently than when anchoring is the concern. There is an emphasis on the new ideas coming from the top management. It is these solutions that set the new agenda. However, there is a point and a possibility for focusing on the decentral aspect. The point is both to start the process of making the new ideas real by having people relate to them seriously, as well as to start the process of realizing them in terms of finding concrete solutions. In practical terms, this means that the local level could be "trying out" what the intended organizational direction would mean. A dialogue between key actors and top management based on the estimated implications of the intended new direction should take place. What does it mean to us

and is it possible?

The learning aspect of this deals with getting key members of the organization to understand and accept the essence of the new direction. Primarily, they are in a situation where the initiative is with the top formulating and forwarding the new ideas in a situation where new action has not started to take place. On the other hand, there is an element of trying out the new which could imply inductive learning. In terms of gaining acceptance, however, the main emphasis is on the power of conviction of the new ideas. In other words, that the main learning must be trusted to be created by ideational rather than experiential means.

New action: What is the meaning of integration when (the creation of) new action is the concern? It seems justified to assume that it is about a correspondence between the new ideas and the demand and requirements for what to do and how to do it that people are exposed to. The questions therefore must be whether it is consequently followed up and whether activities following from the new directions are performed. This is so that they compete with the "old" culturally embedded forms. This again means that new demands and requirements, formulated and forwarded to support the new organizational direction, must consequently be put forward in settings and arenas that deal with the daily operational life of the organization. The new must in this sense be integrated in the ongoing stream of organizational life.

When it comes to the issue of who should have the initiative for formulating solutions, the situation is one of postulating that there is a need for local and concrete solutions reflecting and supporting the ideas for a new direction. In this context, it is easy to suggest the solution to the central/decentral dilemma. Local competence is necessary for connecting the new ideas to the local situation. Therefore, local design is called for to define and formulate solutions for new action reflecting and supporting the new direction.

Inductive learning has been described as one of comprehending ideas from new - possibly imposed - experiences. It is implicit in this view that all affected members have to fully comply with the actions taken. The form of learning is the inductive one; learning through imposed experiences by contributing to both new actions and the formulation of new solutions, and in doing so also contributing to the destruction of old forms.

Stabilizing: When stabilizing is the concern the focus is on preventing the organization from falling back to old habits, as it is inherent in the phenomenon in question to do so. Bearings should be created to support what is emerging. Integration in this context should therefore mean a revision and adjustment of the structures and systems of the organization to support the intended organizational direction both in the material and the symbolic sense.

In terms of the locus for identifying solutions, the implication must be on a local initiative to allow for and make possible the actual and potential definition of the situation of the organizational members to be reflected in the design. Systems and structures are, however, often rather complex and integrated in the overall functioning of the enterprise (e.g. pay systems in a highly unionized firm). There is, therefore, a need for top management initiatives and solutions in the coordination issue. When stabilization is the concern both central and decentral solution initiatives are needed. There is, however, a need for further clarification of this "dilemma of a dilemma" which we will return to later.

The issue of the approach to learning in the context of a concern for stabilizing the organizational members' understanding of their own situation is connected to the requirements of the intended direction. Taking part in reforming the systems and structures of the enterprise offers a kind of experience that carries with it a new perspective concretizing the new and intended organizational direction. This would imply an inductive approach to learning. On the other hand, a deductive approach is needed to endow with meaning the new experiences people already have made when exposed to demands for new action, assisting in the retrospective sensemaking (e. g. Pfeffer 1981). In other words, inductive as well as deductive approaches to learning are suggested.

	<u>Anchoring</u>	<u>Organizational Acceptance</u>	<u>New action</u>	<u>Stabilization</u>
<u>Integration:</u>	Consistent articulation and action	Consistency in managers' signals	Consistent demands and follow up	Consistency in structure/system design
<u>Approach to solutions:</u>	Central: Top management direction	Decentral: Local "scenarios" - try out	Decentral: Local design	Decentral/Central: Local design, top coordination
<u>Approach to learning:</u>	Deductive: ideational conviction	Deductive: ideational conviction	Inductive: imposed experiences	Inductive and deductive (explanation)

The content of the table characterizes the main emphasise of the focal relationship.

FIG. 8.2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CONCERNS AND THE APPROACHES TO SOLUTION, LEARNING AND INTEGRATION

The discussion has revealed a need for further clarification as the notions of inductive/deductive as well as central/decentral were used slightly differently, and were dependent upon which concern was being focused on.

The notions of learning and solution approaches revised

A need for both top management coordination as well as decentral suggestions and solutions taking care of the concern for stabilization has been identified, as well as a need for inductive as well as deductive means around the same concern. This means that having different concerns in mind seems to put the conceptions in question in a different light.

When discussing the approach to solutions there should be a central emphasis when “anchoring” is the concern and it should deal with what are the new frame, strategies, goals etc. This is the same conclusion when stabilizing is the concern, but the solutions should deal with coordinating systems and structures to underpin what is emerging. In the first case the emphasis is on prospective-oriented solutions, in the second case the emphasis is on retrospective-oriented solutions. This, however, must be understood in a particular sense. The solutions are formed for the future, but their intentions should be to stabilise what is emerging.

When there is a decentral emphasis, the focus is on identifying possible solutions for performing new tasks when organizational acceptance is the concern, and for designing them when new action is the concern. The focus is, however, on finding solutions or systems for how these new arrangements are to be supported (e.g. pay and information systems) when stabilizing is the concern.

	Centralization		Decentralization	
	Prospective	Retrospective	Task(design)	Systems
Anchoring	x			
Organizational acceptance			x	
New action			x	
Stabilizing		x		x

FIG. 8.3 CONCERNS AND APPROACHES TO SOLUTIONS

When discussing the approach to learning the focus is future oriented when anchoring and organizational acceptance are the concerns. New actions, however, impose on people new understanding, but the content of that understanding can not be completely foreseen. It is therefore a need for a retrospective focus when stabilizing is the concern, whereas the prospective was the perspective when anchoring and organizational acceptance were the concerns. Even when/if all the organizational participants understand and accept in advance what is going to be put into practice, the practical experiences might prove different from what was intended, raising a need for retrospectively oriented sensemaking. Or the sense people make out of their experiences can prove to vary. The point is to assist in the retrospective process of sensemaking.

When new action is the concern, the focus should be on learning by performing the job or the task differently; the job directions are changed and the pressures on the jobs are changed. When stabilization is the concern, however, (inductive) learning should follow from assessment of and reviewing how the job is to be done: What new standards, directions as well as systems and structural arrangements, should be designed and implemented?

	Inductive		Deductive	
	The task	Assessment	Prospective	Retrospective
Anchoring			x	
Organizational acceptance			x	
New action	x			
Stabilization		x		x

FIG. 8.4 CONCERNS AND APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Integrating these revisions into one matrix leaves this picture:

	Anchoring	Organizational Acceptance	New Action	Stabilization
Learning approach	Deductive/prospective	Deductive/prospective	Inductive/task	Inductive/assessment Deductive retrospective
Solution approach	Central/prospective	Decentral/task	Decentral/prospective	Decentral/system Central/retrospective

FIG. 8.5 CONCERNS AND APPROACHES TO SOLUTIONS AND LEARNING

Four modes of reframing organizations

The idea that organizational reframing is created through a reframing momentum is central in this study. Reframing momentum is created through a process of structuration for change and is based on a reframing rationale. Structuration for reframing is suggested to be created by organizing the working propositions of integration and consistency, learning approach and approach to solutions in relation to the shifting concerns; anchoring, organizational acceptance, new action and stabilization.

These three aspects are related to the task of reframing organizations and are the last steps before suggesting a model. In doing this the focus will be on the role and meaning of integration related to the shifting concerns, and the actual formation of the new frame is accomplished by the construction of new solutions and the learning of their ideas and practice.

Expanding the notion of integration

So far, the issue of how to switch between the shifting concerns has not been touched upon. Integration has, however, been proposed as conceptually reflecting the central paradox of bridging the old and the new with the aim of making the new take root in the old. Actionwise, the steps taken to pursue integration should reflect the need to attune to the natural processes of the organization by consequently supporting consistently the intended organizational direction. Against this background it seems reasonable to suggest that the notion of integration should be expanded to include the need to integrate information about effects into reframing efforts. By doing so integration can be seen as a central hub or node in the cycle of concerns.

By this is meant that integration - as the hub in the cycle of shifting concerns - should be performed to meet the diagnostic needs of the reframing process. This deals with including the dimension of change that is, for example, described by Torbert, "...an ongoing, aesthetic alertness that integrates intuition, knowledge, action, and outcomes as they are occurring" (Torbert 1987). He calls this "action inquiry". I see it as a dimension of a change approach making one able to attune to the situation in terms of adjusting to what kind of effects have occurred. Is the time ripe for shifting concerns? Do we have to "wheel back," or focus again on a concern we thought we had attended to before moving on?

There is a need for participation in the reframing process in order to connect to the situational understanding of the participants and in order to make concrete the ideas for a new direction. This diagnostic function also improves the conditions for the dialogue in the process. Developing awareness of the various actors' reactions and situational understandings in order to be able to relate to them is included in integration as it is now understood.

The need for such a continuous diagnosis and implicit dialogue is related to the concept of the organization as counterforcing change - characterized by momentum - and the need for decentral involvement also offering a constructive potential for producing suggestions and solutions that can make change efforts more effective. There is also a strong argument for this in the thesis that meaning is (re) constructed or arises from the crossing of perspectives, or as says Bråten:

" Meaning is seen to arise in the dialogue of perspectives in and between individuals within the reality which they create and in which they exist. That is, there is a primary dialogical circle that makes even the individual act of creation an event within the meaning horizon of the lifeworld in which the individual exists with other individuals and in virtue of which there is communication between them." [Bråten (1987) with reference to Mead (1934) and Schutz (1972).]

This expanded notion of integration underlines the need for a structure to fulfill its function. The analytic notion of an integration structure can work for this purpose as well as take care of consistency in the following up of new demands as proposed. Analytical means that the integration can be handled within the framework of the existing structure of meetings, or by

adjusting them to meet this requirements. It has been previously argued that a separate change structure would, or could be, antithetical to the need for integration.

Modes of reframing organizations

As it now stands, reframing organizations is accomplished based on the conditions of reframing rationale and structuration. The development of solutions - making the new frame concrete - and the learning of solutions and ideas and the performance of integration conditions for structuration are supposed to be created. This means that the actual formation - the "realization" - of the new frame is performed through the actions for creating and learning solutions. The integration activities deal with how to connect the process of formation into an ongoing organizational process. In the construction of a model for reframing organizations, it is therefore useful to see the combination of the development of solutions and the learning of solutions and ideas as the formation approach.

A model for reframing organizations should order the propositions in relation to each other, the shifting concerns as well as the wholeness of the task of reframing organizations. To be able to do so I suggest conceiving of the various combinations of integration and formation approaches as related to the various concerns as modes. This implies that the reframing process can be seen as four interrelated and overlapping modes. Each mode deals with taking care of a concern of reframing by choosing the appropriate approaches to the issues of integration and formation. These modes are: conviction, directed dialogue, constituting, and consolidation. Each of them is presented with a summing up of their interrelationships in the shape of a model.

It follows from the definition of modes that spelling them out, as well as presenting the whole of the model, actually sews together the earlier parts of the discussion of this chapter. The definitions below means integrating the ideas summed up in figure 8.5 and the idea of a formation approach with the expanded notion of integration and the conception of modes of reframing.

Mode of convincing: In the mode of convincing, the concern is establishing anchoring. The emphasis of the formation approach is therefore what are called central prospective and deductive prospective. In practical terms we can take this to mean that the top manager should envision and communicate what the new enterprise should be and also what it means in terms of ideas for tackling and handling tasks - the central perspective. The new direction should be communicated by information through various channels explaining what the organization should do and motivating why it should do so -the deductive perspective.

In this process, integration should be established by pursuing consistency between what is said and done by the top manager in and across various contexts. This also means that the new

ideas are brought into the arenas of the management function of the enterprise rather than remaining in change seminars (management), culture workshops, etc. The point is that the top manager becomes identified with - he or she, in a sense, personifies or embodies - the new organizational direction.

Mode of directed dialogue: In the mode of directed dialogue, the concern is establishing organizational acceptance. The emphasis of the formation approach is on decentral focusing task and the deductive prospective. In practical terms this means that the top management should initiate and motivate a new organizational direction and that there are discussions and assessments about how to implement and practice at middle management levels and among other key people, like informal leaders and union spokespersons. In other words, there should be a decentralized search for solutions based on a centrally communicated direction. This also implies a dialogue between key leaders and between key leaders and top management.

In this process, integration should be pursued by the different top managers sending consistent signals about where to go, the point being that they are seen to agree on the new organizational direction. The new ideas consequently also have to be brought into the various existing arenas of the organization. This is also necessary in order to diagnose how the process is emerging and to integrate information about this into the process of handling reframing efforts, which again is necessary to relate to counterforces in a constructive way.

Mode of constituting: In the mode of constituting the concern is new action; the enactment of the ideas behind the new organizational direction. The emphasis of the formation approach is on the decentral focusing task and on the inductive by task. In practical terms, this means that local activity or participation is called for when identifying how to perform the job or task according to the new ideas. Implementation of local goals, standards and organizational principles, will start, however, in this mode even if it could be that the new is not completely understood or accepted throughout the whole organization.

In this mode, integration should be pursued by consistently following up new requirements and standards. This has to be done in the arenas and settings of managing operations - the day-to-day organizational life. It should make a difference whether or not new standards and requirements, rather than the old, are followed. There has to be an effective follow-up structure integrating the new arrangements into organizational processes which also catch the effects of change efforts which are feeding the diagnostic data into the directing of the process.

Mode of consolidation: In the mode of consolidation the concern is stabilising the new practices and thinking in line with the new organizational direction. The emphasis of the formation approach in this mode is more complex than in the other modes. Previously, it was

suggested that the focus should be decentral on systems combined with a central focus on the retrospective when it comes to the solution approach. When it comes to the learning approach, an inductive emphasis on assessment combined with deductive retrospective focus was suggested.

In practical terms, this means that there should be a local level suggestion of solutions in the revision process, that is, suggestions on how systems and structures should be altered to underpin the ideas of the new direction. There is, however, a strong need for the coordination of these suggestions for those structures and systems that cannot be seen as decoupled from the enterprise level, which calls for some sort of central or top level involvement.

The process of reviewing and assessing systems and structures constitutes one inductive way of learning about one's situation related to the new organizational direction. The effects of enacting the new direction so far, however, can be both ambiguous and varied. Consequently, there is a need for a centrally- and retrospectively-oriented interpretation communicated to the organization as an element in the collective interpreting process.

Integration is pursued in this mode by engaging in and following up the revision and alteration of the organization structure(s) and accompanying systems. The point is to assist the constitution of a new organizational frame by creating consistency between the new ideas pursued so far and the facets of such organizational features.

Towards a model of reframing organizations

Organizational frames were defined at the first page of chapter one of this study as collective models of and for organizational action that channel interpretation and enactment of situations and that were embedded in the social structures of the organizations thereby sustaining their own existence. Organizational reframing was consequently defined as planned change of the system of organizational frames. Four modes for accomplishing a change in organizational frames have been suggested. Each mode attends to a particular concern identified in the process of reframing organizations and is characterized by different approaches to formation and integration.

The formation approach deals with identifying an organizational learning of solutions, the models that are to provide the new organizational frames. Integration deals with the approach to making the new take root in the old, how to attune to the natural processes by supporting consistently the new and intended. The four modes of reframing organizations reflect the conceptual understanding generated in the study of attempted reframing, the propositions developed on this conceptual platform as well as the analysis of the relationships between these propositions and conceptual ideas about the concerns of a reframing process.

The four modes outlined in the last sections were the modes of convincing, directed dialogue, constituting and consolidation. They attend to the concerns of (in the same order) anchoring, organizational acceptance, new action and stabilizing. The modes are not to be considered as alternative or competing modes. The four modes respectively sort out and sum up clusters of emphasis in a process of reframing organizations. These interrelationships between them follow from the previous discussions and can be pictured as below:

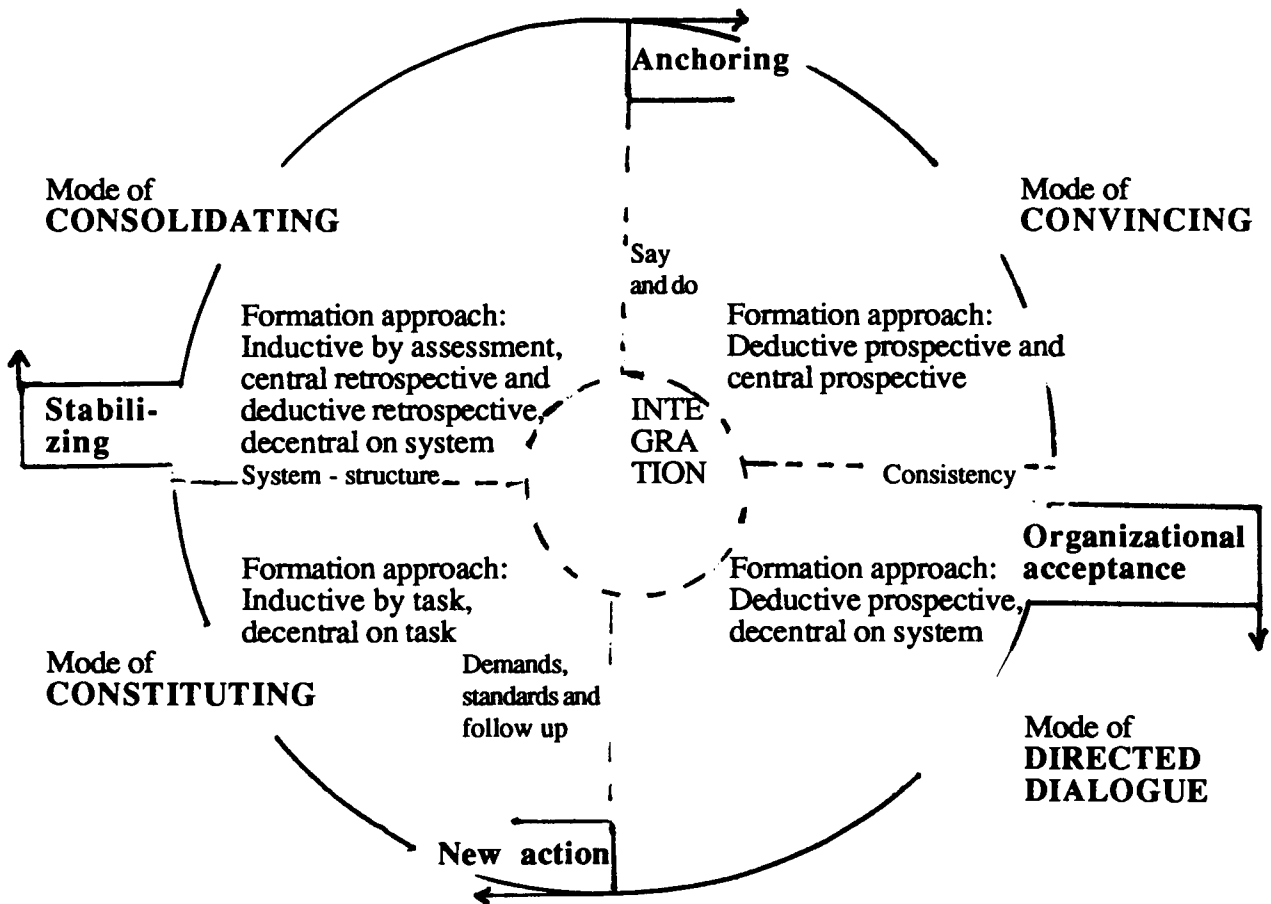


FIG. 8.6 COMPREHENSIVE MODEL OF REFRAMING ORGANIZATIONS

Accomplishing reframing must be understood as a dynamic process where the relationships between the four modes are of the same quality as suggested when discussing the concerns. This also implies that steps back and forth between modes may be needed. Counterforces, new information and new ideas can make it necessary to go back to one of the "previous" modes; renewed anchoring and organizational acceptance might, for instance, be needed. Externally imposed events can also effect the development and status of the reframing process by, for example, putting the new ideas and their premises in a new light.

Although the modes do not constitute clear-cut phases, the model is still to be understood as characterized by an implicit accumulation factor. The four modes are interdependent rather than separate aspects of a change process. A mode of consolidation, for example, does not make sense if there is nothing to stabilize. When, for example, the emphases for integration in the mode of constituting are on demands, standards and follow-up, the mode is based on there being also a consistency between top managers and what they say and do, etc.

There is some sort of paradox in the conception of the model both following and not following a sequence. There is, on the one hand, a sequential logic of social construction in the concerns. But the fact that concerns primarily should be seen as fulfilling functions, reduces on the other hand, the reasons for seeing the modes as purely sequential. There could be a need for shifting between modes because new events as well as new information can make it necessary to go back. Several parts, levels and aspects of the organization can demand a separate reframing focus, etc.

The four modes of - or for - reframing organizations are suggested against this background: At one level they should be understood as circular sequences of concerns that must be attended to by different approaches in terms of finding solutions and learning them. At another level the relationships between the modes must be seen as far more complex. This is particularly reflected in the notions of shifting concerns and the expanding notion of integration as the central hub in the model.

Chapter 9: Contribution and Limitations

The aim of this study has been to develop a model for reframing organizations. This has been done. In order to clarify what kind of a contribution the study represents, it is necessary to go back to the starting point for the study. The problem of developing a model of this kind was seen as reflecting a need for establishing more knowledge in the field of management of change. The problem was identified from the position of a cultural perspective on organizations. It deals with developing a model for the planned change of the system of organizational frames. Organizational frames are defined as collective models of and for organizational action that channel interpretation and enactments of situations. Thereby they become embedded in the social structures of the organizations sustaining their own existence.

When organizations face the need for doing other things or doing things differently, the established ways of defining and enacting situations become obsolete. Due to their funnelling and persistent character, organizational frames both sustain obsolete orientations and hinder the implementation of new ones. Insight in, and knowledge about, critical issues or variables for the task of reframing organizations is consequently seen as being of central importance to the field of management of change. Considering the nature of the task of developing a model of reframing organizations, it was seen as appropriate to do this by exploring actual attempts at changing the way members of organizations define and enact their tasks.

The setting utilized for this study offered a challenging opportunity for doing just this. A process of two years of inductive- and grounded-oriented research in interaction with people having responsibilities for change endeavours produced a set of reframing concepts and conditions. Critical issues in a process of reframing organizations are presented in Chapter Four. The choices made or avoided in these issues as suggested in Chapter Five, should create a reframing momentum for the reframing endeavour to succeed. The study further suggests two important conditions for this in Chapter six. The reframing efforts must be handled so as to create a process of structuration continuously enforcing new performance. At the same time a reframing rationale must exist or be created.

By further analyzing the conceptual insights that emerged from the reframing endeavours, and assisted by other research contributions, a set of normative propositions were developed in Chapter Seven. Their groundings are naturally not so strong as is the case for the reframing concepts. The value and fruitfulness of the findings have, however, been increased by the propositions being more directive. They suggest guidelines for action and offer possibilities for further research in terms of exploring further details and conditions, testing, etc.

Both the practical and the theoretical aspects are also helped by the ideas for further construction

presented in Chapter Eight. The relationships to the organizational practice and the actual task of reframing organizations are clarified. The notion of the four modes of reframing organizations provides a tentative framework for understanding the relationships between the propositions. Each mode reflects a particular concern of the reframing task. They approach the issues of integration, implanting the new in the old, as well as the learning and solution aspects of the formation issue differently.

The model for reframing organizations is seen as both contributing to further research on organizational change as well as being of potential use for managers and organizational practice. These are two kinds of interests that sometimes conflict. The interest of research is truth, at least in some sense of the word, whereas the interest of the manager is action. In this case I don't see this conflict as being significant. The aim of the study has been to develop conceptual understanding that fits and works. The conceptual understanding should be applicable to, and indicated by, the data under study and thereby be meaningfully relevant and able to explain the behaviour under study. It should be fit for relating to and changing the social reality. Credibility for this was also established in relation to actors in the field.

These characteristics also represent, however, what the practitioner is after. For the latter what is developed in this study should appear as a set of strategic variables for the task of reframing organizations. These variables have different qualities depending on which stage of the model is considered. Put simply, the reframing concepts direct attention, the propositions serve as guidelines for action, and the ideas for further construction compose a more comprehensive map for that guidance. Still, at no stage is this a "how to do" model. The user, when wanting to apply the model, will be confronted with a host of unanswered questions, like: What is the (relative) importance of the different variables? What is that contingent on? etc. As strategic variables they are sensitizing more than concluding, providing a directive source for ideas and reflection in order to find local answers and solutions.

It is therefore probably somewhat more important for the researcher to realize that there are different degrees of empirical support in the various stages of the model. He or she takes an interest in the truth matter more than the action matter. I think, however, that the later stages of the model, the propositions and the comprehensive model, make the findings more valuable also for the researcher. They make clearer what the implications of the grounded findings would be as well as suggest their relationships.

First, it should be emphasized that the grounded findings are the basis for these further stages, meaning that they are built upon and embody this grounding. Second, I see this part of the contribution as making it more fit as a source for further research. It is further researchable both because it is put forward as a set of propositions and also because the ideas for further

construction suggest further exploration on issues like contingencies, relative importance, concretizations, operationalizations, etc.

The issue of contingencies in the way to apply the model is directly related to the issue of applicability. The potential for transferring the findings to other settings was initially seen as quite good since the setting represented quite common organizations in relationship to the problem. When looking at the various conceptual findings - like anchoring, integration, inductive vs. deductive learning and top management vs. local solutions - this view is strengthened.

There seems to be little in the nature of these concepts that tie them to a particular kind of organization or industry. They seem to reflect quite general aspects of organizational processes. In fact, I don't even think they reflect situations and problems that are special for the private sector, which all the case organizations belonged to, rather than the public. Neither do I think they are restricted to organizations using external help in their change endeavours. This is also because the difference between the situation studied and the one characterized as being based on internal expertise are unclear. It follows from the same view on the nature of the reframing concepts that, although credibility primarily was established with the project leaders and consultants, the use of conceptual knowledge is not restricted only as related to the positions of such actors.

It seems on the other hand quite likely that issues such as the relative importance of the reframing concepts and the subsequent propositions, the emphasis and strength needed on each, their concrete meaning, etc., can be expected to be dependent upon local conditions. This view bears relationship with what Kluckhohn called a "universal but variable thesis" in the study of numerous subcultures (Kluckhohn 1964:345). A set of human problems for which all groups must find solutions was identified as the general element. Variation stems from the infinite number of ways which groups come to term with and resolve these problems.

This is naturally an ambitious analogy. However, the possibilities for applying the model and its elements as such in other setting are seen to be quite rich. The meaning and importance of the various elements will, on the other hand, vary in different situations and be dependent on conditions like local history and organizational culture. Additional elements might even prove to have as strong an importance. For example, the emphasis that has to be placed on anchoring and manager integration, could be dependent on the history and traditions of management style and decentral autonomy and responsibility in that particular organization.

The problem of the study was formed from a cultural perspective on organizations. The study has a value beyond the actual model produced related to this perspective. First, it demonstrates

one possible application of a cultural perspective to the study of organizational change. Contributions in this field are not numerous and tend to be normatively and conceptually oriented with no substantial grounding. Second, the study implicitly suggests that in spite of meaning being a system of ideas, the task of changing it also deals with such organizational features as power and structure. This might not be a surprising suggestion to all the readers, but it is certainly not trivial. Observe, for example, all the money, time and effort spent on internal marketing and cultural workshops as the principal tools to change collective meaning.

The study is based on what happens when people in organizations actually engage in changes. The need for this kind of knowledge in the area of organizational change was identified as a basis for the study. When such contributions are scarce it has to do with the fact that such situations are often found difficult to be to research. Problems of access, timing, resources as well as difficulties in finding appropriate methods are all reasons that this has been left unexplored. In this case a rare and unique situation was taken advantage of by being creative in the application of methods.

This was a rare and rich occasion for studying organizational change since several serious change endeavours had a focal point through the fact that the firms studied cooperated with one consultancy firm. This situation provided a potential setting for producing data on attempted change, bringing experiences from different cases together for comparative exploration. It was possible to take advantage of the situation since the consultancy firm had decided on the policy of continuously learning from their experiences.

From a research point of view the methodology had to overcome a lot of problems. For example, the process of research had to provide interesting and useful insight not only after but also during a process of research for the people involved. On the other hand, the research activities should not interfere in or disturb the actual change actions. And there were also resource restrictions. The research then had to, as far as possible, take advantage of what otherwise could have been hindrances. Like, for example, the project leaders also were the most important informants, that the data collection could be combined with assessing project status and problems and member checks and practical evaluations could be combined with feeding back preliminary conceptual findings. The latter made the research activities useful in the short run for the participants and strengthened the credibility of the long-term results.

There are, of course, limitations to the study. Many follow from the fact that a study can't be everything. There are choices and trade-offs that have to be made. This, for example, is a theory-generating study based on a purposeful rather than a representative sample. This restricts what can be said about generalization. The study is grounded but the data could have been thicker. That would have made it more difficult to be general, etc.

There are also limitations following from the perspective taken. The problem of the study is, for instance, seen from a management perspective. This could cause some blindness for employee-initiated action and processes. The perspective is fairly instrumental and structural, envisaging the organization as an instrument for human interest using terms like "mechanisms", etc. The study could therefore lose sight of features like action initiated by enthusiasm, morale and value appeal. The search could also be accused of being seduced by the idea of collectivity in the sense that the idea of collective meaning tones down and could make the search overlook individual and group variations, etc.

It is, however, more or less unavoidable that a perspective taken in research will imply limitations. "To see is also not to see." The perspective is, in a sense, a necessary simplification and also represents a trade-off. What is essential is that the perspective is legitimate and fruitful in view of the research interests, and that it is made explicit and that appropriate methods are implemented.

All in all, we see the contribution as fruitfully filling a place. There was a need for this kind of study. It approaches the problem of change in a fruitful way by means of the concept of organizational frames and by exploring attempted change as it takes place. The findings should be interesting and fruitful for at least two kinds of audiences. The researcher seeking to expand the existing knowledge should be interested in what they say, and also in the possibilities offered for further research. The practitioner is offered guidelines and ideas for reflections for how to meet an important challenge.

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