



**The importance and influence of middle management on  
organisational culture change - an action research study**

by

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## **Abstract**

This doctoral thesis explores the influence of middle management on cultural change processes in organisations. An action research strategy in a medium-sized organisation that was facing broad structural and cultural change was adopted. It is well-documented in the literature that the position top management takes with respect to cultural change is of high importance for successful change. At the same time, the role of middle management seems to have lacked attention until recently. The purpose of this work is to contribute to knowledge about middle management during such processes and to explore the roles middle-managers play within such cultural change. In addition it researches if middle managers take over the explored roles, when the organisation creates an environment that supports cultural change.

Middle management is mainly discussed in the literature in the context of strategic change. In the context of organisational culture research with a middle management perspective still seems to be missing.

Using a critical realist philosophical approach an action research strategy was adopted. The practical part reveals the action cycles undertaken. First, the action research cycles according to the consultancy work are presented, as they form an important basis for the parallel conducted thesis cycles. Actions and data collection methods are discussed. During the research different methods have been chosen to create an extensive picture of the development inside the organisation, and to answer the research questions: three qualitative interviews, participative observations on six occasions (workshops and meetings), as well as two quantitative questionnaires (staff surveys). The findings suggest that an organisational culture change occurred in the time-span of two years and that middle management played a crucial part within this process. Several roles can be located with the role 'cultural role model' as the most important one. In addition, the roles middle management play as part of strategic changes according to various literatures was in the main confirmed. These findings contribute to knowledge about middle management and help to minimise the existing gap. The results can be used to develop a model of integrating middle managers actively into the change process and using their creative potential. The thesis finishes with recommendations, not only for further research but also concerning practical considerations. Furthermore, limitations of this research work are outlined.

## **Declaration of originality**

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*Martina Nieswandt*

*Martina Nieswandt, December 2011*

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1. Introduction: background, aims and framework of the thesis

#### 1.1 Practical relevance

Especially in times of economic pressure, organisations seek success-factors that support a competitive advantage. Organisational Culture has been regarded as one of those factors at least since the 1980s (for example: Alvesson 1990; Bate 1994; Deal & Kennedy 1982, 2000; Neubauer 2003; Peters & Waterman 1982). Although the definitions of organisational culture differ (Alvesson 1990; Bate 1994; Neubauer 2003; Sackmann 2006; Saunders et al. 2009), as do approaches (Hatch 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006; Sackmann 2006; Schein 2004; Trice & Beyer 1993), the topic is still of great interest.

Today, change initiatives are not the exception any more, but the rule (Neubauer 2003). At the same time, many of these initiatives fail (Beer et al. 1990; Cameron & Quinn 2006; Kotter, 1996; Neubauer 2003). Some authors blame these failures on a lack of consideration for the organisation's culture during the change process (Cameron & Quinn 2006; Kotter & Heskett 1992). Others highlight the low involvement of a large number of managers across the whole organisation (Franken et al. 2009), instead emphasizing the role of top management (for example: Mintzberg 2009; Roederer 2011) and, how the burden to change an entire organisation is concentrated on this group.

At the same time, research about strategic change suggests that another group within organisations plays a crucial role, too. Research about the role of middle management demonstrates that they play an important part in achieving successful strategic change, too. (Brians 2007; Rauh 1990; Wooldridge et al. 2008). As they are positioned between the work force and upper management, they are an important link between levels with a strategic perspective and decisions based upon this, and the working level that has to operationalise these strategies with their units (Frohman & Johnson 1993; Leavitt & Whisler 1985; Mintzberg 1979/2009).

Still, there are many changes in organisations. As research has proven, the consideration of organisational culture is important. Literature about cultural change often discusses

definitions and concepts in detail (Hatch 1993; Sackmann 2006). In addition, examples of successful organisations are given that show how change can be initiated (Sackmann 2006; Schein 2004). The role and importance of top management is discussed in detail whereas the importance and roles of middle managers is often only mentioned briefly, if at all. Sackmann (2004, 2007) emphasises in her work the involvement of the entire management in the cultural change process and offers some recommendations of how to develop a management that is acting in a culturally aware way. Nevertheless, she mainly refers to the management as one group. However, the demands concerning top management, higher management, middle management and lower management are quite different. Whereas top management is required to think much more strategically, middle management and lower management are requested to think and act much more operationally. It is very likely that the personal interests between these levels also are different. Hence, the integration of middle management into cultural change consequently has to regard this. This suggests to firstly exploring the importance of middle management and their roles within this change. Until today there seems to be a lack of works that explicitly attend to middle management. According to the relationship between organisational culture and successful organisational change, and with regard to the high potential of failure it is in the interests of organisations to find ways to bring about successful cultural change in order to achieve the other change goals. If the middle manager plays a crucial role in strategic change as the literature suggests (for example Mantere 2008; Wooldridge et al. 2008), it seems sensible to examine, whether this is the same with organisational cultural change. The results can be used to develop a model of integrating middle managers actively into the change process and using their creative potential.

So, we find a linkage between successful change, the roles of middle managers, the consideration of cultural change and the need for change in organisations. Therefore, to examine the importance and roles of middle management in cultural change is relevant for organisations. This was studied during a fundamental change process at a medium-sized organisation. The organisation, with 320 employees, is dealing with the development and budgeting of projects concerning Real Estate. South Real Estate (alias, Chapter 4) was facing the need for change as it had to adapt its structure and alignment to the current market situation. Right from the beginning the company board identified organisational culture as an important aspect that should be considered. As a result, they offered me the opportunity to attend to this process and explore middle management roles.

## **1.2 Relevance for research**

The amount of research exploring the roles of middle management has increased in recent years (for example Mantere 2008; Willcocks & Griffiths 2010; Wooldridge et al 2008). Mostly, this research deals with the general role of middle management or its role during strategic change. During the literature review, work could not be found that dealt explicitly with middle management from a cultural change perspective. This appears to indicate a gap between the importance of organisational culture and the role of middle management. This work aims to bridge this gap and contribute to knowledge about middle management.

## **1.3 Research question and objectives**

The aim of this research is to explore the influence of middle management on organisational culture change. By doing this the deficiency of research in this area will begin to be redressed. Hence, the overall aim is to explore the following question:

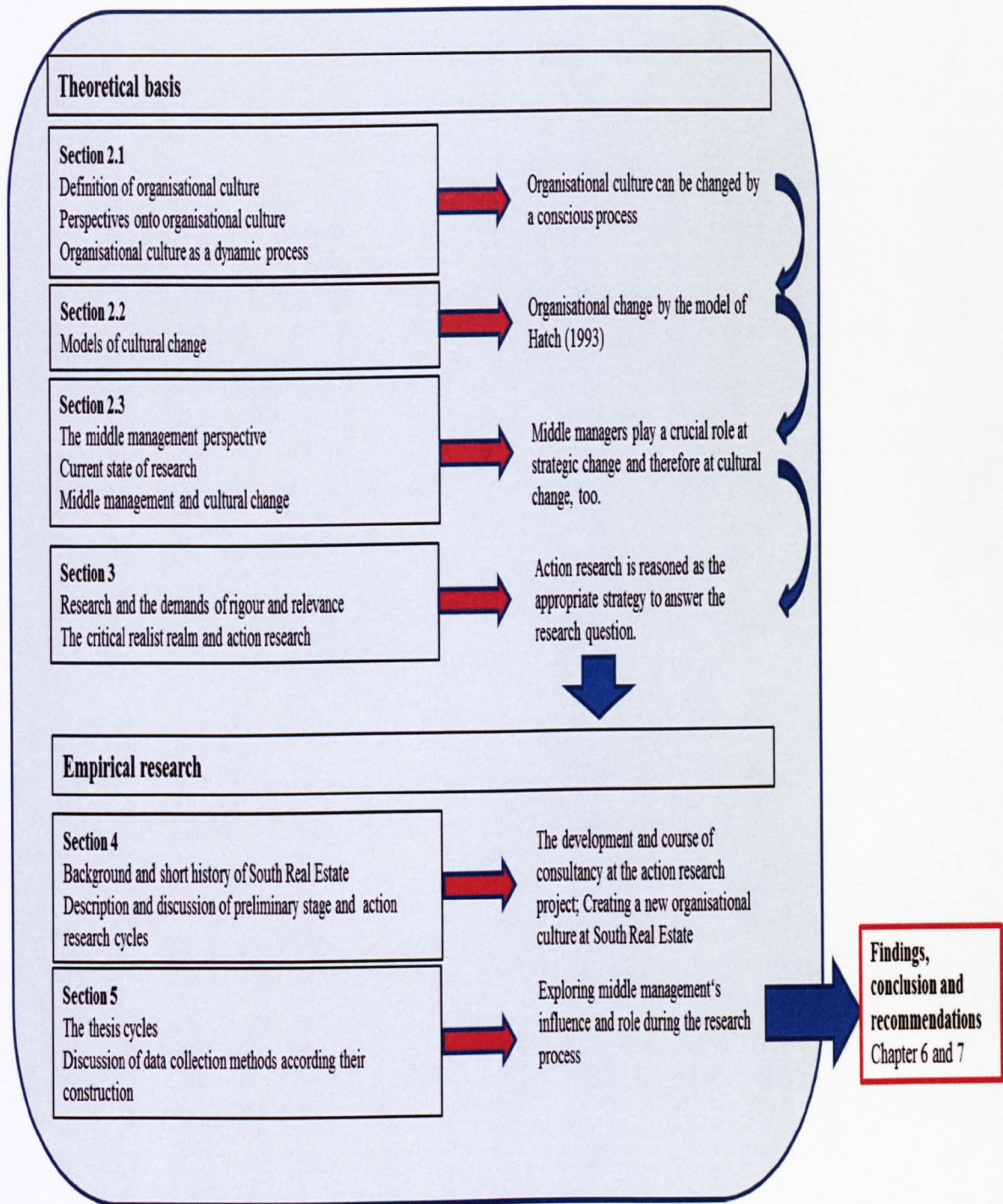
**Does middle management influence organisational cultural change, and, if so, how important is it?**

This research intends to contribute to the understanding of middle management and its roles within organisations. In addition, it aims to explain, how organisations can develop middle management to accept their roles. Therefore, the objectives of this work are:

1. To explore whether middle management plays a role in cultural change;
2. To explore whether the roles middle management plays in strategic change are as valid for cultural change as well;
3. To explore whether there exist additional roles;
4. To explore if middle managers take over the above roles, when the organisation creates an environment to support cultural change.

To answer the research question and meet the objectives, this work will be structured as the following figure shows (1.1):

**Figure 1.1 Structure of thesis**



(present author)

Chapters two and three present the theoretical background forming the basis of this research. A definition of 'Organisational Culture' is given. The debate that organisations *are* and *have* organisational cultures will be discussed and how they influence the model of cultural



dynamic change. Also, the influence and roles of middle management will be reviewed. These literature review chapters will close with a formulation of the research question and objectives that underlay this work. This research is based on the philosophical perspective of critical realism. Chapter three will reason why this perspective and action research fit, and are chosen as appropriate research design strategies.

The empirical part is grounded in these perceptions. Whereas Chapter three has presented action research from a general view, the action research cycles relating to the consultancy work will be presented first within Chapter four. These cycles are the basis for the Thesis Cycles discussed in Chapter five. According to the chronology of events, the methods of data collection are presented and discussed.

Chapter six discusses the findings that are drawn from the data. This chapter is followed by Chapter seven, which contains the overall conclusions and recommendations for further research and practical work with organisations. In addition, limitations of the research are presented.

## 2.    Changing organisational culture

### 2.1   Introduction

In the early 1980's the term 'Organisational Culture' appeared in practitioner management publications, and was no longer confined to research literature (Neubauer 2003). Books by Deal and Kennedy (1982/2000) and Peters and Waterman (1982) draw attention to it, and with the success of books such as '*In Search of Excellence*' (Peters & Waterman 1982) and others, the topic 'Organisational Culture' suddenly became a part of many discussions between CEO's and consultants. Organisations were searching for mechanisms that would help them to positively differ from competitors, and, so act more successfully. For example, Peters and Waterman (1982) presented data leading to the conclusion that successful and outstanding organisations would rest upon a system of values that would be visible. This prompted many organisations to start working upon values and how to make them visible.

Various authors (Alvesson 1990; Neubauer 2003) trace the growing interest back to, beside other reasons, the growing competition in the world market. When citing Frost et al. (1985), Alvesson (1990) provides three reasons for the increasing interest in organisational culture. These reasons are (1) – economic - the rise of Japan at this time, (2) quality and sense of work, (3) dissatisfaction with the results of organisational theory (Alvesson 1990). The second-mentioned aspect (quality of work) still appears to prevail: A study, conducted by the 'Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales' (BMA; Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs/ Hauser et al. 2007) in 2007 about organisational culture, quality of work and employee commitment in companies in Germany using a sample of 314 companies and 37,151 employees showed that only 77 per cent of participants were satisfied with their work. 23 per cent admitted that their satisfaction had declined over the past three years and for only 18 per cent, it grew. 77 per cent wanted to stay with their company at that time, but just 31 per cent were really motivated in their work and with their company. Hence, quality of work and social forces, as remarked by Alvesson and Frost et al. seem to be still on-going. The results of the study present an interrelation between organisational culture and socio-demographic factors, as well as commitment of employees and success. One can assume that the basic

conditions have not really changed. So, as we are faced more recently with a global commercial crisis the topic organisational culture is still of importance and worthy of further examination.

According to Neubauer (2003), the number of mergers between 1984 and 1998 tripled. With these mergers, organisations wanted to be present and act globally, and so, be the leading edge of competitors in the global market. Mergers and reengineering programmes often failed expectations (Sackmann 2007), the reasons for these failures beside other factors, often were traced back to a missing cultural awareness. Therefore, strategy and culture of an organisation should fit as much as possible (Sackmann 2007; Schuppener 2006). If for example an organisation that was characterised by an attitude of bureaucracy aims to follow a strategy of customer orientation, the organisational culture has to be taken into account too. Activities that support the development of an attitude to support customers as fast and uncomplicated as possible have to be conducted at the same time as process-chains etc. are going to be reworked.

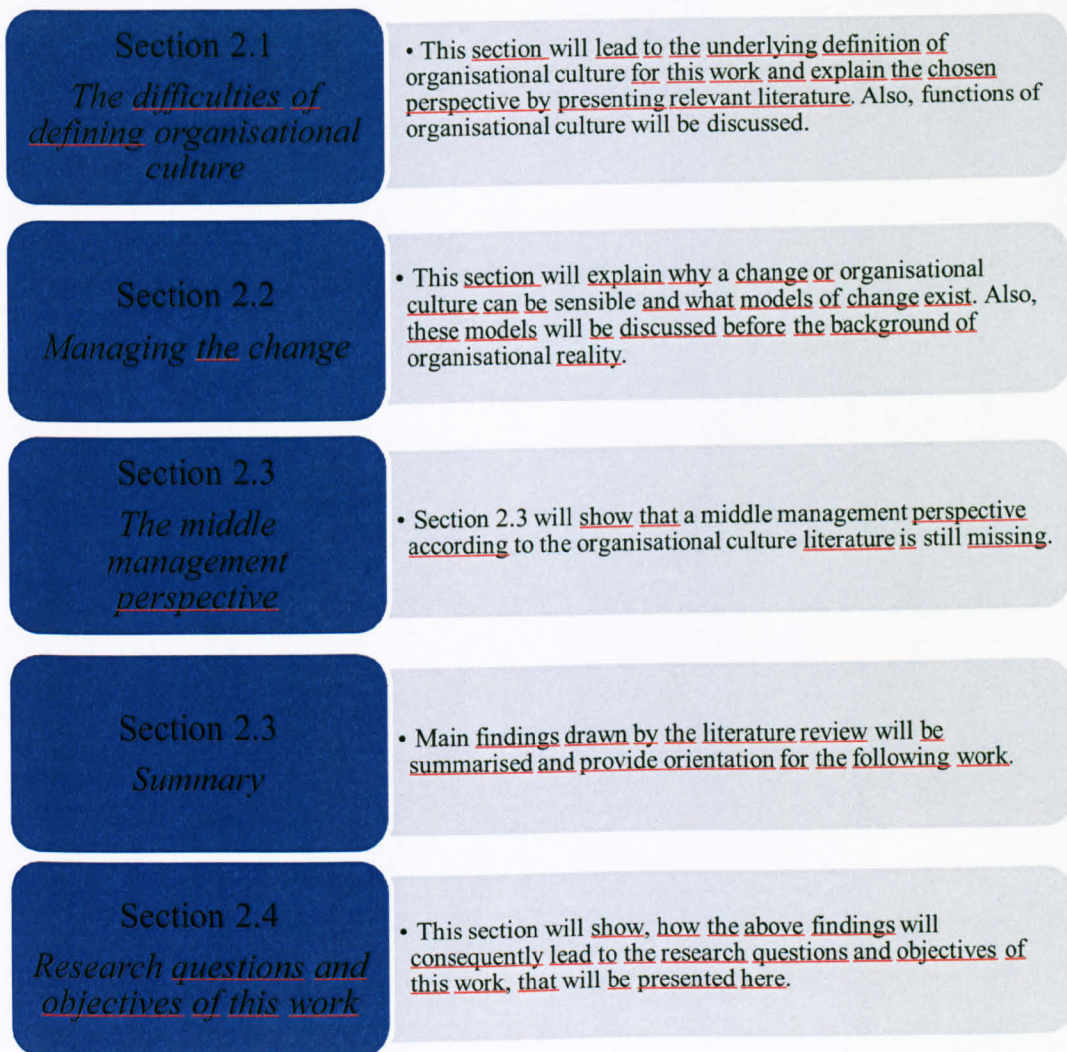
Leitl and Sackmann (2010) conducted a survey with a sample of 157 managers from the top and middle levels, as well as managers from Human Resources. Although the terms top and middle managers were not clearly defined, the results show that today 89 per cent of top management regards the issue of organisational culture as highly and very highly important. For the future, 97 per cent rate the issue in the same way. In addition, middle management shows a development in relation to this question. The survey reported that 60 per cent of middle managers assessed culture for the present time as highly and very highly important. However, 88 per cent of them regarded this issue as highly important for the future. The results show that at least on the rational level it is well recognised that organisational culture is important. At the same time, this does not consequently lead to cultural development activities in organisations. My experience in many organisations, in fact is, that due to operative demands thinking culturally often lags behind, as it is handled as a separate topic and is not an integrated part of operational activities.

Organisational culture ties together the company and its employees. Some researchers see three significant functions of culture: coordination, integration and motivation (Dill 1986; Dill & Hügler 1997; Forstmann 1994). In addition, understanding organisational culture leads to a deeper understanding of organisations (Alvesson 2002; Schein 2004). In this case, it reveals a deeper understanding of how and why something happens in an organisation. This not only

enables better analysis, but can help in the working out of successful strategies for the design of change.

Therefore, if organisational culture is an important factor for organisational success or failure, questions concerning the influence of culture and the reason for engagement are also still of great interest, and will be discussed in later sections. Nevertheless, the question remains open: Can an organisational culture be changed? Moreover, if so, how? In addition, who are the actors and agents of change?

**Figure 2.1** Aims and structure of literature review



(present author)

The following literature review will review the research in these areas, highlighting the gap existing about middle management's influence and roles. By reviewing the literature, it will be reasoned that organisational culture can be changed. However, this change is not easy to achieve and one has to act with care, as this kind of change affects not only the organisation but in the first instance the people working within it. Figure 2.1 (p. 8) presents the structure of the literature review.

## **2.2 Organisational culture: the difficulties of a definition**

Discussion of 'Organisational Culture', has, over the past 30 years, been accompanied by differing definitions, the question of measurability and convertibility, and the question, if, and how, organisational culture is an important factor for economic success. Therefore, the following sections review the research in this field and the continuing discussion. In addition, the definition to be used during this work and the cultural approach taken are discussed.

### **2.2.1 Organisational culture: the definition**

'Culture' is a concept used in various ways. A look into a newspaper today easily shows this: there are articles about the European Capital of Culture, feature pages, it is written about a 'clash of cultures' and so forth. Also, we talk about the culture of our countries, of sub-groups and more. When searching for a concrete definition of 'culture' one can get lost in the enormous literature. Often, metaphors are used to describe the character of organisational culture (Bate 1994, see also Section 2.2.3) or certain aspects concerning it. Bate (1994) describes for example the writing of a book about cultural change as a "daunting task" (Bate 1994, p. 3). By quoting Clifford Geertz's (Geertz 1973, p. 29) story of the elephant as a metaphor he gives an example for the many difficulties and frustrations one experiences when working with the concept of culture.

This story is about "an Englishman who, having been told that the world rested on a platform which rested on the back of an elephant which rested in turn on the back of a turtle, asked ... what did the turtle rest on? Another turtle. And that turtle? 'Ah, Sahib, after that it is turtles all the way down.'" (Bate 1994/1995, p. 3).

The many levels of organisational culture are like the turtles in this metaphor: Whenever one thinks to have detected *the* culture another level or perspective occurs. The difficulty in grasping the concept 'culture' is that there are so many different perspectives and levels that one never has got the feeling of really grasping it. Many different disciplines, such as anthropology, ethnology, philosophy, cultural studies, sociology, and psychology examine culture (Neubauer 2003). All of these disciplines look upon the concept from a different point of view, with different aims etc. Also, within one single discipline, we find different 'schools', and, so, even in one discipline, no single unanimous definition and meaning exists.

So, when working with organisational culture, one first has to clarify how to define 'culture'. The anthropologist Edward B. Tylor very early defined culture as "[...] that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." (Tylor 1871). This definition seems to include everything and anything, and therefore nothing. So it does not really help to bring one closer to a concrete definition, especially with respect to organisations. Nevertheless, even anthropologists have many variations in the definition and the term 'culture'. The variations emerge when looking on the bookshelves of management and organisational research and literature. This seems to relate to increasing interest in the topic. The existence of so many definitions shows that many authors and researchers seem to share this difficulty. Therefore, it is not easy to decide, which definition and approach should be presented and discussed. In this chapter and the following, definitions and concepts will be discussed from key authors such as Alvesson, Bate, Hofstede, Schein and others. Also, typologies of organisational culture will be discussed. Following this an argument will be put forward for a definition of 'organisational culture' to be utilised in this study.

In 1952, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (p. 357) stated that "Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional [...] ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as elements of further action".

This definition is very close to Tylor's above mentioned. Kroeber and Kluckhohn claim to have identified almost 300 definitions of 'culture' and give a more detailed analysis of 164. Schein (2004, p. 17) also views culture as a "pattern of shared basic assumptions that was

learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems”.

Whereas definitions like Tylor’s (1987) and Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s (1952) accentuate internal aspects and their expression in noticeable manifestations, Schein (2004) with his definition also explicitly includes the environment. Here, internal and external aspects as values and assumptions on the one side and challenges that are caused by the environment are linked together. So, culture starts to develop in an evolutionary way. The relationship between cultural development and the environment requires, at the same time, adaption to environmental change, which Hatch (1993) includes into her model that will be presented later. Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) present some definitions of organisational culture based upon the literature about organisations and management that are most widely used. The definitions they chose apply not only to the organisational level but also the subcultural level of analysis (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1 Definitions of organisational culture**

Elliott Jaques (1952; p. 251)	“The culture of the factory is its customary and traditional way of thinking and doing things, which is shared to a greater or lesser degree by all its members, and which new members must learn, and at least partially accept, in order to be accepted into service in the firm.”
Andrew Pettigrew (1979; p. 574)	“Culture is a system of publicly and collectively accepted meanings operating for a given group at a given time. This system of terms, forms, categories, and images interprets a people’s own situation to themselves.”
Meryl Reis Louis (1983, p. 39)	“Organizations [are] culture-bearing milieu, that is, [they are] distinctive social units possessed of a set of common understandings for organizing action (e.g., what we’re doing together in this particular group, appropriate ways of doing in and among members of the group) and languages and other symbolic vehicles for expressing common understandings.”
Edgar Schein (2004, p.6)	“The pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems.”

John Van Maanen (1988, p. 3)	“Culture refers to the knowledge members of a given group are thought to more or less share; knowledge of the sort that is said to inform, embed, shape, and account for the routine and not-so-routine activities of the members of the culture ... A culture is expressed (or constituted) only through the actions and words of its members and must be interpreted by, not given to a fieldworker. Culture is not itself visible, but is made visible only through its representation.”
Harrison Trice and Janice Beyer (1993, p. 2)	“Cultures are collective phenomena that embody people’s responses to the uncertainties and chaos that are inevitable in human experience. These responses fall into two major categories. The first is the substance of a culture – shared, emotionally charged belief systems that we call ideologies. The second is cultural forms – observable entities, including actions, through which members of a culture express, affirm, and communicate the substance of their culture to one another.”

(adapted from Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, p. 177)

These definitions show diversity, but at the same time, some common aspects (for example: common understanding, belief systems). A working definition, often used by practitioners is “The way, we do things around here” (Sackmann, 2007, p. 25). Although this definition stays on the surface and only grasps the visible level, it describes in a very catchy way what people in organisations often understand by the term organisational culture.

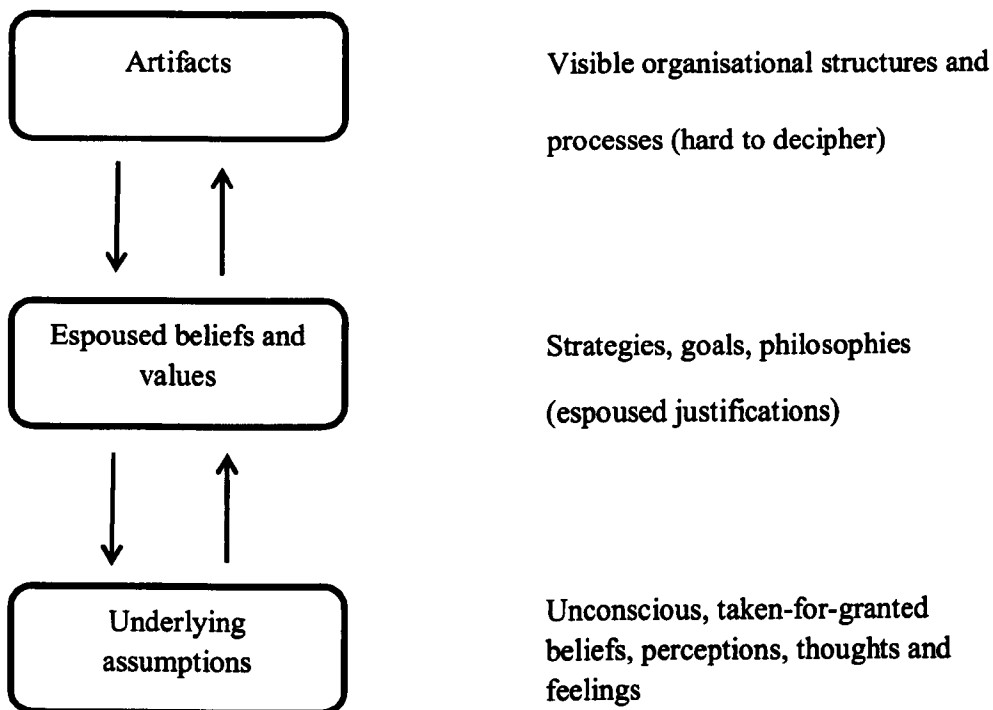
Schein’s concept of ‘levels of culture’, first published in 1985 is one of the most widely used definitions. His concept influences the work of a lot of other researchers, including Alvesson (2002) and Hatch (1993). Schein articulates three levels: artefacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions (Schein 2004). According to him, artefacts are the visible organisational structures and processes, which he describes as hard to decipher. Espoused beliefs and values are strategies, goals and philosophies, which are in his eyes “espoused justifications” (Schein 2004, p. 26). The last and most difficult level to lay open are the underlying assumptions. These are unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings (Schein, 2004). These three levels affect each other in a reciprocal way.

According to Schein (2004) the underlying assumptions are the base level. At the same time, these assumptions are the “ultimate source of values and action” (p. 26). He explains the reason for so many different definitions of organisational culture as the lack of differentiation between these levels and their manifestations. Examining this model highlights why, for example, Weisinger and Salipante (2000) criticise a too narrow view of culture and the idea



that something defined as such can be easily changed. As underlying assumptions are partly unconscious, an attempt at organisational cultural change cannot be an easy intervention that can be organised like the implementation of a new process chain or IT-programme. At the same time, it does not mean that culture cannot be changed at all.

**Figure 2.2** Levels of culture according to Schein



(Schein, 2004, p. 26)

As Schein describes the reciprocal effect of all levels that consequently means that the underlying assumptions not only influence actively, but, also are influenced. With this idea, Schein (1985, third edition: 2004) is the first author to describe a cultural model with its dynamic relationships and whose idea was picked up by researchers like Hatch (1993) and Sackmann (1990). They stand for the cultural dynamic perspective, and, so, they offer a solution to the 'is- and has-debate' in organisational culture research. This debate will be discussed in Section 2.2.3 after explaining both the functionalist's and culture as metaphor perspectives. However, Schein's model of culture includes the visible, audible and measureable as well as the unconscious and therefore not obvious aspects of culture that operate inside and outside individuals and groups. In addition, he regards the environment as

an important factor that causes cultural effects. The arrows in his model (Figure 2.2) symbolise the dynamic character of his model. Hence, with his model Schein offered a broad approach to culture that does not simplify but in fact regards the complexity of it. Authors like Hatch (1993) and Sackmann (1990), although they expand this definition, are very close to Schein (Section 2.2.4).

Another well-known model of culture was developed by Hofstede (1990) and therefore will be discussed next. His research about national cultures is widely used and by his work, he showed how organisational culture is influenced by national culture (Hatch & Cunliffe 2006). Hofstede (1990) developed a model of organisational culture based on 20 case studies. This cultural model is very close to Schein's (1985). Hofstede (1990) argues that cultural characteristics respectively have differences which manifest themselves on different deep levels and different locations of socialisation. He used the image of an onion. On the outside level are symbols (words, gesture and images) that have meaning for the organisational culture. Underneath this level are 'heroes' that are real or conceived living or dead persons who are (were) important for the organisation. The next level is named 'rites' followed by values on the deepest value (Hofstede 1990). Similar to Schein (2004) he regards this level as difficult to discover as these values are invisible. Hofstede's research on national cultures has been criticised (i.e. McSweeney 2002, Section 2.3.2). However, it should be noted that his model of culture does not really add new aspects to the one of Schein. According to this and my understanding and experience of organisational culture, based upon my work as a consultant, I share Schein's definition with its dynamic process and will take this as a basis for the work at hand.

At the beginning of studies related to organisational culture, culture was often regarded as something that could be handled in the same way as any other economic business ratio (Sackmann 2007). It soon appeared that reality was often different, and attempts to change organisational culture failed (Sackmann 2007). Today, we find three different kinds of conceptualisations of culture (Table 2.2/Sackmann 2006, p. 23) which help clarify differences.

Agents of the variable approach claim that an organisation *has* culture, whereas the champions of the metaphor perspective claim that an organisation *is* culture (Saunders et al.

2009). These perspectives, and the debate whether an organisation *has* or *is* culture, will be discussed in the following sections more deeply (2.2.2 and 2.2.3).

**Table 2.2 Perspectives of culture in organisations**

	<b>Culture as variable</b>	<b>Culture as metaphor</b>	<b>Culture as dynamic construct</b>
<b>Assumptions about culture</b>	Culture is an organisational variable that can be manipulated	Culture is a metaphor for understanding life in organisations; organisational reality is socially and symbolically constructed	Culture is a dynamic construct; organisational reality is socially constructed and organisations produce culture (including cultural artefacts)
<b>Paradigm</b>	Social factist/rational-mechanistic	Interpretative	Pluralistic
<b>Predominant interest in culture</b>	Manipulation, e.g., managing, controlling and changing the relevant culture variable for best performance	Deep and rich understanding of a particular cultural setting with a focus on organisational symbolism	Understanding the cultural context of an organisation for effective culturally-aware management
<b>Assessment of culture and its purpose</b>	Focus and questionnaires and visible tolls to identify (sub)variables that can be manipulated	Ethnography, storytelling, in-depth interviews, discourse analysis to render rich descriptions of a particular cultural setting	Multiple methods: qualitative and quantitative; perceptions and observations; triangulation

(Sackmann 2006, p. 23-24)

Most of the definitions and practical descriptions presented above contain the idea of culture as a model of orientation (Allcorn 1995; Müller 1999; Neubauer 2003; Sackmann 2007 and others). This model affects problem-identification, problem solving, evaluating as well as legitimating (Neubauer 2003). So, culture gives stability and continuity (tradition) and makes it possible to reduce complexity. It also serves as a model which gives sense (Sackmann 2007). In addition to these concepts, organisational culture has an impact on individual work-motivation (Hauser et al. 2007) and on the experience of stress and fear (Allcorn 1995). These aspects place stress on the link between organisations, employees and culture. Therefore, as organisational culture has a link to so many different and important aspects of organisational life, any change of an existing culture will consequently have implications for all of those aspects.

The definitions presented and difficulties in developing a common acceptable one show that the research landscape of organisational culture is heterogeneous. Many researchers have tried to systemise what seems to be nearly impossible (Marré 1997). This is traceable, if one regards the concrete contexts where research about this issue is carried out: organisational research has to be conducted in organisations, or at least as near as possible. However, there does not exist one organisation with exactly the same conditions, people, and history. Therefore, it is hard to compare and come to an exact common understanding. Also, it is dependent on the individual researcher's philosophical underpinning. This will have consequences for the perspective taken and conclusions drawn.

The literature differentiates between two perspectives on culture: functional or variable-approach respectively metaphor, for example: Alvesson 2002; Bate 1994; Buono et al. 1985, 1989; Morgan 1999; Sackmann 2007. According to Bate (1994), many authors made their decision to reject an anthropological understanding of culture (metaphor) and to accept a scientific understanding (functional). He argues that this shows an understanding of organisational culture as an object, or a component, of a bigger thing. According to Marré (1997) this system is differentiated by some authors according to anthropological traditions. According to him, Smircich and Callas (1987) present three forms of interests: technical (with the aim of a deliberate controlling), practical (with the aim to creating a better basis for decisions and activities) and emancipatory (with the aim of an increasing autonomy and responsibility). The respective interest consequently leads to different methods in measuring and interventions. The literature reviewed for this work also showed that it is sometimes difficult to allocate one author to a certain perspective. For example, Sackmann's (2007) perspective on culture comprises functional aspects as well as aspects of the metaphor approach. Nevertheless, it seems sensible to present the different perspectives on organisational culture to give an orientation and to present the boundaries along with which research is undertaken. In addition, as the perspective of a dynamic approach to organisational culture melds important aspects of the variable and metaphor perspective, it is important to present and discuss these perspectives first. Following this, the dynamic perspective as a synthesis will be discussed and its relationship to Schein's cultural model will be stressed.

### 2.2.2 The functionalist perspective to organisational culture or culture as a variable

Researchers with a functional perspective try to measure culture objectively, based on inherited cultural models and behaviour patterns (Schuppener 2006). Culture is regarded as one of several variables and as an organisational subsystem (Heinen 1987; Marré 1997; Sackmann 1989; Schuppener 2006). It can also be seen as the result of inter-personal activities as a product of the organisation (Kasper 1987; Marré 1997). In addition, the application of culture as a variable is based on the fact that this variable exists from sub-products, which integrate into a homogeneous whole and become manifest in the form of artefacts and inherited, collective behaviour. Hence, agents of this perspective do not recognise the invisible and unconscious aspects of culture (underlying assumptions).

These authors regard culture as an objectively measurable variable and so they mostly work with quantitative research designs (for example: Cartwright & Cooper 1992; Hofstede 1993; Vahs & Leiser 2003). They measure artefacts, as well as collective behaviour, patterns of verbal and non-verbal form, seen as manifestations of culture (Marré 1997; Sackmann 1990). According to the cultural model of Schein (2004; Figure 2.2), here two of three levels (artifacts and espoused beliefs and values) are examined. The visible (and audible) is surveyed and the third level (underlying assumptions) by Schein is not in focus. It often is a positivist attempt with an understanding of organisational culture independent of the observer and existing reality. Organisational culture is one variable among others to determine organisational success and as any other variable, it is changeable, when changing the manifestations.

**Table 2.3 Manifestations of organisational culture**

<b>Artefacts</b>	<b>Verbal behaviour</b>	<b>Non-verbal behaviour</b>
Architecture	Myths	Rites
Interior Design	Anecdotes	Rituals
Design of work equipment	Tales	Forms of interaction
Documents	Jokes	Ceremonies
Status symbols	Stories about Heroes	
Clothes		
Products		
Advertising material		

(Marré 1997; translation by the author)

According to Marré (1997), Drumm (1991) differentiates between a 'functionalistic-systemtheoretical' and a 'reflective-functionalistic' form of approach. The first one is based on a positivistic standpoint (Marré 1997; Schuh 1989). Marré (1997) allocates publications from Deal and Kennedy (1982), Kobi and Wüthrich (1986) and Peters and Waterman (1982) to the former and Schein (2004) to the last-mentioned. According to him, authors like Schein (2004) note that an absolute external view on culture would only notice phenomenon, which lay on the outside of an organisation, and leave out of sight the meanings to organisational members (Marré 1997). The allocation of Schein into the functionalist perspective seems to be questionable, as Schein (2004) advocates a consideration of the assumptions when undertaking a cultural assessment (Schein 2004). He suggests using group methods, interviews and group meetings to make the assessment. Also, he considers the reciprocal effect of all levels in his model (Figure 2.2). Functionalist researchers mostly use standardised (quantitative) questionnaires that are based upon a priori dimensions (Sackmann 2007) to undertake the assessment, for example Cameron and Freeman (1991), Dill and Hügler (1997), Gordon (1985), Kobi and Wüthrich (1986) and Pümpin (1984). An approach based on this perspective is likely to be explained more easily to managers who often have a positivistic understanding of research and the economy.

Since the 1990s discussion has been shaped by a perspective on cultures as being 'strong' and homogenous, or 'weak', where 'strong' cultures lead to economic success (Cameron & Quinn 2006; Deal & Kennedy 1982, 2000; Denison 1990; Kotter & Heskett 1992; Sorensen, 2002). This perspective often entirely excludes influences of the environment. Also, the image of a homogenous culture excludes sub-cultures, as if they were not there, or consequently if there, would need to be deleted. Thus, important aspects are simply faded out, and so, not considered which a limitation of that perspective is. Consequently, Alvesson (2002) criticises this trivialisation of 'managing culture', as if it only were a ratio, like any other, in economics and Ulrich (1990) even regards the instrumentalisation of culture as counter-productive. The last-mentioned critique is at least discussable. Why should the instrumentalisation of organisational culture with the aim to achieve changes or to maintain a company be counter-productive? A position like Ulrich's (1990) would exclude every engagement with organisational culture that is not just for the benefit of knowledge, as any other engagement would be regarded as potentially dangerous or negative (counter-productive). Whereas a trivialisation of culture certainly does not adequately regard the complexity of culture and

social life and interaction (Alvesson 2002), the attempt to change organisational culture to support a better development of an organisation per se does not seem to be counter-productive. An example: If an organisation starts to work consciously at its organisational culture, it certainly is an instrumentalisation of the concept. However, as it is in the interest of every organisational member to work in a company that is competitive and can survive within the market, this can hardly be counter-productive. But it is similar to any change-attempt in organisations: if the problem is not tackled in a correct manner, it can create chaos in an organisation (Sackmann 2007) . In that case, the aftermaths often are counter-productive.

As a study by Scott-Morgan (1995) showed, approximately 70 to 75 per cent of reengineering-projects failed because soft factors that characterise the social interactions between people were not considered (Sackmann 2007). Transmitted onto organisational culture this would mean, if underlying basic assumptions and the existence and effects of sub-groups are not considered, a cultural change based upon a positivistic functional perspective is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

So, the critique on the variable-perspective often discusses that these authors work with a simple perception of organisational culture and a mechanistic idea of changing that (Alvesson 2002; Barney 1991; Heinen & Dill 1990; Marrè 1996; Whipp et al. 1989). These critics deny a direct single correlation between the existence of a certain organisational culture and performance. In their eyes, it is nearly impossible to exclude other influences on performance when researching the role of culture. Whipp et al. (1989) though regard organisational culture as an important part in mastering competitiveness successfully.

At the same time, the practical aspects of the variable-perspective seem to be alluring. According to this author's experience, organisations often face a lot of pressure that leads to the need to produce quick results. Board-members often have short-term contracts, and so are forced to start interventions that promise results in a time-span that will have positive consequences. Therefore, they adopt methods that reduce complexity rather than increase it. So, it is not surprising that many consultancies work with a variable-perspective.

### **2.2.3 Organisational culture as a metaphor**

In comparison to the variable perspective, one finds here a shift of interest from the object of the cognition to knowledge about the object, hence onto the process of cognition (Marré 1997). Culture is used as a metaphor for the whole organisation (Morgan, 1997) and organisations are “socially constructed realities” (p. 142). The process of cognition is based upon observation and description of the behaviour of group members in connection with cultural symbols in different situations (Neubauer 2003). The metaphor perspective makes use of the following basic assumptions: organisational culture is a perspective that serves the understanding of organisations; Organisational culture is a social (collective) construction of organisational reality; Organisational culture consists of landmarks for cognition, thinking, emotions and action (Sackmann 1989, p. 167). According to Morgan (1997, p. 138) to talk about culture means talking about a “process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways”. The use of images and metaphors helps in an understanding of the complexity of organisational culture. At the same time, as the reality is regarded as a construction, these images and metaphors are the result of an interpretation process. Morgan (1997) points out that these images therefore, are always incomplete, biased and therefore potentially misleading. Hence, every image or metaphor always has to be handled with care. As the variable perspective works with a priori dimensions, this critique can be levelled against this perspective as well.

In comparison to the variable perspective, the processes, which characterise organisational reality rather than the object of culture, are in focus. This process-understanding is attached to a longer period of time. Here, the meaning of materialisation of culture is dependent on the context and therefore accessible to ‘insiders’ (Marré 1997). The researcher is either an outsider who is observing, or a so-called participating observer (Neubauer 2003). According to these aspects, one will usually find qualitative methods used to gain information and cognition (besides observation and in-depth-interviews).

This constructivist perspective sees culture as a system of meaning. This system gives the indifferent stream of experience a reasonable structure. Models and structures are the result of common activities and the negotiation of reality. With this, they constitute the basis of communication, the governance of expectations and legitimisation of activities (Marré 1997).



Hence, one can say that organisational culture is a process, where everybody is involved and becomes a carrier of culture, as well as a designer of it (Marré 1997).

In comparison to the functionalist's approach this perspective is much more complex. In the eyes of a practitioner in an organisation this complexity may cause confusion. However, this perspective also has strengths according to Morgan (1997). Whereas the functionalist focuses on visible and audible artefacts and so corresponds with the rational, the metaphor understanding directs attention to another level than that. Symbols and rites become a meaning in this rational system called 'organisation'. Their uncovering helps to detect hidden meanings and values that are behind them. Moreover, at the same time the focus on symbols and rites can cause an isolated examination of them (Morgan 1997). In this case, the differentiation between individual symbols and the search for underlying structures can harm the search for the idea of identity. Then there is the danger of isolating these symbols which will narrow the perspective to that of single aspects again. Metaphors have the strength to give an intuitive approach to a certain culture. At the same time a metaphor like 'family' for example narrows the perspective as aspects outside the family-metaphor are automatically excluded (Morgan 1997). Also, it is very likely that people have different understandings of the concept 'family' as we can see in our societies every day. In addition to that, the researcher him- or herself is part of an individual culture as well. This individual culture is inseparably part of him or her and so brought into the organisation. It is not only the decision for a certain image or metaphor that has limitations as Morgan (1997) described, also the decision itself is already influenced by this individual biography and culture. Because of this, the researcher can be influenced by personal bias and interpretations that could be determinate. Even the presence of the researcher is a possible intervention and may influence the observed situation (Neubauer 2003). As organisations are regarded as social constructs, the need for shared meanings within them is accentuated. Hence, it opens an approach to the basic underlying assumptions according to Schein's (2004) cultural model. Morgan (1997) also suggests that this perspective can help to discover new interpretations of what happens in organisations. According to Alvesson (1990), this leads to a deeper understanding of organisational change – and also to the failure of change attempts. Hence, as the variable perspective represents the notion that an organisation *has* a culture, the metaphor perspective regards the whole organisation as culture: An organisation *is* culture.

Agents of the metaphor perspective emphasise the aspects of understanding of culture much more than that of changing it as the variable perspective. The management of culture is more

a side-aspect, even if it is not denied (Alvesson & Berg 1992). The aim is to create an awareness and sensitivity about the dynamic aspects of culture, as Sackmann (1990) emphasises. With this understanding, these researchers are closer to the anthropologists than functionalists (Sackmann 1989). As organisational culture is a complex issue, the metaphor perspective is complex too. The findings coming with that perspective are always individual, and so, one criticism levelled at this perspective is whether one can achieve concrete cognitions based upon results that researcher want to generalise. Categories and interpretations are inevitably very specific, so that it is difficult to transfer these to other contexts (Neubauer 2003). So, it is likely that just the fact that a researcher asks certain questions about organisational culture will lead to an interviewee regarding situations and reactions in his or her daily (business) life differently. In addition, the researcher is, according to his or her presence in the field, and using methods like in-depth- interviews or participant observation, often very close to the setting, and hence to the resultant data. Therefore, the danger of influencing this is always given. This influence can be unconscious but this vicinity can also produce the hidden persuasion to manipulate the setting or data.

The metaphor perspective is often discussed with an inductive research method of gaining data (Sackmann 2007). Some researchers suggest this approach when one finds a context that is quite unknown and there exists only a little theoretical basis (Sackmann 2007; van Maanen 1979). As the metaphor perspective aims for a better understanding of organisational culture, this perspective does not seem to be very practical in organisational development.

#### **2.2.4 The *has* and *is* debate in organisational culture research**

The understanding of organisational culture revealed in the two perspectives discussed above appear to be contradictory. Whereas the variable-approach is based on the idea that an organisation *has* a specific culture, the metaphor-approach is based on the conviction that an organisation *is* culture. This issue is just one of a “long list of issues about which cultural researchers vehemently disagree” (Martin 2002 p.5). Also, this completely different perspective on culture reflects the discussion already carried out by anthropologists: Is culture to be seen as part of a social-cultural system (descriptive cultural concepts) or as an independent system of meaning (explanatory cultural concepts) (Lässig 2002; Kluckhohn & Kelly 1972)? Representatives of the variable-approach give the impression that culture can be

changed and subordinated beneath other organisational needs quite easily. As many complex change-initiatives have failed (Beer et al. 1990; Cameron & Quinn 2006; Kotter 1996), this seems at least questionable. At the same time, successful cultural change can happen (Hahnloser & Hasenböhler 1991; Huber 1991, Lässig 2002), as it is presented in the literature.

**Table 2.4 Perspectives of organisational culture research**

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Culture as variable</b>	<b>Culture as metaphor</b>
Cultural understanding	Socio-cultural system	System of meaning
Understanding of knowledge	Objectivistic	Subjectivist
Organisation	<i>Has</i> culture	<i>Is</i> culture
Explanation approach	Functionalistic	Interpretative
Approach	Result-oriented	Process-oriented
Aim	Description and design	Explication

(Neubauer 2003, p. 19/translation by the author)

In her work about integration during mergers, Schuppener (2006) indicates that functionalist approaches attempt to analyse organisational culture, with the aim of predicting whether a successful integration can be expected. On the other hand, agents of the metaphor approach indicate that organisational culture as a subjective reality cannot be objectively measured or indicated. According to Schuppener (2006), a functionalist's approach does not explain the fact that organisational members of different subcultures estimate the consequences of a merger or acquisition differently, and react differently. As this perspective acts on the assumption of a homogeneous culture, this is the consequence of that. On the other hand, social-constructivist approaches consider the existence of subcultures and diversity, and focus upon explaining the differences. The metaphor perspective accentuates the process-character of organisational culture (Marré 1997). Some agents of the metaphor perspective share a normative attitude that declines any attempt to change organisational culture, as they regard these changes, in principal, as damaging (Marré 1997). As critics of the functional perspective criticise the idea of a 'bad' or 'good' organisational culture, it seems that these authors take for granted that culture is, in fact, something positive. Otherwise, a change would not always be negative. Schreyögg (1991) indicates that it has been proven by research that cultures can appear dysfunctional or even destructive for organisational members or the organisation itself. Therefore, change in these cultures is definitively not damaging. So, if we are convinced that

organisational culture can be consciously changed, and that at the same time, culture is a highly complex concept, we find ourselves in a dilemma that the debate between these two perspectives cannot solve, as both have advantages and disadvantages.

Hence, it is sensible to search for another perspective that allows a conciliation of these two perspectives. Some researchers have developed a perspective that does exactly that, and promotes a cultural dynamic perspective. These models of culture claim that organisations at the same time *have* cultures and that they *are* cultures. Therefore, what we find is a dynamic construct that develops continuously and the levels of culture influence each other in a never-ending process. The following section presents two models of this kind.

### **2.2.5 Organisational culture as a dynamic process**

As a solution to this 'is-or has-problem', one can regard so-called 'integrated or dynamic approaches', for example Hatch (1993) and Sackmann (1989, 2002, 2004). They describe organisational culture as a dynamic system, which is both a result *and* a process of human interaction. This means: organisations *are* cultures and they *have* cultural aspects at the same time. This section will discuss the models of Hatch (1993) and Sackmann (2004) and the consequences for the present work. In the perspective of Hatch (1993) and Sackmann (2004), organisational members at the same time are both cultural bearer and cultural designer. Both of these approaches can be linked to the cultural understanding of Schein (2004), as they regard the diversity inside the organisations as well as the reciprocal impact of hidden aspects that cannot be observed on the surface.

The focus of Sackmann (1989, 2002, 2004) is 'organisational culture', an issue she has worked on since the end of the 1980s. Her work, backed by a number of research projects, has been to explore the development between organisational culture and success. She shares a cognitive approach, where in the concrete assessment and work with organisational culture, she particularly regards the conscious aspects of cognition and knowledge (Pittrof 2011; Sackmann 2007, 2006, 2004, 1997, 1989). Within the cognitive perspective, culture is understood as a system of shared cognitions (knowledge and beliefs). During socialisation, one learns certain rules and patterns and therefore, organisations are seen as systems of knowledge (Neubauer 2003). According to this understanding, organisational members aim to

recognise themselves within this system (Argyris & Schön 1978; Neubauer 2003). Researchers within this perspective aim to uncover these rules and patterns (Neubauer 2003).

Organisational culture is something that an organisation develops and which then becomes organisational reality (Sackmann 1989). She regards her model not just as a summation of the functional and metaphor approaches, but as a synthesis of them. Sackmann (1989, 1990) assumes that organisational culture is a complex and dynamic construct. This construct evolves by human interaction and activity in answer to problems and becomes manifest in different forms, some of them apparent, others comprehensible. All facets are complexly linked and multi-causal. Sackmann (1989, 1990, 2004) accepts that 'culture', by itself, is neither good nor bad. It fulfils certain functions in a functional or dysfunctional way.

These aspects consider the complexity of human activity and organisational culture. The organisation here is an open system, but is regarded quasi as a biological membrane that allows biological substances to interchange. These substances, at the same time, are influenced and also influence each other. Hence, the development of organisational culture can be seen as an active, manageable process, without losing sight of its complexity. The possibility of subcultures is not excluded, as she points out the complex and multi-causal conjunction of single facets. According to Sackmann's (2007) understanding, organisational culture influences strategy and strategy-development, structures and processes inside organisations, systems, and, managing and leadership-processes. Every organisational member is seen as a carrier of culture and therefore influences and is influenced by the above mentioned aspects.

Rites, rituals or ceremonies are seen as cultural manifestations. However, one can only draw limited conclusions from these observations about the current culture. In fact, they could be relics from the past (Sackmann, 1989). According to this approach, Sackmann uses the widely used metaphor of an iceberg, from which one only sees a small part above the water. The largest part lies hidden beneath the surface. So, one can only say something about the likelihood of this part (Sackmann, 1990, 2002, 2004).

She defines organisational culture as "the underlying shared basic assumptions of a group which are, on the whole, typical for the group in question. They have an impact on the group members' perceiving, thinking [underlying assumptions], acting, and feeling [espoused beliefs

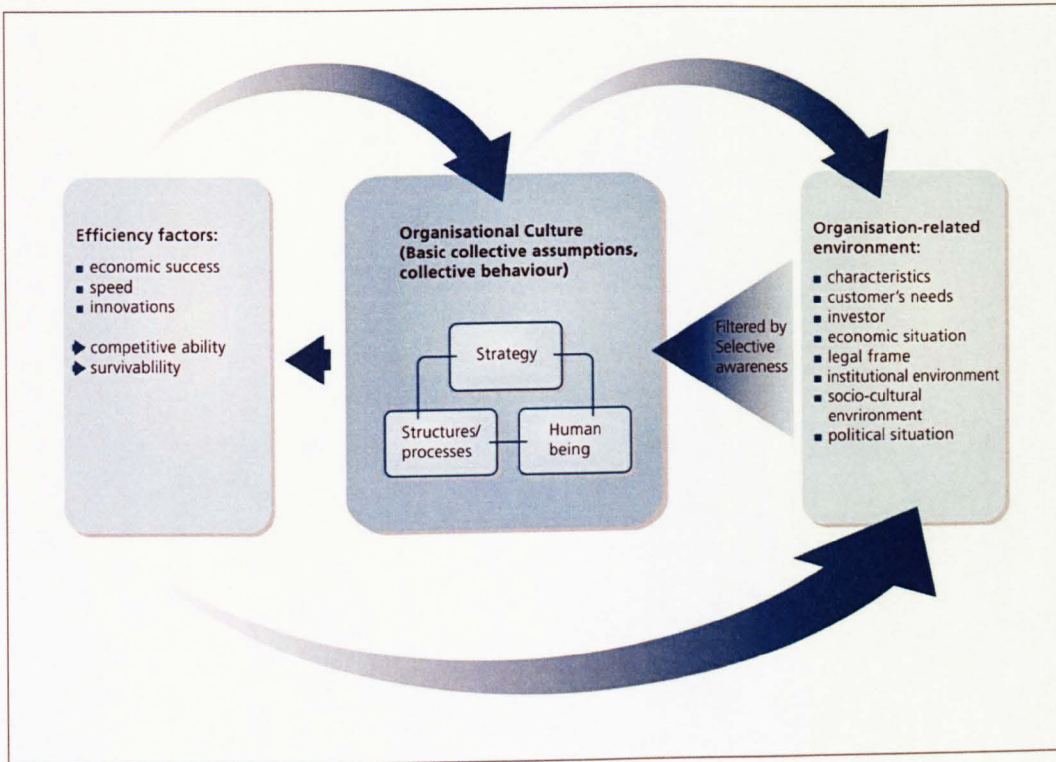
and values] [influence of underlying assumptions] and these may also manifest in their actions and artefacts [artifacts]. Convictions are no longer conscious; [underlying assumptions], they evolve from and develop through the group's experience, i.e. they are being learned and passed on to new members of the group” (Sackmann 2004, p. 25; translation by the author). The annotations by the author in squared brackets refer to the related levels in Schein’s (2004) model. These annotations show that, although Sackmann differentiates more and explicitly refers to the group, her definition is very close to Schein’s.

This model integrates the functional and the metaphor approach. With this concept, Sackmann (2002) aims to develop a management which acts as culturally aware, and therefore, at the same time, regards the evolutionary process of cultural development without forgetting to create basic conditions, to influence and support this development. Cultures are an inherent part of organisations, and important for their functioning.

When Schein developed his model of organisational culture in 1985 (Marré 1997), he emphasised that organisational culture develops by finding successful solutions to problems presented by the environment. Also, he discussed the reciprocal influences between the three levels (see Figure 2.2). When organisations are confronted with the need for change, it is important to evaluate whether the existing culture is going to be supportive or counter-productive for the organisation’s goals and strategies (Sackmann 2007). According to the above presented influences on strategy, structures and processes, as well as the human beings, Sackmann (2007) regards the development of a management that is acting culturally aware, as important. A mature management and organisation that is permanently reflecting and working on cultural aspects, is a precondition for successful cultural change.

The following figure (2.3) presents environmental factors that influence organisational culture according to Sackmann (2004). At the same time, the perception of these factors themselves is influenced by the specific organisational culture and interpreted and transferred accordingly (Sackmann 2004).

**Figure 2.3 Factors of influence and efficiency according to Sackmann (2004)**



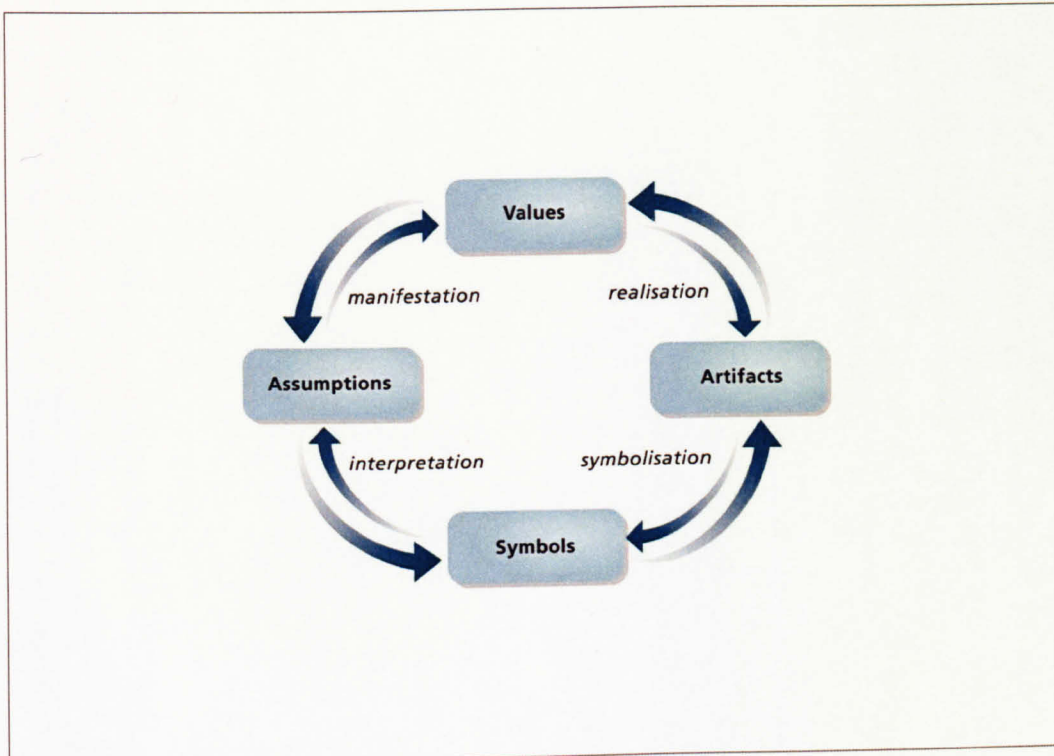
(Sackmann 2004; p. 33, translation by the author)

Although in her definition, the unconscious, taken-for-granted level of underlying assumptions is mentioned, a focus of her cultural development process seems to be the apparent manifestations of cultural aspects and the environment. With this she clearly reduces the complexity. However, diminution of complexity is always dangerous, as important aspects that are likely to have a significant impact may not be regarded adequately. Neubauer (2003) and Marré (1997) state that this model clearly integrates the variable and the metaphor perspective, but misses further differentiation and structure of processes. Hence, the operationalisation of the constructs would be difficult. However, Sackmann's (for example: 2002, 2004, 2007) research and publications about culturally aware management and the many thought-provoking impulses based on this are reasonable enough to regard her model as important in the discussion.

Hatch (1993) developed a model that offers a conceptual framework, and, at the same time, fulfils Sackmann's demands of integrating the variable and metaphor perspective (Marré

1997; Neubauer 2003). This framework is useful for analysis and development of appropriate interventions. Therefore, this model will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Figure 2.4** The cultural dynamics model according to Hatch (1993)



(Hatch 1993, p. 686)

In 1993, Hatch published an article in which she presented her ‘cultural dynamic model’. Although this model is based upon Schein’s (1985/2004), it offers a further development. Hatch (1993) did not share Schein’s (1985/2004) focus upon the underlying assumptions: “Schein’s view focuses on what artifacts and values reveal about basic assumptions. In contrast, the dynamic perspective asks: How is culture constituted by assumptions, values, artifacts, symbols and the processes that link them?” (Hatch 1993, p. 660; Marré 1997). She added symbols to the model and focused onto the relationship between the different elements, which she described as transformation-processes (Marré 1997, p. 19).

As culture is a dynamic process, it underlies a permanent transformation: manifestations, realisation, symbolisation and interpretation. These transformations can run in two directions, as presented in Figure 2.4 (Marré 1997; Neubauer 2003). As the arrows show, Hatch regards the modes of operation as “two wheels of interconnected processes, one moving forward and the other backward with reference to the standard concept of time.” (Hatch 1993, p. 686). The



processes in clockwise direction she calls proactive and the others retroactive. “A truly dynamic appreciation of culture is found in the counteraction of the two wheels.” (Hatch 1993, p. 686). As this figure also shows, there are no starting or end-points in a cultural process. It consists of two never-ending circles.

One example may explain the mechanism of the processes. For this, the author reverts to the theory Y of McGregor (1989). According to McGregor (1989), there are two ideas of man: X and Y. Whereas X stands for a misanthropical view of man, Y stands for a humanistic point of view. For example, he internalises a manager with X-theory employees as people with an inborn dislike of work, who aim for a high form of security and avoid responsibility and engagement. This leads to a management principle of guidance and control (McGregor 1989). When taking this for granted (assumption), this leads to a “perception of lazy acts” (Hatch 1993, p. 662). This will colour thoughts and feelings about these acts and lead to certain activities such as a system of control and avoidance of assigning responsibility. This will be mirrored in symbols which are then interpreted in a certain way, which again affirms the assumptions as correct. On the other hand, employees will likely act within the frame of reference. So a vicious circle occurs which is difficult to break. According to Hatch (1993), this would explain at the same time both stability and change in culture, as the circle can go in both directions.

However, what would happen if new management with the Y-idea joins the company? The culture would certainly not change quickly, but the same mechanism will start. Hence, according to Hatch’s (1993) model some employees will probably use the new possibilities, and a slow, but noticeable change will arise. The transformation processes by Hatch (1993) can be examined in both directions: forward (proactive, prospective), this means clockwise and backward (retroactive, retrospective). These transformation processes will be discussed in Section 2.3.2 as they offer a method to assess and change along of organisational cultures.

Although, Hatch’s (1993) model offers a useful way for examining organisational cultures, it also contains some difficulties. In comparison to Sackmann (2007), she considers the unconscious underlying aspects of organisational culture and opens the range for a lot of perspectives. At the same time, the borderline between the transformation-processes is not

sharp. In addition, Marré (1997) questions whether all processes are really required and whether they can be separated, while working with the model.

Within the above sections Schein's (1985, 1995, 2004, 2009) model of 'culture' was discussed in detail by me. Whereas the functional approach creates the impression that culture change is simple and quick and so suggests a risk-less opportunity, the metaphor-approach leaves one with the idea that it is better not to attempt conscious culture change because of its complexity and depth. The dynamic aspect of this model is further developed by researchers like Hatch (1993) or Sackmann (2006) but remains still very close to Schein (2004). Furthermore, the dynamic aspect they highlight already is part of his model. The approaches of Hatch (1993) and Sackmann (1986, 2002, 2006, 2007) based on the cultural model of Schein (1985, 2004) integrate both the functional and metaphor perspectives. They show multiple ways of how to engage with organisational culture. According to their perspective, one cannot detect culture as a whole, but one can as single aspects (Marré 1989). Single aspects by nature, can be managed much more easily and one could apportion the relevant steps. This may sound opportunistic, but, it is possible to affect a cultural structure, and in a certain time create change, even of assumptions. However, I think it has to be done with great care and awareness. The alternative would be to relinquish any attempt at change because of its complexity, or the fear of impossibility. Would it be wise to do this and miss the chance of further developing the firm? I do not think so: if abandoned to evolution, the result may not be in the interests of the continued existence of a company.

Hence, I will refer to Schein's (1985, 2004) definition of organisational culture and will take this as basis for the following work. I accept the existence of sub-cultures as well as unconsciously working influences on culture. Therefore, the cultural dynamic perspective is judged to be the most appropriate for me. In addition, as Hatch's (1993) model grasps culture with all these aspects and so widens the cognitive approach from Sackmann (2006, 2007), reference will be made to Hatch's (1993) model for an organisation to approach culture change.

The above sections have presented the heterogeneity of definitions accorded to organisational culture and the perspectives on culture presented in the literature. As a basis for this thesis, reference is made to Schein's (1985) model of cultural levels. In this thesis I adopt the perspective that an organisation *has* culture and that it *is* culture at the same time, and that all organisational members are carriers of culture. Also, it is assumed that organisational culture,

although highly complex, can be changed consciously. The model from Hatch (1993) offers many possibilities for the assessment and change of organisational culture. Although she does not give explicit hints as to how this could be carried out exactly, it seems to be a useful concept for the present study. However, the question remains open of how to change organisational culture in reality. Therefore, the following section (2.3) will discuss different models of cultural change, as presented in the literature.

## **2.3 Managing the cultural change**

Researchers of the variable and dynamic approaches developed differing models of cultural change (for example: Deal & Kennedy 2000; Hatch 1993; Kobi & Wüthrich 1986; Sackmann 2002). Many of these researchers used case studies to develop their models (i.e. Schein, 2004) or worked as consultants at the same time as conducting research, for example Sackmann ([www.inibw.de/wow1\\_2/team/sackmann](http://www.inibw.de/wow1_2/team/sackmann)) (and as the author of this thesis does herself). Therefore, one has to be aware of possible bias resulting from commercial interests, which may have influenced the methodology used by these authors. In addition, there are differences according to the philosophical underpinnings (functionalist – metaphor - dynamic approach). These philosophical underpinnings lead to the use of certain methods, and hence the interventions for changing the organisational culture as well. However, the reported models mostly follow the same sequence during the change processes: recognition/decision to take a closer look at the organisational culture, measurement of it, development of goals, implementation (for example: Kobi & Wüthrich 1986; Schein 2004; Sackmann 2002).

### **2.3.1 Why change an organisational culture?**

If organisational culture is as complex an issue as argued above, and therefore poses many risks when one tries to change it - then why change an organisational culture? Circumstances that lead to a cultural change project can appear from inside and from outside (Sackmann 2007). Kotter regards the macro-economic powers as a driver of general change (Kotter 1996). Kraus et al. (2004) stated that very often a financial crisis, a change in market conditions, new technologies, new boards, global projects and co-operations, knowledge-management, environmental changes, mergers and many other things cause the need for

change. It is obvious that these factors will continue to exist and therefore change in organisations will become a regular challenge. The reasons for cultural change are linked up with these. Pressure and other influences from the environment cause changes (Kotter 1996, Kraus et al. 2004). To face the demands caused by this successfully, structures, strategy and therefore the organisations have to adapt to these demands. Bate (1994) summarises the reasons for cultural change as: to change structure, to change strategy and (wider) to change the organisation. Hence, most change projects also concern the organisational culture and demand for its change or at least adaption as well.

The reason for many failing change-initiatives can be found in an absence of soft and cultural factors (Cameron & Quinn 2006; Kotter & Heskett 1992; Sackmann 2007; Schuppener 2006; Scott-Morgan 1995). Therefore, it is important to regard the cultural process as well. Hatch's (1993) model shows the strong connection between values and activity, as well as Sackmann's (2002) approach. Hence, any change in an organisation at the same time influences, and is influenced by, the culture of the organisation and its sub-groups.

As the above sections argued, cultural change is very complex as it not only addresses procedures and organisation charts. Much more, cultural change is inseparably connected with individual and collective beliefs and values. Therefore, one can assume that cultural changes cause even more resistance than structural changes. At the same time, as change becomes mandatory, employees appear to become more and more pessimistic and suspicious of the motives for change, due to their experience. They regard managers as incapable of that task. Many of them are tired of change (Cameron & Quinn 2006; Kotter 1996; Zink et al. 2009). One can assume that this attitude according structural changes occurs at cultural change processes too. So, if there is no trust in the responsible persons who need to cope with changes likes process-chains etc. how should they trust that an even more difficult change could be achieved by the same persons in charge? Aside from this, the planned change of an organisation requires a 'constructive destruction' (Deeg & Weibler 2000; Neubauer 2003). This means that existing structures and well-rehearsed processes must be destroyed by some kind of 'creative destruction' (Schumpeter 1997; Neubauer 2003). As long as a system or organisation is in balance and people feel comfortable with it, they will probably see no reason to change the situation. Therefore, a dysbalance or 'creative destruction' has to happen (Schein 2004). Reorganisations have consequences for personal work-flows (for example new contact persons, colleagues, IT etc.). In extreme cases, individual career hopes may end (for example: the number of managers will decrease after the restructuring) and there may be other

consequences for personal life plans (Neubauer 2003). So, it is natural that this causes opposition. Within the context of cultural change the above mentioned would mean that this 'destruction' and 'dysbalance' would affect values and assumptions. Again, this can raise the resistance against cultural change or cause uncertainty. If decisions threaten (subjective) scope for decision-making and activities, psychological reactance occurs (Brehm & Brehm 1981). When changing organisational culture by a conscious and controlled process, values and assumptions are necessarily affected. It seems obvious that any attempt that affects the people concerned will cause psychological reactance and a process of 'unlearning' routines that "may have become part of our personal and group identity" (Schein 2004, p. 321). However, if the 'old' culture that is going to be changed is evaluated and experienced as undesirable it seems to be very likely that the resistances are not as great as if the people feel well within their 'old' culture (Schein 2004). Nevertheless, there will be situations where cultural change has to be conducted to support the success of strategic and other organisational changes. As argued above, to minimise failure in changes of any kind, the organisational culture has to be taken into account, even if the above mentioned challenges are likely to appear. Therefore, independently of the perspective on culture one shares, the change-process has to be conducted with great care and awareness. Researchers present different models of change. The following sections will discuss some of these models of change according to the above argued perspectives.

### **2.3.2 Models of cultural change and the reality in organisations**

Literature about change management in general is widespread. As organisational and cultural change show very close linkages it seems to be sensible, to regard insights into organisational change processes. In Germany, authors such as Doppler (2003) and Doppler and Lauterburg (1997) are well-known. Within their work they discuss, how organisational change can be conducted successfully. Most common is the requirement of a participation of all concerned people (Doppler 2003; Doppler & Lauterburg 1997; Doppler et al. 2002), a demand that is also formulated by researchers about organisational culture change (for example: Sackmann 2006, 2007; Schein 2004; Vahs & Leiser 2003). However, other researchers also highlight the fears and resistances that occur when changes (organisational and culture) become apparent (Brehm & Brehm 1981; Kets de Vries 2009; Kraus et al. 2004; Neubauer 2003). According to these researchers, many people, confronted with organisational and cultural change, are struggling with fears they may sustain a loss, or have interpersonal conflicts, and

dissatisfaction. The occurrence of these emotions very likely differs between individuals. In addition, the intensity of change is different as well. Nadler and Tushman (1990) argue that within incremental change the intensity is low, as this change addresses an advancement and modification of something already existing. It can be assumed that in this case, fears and other negative emotions related to change also are low. On the other side Nadler and Tushman (1990) discuss a fundamental or transformational change as a change that is characterised by a profound or radical change and a high intensity. Here, operational methods and the framework of the entire organisation are involved. My conclusion is that it is very likely that also emotions of fear and/or resistance against an all-embracing change like culture change will be more intensive. Section 2.2 discussed definitions of organisational culture and different models of cultural change. As has been argued, according to the nature of organisational culture concerning underlying assumptions and values, this issue affects the individual completely. So, when attempting to change organisational culture, organisations aim to conduct a fundamental or transformational change. Therefore in my opinion, the appearance of emotional challenging situations and resistance against this change is very likely and hence has to be observed and regarded when planning interventions and activities.

However, the researchers of cultural change suggest making a cultural assessment before starting change-attempts (Deal & Kennedy 2000; Hatch, 1993; Kobi & Wüthrich 1986; Neubauer 2003; Schein 2004; Schuppener 2006). These diagnoses are based on particular definitions of culture, the perspective and theoretical constructs. Therefore, the quality of methods has to be estimated according to these, their use and aims (Marré 1997; Rousseau 1990).

Neuberger and Kompa (1987) developed a matrix that differentiates between both a pattern *of* behaviour and pattern *for* behaviour as the objects of research (Marré 1987). Also, they differentiate in accordance with the methodological approaches (Table 2.5). This matrix offers an orientation for classification of different approaches to cultural change, notably those with a variable or metaphor perspective. However, it is not always possible to make a clear division between methods used. In particular, the cultural dynamic perspective cannot be clearly assigned to one sector. This perspective calls for mixed methods, as it aims to discover both, socio-cultural constitution and psychological factors.

**Table 2.5 Schema for classification of methods to assess organisational culture**

<b>Contents of organisational culture</b>	<b>Reactive quantitative methods</b>	<b>Nonreactive qualitative methods</b>
<b>Socio-cultural constitution</b>	I Interviews with key-players; Questionnaires to describe leadership-behaviour; Structural analysis of interactions at conferences; Systematic-quantitative analysis of minutes	III Stories; slogans; prescribed terminology; jokes; morals; traditions; rites; clothes; symbols of status; emblem of organisation; awards
<b>Psychological factors (latent structures)</b>	II Questionnaires to capture norms, values, schemata of thinking; Identification of latent structures within leadership style- and organisational climate characterisations	IV Spontaneous interpretations of meaning and functionality of existing processes; 'understanding' interpretation by outsiders of stories, rituals, and artifacts

(Neuberger & Kompa 1987, p. 40 according to Marré 1997; translation by the author)

We usually use typologies in our everyday life to help us orient to a complex world. We label things with categories that help us to decide in time and serve as a compass (Schein 2004). Therefore, it is reassuring to find categories or types to which every culture could be assigned. This would reduce complexity and give the possibility of comparison. Hence, it is not surprising that the idea of typologies, like the one of Cartwright and Cooper (1992), or Quinn (1988) (to name just a couple) is associated with the functional approach. Here, organisations are attributed to certain clusters like behaviour. These clusters have been developed by mainly quantitative research. There exist a lot of different typologies and the names for the categories often evoke associations. Therefore, the following paragraphs will discuss some aspects related to typologies and their use to achieve cultural change.

Kellner (1997) published a typology with categories such as village-culture, jungle-culture, city-culture or hiking-culture. She regards these different cultures in terms of development. City-culture, for example, is the third level after village- and jungle-culture (Kellner 1997; Schuppener 2006). Another well-known typology was published by Deal and Kennedy (1982, 2000). They describe different cultures according to two dimensions (decision risk and environmental feedback) as tough guy/macho, bet your company, process, and work hard – play hard. In my opinion the associations that come with labels can be positive or negative. With that view, these typologies automatically include the idea of 'better' or 'worth' cultures,

which are more successful than the others, and so are more admirable (Schuppener 2006). These typologies seem to offer easy answers to assess and change organisational culture. This surely can be alluring to practitioners who often have to offer solutions without having too much time. However, as with a choice for selection of a certain metaphor for an organisation or culture (see Section 2.2.3), these categories also reduce the perspective. In addition, the existence of subcultures is excluded.

‘Strong’ cultures can cause trouble as well. Organisations with cultures that are too strong can adopt a character similar to an ideology, or even a sect. If this happens, they develop a closed system and are no longer able to administer change in the environment quickly. Many authors describe ‘strong’ cultures as homogeneous and consistent (Dill & Hügler 1987; Schreyögg 1989; van Maanen & Barley 1983). In this case, sub-cultures can be regarded as difficult if not dangerous for the whole. With this perspective, the potential of differences and subcultures for development and innovation is denied (Martin & Siehl 1983). In fact, many authors regard a ‘good’ organisational culture as uniform. Authors (Cameron & Quinn 1999; Goffee & Jones 1998) encircle different types of organisations and so imply that these are comparable and by doing this they reduce the complexity of ‘culture’. This certainly helps the observers to orient themselves, but at the same time allows for the danger of oversimplification as Alvesson (2002) noted.

The advantage seems obvious at first: Typologies appear to make it easier to find an approach to an organisational culture and assist in “building higher-order theoretical categories” (Schein 2004, p. 85-6), or to compare different organisations. Also, when analysing a certain organisational culture, it appears helpful. However, the approaches are all very different, and this again makes comparison difficult, i.e. Goffee and Jones (1998) vs. Cameron and Quinn’s (1999) typology. However, the denegation of heterogeneity and subcultures as well as the reduction of complexity, limit the potential of these models to assess and change ‘culture’. Therefore, I reject the use of any kind of typology. The disadvantages of typologies predominate over the advantages.

Another well-known example of typologies is the research of Gert Hofstede (1990). Based on his research in the company IBM, he developed five dimensions to describe national culture according to the respective shape (Geschwill 2011; Schuppener 2006; Thornhill et al. 2000). Intercultural training conducted to prepare expatriates often is based on his results and



therefore, is well-known to many managers. However, McSweeney (2002) criticises Hofstede's work. He argues that the sample in some countries would have been too small to present evident findings. In addition, the number of dimensions is too small to give sufficient information about a whole nation's character. Also, Hofstede conducted his research inside one organisation, and deduced from the results inside one national division, to the whole country. Beside this criticism, Hofstede's approach is also attractive, as it offers the possibility of clearer orientation, when a manager is going to become an expatriate. At the same time, this means that one goes with certain stereotypes in mind, and this can cause difficulties, as one behaves according to how one has imagined others to be. With this, the individual's perspective is narrowed and often one cannot notice aspects that fail to fit within this image.

Typologies make one feel that mastering complex questions is easy. As managers and CEO's often do not have the luxury of time for change-projects, it is easy to understand why typologies are quite popular. The advantages are clear: typologies simplify, give orientation, help to compare, and help to build high-order theoretical categories. Many of the functionalist researchers use a simplified mechanistic idea of systems (Heinen & Dill 1990). Often, they do not reflect methodological presumptions (Klimecki & Probst 1990). The diminution of complexity necessarily leads to a situation where complete aspects are blocked, as they cannot be grasped or assessed by deduction. It narrows the perspective; it simplifies a complex system and results in the danger of possible false conclusions. Besides that, categories do not give information about specific meaning in a specific organisation (Martin 2002).

Another danger, when making an assessment and following work based upon typologies, is the following: if an organisation does not fit into the scheme – what will be done with the results? One could be misled to make the organisation fit to the scheme and so excludes important aspects. In addition, typologies refer to an image of homogeneous cultures within an organisation. The existence of sub-cultures is excluded. To ignore the existence of sub-cultures could lead to a failure of the change attempt, as this may blank out an important part of the reality inside organisations.

The heterogeneity inside organisations appears in subcultures of differing number and kind. These subcultures produce multiple meanings and interpret them from their own specific cultural contexts (Hatch & Cunliffe 2006). These interpretations then blend to a socially

constructed organisational reality (Hatch & Cunliffe 2006). As the present study explores the role of middle management during cultural change, it seems to be important to present some information about the role and impact of subcultures, as these managers will be members of at least one subgroup and -culture. And as will be argued, research with a middle management perspective within organisational culture change still seems to be missing (Section 2.4.4).

Subcultures are groups, which develop an identity of their own within their group (Sackmann 2002). They differ from other groups by their action knowledge and their lexical knowledge, which probably distinguishes them from others (Sackmann 2002, p. 55). As such, they take action on the basis of their unique collective understandings (Hatch & Cunliffe 2006). With an understanding of organisational members as carriers of culture, the members of subcultures carry their individual culture into the organisation's culture and so influence it (and are influenced by it). Therefore, it is inevitable that one must take account of these groups if cultural change is to be achieved.

It is a common phenomenon that one finds different departments in organisations carrying out necessary tasks: IT-service, accountancy, marketing, sales, production etc. Also, one very often has the impression that these teams, or people, act and behave differently. A simple example makes it clear. If a consultant asks a group of HR-staff about their feelings about a difficult management situation, the probability is very high that he or she receives not only one, but many answers. Asking the same question of a group of engineers or IT people will result in less, even if both groups are working in the same company. This difference can be expected because the HR specialists are often used to seeing a problem like this not only from the factual side, but also taking into account the inter- and intrapersonal aspects and discuss a problem on a meta-level. IT engineers, according to their profession, tend to analyse the situation more from the factual side. Chao and Moon (2005) widened the cultural perspective with their work on people with developing a meta-theory of a cultural mosaic, which takes into account the diversity and complexity of culture and subculture. They "conceptualize culture as a pattern of cultural identities within individuals that has implications for the conceptualization and assessment of culture at the multiple level of analysis" (Chao & Moon 2005, p. 1128). Chao & Moon (2005) identified demographic, geographic, and associative features that underlay culture. These facets again shape multiple group identities for people and can help explain the development and varied forms of subgroups and their cultures. As the existence of these groups cannot be ignored, the question is what influence these different

cultures have on the organisational culture and any change to it? The second question is, if certain groups have a higher influence than others, how these groups can be involved positively into the change process.

Research about subcultures can be divided into integrative and differentiation studies, where the last-mentioned examines differences between subgroups, including inconsistencies, as “inescapable and desirable, both descriptively and normatively” (Martin 2002; p. 102). The growth of an organisation is attended by a differentiation, so that subcultures arise. These groups, quite possibly, consciously differentiate themselves from the others (Sackmann 2002).

According to Martin (2002), subcultures can differentiate along different lines such as horizontal (functional) or vertical (hierarchical) lines. In addition, there may exist context-specific subcultures based on networks of personal contacts at work, friendship or demographic identities. In the context of organisations, subcultures are often regarded just within the organisations (for example: Sackmann 2002). This ignores the fact that people do not only act within their organisation, but are members of subgroups ‘outside’ as well (Chao & Moon 2005). Probably the values that one shares with these subgroups will have an influence on the behaviour one shows in his or her organisational subgroups and so will influence the organisational culture as well. Within the organisation, subgroups have contacts and react with each other. Siehl and Martin (1984) mention four types of reactions: dominating, enhancing, orthogonal or countercultural. They regard enhancing subcultures as groups that enthusiastically support the organisational culture, orthogonal subcultures will preserve independent values and beliefs that neither interfere nor celebrate organisational culture, and countercultures hold values and beliefs that actively challenge organisational culture (Hatch & Cunliffe 2006; Siehl & Martin 1984).

Fiol (1991, p. 200) describes the role of contextual identities in linking behaviours, and their social meaning in organisations. Identity “is a concept rooted in psychology and sociology where it is used to characterize an individual’s relationship to a larger cultural system (Goffman 1967). It is essential to note that the concept refers not to the larger system per se, but to people’s understanding of themselves in relation to the system/s. It thus serves as a critical link between people’s particular behavioural contexts and the underlying values that give them meaning”. The concept of ‘identity’ seems to have some important relationship to

the issue of subcultures. The behaviour one shows is as dependent on identity as it is from the subgroups to which one belongs. It is likely, that there is a big intersection between the values and behaviour according to identity and that of the subculture. Therefore, it is inevitable that one must have regard to the concept of identity when trying to understand and change organisational culture, as this attempt will always affect identity and subcultures as well.

Research has shown that the relationship between these subcultures can be mutually reinforcing, conflicting, or independent (Louis 1985; Martin 2002). They can develop according to manifold factors such as department, seniority, membership of a professional group, ethnic and others (Sackmann 1997; Trice & Byer 1993). Also, they can take on a functional or dysfunctional role and so influence the organisational culture on the level of the company as a whole (Martin 2002; Sackmann 2002). Hence, subcultures emphasise the complexity of an organisational culture. It is important to work out how they interact with each other and the organisation as a whole, to identify possibilities for interventions to support organisational cultural change.

Results of the social identity theory back up the existence of subcultures, as they attest that the formation of groups is inevitable and social processes to categorise can be found anywhere (Mayrhofer et al. 2003). The probability of subcultures grows with the size of organisations (Sackmann 2002; Van Maanen & Barley 1998). However, even subgroups are not homogeneous themselves and so they do not necessarily share the same culture. According to Chao and Moon's (2005) cultural mosaic, group identities could be much more influenced by the sharing of cultural mosaic tiles such as gender, nationality, profession, and age. However, beside the membership to a certain subgroup (i.e. middle manager), cultural mosaic tiles could help to bridge between one and another subgroup. Hence, it is important to pay regard not only to the existence of subgroups and cultural mosaic tiles, but, also to be aware of the different reactions of them, and their perspectives on change inside an organisation. It is most likely that an attempt at change only can be successful if this is taken into account. In addition, it is advisable to accept the existence of different groups and identities within a company as something natural, which is neither good nor bad by nature. As subcultures can act in different ways, they should be examined the same way as Morgan (1997) advises to "...observe the day-to-day functioning of a group or organization to which one belongs, as if one were an outsider. Adopt the role of anthropologist" (p. 129).

The above sections showed that typologies are useful to a certain extent, but exclude the existence of subgroups. Besides that, other limitations have been discussed. Therefore, the use of typologies to assess and change an organisational culture does not fit to my understanding and it is a disadvantage to go into an organisation with a predicted image of what is there to be found.

Hatch (1993) and her model of cultural dynamics provides another approach to organisational culture change. Her dynamic process is a cycle that takes effect for both directions (clockwise and counter; see also Figure 2.4 Section 2.2.5). For example the value 'openness' will be realised within an organisation by discussions and transparency. Artefacts that demonstrate this value could be the existence of regular discussions between superiors and subordinates or the publication of a meaningful employee newspaper. At the process of symbolisation, artifacts and activities are attached with meaning (Marré 1997). An example could be the intensification of the employee meetings in difficult times or the other way the cancellation of the meetings during that time. It is very likely that employees would interpret these activities in the one or other form that according to Hatch (1993) could cause assumptions that again manifest themselves in values etc. In her work, Hatch discusses the impact of the transformation processes. According to the reciprocal dynamic character of her model, cultural assessment and change could start at any point and then proceed following the circle.

The transformation processes presented by Hatch (1993) not only offer leverages to decipher and assess organisational cultures according to the particular context. They also open the perspective to manifold interventions to join and control cultural change. Table 2.6 shows suggestions that she makes in order to study the whole cultural process.

Here, Hatch suggests, without exception, qualitative methods. So, the addition of quantitative methods, as presented by Sackmann (2007) seems sensible, as this would cover cognitive elements as well. Organisations are mostly used to working with quantitative methods and when doing research inside an organisation it is very likely that a mixed approach would make it easier to gain access, and to translate results into action.

**Table 2.6 Suggestions for studying the four cultural processes by Hatch (1993)**

<b>Processes (Focal Elements)</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Illustration/Added inspiration</b>
<b>Manifestation (assumptions – values)</b>	Visualisation and scenarios	Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991 Witkin & Poupart, 1985 Kunda, 1993
<b>Realisation (values – artifacts)</b>	Ethnographic observations	Riley, 1983 Barley, 1986 Arora, 1988
<b>Symbolisation (artifacts – symbols)</b>	Ethnographic participation	Van Maanen, 1991 Gioia, 1992
	Aesthetic techniques	Witkin, 1990 Strati, 1990, 1992
	Postmodern ethnography	Jeffcutt, 1991 Linstead, 1993
<b>Interpretation (symbols – assumptions)</b>	Ethnographic interviews	Botti & Pipan, 1991
	Discourse analysis	Donnellon, Gray & Bougon, 1986

(Hatch, 1993, p. 678)

After the assessment of organisational culture the findings should serve as a starting point to analyse the situation and conduct the culture change. The question is how to initiate it. Although Hatch (1993) clearly discusses the transformation processes, she does not give suggestions for the practical doing of it. According to the literature, change can happen in an evolutionary or revolutionary way (Sackmann 2007). The choice made is dependent on the need, and the urgency of action. If the pressure is low, and there is enough time to proceed more slowly, an evolutionary change should be initiated (Sackmann 2007). Gagliardi (1986) discusses three kinds of change: apparent change, revolutionary change and incremental change. The last-mentioned is the only one he assumes to reach the deep level of cultural values and assumptions. However, often the reality in organisations is different: Due to environmental pressure from the market, shareholders or others, the organisation has to react quickly (Sackmann 2007). This does not leave time for intensive analysis and incremental change. Hence, the revolutionary way is chosen. Here, radical change activities take action that must produce results. Although Gagliardi (1986) regards the incremental change as the only one that reaches the deeper levels it cannot be completely excluded that under certain circumstances a revolutionary change could also reach this level. In this case, cultural change could be achieved in a shorter time-span.

In general, successful organisational cultural change has to include different steps that can also be linked to Lewin's (1947, 1951, 1958) work about group activities and learning (Schein 2004). Lewin (1947, 1951, 1958) developed a theory of social change. According to him, systems aim for a balance of forces. So, change results from disturbances that endanger organisational stability. When the forces, leading to disturbances are stronger than resisting forces, the system will start to change (Lewin 1951, 1958): unfreeze – movement (change) – refreeze.

According to Lewin (1947, 1951, 1958) change has to follow the following steps: (1) Break open patterns of thought and behaviour that is taken-for granted, in accordance with critical reflection and inspection: unfreezing; (2) Let go of used patterns that have been successful in the past, and have unlearning: moving; (3) Search for, and create a new reality: moving; (4) Develop a new pattern of thought and behaviour, as well as new competencies: moving; (5) Motivate and commit to keeping the new reality: refreezing. Sackmann (2007) transferred these steps onto cultural change. Schein's (2004) principles about cultural change can also be subdivided in accordance with these steps.

Based on his experiences with organisational change, Schein (2004 p. 331 - 335) postulates that (1) Survival anxiety or guilt must be greater than learning anxiety, (2) Learning anxiety must be reduced, rather than increasing survival anxiety, (3) The change goal must be defined concretely in terms of the specific problem you are trying to fix, not as culture change, (4) Old cultural elements can be destroyed by eliminating the people who carry those elements, but new cultural elements can only be learned if the new behaviour leads to success and satisfaction and (5) Cultural change is always transformative, a change that requires a period of unlearning that is psychologically painful. These principles are illustrated with links to change projects inside organisations. Schein (2004) describes the steps to change culture as: disconfirmation – cognitive moving – refreezing (Schein 2004, pages 320-329). According to his principles: If an organisation – and within it, the organisational members – does not feel a discomfort with the current situation that is greater than the fear of risking a movement to an unknown situation, nothing will happen. So, the organisation and its members have to be 'unfrozen'. After that, learning can start, but this needs time (principles 2-5). However, I do not agree with Schein's (2004) demand that cultural change should not be named as one. Sackmann (2007) discussed very convincingly the importance of developing a management that is acting culturally aware. In order to do this, it seems inevitable that one must discuss matters with managers and staff in an open way. In other words, one must state things as they

are (Sathe 1985). According to the fourth principle, people who do not agree with the new culture have to be eliminated (see above). This is very important, as a new culture is hard to implement, if forces within hold on to old assumptions and values that do not fit any more, or even work against it (Schuppener 2006). Although differing in detail, the models of change according to Lewin (1947, 1951, 1958), Schein (2004), and Sackmann (2007) all require learning of the entire organisation and people within it. However, according to Tosey and Mathison (2008, p. 28) organisational learning demands for a management that “would emphasize sensitivity to the significance of context and metacommunication”. According to them the manner how organisations and people learn is not running analogous (Tosey & Mathison, 2008). This has to be taken into account when designing a cultural change programme as it could happen that people have learned already more than the organisation. Although maybe the individual has already internalised the new organisational culture the organisation itself may not. Therefore patience and communication of the management is asked.

Within the reviewed literature, general suggestions as to how to create successful cultural change are found, and examples of organisations where change has happened were presented. Also, cultural assessments are discussed. Some authors (for example Sackmann 2007) present characteristics of culturally aware management and present a range of possible interventions. However these authors seem to regard the entire management as a homogeneous group without any differentiation between the management levels. The management of change is an issue that is extensively discussed within the literature about organisational development and change. Here, Doppler et al. (2002) suggest conducting the successful change-process by a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. They argue that top management and boards have to set the framework within which the change has to be realised. Top management has to constitute goals and strategies as well as core areas etc. for this process. They are the ones to define milestones and their due-date. In addition, the design of the project organisation as well as its formation and the communication of the concept are important tasks of the top management (Doppler et al. 2002). This is essential, as a strong will at the responsible level of management has to be developed. Without this clarity, it is impossible to conduct the change (Doppler et al. 2002). When the goal and strategy is clear, members of the organisation have to be integrated to develop a common way of achieving those goals and making the strategy a reality. In cultural research, the role of top managers and leaders is often discussed, and there is a consensus that without them cultural change



cannot be successful (for example: Doppler 2003; Doppler & Lauterburg 1997; Doppler et al. 2002; Kobi & Wüthrich 1986; Kotter 1996; Simon 1990). In addition, the literature discusses the influence of organisational culture on management, and on management- and leadership-processes, but the opposite case is often not discussed in any depth (Sackmann 2006). Hence, one can assume that in general terms, cultural change has to be conducted as a top-down strategy and that the firm commitment of top management and board within the organisation has to be achieved. According to the realisation of the intended strategy, the basis is involved to address their perspective and suggestions should flow from the bottom to the top. So, although the initial impulse for the change process and the framework does not come from there, the top-down strategy is added by a bottom-up approach. Beside these two strategies, Glasl (1975, 2008) adds three more: bipolar strategy, middle-outward-strategy, and multiple-nucleus strategy. The bipolar-strategy is a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategy (Schuppener, 2006). This strategy is characterised by the initiation of change-activities at the same time by top management and the basis (top-down and bottom-up). Although this strategy is supposed to achieve quick results, the danger of excluding the middle is given (Schuppener 2006). The 'multiple-nucleus-strategy' is characterised by the appearance of change-processes at the same time on different levels and departments. At the 'middle-outward-strategy' change-processes are initiated by the middle management (Schuppener 2006). As their position brings them into contact with both the working level as well as top-management (Glietz 2011), it can be assumed that a change-strategy can be conducted and realised by them. As Section 2.4 will discuss in more detail, according to its positioning middle management have a great potential when implementing strategic change (Glietz 2011, Mantere 2008). So, if middle management has this potential it is very likely that an implementation strategy that includes this level should support a successful cultural change. This would broaden the approaches for cultural changes as with the combination of a top-down- and middle-outward the important player inside an organisation can become more involved.

It is a commonly held view that a relatively stable culture requires approximately 30 years to develop, and that a change of culture will need seven years (Kraus et al. 2004). This long timeframe is a challenge for research. Besides, if there is a need for radical change, organisations do not have seven years. Activities have to show results as quickly as possible. This also requires a change strategy from more than one side: Top-down, bottom-up and

middle-outward-strategy. If it is possible to convince middle management to play an active role within this process, it should be possible to initiate the change in less than seven years.

## **2.4 Organisational change from a middle management perspective**

Who are the drivers of (cultural) change? Schein (2004, p. 225) stated that "...it is the leader who initiates this process by imposing his or her beliefs, values, and assumptions at the outset." Not only Schein (2004) emphasises the importance of the role of leaders. Many authors on change-processes share this perspective (for example: Doppler 2003; Doppler & Lauterburg 2005; Doppler et al. 2002; Kobi & Wüthrich 1986; Kotter 1996; Roederer 2011; Simon 1990). Although the importance of the role of top management and leaders is not questioned, as they provide the strategy and main goals of the organisation, I partly disagree with the exclusive role of leaders as stated by Schein (2004). When taking the cultural dynamic model by Hatch (1993) as a basis, and the idea that everyone inside an organisation is a carrier of culture, it is also possible that other important groups inside an organisation could gain such a degree of influence given that they play a very important role. In addition, when top management is regarded to have this exclusive role, there is the danger that the responsibility of the change also is exclusively delegated to the top. In that case, the rest of the organisation could take-over a more passive attitude according to change. Also, top management runs the risk of regarding the other levels as the simple doer. This reduces the other levels to vicarious agents. With this, not only self-responsibility is taken away from the other organisational members as everyone concentrates on top management and its behaviour. Moreover, the potential of others than top managers to play an active part and therefore become a driver of changes is neglected. The above explanation does not reduce top managements responsibility and potency. They still are crucial for change. However, they are not the only ones, as the following sections (Sections 2.4.2 to 2.4.4) will argue in more depth.

The above sections (Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2) have argued that cultural change activities have to regard the existence and individual character of sub-groups and cultural tiles. In addition, the literature suggests the conducting of a top- down and bottom-up strategy (for example Doppler et al. 2002). This author has argued that a middle-outward strategy to involve middle management more actively could help to achieve cultural change in the medium-term. Although top management plays a crucial role for cultural change, other levels are likely to be

drivers of change too. According to this the role that middle management might play in cultural change is discussed by this author in more detail.

As published works often use the terms 'leader', 'leadership', 'manager' and 'management' in the same context, the comparison of works is often not easy. In everyday communication, these expressions are often used to describe all management levels inside an organisation. The translated use of the expression 'leader' in German is also difficult, due to negative historical associations arising from the time of National Socialism. Therefore, often the term management is used, or the English term 'leader', or the German word 'Führung' is used for both leadership and management. Hence, for the purpose of this study, the terms 'management' and 'leadership' have to be defined. This is followed by a definition and discussion about the role of middle management (Section 2.4.2 and 2.4.4) according to the current state of research with a middle management perspective and its role(s) and influence.

#### **2.4.1 Leadership vs. management**

Similar to the attempts to define organisational culture, we find a great number of different definitions for 'leadership', 'leader' or 'to lead' (Horsak 2008; Neuberger 2002). Kets de Vries et al. (2004) refer to the Anglo-Saxon etymology with the pristine meaning of 'path' or 'road'. So leading means 'to travel'. This meaning can be found in many definitions. In the 1980s, the term 'leadership' became a central term in a lot of management literature. Kotter (1988) published his results from intensive fieldwork in the 1970s and added more results from four more projects. Out of these results, he developed a definition of 'Leadership' and discussed its meaning for successful organisations.

Most authors emphasise the process of moving a group in some direction in guiding, influencing, or directing, the passage of an idea (Bate 1996; Johnson et al 2008; Kotter 1996) in some direction to achieve a long-term goal. Effective leadership is defined as leadership "that produces movement in the long-term best interests of the group(s)" (Kotter 1996, p. 5). Leadership includes according to Kotter (1996) a vision of what should be a vision which takes into account the legitimate interests of all people involved and a strategy for achieving that vision. This strategy recognises the relevant environmental forces and organisational factors (Kotter 1996). To achieve that, leaders create a cooperative network of key-players, who commit to making that vision a reality (Bennis 1999; Kotter 1996; Levinson & Rosenthal 1984). Kotter regards the leadership-process as a movement mostly through true noncoercive

means. It is at least questionable whether a noncoercive discourse between two people at different hierarchical levels really is possible, as this implies a very cooperative organisation and people within it. But, even if the organisation has a high level of mutuality, and even if the leader has internalised an image of leadership driven by true participation, it will mostly be at least difficult for lower ranks to conduct a discourse like that. According to my experiences as facilitator of various seminars, discussions within a seminar, for example, mostly change as soon as a person from a higher hierarchy enters the room. The lower levels know that there will come a point in time when the leader will evaluate their performance. Therefore, they usually filter what they really think and what they say, when the leader joins the group.

Besides that, authors like Johnson et al. (2008), for example, characterise leaders as charismatic, instrumental or transactional. This leads to a situation, where the term is burdened with high expectations. In ordinary understanding, a charismatic person is someone, who has more ability than others, which sets him or her apart from them. This also leads to a situation, where leadership is focused on the individual and the success of a whole organisation is limited to the perspective of, and on, this individual. It seems leaders are strong people. However, strong people do not produce exclusively positive reactions. Nadler and Tushman (1990) worked out the limitations of the Charismatic Leader. Also, especially in high positions such as company boards, we find today a high turnover. So, what happens to change when the leader leaves? Morgan (1997) reasoned that very few people have charisma, so, if leadership – and with that charisma – is an important success factor to implement change, most change-processes would have to fail. Also, with that understanding of leadership, the manager is downgraded to a follower, a more passive role (Mintzberg 2009) and there builds up a separation and distance between leader and manager.

Schein (2004) regards leadership as a creator and changer of culture in differentiation to a manager or administrator who acts within a culture. However, as remarked earlier, within a cultural dynamic perspective, this distinction cannot be maintained. As a carrier of culture, every manager can create and change culture, and, at the same time, he or she will manage and administer within it. So, he or she would be, at the same time, leader *and* manager. This shows the difficulty of distinction between leadership and management, as criticised by Mintzberg (2009) and Alvesson (2002).

Bate (1996), in turn, defines leadership as any activity that assists in guiding, influencing, or directing the passage of an idea. But, is not a manager doing the same? Where does the leader end and the manager start? According to Drucker (2007, p. 30) management “has to be operational. It has to embrace the entire process. It has to be focused on results and performance across the entire economic chain.” Furthermore, he says “Management’s concern and management’s responsibility are everything that affects the performance of the institution and its results – whether inside or outside, whether under the institution’s control or totally beyond it.” At the same time, Drucker (2001) includes the establishment of the specific purpose and mission of the institution, whether it is a business enterprise, hospital or university. According to the above mentioned definitions of leadership, this links both, although Drucker’s perspective here is a much more operational one. The origin of the terms ‘to manage’ or ‘manager’ come from the Latin terms ‘manus’ meaning ‘hand’, and ‘agere’ meaning ‘to carry on, leading, doing’ (Stowasser et al. 2006). This translation also emphasises the practical aspect of managing.

Mintzberg (2009) shares Drucker’s operational perspective, as he regards the manager as someone who is responsible for a whole organisation or some identifiable part of it. He adds, “The manager has to help bring out the best in other people, so that they can know better, decide better, and act better” (Mintzberg 2009, p. 12). This definition explicitly emphasises the task of human resources development and therefore the extent of the responsibility of a manager. Also, this definition is close to Bate’s (1996) definition of leadership. This, again, underlines the difficulty of a clear differentiation between these two concepts.

Although the leader is responsible for a long-term vision and the power of persuasion, it seems inevitable to me that a person in organisational day-to-day work as a manager is responsible for operational transformation into activities. However, although managers below the top-level do not develop strategies for the entire organisation, they do this – according to the overall-strategy – for their units and so have to think strategically as well. This seems to be one reason, why the contours that theoretically separate leadership from management often are not really sharp. In my work as consultant, I often observe that junior managers are qualified within their organisation in ‘leadership’. In later coaching or further development, it can be found that these leaders know a lot of about vision and soft skills, but do not know a lot about practical management skills (delegating, controlling, time management etc.). But it is only, if one can handle both these aspects, that we find someone who can develop a vision

for the organisation or the team and realise strategies in a practical way etc. Therefore, in this thesis a 'manager' is defined as someone, who develops strategies and plans and accompanies its realisation. To do this, he or she has to convince subordinates and colleagues to follow the strategy and to be part of the operationalisation. The 'manager' is always attached to practical aspects of keeping an organisation functioning. Given this understanding, the term 'leader' is used for a group of people who develop visions and ideas, convincing others by their personality.

This section argued for the definition of 'manager' that will be used within the thesis. In addition, former sections discussed the existence of subgroups, cultural tiles and approaches to change. Middle management can be regarded as one subgroup that by its organisational level shares at least one cultural tile. As the literature suggests (for example: Glietz 2011; Wooldridge et al. 2008; Section 2.4.2 to 2.4.4) middle management plays an important part within change processes. Within the context of cultural change their influence and role still seems to be unexplored. However, according to their positioning, they have great potential to develop activities and influence that levels top management and board can hardly reach. The following will discuss middle management and its characterisation and role(s) and tasks in more detail.

#### **2.4.2 The role and tasks of the middle manager**

Literature about change management and cultural change very often accentuates the importance of management, with top management emphasised most (Kaplan & Norton 2001; Kobi & Wüthrich 1986; Kraus et al. 2004; Neubauer 2003; Roederer 2011; Sackmann 2002, 2004; Schein 2004; Simon 1990; Vahs & Leiser 2003). Unfortunately, very often, a clear differentiation between different levels of management is not presented (Meyer-Raven 1996). This makes it difficult to compare findings as it is very likely these levels have differing characterisations. Therefore, this section will first discuss the principal roles and tasks of a manager within the organisational context in general. This is followed by a section (2.4.3), which presents possible differentiations between top- and middle management. Also, the current state of research with a middle management perspective will be presented.

Drucker (2001) regards three tasks as essential for managers. They have to perform these to enable the institution in their charge to function, and to make a contribution. These tasks are establishing the specific purpose and mission of the institution, whether business enterprise,

hospital, or university (mission), making work productive and the worker effective (worker achievement), and managing social impacts and social responsibilities (social responsibilities)/ (Drucker 2001, p. 14). Drucker clearly subordinates the tasks under the economic performance of an (business) organisation (Drucker 2006). Hence, as a converse argument, any activity that does not serve the function of the organisation is not a managerial task. Mintzberg (2009) presents roles and competencies of managing in more detail shown in Tables 2.7 and 2.8. These tables show the huge demands placed upon them. As Mintzberg (2009) remarks on that point: It is impossible for *one* person (manager) to fulfil all of these to a good level. At the same time, many organisations with managers exist very successfully, even with imperfect managers (Mintzberg 2009).

**Table 2.7 Roles of management**

	<b>Framing the Job and Scheduling the Work</b>	
	<b>Internal</b>	<b>External</b>
<b>Information</b>	<i>Communicating</i> Monitoring Nerve Centre	<i>Communicating</i> Spokesperson Nerve Centre Disseminating
	<i>Controlling</i> Designing Delegating Designating Distributing Deeming	
<b>People</b>	<i>Leading</i> Energizing individuals Developing individuals Building teams Strengthening culture	<i>Linking</i> Networking Representing Convincing/Conveying Transmitting Buffering
<b>Action</b>	<i>Doing</i> Managing projects Handling disturbances	<i>Dealing</i> Building coalitions Mobilizing support

(Mintzberg, 2009, p. 90)

**Table 2.8 Competencies of managing**

<b>A. Personal Competencies</b>
1. Managing self, internally (reflecting, strategic thinking)
2. Managing self, externally (time, information, stress, career)
3. Scheduling (chunking, prioritizing, agenda setting, juggling, timing)
<b>B. Interpersonal Competencies</b>
1. Leading individuals (selecting, teaching/mentoring/coaching, facilitating, dealing with experts)
2. Leading groups (team building, resolving conflicts/mediating, facilitating, systematizing, and running meetings)
3. Leading the organization/unit (building culture)
4. Administering (organising, resource allocating, delegating, authorizing, systematizing, goal setting, performance appraising)
5. Linking the organisation/unit (networking, representing, collaborating, promoting, lobbying, protecting/buffering)
<b>C. Informational Competencies</b>
1. Communicating verbally (listening, interviewing, speaking/presenting/briefing, writing, information gathering, information disseminating)
2. Communicating nonverbally (seeing [visual literacy], sensing [visceral literacy])
3. Analyzing (data processing, modelling, measuring, evaluating)
<b>D. Action Competencies</b>
1. Designing (planning, crafting, visioning)
2. Mobilizing (firefighting, project managing, negotiating/dealing, politicking, managing change)

(Mintzberg, 2009 p. 91)

These tasks and competencies are allocated to the group of managers, at which this group is not differentiated furthermore according to lower, middle or top management. According to differing structures and orientations, these tasks and competencies are not likely to be the same in every organisation. In addition, individual specifications will probably be different as well. For example, in organisation A the disciplinary responsibility to agree goals with a subordinate is positioned at the level of higher management, whereas in organisation B this competency is allocated to the middle manager. Hence, although Mintzberg (2009) gives a complete picture of tasks and competencies for management as a whole he has also included the respective specification between different management levels which can differ significantly.



However, Hatch (1993) and Hatch & Cunliffe (2006) place the manager right within the organisational culture model. According to her model (see Section 2.2.4), during the realisation process, images grounded in assumptions and values are given a tangible form. So, whenever a manager is acting (i.e. leading his or her subordinates) the way this activity is conducted is based on grounded assumptions and values. Another example is: the employee newspaper is an artifact. However, the concrete choice of articles to be published or the writing style of an article a manager assesses is characterised by his or her assumptions and values. Therefore, one could say that every activity by a manager is always cultural action as well. In that case, it is very important when working on cultural change, not to distinguish between culture and organisational or management action, as often happens in cultural training. In fact, training on competencies and roles should always be integrated with cultural values the organisation aims to achieve, in order to create culturally aware managers (and staff).

#### ***Differentiation between top and middle management***

Although research is making up, surveys about middle management are still characterised by a low number and lack of a clear definition of the research object (Huy 2002; Meyer 2006; Meyer-Raven 1996; Wooldridge et al. 2008). As organisations even within the same branch are likely to be different (structure, process chains, people, management-style), the responsibilities, detailed tasks and level of freedom will be different too. So, without a clear definition of middle management a transfer of the findings will, at least, be very difficult.

According to Smith (1976) and Chandler (1977), the allocation of tasks to middle management has been mainly operational. They have to transfer sub-processes to operational teams and to coordinate and control these. Moreover, as many change-projects finish with a reorganisation and decentralisation, middle managers automatically receive more responsibility and their tasks are changed (Glietz 2011). With that growth of responsibility middle managers have to do more than just transferring strategies from above. Their responsibilities demand for more strategic thinking and activity. They cannot say anymore: "The people above want you to do this." But: "I want you to do this."

The definitions of middle management given since the 1980s differ in their detail. These go from a definition of middle management as "jobs that appear in the big middle area of the organization chart" (Leavitt & Whisler 1958, p. 44) to "beginning at first-level supervisor and ending just below the level of executives who have company-wide responsibilities" (Frohman

& Johnson 1993, p. XII). Mintzberg (1979; 2009), on the other hand, refers – like Leavitt - to the organisation chart, as he refers to the location of a job in the formal hierarchy of authority. “So, to be in middle management should mean that you have managers above and below you on that [organisation] chart – some reporting to you, and you reporting to other(s) – although, as we shall see, greater liberties are often taken with this term.” (Mintzberg 2009; p. 109). It is this ‘liberty’, which handicaps a comparison between different research studies.

Middle managers often find themselves in a ‘sandwich-position’ between the strategic level and staff. According to my work experience in different organisations as manager and external consultant, they are often not involved in the strategy-development processes. At the same time, they have to communicate and explain the background to their staff-members and are responsible for the following activities. Most staff-members – especially in large organisations – do not (or, at least seldom) have personal contact with people at the top-level.

In addition, while middle managers in one organisation have the liberty to preside over big budgets, make personnel decisions and develop their own strategies within their team, others may not. In the last-mentioned case they seem to be only (passive) receivers of orders that they must realise. They often have no possibility of making their own decisions, even if they fit to the overall strategy. So, the general influence of this group of middle managers on organisational processes and strategies consequently is much lower. When researching the role of middle managers in general, one can hardly compare these two groups. In any case, both groups will be influenced by organisational culture, and will influence it. However, from a change perspective, the impact of the first-mentioned is likely to be higher. In addition, the respective definition of middle management will be dependent on the number of management levels. Within organisations with many levels middle management will include more than only one level. Therefore, a definition of middle management always has to be defined within the concrete context of the respective organisation, where the research is conducted. To create a general definition that covers all kinds of organisations and their structure seems to be difficult. The researcher has to decide in every single case, what definition fits to the purpose of the research and the concrete context where this research takes place.

According to the above discussed I share Mintzberg’s (2009) definition of middle managers as managers who have to report to managers above and have managers that report to them. This definition is very broad and therefore fits to most organisations that have at least three

levels of management (top, middle, lower management). In addition, I have argued that middle managers are a subgroup that is important to be regarded at cultural change processes.

### 2.4.3 The current state of research with a middle management perspective

So far, it has been stated that middle management is a sub-group within an organisation and that the regard of sub-groups in the change process is important. In addition, a definition of middle management and its roles was given. The following sections will discuss the current state of research within a middle management perspective and so lead to the question, whether the influence and role(s) attached to middle management within strategic changes could be similar to organisational culture changes.

According to Brians (2007) and Rauh (1990) middle management is far and away one of the most critical success factors during restructuring. At the same time, research with a middle management perspective is still minor, although catching up. Researchers with a middle management perspective in the first instance engage with strategy research (Wooldridge et al., 2008). A research with a middle management perspective exploring their role within cultural change still seems to be missing. However, according to Bate (1994) every activity is a cultural activity. Therefore, strategic change and cultural change cannot be separated (Bate, 1994). Hence, results of research dealing with a middle management perspective during strategic change should be considered for this work as findings could possibly be transferred onto cultural change.

**Table 2.9 Strategy research from a middle management perspective**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Number of published articles</b>
1986 – 1989	2
1990 – 1999	10
2000 – 2008	25

(Wooldridge et al. 2008)

Since 1986, the number of published articles with a middle management perspective has been growing continuously (Wooldridge et al. 2008; Table 2.9). This increase shows that the meaning of middle management during strategic change is now not only noticed, but taken seriously. At the same time, research about the role of middle management during change projects other than strategy implementation is still underrepresented, as well as that related to cultural change. Besides works about strategic change, researchers work focuses on the changing tasks and roles of middle management in different contexts (Blomquist & Müller 2006; Lassen et al. 2009; Mantere 2008; McCann et al. 2008; Meynhardt & Metelmann 2009; Stoker 2006; Willcocks & Griffiths 2010). Raes et al. (2011) published a work about the interface between top and middle management and Glietz (2011) presented an economic analysis of middle management.

Huy (2002) acknowledges the role of middle management during change, as they are in a position which gives them the opportunity to connect practical knowledge with strategic goals. Middle management has many opportunities to retard or delay change initiatives, by filtering and manipulating information aimed at employees about upcoming changes, negative statements and much more (Kraus et al. 2004). As any other employee, middle managers have the same feelings according to changes in their organisation. Some of them will welcome these and others are afraid of losing their position or else and they will act according to their feelings and attitude to change. Glietz (2011) identifies, in the first instance, the existence of barriers that lead to failure of change-projects. According to him, these barriers can be caused by the existence of goal-conflicts between the organisation's goals and those of the individuals. So, this prevents people from being fully involved in the process. Instead of this, they will probably aim to protect their personal interests and attempt to influence change into the desired direction (Glietz 2011). According to Huy (2002), it will have a clear effect on a change project if middle managers find themselves in goal-conflicts that hinder positive engagement with the change process.

Literature about middle management is divided. Whereas some authors see the middle manager as a hindrance to successful change, due to his or her own interests and fears (Guth & MacMillan 1986; Kuratko & Goldsby 2004; Meyer 2006; Sillince & Mueller 2007), others attribute a positive role to middle managers (for example: Burgelman 1994; Boyett & Currie 2004). Glietz (2011) draws the conclusion out of his research that middle manager play an important part during reengineering-processes. He argues, they dispose specific knowledge

according to processes and work-flows. In addition they know about strategic coherences inside their organisation. Therefore, they are capable of convincing employees to commit to change (Glietz 2011). As one precondition to convince the employees, Glietz (2011) regards the commitment of the middle manager him- or herself to the change. Huy (2002) sees the role of middle management during fundamental change (see section 2.3.2) as being at least as important as the role of top management. Whether an approach has a positive or a more negative perspective on the role of middle managers can cause bias. Therefore, it seems to be sensible to take a neutral perspective, with the assumptions that they definitively play a role and that this can be either positive or negative. This perspective poses the question, of how their influence can be channelled into a positive direction. As argued previously, there is a lack of research about cultural change with a middle management perspective. Therefore, it is not examined if middle management has got the same influence and plays the same roles at cultural change as those of strategic changes.

*So, this thesis aims to answer the research question, if middle management influences organisational culture change and if so, how important they are. Therefore, this research aims to explore, whether middle management plays a role in cultural change (research objective number one).*

By exploring this, the deficiency of research in this area will begin to be redressed. The following paragraphs therefore will discuss in more detail the findings of the existing research about middle management.

Often, only existing typologies from top management were transferred, and existing research is based on empirical observation and classification (Wooldridge et al. 2008). This leads, according to Wooldridge et al. (2008), to the disadvantage of a too broad view. A broadening consequently leads to having a homogenous perspective on the group of middle managers, as discussed above. "Existing theory asserts associations between Middle Manager roles and organizational strategy, but fails to address the question of how such alignment develops and how it influences organizational performance" (Wooldridge et al. 2008, p. 1215). Besides that, most researchers seem to regard middle management from a positivistic research philosophy. This is criticised by Thomas & Linstead (2002). According to them, this leads to limitations, as well as to the fact that these researchers tend to regard middle management as a homogeneous group of people. This perspective is congruent to the variable perspective of

organisational culture, where organisations are also seen as homogeneous. In this context, this means that middle managers as a subgroup are identified, but the fact that they are likely to belong to more than just this subgroup and according to the cultural mosaic (Chao & Moon 2005) also belong to different cultural tiles, is ignored.

Picot and Boehme (1995) and Wolff (1999) emphasise the resistance of organisational members as important reasons for changes failing (Glietz 2011). This resistance is often caused by effects on personal plans, perspectives and values that middle managers have to face during changes. As already discussed, changes can cause fear and other emotional reactions. The use of typologies would narrow the perspective of middle management and so seems to be not adequate to uncover these aspects. Alvesson's (2002) warning against oversimplification, postulated within the cultural debate, seems to be valid in this context as well. As middle managers are members of different cultural groups and are confronted with personal consequences by changes, research concerning their influence and role should take account of this by using a mixed method approach or qualitative methods.

So, research confirms that middle management plays an important role within change processes. Although, it is clear that middle managers not only play an important role within *strategic* changes but in organisational cultural change as well, to the best of my knowledge, this has not yet been explored. So, in addition to the above mentioned objectives of exploring influence and role(s) of middle management within cultural change, this study aims to provide some ideas for *how* the potential of middle management can be developed and supported to be part of a positive and successful cultural change.

#### **2.4.4 Middle management and cultural change: hindrance or facilitator?**

I have argued that strategic change and cultural change are very much linked with each other. Strategic change cannot be successful without regard to organisational culture (Sackmann 2007). However, one cannot simply apply results from strategic research (relating to middle management) completely to organisational culture change. Probably, many aspects will be the same within strategic research, but, as previously argued cultural change requires work on values and assumptions. To change these, perhaps more, or different, roles and tasks, have to

be fulfilled by middle-managers. In addition, while a strategic change should consider cultural change, a cultural change does not necessarily come with a strategic change, and often strategic changes are realised by a top-down strategy. Therefore, this section will first discuss results according to existing research. Within this section roles middle management is playing at strategic changes are discussed. The literature reviewed caused the question if there are additional roles that are adopted by middle management at organisational culture change. Hence, this research aims to explore, if the strategic roles are valid for organisational culture change also and if there exist additional roles.

Four strategic roles of middle managers are articulated in the literature (Burgelman 1983; Floyd & Wooldridge 1992; Mintzberg 1978; Mintzberg & Waters 1985; Wooldridge et al. 2008). "Each role is distinguished by a unique combination of cognitive and behavioural components" (Wooldridge et al. 2008, p. 1195). These roles are Implementer, Synthesizer, Champion, and Facilitator. In addition, these roles include certain expectations from top management, with respect to their realisation (Mantere 2008). These expectations will not necessarily be expressed by them. However, it is very likely that top management will expect certain activities. If middle management does not act as expected, top management will react. According to Hatch's (1993) cultural model of change, within the phase of realisation expectations are likely to produce cultural artifacts (Hatch 1993; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006). In this case, the reactions of top management according to unaccomplished expectations would be artifacts. These artifacts are visible and the values (i.e. middle managers develop ideas to implement change without further demand) are invisible. However, according to the reciprocal effect these artifacts influence organisational culture. Besides this, today we do not know whether the above mentioned roles are also important during cultural change, or, if cultural change demands middle managers to fulfil different or additional roles. The following paragraphs will exemplify the four (strategic) roles of middle management (Implementer, Synthesizer, Champion, and Facilitator) from a cultural perspective.

### Implementer

During strategic change, this role and the expectations concerning it means disseminating strategy downward from the middle manager to subordinates and gaining conformance to top-down objectives and guidelines (Floyd & Lane 2000; Mantere 2008). This role is one of the most typical (Mantere 2008). As the respective objectives for the manager are negotiated

according to the strategy, this role demands, for very practical activities, information, following new procedures and guiding the subordinates to do the same.

Based on the fact that the same role can constrain or enable managers as strategic agents, Mantere (2008) identified conditions that enable managers to fulfil expectations of the respective roles. In the case of the 'implementer' there are four conditions. The most important one is that top management inform middle management not only about the new strategy, but about the development and thought process that led to this. The second condition is that the strategy is clearly linked to relevant work contexts. Third, middle managers receive the allowance and authorisation to make changes in every day work and they receive the needed resources. And last, everyday work is respected by top management as valuable, and as implementation activity and so relevant to strategy. During cultural changes, the organisation aims to adjust the entire organisation to the desired culture. Therefore, implementation on every level of the organisation is important. Therefore, it is very likely that the role 'implementer' will be important in cultural change processes as well.

### Synthesiser

"As synthesizers, Middle Managers interpret information and channel it upward to top management" (Wooldridge et al. 2008, p. 1203). Top management needs realistic information about the realisation of goals. This process is both bottom-up and integrative (Mantere 2008). Similar to the implementation expectation, this process creates continuity and progress. This role is enabled by the response of top management to the provided feedback. Success and failure about past actions are transparent, and so, offer the opportunity to learn and respectively adapt the strategy. The information is essential to draw the right conclusions and develop further actions. Organisational culture is a dynamic phenomenon. Changes in environment (market as well as society) lead to the need to adapt the organisational culture to these changed circumstances. If middle management receives information, it is important to forward it. Besides, as the middle managers have contact with subordinates, they are the first – and possibly only ones – to experience whether the postulated values are shared, and where differences occur that would contradict the cultural mission statement. In addition, if parts of the organisation develop concrete actions to further develop and adopt the new culture, but do not receive any feedback about their efforts, the cultural process is very likely to stop at that point. The organisational members may more or less behave according to the guidelines, but they would probably not internalise the values, and, so, cultural change cannot arise. Therefore, it is very likely that this role can be transferred to cultural change too.



### Championing

“Championing also involves upward influence, but in this role, middle management’s divergent thinking has the potential to reshape upper management’s concept of strategy” (Wooldridge et al. 2008, p. 1203). So, championing is an activity where middle management promotes ideas bottom-up (Mantere 2008) and is focused on impacting the future. As enabling conditions Mantere (2008) discusses the inclusion of middle managers into planning processes, and a top management that is evaluating and rewarding the quality of ideas, championed by middle-managers.

Bate (1995) regards organisational culture as a process that is always on-going. To change organisational culture in a planned and organised process, it is essential that within the organisation a manner of talking about it and reflecting on it is developed: “Before people can change a culture, they must first be able to think about it within their own minds and then be able to talk about it with others” (Bate 1995, p.140). He emphasises the social character of cultural change; that it is not a process of the individual, but collective. This process is a process of debate, interaction, involvement and participation (Bate 1995). These processes are not one-way-roads, as the second enabling condition by Mantere (2008) also shows.

Middle managers usually have more direct personal contact with customers, members of lower management ranks (supervisors) and the work level. This means that he or she, in the context of a culturally sensitive management, has the opportunity to be aware of their reactions more often. These reactions can be important information for a course of correction in the above mentioned meaning, but also valuable for further development. In addition, as organisational culture is dynamic, the lack of these exchanges would lead to an end of cultural development. Hence, the role of champion can be expected within cultural change as well.

### Facilitator

“As facilitators, Middle Managers encourage organizational actors below and around them to engage in idea generation and other experimental efforts” (Wooldridge et al. 2008, p. 1203). This role expectation is top-down again. According to Mantere (2008, p. 306), middle managers are expected to “promote experimentation and autonomous development of work within their areas of responsibility”. Whereas the role of ‘implementer’ is concentrated on the managerial competencies of middle managers, here the expectation is to facilitate processes

within their areas to develop their work practices. To do this, they need a top management that trusts in their abilities and legitimises its efforts. Openness for failure is needed to find creative solutions and to try out different ways of doing things.

In the context of cultural change, this role does not seem to be obvious at first. The above quoted role tends to relate to the issue of innovation. On the other hand, middle managers should urge everyone in his or her (business) environment to act according to the cultural values, and so support deeper anchoring of them. This is very much connected with the role of implementation, because in comparison to a strategy implementation, the implementation of organisational culture is a permanent process, as the above discussed models show. Mantere (2008) bases the potential of the expectation of facilitating on building a sense of responsibility. Transferred to cultural change, the expectation of facilitating builds on a sense of responsibility for a cultural awareness and cultural-conforming behaviour, but not only of middle managers. Moreover, he or she has to enable his or her sub-ordinates to feel the same responsibility. So, this role also is valid in cultural change processes, although the design of it will probably differ according to the target cultural goals within this organisation. However, it is very likely that the role of 'facilitator' can be found within cultural change processes, too.

Based upon the above discussed strategic roles, the following research objective can be formulated:

***To explore whether the roles middle management plays in strategic change are as valid for cultural change as well (research objective number three).***

### *Additional roles*

According to their hierarchical level, middle managers certainly have an effect as multiplier and role-model (Glietz 2011) in addition to the above mentioned roles. Already, their place on the organisational chart emphasises their potential to operate as an important linkage between top management and board and the lower management and staff. Hence, middle managers have to act as transmitter, with the aim of communicating the ideas of top management and board, by translating them into a language that operational units will understand (Glietz 2011). At the same time, according to Glietz (2011), members of middle management tend to influence directly or indirectly their organisational environment according to their individual preferences (Milgrom & Roberts 1998). Therefore, it seems to be essential for the success of

organisational cultural change, to win over middle management so that they support this change positively. It is important to detect individual preferences and to work with these managers in such a way that these preferences are not contradictory to the organisation's goals (Milgrom & Roberts 1998). Hence, the four strategic roles of middle management are likely to be valid for cultural change as well. These roles are very much linked with operative activities (Mantere 2008). As argued earlier, operational and cultural thinking should not be separated from each other. However, as culture concerns the entire individual (values, underlying assumptions), it is very likely that additional roles as multiplier and role-model which take effect on a more personal level, are needed to develop cultural change. This thesis will therefore **explore whether additional roles exist and if so, what these would be** (research objective number four).

Beside the roles of middle management, some research actually questions if middle management today is still needed (Glietz 2011). Experience with middle managers who did not forward information satisfactorily caused top management within some organisations to build communication-bypasses (Glietz 2011). With these, middle management is excluded from important processes and one can assume that destructive behaviour of middle managers will continue to develop rather than be changed. In addition, one may ask, whether middle managers are still of use when they only serve as operational organiser. Mantere's (2008) enabling conditions guide a path so that middle managers become agents instead of obviators of change.

According to organisational culture, some authors argue for the need of culturally sensitive management (Kobi & Wüthrich 1986; Sackmann 2004; Simon 1990). They emphasise the need to develop a management (including middle management), that is aware of organisational culture, not only in times of obvious, and planned, cultural change. In my work as consultant I often experience organisations, where 'culture' and daily management seem to diverge. Organisational culture is the subject of training or campaigns, occasionally offered. However, in combination with the daily tasks or meetings, culture is not reflected. The reason for this seems to be a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity. Therefore, the above mentioned authors (Kobi & Wüthrich 1986; Sackmann 2004; Simon 1990) characterise a culturally aware and sensitive management based upon several aspects. First, management has to know about the meaning of organisational culture and its impacts. Without that knowledge, how could it act accordingly, in particular, during change? Second, cultural sensitivity has to be developed. This means working out the relationship between a cultural

mission statement, the values that are behind it and the manifold manifestations of it. Third, openness has to be created that at the same time appreciates the past and the positive aspects of it, and at the same time, is open-minded for the required adjustment of artifacts. At the time of challenges and crisis (radical change of strategy and culture for example) cultural assumptions have to be adjusted. To realise this (fourth aspect), management has to realise in time the need to change the culture and know about the meaning of assumptions and their effect on organisational life. The fifth aspect requires the ability to work with cultural dynamics consciously and adequately. In addition (sixth aspect), management has to know about cultural networks and how to handle them. This last aspect requires both knowledge and ability concerning the configuration of social processes (Sackmann 2002).

These demands have to be internalised by all managers. This is a big request, especially if one takes into account the daily operational challenges that managers already have to face. Also, it seems to me that these demands can only be achieved by an organisation and management that is mature. Therefore, when assessing a culture, it seems sensible to assess how mature the organisation and managers are. If we find that the level of maturity is low, then it is important to have regard to this when planning interventions.

It is difficult to talk about *the* middle management as a homogeneous group as it does not exist, as discussed above. This heterogeneity is also true for the tasks and roles of middle management (Meyer-Raven 1996). Therefore, it is important to have in mind that although we often talk about them as one homogeneous group (for example Mintzberg 2009), it is a heterogeneous one with at least one common characteristic: Their place on the organisation chart. This positioning underlines the special role of middle management (Glietz 2011; Mantere 2008; Wooldridge et al. 2008). So, they have the potential to influence either positively (functional) or negatively (dysfunctional) what is happening within their organisations (Sackmann 2006). Hence, one can assume that this is valid for the issue of organisational culture and its change as well. Research about the influence of middle management self-interest (Glietz 2011; Guth & MacMillan 1986; p. 313; Milgrom & Roberts 1998) shows that “Middle managers who believe that their self-interest is being compromised cannot only redirect a strategy, delay its implementation or reduce the quality of its implementation, but can also even totally sabotage the strategy”. It is very likely that this can be transferred to the change of organisational culture for the above mentioned reasons. At the same time, this means that if it is possible to involve middle management in a way that self-interests and the interests of the company are balanced, it should be possible to convert them

to being supporters and agents, not only of strategic, but also of cultural change. Mantere's (2008) findings about enabling factors according to middle management roles in strategic change suggest that there will also be enabling frameworks that support middle managers to take over an active part within cultural change processes.

Therefore, research objective number five is *to explore if middle managers take over the roles, when the organisation creates an environment to support cultural change.*

According to the above discussed, one can regard it as given that middle management has an influence on organisational culture either. This influence can be functional or dysfunctional. The roles middle managers have in strategic change processes are likely to be transferred to cultural changes, although their design may be different. Also, middle managers are not a homogeneous group of people. In fact, they have different functions, tasks and biographic backgrounds. As a result of that, they are likely to be a member of at least one subgroup, which probably has a subculture as well. So, it is essential to use their potential in a positive manner, to achieve not only trained behaviour like dressage, but in the long run, a true change of underlying assumptions and values.

## **2.5 Summary and research aims and objectives**

The literature review discussed cultural background, research perspectives and approaches and their impact on cultural change. Also, the meaning of group identity and subculture has been presented briefly. There is discussion of the handling of cultural change at the level of individuals, presentation of the current state of research with a middle management perspective and some conclusions with respect to cultural change. The aim and objectives of this research have been deduced. This section will briefly summarise the main findings from the literature review and the research aim and objectives.

Researchers work upon organisational culture from different perspectives. Whereas a functional/variable paradigm regards culture as an important organisational factor like any other and as something which can be changed in a quite simple manner, the metaphor paradigm accentuates the complexity and evolutionary aspect of organisational culture. The different perspectives discuss whether a company *has* culture (variable) or if it *is* culture

(metaphor). For a long time, it seemed a researcher would have to decide whether to follow one or the other. There are coherent arguments for both paradigms. However, following the variable or the metaphor perspective would mean ignoring important findings from other approaches. The dynamic perspective according to Hatch (1993) and Sackmann (2007) integrates both sides, respectively builds a bridge between these two perspectives. It accepts the possibility of a manageable change of culture, without reducing its complexity to simplicity. Hatch's (1993) model offers approaches to initiate this change with regard to the underlying assumptions and values. Moreover, it considers the existence of subcultures within one organisational culture. While Sackmann (2007) follows a cognitive approach, Hatch (1993) developed her model with regard to the level of symbols, and so offers more approaches to detect underlying assumptions and values. Hence, she takes positivist and constructivist aspects into account. Therefore, I share the dynamic perspective by Hatch (1993) and will take this model as a basis for what follows. As such, an assessment of culture by the use of typologies is declined.

For this research, I will take the definition of culture by Schein (1985; p. 6) as its basis: "*The pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems.*" (see also Table 2.1, p. 11)

As the models by Schein (2004), Hatch (1993) and Sackmann (2007) all cover certain aspects of changing organisational culture an integration of all of these is advocated, when aiming for a cultural change. Organisational culture can be changed, but it is not a simple process. Organisational culture is like a mosaic. Only, if underlying assumptions, values and their manifestations and artifacts are considered like small pieces of the whole mosaic, does a complete picture emerge. Hence, for cultural change, it is vital to have regard to this complexity. Research suggests that profound change of organisational culture, due to this complexity, requires a time-span of at least seven years (Kraus et al. 2004). Strategic change most often does not have this time, as the market calls for quick changes and adaptations. At the same time, strategic change is supposed to be successful, only if cultural change is taken into account as well (Cameron & Quinn 2006; Kotter & Heskett 1992; Sackmann, 2007). So, we have a time-difference between these two change processes. Current research presents

enabling conditions to make middle managers agents of strategic change (Mantere 2008). This involvement of middle management is essential due to the special position it has, and its roles (Glietz 2011). If a company succeeds in involving middle managers in cultural change in a similar way, it should be possible, to change a culture in a way so that at the levels of artifacts and espoused beliefs, visible manifestations appear, and the process of changing assumptions and values has, at least, begun. It would be of great value to find a way, as to how organisational culture change could be initiated in less than seven years, as organisations often think, and plan, in shorter time-spans than that. As cultural aspects of change are of such importance, this would help to convince organisations to risk this process if they could expect results earlier without losing sight of complexity and depth.

At the same time, there still is little research about middle management. The literature review reveals that existing research with a middle management perspective predominantly deals with the process of strategy development and implementation, to date. I have argued that therefore, we can assume that middle management plays an important role in cultural change processes as well. However, as far as I have found there seems to exist no research about this question today. Hence, this work aims to answer the following research question:

**Does middle management influence organisational cultural change, and, if so, how important is it?**

This research will contribute to the understanding of middle management, its importance and its roles within organisational culture change. In addition, it has the aim to explain, how organisations can develop middle management to accept their roles. Therefore, the objectives of this work are:

1. To explore whether middle management is important for cultural change;
2. To explore whether the roles middle management plays in strategic change (implementer, synthesiser, champion, and facilitator) are as valid for cultural change as well;
3. To explore whether there exist additional roles;
4. To explore if middle managers take over the above roles (implementer, synthesiser, champion, facilitator, and additional ones) when the organisation creates an environment to support cultural change.

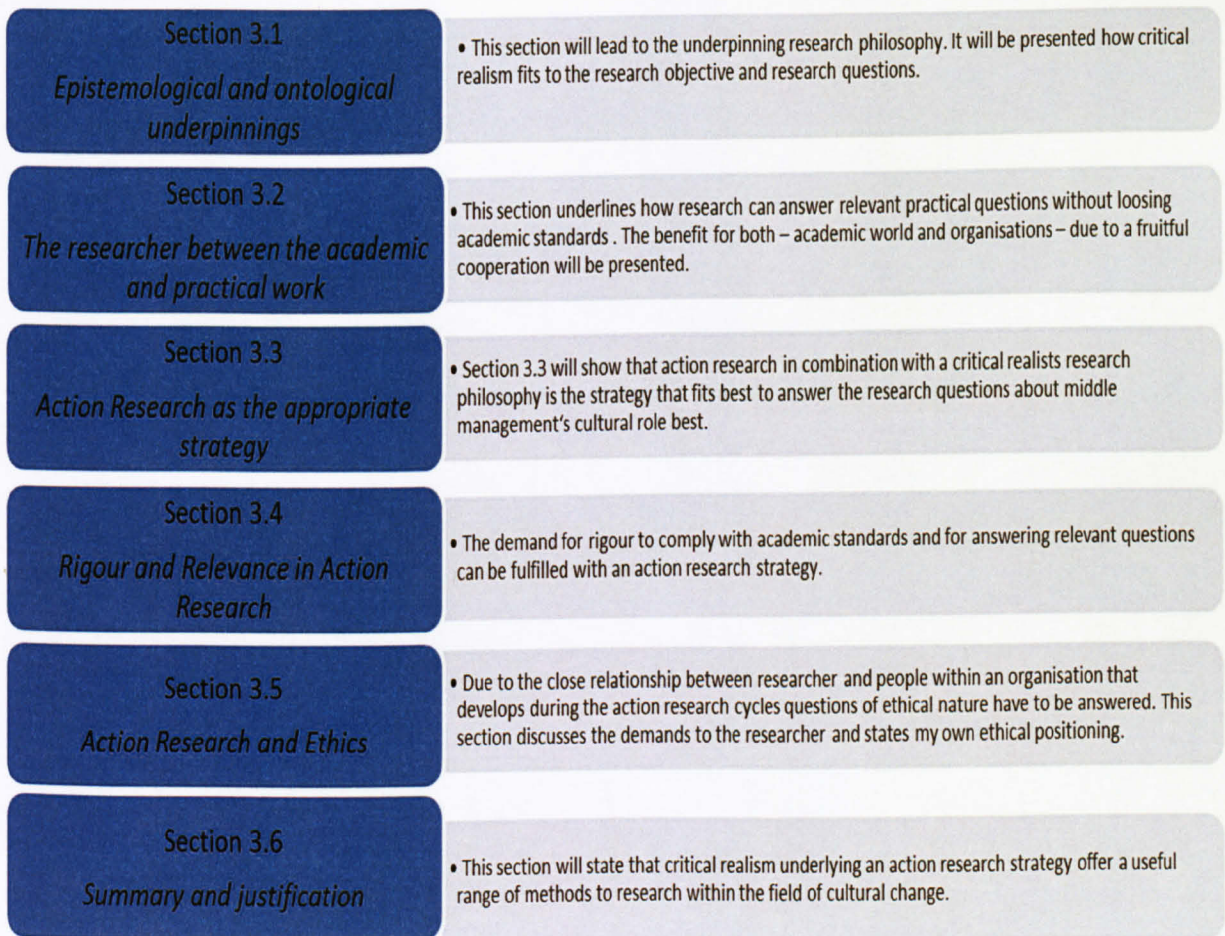
In answering this research question, the aim is to contribute to an understanding of the roles middle managers adopt during cultural change and so help diminish the gap of knowledge about middle management that is found to exist.



### 3.      Methodology and overall research design

An exploration of the influence of middle managers on cultural change can be undertaken in various ways. To rationalise and describe the approach chosen, this chapter will discuss the epistemological and ontological underpinnings shared, and which form the basis for the thesis. This is followed by a description and discussion of action research, as well as the ethics and justification of that strategy. Figure 3.1 gives an overview of the sections and their aims.

**Figure 3.1      Aims and structure of methodology**



(present author)

### **3.1 Epistemological and ontological underpinnings**

Researchers are usually intent on acquiring new knowledge and perceptions, whereas practitioners look for practical solutions to their day-to-day management-issues. Sometimes these aims are congruent, but mostly writings from researchers and practitioners appear to live in different realities. This work is a DBA thesis, hence, it aims to reach doctoral standard with all its implications and requirements for methodology, analysis, and rigour. At the same time, it aims to answer a very relevant and practical question (Murray 2006) regarding the influence of middle managers on cultural change. Therefore, this thesis takes the perspective of a “management researcher as practitioner” (Saunders 2011, p. 243). As a management researcher I aim to contribute to organisational practice and relevance by delivering practical, relevant and useful research (Saunders 2011). Aims and objectives of research are always influenced by the philosophical standpoint the researcher takes (Thietart et al. 2007). The following paragraphs will therefore argue the philosophical standpoint of a critical realist, as this was adopted for this study.

As Syed et al. (2009) discussed the critical realist approach bridges rigour and relevance in relation to the research paradigm, context and causality, methodological rigidity and ethical aspects of business research. Therefore, this section will first give some basic information about the critical realist position. Then this ‘bridge’ (Syed et al. 2009) will be discussed. As I share this philosophical perspective, I concentrate in this chapter on critical realism and do not discuss other approaches like positivism or constructivism in depth.

As the purpose of research is an increase in knowledge and perception, this leads to the question, of whether we are able at all to perceive anything; and if so, what kind of things we can perceive and how we could achieve this cognition (Musgrave 1993). Different philosophical approaches can be found in relation to these problems, and are the basis for the respective research work of many researchers.

To a large extent, empirical science during the 20<sup>th</sup> century was affected by the strong belief that human cognition would lead to an objective image of reality (Albert 1987; Bhaskar 1993; Musgrave 1993). The world was regarded as independent from the observer (positivism). This was criticised over the time, as it ignored research about the ways human beings experience

their world (Albert 1987; Musgrave 1993). So, the idea that the human being him/herself constructs reality developed.

**Figure 3.2 Epistemological orientations**



(present author)

Whereas the left side of Figure 3.2 postulates the existence of a common truth which can be measured and perceived, and, therefore, in the end, once proved cannot be questioned or criticised (objectivism/positivism), the right side of the arrow leaves us with the understanding that there is not *one* truth or reality that can be measured and regarded as fact (subjectivism - constructivism). So, we feel lost and alone with the question of what this means for our daily life. According to organisations, the perspective of the left side of the arrow says that there is an objective perception of reality that therefore should be the same for everyone. However, at the same time, we experience situations that show something else. If we accept that reality is constructed subjectively on the other hand, this would mean that it is difficult to find solutions that suit a whole organisation. It therefore seems that both sides of the arrow do not have the potential to offer all-embracing answers.

For some time, it seemed one had to decide whether to share the one or the other paradigm. However, a third philosophical basic item was developed and discussed by some authors as (critical) realism. Agents of this position are: Nicolai Hartmann, Oswald Külpe, Hans Driesch, Erich Becher, Hans Albert (in Germany), George Santayana, Roy Wood Sellars, Arthur Lovejoy (in America), Bernard Lonergan (in Canada) and Roy Bhaskar (United Kingdom).

Realism shares aspects of a positivist ontology which points out that we perceive external objects directly or intuitively in a way as they really are (Albert 1987; Musgrave 1993;

Saunders et al. 2009), so these are independent of human consciousness. Realism is based on the idea of reality as an entity (Albert 1987). We find different developments of realism, like naïve realism, moral realism, new realism, scientific realism, entity realism, critical realism and more.

Whereas naïve realism is sure of the world really being as it is perceived, critical realism points out that we are influenced by the way our senses work and that subjective elements influence our perception of images of the world (Albert 1987). This consequently includes the possibility that reports about perceptions or observations could be fallible (Musgrave 1993). As Albert (1987) presented, naïve realism was displaced by a critical realism very early in time. Critical realism regards the subjectivity of sense-qualities and tries to liberate perception of the subjective limitations we find in naïve realism (Albert 1987). Hence, due to the way our senses work and other influences, what we see does not have to mirror the objective facts or truth as naïve realism demands. Therefore, as researchers, we should always be aware of this difference between sensations and objective reality and take this into account when collecting data, analysing and interpreting it.

Critical realism is a metaphysical consequence from empirical-scientific theories (Popper 1994). It is not only concentrated on the existence of an external world (cosmology), but epistemic also. It differentiates between character and physical appearance. The physical appearance of an organisation, for example, can be described concretely and objectively: number of employees, organisation chart, building, equipment etc. The character of that organisation describes what forms that organisation, for example service-oriented, bureaucratic, lazy, challenging etc. The goal of perception is to detect the character and physical appearance of objects and regards the aim of perception as detecting the character in order to explain these appearances (Albert 1987).

To achieve real knowledge, one has to go behind the appearances: one has to transcend the given (Albert 1987, p. 46). To do this, Albert (1987) has indicated, it is necessary to identify certain limitations lying in the subject and to overcome these. If a human being finds a mistake by falsification and then adjusts it, he or she is coming nearer to reality with every attempt. The redemption of an error by a better explanation leads to a deeper knowledge about reality. Hence, any correction of a mistake means an approximation to reality.

According to this understanding of critical realism, there exists no definite method that has to be followed. In fact, as we deal with the *gaining* of knowledge, one starts with rudimentary current knowledge about the problem itself and the research instruments (Albert 1987). Critical realism is committed to methodological pluralism (Syed et al. 2009). If we are critical realists, we stop having an *infallible* empirical basis for knowledge (Musgrave 1993, 2010). The question can be stated if this absence of an infallible empirical basis could lead to uncertainty and the question of whether research in that case makes any sense at all. However, this philosophy gives the opportunity and freedom to think beyond borders. One is not stuck with dogma. But at the same time, one could ask the question: what does it mean for research and knowledge, if we do not have an infallible empirical basis? At least, it would mean being able to deal with a certain kind of uncertainty and we would have to accept that there is something we do not know something about for certain.

In the United Kingdom, Roy Bhaskar is one of the leading proponents of critical realism. In his writings, he draws the conclusion between the philosophy of critical realism, sociology and change (Bhaskar 1978, 1991, 1993) and aims to develop a systematic realist account of science (1978). One of his central arguments is that a constant conjunction of events is sufficient and moreover, he argues, it is not even a necessary condition for a scientific law (Bhaskar 1978).

As this research is about cultural change, Bhaskar's approach is of great interest. This approach also mirrors my experience in daily work where I realised that functionalistic methods (in the case of organisational culture) often seemed to be short and sharp and missed the deeper lying and unspoken aspects, whereas an interpretivist or constructivist approach seems too wide to find clear answers for day-to-day practice. In addition, to draw directly causal laws from a certain event or observation requires stable circumstances (like in an experiment). However, the reality of companies is mostly different and not even stable. The organisation chart of the company (and so the people, who fill this chart) where this research was carried out, changed over the research period. Hence, the research approach had to be as flexible as possible without reducing academic standards.

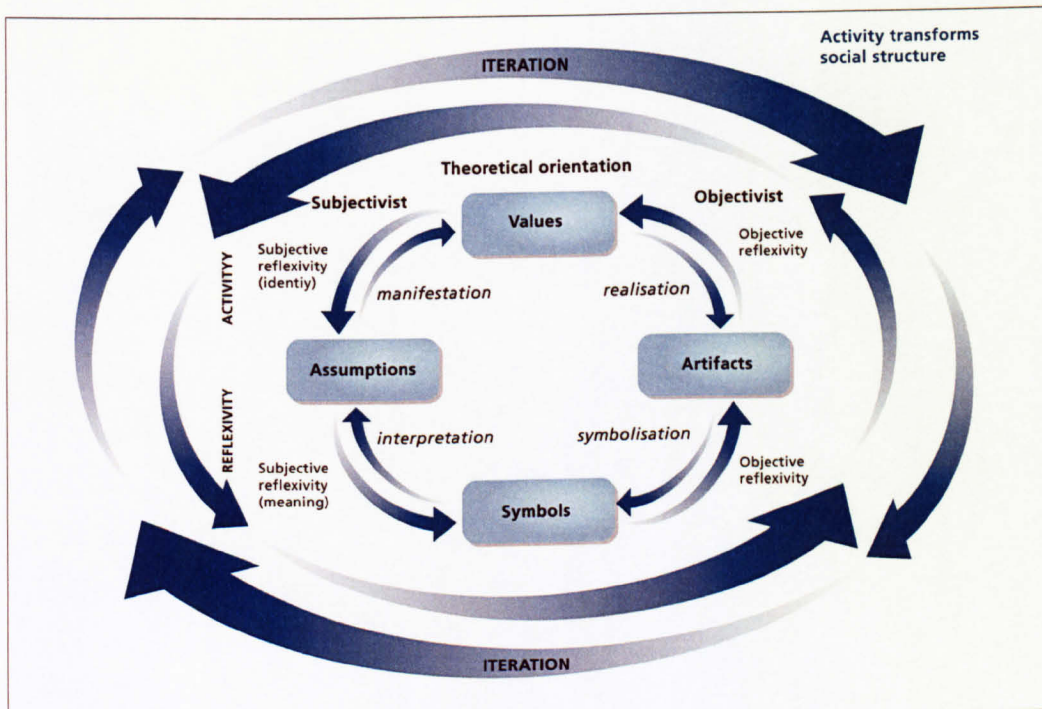
Bhaskar (1978, 1991, 1993) very clearly combined a critical realist's paradigm with the aim of changing social reality. Critical realists do not deny the reality of events and discourses (Bhaskar 1978, 1991, 1993; Syed et al., 2009) but they insist upon them (Bhaskar 1991). As

Bhaskar argues, the identification and understanding of structures at work, which generate those events and discourses, is an imperative precondition to achieving change (Bhaskar 1991). He defines structures as sets of internally related objects and mechanisms as ways of acting (1978). Also, critical realism regards social structures as intrinsically different from physical structures (Syed et al. 2009). Objects in Bhaskar's view are internally linked to these structures in the sense that their identity depends on their relationship with the other components of the structure (1978). Hence, social structure does not exist independently of social activity and it cannot be empirically identified except through such activities (social activities). Also, it is not independent of actors' perceptions of their activities and is relative to particular times and cultures (Syed et al. 2009, p. 74). Activity, according to Syed et al. (2009) is always conditioned or moulded by a pre-existing social structure of roles and expectations. In Bhaskar's perspective of critical realism, reality consists of three overlapping domains (Bhaskar 1978). First, the reality to which research theories primarily aim to refer is that consisting of the structures and mechanisms of the world, rather than empirical events (Bhaskar 1978). Second, the underlying structures and mechanisms are only contingently related to observable empirical events and third, although research knowledge of (social) reality is never infallible, it is still possible to acquire such knowledge through the creative construction and critical testing of theories (Bhaskar 1978). Furthermore, it is possible that the combined effects of structures and mechanisms generate observable events. At the same time, the absence of an observable event does not necessarily mean that the underlying mechanisms do not exist (Bhaskar 1978). Hence, activity transforms or reproduces the social structure. Therefore, critical realism as a research philosophy connects relevant research methods with social activity, which is especially fitting in the case of cultural change. The model of dynamic cultural change by Hatch (1993, see Section 2.2.4, Figure 2.4) and this transformation shows commonality, as they both include a dynamic side, which leads to changes, presented in Figure 3.3.

For example: An organisation developing its culture aims to change from a paternalistic autocratic culture to a culture that is characterised by openness, clarity and the freedom to act self-responsible with the organisation's strategy. Employee A has attended the relevant workshops, training, coaching etc. and is positive about this new attitude. With this training, he or she understands the background and expectations, according to this new culture. His supervisor observes that A does not make a decision that he was supposed to make now and which was covered in training seminars. This objective observation does not necessarily mean

that A has not internalised the new culture and is unwillingly to take-over responsibility for decisions. With a positivistic and functionalistic view of this situation, this conclusion is likely to be drawn. The critical realist would go further into detail and use different methods to interpret what is going on. By questioning the reason for this lack of decision-making, he or she would aim to find out, why A showed this behaviour. For example, the critical realist would reflect or/and interview employee A about what has happened. So, the critical realist aims to understand. Maybe, A did not decide, because he needs information from his supervisor, or he still feels uncertain as he never had a problem to solve like that before, or he still feels uncertain as to what would happen in case he was making a wrong decision etc. So, the critical realist appreciates that the reality could have been different to his or her own perception.

**Figure 3.3** Combination of Hatch’s model with the critical realist philosophy



(adapted from Hatch 1993, p. 1993, further developed by the author)

Hatch (1993) combines within her model of cultural dynamic both an objectivist and subjectivist perspective as Figure 3.3 shows. To underline the iterative process and highlight the influence of activities onto the social structure, I added respective arrows and an according annotation. Through activities, a transformation process starts that changes

organisational culture and vice versa (iterative process). The critical realist postulates the same: Activity transforms social structure. Hence, I regard it as conclusive to work with the cultural dynamic model based upon the philosophical perspective of a critical realist.

### **Rigour, relevance and critical realism**

Syed et al. (2009) discussed rigour and relevance in research according to critical realism. As a lot of management research is based on a positivist or empiricist approach (i.e. variable-approach to organisational culture), questions of rigour and validity of alternative research methodologies are often discussed from this point of view. So, fundamental differences between the respective methodologies and methods are not treated adequately. Therefore, much business academic research remains founded on issues of experimental design rather than the needs of practitioners (Syed et al. 2009). With regard to this discussion, Troyna (1994, p. 3) argues, that a perspective is needed in which research is not construed as something pristine but as something “carried out by flesh and blood figures who are engaged in real life activities”, which is possible when using action research.

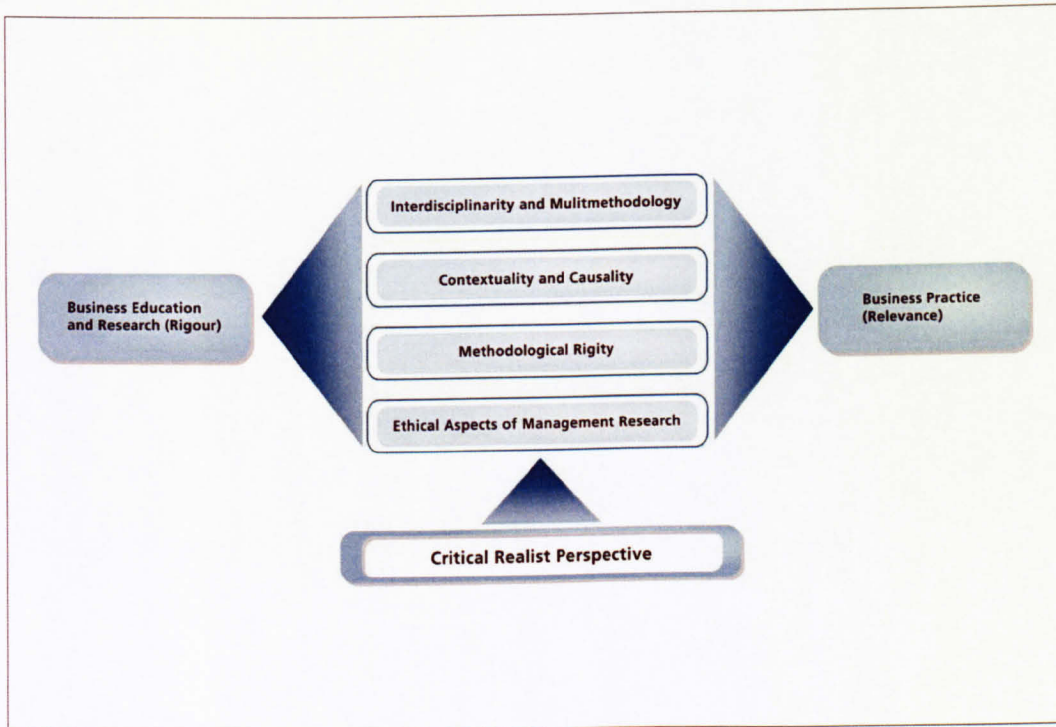
Syed et al (2009) criticised the separation of rigour from relevance. They argue that according to its novel ontological position, critical realism has the potential to advance both business theory and research. Critical realism reinterprets the activities of science (Ron 2002). This reinterpretation then can better explain previous research (Befani 2005; Pratschke 2003; Ron 2002; Syed et al. 2009). Syed et al. (2009) noting the existence of research-practice gaps in any complex diversified and specialised field. In fact, they share Anderson’s (2007) argument that these gaps are not the problem, but rather the lack of integrating processes, bridges for information exchange and policy formulation in both research and practice. Anderson (2005) stresses that it is not the width of the gap on which (management) schools and policy makers should concentrate, but, rather, the lack of sufficient bridging mechanisms to span research and practice.

In addition, Alvesson (1990) discussed the question of rigour and relevance in the context of research of organisational culture. He conceptualised this by the picture of a market of culture, where scholars are the producers of theory, whereas practitioners, like managers, are buyers. In his article he (Alvesson 1990) argues that management theory is sometimes caught between academic criteria and scientific requirements, and, on the other hand, the demands of



the market, that is, of being of practical value and relevance, primarily for managers. The more the top management can benefit from the research activities and results for their own career, the more likely they will agree to research within their organisation. At the same time, the researcher has to consider academic standards within his or her work. Alvesson's (1990) picture illustrates the need for some kind of negotiation and achievement of a common denominator. As a management researcher, one needs insight into an organisation. Sometimes, it is not easy to achieve agreement by responsible managers for access. Research in a company means, for them, that an external researcher might keep people from their work by observing or interviewing them. So, the responsible person will ask - and the researcher has to answer - for what reason should the company (or the responsible person) engage in this research. Hence, a connection between the different demands is important with some advantages for both parties ('buyers' and 'producers' mentioned above).

**Figure 3.4 A critical realist bridge between rigour and relevance**



(Syed et al. 2009, p. 81)

Figure 3.4 presents the potential of a critical realist perspective to serve as a bridge between rigour and relevance. Research is still characterised by clear boundaries between the

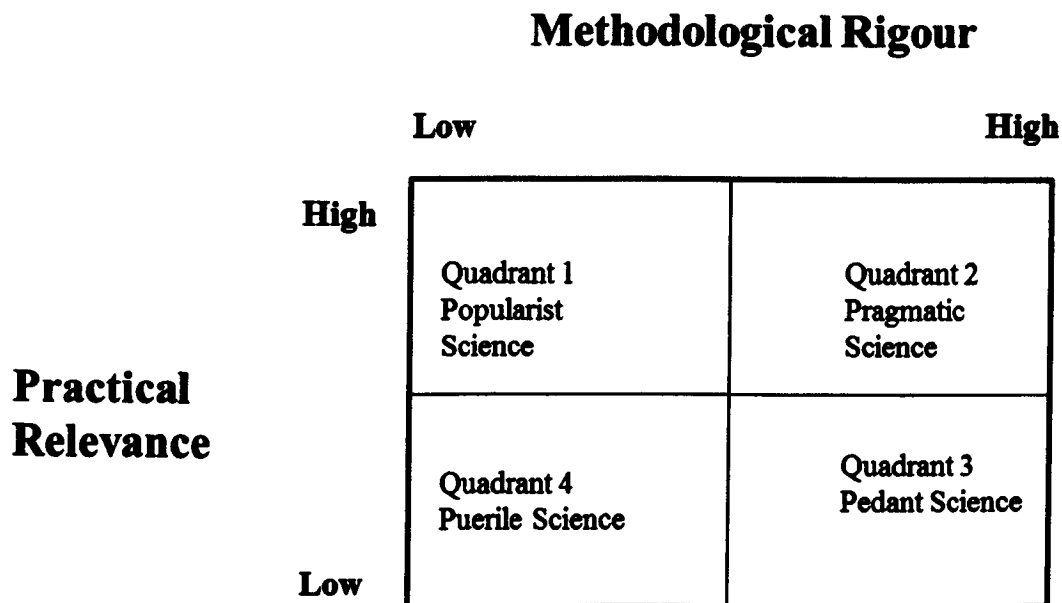
disciplines (Syed et al. 2009). On the other hand, particularly in business research, we realise that we are in a reality that is highly complex and it is difficult to find answers to these problems within one discipline only. Therefore, it is important to work across disciplines and with methodologies that are manifold and not limited by the allocation to certain disciplines or simply a positivist or constructivist philosophy. Critical realism as research philosophy provides a “unified and consistent philosophical foundation for combining research methods and theories” (Syed et al. 2009, p. 75).

Critical realism accepts the existence of a causality that is not driven by a strong interpretation of causal relationship, without denying it. Causal relationships may exist, but within a critical realist perspective the importance of a certain context, meaning, and interpretation is also noted (Syed et al. 2009).

Although the validity of alternative research methodologies to a quantitative one has been established, the reasoning for methods is often still based on issues of experimental design derived from hard sciences (Syed et al. 2009). Syed et al. (2009) comment that the separation of rigour and relevance in the discussions of researchers may have led to the assumption that research work is either meeting the demands of rigour or is of relevance for organisations. With its ontological paradigm, critical realism integrates both.

Anderson et al. (2001) developed a 2 x 2 model about the problem of rigour and relevance (Figure 3.5). They allocate different research works according to their value on methodological rigour and practical relevance. This model can help one to find one’s own position. This study can be positioned in quadrant 2 ‘Pragmatic Science’, as it aims to answer a relevant question with the requisite rigour of an academic work. However, a preliminary question remains: How to define ‘relevance’ and ‘rigour’.

**Figure 3.5 Model by Anderson et al. (2001) according rigour and relevance**



(adapted from Anderson et al. 2001)

The question of ‘relevance’ may be answered differently over time and according to the addressee. Therefore, it is difficult to develop an ultimate definition of ‘relevance’ (Anderson et al. 2001). So, the question of relevance of a study has to be answered individually, from case to case.

The understanding of what ‘methodological rigour’ is, in turn, dependent on the ontological assumptions and epistemological orientation underpinning it (Anderson et al. 2001). Today, qualitative approaches stand beside quantitative approaches. Academic literature has discussed in detail the question of the methodological rigour of these alternative approaches. Argyris (1999) describes some as ‘scholarly consulting’. Major elements of this ‘scholarly consulting’ today are termed action research (Anderson et al. 2001).

The above section has explained critical realism as a theoretical research background. Critical realism is a paradigm that connects the demand for research rigour as well as relevance. With its perspective on social systems and mechanisms, it is the appropriate approach to answer this study’s research question. In addition, it shows similarities to the model of cultural change by Hatch (1993) which in Chapter 2 was identified as the chosen model.

### **3.2 The researcher between the academic and practical world**

As far back as 1978, Susman and Evered discuss a “crisis in the field of organizational science” (p. 582), given research methods have become more sophisticated yet that at the same time research became increasingly less useful for solving practical problems. However, the question is, if it really is less useful? Actually, it could only be used less and therefore not as apparent any more. Another deficit could be that there is only a practicable ‘translation’ of the results into management-language or reality may be missing. In this case, research findings are still useful, but for non-researchers difficult to grasp and therefore regarded as less useful for practitioners. Methodologies like action research (AR), with its participatory approach, lead to a different understanding of the researcher in the balance between practical efforts and demands of the researched organisations and the role of the objective researcher as a distanced observer. Van Aken (2007) notes that management research, like other social sciences, developed more into an explanatory science. This development also leads to different demands on the role of academic researchers. There is no doubt that explanations are very important. In addition, suggestions for changes should follow these explanations and consequences out of the explanations should be discussed for interested managers and practitioners.

According to Chambers (1998), the post-modern perspective of the existence of multiple realities and the recognition that professional realities are constructed differently from those of lay people raised new challenges as well. Researchers conducting management research face the problem of academic demands and the aim of doing research which is immediately useful and relevant to practitioners (Saunders 2011). This is especially so with research in organisational development, with its emphasis on change. The researcher wants to answer his or her research questions and designs the methodology and methods to find these answers. On the other hand, we see the more practical approach by practitioners, to whom the researcher’s approach seems to be strange or even frightening (Bartunek 2007). Hence, we find a gap between the approach and results of research and the problem-solving process within organisations. Literature about this gap is heterogeneous. On the one hand there are researchers who deny this gap (van Aken 2007), while others that see this gap growing (Hulin 2001), and others who regard this gap as shrinking (Cascio, 2008; Latham 2001). As I experience the existence of such a gap (Bartunek 2007; Saunders 2011; van Aken 2007) in

my consultancy work, I share this. But as with critical realism (Section 3.1), we should not concentrate on the gap but rather, on how to bridge it.

According to Cascio (2008), Shrivastava and Mitroff (1984) and others have concluded that the differences between the real world of academics and practitioners affect their basic assumptions and beliefs. The debate about these worlds challenged their view as to which type of information constitutes a valid basis for action. To translate results from research in a way that practitioners and researchers can accept demands new ways of arranging and presenting information and results. Also, past experiences used to evaluate the validity of knowledge claims was challenged (Cascio 2008, p. 456).

**Table 3.1: Academic and practitioner orientations by Saunders (2011)**

	<b>Management researcher</b>	<b>Practitioner</b>
<b>Focus of interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic understanding</li> <li>• General enlightenment</li> <li>• Theoretical explanations of problems</li> <li>• ‘Why’ knowledge</li> <li>• Substantive theory building</li> <li>• Scientifically credible output</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useable knowledge</li> <li>• Instrumental</li> <li>• Practical solutions to problems</li> <li>• ‘How-to’ knowledge</li> <li>• Local theory-in-use</li> <li>• Practically useful guidance</li> </ul>
<b>Methodological cynosure</b>	Theoretical and methodological rigour	Timeliness
<b>Measured outcomes</b>	Academic publications in top level journals	Actionable results with practice impact
<b>View of other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disdain of practitioners</li> <li>• Desire to help to make a difference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deprecate or ignore management research</li> <li>• Belief can provide relevant research abilities and fresh insights.</li> </ul>

(Saunders 2011, p. 244)

According to Saunders (2011) the differences in orientations of academics and practitioners can be placed into four categories: Focus of interest; methodological cynosure; measured outcomes, and perspective on each other (academic researcher and practitioner). Table 3.1 presents these differences based on current literature.

In his work, Saunders (2011) discusses examples where these different orientations have been brought together. These examples also demonstrate the ‘bridge’ between rigour and relevance

as presented by Syed et al (2009; see also Section 3.2). The foci of interest have been achieved by agreement about research aims and data requirements with the gatekeeper and other influences within the system. Whereas, in one case the same data could satisfy the researcher's and the practitioner's interest, in the second case different data has been collected. The cases stressed the importance for the management researcher of negotiating with decision-makers and people who hold the power of access, intellectual property and the subsequent use of data and collection tools (Saunders 2011). Therefore, a management researcher should have the ability to negotiate successfully about different interests with professional partners. The art is not to lose one's own focus, as the author experienced during her fieldwork.

Another challenge to be met is the methodological cynosure: To meet practitioner needs, with no compromise, and theoretically and methodologically rigorous research design (Saunders 2011). The choice of methods and their design has to be done with regard to methodology rigour and organisational conditions. Often compromises are required to fulfil both requirements, this author personally experienced during her fieldwork. Especially, when organisations are under time pressure to produce solutions to urgent problems, there exists the danger of compromising methodological rigour (Saunders 2011; Van de Ven & Johnson 2006). Again, the ability of the researcher to successfully negotiate and develop agreements about design that satisfy researcher and practitioner demands is an important pivotal point.

Some authors describe the difficulties associated with creating a mutually positive relationship between academic researchers and practitioners (Bartunek 2007; Kahn 2007; Saunders 2011). This relationship is sometimes defined by stereotypical thinking by each group (Anderson et al. 2001). This limits openness, and, therefore, the potential of the work itself (Davidson & James 2007). Anderson et al. (2001; Anderson 2007) may have differing and strong opinions about the value of rigorous research versus relevant practice research (Anderson et al. 2001; Bartunek 2007). These positions, which are often expressed emphatically among academics (Bartunek 2007), can create a barrier between researchers and practitioners, which is difficult to overcome. According to these discussions and strong positions, there seems to be a need for certain courage to break down this wall (Bartunek 2007). Researcher and practitioner both want, and need, acceptance of their work by their peer-groups.

The reason why an organisation agrees to a survey is usually the fulfilment of certain needs. Often, this is the solution to a specific problem. So, the client wants to receive concrete answers and actionable results. In addition, the practitioner will probably expect clear recommendations for their practice from published articles by researchers (if not, why is there such a huge number of published management books in bookstores which promise solutions to problems?). Yet, a survey based upon 59 refereed articles in 2006 in the *Academy of Management Journal* showed that only 64 per cent of these articles discussed implications for practice, although the Journal demands these from its authors (Bartunek 2007).

In addition, these recommendations seem to be very broad, like “Increase awareness of phenomena” (38 per cent of articles included this implication; Bartunek 2007, p. 1325). The focus of an academic researcher on publication output seems to be too narrow (Saunders 2011). Cascio (2008) argues for the necessity to modify academic reward systems and to promote much closer collaboration between academics and practitioners to generate genuine change.

Hence, it is an important task for the academic to concentrate on both results and publications with implications for management practice that can be realised in every-day management practice. Hereafter, it is important to create conditions where academics and practitioners both win. Saunders (2011) describes two case-studies where the different interests of both groups can be satisfied. These demonstrate the need for a willingness from both to do so. Also, Cascio (2008) describes some efforts made by academics to reach out to practitioners, to translate academic research into actionable knowledge by practitioners.

Bartunek (2007) discusses Boyer’s (1990) model of ‘scholarship of integration’ as one way of expanding the possibilities for academic-practitioner relationships. She regards it as a valuable win to find a bridge over the gap. Whereas Boyer (1990) developed his concept as a demand made of the individual academic to search for communication with practitioners, and go beyond publishing research-articles in the relevant papers, Bartunek (2007) calls for a “relational scholarship of integration” (p. 1327). She contends that without management, management and organisational scholars would have no research to do. Also, academics would benefit from the fact that practitioners often know of certain phenomena long before the academic world takes notice of these. She holds the view that academics’ and managers’ knowledge complement each others (Bartunek 2007). According to my own experience since

commencing my DBA project, the way of thinking and working as a scholar broadened my interventions, depth and perspective on certain phenomena as well. I experienced this as real enrichment that is also of direct benefit to my clients. Anderson et al. (2001) stated that robust research supports the development of best professional practice, whereas simultaneously informed practice stimulates new directions for research and theorising in Industrial Work and Organisational Psychology (IWO).

So, the question of rigour and relevance is not only a question of philosophical interest. It puts the researcher right into the world of the practitioner. These practitioners are important clients for a type of research that not only wants to answer why-questions, but gives clear recommendations as well. Therefore, the choice of research strategy must have the potential to achieve both demands: rigour and relevance.

### **3.3 Action research as the appropriate strategy**

The literature found about organisational research and theory often failed to reflect the complex realities that one is confronted with in organisations. The organisational development and change literature often describes change as a linear process (Maurer & Githens 2010). However, this was contrary to my experience over the years as a consultant. In many cases – if not to say in most - the situation found was much more complex and there existed no easy answer. According to Weick and Quinn (1999), change can be seen as a spiralling process. Here, the people involved aim to understand the context, take action and understand what is happening. Hence, we find a spiralling process of change. Action research itself is described as a spiralling process in overlapping cycles, with the aim of understanding and facilitating this change process in organisations (Burke 2002; Maurer & Githens 2010). Besides this, as presented in Section 3.1, critical realism is also characterised by a dynamic aspect. So, beside the spiralling process of change and action research, the philosophical basic position of critical realism also includes a dynamic aspect and meets the situation of the organisation, too.

Reason and Bradbury (2008) describe action research as a participatory, democratic process. The goal of action research is to develop practical knowledge, grounded in a participatory perspective. According to the situation in the case study organisation, (to preserve anonymity it will be named 'South Real Estate', see also Sections 1.1 and 4.1), and the research question,



this strategy seems adequate. Hence, the following sections (Sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.3) will give a description of action research and the reason for the choice of this methodology.

### **3.3.1 Foundations of action research**

To name one certain point of time or researcher as the source of a certain method, is always arbitrary. So, one has to decide, which different approaches and experiments that show single principles and developments are central to his or her perspective (Pieper 1977). It seems sensible to put this starting point at the time where social science and empirical social research become more and more accepted, due to initial success. According to Pieper (1977) action research was confronted, right from its beginning, with a problematic relationship between empirical (objective) science and social practice (and, today, management practice). This discussion is still on-going (Anderson et al. 2001; Cascio 2008; Saunders 2011). According to Reason and Bradbury (2001), the theoretical and philosophical roots of action research primarily lie in pragmatic philosophy, critical thinking, social constructionist theory, systems theory and philosophical perspective.

Over the years, different kinds of action research have developed (Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008) including action research in management, community action research and participatory rural appraisal. Table 3.2 briefly presents the character of AR in management. AR is closely associated with the person of Kurt Lewin and his work (Coghlan & Brannick 2010; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008; Pieper 1977; Reason and Bradbury 2008). He is even often named 'the father of action research' (Cunningham 1993; Greenwood & Levin 1998; Marrow 1958; Maurer & Githens 2010). Besides this, Lewin is also known as the 'father' of organisational development (Burnes 2004), and, so, the chosen methodology of this work and the realm where the survey takes place are based on the same original sources.

AR aims to create knowledge about an organisation, while at the same time it tries to change it (Elden & Chisholm 1993). According to Ozanne & Saatcioglu (2008) Lewin oriented himself and his work to an idea of 'man' that was different from the approaches of scientific management and control as by Taylor. So, Lewin (Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008; Pieper 1977) and the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (Maurer & Githens 2010) advocated greater workplace democracy, including collaborating with workers affected by organisational problems.

**Table 3.2 Characteristics of action research in management**

	<b>Action research</b>
<b>Exemplar</b>	Kurt Lewin (1946, 1948) in management
<b>Contemporary research streams</b>	Participatory action research (PAR; Whyte, Greenwood, and Lazes, 1989) Action science (Argyris et al., 1985) Appreciate inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987)
<b>Change focus</b>	Organisation
<b>Immanent critique</b>	Little focus on the historical process of change
<b>Imminent critique</b>	Collaboratively come to a new understanding that shapes local interventions
<b>Participation</b>	An obligation of citizenship
<b>Approach to power</b>	Collaboration: top-down reform by including worker's insights and working within social order
<b>Nature of causality</b>	Think-act-reflect cycle of change as never-ending process of improvement
<b>Approach to theory</b>	Traditional view of theory but preference for testing in the field
<b>Key methodological practices</b>	Solve practical problems Use the scientific method Employ cyclical inquiry Collaborative relationship
<b>Research process</b>	Identify and diagnose problem Develop hypotheses, design research, collect and analyse data Action planning Implementation Evaluation (begin anew)
<b>Key evaluative criteria</b>	Was there rigorous application of the scientific method? Did the action generate the desired result?
<b>Criticisms</b>	Use of research to manipulate people Worker's interest are absorbed within organisational interests and may not be emancipatory

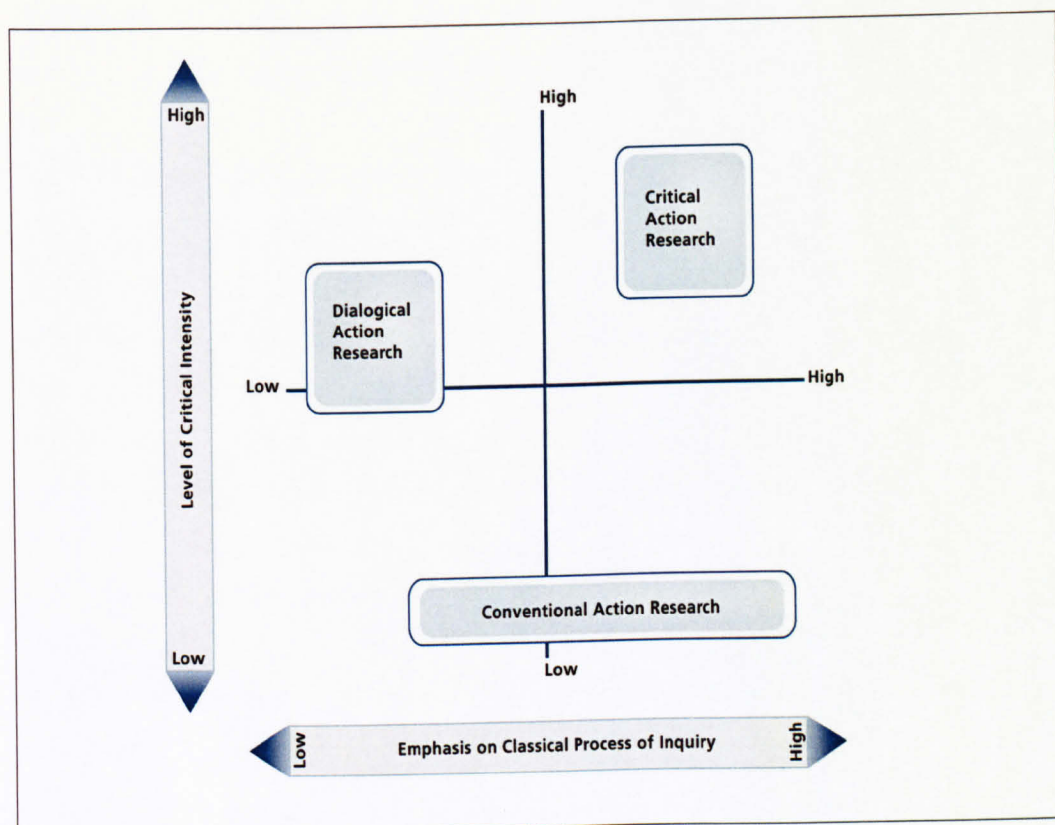
(Extract of a table by Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008)

Lewin (1948) found in his fieldwork that workers, who are involved in processes like decision making, were more productive than others who were not involved and who had more dictatorial supervisors. Lewin's work was not only adapted by organisational development, but, also by consumer researchers and had other variants (Kozinets & Handelman 2004; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). These variants have in common that they share a commitment to the research method as a rigorous approach in knowledge creation (Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). So, with Lewin's work, research moved out of the laboratories into the real life of organisations, communities and others and so is directly confronted with real life problems. Field data is used to support, challenge, or expand the theory within the existing literature. The change process is focused on solving practical problems within an organisation (Coghlan

& Brannick 2010; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). It is this work that makes a combination of rigour and relevance possible.

Maurer and Githens (2010) provide a framework of action research that considers both the degree of criticality and the emphasis on conventional scientific research methods in common approaches to action research (Figure 3.6). In their framework, Maurer and Githens (2010), horizontally consider the extent to which action researchers focus on classical methodological rigour. Vertically they consider the levels of critical intensity between technical, emancipatory, and practical or hermeneutical knowledge interests.

**Figure 3.6 Approaches to action research according to Maurer and Githens (2010)**



(Maurer & Githens 2010, p. 274)

Critical intensity, according to Maurer and Githens (2010), refers to the amount of space for questioning existing systems and/or practices. They claim that conventional action research would be a relatively uncritical mode, where researcher and/or consultant tend to work with a

value-neutral stance. Action research here is only seen as a problem-solution tool. This would lead to a situation where the actors would primarily serve the interests of management. However, this seems to be black and white thinking. Why should it be negative to join a value-neutral stance and so try to hold distance to the object of research? In addition, it must not be negative to use AR as a problem –solution tool.

Critical action research not only aims to create knowledge and results in action, but also aims to empower oppressed people, through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge to generate emancipatory knowledge that questions underlying ideologies and power structures (Maurer & Githens 2010; McArdle & Reason 2008; Schwandt 2001). In opposition, the conventional approach is technical (Habermas 1971). This research aims to create knowledge about role(s) and influence of middle management onto organisational culture change. Therefore, the organisational culture change at South Real Estate was conducted. The intended result was a noticeable culture change. To achieve this, we planned to empower the middle management to be an active participant within this process.

As a third method, Maurer and Githens (2010) present ‘Dialogic action research’. According to them, dialogic action research emphasises the critical engagement of individuals, organisations, or communities when undertaking action-oriented investigations into organisational issues or problems. In using dialogue, the researcher seeks to lay open beliefs, values, tacit assumptions, and mental models informing and shaping practices (Schwandt, 1997). Maurer and Githens (2010) claim that this emphasis on reflective practices – beside others – differentiates dialogic action research from conventional research.

The boundaries between these approaches are in a state of flux. Although the characteristics of critical AR are clearly given (see above paragraphs), the project at South Real Estate also included the attempt to engage the entire management into it. Therefore, dialogic aspects can be found either. However, I would still allocate my approach to the critical AR.

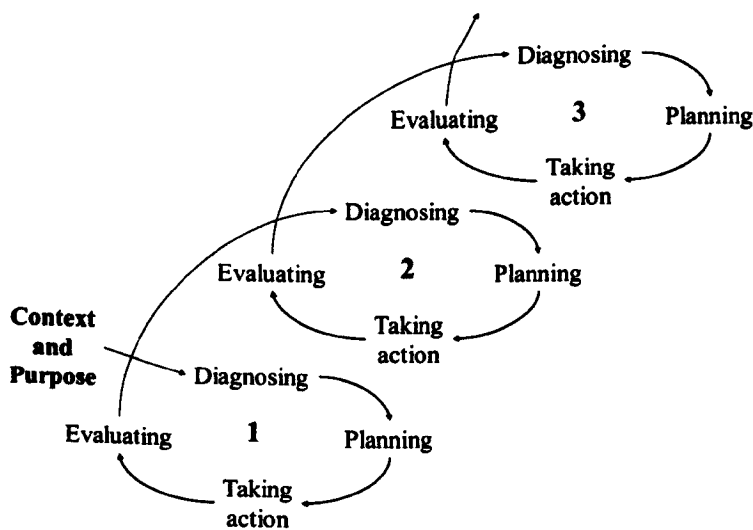
As is the case with any other strategy, AR has certain strengths and weaknesses. According to Ozanne and Saatcioglu (2008), its strengths are systematic and rigorous inquiry, great social legitimacy and status and its allowance for comparison of techniques. On the other hand, working with AR in an organisation to create change requires educated and well-informed clients and significant training and expertise (Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). Therefore, an

organisation and its members must first have a certain degree of maturity to be able to work successfully with AR, which is the same for driving a cultural change with culturally aware management (see Section 2.4.4)

### 3.3.2 The action research cycles

AR comprises a pre-step and three core activities: planning, action and fact-finding and evaluating (Coghlan & Brannick 2010; Lewin 1946, 1997; Maurer & Githens 2010; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). According to Coghlan and Brannick (2010), the pre-step involves naming the general objective, planning comprises having an overall plan and a decision regarding the first step to take, and action which involves taking that step. Coghlan and Brannick attach evaluating to the step of fact-finding, but, as with most other authors, I would take it as an extra step to underline its importance. Evaluation involves evaluating the first step, seeing what was learned and creating the basis for correcting the next steps. In addition, a step of diagnosing what is found is important (Saunders et al. 2009). So, what we find are continuously developing iterative cycles, or as Lewin writes, a continuing “spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action” (Coghlan & Brannick 2010, p. 7; Lewin 1946, 1997, p. 146). This description very clearly shows the dynamic aspect of action research (Figure 3.7).

**Figure 3.7 Action research cycles**



(Saunders et al., 2009, p. 141)

Before embarking into a process of AR, purpose and issue have to be clarified (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). This clarification is important, as the following research steps build upon its

results. Researchers and clients actively collaborate throughout this cyclical process (Elden & Chisholm 1993; Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008). AR is a strategy that can be useful if there are concrete problems to be solved. So, this strategy is always strongly linked to everyday life (inside organisations or other communities; Coghlan & Brannick 2010). According to Argyris et al. (1985), clients bring in their practical knowledge, perspective and their struggle with real world problems and researchers contribute theoretical knowledge. So, what we find here is a unique relationship between clients and researchers. Both researcher and practitioner must develop a common understanding of the problem and its solution (Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008). Hence, this is a dialogic activity between the people in the organisation and the researcher. The cycles and their iterative development show that we do not have a linear process during fieldwork. Moreover, surprising twists can happen that cause the need for changing the planned activities, something that happened at South Real Estate (see Chapter 4). AR strategy gives the researcher the opportunity to follow this development, and twists, without losing the plot. Therefore, AR is the appropriate strategy for research in a complex field with a high number of unknown variables, as we may find in cultural changes.

After activities have started, reflection about outcomes begins immediately, as this is a prerequisite for the next decisions. Outcomes are not always as intended, as I experienced myself at a future search conference during the research (see Chapter 4). So, outcomes both intended and not, have to be examined carefully and taken into account for following activities.

AR unfolds in real-time (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). This is a special challenge for the researcher, because they have to adapt continuously to new aspects arising. Certainly, this happens in laboratory work as well, but it seems that due to the many factors which can influence the on-going process, this is more likely to happen in the field more often, where the researcher is working with human beings and not with physical laws.

### **3.3.3 Two action research cycles: The core and the thesis action research**

Coghlan and Brannick (2010) discuss two AR cycles, operating in parallel: the core action research cycle and the thesis research cycle about the action research cycle (Zuber-Skerrit & Perry 2002). This is especially the case when the AR is undertaken for academic accreditation like the DBA. This means, the researcher has to pay regard to two different kinds of actions.

On the one hand, within the core action research cycle the activities are developed according to the concrete problem which is to be solved. At the same time, the researcher has to change his or her perspective and regard the activities from a meta-level. At the thesis research cycle, one needs to construct, plan, take action and evaluate how the *research* is going to achieve its aim and objectives, reach academic standards and reflect on what is to be learnt. So, it can happen that activities that are conducted within the core AR cycle are not necessarily part of the thesis cycle. Coghlan and Brannick (2010, p. 12) therefore also name this the “meta cycle of action research”. Argyris (2003) regards this as central to the development of actionable knowledge. Hence, in addition to the dynamic of the core cycle comes another dynamic development, the scientific work.

According to Coghlan and Brannick (2010) and Mezirow (1991), within the core cycles, three forms of reflection are identified: content, process and premise.

**Content reflection:** Thinking about the issues, what one thinks is happening;

**Process reflection:** Thinking about strategies, procedures and *how* things are being done;

**Premise reflection:** Critique underlying assumptions and perspectives.

Reflection on the core cycles is the basis for the thesis cycles. Whereas the actions within the core cycles do not have to fulfil academic standards, the realisation of the thesis cycles should (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). It is important to be aware that the core cycle and thesis cycle are not always identical. Whereas the focus of the core cycle is dependent on achievement of the goals of the project, the thesis cycle occurs independently from that achievement. Its focus is on demonstration of the quality and rigour of the inquiry (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). Moreover, by realising the different thesis cycles the researcher aims to answer bit by bit, his or her research questions. Therefore, the two AR cycles can include different activities. Sometimes, activities undertaken within the core cycle have no use within the thesis cycle, as we will see in the research at South Real Estate. Hence, this thesis will present one chapter that will describe the action research cycles relating to the consultancy work (Chapter 4) and one chapter will discuss the thesis cycles (Chapter 5). Findings for the thesis will be drawn out of the last-mentioned section and discussed in Chapter 6. Here, information about justification of the particular method, its validity, and reliability will be discussed.

### **3.4 Rigour and relevance in action research**

The above section presented AR with its specific course of action. Therefore, it requires its own quality criteria, some of which are different from those of positivist science. In 2001, Swanson and Holton (scholars in the field of Human Resources and Organisational Development) criticised that AR would not represent a research method (Maurer & Githens 2010), as it is a research strategy (Saunders et al., 2009). In 2005, Swanson and Holton (2005) described AR as a mixed method strategy. This example shows the change in opinion about AR over time. In fact, AR is discussed as a particular way of thinking about, and acting, in human inquiry, which expresses itself in a specific set of practices, and a collaborative process of mutual and liberating inquiry (Greenwood & Levin 1998; Gustavsen 1992; McArdle & Reason 2008; Maurer & Githens 2010; Reason & Bradbury 2001). Here, it comes out very clearly why this strategy is suitable for researching organisational culture change: The literature review showed that to change organisational culture, middle management has to be involved. Besides, they have to be educated to a culturally aware behaviour to fulfil their roles within the change process. Also, I indicated that the level of maturity (of management and organisation) has to be high to make the change happen. So, the way of thinking within the AR process and the cultural change process have significant aspects in common.

Reason (2006) presents some key questions, and measures quality on the basis of these. These questions relate to the development of practice of relational participation. They concern the reflexive concern for practical outcomes; the inclusion of plurality of knowing which ensures conceptual-theoretical integrity and extends our ways of knowing, and has a methodological appropriateness. In addition, they ask for the engagement in significant work; and if the AR process does result in new and enduring infrastructures. Again, we can find a very close relationship between change and AR.

Rigour in AR refers to how data are generated, gathered, explored and evaluated, as well as how events are questioned and interpreted through multiple cycles (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). An extensive list of 15 characteristics of good AR is presented by Eden and Huxham (1996). This list concentrates on reflection of the intentionality to change the organisation, the implications beyond the people directly involved, development of theory and the theoretical basis of design and action research cycles. Eden and Huxham (1996) emphasise the



systematic method and orderliness in which the reflection on the outcomes of each cycle are done.

Beside these demands about rigour and relevance, another point has to be taken into account: in this research I was a consultant inside the organisation (South Real Estate) while, at the same time, doing my research study. So, right from the beginning I had to reflect on the different demands on the consultant (by the organisation and my colleagues) and the academic researcher (by the academic world) and the role(s) I would internalise or present in the eyes of others. Both roles have their entitlement. It is very likely that in the eyes of the staff members I was primarily acting as a consultant. So, when realising the specific steps, I had to be aware of these roles and expectations and how to deal with them. This reflecting process and its particular influence are discussed in detail in Chapter 4, to demonstrate research rigour.

Action research in connection with organisational research and development is mostly aimed at bringing about a change or generating a solution for a particular problem (Coghlan & Brannick 2010; Ozanne & Sattcioglu 2008 and others). In the research project at hand, the organisation was also pursuing the goal of changing the organisational culture within the scope of its process and structural changes, as this was seen as an important prerequisite for success. The consultancy firm, in which I am a partner, was engaged to support the management board within the scope of this task. The idea was put to the management board that we monitor the cultural change process scientifically within the scope of the DBA thesis. The research issue therefore had practical relevance for the organisation and the fact that I had not come across any publications on the role of middle management in this context indicates that results on this subject are also of interest for academic discourse. This leads to a close linkage between consultancy and the research project, with its corresponding implications.

Similar to AR, the question also arises with consultancy projects of how success or efficacy can be measured. At South Real Estate, we were realising a consultancy project with the help of AR and within this project I aimed to answer my research question. Hence, the discussion about the measurements of outcome in consultancy projects may be of interest at this point too.

Ernst (2010) challenges the classification of consulting success on the basis of interventions in companies. In an empirical study, she interviewed 11 managers of big corporations and large medium-sized companies and 12 consultants from the highest turnover consultancy firms in Germany on their evaluation of consulting success in companies. Through these semi-structured interviews, data from 17 consultancy projects were collected, all of which are attributable to strategic management and expert consulting.

“Only 1 (!) of the managers interviewed mentioned that consultancy projects were reviewed once they were completed, on the basis of a list of criteria. However, even in this case, no attempt was made to isolate the influence of consultancy from other influences that might also have had an effect on the target value of the consultancy project” (Ernst 2010, p. 119).

This result is at least surprising given the importance and cost of external consulting and its legitimation for companies. When using an AR strategy, the phase of evaluation is an inherent part of a complete cycle. There does not seem to be a rational reason why this evaluation of consultancy projects seems to be missing as the results indicate. A further sociological interpretation of the survey results leads to an explanatory approach for the practical importance of (formal) evaluation and thus the exercise of power which can be illustrated as follows:

**Table 3.3 Problems of measuring consulting success and their transfer to the research project at hand**

<b>Problems with the formal evaluation of consulting success</b>	<b>Explanation in the context of consulting</b>	<b>Transfer as a risk for the research project at hand</b>
Ambiguous goals and expectations	In consultancy projects, frequently several and sometimes also contradictory goals (e.g. improvement of customer orientation and reduction of services) are aspired to. Thus, the complexity of the evaluation and/or the dependent and independent variables increases.	The company’s main goal is to successfully change its strategy as well as its structural and procedural organisation. The subject of ‘organisational culture’ has been recognised as important for this purpose and is actively supported, but is part of a complex remit. The background and the process in the given case are shown in detail in the following chapter.
Unexpected external influences	Consultancy projects always take place under the premises of changing markets and economies, which may	The economic crisis has led to this company performing very well economically. Significantly more

<b>Problems with the formal evaluation of consulting success</b>	<b>Explanation in the context of consulting</b>	<b>Transfer as a risk for the research project at hand</b>
	affect the evaluation of consulting success as an intervening variable.	projects could be realised than resources are allowing.
Interactive provision of services	Both consultants and company employees render performance. The share and the quality of the rendered performance are frequently interdependent and therefore difficult to classify.	The employees and managers of the organisation take decisions on a daily basis and act accordingly. This has an effect on the corporate culture, but is not always directly attributable to a precise intervention by the researcher. Mutual 'stimulation' takes place. On the other hand, the success of interventions is dependent on the activity of the persons concerned in the organisation and their transfer in the operative business.
Process evaluation to manage complexity	Consultancy projects generally take place in project groups of employees and consultants, where interim evaluations are made of the status of success (milestones). This frequently leads to iterative target changes, which can change the measured zero line of a project evaluation.	This equally applies to an action research project that lives from, and is largely supported by, the perpetual reflection and conflict between researcher and participants. Thus, in the course of the process, more and more information is acquired that can change the perspective on the situation.
Official consulting functions which are difficult to evaluate	Especially in the case of expert consulting, frequently 'knowledge' is temporarily placed at the company's disposal which is no longer available when the consultancy mandate vis-à-vis the company has ended and can thereby influence sustainable success.	Part of the action research process is to sensitise members of the organisation to the subject and meaning of organisation culture, thus contributing to a culture-conscious management which is further supported by all the participants. The change in corporate culture will continue beyond the duration of the project. The researcher's influence ends here, thus making evaluation difficult.
Latent functions which cannot be officially communicated	In consultancy projects, consultants sometimes take on management substitute functions. This means they do not just have the traditional consulting mandate to advise managers, but rather actively participate in decisions, communication and implementation. These latent functions are not contained in the 'official' consulting mandate, but probably contribute to the consulting result.	Such a function is not taken on by the researcher.
Distorted judgements due to own evaluations of participants.	When evaluating consulting services, there is always a risk of errors of judgement and disruptive elements, such as sympathy/antipathy, qualification, self-fulfilling prophecies,	The researcher is also subject to this risk, especially in the case of an action research project, where he/she has greater proximity to all the participants, and must ensure that it

Problems with the formal evaluation of consulting success	Explanation in the context of consulting	Transfer as a risk for the research project at hand
	interest-led evaluations, selective perceptions and much more, which are very difficult to control in an evaluation.	is counteracted.

(present author)

The problems presented and their explanation can, for the most part, be transferred to the research project. According to consultancy projects, Ernst (2010) regards these problems, and the associated difficulties with evaluation, are the reason why a performance evaluation is rarely carried out in practice. However problems in developing a clear model of evaluation cannot cause the entire abstinence of evaluation. Evaluation tools within economics often are quantitative. When looking into organisations, one finds that mostly ratios are used to evaluate the efficacy of interventions (for example: Bühner 2000). It is very difficult to develop criteria to measure for soft aspects or qualifications, although may be possible if desired. So, the question remains, if there are alternative explanations for the lack of evaluation to those presented in Table 3.3. Maybe the effort to evaluate tools other than quantitative ratios is too high or there is in fact no interest in really evaluating. However, evaluation is a mandatory part of AR and therefore has to be conducted. This thesis aims to give answers to a concrete question and out of the results practical recommendations will be presented. Without evaluation, this would simply not be possible.

### 3.5 Action research and ethics

Any kind of research requires compliance with ethical standards. This is all the more important when working in complex human systems like organisations with people in different organisation roles. The researcher obtains much information, very often of a very personal nature. If a respondent places such trust in somebody else, it is very important to take great care not to abuse this trust. AR, where the researcher is collaborating with boards, managers and staff members, therefore sets high demands on ethical activities. Hence, the clearance of ethical rules and standards between the people of the organisation and the researcher is essential. The importance of this issue can be seen from the literature about ethics in AR which has emerged in recent years (Brydon-Miller 2008; Brydon-Miller et al. 2006; Coghlan & Brannick 2010; Coghlan & Shani 2005; Eikeland 2006; Hilsen 2006).

The Norwegian philosopher Olav Eikeland (2006) worked with ethics and AR and differentiates between philosophical and applied levels of ethical aspects (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). Philosophical ethics, according to him (Eikeland 2006), deals with questions about the principles and aims that should guide us in our relations with others, and how to apply reason to what we do. Also, it deals with the conflicts these principles and aims may have between them. The ethical questions the researcher is confronted with in their research practice during an AR project in the first instance are about: Who is involved? How and why? Who makes decisions? Whose interpretations are to prevail and why? How do we write and publish on people involved? Who owns the ideas developed? (Eikeland 2006). Beside these questions, Eikeland (2006) based on Zeni (2001), points out some more ethical issues, such as the questions of who is included in the community of inquiry and interpretation, and what/who are the subjects of study.

AR is often defined as 'insider investigation' as well (Eikeland 2006; Lytle 2001; Zeni 2001). So, the question is, whether this kind of research asks for different ethical standards or the same set by conventional 'outsider research' (Eikeland 2006).

Therefore, the situation in AR, where the researcher is an active participant in a change process and the human beings in the organisations are regarded as subjects, requires an ethical positioning of the researcher. There are no longer separated groups of researchers and objects to be studied. Now, there is a 'we'. So, the researcher is much more affected by what they are doing. This certainly causes more emotional reactions. It is much harder to keep distance. This becomes much more apparent in the case of AR in one's own organisation. There, the researcher is not only conducting the research. He or she will still have to work productively with the subjects of the study after the conclusion of the project. As a consultant, on the other hand, it is important to do successful projects in order to acquire future work. So, very quickly, one finds oneself in a situation where one has to weigh up potentially different demands. Hence, the following section will discuss some basic aspects of ethics and AR and at the end this my personal position will be stated.

Ethics and AR are discussed from different perspectives. Whereas Hilsen (2006) derives his ethical principles by the grounded principles of AR itself, others ground the issues by the

cycle (Walker & Haslett 2002). So, Table 3.4 will present these different ethical aspects. These principles show some consistencies.

**Table 3.4 Ethical principles of action research according to different authors – an overview**

Authors	Derived from	Principles
Hilsen (2006)	Based on the action research principles: Democracy Justice Freedom Participation (Coghlan & Brannick, 2010)	Human interdependency Cogeneration of knowledge Fair power relationships
Walker & Haslett (2002)	Action Research cycle	Consent within the organisation Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality Balancing conflicting and varying needs Central questions: Who will be affected? How will they be affected?
Brydon-Miller & Greenwood (2006)	Criteria to submit research work by the Institutional Review Board (IRB)	Coercion Predictability Confidentiality Risk of action research for participants

(present author)

Whereas Hilsen (2006) and Walker and Haslett (2002) refer to the AR strategy itself, Brydon-Miller and Greenwood (2006) distinguish between the process of AR and reporting on it. This perspective is helpful to reflect on one's own work in relation to that point. But, it does not fully deal with the ethical questions of coercion, confidentiality and risk in the process itself, because these issues do not come up at the time of publication or submission, but, rather, in the day-to-day activities. Then again, these suggestions can serve as useful boundary markers to reflect on these activities with regard to ethical challenges. The demand for fair power relations is certainly desirable. But, I doubt that within any organisation it is possible to create really fair power relations, as this principle does not give a definition of what this could be. Therefore, I share Walker and Haslett's (2002) ethical principles of achieving: Consent with the organisation, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality and balancing conflicting and varying needs. Besides declarations of confidentiality given by me to interviewees, all data were collected and stored by me personally. Results were summarised and checked before

presenting, if certain statements could allow identifying individuals. Every individual questionnaire or interview was marked by a certain code that would not allow anybody but me to identify the individual person (for details, please see Chapters 4 to 6).

AR usually takes place for some time in an organisation, as it aims to be part of a change process. So, not only because of the demands concerning ethics, it is in their own interests for researchers to act and behave according to ethical bases. The researcher is dependent on a good relationship with participants to achieve their goal. If the organisation and the members, respectively the single participant, felt that they are being treated unethically, the whole project may be in danger.

During the AR, my consultancy company was working for the organisation where the research was carried out (mainly coaching some members of the board, some training and workshops for managers). Although it was decided that the consultancy work was to be mainly done by my colleague, I was concerned with the procedures and results as well, as some of them were not only part of the core cycle but also the thesis cycle. So, in each case, it was thought important to clarify right at the beginning, whether I was in the role of consultant or researcher.

Especially when designing and facilitating the workshops, this could not be separated clearly. The ethical standards between research and work as a consultant can differ, as the consultant is paid to reach the goal of the assignment. Therefore, it was very important to discuss questions of confidentiality, approach to participants, roles and responsibilities etc. Also, these questions were part of a continuous discussion with my supervisor, colleague, the board and participants. In addition, it is important to mention that in the case of the research work (interviews, presentations, joining of staff meetings etc.) no payment or reimbursement for expenses were received.

### **Consultancy, research, power and ethics**

This research was carried out at a client (South Real Estate; see also Sections 1.1 and 4.1) of a consulting company I not only work for, but of which I am one of the partners. The consulting project included various tasks including working with the entire management

board of the organisation in the form of individual consulting and coaching, team development and organisational development, the facilitation of workshops and management training with top and middle management. Besides myself another partner, serving as the leading consultant, worked within this project. Therefore, it seems sensible to discuss the issue of consultancy, research, power and ethics within a separate section.

In a case study, Muhr (2004) demonstrates the complex communication and power relationships between the consulting clientele with different interests and the consulting system with different work mandates, goals, expectations and interests from a sociological point of view. In this connection, the question arises for research and consultancy practice of the extent to which the research result is influenced by power interventions due to these differing aspects of communication (Luhman 2003), and, therefore, can then be rendered a problem on ethical grounds. The exercise of power in this case through the consulting system means in the broadest sense "... any capability for effective action" (Luhmann 2003, p. 39) and power in the narrower sense (= influence) "... affecting the behaviour of others" (ibid.). This can be transferred to the researcher in an AR project.

The mandate to the consultants and the researcher to support the culture change was ultimately awarded by the management board and already represents in the 'broadest sense' an exercise of power. Power relationships are always asymmetrical; that is, there is someone who exercises power and someone who is the addressee of the exercise of power (Handy 1993). Therefore, for research work, it is particularly important to reflect on the obvious power relationships from an ethical point of view. However, 'having power' actually means *exercising* power through interventions or having the power to sanction incorrect behaviour in the narrower sense.

The influence of power on the research project, like the measurement of individual variables and their influence, is difficult to measure and therefore to rule out. It can, according to the criteria of Elbe and Saam (2010), only be indirectly verified by a commitment on the part of the consultant/researcher to develop his or her relationships with the client groups in the company and his or her own understanding of consultancy. When discussing data collection in Chapters 4 and 5, detailed information about the way this researcher warranted confidentiality and what kind of consent forms were used will be given. In addition, important letters and forms are attached within the appendices. Elbe and Saam (2010) differentiate ideal



types of consultancy as strategy consulting, core process consulting and consulting as 'organisational development'.

I will concentrate in the following on organisational development, because this is very much influenced by the tradition of Kurt Lewin (Elbe & Saam 2010). As I have already remarked earlier (Section 2.3.2), research about change is based upon his work. I see myself in this tradition of organisational development. This understanding coincides to a large degree with the type specified by Elbe and Saam (2010), where organisational development is seen as a form of consultancy. Initially, organisation developers try to focus on concepts such as the exercise of power in companies, resistance to change, the legitimation of decisions and different types of management and cooperation. Basically, there is the idea of letting the parties affected in a change processes become participants in the problem-solving. This implies that in the consultancy, bottom-up strategies are used during all phases of the project in addition to top-down strategies. Again, we find a strong link between the principles of action research and organisational development at this point.

In the culture change project at hand, the organisational culture vision was developed by the management board on a top-down basis, but the content was developed on a middle-outward basis according to the narrower sense of organisational culture in several workshops with middle management. In addition, all other organisational members were involved by a bottom-up process. Organisational development consultancy has become established in many organisations, because open communication and the early inclusion of participants can shorten acceptance phases for decisions. In addition, employees can contribute important ideas to change processes, which may even lead to changes of strategy. The key requirements for this discourse are openness and trust as well as respectful, mutual interaction, even in controversial discussions (Doppler & Lauterburg 1997; Doppler et al. 2002). Hence, we really have a participatory approach, as called for by AR. AR aims to achieve a further development of people and organisations, just as organisation developers do. So, the ethical principles according to Walker and Haslett (2002) can be taken as a basis for approaching this research study.

To sum up, dealing with the various situations that can occur while conducting AR and while working as an organisational developer both call for ethical handling. Based upon my work experience, the ethical principles of Walker and Haslett (2002) only can be achieved through

and by a never-ending process of coordination within the consultancy system, by the researcher and the responsible persons within the organisation. The experience of managing confidential information, power and one's own ethical demands, to which a consultancy system and the researcher feel committed, have to be made clear and sometimes one may have to fight to keep them during a complex and real-time project.

Action research usually takes place over a long period in an organisation, as it aims to be part of a change process. In the case of the organisation where this research took place (South Real Estate) the project itself is still on-going, although the thesis cycle is finished. South Real Estate will be introduced in more detail in Section 4.1.

When spending so much time inside an organisation, meeting people, feeling sympathetic with many of them and accompanying them for so long, individual relationships develop. Besides the fact that as a consultant one aims to get new contracts, one wants to leave an organisation in a way that this would result in it recommending the consultants to others. So, not only because of the demands of the academic world concerning ethics, it is in one's own interest to act and behave ethically. The researcher is dependent on a good relationship with participants to achieve their goal. If the organisation and the members, respectively the single participant, feel that they are being treated unethically the whole project would be in danger. Therefore, it was very important to develop this good relationship in several ways. Enough time was always given, not only to talk about organisational needs, but also to individuals privately. Also, I always tried to offer information to people and help them wherever it was possible. In addition, the organisation was always informed about the status of this research work and about the next steps. There exist no secret recipes to developing good relationships. But, my experience has been that politeness and ethical behaviour opened doors.

### **3.6 Summary and justification of methodology**

This chapter outlined this researcher's standpoint as a critical realist. This philosophy reflects a permanent approximation to reality and may represent a bridge between rigour and relevance in research. Critical realism questions reality as it occurs. Taking the perspective of a critical realist means not to take something as given, but to question further. To find answers, interdisciplinary approaches and multimethodologies are not excluded by strict

boundaries of discipline and methodology. In addition, critical realism connects research methods with social activity. Important within this perspective is the persuasion that activity transforms social structures. With this, we find a clear analogy to the cultural dynamic model of Hatch (1993), as it was discussed in Chapter 2. On the other hand, action research, with its iterative circles and regular reflection as well as its variety of methods, corresponds to the dynamic reality in a comprehensive change process within an organisation. Action research is therefore a suitable approach for clarifying the research aim to explore if middle management influences the cultural change process in an organisation and if so, how important that influence is.

Chapter 4 will now present the organisation and its situation. Within this chapter the AR and the methods chosen, relating to the organisational cultural change will be introduced and discussed. Chapter 5 will then discuss the thesis cycles. Here, questions of validity and reliability will be argued. Chapter 6 will discuss the findings and the overall conclusions and recommendations based on these findings will be presented in chapter 7.

## CHAPTER 4 THE CORE ACTION RESEARCH CYCLES

### 4. Consultancy and research at South Real Estate

Chapter 3 discussed the underlying philosophical basis of this research. Action Research (AR) was justified as the most appropriate research strategy. The foundations of AR as well as approaches, goals, cycles (core and thesis action research cycles), rigour, relevance, and ethics have been discussed more generally based upon the literature. This chapter will first introduce 'South Real Estate', the organisation where this research took place (Section 4.1). This is followed by a justification of the overall design and its reasoning (4.2). Sections 4.3 and 4.5 introduce the core AR cycles (4.3 to 4.5). Every investigation phase and the cycles will be discussed in order to demonstrate how the results fit the following cycle (Figure 4.1). As the activities of the core AR cycles concentrate on the practical work of consultancy, this chapter offers succinct but essential information about the activities and so takes the reader on the journey of two years of AR project work. The core AR cycles form the basis on which the research cycles build up and offer the framework for the data collection methods used to explore middle management's influence and role(s) related to organisational culture change. Data collection concerning the research aims and objectives belong to the thesis cycles, which are discussed in depth in Chapter 5. These clearly separate both the core action research cycles (consultancy project) and thesis cycles (research). Within Chapter 5, the access to the organisation, the researcher's role as 'participant as observer', note-keeping and note-storage, and choice for samples as well as reliability and validity are discussed. The analysis of the particular cycles and the findings will be discussed in Chapter 6 (findings). The core AR cycles (consultancy) demonstrate the process of the cultural change and the interventions my organisation as consultancy initiated to bring forward the cultural change process within South Real Estate. However, right from the beginning of this research and consultancy work I was introduced to the organisational members not only as a consultant but as a researcher who is writing her doctoral thesis about the influence and role(s) of middle management as well. So, whenever this researcher was part of activities according to the core AR cycles that are presented in the following sections, there was a need to adapt to the role of 'participant as observer'. As the observations are part of the data collection during the research cycles, this role is explained in detail in Chapter 5.

#### **4.1 The story of South Real Estate**

The research was embedded in a process of change in one medium-sized organisation. To preserve confidentiality, this organisation will be named 'South Real Estate'. South Real Estate is based in Germany with approximately 320 employees and belongs to a holding company. It is led by a CEO and three managing directors. South Real Estate's work includes financing, developing and selling of real estate, as well as property and asset management of its own real estates, and the real estate of clients. In 2009, South Real Estate was the owner of a subsidiary organisation with another CEO that was dealing with facilities management for other companies. The organisational structure at the start of the research in 2009 had been developed from a merger of two former organisations belonging to the holding company. These two organisations were characterised by different organisational cultures and an understanding of work processes. At the time research began, it was apparent that these differences still existed and caused difficulties in interaction. To assure confidentiality the turnover exposure can only be given approximately. South Real Estate produces turnover exposure of round about 300 million € and an EBIT (earnings before interest and tax) margin of approximately 110 million €.

At the beginning of 2009, the CEO at that time, as well as two managing directors, left the organisation. Changes in top management caused disturbances that impacted upon the success of the organisation as well as the organisational culture and climate. In spring 2009, a new CEO 'A' started his work. He was supported by three managing directors. Whereas A was new in the organisation, the others had been with the organisation for several years. One of them had been a managing director since 2007.

With the start of the new board, fundamental changes were initiated concerning structure and process-chains. The aim of this change process was to secure future success. At that time, South Real Estate benefited from a boom in the real estate market, as many private investors and family offices during the financial crisis sought to go into hard assets. At the same time, the organisation was in need of developing new projects to serve the market, and property management was not developing in the same positive way. Also, the working style of the new CEO was totally different to the style that had dominated prior to that time. In addition, personnel decisions were made according to positions and other concerns. For example, three

middle managers left the organisation in summer 2009. In winter 2010, one department changed not only its name but also its focus. The purpose of this change was to make use of synergy effects and avoid duplication to reach positive figures.

At the beginning of 2010, another consultancy organisation was assigned to benchmark the salaries and awards of all employees. A background check against the market was to be undertaken to ascertain whether these salaries were being paid according to market prices and to assure that members of the whole organisation were paid equally, wherever they worked inside the organisation. Initial results showed that organisational members of South Real Estate earned much more than employees at comparable organisations (some of them about 20 per cent more). It was obvious that action had to be taken to enable the organisation to work to market salaries and to avoid further imbalances inside the organisation.

In spring 2010, the former subsidiary was affiliated with parts of another department to concentrate similar activities inside one department in a new subsidiary (South Real Estate Facilities). The board of this new organisation was joining the board of South Real Estate as well. Employees of South Real Estate went to this new organisation under perpetuation of their employee rights. At the same time, South Real Estate Facility was facing some changes with respect to clients as well, with consequences for budgets. South Real Estate Facilities now had more than 100 employees, compared to 70 employees before that time.

Over the time from the beginning of the structural changes, employees had to face the situation that they had to move, change their tasks or earn less than before. Also, some staff members and managers were dismissed for various reasons. South Real Estate was successful in the market. Nevertheless, it was important for the board to work on the organisational culture of South Real Estate during the whole time of changes. At the same time, given the above mentioned history of the organisation, its changes over recent years and the current changes will have had consequences for the cultural development as well. It was clear from the very beginning that any consultancy intervention would not experience stable conditions.

## **4.2 Overall design**

The field work took place between 27<sup>th</sup> May 2009 and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011. During that time, a number of different methods were utilised. There were interviews at various stages of the field work, as well as two staff surveys during the main investigation and the closing stage. Interventions conducted included the future search conference (Sections 4.4.1.1), two

workshops during the main investigation and the final presentation at the end of the closing stage. These form the core AR cycles realised, and which subsequently formed the basis of this thesis. The change in organisational culture is still on-going at South Real Estate and according to my understanding of organisational culture (Section 2.2), this process will never end.

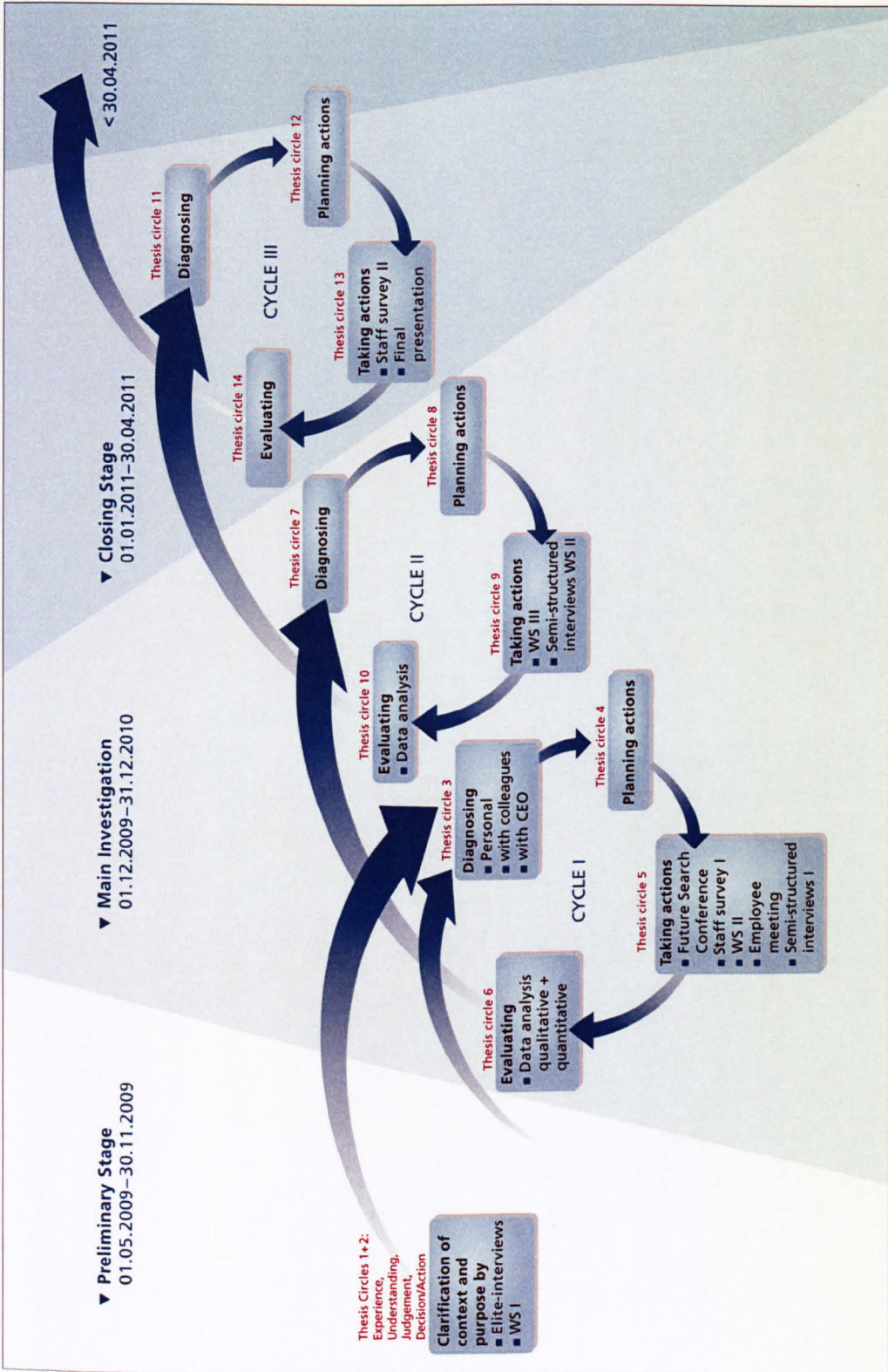
There exist many socio-scientific methods that can be used during research (Coghlan & Brannick 2010; Kühl & Strodtholz 2002; Kühl et al. 2009; Saunders et al. 2009). Therefore, it is important to check for any individual case, whether the chosen method really is adequate to achieve the specific goal(s). According to the nature of AR, the decision relating to these and to interventions always rests upon the results of reflection of the former step (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). As Eden and Huxham (1996a) demonstrated, the term AR is used to cover a variety of techniques. The common denominator is “that the research results from an involvement with members of an organization over a matter which is of genuine concern to them” (Eden & Huxham, 1996a, p. 75). Eden and Huxham (1996a) discuss different kinds of AR: First, as a form of self-development with an individual focus, rather than the organisation, and for an individual’s own personal benefit (developing effective professional practice); Second, ‘participatory action research’. Here, the central principle of participation and collaborative research and the principle of AR are combined. A two-way relationship exists (Eden & Huxham 1996a). The researcher becomes involved in, and, at the same time, contributes to, the practitioner’s world, and, the practitioner becomes involved and contributes to the research output (Eden & Huxham 1996a). The research project at South Real Estate is an example of the second kind of AR. The researcher was not an insider (member) of the organisation and it was not the aim of the work to develop her consultancy work – although it naturally happened through the reflections and progress of the complex situations experienced. The aim was to work with members of the organisation to learn about influence and role(s) of middle management in the cultural change process and to do this to support this change process. The focus was on the organisation and a group of people within it.

The AR cycles can be divided into three phases: Preliminary stage, main investigation and closing stage. These phases are the same with the core AR cycles and the thesis cycles. Some activities belong to both cycles (i.e. expert interviews), whereas others only belong to the thesis cycles (i.e. semi-structured interviews with middle managers and board). Figure 4.1 presents an overview of the core AR cycles, including the thesis cycles.

The general development of action research cycles was discussed in Section 3.3.2 and the following sections. Within the AR-Cycles the following phases will take account of the various steps: constructing/diagnosing, planning action(s), taking action(s), and evaluating action(s). For a better understanding the thesis cycles will be indicated accordingly to the AR-cycles. However, every single step within one thesis cycle includes one circle with the steps: experiencing, understanding, judging, and taking action (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). So, at the end of field work, a total of fourteen thesis circles were realised, as Figure 4.1 shows. Table 4.1 gives an overview of the time-line and general goals of any activity during the core AR cycles (consultancy) and the thesis cycles.



Figure 4.1 Course of fieldwork



(present author)

**Table 4.1 Overview of stages, actions and goals**

Stage	Action	General goal/s consultancy	Goal/s thesis cycles
Preliminary stage (01.05.-30.11.2009)	Expert interviews (August – middle of October 2009) – AR and thesis Workshop (WS I) with the board (23.-24.11.2009) – AR and thesis	Clarification of context and purpose	Explore, whether middle managers play a part in developing and establishing an organisational culture. Establish views of organisational culture: What is the definition of organisational culture at South Real Estate, what needs to be changed?
Main investigation (01.12.2009-31.12.2010)	<u>Cycle I:</u> Information of managers and development of activities with them by conducting a future search conference;(08.-09.02.2010) – AR and thesis staff survey I (28.02.-31.03.2010) – AR and thesis Workshop II (17.-18.05.2010) – AR Participant observation - thesis Employee meeting (10.06.2010) – AR Participant observation – thesis Semi-structured interviews I - thesis <u>Cycle II:</u> Workshop III (25.-26.11.2010) AR Participant observation - thesis Development board skills - AR Further development of new culture by training of management – AR Semi-structured interviews - thesis	<u>Cycle I and II:</u> Integration of Staff and middle management  Keep the cultural change process moving on	<u>Cycle I:</u> Give the middle managers background information about the organisational culture at stake. Find out about the middle managers feelings about the cultural change and create a personal concern about their participation and responsibility to support the change.  <u>Cycle II:</u> Find out, what kind of roles the board was attaching to middle management and what impact they estimated to the cultural process. Discover, how middle management responded to the cultural change and their roles.
Closing stage (01.01.2011-30.04.2011)	<u>Cycle III:</u> staff survey II – AR and thesis Final presentation/evaluation – AR and thesis	<u>Cycle III:</u> Assessment of cultural changes Detection of further existing spheres of action Recommendations for further development in South Real Estate	<u>Cycle III:</u> Confirmation of the roles, supplemented by the roles, as discussed within the literature about middle management roles during strategic changes. Evaluating the importance of the roles and their realisation as well as the acts.

(present author)

The aim of the core AR cycles was to achieve cultural change. This regarded as an imperative precondition, because otherwise it would have been impossible to explore middle

management's influence and role(s) upon organisational culture change that is the object of the thesis cycles. After this general overview about the course of fieldwork details about the course of the consultancy activities follow.

### 4.3 Preliminary stage

As discussed in Section 3.5, the researcher's company was mandated to accompany the management board in the form of individual consulting and coaching, team development and organisational development, the facilitation of workshops and management training for top and middle management. The consultancy team consisted of one colleague as the leading consultant and this researcher. Within this context, the CEO told us that he regarded the organisational culture and its change as an important aspect during the change processes. My offer to deal with the part related to cultural change and middle management's influence and role(s) during this process was immediately accepted. In an elaborate discussion the CEO, myself and my colleague clarified questions of confidentiality, the DBA process, my roles and the separation between consultancy and research work. AR was explained and recommended as a suitable research strategy. Before the CEO agreed, he discussed every aspect with his colleagues of the board. All of them welcomed the research and regarded it as a possibility to demonstrate their seriousness about cultural change and that the findings would be helpful as well.

At the beginning of the fieldwork, the existing situation with respect to the organisational culture was not very clear. It was obvious that the organisation would need to change, due to the economic situation in the market. Some changes relating to organisational structure had already been conducted by the organisation. At the same time, the CEO regarded cultural change as an important aspect, which he found essential to take into account during this process. His colleagues agreed with him. The board could give me some information about how they evaluated the organisational culture at that point. However, this was only *one* perspective. Hence, the very first thing that was important to start with, was to acquire more information. Therefore, the goal of the preliminary stage was to gain more sound information, to set up the following actions and to clarify both context and purpose, as is recommended by Coghlan and Brannick (2010) and Saunders et al. (2009).

### **4.3.1 Semi-structured interviews as expert interviews**

The main goal at the beginning was to get a personal impression of the organisation, to find out the cultural status quo from different perspectives, as well as to discover the differing perspectives on existing culture held by the employees and managers. In addition, the researcher wanted to find out, whether there would be a homogeneous understanding of organisational culture as the literature about culture suggests (for example: Alvesson 2002; Bate, 1995; Hatch, 1993; Sackmann 2002, 2006). If there were going to be differences, it was important to know what kind they were. One characterisation of AR projects is that members of the organisation regard an issue as a problem that would be worth working on (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). Therefore, I also wanted to know if 'organisational culture' was an issue for the people outside the board as well as for those within. According to these goals and their explorative character, a qualitative method seemed sensible. Besides this, I had developed very good previous experience with interviews like that in order to gain information and build a relationship to organisational members.

My access to the organisation was prepared carefully with regard to ethical aspects as discussed in Section 3.5. Details about information letters, consent forms, content etc. are discussed in more depth in Chapter 5 (thesis cycles) and additionally are part of the appendices (Appendix 1 to Appendix 4a). As the interviews are part of the thesis cycle as well, the reader may want to refer to Section 5.1 where the background and design of this method as well as sample is discussed in detail.

With the agreement of the CEO, I gained permission to interview 20 members of staff. Also, it was of interest for the organisation to receive information about the (cultural) perspective of some external participants. Therefore, six contacts were chosen. All of them had intensive contact with people inside the organisation over several years. Therefore, it was likely that they could provide important information. The board gave notice of the interviews by a personal letter of the board with background information related to me and the study objective (for details see Section 5.1 and Appendices 1 to 3a). After I had made the necessary appointment by telephone with respondents, everyone was met personally and the interviews were conducted. They were audio-taped and lasted between one and one and half hours each. After that, the results of these interviews were summarised in a way that no conclusion relating to the identity of individual persons could occur. Detailed information about analysis and storage are given in Section 5.1.1 as they are also part of the thesis cycles.

The results provided a clear picture of what had happened so far inside South Real Estate, and revealed that there was a common emotion of an urgent need to change the organisational culture. It was planned to present the results to the board to develop further activities. As the issue of organisational culture seemed to be so important to the organisation, and in the view of staff, a workshop with the board was planned.

#### **4.3.2 Workshop with the board (workshop I)**

Literature emphasises the importance of top management commitment to change and to the realisation of (cultural) change processes (for example: Doppler & Lauterburg 2005; Schein 2004; Sackmann 2004). Hence, it was important to involve the board of South Real Estate as much as possible. At this point, the interviews were carried out. The board showed interest in being informed about the results and to think about further action according to these. Therefore, a two-day workshop with members of the board was planned and realised.

As a workshop such as this had never been held at South Real Estate before, this, in itself, was something culturally new. It was decided that we would work in a small alpine hut, where no other guests stayed during that time. So, it was ensured that we could work together without interruption. The aims of this workshop were to work as a team, assess information from the interviews, develop a cultural vision, and, on an operational level to discuss interfaces and develop action lists.

The information about interviews was presented by me. I informed the delegates about the atmosphere during the interviews, my evaluation of the honesty and a descriptive summary of the results (lengths of interviews, sample, questions, and number of mentions). The results were discussed immediately. The board felt it had confirmed its own assessment of the organisational culture by the quantity of negative statements concerning the organisational culture in the time up to April 2009. This motivated them to follow through with their original idea of developing the culture. During this workshop, a cultural vision was developed and activities of how to involve other managers and staff in this process were discussed and committed to. Hence, by the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2009, the preliminary stage could be closed. The board had agreed to the organisational culture to be changed along with employees and

other managers. So, the context and purpose had been clarified and an action plan for the start of the main investigation and AR cycles had been carried out.

#### **4.4 Main investigation: Cycles I and II**

This phase took place in the period between 01.12.2009 and 31.12.2010 (see Table 4.1, Section 4.2). The goals during this time were to integrate staff and management, while keeping the cultural change process moving in the desired direction. In this time, two AR cycles were conducted with different activities. The results of the activities during the preliminary stage have been reflected upon by the researcher and with the board, especially the CEO and the colleague who was acting as the lead consultant within this project. These reflections were a permanent process and occurred on many different occasions. The activities within these cycles will now be discussed. Also, the deduction from one cycle to the other will be reasoned.

##### **4.4.1 AR Cycle I**

The activities during this cycle were allocated in the time period between the 01.12.2009 and end of October 2010. During this time the aim was to integrate staff and management to initiate the cultural change process and support the development (Table 4.1). Therefore, different activities were conducted: information of the managers about the results of the expert interviews and the board-workshop, the development of activities by having a 'future search conference', a staff survey, a workshop with the upper and middle management and an employee meeting. The individual activities were as presented in the following.

After finishing the board-workshop, my colleague and I (with agreement of the board) decided to run a future search conference. This form of working with big groups of people was chosen, as we wanted to provide the entire management not only as soon as possible but also all at the same time with the same amount and style of information. This was part of the 'unfreezing' process according to Lewin (1947).

According to the AR cycles (Figure 4.1), this cycle included the four steps: diagnosing, planning actions, taking actions and evaluating. What seems like a chronological process is

more a process of at least four AR circles, as with every activity the four stage process as above is repeated. For the sake of readability, the AR activities are presented in their chronological order.

Based upon the findings of the preliminary stage (more details in Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2), members of the organisation rated general interaction with one another and also external dealings as culturally important. Many aspects discussed in interviews, and also in the workshop, were, however, directly connected with management and the cooperation between the different organisational levels and units.

The board wanted to involve the other management levels to take-over responsibility for cultural development and realisation as well. They were convinced that without the other managers, a cultural turn-around was not realistically achievable. Also, these managers have much more direct contact with the level of staff members (see literature review also, Section 2.4.4). Literature underlays the importance of involving concerned persons in change processes (for example: Doppler & Lauterburg 1997; Kotter 1996; Nadler & Tushman 1990). The role of management is also emphasised by authors such as Sackmann (2004), Schein (2004), Vahs and Leiser (2003). Therefore, the activities that follow should attempt to integrate the other managers into this process. This author refers again to Table 4.1 where the main investigation, activities and general goals are presented in an overview.

#### **4.4.1.1 Future search conference**

When thinking about the next logical method, it was clear that beside integration of management, it should be an instrument that would enable quick action, as South Real Estate was facing a lot of pressure from the market. Therefore, the intervention needed to be as effective as possible. The target group included all managers, members of the staff unit, and project leader. The number of participants was 43 people, including the entire board. The target group needed to be informed all at the same time. Underneath these goals, the meeting was based upon discussion above departmental borderlines.

Future search conferences are used to help people to find common ground and develop plans upon this (Polanyi 2001; Weisbord & Janoff 1999). Also, it is useful, if major changes are to be made. It can be used by groups of up to 80 people. The purpose is always to develop

concrete action plans with activities to get nearer to a desired future (Weisbord & Janoff 1999). Based on a commitment to democratic ideals (Polanyi 2001; Weisbord & Janoff 1999) it aims to have the whole system in the room and have the focus on developing the future (Weisbord & Janoff 1999). Besides, it regards Lewin's action research tradition (Polanyi 2001; Weisbord & Janoff 1999). The future search conference is characterised by the identification of common ground, the stimulation for rapid action, facilitation of participant learning, increase of potential for multistakeholder cooperation, and the fact that it follows a participatory, inclusive, and open process (Polanyi, 2001; Weisbord & Janoff 1995). According to these characteristics, the team (my colleague and me in coordination with the board) decided to plan a conference that should concentrate on the involvement of the managers, to develop a common understanding between them and the board for the cultural vision, and to work out, and to adopt, an action plan for the further cultural change process. This is an adaption of the future search conference that uses the advantages of this large group intervention (Oels 2002). The conference is process-driven (Oels 2002). In addition, future search conferences are useful when creating fast change. According to these characteristics, this method was deemed appropriate.

At the preparation of the conference the board agreed that they wanted to work with all managers at the same time and that they wanted to create an atmosphere where participants could discuss aspects of the organisation frankly and critically. Also, they felt that the further process of cultural change should be accelerated. The conference was planned and took place at the beginning of February 2010. The participants were invited by the board and received an agenda and information about the goals. The conference was planned for two days and the participants were asked to stay overnight at the hotel, although it was in the same town as the organisation. The reason for this was not only the idea of working till late into the evening, but to give enough time and space for the participants to get emotionally involved and to spend time with colleagues they may not often meet, or even know. The conference was facilitated by my colleague and me. At the conference the middle management was also attending. Therefore, I decided to use this occasion for observations to collect data. I adapted the role as 'participant as observer'. For details about this role and ethical questions refer to Section 5.2.1.1. This section will present information about the course of the conference in general to demonstrate the core AR cycle.

As there was seldom the time and place for a meeting with all managers at once, the board decided to give additional important information to them about important issues beside



organisational culture. Therefore, it was early afternoon before a start could be made with the topic 'organisational culture'.

After an introduction by the CEO and some other information, I presented the results according to the interviews and the board-workshop. The cultural vision as it was formulated by the board was introduced. As this was only a skeleton, the task during the conference was to work out in detail what that meant for daily action and what activities had to be conducted to make sure that cultural change would be supported in that direction.

Action groups (each of seven to eight people) were formed and asked to answer the following questions: (1) Why is the respective aspect important for organisational culture at South Real Estate? (2) What is missing? (3) Where are we today (according the respective aspect)? (4) What are the three biggest barriers to reach the cultural change? (5) What do we have to do, to develop a better organisational culture according the above mentioned key-phrases (action-list, time-schedule)?

The action groups were given time until the evening for completion of the first steps. Then, they were asked to present their intermediate results. It is sensible to organise this kind of presentation in the middle of the work. First, one can check if the groups are still on the right path. Second, the other action groups and the facilitator can give some advice the group can use for further work. The final presentation was planned for 11:00 a.m. the following day. During this time-span the groups were free to organise themselves. The two facilitators (my colleague and me) and the members of the board, moved around in the groups, gave support where needed, and also gave more detailed background information.

The discussions in the groups and the intermediate presentations showed that some groups still had difficulty becoming concrete and clear in their ideas. Therefore, more input from the members of the board and the facilitators was given. At that point of time, all groups had answered at least the first two questions. They confirmed that all aspects of the cultural mission statement were important for the organisational culture. Only one wish was expressed to be added to the vision: recognition. The action groups signalled that they understood the vision and that they had no argument with it. Nevertheless, it was just the start of this part of workshop-activity.

In the evening, a dinner was organised and participants were free to sit together, talk with each other and spend time with each other. The members of the board joined this dinner as well.

After a work-session the next morning, the action groups presented their results. The quality of the results varied. Although the facilitators and management members repeatedly joined in the discussion, and provided input in the working groups until they felt the groups were on the right track (in terms of content and the depth of results), the results particularly of the last two working groups were way off the mark. They were less clearly formulated; much generalised and, in some cases, missed the point entirely. After the presentation, the participants had a break while the board and the facilitators discussed the results, because the members of the board were asked to give feedback on the results and decide about suggested action. So, we found ourselves in a dilemma. Process-orientation and the delegation of responsibility to participants always bear the risk that the results at the end are not as expected when planning the intervention. The members of the board felt unhappy with the quality of some of the results. There was uncertainty about how to react and give feedback to the group. We were of the opinion that they wanted a positive feedback and praise of their work during the conference. The feelings of the board were different, as the board desired a culture of open communication – and so feedback, too – and the CEO had communicated that quite clearly at the beginning of the conference. Finally, he decided to tell the participants what he really thought and felt at that moment.

After the participants returned, the CEO repeated how important open communication is, even if critical, and that he wanted all members of the organisation to engage in this. In his opinion, an organisation can only become a good one if there exists a culture that permits that. So, he told the group the board's assessment of the results. Where the board was happy with the developed actions, they decided to accept these. The CEO gave positive feedback about the results that were fine and negative feedback about the results that were not acceptable. Silence followed his words. Two managers answered back. The others kept silent. The CEO praised the two that answered back for doing that. The others kept silent. The CEO asked my colleague to speak some closing words. This was quite a challenge at that point. The participants left the room, but not many said 'good-bye'.

The question now was: What is important to do now? What can be done that avoids the managers dropping out of the whole process and preventing the attempt to change the

organisational culture from happening? I arranged a meeting with the board for the next morning with the aim of reflecting on what had happened, the reasons and to decide about further steps.

The next day it seemed that few had slept well. Members of the board told us that they had had phone-calls for hours after the conference ended, and that intensive discussions had taken place. So, in a way we had never expected, it appeared an 'unfreezing' happened in the form of an explosion.

Literature about change suggests that it is important to create an imbalance to create readiness for the change process (Kraus et al 2004; Schein 2004). Lewin talks about 'unfreezing' (Lewin 1947). Lewin's (1943) model of change is based on the assumption that a person's goals, desires, needs, and anxieties determine their behaviour (life space) at any given moment. Consequently, his model of change rests on the idea that a person or social system will only change if there is some kind of confrontation or external stimulus. Therefore, 'destabilisation' or 'unfreezing' plays an important role at the beginning of the change process (Lewin 1943, 1947). The individual life space or group space are influenced by helping and restraining forces (Maurer & Githens 2010), which can hinder or support the process.

The confrontation at the end of the conference seemed to release the participants. They started discussing what has happened, demonstrated their dissent and talked about the desired culture. During the meeting on the day after the conference, the entire board, my colleague and me reflected and discussed what had happened at the conference and the board told us about the reactions they had received since then. The CEO for example said "*If we could have planned the conference that way, we should have done it!*" During this discussion we decided that all members of the board should meet within the next few days with all of their managers and discuss what happened, what was expected by the managers and the board, and what they would expect from the board the next time. It happened that these discussions went well, and a lot of aspects were spoken about openly and clearly. The managers were also informed that their wish to carry out a staff survey about organisational culture and vision would be realised by March 2010. In addition, the board sent a letter to managers thanking participants and including the action plan committed to at the conference.

This future search conference, although unexpected in its course, reached the achieved goals. The managers felt informed, and, in fact, affected. Therefore, organisational culture was an issue that was discussed intensively and so the cultural change process within their group began. In addition, it caused a feeling of responsibility for this topic on the part of middle managers (see also Section 6.2).

#### **4.4.1.2 Staff survey I**

To involve the entire organisation in the process as the managers had suggested at the future search conference, South Real Estate planned to conduct a staff survey. The survey was announced by information from the board, immediately after the conference.

This would be the first survey to generate a clearer picture of how the desired culture was lived at that time. Apart from interest demonstrated by managers, and the need for the board of South Real Estate to now inform the entire workforce not only about the cultural vision, but also about the employee survey, this measurement was also a further important step for the research project as it would serve as primary data (Section 5.2.1.2) as well. The results of the survey were not only used for developing further activities for the core AR cycles (consultancy) but also to further develop the organisational culture. This initial survey would represent the status quo of the cultural vision that was intended as an objective to achieve. In addition, a subsequent second measurement compared to the first would show whether, and to what extent, a cultural change had taken place that was comprehensible and recognisable to the employees. As the research aim is to determine if middle management had influence on this change, it is important to ascertain whether a change has taken place at all. Therefore, the data gained from the survey not only would serve to inform the core AR cycle but also the thesis cycle. Hence, again the role as participant as observer was adopted. In addition, this meant that the design of the survey had to regard the demands of the research method. These demands and their fulfilment are discussed in detail in Section 5.2.1.2. Within this section only succinct information is given about the course according to the core AR cycles.

Scholz and Scholz (1995, p. 728) define a staff survey as “systematic and completely anonymous surveys of collective attitudes and opinions of staff in relation to work-related topics which are procedurally integrated in organisation development processes, with the aim of improving the company’s success and employee satisfaction”. So, with the help of staff surveys, employees become involved in a process of analysing strengths and weaknesses of

their organisation. Hence, staff surveys are one method to integrate the entire organisation into a certain topic. At the same time, this means for organisations that there is a responsibility to use the generated data in a way that shows employees that their dedication to honestly answer the survey is honoured by top management. Otherwise, later staff surveys are in danger of low response rates or answers that the staff may think are socially or politically desirable. This is a situation this researcher has sometimes met in other organisations.

According to the literature (Domsch 1999; Richter 1996; Thielen 2004; Zeitz & Briegel 1996) a staff survey is an instrument of diagnosis, communication and organisational development. It is the basis of an employee-oriented organisation development and it can serve as access to process-controlling. The staff survey at South Real Estate features these characteristics as well. The questionnaire itself has to be developed according to the aims of a particular staff survey. Standardised questionnaires by other organisations or presented in the literature can only give ideas, but will probably not fit to the individual situation. So, in the case of South Real Estate, the questionnaire had to be oriented fully to the cultural vision. In addition, the questionnaire was discussed, not only with my colleagues, but with organisational members (board, Human Resources (HR) department) as well.

The development of the questionnaire (Appendix 6 and Appendix 6a) followed the suggestions given by the literature (Saunders et al. 2009; Sekaran & Bougie 2010; Section 5.2.1.2) and in close coordination with South Real Estate (board, HR department). The design of the survey had to be in accordance to the practical demands of South Real Estate and the research and therefore, a balance between these demands had to be found. Therefore, several discussions were conducted with the responsible person inside the HR department of South Real Estate and then the CEO was asked to agree to the wording, time-line and allocation.

The complete questionnaire is attached as Appendix 6 (German version) and Appendix 6a (English version). In the original questionnaire the departments were named as they are named in reality. To assure the confidentiality of South Real Estate, the departments have been renamed and numbered. The original names would probably allow an insider of the branch to identify who South Real Estate really is. As South Real Estate is an organisation of medium-size, it was important to develop classifications that would not allow identification of respondents. Therefore, the organisation decided to make identification of the executive level optional. In addition, it was important to make it as easy as possible to fill in the information. Therefore, a minimum of groupings was designed. Also, the organisation asked me to keep

the number of pages of the questionnaire itself as low as possible. So, at the end, the questionnaire (Appendix 6 and Appendix 6a) consisted of a cover letter with the background and the objectives of the survey, including the cultural vision and signed by the members of the board, information about how to fill in the questionnaire and the questionnaire (3 pages) itself. Beside categorical data, 22 items asked how applicable they were estimated. In addition, the participants were invited to attach further statements according to the organisational culture, if they wanted to. The managers were asked to inform their staff in meetings and to distribute the questionnaire with the request to fill it out. To demonstrate the data confidentiality the participants were asked to send the questionnaire directly to this researcher, where the analysis would also be conducted. There was no intention to collect questionnaires and send them together via the HR team. We wanted to give participants the security of anonymity. It was affirmed that the analysis and storage of the original questionnaires would be done by me personally. To make it as easy as possible, an envelope with our company address was attached to the questionnaire. The date by which the questionnaire had to be returned was announced and between the allocation and this date two more emails by the HR department reminded the organisational members to participate in the survey. The questionnaire was delivered to every organisational member – excluding the board – and so we have a sampling of the complete population.

The analysis was conducted by the use of SPSS. In accordance with the goals of the staff survey, descriptive analyses were done. The SPSS-analysis was conducted according to the departments and the classification of staff or management. The board was interested in the average values given to the individual items according to department, total and hierarchical level. In addition, the return rate and additional information given by participants was summarised (see also Section 5.2.1.2) and presented. This was followed by an intensive discussion during a meeting with the board of South Real Estate. Not surprisingly, the results were heterogeneous and problem areas could be identified, which had to be worked upon. As the aim of the board was to integrate the entire management into the process, another workshop (workshop II) was planned and designed. Here, top and middle management were invited with the aim to inform them about the results and to develop activities of how to work on the indicated problem areas.

#### **4.4.1.3 Workshop II**

The aims of the workshop were to inform managers about the results of the staff survey, to give them background information about their role and task as managers, to develop an action plan to cover how they would inform their staff members, and what concrete steps they would take to develop the organisational culture further. During the workshop, managers learned about the principles of management according to Drucker (2001, 2006).

After the presentation of the staff survey's findings, action groups from the departments were invited to work on these results. Within these groups, they were asked to explore what the results would mean to them and their teams. In addition, they were requested to develop concrete actions to reach advancement and to identify what framework was to be used. At the very least, they should express what should not happen in this context. Every participant was given the findings of the staff survey, as presented to the board a few weeks before. This hand-out included the value for every question, according to the departments and overall results. With these papers, they started the work within action groups. The participants discussed the results with regard to their own department, but also with regard to the entire organisation. Their recommendations for actions were concrete and also included actions that they themselves would do, or activate.

At the end of the workshop, the board joined a presentation of results and invited the managers to immediately commence their recommended actions. The CEO emphasised that the managers would get the support they needed to implement these. So, at the end of this phase we could remark that the given aims were achieved. According to the thesis cycle, I was attending this workshop as a participant as observer. Therefore, detailed findings concerning my research will be discussed in Section 6.2.3.

After the top and middle management was informed and concrete plans developed, an employee meeting was announced. The participants of Workshop II were informed about the day and contents of this meeting. In addition, it was declared that the managers would take action after the meeting. With this time-line, we wanted to be sure that the entire staff would receive all information at the same time and that activities would start in every department afterwards.

#### **4.4.1.4 Employee meeting**

In accordance with the results of the workshop, the next employee meeting was set. Since the new board began its work in 2009, staff meetings had been organised on multiple occasions. The aims of these meetings were widespread. First, the board wished to communicate important information personally to employees, so that they more often had occasion to meet with each other. This should, they argued, reduce barriers between them and provide an opportunity to develop a feeling for each other. Second, full employee meetings meant that employees did not only meet with their own team or department. The results of the staff survey had shown that communication and interaction between different departments was not satisfactory, but was regarded as falling far short (All items regarding the co-operation over department borders were assessed with values between 3.09 to 3.45 on a scale of 1/does not apply to 6/applies.) Moreover, employee meetings gave space for discussion and allowed for board and management to show that they are developing the organisational culture based upon presenting themselves as authentic role models.

This employee meeting took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2010. The entire staff was invited and organisational units from other towns were involved via video-conference. Beside a presentation of the overall results of the staff survey, the CEO informed participants about the status of important projects, and general information about the business. He also pointed out the positive performance of certain teams. The meeting closed with consideration of what would be the next activities, according to the results of the staff survey and the workshop with the managers. Space for questions and discussion was given – and this was used by some participants. Again, I had the opportunity to participate as observer and findings will be presented in Chapter 6.

With this meeting, Cycle I was finished. The entire organisation was informed about the cultural vision, and management including middle management was involved and knew about their roles during this process. The cultural change process was moving.

#### **4.4.2 AR Cycle II**

The activities during this cycle took place in the time between 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010 and the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 (see also Table 4.1). In the first instance, the aim of this cycle was to keep the cultural change process moving. As the members of the board and management were deemed



important for the process attention was given to further qualifying the future direction by different interventions.

#### **4.4.2.1 Workshop III**

During workshop II, the middle-managers had asked for workshops and training at regular intervals. Therefore, workshop III was planned. The topic for this workshop was information about communication, communication models and training for difficult dialogues.

Prior to this workshop, my colleague joined the second board-workshop in the mountain hut. This board-workshop showed that the cultural topic was always in danger of being displaced by operational needs. This occurred due to the perception that culture was something existing separately from the daily business; as if it were an additional topic. In the course of the board-workshop, the participants changed their opinion. They recognised, that any activity they were doing had a cultural aspect, as this was the *how* they were acting and communicating at that special moment. This is according to the cultural model of Hatch (1993). See also Section 2.2.4.

The coming organisational changes would have consequences other than employees having to change departments and tasks. The result of an evaluation of the earning- and bonus-systems conducted by another consultancy showed that (in comparison to the market) some employees received higher earnings than they were entitled to according their tasks, and job descriptions. So, these people would be facing dialogues with their executives about that and their future situation. Also, there would always be the possibility that an employee had to be dismissed.

Again, the workshop was conducted for two days with an overnight-stay from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2010. Another workshop was planned for lower management, so all management levels would have the same knowledge about the agreed topic areas. Workshop III for middle management and the other workshop for the lower management were both facilitated by my colleague and me. Therefore, again I adopted the role as participant as observer in workshop III (Section 5.2.2). Two members of the board attended workshop III the entire time, and the others at least temporarily. The CEO opened the workshop with an appraisal of what they had achieved together at that time and indicated the relationship between every day operational work and the intended culture at South Real Estate. During this workshop, we worked with presentations, input, role-plays and peer coaching. Contents of the workshop were: (1) What is sociology saying about communication? (2) What is Peter

Drucker telling us about management? (3) Why is it useful to listen actively, using First-person messages and open-ended questions in communication and when to use them? (4) What kind of attitudes exist in conversations, according to Eric Berne? (5) What kind of communications between executive and staff-member can be structured in daily business? (6) How can one use peer-coaching? As communication models, we worked with the participants using the model by Prof Schulz von Thun (1981) and Trans-Action-Analysis by Eric Berne (Stewart & Joines 1990). The theory was always contrasted with the cultural vision, the results of the staff survey I, and examples given by the participants. Training was given for four kinds of conversations: needs assessment discussion, advise and convince, negative feedback discussion and dealing with 'dirty tricks'. At the end of the workshop, the participants also asked for information about how to handle staff mental health problems and problems with alcohol and drugs. Hence, by the end of workshop III the middle managers knew how to communicate according to the cultural vision and understood that organisational culture and daily management activities belong together and are not separated from each other (Section 5.2.2).

#### **4.4.2.2 Development of board skills and further development of the new culture**

Both seminars with the management closed with concrete commitments about further activities. Up until the end of the main investigation, other activities continued. So, the entire board joined individual coaching and one department conducted a workshop where they clarified conflicts. This workshop was facilitated by my colleague and contributed directly to the cultural vision, as questions concerning open and clear communication (part of the cultural vision) were discussed deeply. The second training with lower management was conducted with the aim of further developing their skills, and to offer them the same information as middle and top management had. So, at the end of Cycles I and II of the main investigation, the entire management was aware of their cultural contribution and took over more and more responsibility for that as Chapter 6 (findings) will discuss in detail.

### **4.5 Closing stage: AR Cycle III**

Although the consultancy work within South Real Estate is still going on, I had to define a closing date for the research. Therefore, together with the board, we decided to agree a closing stage for the research. To demonstrate the parallelism of the two cycles, I defined this time-span also as the 'closing stage'. It can also be seen as a main milestone within the

consultancy work to estimate how far we had come to that point. The closing stage was in the time between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2011 and end of April 2011 (Table 4.1). Aims during this period were to assess cultural changes so far and to detect further existing spheres of action. In addition, clear recommendations were presented.

#### **4.5.1 Staff survey II**

The second staff survey was announced in the same way as the first one, and again at an employee meeting in March 2011. The delivery of the questionnaire followed the same procedure as the first one. Therefore, I refer to Section 5.2.1.2 with details about the strategy. Changes between time1 (survey I; t1) and time 2 (survey II, t2) are reasoned in Section 5.3 as this survey again is an important part of the thesis cycle as well. Two questions had to be changed slightly and in order to gain more clarity (Appendices 10 and 10a). The reason for this was the fact, that at workshop II, some questions about the interpretation of item six “Everyone is treated equally fairly in my working environment” came up and item 12 “I know what the aims of South Real Estate are” was supplemented in hand writing with comments like “I know the aims of Department V” (Section 5.3).

Subsequently the survey included a second section with additional items (Appendices 10 and 10a). While the first part of the survey was supposed to demonstrate the development of the organisational culture and any work that still needed to be done, the second part referred solely to my research project (see Section 5.3.1). The results of the first part were of great interest to the organisation and the management. By investing time into a second survey, they wanted to prove to the organisation that they were serious about the issue of culture. Also, they wanted to know whether the activities they had initiated in the last year would show any effect and whether one could estimate that there was a cultural change really going on. This result was of interest for my research objectives as well and therefore details of this survey are discussed in Section 5.3.

The separation into two sections seemed to be sensible for various reasons. First, I did not want to mix the two topics. As South Real Estate gave me the chance to do my research inside their organisation, I wanted to make sure that their demands on the survey would be fulfilled. I was afraid that some employees might not participate in the survey, if they were faced with a questionnaire with a length of nearly 50 items (The total return rate was 53.18 per cent; for details please see Section 5.3.1). Second, as I was asking inside a medium-sized organisation

where the number of people belonging to middle management was straightforward, I wanted to separate the questionnaire about this group clearly from the other questionnaire. If the potential respondents realised that the second part was only analysed by me for reasons of research, they would probably answer more easily than if the two questionnaires were mixed. In addition, the respondents should feel free to decide whether they wanted to answer both parts or not.

For the second section of this survey I refer to Section 5.3.2, as this was not part of the consultancy work (core AR cycles), but the thesis. The complete questionnaire can be found in Appendices 10 (German version) and 10a (English version). The questionnaires were developed during February and discussed in a meeting with an executive of the HR team. The board gave its acceptance on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2011. After the announcement of the survey, it was delivered on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2011, and a reminder was planned to be sent via email latest 28<sup>th</sup> of March. The return was to be finished by the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2011 and a presentation and discussion of the results was scheduled for the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2011. With this timing, the research at South Real Estate was scheduled to end, although the change process had further to go.

The results of the first section of this survey show that the assessment of organisational culture at South Real Estate was advancing as every item was assessed higher than the year before. This indicates a positive development of organisational culture (Chapter 6). Details about return rate and findings are discussed in Section 5.3 and Chapter 6. Again, the results were analysed by the use of SPSS and South Real Estate asked for a descriptive analysis. The results according to average means and changes between t1 and t2 were presented and discussed with the board.

As in 2010, the results of the staff survey were first presented to members of the board. All members expressed satisfaction with the development between t1 and t2, but that there still was work to do. Also, while the results had clearly advanced (Section 5.3, Chapter 6), the issue of culture still had to be developed further to anchor it strongly within the organisation. They saw the danger that good results may cause some managers to limit their attempts to improve the organisational culture.

#### **4.5.2 Closing of AR Cycle III**

To inform management, a workshop was planned and conducted. Again, the participants planned how to inform the staff and a time-plan was developed. All agreed that the results were - mostly – satisfying, but that there was still work to do. After this workshop, the staff was first informed by a personal letter from the board. Then, briefing of staff by their executives took place, with the development of concrete actions. These action plans were to be championed back to the board to continue the cultural change process.

#### **4.6 Summary**

The above sections focus on the core AR cycles which present the consultancy work during the time between 01.05.2009 to 30.04.2011. The activities developed within these cycles aimed to support the organisational culture change process. I accompanied these activities and adopted the role as (overt) participant as observer. Whenever I attended in the organisation during these activities, the participants knew about my work as a consultant as well as my own research within their organisation.

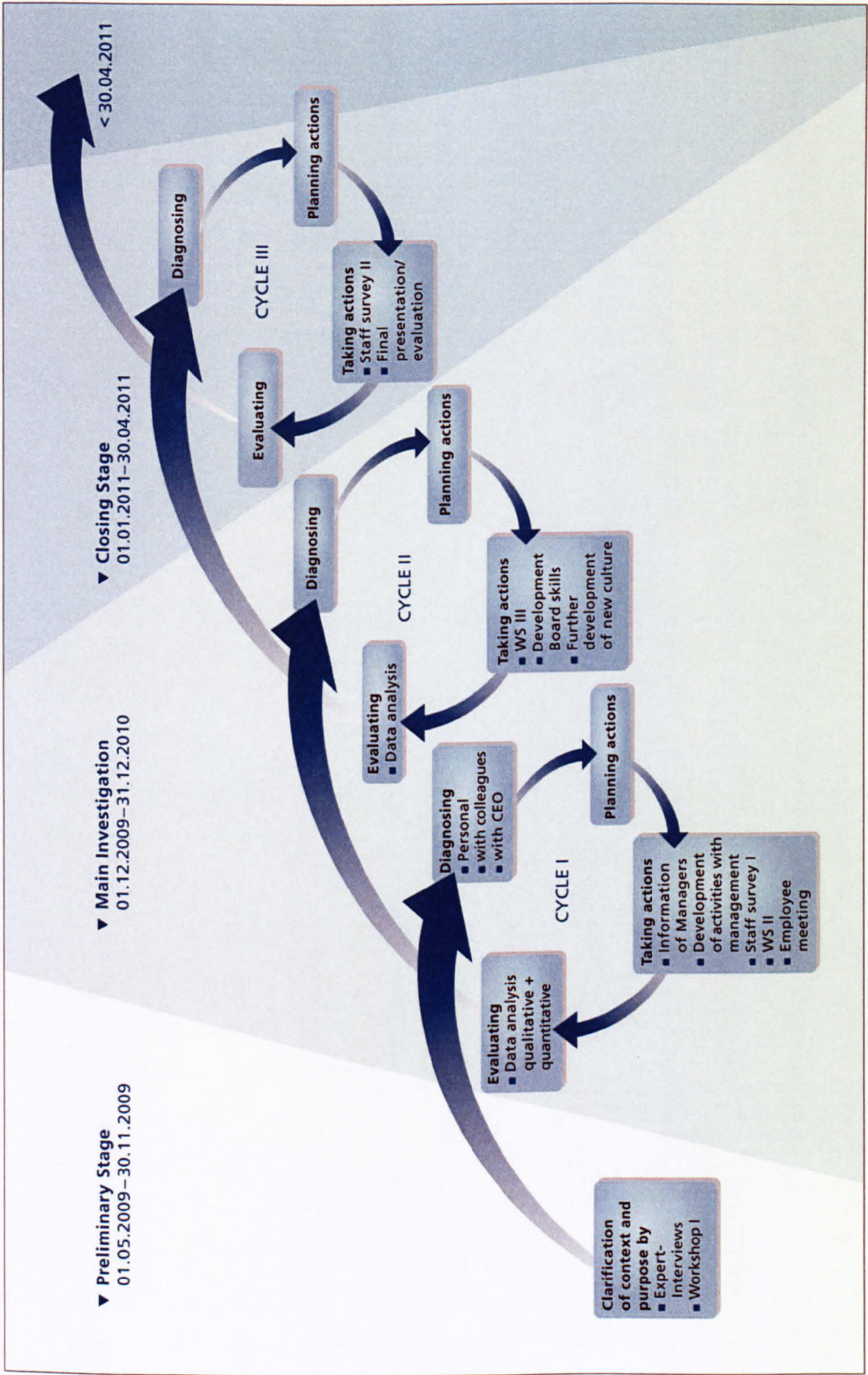
During the preliminary stage, I clarified the context and purpose of the core AR project. The results of the expert interviews were used to develop a cultural vision in cooperation with the board. The following activities aimed to create a participation of the entire management into the culture development process, as me, my colleague and the board regarded these levels as important for achieving the project objective. Therefore, two staff surveys, information of management, one employee meeting and two workshops with the management have been conducted.

Figure 4.2 presents the complete core AR cycles with respect to the consultancy work. In connection with this thesis, the presentation of the core AR cycles (consultancy) also ended by the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2011.

When working with AR within a thesis, one has to cope with the dynamic and parallels of activities as discussed in Section 3.3. Although the activities conducted within the core AR cycles are vital for the activities within the thesis cycles (sometimes even the same) one has to differentiate between the aims and objectives of the two. The first one is very closely related to practical demands and objectives. The last one has to fulfil academic demands as part of the research work (Section 3.3). However, the core AR cycles give important information

about what happened inside the organisation and the project and therefore, to understand the thesis cycles it seemed not only sensible but even more a pre-condition for following the thesis cycles and the decisions taken to present the story-line of the core AR cycle as well. The core AR cycles worked upon organisational culture change. However the result by the end of these cycles would have been, without this project, I would not have been able to explore the influence and role(s) middle management had played within this process. Therefore, the following chapter discusses in detail the activities of the thesis cycles to collect data. Issues according the development of the questionnaires, participant observation, note-taking and keeping will be explained. Whereas Chapter 5 again will follow the chronology of activities, Chapter 6 discusses the findings according to my research aim and the objectives.

Figure 4.2 AR-Cycles – consultancy



(present author)

## CHAPTER 5 THE THESIS CYCLES: DATA COLLECTION

### 5. The thesis action research cycles – collecting and analysing data

Chapter 4 presented the activities that took place to initiate the organisational culture change at South Real Estate. The activities relating to the core AR cycles are important for the thesis cycles. Some of them are used as quantitative data (like the staff surveys), others served as possibilities to gain data by participant observation and qualitative interviews. Parallel to the core AR cycles, the thesis cycles took place in the period between the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2009 and 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2011. For the writing of this thesis it was important to define a final point where research finished. According to prior agreement with the board of South Real Estate, it was decided to end with a final staff survey to consider the development which had taken place over the phases. This chapter discusses the methods used to collect data for the research during this time. Participant observation is used at different times. Therefore, this particular method is discussed in detail when it is introduced for the first time. Later sections will refer to this discussion. Where necessary, more details will be presented when methods are used a second or third time.

The aim of this research is to explore if middle management does influence organisational culture change, and, if so how important it is. Therefore, the objective is to explore whether middle management plays a role within this process and what roles that might be (Chapter 2). In addition, I want to explore, if middle managers take over their roles, when the organisation creates an environment to support cultural change. Therefore, the data are collected first to explore, whether there was any cultural change and respectively the activities to achieve that, and secondly to achieve the stated research objectives.

Marshall and Rossman (1999), and others (Brüsemeister 2000; Lamnek 2002), suggest that when using qualitative methods (as when conducting the expert interviews and participant as observer), the researcher should make and retain extensive notes relating to the research design and the reasons for underpinning the choice of strategy in order to understand the processes that one used, and deviation of the findings (Brüsemeister 2000; Fuhs 2007). Therefore, detailed notes were kept during the realisation of any particular method during the research process, as well as any time data was taken and worked on (research diary,



observation notes, theoretical notes, and method notes). During workshops notes were made whenever possible during group activities as well as in the evenings and breaks. This ensured that at any time in the following research, the researcher would be able to re-visit situations, to retrace conclusions and avoid forgetting anything important.

## **5.1 Preliminary stage**

At the preliminary stage, the starting basis was defined. During this phase of fieldwork, the aim was to explore if the issue of organisational culture in the specific organisation South Real Estate was regarded as an issue that concerned managerial aspects at all which would include the middle management. In addition, I wanted to know what understanding of organisational culture existed at South Real Estate and what had to be changed, according to the people within the organisation. Therefore, two activities during the preliminary stage were planned: expert interviews and a workshop with the board that I joined as participant as observer. Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 will discuss these methods.

### **5.1.1 Semi-structured interviews as expert interviews**

If a field is unstructured and largely unexplored, some authors recommend an exploratory approach (Helfferich 2004). Froschauer and Lueger (2003) regard an exploratory and qualitative approach in the early stages of research as sensible. At this point in time, I did not know anything about the roles middle managers might play during cultural changes. Therefore, I decided to conduct qualitative exploratory interviews. This method was used within the Core AR cycles (consultancy) and the thesis cycles (research) and was shortly presented in Section 4.3.1. This section will discuss the interviews more deeply with regard to thesis cycles (research) and their resultant demands.

The following paragraphs give an explanation and justification of the decisions made when designing and conducting the expert interviews. Figure 5.1 gives an overview of the different steps that have to be followed to conduct interviews.

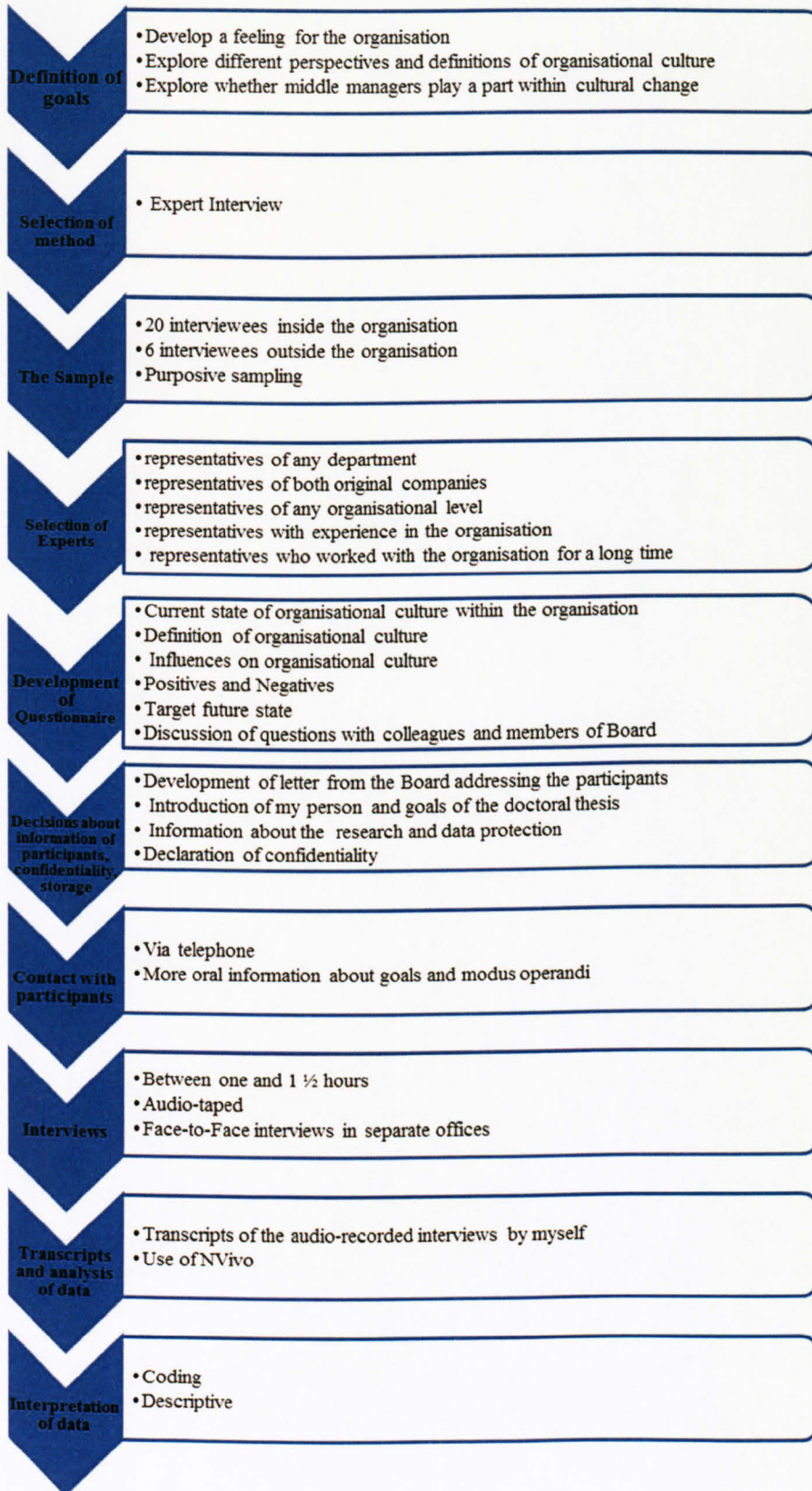
There exist different forms of interviews to conduct exploratory analysis (Brüsemeister 2000; Helfferich 2004; Lamnek 2002; Saunders et al. 2009). With interviews, one wants to explore facts, knowledge, opinions, and engagement of social groups (Brüsemeister 2002). According to Gläser and Laudel (2004, 2006), an interview conducted with a checklist seemed to be the

most appropriate one, as the checklist includes every question that has to be answered in any interview. At the same time, the sequence of questions and the way in which they are asked is not mandatory. In addition, questions can be asked that are not explicitly a part of the checklist. Hence, the interview can be conducted much more like a 'normal' conversation. By this form, the interviewee can act relatively freely and can describe his or her associated memory or observation, where applicable (Gläser & Laudel 2004). According to Lamnek (2002), qualitative interviews like expert interviews demand frankness and reservation on the part of the researcher in order for the interviewer to create an atmosphere where the interview-partner feels relaxed and trusting, so he or she can talk frankly. Also, the researcher should avoid any comment that could affect the participant's subjective perspective (Froschauer & Lueger 2003).

In this early phase of field work, I wanted to gain information about different and subjective opinions and perspectives about the specific organisational culture at South Real Estate. According to some information I had at that time, it was very likely that participants would be cautious, if not anxious, about answering frankly. Hence, an interview taken personally face-to-face seemed the most appropriate. An open form, as described above, would give the opportunity to reduce stress for the interviewee and to follow his or her way of thinking.

Liebold and Trinczek (2002, 2010) describe 'expert interviews' conducted by a checklist as an instrument, that in empirical social research, would be one of the most often used in practice. But, who is an 'expert'? In every-day-language experts are persons, who have outstanding knowledge about something (Gillham 2005; Liebold & Trinczek 2002). So, in the context of research the expert is one, who can offer knowledge to the field of interest. In their publication, Kühl and Strodtholz (2002) discuss the sociological perspective to that question and come to the conclusion that it is not the person of the expert, or his or her biography, that are of interest to the researcher, but the "protagonist integrated in the functional context who becomes the subject of the analysis" (Meuser & Nagel 1997, p. 485). Hence, to be declared as an 'expert' in the context of the interview is dependent on the advance in knowledge in comparison to other persons concerning the research question (Gillham 2005; Kühl & Strodtholz 2002; Walter 1994).

**Figure 5.1** Conduct of first interview



(present author)

According to Kühl and Strodtholz (2002, p. 38) “the focus of scientific interest is selectively focused on the experts approach to problems within ‘his or her’ organisational and institutional context”. Also, the expert will not answer naively to the questions and so will not “submit tamely to a series of prepared questions” (Gillham 2005, p. 54). Therefore, it is important to pay regard to these aspects, when deciding a certain sample method. In this case, the participants within this sample have to be able to relate something about the organisational culture in the past and today as well as about issues that would have to be changed. In addition, they should be able provide responses about the relationship between the organisational culture and management.

The aim of expert interviews is to reconstruct a complex body of knowledge, to explain social phenomena, according to the current research interest (Liebold & Trinczek 2002, 2010). According to Liebold and Trinczek (2002) expert interviews, conducted by a checklist are (semi) structured interviews, with the aim of motivating the respondent to personal interpretations by the use of questions which encourage them to talk. Therefore, an open und non-bureaucratic checklist (Appendix 4) is used that leaves enough space for free narrative passages with personal settings of relevance (Hopf 1978; Liebold & Trinczek 2002).

The decision in favour of the expert interview fits into the interpretative perspective of organisational culture as discussed in the literature review, as well as into the basic philosophical perspective as argued for (see Chapters 2 and 3). With its openness and communication, it also conforms to the processability in the research process as encountered in the case at hand.

Although face-to-face expert interviews are much more time-consuming than many other techniques, this method seems to be most appropriate within the context of South Real Estate and the thesis research objectives, as they are of an exploratory nature. Working with qualitative methods does not call for as big sample sizes as quantitative research (Brüsemeister 2000). This is because the individual case (here, the individual expert) is much more important than the pure number of cases. In extreme situations, explorations can be made just out of one case (Brüsemeister 2000). The single case is the reference point (Brüsemeister 2000). According to Fuhs (2007), the question is not statistical representativeness but legitimacy of the interviewees. Single cases open the approach to perspectives and lives that are usually not accessible to outsiders. Therefore, it is important to show that the selected interviewees can give answers to the questions. This is called purposive

sampling (Saunders et al. 2009). Literature suggests the likelihood of a purposive sample being representative as low (Saunders et al. 2009). However, when working with small samples this sampling technique is regarded as useful, especially when focusing on key themes and with heterogeneous cases (Saunders et al. 2009). I already discussed the explanatory character of the planned interviews. To gain the needed information, I had to select a sample that would be capable in giving me information about organisational culture at South Real Estate. Therefore, a purposive sampling design can be regarded as appropriate.

Who could answer my questions? This was discussed with my colleagues as well as with the chairperson of the board. Every person within the sample should be able to give me answers relating to my aims from a different perspective. Therefore, it was important to include persons, who were members of different departments. South Real Estate is built up of two different organisations that have merged. I had been told that there were at least two different cultural understandings within these two organisations that were apparent. Therefore, it was also important to have representatives from each of these two former organisations. As the perspective upon culture was likely to differ between different organisational levels, the participants should also represent these levels. As new organisational members were probably not able to give broad information, the sample should include only persons with experience within the organisation. South Real Estate also wanted to gain an outside picture of the organisational culture. Therefore, external representatives were interviewed as well. These external interviews were done as part of the consultancy, and not the thesis research.

As expected, people talked about the interviews within the organisation and discussed who was going to be interviewed (office grapevine). I regarded it as important to allocate the interviews between the departments in relation to the number of the respective employees. These demands led to a sample size of 20 organisational members. I expected to receive new information within the first ten interviews according to my experience. It appeared that this later on was the case. The following five interviews confirmed the information and the last five interviews did not bring any new information. As face-to face-interviews are time-consuming and a high number of interviews were not required to achieve the set goals, it was decided that to interview 20 staff members was sufficient.

At that time, South Real Estate employed 229 people. So, the sample is 8.7 per cent of the population. Beside the criteria (Table 5.2), the chairman of the staff council was included. Hence, it was ensured that as many perspectives as necessary were involved. Also, it was of

interest for the organisation to receive information about the (cultural) perspective of some external participants. Therefore, six contacts were chosen. All of them had experienced intensive contact with people inside the organisation over several years. Therefore, it was likely that they could provide important information for the organisation. Table 5.1 shows the decisions related to the sampling in an overview.

**Table 5.1 Purposive sampling**

Criterion	Purpose
Representatives of every department	It is most likely that there exist different subcultures within the organisation (Chao & Moon 2005; Martin 2002; Sackmann 2002);  To explore the influence of these on the organisational culture or the sensation of the need for change
Representatives of both original organisations	In the history of the organisation, there had been a merger of two companies with different organisational cultures. I wanted to know, whether these different cultures were still present, and if members of the two organisations had different perspectives.
Representatives who commenced working in the organisation after the merger	Was there a difference in sensation and judgement between them and the representatives of the old cultures?
Representatives of any organisational level	Beside sub-cultures between departments, there probably exist different cultures between managers and other staff members (Martin 2002; Sackmann 2002)
Representatives with experience in the organisation	An expert is someone, who can answer the questions (Gillham 2005; Kühl & Strodtholz 2002; Walter 1994). Therefore, the representatives should be members of the organisation for at least 1 year to have experience and contacts within the organisation.

(present author)

The next step was to develop the interview checklist (Appendix 4 and 4a). The expert interviews were planned as semi-structured interviews. According to the goals set, questions were generated and the plan constituted. Table 5.2 will present the contents of the interview checklist of the expert interviews and the reasoning for the different issues. The objectives, respectively the reasons for the several steps or questions, are given also.

**Table 5.2 Contents of interview checklist expert interview**

Part/Question	Objective/Reasoning
<p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<p>Creating a comfortable situation for participants</p> <p>Providing background information about project and objectives (Appendices 1, 1a, 2, 2a)</p> <p>Confidentiality consent form and data protection agreement (Appendices 3, 3a)</p>
<p><b>Biographical questions</b></p>	<p>Gain information needed for groupings etc.</p> <p>Give the participant room to talk about something common so that they relax and feel more comfortable with the situation</p>
<p><b>Culture</b> <b>(open-ended questions; see next row)</b></p>	<p>Literature review showed that there exist numerous definitions of ‘culture’ (Kroeber &amp; Kluckhohn 1952). Basic underlying assumptions according to Schein (2004) are part of Schein’s model of culture. They exist – beneath others – of the Nature of people, Nature of peoples operations, and Nature of relationship between people (Behrends 2003;Schein 2004;). Therefore, it was important to find out what the perspective of the participants would be and to develop an understanding of their assumptions.</p> <p>To gain information about the Is- and the Target-State of culture in the eyes of the participants and if any managerial issues were concerned.</p>
<p><b>Is-Analysis:</b></p> <p>What do you personally understand by the term ‘organisational culture’?</p> <p>How important is the presence/existence of organisational culture (OC) for a company, in your opinion?</p> <p>How would you describe the OC prior to 1st April 2009 (management, employee-employee, customers/external associates)</p> <p>What factors influenced this culture? What effect did it have?</p> <p>What were the positives? Why?</p> <p>What were the negatives? Why?</p>	<p>To find out the individual perspective and understanding of the term, to be sure that in the following interview we would talk about the same thing, when using the term.</p> <p>The Board regards the topic of organisational culture as important. But what do the employees think about that? This information is important for the further change process. If the staff do not share the same position as the Board, any subsequent action on this issue would be difficult to realise, including implementation, integration etc.</p> <p>To start the change, and later evaluate the progress of that process, it is important to know the starting point.</p> <p>The answers should give information about drivers of culture and their effects and therefore should show working points.</p>
<p><b>Target state</b></p> <p>When you think about the future and/or the new organisational structure: What should/must the OC be like, in your opinion, to enable</p>	<p>To gain information about a possible future vision of culture.</p> <p>The answers will give further information about what should be done in future and what pitfalls could come up during the</p>

Part/Question	Objective/Reasoning
targets to be met?  What other effects (apart from target attainment) would this culture have?  What aspects of the 'old' culture should be preserved?  Which should be discarded?  What should be done, in your opinion, to introduce this new culture on a sustainable basis?  On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the 'old' culture and the current status?  Are there any other questions I should have asked?	process.  The rates are a starting basis for further evaluation of development.
<b>Final part</b>  Thank the interviewee and explain further steps.	Closure of the interview, appraisal of participation and information provided.  The participant gets further information that can be brought into the organisation.

(present author)

To create an atmosphere of frank communication and serve the open character of the interview, I decided to ask 'open-ended' questions (How, what, which etc.). This serves the explanatory character at this stage of the research work. Literature suggests using open-ended questions as well, as they give participants the opportunity of both answering frankly, and providing their individual perspectives and meaning concerning the topic (Froschauer & Lueger 2003; Liebold & Trinczek 2002; Mayer 2002; Mayring 2002).

Reliability describes the consistency of the used method (Gierl 1995, Saunders et al. 2009; Yin 2009). This means, the extent to which a "data collection technique will yield consistent findings, similar observations would be made or conclusions reached by other researchers, or, there is transparency in how sense was made from the raw data" (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 609). As it was the goal to explicitly find out the personal – and, so, subjective – perspective of the interviewees and the process of interpreting qualitative answers is a subjective act by itself, it is very unlikely that another researcher, asking the same questions on another day will provide exactly the same conclusions. Also, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999), non-standardised research methods are not necessarily intended to be repeatable, since they



reflect the reality at the time they were collected, in a situation which may be subject to change (Saunders et al. 2009), as was the case with South Real Estate.

According to Richards (2008), reliability in qualitative research is there to make sure the researcher is reliably interpreting his or her data. This means, the researcher – especially in long-term projects like the research at South Real Estate – has to make sure that they are, for example, reliably interpreting data the same way across time. In the case of the expert interviews, it was decided to audio-record and make notes while interviewing and after any interview. Yin (2009) suggests that reliability can be demonstrated when the operations of a research can be repeated, with the same results. Therefore, the use of a protocol is recommended (Yin 2009). Although Yin's suggestions refer to the development of case studies, his recommendation can be transferred to this research. Interviews are transferred verbatim and analysed by using NVivo. In addition, memos, codes and categories used are described and stored. Interview-checklists are stored in appendices as part of this thesis. These actions should demonstrate the reliability not only of the expert interviews conducted but also of the other semi-structured interviews in later cycles as well as the observations.

Validity specifies the extent to which data collection methods accurately measure what they were intended to measure or the extent to which research findings are really about what they profess to be about (Saunders et al. 2009). In the case of expert interviews, it is therefore the question, to what extent the researcher gains access to the participants' knowledge and experience, and if the researcher is able to infer a meaning "that the participant intended from the language that was used by this person" (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 319). According to Blumberg et al. (2005) researchers refer to content validity, criterion-related validity and construct validity, when it comes to discuss the validity of a questionnaire. In the case of the interviews conducted at South Real Estate, content validity and face validity can be referred to. Content validity refers to the extent the questions provide adequate coverage of the field to be investigated. This can be tested by aligning the questions with the results of the literature research and by prior discussion with others. The literature review (Chapter 2), covers the questions asked. In addition, the questions were discussed and revised where necessary with colleagues in advance, so face validity was tested also. South Real Estate was facing a deep change process. Therefore, everyone within this organisation was very busy to accomplish not only the daily tasks but also the tasks concerning the realisation of the structural changes. Hence, it was important to keep the additional load for the participants for joining the research

to a minimum. So, with regard to this and the number of interviews I decided not to conduct some interviews as a pilot study but start with the data collection immediately. However, the results of the interviews and of later discussions and surveys suggest that data were valid.

Prior contact with the respondents was carefully prepared, and was carried out in several steps. First, the entire organisation was informed via the intranet about the research and its objectives. Introductory letters are recommended in the literature (Froschauer & Lueger 2003; Saunders et al. 2009). Therefore, the board wrote a personal letter to all participants (Appendix 1, 1a), to inform them individually and to ask them for their participation. This letter was attached to an introduction and personal letter from me (Appendix 2, 2a), in which I explained the DBA programme, the current research project and its general goals. The issue of confidentiality was addressed at that time. Also, the next steps that would follow were described. The appointments were organised by me, by way of individual contact by telephone. This gave me the chance to provide more detail and answer individual questions. It appeared that this reduced the existing reservations that some people had.

Ethical aspects have been discussed in Section 3.5. According to these, a declaration of confidentiality was developed that was handed over to a participant and explained in detail at the beginning of the interview. The participants signed these forms. One exemplar was given to them; one was stored by me (Appendix 3, 3a). I indicated that this face-to-face interview was the first one and that other interviews during the research time may follow. The confidentiality consent covered any of the following interviews and questionnaires. The participants were asked to join the interviews and support not only the organisational culture change but my research as well. So, they were not voluntarily part of the interviews. Although I clearly stated that they could deny joining the interviews without any problem before we started with the respective interview, I have to take into account that the participants were not volunteers. As the findings showed (Chapter 6) the reactions and answers given to me seemed to be honest and not influenced by social expectancy. The course of the interviews and the results do not seem to be negatively influenced by the fact that the participants were not volunteers. Moreover, most of them seemed to be happy to have an opportunity to talk about the former organisational culture and their wishes for the future.

The use of an audio-recorder is suggested (Liebold & Trinczek 2010). As the process of format and analyses of empirical material is a process of systematic and controlled destruction of data this process should not depend on the memory of the interviewer (Liebold & Trinczek

2010). For the participant, it is necessary to have at least a minimum of trust in the confidentiality of the researcher as personal, maybe even critical, information will be given. So, from the very beginning of the interview, it is important for the researcher to create a situation, where the participant permits recording. To create this, the participants were assured that the tape recorder would be switched off at any time they wanted it to be. This process was followed not only at the expert interview but in any other interview following at later stages of the thesis cycles (interviews with middle management and with board). As it turned out, this was not necessary in any interview at all. The audio-tape was switched on after the introduction and clarification of formalities. In most cases, there was no problem with using the audio-tape. Only one person was very critical, but after 35 minutes of general conversation, the participant declared that he or she agreed with the procedure. So, this interview was also audio-taped.

The interviews followed the interview checklist as suggested by Liebold and Trinczek (2002, 2010; Appendices 4, 4a). They lasted between one, and one and half hours (in total 21 hours), and were held in separate offices. So, no other person from the organisation could hear what was being discussed. During the interviews, notes about non-verbal gestures, atmosphere etc. was taken.

I decided to transcribe all interviews myself using transcription notes verbatim and also ensuring pauses, and non-verbal communication were noted. To prepare for the following analysis, NVivo 8 was used to help organise, store and carry out the later analysis. The expert interviews were followed by a workshop with the entire board where I attended as participant as observer.

### **5.1.2 Workshop I**

Some information about the workshop has already been given in Section 4.3.2, where I described this from the consultancy perspective. The workshop was also important with regard to the research. I wanted to observe and discuss with board members the results of the interviews. During the interviews a lot of information was given in relation to the leadership style within South Real Estate (see Chapter 6 Findings). Still, I wanted more information about whether management – especially middle management – was playing an active part within the change process. The board workshop offered me the opportunity to discuss these

issues in detail and find out the boards opinion on this. As a research method, participant observation came into operation.

According to Waddington (2004, p. 154) the investigative social researcher Jack Douglas (1976, p. 112) maintains that “when one’s concern is the experience of people, the way that they think, feel and act, the most truthful, reliable, complete and simple way of getting that information is to share their experience”. Participant observation is a method, and a strategy for participating in people’s daily routine for a longer period, and, so, becoming familiar with it (Lüders 2010). These characteristics demonstrate the roots, and the use, of participant observation in sociology. Although I did not join the daily routine at South Real Estate for longer time-spans, but joined in various activities, the participant observation was used as the method during these activities.

Brüsemeister (2002) describes three kinds of observations: (1) descriptive observations as well as general observations made at the beginning of the research process, in order to give an overall view of the object of study, (2) focusing observations which concentrate increasingly on aspects relevant to the research question, (3) selective observations, during which special segments can be observed in detail. At the time of the workshop, I was still at the preliminary stage, where the context and significance of the topic were still being clarified, so my observations were more descriptive initially.

In addition, a distinction is made between participant and non-participant, covert and overt observations as well as systematic and non-systematic observations (Brüsemeister 2002). During this workshop only participant observation was used, and so I will not discuss the other types of observation in the following.

According to different authors, with this method, the researcher aims to come nearer to the research subject and to experience an inside view. The researcher shares people’s life for some time (Delbridge & Kirkpatrick 1994; Mayring 2002; Saunders et al. 2009). Taylor and Bogdan (1984; p.15) define participant observation as a method that “involves social interactions between the researcher and informants in the milieu of the latter”. Action research as my chosen research strategy necessarily includes (more or less) active participation during the process (mostly, as facilitator). Hence, participant observation and action research are consistent.

Participant observation was first used scientifically by ethnologists. The aim was to supply a holistic overall picture of a foreign culture, whereby, along with the analysis of texts and the collection of statistical data, other aspects are added to the overall picture through observation (Bachmann 2002). Since then, observation as a method has also been used in other areas of research (Bachmann 2002). Bachmann (2002) points out that in the case of participant observational field research, the actual practical research is dependent on the personality of the researcher, the properties and nature of the field and the more or less random outcome of the researcher's interaction with the field. This interaction within the field calls for different roles, the researcher takes (Bachmann 2002). The formal internal role within the organisation ranges from (supposed) intern or trainee to management consultant. The choice of a certain role is dependent on the environment that is to be investigated (Johnson et al. 2006). As I did not work in the organisation myself, one could refer to my internal role within the organisation as that of a management consultant who is conducting research. It is crucial for the success of the research work to always be aware of this role and the resultant consequences (Johnson et al 2006). The role as management consultant naturally has corresponding repercussions in terms of the perception of the persons involved, the expectations ascribed to me by these persons and the degree of trust which they may invest in me.

Different social milieus as well as the age, sex or level of education can also play a part (Bachmann 2002). In the research situation at hand, I mostly encountered members of the organisation with a similar social background to mine (qualifications, years of professional experience), so access was not characterised by barriers in this sense. So, I mostly encountered a high degree of openness.

Johnson et al. (2006) discuss twelve criteria they used to analyse potential roles. Many of these criteria are interrelated and show how a range of formal or culturally identifiable roles found in a system, (like an organisation), can be more or less useful within a dynamic, active participant observation strategy. These criteria are presented in the following table with a short description and transfer onto my role(s) during the research process (Table 5.3). Although Johnson et al. (2006) especially refer to participant observation while doing ethnographic research these criteria are useful for the validation of my role during the research at South Real Estate. As well, similar questions regarding access to informants, data, and information reliability apply. Table 5.3 presents the criteria discussed by Johnson et al. (2006) in an overview.

**Table 5.3 Criteria for active roles at participant observation**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Transfer</b>
Freedom of social movement	The extent to which an active role allows for movement among the various identifiable groups and subgroups found in the ethnographic setting. Overidentification with a single group can often inhibit access to a diverse set of informants.	In the role as consultant I was allowed to contact any staff member and manager I wanted to. Over time, more and more organisational members knew me and the work I did within the organisation. As I had been assigned by the board, I had to take care that people saw that I took their perspectives and notions seriously.
Access to information	The variety of kinds of information available to a given active role.	I was given any information I wanted to use. The organisational members associated with that role had the ability to use confidential information.
Type of informant relation	The extent to which informants depend on the ethnographer's active role in the course of their own activities.	I could not support the organisational members in their daily work. But according to the organisational change process and the activities chosen during the AR cycles, I could serve them with my special knowledge about organisational processes and experience as an organisational developer.
Types of information	The types of information available and the amount of detail afforded ethnographers in an active role.	See above
Need for specialised knowledge	The extent to which an active role requires specialised knowledge and skills	See above
Neutral status ability	The tendency for an active role to more or less be identified as part of one or more given groups or subgroups. This is related to the freedom of social movement above.	As a consultant, assigned by the board, I had to expect to be identified with them, at least partly.
Information reliability	The extent to which active roles ensure the reliability of information collected and afford reliability checks.	Beside my role as consultant, I was known as a researcher. As I had complete freedom in the organisation to do my research work, I was able to check for the reliability required of a thesis work.

Criterion	Description	Transfer
Reliance on key informants	The extent to which an ethnographer in a given role must depend on key informants for collecting data.	As consultant and researcher, I was allowed to ask people personally. Hence, I could refer to direct sources and was not dependent on other people collecting information for me.
Entrance probability	The chances surrounding the entrance of any given ethnographer in a particular active role, assuming limited skill sets.	Entrance probability was given, because as a consultant and researcher I was supposed to ask questions and not to be a specialist in real estate.
Accessibility to organisational sectors	This is similar to freedom of movement in that it concerns the ability of an active role to have access to various organisational levels and sectors, including such things as social class.	See above
Power within the organisations/setting	The degree of power and autonomy associated with a given active role.	The role of consultant and researcher, who is doing the research assigned by the board, should automatically be associated with a certain degree of power, because I would be expected to develop suggestions for the organisation.
Basis of power	The particular characteristics of an active role that constitute the basis for such power.	See above

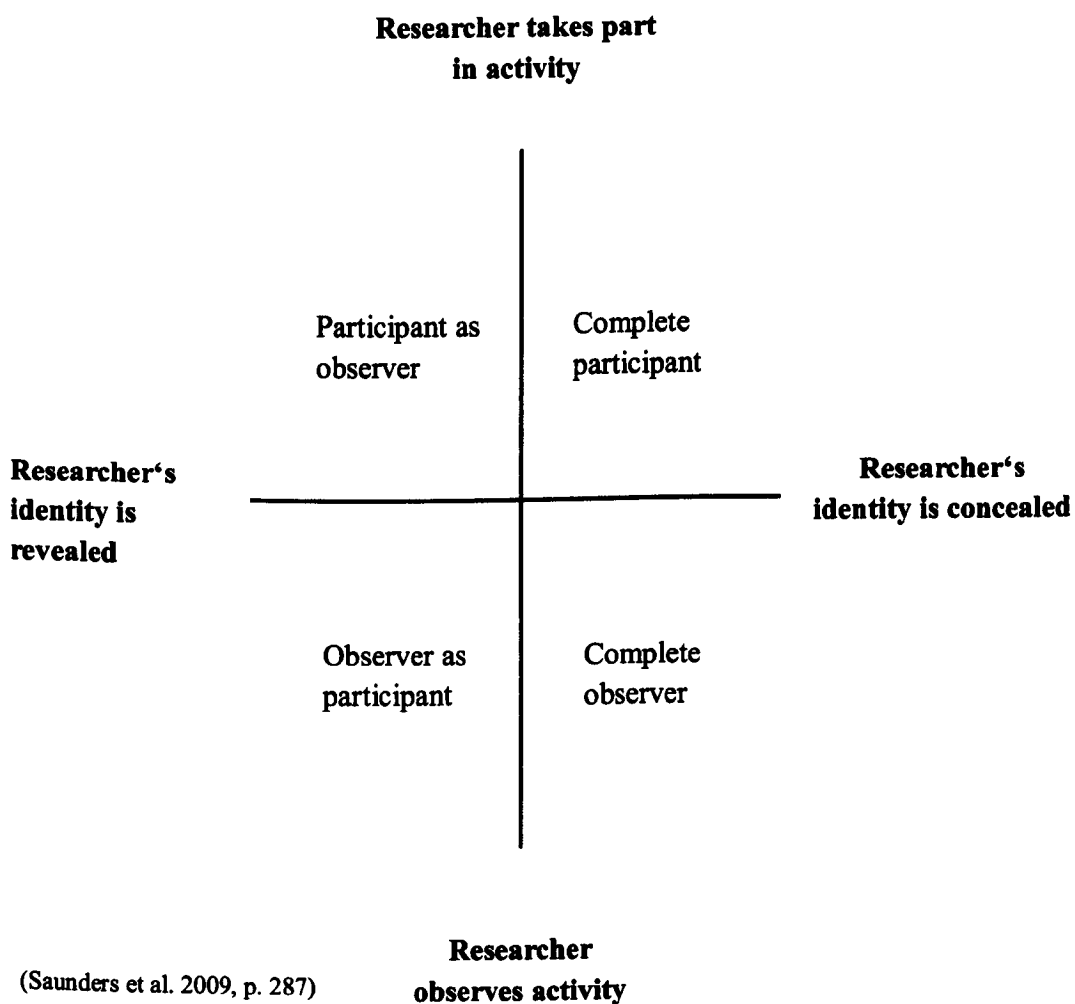
(present author)

I was introduced to the organisation in the first place as the researcher, who would accompany the cultural change process. At the same time, it was noted that I was a partner in a consultancy company working for the organisation and would be part of upcoming activities for organisational culture change, for example as facilitator. The check of the above mentioned criteria show that these two roles would give me a broad approach to the organisation. I was allowed to make contact with every person inside the organisation I thought could be valuable for my research and for the consultancy work. As a consultant, assigned by the board, I had the freedom of social movement, although within that role, I had to take care that people saw that I took their perspective and notions seriously. Whenever I asked for information, it was offered to me. Although, I did not share the daily work with the employees or managers, I was able to support them with my special knowledge about organisational processes and communication. However, as a consultant, assigned by the

board, I had to expect to be identified with them, at least partly. Beside my role as consultant, I was known as a researcher. As I had complete freedom, I was also able to check for the reliability required. As well as the role 'consultant' that of 'researcher' allowed me to address people personally and without restrictions. In addition, people expected me to develop suggestions to support the organisation in each of my roles. This check demonstrates that both roles 'consultant' and 'researcher' gave me a broad approach to the organisation.

There are various types of participant observation (Brüsemeister 2000; Burgess 1989; Saunders et al 2009). There is the complete participant, the participant as observer, the observer as participant and the complete observer. Figure 5.2 demonstrates the different variants, which can be measured by the axes 'revealed identity of researcher' vs. 'hidden identity of researcher' (horizontally) as well as 'participation in activity' vs. 'observation of activity' (vertically).

**Figure 5.2 Typology of participant observation researcher roles**





Participation in the field, however, poses a basic dilemma (Brüsemeister 2000; Lüders 2010). There is increasing participation in the field on the one hand, which is the only way an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation can be scientifically verified. However, on the other hand, as a complete participant, one runs the risk in an observation situation of adopting perspectives from the field without reflecting on them. In the role of a completely distanced scientific observer, it may be the case that it is impossible to obtain the desired information.

My role during the board-workshop can be classified in the “participant as observer“-quadrant (Saunders et al. 2009). This role was also adapted, whenever I was facilitating a meeting or workshop. At any time, the participants knew about me and the reasons for my attendance. Nevertheless, to keep the necessary distance in the role I had assumed, I regularly reflected on my conduct and my conclusions with my colleagues after making observations. The aim was to recognise in good time whether I was running any risk through my own experiences, active participation (and therefore influence) and personal perspectives, of making my research findings too one-sided or thus, even distorting them.

In addition to that, Brewer (2000) regards the observer’s own experience as an important character and legitimate source of data when doing participant observation. When choosing the role of participant observer, the researcher must concentrate on maintaining a positive and non-threatening self-image (Waddington 2004). This is always a challenge during observational situations. When working with the board and doing observation there, it is most likely that the members of the board did not regard me as threatening, because they gave me the assignment for my task and supported me at all times. On various occasions, this was a more difficult task because of the same reasons: I was consultant with an assignment from the board. As my role was revealed, I had to be aware of that and working on building a relationship of trust was a continuing task.

The importance of field notes has already been referred to. Of course, they are particularly important in all observation situations, as they form the basis for any subsequent reflections and deductions and therefore should be done as soon as possible (Hickson 1974).

According to Brüsemeister (2002), the process of research includes two situations: the presence of the researcher during data generation and the distanced handling of the data during the process of analysis. Hence, it is important to reflect on the individual influence of

the researcher as participant at any time during the process. This is important for the quality of the research work in terms of academic quality.

Delbridge and Kirkpatrick (1994) categorise the types of data generated by that method as 'primary', secondary' and 'experimental' (Saunders et al 2009). When I was facilitating the workshop, I collected a lot of primary data. This means, I was directly observing interactions, expressions and communications that were noted in my research diary. However, negative observations could be of value too. It is not only what was said, done etc. that is of interest. What people do not do, say etc. can also be important information (Hickson III, 1974). Data of a secondary type are statements of observers. These statements have already been the result of a process of interpretation (Saunders et al 2009). For example, secondary type data where information given to me by my colleague.

According to the closeness of the researcher observer, bias is one of the greatest threats to reliability (Saunders et al. 2009). As it is hard to avoid this completely, the researcher should always be aware of it and therefore seek to control it. Hence, it has to become an integral part of the process of self-reflection. This is done, for example, with questions about alternative interpretations (Saunders et al 2009). Due to my years of experience as a consultant and facilitator of assessment-centres, I was trained in noting observational biases caused by myself or other observers. Within the activities, I noted everything that seemed to be important to me. In the evening, I transferred these unstructured notes into a structured form. Therefore, I developed a standard form that helped when organising the data (Figure 5.3)

In addition, I reflected on suggestions given by Richards (2008) for the handling of qualitative data. She suggests logging every event, everything that happened or may have changed, every step I would take and why, note alternatives and why rejected and what the likely results for the final project would be. Therefore, I could refer to these experiences and so exclude this threat to reliability.

So, at the end of the preliminary stage, two different methods for collecting data had been used: expert- interviews as semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. These methods resulted in important data that was used for conducting the following activities.

**Figure 5.3** Form for structured notes

**Structured notes**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Occasion:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal(s) of activity (for example: Workshop, meeting etc.):**

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Research goal:**            **influence and role(s) of middle management**

**Pre-condition: activities for organisational culture change**

<b>What have I observed/heard or what was I informed about?</b>	<b>Primary or Secondary data?</b>	<b>What can that mean? Alternative interpretations possible? If yes, what?</b>	<b>Serves which research objective?</b>

(present author)

## **5.2 Main investigation: Cycles I and II**

By the end of the preliminary stage, I knew that many aspects that had been mentioned by my interview-partners were those dealing with management-processes, and a cultural vision had been developed by the board. During the main investigation the core AR cycles kept the organisational culture change as on-going (Section 4.4). According to my research objective, the activities conducted within the time of the main investigation were to generate data about how middle management was reacting and acting with regard to the change. The question

was, if they would show any indicator that suggested them taking up roles to influence the organisational culture change or roles related to strategic changes (Section 2.4.4); or if they would show additional or different roles. Therefore, I aimed to explore the feelings of the managers about the cultural change and personal concerns about their participation and responsibility. Also, I wanted to explore if the cultural activities would be regarded as creating an environment to support the take-over of an active and influencing part in this process.

## **5.2.1 Thesis Cycle I**

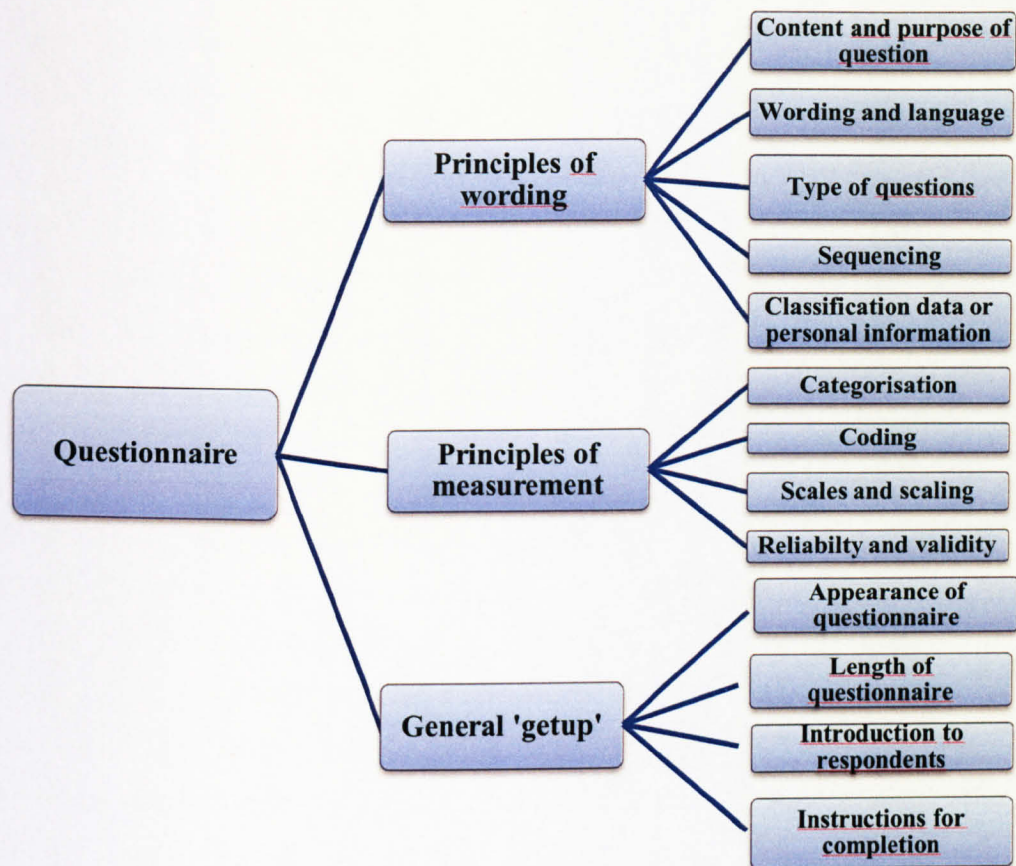
### **5.2.1.1 Future search conference**

Participant observation was discussed in Section 5.1.2. During the future search conference, which was also part of the core AR cycles, this method was used to collect data. Therefore, I refer to Section 5.1.2. By the end of the future search conference the board decided to conduct the staff survey I.

### **5.2.1.2 Staff survey I**

The staff survey was discussed in Section 4.4.1.2. As this survey also had to meet the demands of research, I will discuss in more detail the development of the questionnaire and its allocation. Information about the conducted analysis will be given. However, the results of the analysis are discussed and interpreted in Chapter 6.

**Figure 5.4** Development of a questionnaire



(adapted from Sekaran & Bougie 2010)

### Principles of wording

Statements were derived to measure the five aspects of South Real Estate’s cultural vision: culture of performance and success, respectful interaction and recognition, clarity, openness, and encouragement (Appendices 6, 6a). The items have to fit the aspect (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). At South Real Estate, we (me, my colleague, and the board) were interested in how the respondent would evaluate the organisation’s behaviour concerning certain cultural aspects. Therefore, mainly questions about behaviour were asked. Attributes such as age etc. were requested for later categorisation. To get a clear picture, it was important to have a high return rate. Therefore, I tried to formulate the items to be as short and clear as possible in the German language. The translation process was conducted with care, as literature suggests (Saunders et al. 2009; Usunier 1998). According to Saunders et al. (2009) Usunier (1998) suggests to pay attention to the following: (1) lexical meaning, (2) idiomatic meaning, (3)

grammar and syntax, (4) experiential meaning. Therefore, the questionnaires and other documents were translated by a professional translator and back into German by another, to assure that the translation would fit the original question. To make it as easy as possible to answer the questions, I tried to use every day language with no loanwords etc. (Sekaran & Bougie 2010).

The aim of this survey was to collect information about how the employees of South Real Estate (working level and managers) are assessing the status quo of the cultural mission statement. Therefore, members of the board did not join this survey. I decided to formulate statements and ask for the level of agreement (see 'scales' later on). These statements were based on results of interviews and discussions I had whenever I researched organisational members. The sequence of questions was kept logical. Scholz and Scholz (1995) define a staff survey as an anonymous survey. It is obvious that there are usually employees who would not give an honest rating or answer, if afterwards they knew their answer could be traced-back, and they are afraid of the consequences. Therefore, with regard to the results concerning the former organisational culture, I decided to do the staff survey anonymously. This would also minimise mistrust which otherwise was likely to occur, and create a pre-condition to receive as high as possible response rate. However, some personal information would be needed in order to work out useful results (Table 5.4). This data were used to examine if the results according to a certain group like department, hierarchical level or duration of service would show significant differences. This would be useful information for the development of further activities and the work with the middle managers. Hence, the following classification data were requested: age (in groupings), department, length of service within the organisation (in groupings). Also, the respondents were asked to tick, if they were an employee without management responsibility or an executive under the board with disciplinary management of at least one person. As this was the first survey ever conducted at South Real Estate and with regard to the small group of middle managers, I decided not to differentiate between the management levels. At that point of time, the AR had just started and the future search conference had been closed with a conflict (Sections 4.4.1.1 and 6). Therefore, I believed that a differentiation between the management levels could cause people not to answer. In addition, the union asked to let the data requesting this status be an optional information.

**Figure 5.5** Extract of classification data; Staff survey I

**Questionnaire for all members of staff**

**General information:**

**Age:**

- Up to 30 years
- 31-45 years
- 46 years and older

**I belong to the following department:**

- Department I
- Department II
- Department III
- Department IV
- or work for**
- Organisation Y

**Length of service with the company (within organisation or holding):**

- 1-5 years
- >5-10 years
- 11 years and longer

**I am (optional!)**

- an employee without management responsibility
- an executive under the board
- (disciplinary management of at least one person)

(present author; Appendix 6)

The number of employees at South Real Estate is straightforward and so many of them know each other. Therefore, it was important to develop classifications that would not allow identification of respondents. Therefore, the organisation decided to make identification of the executive level optional. In addition, I wanted to make it as easy as possible to fill out the information. Therefore, a minimum of groupings was designed.

I did not ask for gender, as in some departments the number of females was very low. In combination with other classifications, identification would have been possible. In my eyes, it was much more important to receive the other data for analysis, as I was afraid that questions seeking gender, due to the above mentioned reasons would reduce completion rates.

**Table 5.4 Classification data and aims**

<b>Classification Data</b>	<b>Reason</b>
<b>Broad age group</b>	I was interested, if the perception and evaluation of the cultural status would differ between younger and older members of the organisation.
<b>Departments</b>	Will there be different results between departments? If so, would it be departments with more or less organisational changes related to past times?
<b>Length of service within the organisation</b>	Would the results differ between these groupings? Was there any association between the length of service and the evaluation of culture?
<b>Status (management or not)</b>	Would the results differ between staff members and management?

(present author)

Principles of measurement

To minimise bias, it is recommended that one follow certain principles of measurement to ensure that data is appropriate to the aim of the survey (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). These principles should also support categorisation and coding (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). In the following, these principles will be discussed with reference to staff survey I at South Real Estate.

The ideas illustrated by the cultural vision had to be translated into behavioural dimensions that would be observable (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). Only then, can people assess the items. Second, an appropriate scale is to be chosen. An interval scale was chosen with a scale from 1 (does not apply, or, I do not agree at all) to 6 (applies, or I agree totally). I decided to use this even numbered rating scale with the idea of forcing the participants to decide whether one item can be rated with a positive or negative tendency. Also, the items have to measure accurately and actually, what one tries to measure (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). Questions on reliability and validity concerning this questionnaire will be discussed in detail after I have discussed the development and delivery of the questionnaire at the end of this section.

General Appearance or ‘getup’

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) the appearance and delivery of a questionnaire is important, as this will invite the potential respondents to answer fully and honestly, as well as to complete it. Therefore, it is sensible to show the importance of every single answer and to



present the questionnaire in a way that makes it as easy as possible to fill it out. This should heighten rates of return and the quality of data received. An introduction about background and aims of the survey by the board was attached on top of the questionnaire. As discussed in Section 4.4.1.2 the potential respondents were asked to return the questionnaire for analysis. To explain the scale and the way to fill-out the questionnaire, an example was introduced right after the cover letter (Figure 5.6).

**Figure 5.6 Explanation how to fill out the questionnaire**

**Method**

Various statements are presented to you below. You should rate them on a scale of 1 to 6. Please proceed as follows:

Example:

Statement	Rating					
	1 (does not apply at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (absolutely applicable)
Successes are celebrated at our company						

If you think this statement does not apply at all, then place a cross by 1. If you think this statement is absolutely applicable, then place a cross in box 6. Please use the scales from 2 to 5 for results in between. The basic principle is that values 2 and 3 express more of a negative tendency whereas values 4 and 5 are more positive.

Please carry out your evaluations clearly, i.e. do not give any scores of 2.5, 4.5 or similar. If you wish to change your rating, black out the wrong cross clearly to avoid errors in the assessment.

( present author; Appendix 6a)

There are some items with more than one aspect, like

“2. Whenever I am particularly committed and/or take the initiative, I receive support:

- from my direct superior
- from my colleagues
- from other departments”

According to the literature matrix questions are supposed to reduce the return rate (Saunders et al.). Therefore, these questions always had the instruction “Please answer all the statements!” to make sure, no sub-item was left out. Although this kind of question could harm the return rate, I decided to use them in some cases. By the use of them, I was able to

reduce the total number of items. Otherwise, I would have had to declare these items as individual rating questions. This would have increased the total number. I regarded a questionnaire with more items as dangerous, because some potential respondents might refuse to fill it out because they expect a more time-consuming work. I thought that this was more dangerous for the return rate than the decision to include some matrix questions. At the end of the questionnaire the participants were invited to give further comments about organisational culture: "If you would like to say anything else about the subject of organisational culture (voluntarily):" And finally, the respondents were thanked and asked to send the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope directly to me for evaluation (Appendix 6a).

Literature suggests pretesting of questionnaires (Saunders et al. 2009; Sekaran & Bougie 2010) by a pilot study. Management of South Real Estate wanted the survey to be conducted quickly. Therefore, it was not possible to test the questionnaire with a pilot group first. To minimise a possible negative impact of measurement problems, the questionnaire was discussed with colleagues who were not involved in the project at South Real Estate, as to their understanding of the questions and procedure. Also the questionnaire was discussed with the CEO.

After that, the questionnaire was delivered as you find it in Appendices 6 and 6a. One employee of the HR unit supported the process of delivery and gave me data about the amount of delivered questionnaires. Due to my request, she gave me the quantities according to the category data ('employees without managerial responsibility' = staff; 'executive under the board – disciplinary management of at least one person' = management/ Table 5.5). The potential respondents were asked to return the questionnaire directly to me. As it was given to every organisational member – excluding the board – the sampling is of the complete population. So, in total, 301 questionnaires were delivered. The participants were asked to return the completed questionnaire to me for analysis within two weeks. Between delivery and end-date, every organisational member was reminded via email from the HR-team to participate in the survey.

**Table 5.5** Sampling structure

<b>Department</b>	<b>Number of questionnaires to staff</b>	<b>Number of questionnaires to management</b>
Department I	47	6
Department II	11	2
Department III	40	8
Department IV	110	6
Organisation V	66	5
<b>Sum</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>27</b>

(present author)

Table 5.6 will present the statements, their reference according to the cultural mission statement, and reasoning in an overview. At the organisation's request the statements completely refer to the five central aspects of the cultural vision:

*“Durch eine Leistungs- und Erfolgskultur, gelebt in respektvollem Miteinander, Offenheit, Klarheit und Förderung steht die South Real Estate für hervorragende Produkte und zufriedene Kunden.”*(By way of a culture of performance and success, expressed in respectful interaction, openness, clarity, encouragement and recognition, South Real Estate stands for outstanding products and satisfied customers.)

For each aspect, a different number of items were formulated: (1) Culture of performance and success: 9 items; (2) respectful interaction and recognition: 7 items; (3) clarity: 4 items; (4) openness: 9 items; (5) encouragement: 6 items. As the board and I did not want a questionnaire with too many questions, one with a minimum of questions to achieve the objectives was planned for. Up to that time, only staff members that were participating within the expert interviews had been included into the process of cultural change. Therefore, the items needed to reflect some images of ‘respectful interaction’, ‘culture of performance and success’ either.

**Table 5.6 Statements/items with background**

Statements	Reference to cultural mission statement of South Real Estate	Reasoning for the items
1. If I notice something that could be improved, I take the initiative even if it does not relate to my personal area of work.	Culture of performance and success	The discussion with the members of the board during the workshop in November 2009 made clear their understanding of a culture of performance and success. They stated that to become successful as an organisation, it was vital that everyone in the organisation is welcomed and required to take initiative, even if it does not concern the individual department. To develop this culture (the interviews had shown that during past times, initiative was blocked by a culture of mistrust), it was important in their eyes that every manager and colleague should support engaged people. A culture where a performer will be supported and not dismissed (like a climber) would be preliminary for the development of new ideas, products and ways. In addition, the interviews showed a discomfort with the fact that (in former times) it seemed that a low-performer would be treated like everyone else and would not have to fear consequences for that.
2. Whenever I am particularly committed and/or take the initiative I receive support:  from my direct superior from my colleagues from other departments <i>Please answer all the statements!</i>		
3. It is important to develop ideas and activities outside normal work too.		
4. In my working environment there are people who inspire others through their commitment.		
5. People who do not perform/performance badly  are given support to improve suffer the consequences if they do not change are confronted by their direct superior <i>Please answer all the statements.</i>		
6. Everyone is treated equally fairly in my working environment.	Respectful interaction and recognition	Another important concern of the participants during the expert interviews was the interaction between people of different levels and departments. Most definitions of organisational culture given by them were about the quality of cooperation and climate. There was a feeling of differences in the treatment of people that lead to dissatisfaction. Also, they described the feeling that performance was not really
7. When I perform well I receive recognition from my direct superior.		
8. Even critical points are approached respectfully:  by my manager by my colleagues <i>Please answer all the statements.</i>		

Statements	Reference to cultural mission statement of South Real Estate	Reasoning for the items
<p>9. We all pull together to get our work done</p> <p>in the team in the department across departmental boundaries <i>Please answer all the statements.</i></p>		<p>recognised respectfully. It was taken for granted. At the same time, often low performers did not have to worry. Critique was often not given in an appropriate way or it was not given at all. Interviewees saw a lack of cooperation to get the job done together.</p>
<p>10. I know what expectations my direct superior has of me.</p>	<p>Clarity</p>	<p>As a characteristic of a new culture, interviewees desired clarity about expectations, competencies, orientation and clear signals. Also, goal clarity was missing in the past. Decision making processes were experienced as protracted and not transparent. To understand decisions, the quality of information is important. Therefore, statements about information are given in the questionnaire.</p>
<p>11. I receive information which is transparent and understandable.</p>		
<p>12. I know what the aims of the organisation are.</p>		
<p>13. My direct superior is consistent in his/her actions.</p>		
<p>14. I receive all the information I need to do my work successfully.</p>	<p>Openness</p>	<p>Interviewees told me that they often had the feeling of not being informed adequately. The board regarded it as important that the organisational members develop a culture of talking about positive issues as well as about negative ones. This included the courage to express criticism to a superior as well. In past times, a culture of mistrust and fear of making any mistake or dangerous decisions lead to a situation where certain issues were not discussed any more. The board regarded this as a danger for the success of the organisation. The thinking in borders between different groups or departments was regarded as a stumbling block.</p>
<p>15. Both positive and negative issues are discussed</p> <p>amongst colleagues between direct superiors and staff <i>Please answer all the statements.</i></p>		
<p>16. When I have a criticism I speak to the person concerned directly.</p>		
<p>17. I also express criticism to my superior.</p>		
<p>18. I experience open, clear communication</p> <p>between managers and staff within the team across departmental boundaries <i>Please answer all the statements.</i></p>		
<p>19. I am given professional/technical support.</p>		<p>To develop organisational members that are able to work responsibly and to make decisions</p>

Statements	Reference to cultural mission statement of South Real Estate	Reasoning for the items
20. My direct superior knows my further training needs.	Encouragement	as well as to dare to take a risk, support and encouragement by superiors was important according the Board. In addition, a performer should experience that their engagement was not only recognised, but also rewarded. People, who want to heighten their performance but have a deficit of knowledge, should experience support to develop further.
21. My direct superior promotes my professional development personal development <i>Please answer all the statements.</i>		
22. Those who perform are given prospects support <i>Please answer all the statements.</i>		

(present author)

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the aim of the staff survey was to explore, how the status of organisational culture according to the cultural vision was assessed by the members of the organisation. With regard to my research objectives, I planned to use the results of this survey to measure the status and - in addition with a second survey a year later - the development of organisational culture. In addition, this survey would support the discussion about culture and further activities to develop a middle management that would act as culturally aware. Therefore, the items were not literature-driven but according to the aim of the core AR cycles and requests of the organisation in addition to my research objectives, the items refer to the cultural vision. For example, one cultural aspect is ‘culture of performance and success’. The development of specific items that would express this category, were based upon statements that had been given to me during the expert interviews and participant observations at the board-workshop and the future search conference. The development of the category system that was used to develop the items and do the analysis is discussed in Chapter 6 in detail. In addition, literature shows, that the above mentioned aspects of communication, fairness etc. find their justification there too. For example, the topic of communication can be found in published works about organisational change (for example: Doppler & Lauterburg 1997) and about organisational culture (for example: Sackmann 2004). The feeling of being treated fairly is mentioned in literature about organisational trust and organisational justice theory (Saunders et al. 2002; Saunders et al. 2010; Saunders & Thornhill 2004).

By the planned end-date, I started analysis by the use of SPSS. Every returned questionnaire was marked with consecutive numbers and recorded under this number. Validity, reliability and return rates were analysed first. Measured data is of good quality if it meets the demands of validity and reliability (Saunders et al. 2009; Sekaran & Bougie 2010; Thiéart et al. 2007). Data are validated, if the collection method actually measures what the researcher intended to measure, and secondly, it describes the extent to which the findings really present what they ought to be about (Drucker-Godard et al 2007; Saunders et al 2009; Sekaran & Bougie 2010). Reliability tests and measures indicate how far the same data collection methods, used by different researchers in related contexts, will lead to the same results across time and various items (Drucker-Godard et al 2007; Saunders et al 2009; Sekaran & Bougie 2010).

To test the internal consistency of the questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha was measured. This coefficient measures the consistency of the answers according to all items (Cronbach 1951; Drucker-Godard et al 2007; Sekaran & Bougie 2010).

**Table 5.7 Reliability test by Cronbach's Alpha; Survey I**

<b>Groups of items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Reliability given</b>
Culture of performance and success 9 Items	0.817	The items are internally consistent.
Respectful interaction and recognition 7 Items	0.847	The items are internally consistent.
Clarity 4 Items	0.749	The items are internally consistent.
Openness 8 Items	0.787	The items are internally consistent.
Encouragement 6 Items	0.919	The items are internally consistent.

(present author)

The closer the result is to 1, the stronger the reliability (Drucker-Godard et al 2007; Field 2005). All results are higher than 0.7. Hence, Cronbach's Alpha demonstrates the reliability of the questionnaire statements.

Validity tests are used to check the measurement instrument itself. These tests examine whether questions asked in a questionnaire are really measuring the concept that is lying behind them (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). The groups of items (see Table 5.6) can be regarded as concepts or ideas in the case of South Real Estate. Therefore, the check of validity should

prove that the dedicated items really mirror these concepts (culture of performance and success, respectful interaction and recognition, clarity, openness, and encouragement). Face validity occurs, if there is an agreement that a question, scale, or measure appears logically to reflect accurately what it was intended to measure (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 598). In this case, the items are based on the data, collected by multiple methods: expert interviews, board-workshop, future search conference. Within the various discussions during these methods, I was informed about what the organisational members (in this case, the board and management) understood as characteristics of the cultural vision. In addition, the questionnaire was discussed in the context of whether the statements would fit to this vision. Therefore, face validity is given.

First, the return rate was evaluated (Table 5.8; Appendix 10). The overall rate of return was, very good at 66.11 per cent. Baruch and Holtom (2008) conducted an analysis of response rates for surveys used in organisational development. They analysed 1607 studies that were published in the time between 2000 and 2005 in refereed academic journals. The average response rate of studies that utilised data collected from organisations was 35.7 per cent. For this thesis study every department achieved a rate of more than 50 per cent. Hence, the return rate achieved in this survey can be estimated as very good. Surprising was the fact that in department IV more respondents claimed themselves as executives than the official information from the HR team (HR-team: 6; Return of 11). The reason for this remained unclear. However, it might be that according to the restructuring process some respondents felt confused about their classification. This seemed especially the case of project-leader, as found later on in a conversation. I decided not to identify these respondents. To do this, I would have needed to contact the organisation and was worried that this could result in a fear of respondents that their anonymity was in danger. However, as presented in Table 5.8 I counted these questionnaires as returns of managers and decided to discuss this fact with the board. As later analysis showed (Chapter 6) this categorisation did not impact my findings. However, it caused South Real Estate to communicate more about, who belongs to which group of employees. According to my research objectives, I do not regard this information as meaningful.



**Table 5.8 Return Rates Survey I**

	returned question- naire without department	Department I			Department II			Department III			Department IV			Department V			Total		
		N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
staff		47	24	51,06	11	2	18,18	40	20	50,00	110	51	46,36	66	25	37,88	274	122	44,53
Management		6	2	33,33	2	2	100,00	8	3	37,50	6	11	183,33	5	4	80,00	27	24	88,89
without level		8	9		3			5			15			13			53		
total return departments		53	35	66,04	13	7	53,85	48	28	58,33	116	77	66,38	71	42	59,15	301	199	66,11

N= number of delivered questionnaires; n = number of returned questionnaires (present author; Appendix 10)

As the actual names of the departments might offer the possibility to identify South Real Estate by insiders of the branch, I decided to name them ‘department I’ to ‘department V’. As the table shows, eight participants did not give categorical information about belonging to a certain department. Others did mark the department but not the level. However, they are all included.

The data, generated with this survey was also used for the thesis cycle. When exploring the role of middle management during a cultural change process, it is essential to know about the current state of organisational culture. This assessment can be used as a first point of measurement. A second staff survey was already planned as a second point of measurement. The aim of this was to find out, whether any cultural change had taken place. As the cultural vision (see Section 4.4.1.2) formed the basis for the statements and items, there was a strong relationship between these and aspects of management. The research aims to explore, if middle management influences organisational cultural change, and, if so, how important it is, can only be answered, if any change occurred. To explore this, it is important to examine how organisational members assessed the realisation of the cultural mission statement.

The results of one-way between-groups analysis of variances according to age, length of service, and department are discussed in Chapter 6 in accordance with the research objectives. For the use of the organisation, I presented and discussed with the board return rates and summarised the average values per item as well as personal annotations made by respondents.

This information and the conclusions the board made, were used for planning the next activities.

### **5.2.1.3 Workshop II and staff meeting**

As discussed in Chapter 4, a workshop with management and a staff meeting took place during this cycle. I joined the workshop as facilitator and therefore, I adapted the role as participant as observer. This role is already discussed in detail in Section 5.1.2. Findings concerning the research objectives are discussed in Chapter 6. Within the thesis cycle, these activities aimed to create a personal concern of the middle management about their participation and responsibility to support change and act as culturally aware during their daily business (see also Table 4.1). At the staff meeting I did not join in actively. My aim was to listen to the information about the survey given in this meeting to the entire staff, and to observe the reactions of the participants. However, I was known in the organisation as consultant and researcher. In addition, many managers and participants of the former expert interviews greeted me and asked about the development of my work. Hence, at the staff meeting I was an observer as participant (Figure 5.2).

### **5.1.2.4 Semi-structured interviews II**

At this point in time, different activities had been conducted (Figures 4.2 and 5.5, Table 4.1). During these activities, the cultural vision was presented, discussed, and activities developed to initiate the change. Middle managers were informed about organisational culture in general and joined the change process in an active role. Therefore, I decided to conduct a semi-structured interview with some representatives from this group. I aimed to use these semi-structured interviews to gain information of how the middle managers at that time assessed the cultural changes, if they had conducted the planned activities of the workshop. According to my research objectives I sought for information of how the middle-managers themselves estimated their personal importance, influence and role within this process. Moreover, I asked them, what support they would need to encourage the cultural change process and if there would be anything that would hinder them. The interview was part of the thesis cycle, and not of the core AR cycle in the consultancy project.

This interview was developed in the form of an adaption of pulse surveys (Müller et al 2010) with middle management. The interviews took place between 17<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup> of August

2010. The time span between the workshop and employee meeting to this interview seemed to be long enough so that managers had time to conduct at least some of the activities that they had committed to at the workshop before in May 2010 and to reflect on how they experienced the changes. Characteristics of the pulse surveys (Müller et al 2010) are presented in Table 5.9. The checklist with the questions can be found in Appendices 7 and 7a.

Müller et al. (2010) argue that pulse surveys always have a thematic focus and aim to check general conditions of the organisation. In addition, they are used to control the implementation of certain activities. At South Real Estate, the interviews focused exclusively on the cultural change and the middle management's activities within this change. A representative sample or complete sample is usually used (Müller et al. 2010). However, according to the specific situation at South Real Estate I decided to use a purposive sampling technique again. 12 middle managers had joined the workshop. Seven took part in interviews. The participants were selected taking into account time resources and holiday vacations as well. Also, I decided not to include managers who were stationed in areas other than the town where the headquarter was placed. The reason for this was that most employees were located inside the headquarters and according to the past results the need for cultural change was more vital here. Also, here the most structural changes took place. Usually, pulse surveys are conducted online via the internet. According to my understanding of organisational culture as an issue that is very complex I decided to do these interviews face-to-face. In addition, I expected to gain more information when personally doing the interviews and using the chance to further probe when I had the feeling that the answer was not complete. The checklist (Appendices 7, 7a) only consists of 15 open-ended questions. Müller et al. (2010) suggest the use of 10 to 25 items. Therefore, the interviews conducted meet the demands of pulse surveys to be short and conducted more quickly. The organisation was interested in being informed about the cultural activities within the units. Therefore, the board was informed about the results with regard to anonymity. Pulse surveys are singular and can be repeated at short notice (Müller et al. 2010). The interviews with middle managers at South Real Estate were only conducted once. Although I thought of repeating another one sometime later, due to the amount of data I had already collected, I turned this idea down. Table 5.9 shows the characteristics of a pulse survey and the design of the interviews carried out.

**Table 5.9**      **Semi-structured interviews as a pulse survey at South Real Estate**

	<b>Pulse survey</b>	<b>Interview at South Real Estate</b>
<b>Content</b>	Thematic Focus	Activities since workshop II; Focus on cultural changes
<b>Aim</b>	Checking the general condition of the organisation; Controlling of the implementation of certain activities	Questions: 4; 5; 13; 14;15  Questions: 1; 2; 3; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12
<b>Addressee</b>	Representative Sample or Complete sample	12 middle managers joined the workshop. Seven took part in interviews. The participants were selected taking into account time resources and holiday vacations as well. Also, I decided not to include managers who were stationed in areas other than the town where the headquarters were placed. The reason for this was that most employees were located inside the headquarters and according to the interviews the need for cultural change was more vital here. Also, here the most structural changes took place. Hence, this was a purposive sample with critical cases (see also Section 5.1.1).
<b>Format</b>	Usually online via internet	I decided to ask open-ended questions. In addition, I wanted to further develop my relationship with the interviewees. Also, a face-to-face interview would give me the chance to ask deeper questions, if I had the inclination to do so. A numeral scale in an online survey seemed to me too limited to gain the data I sought. Therefore, I decided to do face-to-face interviews again.
<b>Length</b>	10-25 items	The checklist included 15 questions.
<b>Subsequent Process</b>	Central reporting and central deriving of activities	The board was informed about the overall results. Also, these would flow into later research methods and analyses.
<b>Frequency</b>	Singular; Short term repeated at short notice	As this instrument was only one joining the different activities during the AR project, only one survey was conducted.

(present author, according to Müller et al. 2010)

The questions referring to the precedent activities were conducted during the workshop. In addition, I asked for their opinion about their role within this process and how effective they would assess their influence on cultural change. Open-ended questions were asked to gain as much information as possible. Also, some questions asked for an evaluation on a rate of 1 (less) to 10 (most) on some aspects. This was to complement the open-ended questions. The 10 point scale was used, because this broad range would give enough space for an evaluation that could take account of differentiating nuances. Again, I used a checklist, which included all questions, I intended to ask. So it was planned that every participant was to be asked the same questions. The complete checklist can be found in Appendix No 7a.

Section 5.1.1 discussed the reliability within the context of interviews in detail. Therefore, I refer to this section. As the target group (middle management) within South Real Estate was only small, a pilot study was not conducted. To ascertain validity, I followed the same procedure as at the expert interviews at the preliminary stage (Section 5.1.1). Validity has been discussed in Section 5.1.1 in depth. Again, the questions were based upon the previous activities and in addition from the literature about the influence and role(s) of middle management within change processes (Section 2.4.4 and 5.1.1). With regard to the discussion about validity of the expert interview the same can be stated for the pulse survey: the interview was valid.

As the participants already knew me at this time, it was not necessary for the board to announce the interviews in advance again. I contacted the participants by phone, explained the aims and background and made an appointment. The interviews took between 30 minutes and one hour (in total five hours). Although the middle managers all knew me and the reason for my attendance, I explained in detail about confidentiality, data storage and analysis to them. Three of them had been participants in the expert interviews already and therefore, I referred to the consent-form, they had already received (Appendices 3, 3a). I offered the others this consent-form, but all of them said that they would not need that form, as they were agreeing to the interviews. I added this into my notes as to their agreement. Again, the interviews were audio-recorded. The verbatim transcription-process followed the same procedure as in 2009, as well as the storage and note-keeping.

## **5.2.2 Thesis Cycle II**

According to this thesis's research objectives, it was necessary to find out what kind of roles were being adopted or needed to be adopted by middle management. Therefore, I conducted a semi-structured interview with the members of the board. Also, the skills of the middle managers were developed further to act and communicate according the cultural vision and so support the cultural change. During this cycle, I facilitated Workshop III (Section 4.4.2.1). By adopting the role of a participant as observer, I wanted to explore, whether the behaviour of the middle management during workshops had changed in line with the demands of the cultural mission statement and if they would exercise the skills they had learned.

### **5.2.2.1 Semi-structured interviews III**

In August 2010, I had interviewed a sample of 7 middle-managers about, how the cultural change had proceeded, and what the middle management had done (Section 5.1.2.4). In December 2010, I decided to interview the members of the board to evaluate their assessment of the cultural change implemented at that time. Moreover with regard to my research objective, I was interested in their evaluation of the importance of middle management as to the cultural change and their influence, as well as the role(s) they would allocate to them. All members of the board accepted my request for a meeting immediately. The procedure during the interviews was the same as in previous interviews (audio-record, notes, transcription etc.).

Five questions relating to the aims of the interviews were asked. All of them were open-ended. In addition, I asked for assessment of some items on the 1 – 10 scale (Appendices 8, 8a). The questions were oriented at the interview of middle-managers in August 2010. Reliability and validity relating to interviews has been discussed in depth within section 5.1.1. The semi-structured interview can be regarded as reliable and valid. Findings are discussed in Chapter 6. Following these interviews, the main investigation was closed.

### **5.3 Closing Stage: Thesis Cycle III**

In this research I aim to contribute to the understanding of middle management and its influence and roles within organisational culture change. In addition, I aimed to explore if middle management takes-over these roles if the organisation creates an environment that supports organisational culture change. Therefore, the objectives of this stage of research are to finally uncover information that supports and continues the findings of the former cycles. Since the first staff survey one year before, I concentrated on interviews and activities with middle management and the board. A second staff survey was to assess if there had been any kind of cultural change between t1 and t2. In addition, this survey was used to collect assessments not only of middle managers and the board about importance, influence and role(s) but the entire organisation. So, at the end of this stage I received a full self-evaluation of all those included to the study. In addition, the goal of this survey was to confirm the question, if middle management influences cultural change and if the roles according to strategic changes (Section 2.4.4) are valid as well. I added roles that have been expressed at the semi-structured interviews with middle management and the board to explore the validity of these roles. Also, items were developed to examine, how important the respective role within the context of cultural change is and if middle management would be involved in the process.

According to the research objectives, this time, the questionnaire was supplemented by a second section, which I provided to achieve the objectives and therefore was concentrated on middle management, influence, roles and their activities. Principles on how to develop a questionnaire and the allocation have already been discussed in detail within the context of survey I (Sections 4.4.1.2 and 5.2.1.2).

#### **5.3.1 Staff survey II, section 1**

Section 1 of the second staff survey in general included the same items and scale as the first staff survey, to allow comparisons between these two times of measurement. Otherwise, it would have been difficult to clearly examine if there have been cultural changes according to the cultural mission statement and with regard to the activities in between. In addition, it was delivered in the same way as the year before and again a letter from the board and an explanation how to fill in the questionnaire was provided. However, two slight changes were made.

After staff survey I some managers expressed difficulties they and some subordinates had to understand one certain item correctly. Item 6 (Appendices 6, 6a) in 2010 was formulated as follows: “6. Everyone is treated equally fairly in my working environment.” The managers said that they have been unsure of what to understand as ‘fair’ and therefore suggested to formulate this item more clearly when the next survey was conducted. Statements during the expert interviews and observations indicated that ‘fairness’ was an important issue with regard to organisational culture. Therefore, I revisited the literature to improve this item and find out how ‘fairness’ could be differentiated. The literature on ‘Organisational Justice Theory’ (Saunders et al. 2002; Saunders & Thornhill 2004) focuses on perceptions of fairness in organisations with regard to the distribution of resources (distributive justice) and fairness of the interpersonal treatment during change (interactional justice), and the perception that procedures used to make decisions are fair (procedural justice; Saunders et al. 2002; Saunders & Thornhill 2004). Therefore, I complemented item 6 as follows “Everyone is treated equally fairly in my working environment. This means:

- Application areas receive in equal mode the resources they need to do their work.
- The compliance with prevailing rules is claimed by everybody alike.
- Everyone is generally treated in an equal way.” (Appendices 9, 9a).

Every sub-item had to be evaluated. A comparison of the reliability of survey I and survey II with this change showed that this change led to a little advancement of the Cronbach’s Alpha value (2010/7 items: 0.847; 2011/9 items with regard to the change: 0.877; see also Table 6.4).

Beside this slight change of items the classification data was adapted to the current situation. Between the time of the first staff survey and this one, some organisational changes were carried out. These changes led to a differentiation of departments. With regard to this, classification data were adjusted (Figure 5.6, Appendices 9, 9a). To check whether a change to another department would bear on the assessment, I asked for confirmation of belonging to a certain department before and after the change. Also, this time the classification of the levels (employee, management) followed the new organisational chart and this time was differentiated into (1) employee without management responsibility, (2) division head, (3) department head. The division head was defined as middle management (Section 2.5) and the respondents were asked to answer the respective items in section two with regard to division heads. The scale was maintained, as the staff knew this from the last survey and another scale



would have made it difficult to compare findings. So, the second survey was as close to the first one as possible.

The reliability of the survey was tested. The results of the first section are presented in Table 5.10 and again which again showed that all items were internally consistent.

**Figure 5.7 Classification data, staff survey II**

**General information:**

**Age:**

Up to 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Until 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2010, I was a member</b>	
		<b>Of the following Department:</b>	
31-45 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department I	<input type="checkbox"/>
46 years and older	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department II	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Department III	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Department IV	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Department V	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Length of service with the company (within the Holding):**

1-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Since 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2010, I belong to</b>	
		<b>the following Department:</b>	
>5-10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department I	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 years and longer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department II	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Department III (a)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Department IV (a)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Department V (a)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Department VI (b)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**I am (optional!)**

- employee without management responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- division head	<input type="checkbox"/>	
- department head	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**I work in the division or in the team (optional!):** \_\_\_\_\_

(present author; Appendix 9a)

**Table 5.10 Reliability test by Cronbach's Alpha; Survey II (section 1)**

Groups of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability given
Culture of performance and success 9 Items	0.795	The item is internally consistent.
Respectful interaction and recognition 9 Items	0.877	The item is internally consistent.
Clarity 4 Items	0.799	The item is internally consistent.
Openness 8 Items	0.828	The item is internally consistent.
Encouragement 6 Items	0.917	The item is internally consistent.

(present author)

Again, every returned questionnaire was marked with consecutive numbers and recorded under this number. The return rates according to section 1 are presented in Table 5.11. To achieve a return rate as high as possible, the respondents were informed that the first section was very important for South Real Estate. The second section was clearly separated from the first and accompanied by a covering letter from me (Appendices 9, 9a). I discuss this in more detail in the next section (5.3.2). This time, the overall return rate was smaller (2010: 66.11%; 2011: 53.18%). However, according to Baruch and Holtom (2008) this rate can still be regarded as good (see also Section 5.2.1.2).

**Table 5.11 Return rates survey II (section 1)**

	returned questionnaire without departm	Department I			Department II			Department III			Department IV			Department V			Department VI			Total		
		N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%	N	n	%
staff	10	60	33	55,00	54	11	20,37	43	19	44,19	28	31	110,71	78	20	25,64	36	9	25,00	299	133	44,48
division head		5	4	80,00	3	3	100,00	3	2	66,67	0	0	0,00	1	0	0,00	1	0	0,00	13	10	
department head		1	3	300,00	1	1	100,00	3	3	100,00	3	2	66,67	4	2	50,00	3	0	0,00	15	11	73,33
without level	13		6			7			3		7			5							13	
total return departments		66	46	69,70	58	22	37,93	49	27	55,10	31	40	129,03	83	27	32,93	40	0,00		327	167	53,18

N= number of delivered questionnaires; n = number of returned questionnaires (present author; Appendix 10)

For better readability the table can also be found in Appendix 10. The reasons, why this time the response rate was lower can only be assumed. The following reasons might apply: (1) As the items were all developed to create a better evaluation (Chapter 6), people might have thought that everything was fine and their answers not needed; (2) People did not send back the questionnaire because of the second section; (3) I was told anonymously that one manager told his subordinates that he would collect the questionnaires and send them to me, which may have reduced responses; (4) Some just did not have sufficient time. Whatever the reasons, the return rate was still good. The fact that for example in department IV more staff answered than joining the department can be explained. After the reorganisation some people belonged to two departments but marked only one of them in the questionnaire. So, although the smaller return rate and some differences between delivered questionnaires and returns makes it difficult to compare departments, the differences between the values at t1 (2010) and t2 (2011) are still meaningful, as further analysis and findings will show (Chapter 6). Chapter 6 discusses the results according to an ANOVA test (age, duration of service, and department)

as well as a t-test according to the impact of the cultural assessment of a change of the department during the reorganisation in October 2010 (Appendix 11).

### **5.3.2 Staff survey II, section 2**

It was important for South Real Estate to receive as many responses as possible according to the status of the organisational culture that I decided to have a separate section for my research. This was welcomed by the board. Although the cover letter of the staff survey II asked the potential respondents to also take time to answer my questionnaire, this separation was obvious.

While the first part of the survey was supposed to demonstrate the development of the organisational culture and any work that still needed to be done, the second part referred solely to my research project. The items within the second part concentrated on the importance of middle management (division heads), their roles, effectiveness of those roles and influence in accordance with the cultural change. During the main investigation, I explored how middle managers themselves, and the board, estimated middle managements influence and roles. Here, I aimed to find out the whole organisation's perspective. Therefore, I asked the members of the board to fill-out this section as well and to send it back. To not confuse the other potential respondents, I did not add the board explicitly to classification data, although I would not have expected consequences to the return rate due to this.

I added a letter in front of the second section where I referred to my research and personally asked for the support of everybody. This letter was signed by me and not from an organisational member. The complete questionnaires can be found in Appendices 10 and 10a. The questionnaire was developed at the same time as the first section and they were delivered together. With the analysis and presentation of the results to the board the thesis cycles were supposed to end.

The same classification data was used as in the first part. Only one change was made. In the first part, the participants were free to mark their organisational level. Therefore, this field was labelled as 'optional' (Figure 5.7). For the purpose of my research, I needed this information. Therefore, I did not label this classification data that way in the second part (see Appendix 9 a). The information about the level was important for me, in order to analyse

possible different perspectives and ratings across the different organisational levels. Also, this time, the responses were differentiated between levels according to the organisational chart.

Again, I used an even number rating scale of 1 to 6. The same rating was used to avoid any inconvenience for participants. The easier this second section was to fill out, the more people were supposed to answer. The survey was conducted in German. The translation was done by a professional translator and was re-translated into German again (see also Section 4.4.1.2). The participants got an explanation as to which level was defined as ‘middle management’ and that all items should be estimated with regard to organisational culture and this level. In accordance with the organisation I defined the division heads as middle management (see also Section 2.4.2).

**Figure 5.8 Classification data; staff survey II (section 2)**

<b>General information:</b>	
<b>Age:</b>	<b>Until 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2010, I was a member</b>
Up to 30 years <input type="checkbox"/>	Department I <input type="checkbox"/>
31-45 years <input type="checkbox"/>	Department II <input type="checkbox"/>
46 years and older <input type="checkbox"/>	Department III <input type="checkbox"/>
	Department IV <input type="checkbox"/>
	Department V <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Length of service with the company (within the Holding):</b>	<b>Since 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2010, I belong to the following Department:</b>
1-5 years <input type="checkbox"/>	Department I <input type="checkbox"/>
>5-10 years <input type="checkbox"/>	Department II <input type="checkbox"/>
10 years and longer <input type="checkbox"/>	Department III (a) <input type="checkbox"/>
	Department IV (a) <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I am</b>	Department V (a) <input type="checkbox"/>
- employee without management responsibility <input type="checkbox"/>	Department VI (b) <input type="checkbox"/>
- division head <input type="checkbox"/>	
- department head <input type="checkbox"/>	

(present author; Appendix 9a)

My research objectives contain the examination of middle managements importance, roles, influence and realisation and so I developed four groupings according to these. The relevant items are based upon the results of the measured activities and their analysis. Table 5.12 presents an overview of the individual items, their allocation to one group and their reasoning.

In addition to the roles that had been identified by the board, I added, according to an analysis by Wooldridge et al. (2008): championing, and facilitator (items 10-11). Beside these roles,

Wooldridge et al. (2008) discuss a role called ‘synthesiser’. A synthesiser is defined by Wooldridge et al. (2008) as someone who translates information between top management and the levels below them. As the board had mentioned the role ‘translator’ (item 6), I decided to take this role and did not ask additionally for the role of synthesiser. The descriptions, the board gave to the role of multiplier showed a clear conformance to the role of implementer. To reduce the complexity of the questionnaire and to avoid mixing similar roles, I decided in these two cases to take the roles as expressed by the members of the board.

**Table 5.12 Statements with background, staff survey II (section 2)**

Statements	Group	Reasoning for items
1. Middle management is important for implementing a corporate culture that is actively practised within our company.	Importance and Impact (Objective 1)	The results of interviews with the middle managers themselves and the board suggested that middle management would be important for the cultural change process. Literature about strategic change also indicated the importance of middle management (Boyett & Currie 2004; Burgelman 1994; Huy 2002). Therefore, with these items, I wanted to find out, how importance regarding cultural change was regarded by a bigger sample and different levels than board and middle management itself.
2. The influence of middle management on organisational culture in our daily work is considerable.		
3. The organisational culture cannot be changed without the (cultural) role model of middle management.		
4. If middle management does not share the cultural values of a company, the organisational culture cannot be changed		
5. The middle management is the multiplier of organisational culture.	Roles (Objectives 2 and 3)	During the interviews, different roles associated with middle management were mentioned. Besides, literature discusses more roles: implementer, synthesiser, champion, facilitator (Wooldridge et al. 2008). As the expression ‘champion’ does not have a satisfying translation, item 10 gives a short explanation. I did not regard the role ‘synthesiser’ as during the board interviews a very similar role was mentioned (translator). Therefore, I asked for this role. The aim of this group was to find out, whether the participant would agree to these roles with regard to middle management and cultural change.
6. Middle management is the translator of cultural information to - employees - other managers - the board.		
7. Middle management is the trainer for culturally aware behaviour.		
8. Middle management is the role-model for others.		
9. Middle management provides feedback on behaviour relating to the cultural mission statement.		
10. Middle management has a lot of contact with employees, customers and contractual partners. Therefore, he or she has the opportunity to observe these people’s behaviour and champion these at the top to bring about change.		

Statements	Group	Reasoning for items
11. Middle management is a facilitator between employees and upper management.		
12. Please rate the above-mentioned roles according to their importance, whereby 1 stands for the most important role and 7 for the least important. Each score may only be given once: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multiplier</li> <li>- translator</li> <li>- trainer</li> <li>- role model</li> <li>- feedback provider</li> <li>- champion (see statement 10)</li> <li>- facilitator.</li> </ul>	This statement is the only one with a differing scale. Here, the participant had to rate the roles according to their importance. Therefore, Cronbach's Alpha was not measured and this question is not assigned to any group. Nevertheless, these items also belong to the group 'Roles' (Objectives 2 and 3)	Agreement to these roles was requested. As it is difficult for someone to fulfil all of these roles, it seemed sensible to me to ask for a rating. This rating should show a graduation, maybe also between different levels. Results of this question should offer information as to which roles are probably the most important ones to work on with middle management.
13. The influence of middle management to actually bring about cultural change in their divisions is considerable.	Influence (Research aim)	Middle managers might be important for cultural change, But, does middle management really have influence on cultural change?
14. The influence of middle management to actually sustainably inject life into a cultural change that has taken place in their division is considerable.		
15. Members of middle management each fulfil their roles appropriately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multiplier</li> <li>- translator</li> <li>- trainer</li> <li>- role model</li> <li>- feedback provider</li> <li>- champion (see statement 10)</li> <li>- facilitator.</li> </ul>	Realisation (Objective 4)	If middle management is important and influences cultural change, do they actually use this and act according to this? Sackmann (2006) asks for a culturally aware management. This cultural awareness should be visible from the activities taken.
16. Middle management is actively involved in the implementation of organisational culture.		
17. Middle management is sufficiently involved in the implementation of organisational culture.		
18. Middle management takes cultural aspects into account in their actions.		
19. Middle management regularly broaches the issue of organisational culture.		

(present author)

To test the internal consistency of the questionnaire, again, the Cronbach's alpha was measured (Table 5.13). This coefficient measures the consistency of the answers according to

all items (Cronbach 1951; Drucker-Godard et al 2007; Sekaran & Bougie 2010). The test proved all items to be internally consistent.

**Table 5.13 Reliability test by Cronbach’s Alpha; survey II (section 2)**

Groups of items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Reliability given
Importance and impact 4 Items	0.826	The items are internally consistent.
Roles 9 Items	0.897	The items are internally consistent.
Influence 2 Items	0.806	The items are internally consistent.
Realization 11 Items	0.944	The items are internally consistent.

(present author)

According to the abovementioned reason, not all respondents filled-out the additional section. Therefore, the return rates are different from the return rates of the first section of the survey. Although the return rate of 42.47 per cent can be regarded as satisfying (Baruch & Holtom 2008; Table 5.5) there are differences according to the level. Especially the return rate of the staff with 37.79 per cent is weaker.

**Table 5.14 Return rates staff survey II (section 2)**

Sum of delivered questionnaires		Return		Return Rates	
Staff	299	Staff	113	Staff	37.79 %
Division Heads	13	Division Heads	10	Division Heads	76.92 %
Department Heads	15	Department Heads	13	Department Heads	86.67
Board	5	Board	5	Board	100 %
<b>Overall</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>Overall Return</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>Overall Rate</b>	<b>42.47 %</b>

(present author)

The annotations of a few respondents suggest that this level of staff had difficulties in assessing these more theoretical items in comparison to the first section which was much more concerning their daily working life. In addition, according to the core AR cycles, management more often was discussing the cultural dimension with me and therefore, it is very likely that first, they were more willingly to support the research (as some of them noted onto the questionnaires) to do me a favour and that they had many opportunities to be engaged with organisational culture theory. However, as this is an exploratory research, the proportionally low return rate of the staff still offers meaningful information to get a clear

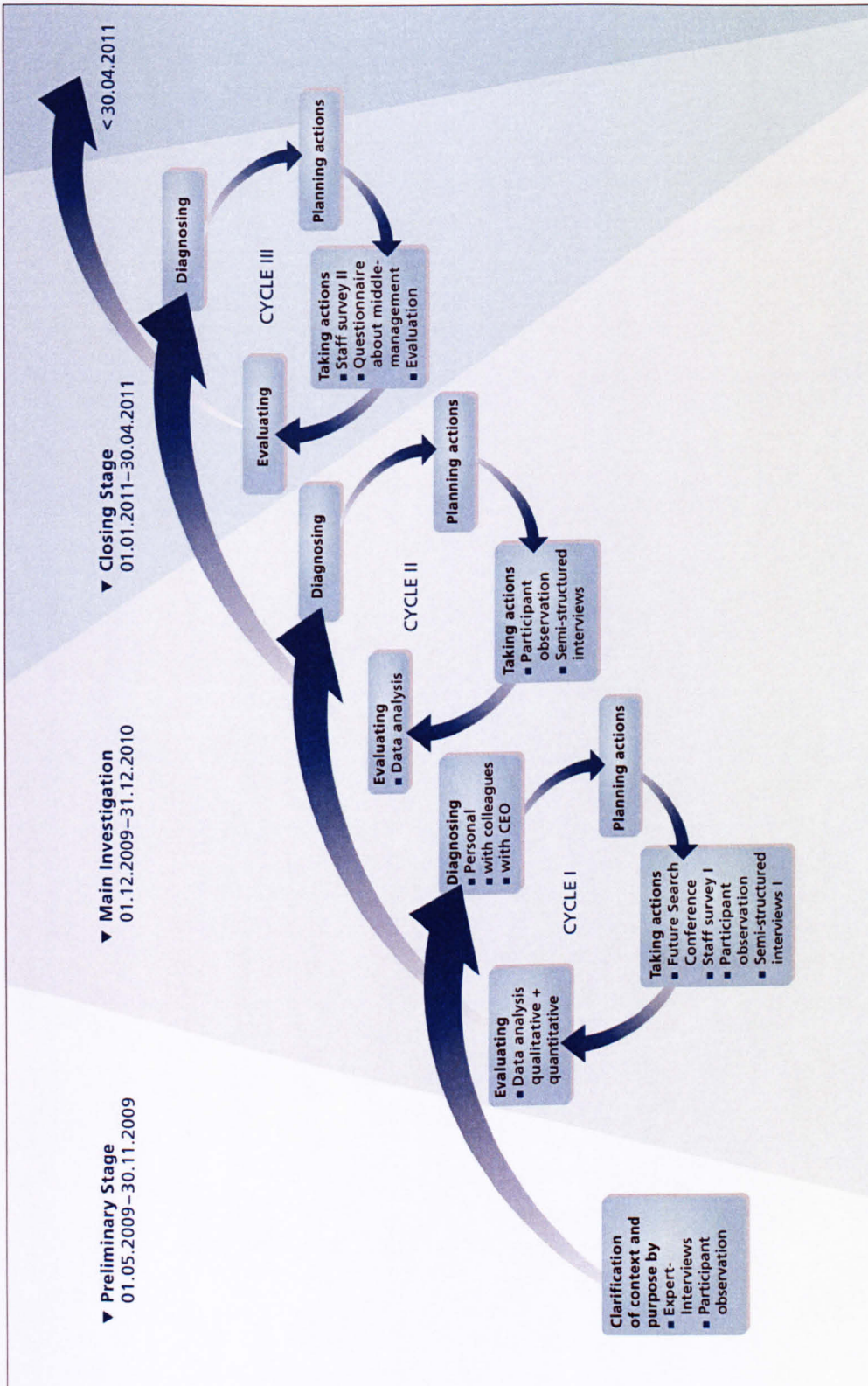
idea about their estimation of middle management's participation at organisational culture change.

#### **5.4 Summary**

With this survey, the research inside South Real Estate was completed. Chapters 4 and 5 both presented the course of the cycles (core AR cycles and thesis cycles) and showed how every single cycle builds upon the former. The core AR cycles have been conducted to examine the respective status of organisational culture at South Real Estate and developed activities to further develop this culture to achieve the cultural vision. Therefore, middle management was integrated into the process and learned to relate daily management work with cultural behaviour. The aim was to invite them to take-over responsibility for cultural development and act as culturally aware, as the literature suggests (Sackmann 2007). The activities of the thesis cycles were conducted to collect data for achieving my research objectives which aimed to explore if middle management influence cultural change and which roles they would adopt within this process. In addition, I aimed to examine if they would adapt these roles, if the organisation creates an environment to support cultural change, which was pursued by the core AR cycles. At the end of the thesis cycles, I collected qualitative data by conducting interviews, adapting the role as participant as observer, and observer as participant. In addition, two staff surveys were conducted to collect quantitative data. So, many types of data for analysis were generated. The next step is to discuss the analysis I conducted and to provide the findings. Whereas the two former chapters followed the chronology of the activities, the following chapter (Chapter 7) is structured differently. First, it discusses general analysis according to the qualitative and quantitative data. After this, the findings of all sources according to the research objectives are discussed and propositions are formulated. Figure 5.9 presents a complete picture of the thesis cycles.



**Figure 5.9** Course of thesis cycles



(present author)

## CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS

### 6. Findings

The chronology of the thesis cycles has been documented in Table 4.1 and Figure 5.9. The following sections will discuss the findings relating to the research objectives. Therefore, the structure of Chapter 6 will not follow the chronological development according to the thesis cycles. Moreover, I will first discuss the analysis of qualitative data (Section 6.1), followed by analysis of quantitative data (Section 6.2) in general. Section 6.3 will then bring together findings of both the qualitative and quantitative data according to the research objectives. This will lead to five propositions. So, at the end of Chapter 6 my research question: *Does middle management influence organisational cultural change, and, if so, how important is it?* finally is answered. The general conclusions drawn from these findings will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

In addition, this research aims to explain, how organisations can develop middle management to accept their roles. Therefore, the objectives of this work are:

1. To explore whether middle management plays a role in cultural change;
2. To explore whether the roles middle management plays in strategic change are as valid for cultural change as well;
3. To explore whether there exist additional roles;
4. To explore if middle managers take over the above roles, when the organisation creates an environment to support cultural change.

In answering these questions, I aim to contribute to an understanding of the roles middle managers adopt during cultural change and so help diminish the gap of knowledge about middle management.

#### 6.1 The analysis of the qualitative data

Qualitative data was collected by expert interviews at the preliminary stage, two semi-structured interviews with members of the middle management and the board as well as participant observations at several occasions (mainly workshops and a staff meeting) during

the main investigation. The procedures are reviewed in detail in Chapter 5. Section 5.1.2 discussed the importance of notes during data collection. I kept detailed notes (research diary, observation notes, theoretical notes and method notes). These notes were taken during and at the end of the interviews and staff meeting. In addition, they were taken whenever possible during the workshops at breaks and in the evenings. I revisited these notes several times to examine my perspective and interpretations and to further develop my coding. The activities and notes provided me with a lot of data. To analyse and interpret these in an appropriate way and according to research standards, it is important to develop a structure to order these (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Thietart et al. 2007). This system helps navigating within the data without getting lost in details. The expert interviews were intended to form the initial point of organisational culture change. Therefore, the status of the former and the intended culture was explored. The statements were analysed descriptively to inform the board about the research status. Within the workshop these reports were used to develop the cultural vision (see Sections 4.3.2 and 5.1.2). This process was important, as this vision now served as a compass for any following cultural activity. After the workshop with the board, I revisited the interview-scripts to examine, if the cultural vision and the statements of the participants would cover the same range. With this, the starting point of changing the organisational culture at South Real Estate was defined. The examination also showed that there was a high congruence and in addition it showed that many issues named by participants' concerned managerial tasks, i.e. the handling of mistakes.

For example one participant (interviewee 12M1) said when asked for the character of a desired culture: *"If I have a culture, where mistakes, that on-again, off-again happen, are addressed positively, that means not punishing every mistake in a way that the employee stops acting for the next 10 years. – But [the organisation – annotation by the author] deals with that in a way that the employee gets the chance to learn out of this mistake..."* This is one of several examples that suggest a linkage between the cultural vision and roles and tasks of managers according to Mintzberg (2009, see also Section 2.4.2).

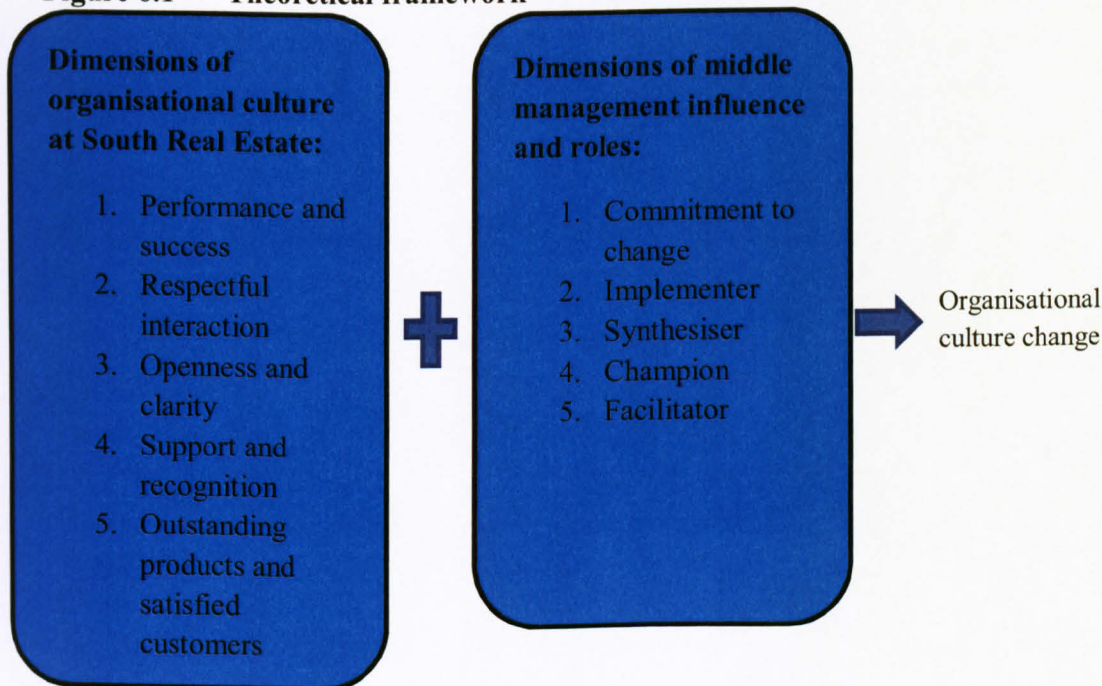
According to the literature (Section 2.4) there is evidence of the influence middle managers can execute due to their hierarchical positioning and their specific knowledge (Glietz 2011, Huy 2002). Therefore, they are capable of convincing employees to commit to change and are important for change projects in the field of reengineering (Glietz 2011). As one precondition to convince the employees, Glietz (2011) regards the commitment of the middle manager him- or herself to the change. Therefore, the congruence of the statements at the expert

interviews, the cultural vision and managerial tasks according to Mintzberg (2009) suggest that it is very likely that middle management would be important to create a successful cultural change.

Within the literature review (Section 2.4.2), I discussed the work of Wooldridge et al. (2008) who examined four roles that a middle manager would represent during strategic change: implementer, synthesiser, championing, and facilitator. Their findings suggest that organisations that enable a middle manager to adopt these roles would support a successful strategic change. The literature review elaborated the linkage between strategic and cultural changes. Hence, it is also very likely that middle management roles within any strategic change would be part of cultural change as well.

Figure 6.1 summarises my theoretical framework incorporating the dimensions of organisational culture at South Real Estate with the above discussed aspects of middle management. This model suggests that there is a relationship between the desired organisational culture and dimensions of middle manager's role(s) when there are changes. These two columns together are supposed to support successful organisational cultural change.

**Figure 6.1 Theoretical framework**



(present author)

However, whenever examining cultural change factors that influence it, it is difficult to separate single factors and build a chain of dependent and independent variables. Borders are in flux. Nevertheless, this explanatory study aims to diminish the research gap about the influence, middle managers may exert as part of the cultural change process by offering insights into how different elements of their roles and activities might relate to the change of culture according to the cultural vision.

My qualitative analysis is based on data not only from interviews but also observations. As Chapters 4 and 5 (data collection) discussed, the duration of the face to face interviews (expert interviews as well as semi-structured interviews with middle managers and board) lasted between one and one and a half hours. All interviews were audio-taped and later typed verbatim. Participants at the expert interviews were members of all hierarchical levels and every department. The allocation was done in relation to the total number of people working within the departments and the intended number of expert interviews. So, 20 one-on-one expert interviews were conducted (Section 5.1.1). One semi-structured (one-on-one) interview was conducted with seven members of the middle management (Section 5.1.2.4) and one interview (one-on-one) with the entire board (Section 5.2.2.1). Other qualitative data were collected by participant observations during workshops with the entire management and with the board (participant as observer, Sections 5.1.2, 5.2.1.1, 5.2.1.3), as well as one staff-meeting (observation as participant, Section 5.2.1.3). The analysis of the observation data is based on my notes taken (for details, please see Chapter 5).

Content-analysis was used to review interviews again to check any correspondence between statements in the interviews and observation notes. Empirical content analysis is a method of uncovering social reality by the help of attributes of an obvious actual situation, to uncover a context that is not as obvious (Merten 1995).

Kromrey (2000, p. 298) defines qualitative content analysis as a “research technique, where conclusions which are to have generalised application beyond the individual analysed document can be drawn from any type of carriers of meaning through the systematic and objective identification of their elements”.

Texts or transcripts of communications are not the objective of the analysis themselves; rather they are seen as carriers of information, whose contents can serve as indicators to make statements about the social reality that is the basis of the texts (Thielen 2004). According to Groeben and Rustemeyer (2002), the object of content analysis is human communication

processes. The core of the analysis constitutes the categorical system. This system records the relevant dimensions and aspects. The desired organisational culture at South Real Estate was defined by the cultural vision. Hence, the following activities of all employees at South Real Estate would be evaluated by comparisons with the contents of this vision. As the exploration of the cultural change is preliminary to research the influence and roles of middle management within this change, I developed two categorical systems: One that was used to analyse the change itself and one with regard to middle management according to my theoretical framework (Figure 6.1).

For the first category system, I decided to take key aspects of the cultural vision as categories and subordinated the statements of the interview participants. For example, I took 'culture of performance and success' as one category. Groeben and Rustemeyer (2002) suggest three steps are required to develop the system. The first step includes the naming of the category, the second the explanation and the third step gives positive and negative examples. The category names are based on sub-aspects from the cultural vision developed within the scope of the board workshop. The definition stems from comments by the board as to what they understand by the respective point. Instead of the positive or negative examples, it seemed more sensible to form two sub-categories, namely 'old organisational culture' and 'future organisational culture'. At the example of 'culture of performance and success', these steps are presented in Table 6.1. The entire table is to be found within the appendices (Appendix 5).

According to the category system, any case is objectively and systematically separated in single components that will serve as a carrier of attributes during further analysis. Objectivity and reliability during this work is demonstrated with the revision of multiple codings and checking to see if these lead to the same results (Groeben & Rustemeyer 2002; Thielen 2004). In the case of South Real Estate, the coding was developed and carried out only by myself. However, to test the quality of the coding, I asked a colleague to use the category system to code three interviews. A comparison of my and his results showed congruence to a great extent.

To meet the demands of the research goals, a second category system was needed. This is based upon the dimensions according to middle management, discussed in the previous paragraphs (Figure 6.1, Appendix 5a). This category system consists of four aspects: personal attitude to change, exercise of roles, influence onto cultural aspects, (cultural) realisation (Table 6.2). The entire table is also to be found within the appendices (Appendix 5a).

**Table 6.1 Development of the category system by an example**

<p><b>Step 1: Naming and definition</b></p>	<p><b>Culture of performance and success</b></p>
<p><b>Step 2: Explanation:</b>  <b>What are the characteristics of this culture?</b></p> <p><b>The explanation is based upon the information given to me during the interviews and board workshop.</b></p>	<p>A culture of performance and success is characterised by the fact that it creates the cultural foundations for making performance and success possible. In such a culture, the will to succeed is supported and promoted; success is celebrated and not just aspired to. If someone makes mistakes, the persons concerned are supported in making corrections and they are given the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. However, the same mistakes should not be made repeatedly. In this case, the concerned person will be confronted with consequences.</p>
<p><b>Step 3: Positive and negative examples</b></p>	<p>(selection of statements during the expert interviews in catchwords)</p> <p><u>Answers according to the former organisational culture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions are not really implemented</li> <li>• Winner/loser mentality</li> <li>• Tendency for inflexibility</li> <li>• No acceptance of responsibility</li> <li>• Risk aversion</li> <li>• We did our job independently of those at the top</li> <li>• Are always receptive</li> <li>• Decisions are not taken</li> <li>• Unprofessional decision-making</li> <li>• Excuse culture</li> <li>• Resignation</li> <li>• High fluctuation</li> <li>• Self-preoccupation</li> </ul> <p><u>Answers according to a desired future organisational culture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer of competence and responsibility</li> <li>• Make quick decisions</li> <li>• Become a knowledge community</li> <li>• Control, but within reason</li> <li>• Trust in employees' abilities</li> <li>• Hire good people</li> </ul>

(present author; Appendix 5)

**Table 6.2 Excerpt of the category system II**

<b>Step 1: Naming and definition</b>	<b>Personal attitude to change</b>
<b>Step 2: Explanation: What are the characteristics of this?</b>	The personal attitude is demonstrated by expressions of commitment or non-commitment to the cultural vision (verbally and non-verbally).
<b>Step 3: Positive and negative examples</b>	<p><u>Positive examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive verbal expressions about the cultural vision</li> <li>- Positive non-verbal expressions about the cultural vision</li> </ul> <p><u>Negative examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative expressions about the cultural vision</li> <li>- Negative non-verbal expressions about the cultural vision</li> </ul>

(present author; Appendix 5a)

Within the following paragraphs, I will explain the categories in more detail. The discussion of the examples will be carried out as far as they are important for the research goals. Within the category **Personal attitude to change** statements that pointed to the level of commitment, the middle manager him- or herself demonstrated were collected. To set the boundaries to the category of **Cultural activities** statements and non-verbal behaviour (nodding, smiling etc.) that mirror the inner and personal commitment to the cultural vision and the cultural change were regarded.

For example one middle manager (24M2) stated: “*We discussed the results [annotation: of the staff survey I] within our teams. I did this and went through all items. We looked at them and shortly discussed them. Tried to make a personal picture out of it. Discussions and questions occurred. [Some] activities we really realise*”. Another manager stated (13M2) “*I use any possibility to search the conversation. We sat together very long about the results of the staff survey.*” [Annotation: This refers to the first staff survey in March 2010]

The (proven) fact that these managers invested time with their units to work on the results of the survey can be interpreted as commitment to the cultural change process and the related activities. Otherwise, it would have been very likely that they would not have spent time on an event they do not regard as important. Within the interviews, the interviewees always were



asked to give examples or to reason their behaviour or activities. This also offered data that was used for analysis.

For the category **Exercise of roles** I analysed the data according to those statements and behaviour conforming to the definition of roles related to the literature about strategic change (implementer, synthesiser, champion, and facilitator; Wooldridge et al. 2008). The role of implementer for example is characterised by developing activities required for the new strategy (Wooldridge et al. 2008). In the context of this research, I searched for statements and observations where middle managers developed activities to implement the new culture. In addition, I assessed statements about activities developed after the analysis of the first staff survey to advance the culture as hints that the manager would carry out this role. In the course of activities it occurred that there were descriptions that could not be allocated to one of these four roles. Therefore, I assumed that there would be additional roles and coded respective statements and activities related to that.

I named the third category **Influence onto cultural development**. Within this category, I analysed behaviour and statements for contents that would demonstrate any kind of influence middle managers have as to the cultural change. This could be by examples of their active exertion of influence given during interviews or demonstrated during workshops and other observations. In addition, questions were evaluated according to the level of influence the middle managers would assign to themselves or are assigned to them by the board.

The last category is named **Cultural activities**. This category asks for concrete activities, according to the new cultural vision. Also, it was used to examine if there were any activities to perform in their units culturally at recurring moments. **Cultural activities** is the category that asks for the transfer of commitment, roles and influence and culturally aware actions.

The development of the theoretical framework and the design of two categorical systems formed the basis for the qualitative analysis. As suggested by many authors (for example: Corbin & Strauss 2008; Groeben & Rustemeyer 2002; Mayring 2002), the coding systems presented in this thesis are the result of an iterative process. Within this process, I revisited the qualitative notes again and again and improved the categories until I defined the two systems that are discussed in the above paragraphs. Both staff surveys offered the respondents an opportunity to add individual notes. These notes were summarised in an extra file and by the use of the category systems were also analysed.

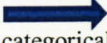
By the end of the field work, the data was finally revisited and analysed by use of the final category systems. Section 6.3 will discuss the findings that indicate the influence and roles of middle managers as well as their realisation activities within the cultural change programme.

## **6.2 The analysis of quantitative data**

The following section will review the procedure of how the quantitative data was analysed from the two staff surveys, conducted in March 2010 and March 2011 (tables with results, see Appendix 11). The survey in March 2011 was supplemented by a second section (see Sections 4.5.1 and 5.3.2, Appendices 10, 10a) that was developed according to the results of the qualitative data (especially the semi-structured interviews with middle managers and the board; August 2010 and December 2010). This part deals exclusively with the roles and influence of middle management according to cultural change. Therefore, within the following paragraphs I will refer to 'survey II, section one', whenever the cultural change according to the cultural vision is meant. 'survey II, section two' always refers to the additional questionnaire dealing explicitly with middle management and cultural change. Section 5.3.2 discussed the design and contents as well as the presentation of this part to the staff. Whenever I refer to 'staff survey II' the complete survey is meant, including both sections. The following table presents an overview of the two surveys, showing consistencies and differences between them (Table 6.3).

Within Chapters 4 and 5, the validity of the questionnaires has been discussed in detail and it was demonstrated that the measurements can be regarded as valid. Also, the testing of Cronbach's Alpha showed that the items are internally consistent (Tables 5.7, 5.10, and 5.13). The sample and the return rates have been discussed in detail, also (Tables 5.1, 5.6, 5.8, 5.11, and 5.14). Therefore, in this section I will only provide additional analyses I conducted, as well as the comparisons between t1 and t2.

**Table 6.3 Overview of staff survey I and staff survey II**

	Questionnaire I	Questionnaire II
Covering letter of the CEO	✓	✓
Explanation how to use the questionnaire	✓	✓
Demographic information (categorical data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Department</li> <li>• Length of service within the company</li> <li>• Level</li> </ul>	<p>Changes relating to the new departmental structure; ✓</p> <p>More detail according management level   The same categorical data was used for part one and part two of the questionnaire</p>
<p>Scales (internally consistent) to measure organisational culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Performance and success</li> <li>✓ Respectful interaction and recognition</li> <li>✓ Clarity</li> <li>✓ Openness</li> <li>✓ Encouragement</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>More detailed items on fairness (relating to respect)</p>
Additional items related to middle management and cultural change	None	<p>Additional items on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle management's (mm) importance</li> <li>• Mm roles</li> <li>• Mm influence</li> <li>• Mm activities</li> </ul> <p>This part is introduced by a separate covering letter with reasoning by the researcher. In comparison to the first part of the survey this part was also filled in by the members of the board to receive an all-round perspective upon middle management's importance and roles.</p>

(present author)

During the analysis the following tests have been undertaken by the use of SPSS: reliability of the scale by Cronbach's Alpha (staff surveys I and II), Item Statistics (staff surveys I and II), One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) based upon hierarchical level, age and length of service at the company (staff surveys I and II), as well as to the change of the department (staff survey II). In addition, a paired-samples t-test between the surveys (March 2010 and March 2011) was carried out. This test was conducted for all staff members, executives as

well as in total for those participating in the surveys. Tables with relevant data can be found in the Appendix 11. The results are discussed in Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2.

The first survey did not include items explicitly dealing with the middle management. The questionnaire items were developed based on the results of the qualitative findings, especially during the semi-structured interviews with middle managers and board in the time after staff survey I. Therefore, the comparison between t1 (March 2010) and t2 (March 2011) refers to survey I and survey II, section one. Results according to the second section of the questionnaire staff survey II regarding the influence and roles of middle management will be discussed separately.

### 6.2.1 Reliability of staff surveys 2010 and 2011 (section 1)

The Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the consistency of the items. The following table presents the results of the reliability test for the first and the second surveys (Table 6.4). This comparison refers to the staff survey I in March 2010 and the first part of survey II in March 2011. Both measurements indicate the reliability coefficient is 0.795 and higher. Differences between t1 and t2 are marginal. This suggests that all items are internally consistent at both measurement times.

**Table 6.4 Reliability of items in 2010 and 2011 (section 1)**

Groups of items	Cronbach's Alpha 2010	Cronbach's Alpha 2011
<b>Culture of performance and success</b>	9 items 0.817	9 items 0.795
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition</b>	7 items 0.847	9 items* 0.877
<b>Clarity</b>	4 items 0.749	4 items 0.799
<b>Openness</b>	8 items 0.787	8 items 0.828
<b>Encouragement</b>	6 items 0.919	6 items 0.917

\*Due to some discussions with managers after the first staff survey, item No 6 (Fairness) was further differentiated into 3 items (present author; Appendix 9a). This explains the difference in items (Section 5.3.1).

### 6.2.2 Significance tests

Significant differences between groups within the sample could be regarded as indicators for the cultural change process and interventions. Therefore, ANOVA-tests were conducted to explore the impact of age, length of service and level on the assessment of the cultural status (culture of performance and success; respectful interaction and recognition; clarity; openness; encouragement) and the assessment of middle managers roles during cultural changes (staff survey II section 2). The results of all significance tests are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs. All results are shown in tables in Appendix 11 to which I refer.

#### Results according to age (Appendix 11)

Subjects were divided into three groups according to their age (Group 1: up to 30 years; Group 2: 31 to 45 years; Group 3: 46 years and above). For both surveys (I and II) there were no statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level in the scores for the three age groups. The difference in mean scores between the groups was quite small. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was  $< .02$  for all scales. This indicates the differences between means according to age are small (Cohen 1988). Therefore, interventions to support the cultural change process did not have to include activities according to the age of organisational members. In addition, the age does not seem to be an indicator for the assessment of middle management's roles and influence as to cultural change (Appendix 11).

#### Results according to length of service (Appendix 11)

Again, subjects were divided into three groups according to the length of their service within the organisation (Group 1: 1 to 5 years; Group 2: >5 years to 10 years; Group 3: >10 years). The results at t1 and t2 were different. Whereas at t1, statistically significant values could be found, at the second survey one year later, there were no statistically significant differences (culture and middle management's roles and influence). In 2010 there were statistically significant differences at the  $p < .05$  level in the scores of the three groups: 'culture of performance and success':  $F(2, 180) = 3.4, p = 0.03$ ; 'respectful interaction and recognition':  $F(2, 180) = 4.7, p = 0.01$ ; 'encouragement':  $F(2, 179) = 4.5, p = 0.01$ . Despite this the actual difference in mean scores between the groups was quite small. Therefore, the results, although statistically significant can be regarded as practically not too different. The differences

between the means lie between .44 to .65. The effect size of 'culture of performance and success' is .006 and at 'respectful interaction and recognition' .04. Hence, both can be estimated as medium. The eta square for 'encouragement' was .02 and therefore small.

However, at the first survey in 2010 group 2 (>5years to 10 years) continuously was the one with the smallest mean. Within this time-span the characteristics of the 'old' organisational culture clearly influenced South Real Estate. So, the result suggests that the recognition and estimation of cultural aspects within this group was more influenced by experiences that were regarded as difficult. On the other hand, group 1 (1 to 5 years) did not seem to be as affected by negative experiences and were still more open to sense positive development. Negative experiences did not seem to be hardened. Group 3 (>10 years) not only experienced the former culture but also what historically had happened at South Real Estate even before the time of the merger and major change. This time was regarded as culturally positive, as some interviewees also stated and so the time in between did not increase negatively the experiences they were facing later. The results of the survey one year later suggest that the duration of length of time does not play a role any more. Although group 2 (>5 years to 10 years) still shows the lowest means, the differences cannot be estimated as statistically significant. It seems that the perceptions of the groups are starting to become similar. Therefore, extra interventions for members of group 2 (>5 years to 10 years) do not have to be planned and conducted. In addition, the duration of service with the organisation did not seem to influence the estimation of middle management's roles and influence upon cultural change (Appendix 11).

#### Results according to level (Appendix 11)

Finally, one-way between-groups analysis of variances were conducted to explore the impact of hierarchical level on the assessment of organisational culture at South Real Estate. The categorical data of staff survey I and staff survey II was slightly changed (Sections 4.5.1 and 5.3). Therefore, to the results of survey I followed by the results of survey II are provided. At survey I, subjects were divided into two groups according to their hierarchical level within the organisation (Group 1: employee without management responsibility; Group 2: an executive under the board [disciplinary management of at least one person]). There were statistically significant differences at the  $p < .05$  level for the levels according to 'culture of performance and success':  $F(1, 147) = 8.8, p = < 0.01$ ; 'respectful interaction':  $F(1, 147) = 6.1; p = 0.01$ ; 'openness':  $F(1, 147) = 4.4, p = 0.03$ . Again, the actual differences in mean scores between

the groups are small (between 0.38 to 0.58). Nevertheless, the means of group 2 (executives) always were higher than those of staff members without managerial tasks. Therefore, the results indicate that there seemed to be a kind of break between the levels. Hence, for the following process it was important to work with the managers to overcome this difference. The effect sizes were moderate ('performance and success': 0.06; 'respectful interaction': 0.04; 'openness': 0.05).

At survey II the level of the executives was more differentiated (group 1: employees without managerial responsibility; group 2: division heads; group 3: department heads). Reasons for this have been discussed in detail in Sections 4.5.1 and 5.3. For this survey, the hierarchical levels not only consisted of two but of three (Figures 6.2 and 6.3):

**Figure 6.2 Category data 2010**

- I am (optional)
- an employee without management responsibility
  - an executive under the board
- (disciplinary management of at least one person)

(present author)

**Figure 6.3 Category data 2011, section 1**

- I am (optional)
- employee without management responsibility
  - division head
  - department head

(present author)

Therefore, I decided to merge division heads and department heads to compare their results with the category 'an executive under the board' in 2010.

This time there was only one statistically significant scale: 'culture of performance and success':  $F(2,150) = 4.7, p = 0.01$ . The actual differences in mean scores were small (0.64) which can be regarded as practically not relevant. The eta square is 0.06 and indicates a moderate effect. However, group 2 (division heads = middle management) and 3 (department heads = lower management) continuously rated better than group 1 (employees without management responsibility). Whereas 'culture of performance and success' was rated higher

by group 2 (division heads) as group 3 (department heads), for the other scales it was the other way round, group 3 (department heads) rated better than group 2 (division heads/middle management). Between t1 and t2 the statistically significant values were reduced. This suggests that the estimation of the levels with regard to some differences seem to conform more over the time. The second section of staff survey II included the board. However, again, the results have not shown significant differences between the levels when estimating middle management roles and influence. Therefore, the results of this part of the survey can be regarded as a homogeneous perspective upon middle management (Appendix 11).

#### Effects of a change of department (Appendix 11)

It was of interest to test if the change of the department (structure, membership) was causing differences in the estimation of organisational culture. Therefore, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the cultural scores of people who stayed in their department (group 1 = no change) and those who had changed their department in the time between the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2010 and the survey (group 2 = change). All cultural scores showed statistically significant differences, whereas the scores according to middle management did not show any significant differences. The statistical significance for 'culture of performance and success' was for group 1 'no change' ( $M = 4.47, SD = 0.838$ ) and group 2 'change'  $M = 4.04, SD = 0.759; t(190) = 3.95, p = <0.001$  (two-tailed). The difference in the means was small at 0.47, and the eta squared with 0.08 was moderate. Significance for 'respectful interaction': group 1 'no change' ( $M = 4.84, SD = 0.928$ ) and group 2 'change'  $M = 4.22, SD = 0.983; t(191) = 4.29, p = <0.001$ . The difference between the means was 0.62 and the eta squared suggests a moderate relationship (eta squared 0.09). The statistical significance for 'clarity' was for group 1 'no change' ( $M = 5.07, SD = 0.934$ ) and group 2 'change'  $M = 4.54, SD = 0.960; t(191) = 3.71, p = <0.001$ . Although statistically significant, the difference between the means only is 0.53 and the magnitude of the differences in the means can be regarded as moderate (0.07). The statistical significance for 'openness' was for group 1 'no change' ( $M = 4.86, SD = 0.697$ ) and group 2 'change'  $M = 4.35, SD = 0.813; t(191) = 4.39, p = <0.001$ . The difference between means is small at 0.51. In addition the magnitude of differences of the means can be regarded as moderate again (eta squared = 0.09). The scale 'encouragement' offers the last statistically significant difference: group 1 'no change' ( $M = 4.86, SD = 1.070$ ) and group 2 'change'  $M = 4.36, SD = 1.199; t(191) = 2.89, p = 0.004$ . The difference between the means is small at 0.50. The magnitude of the differences can be regarded as moderate again (eta squared 0.04).



The means of group 1 (no change of department) continuously were slightly higher than the means of group 2 (change of department). Although the survey only regarded the change of one department into another as change and so does not regard the changes people were facing although staying in their former departments, this test indicates that the changes caused differences in the perception of organisational culture. Whereas age, duration of service, and level did not seem to cause so many significant differences, the change of department does. On the other hand, I would have estimated there would be higher differences between the means. Also, group 2 (change) measured the organisational culture in 2011 with means higher than 4. On the other hand, the change of the department did not lead to significant differences according to the second section of the survey (middle management)/(Appendix 11).

#### Results of repeated measurements (Appendix 11)

To compare the results of measurements with each other, the items and the categorical data have to be the same (Pallant 2007). Item 6 was slightly changed, according to the participant's feedback (Section 5.3.1). Therefore, the comparison of the two surveys had to regard the change of one item (see Section 5.3.1, Table 6.3) and I decided to exclude item 6 (2010) and 6.1-6.3 (2011) when comparing the measurements. As in 2010 the questionnaire focused on the measurement of the organisational culture according to the cultural vision, a comparison between t1 (2010) and t2 (2011) only could be conducted between staff survey I and staff survey II, section 1. When analysing the results of the Paired-samples t-test the results have to be discussed with care. According to the confirmation of anonymity, I cannot be sure, when comparing the answers that they are based upon exactly the same participants. Nevertheless, according to the return rates (Tables 5.8, 5.11) and discussions with organisational members, I assumed that the majority of the returned questionnaires in 2011 have been sent by the same people. So, independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare the results of t1 (group 1 = March 2010) with t2 (group 2 = March 2011) according to executives, staff and total sample. To compare the results according to the level (according to the differences between category data, Figures 6.2, 6.3), I matched department heads and division heads as one group of executives. As the comparison of the executives did not show any statistically significant differences, I refer to the table in appendix 11 without further comments within the following paragraphs.

### *Employees without managerial responsibility*

All scales showed statistically significant results and the magnitude of the differences in means for any of them is  $<0.001$  and therefore can be regarded as small. The results according to the scales: (1) 'culture of performance and success' group 1 'March 2010' ( $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 0.899$ ) and group 2 'March 2011',  $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 0.799$ ;  $t(255) = -2.42$ ,  $p = 0.016$ . The difference of means between t1 (March 2010; group 1) to t2 (March 2011; group 2) is 0.26; (2) 'respectful interaction and recognition' group 1 'March 2010' ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 1.033$ ) and group 2 'March 2011',  $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 0.977$ ;  $t(256) = -2.085$ ,  $p = 0.04$ . The difference between the mean of group 1 (March 2010) and group 2 (March 2011) is 0.26. (3) 'Clarity' group 1 'March 2010' ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 1.015$ ) and group 2 'March 2011',  $M = 4.77$ ,  $SD = 0.896$ ;  $t(256) = -2.840$ ,  $p = 0.005$ . The difference between the means of t1 (March 2010; group 1) and t2 (March 2011; group 2) is 0.34. (4) 'Openness' group 1 'March 2010' ( $M = 4.29$ ,  $SD = 0.829$ ) and group 2 'March 2011',  $M = 4.57$ ,  $SD = 0.746$ ;  $t(256) = -2.837$ ,  $p = 0.005$ . (5) 'Encouragement' group 1 'March 2010' ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.354$ ) and group 2 'March 2011',  $M = 4.61$ ,  $SD = 1.1306$ ;  $t(255) = -3.826$ ,  $p = <0.001$ . The difference between the two means is 0.59. Although the practical relevance of all scales with differences of 0.26 to 0.59 is not given, this test shows a consistent positive development to higher means.

### *Total sample*

The test of the total sample showed statistically significant differences for the scales of 'culture of performances and success', 'openness', and 'encouragement'. The magnitudes of differences in means for these scales are  $< 0.001$  and can be regarded as small. The results according to the scales: (1) 'culture of performance and success' group 1 'March 2010' ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 0.915$ ) and group 2 'March 2011',  $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.819$ ;  $t(392) = -1.837$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ; (2) 'openness' group 1 'March 2010' ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 0.802$ ) and group 2 'March 2011',  $M = 4.54$ ,  $SD = 0.809$ ;  $t(393) = -2.410$ ;  $p = 0.016$ ; (3) 'encouragement' group 1 'March 2010' ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 1.275$ ) and group 2 'March 2011',  $M = 4.547$ ,  $SD = 1.167$ ;  $t(392) = -3.940$ ;  $p = <0.001$ . Although the practical relevance with differences between 0.20 to 0.48 is small, all means between t1 (March 2010) and t2 (March 2011) show a positive tendency (between 0.20 to 0.48).

**Table 6.5 Results of paired samples t-test according the total sample**

Scale	Distribution	n	M	SD	$\alpha$	Significance	t	df	Significance (two-tailed t-test)	Eta square
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	March 2010	202	3.92282	0.915091	0.817	0.128	-2.928	392	0.004	< 0.001
	March 2011	192	2	5	0.795					
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (9 items)</b>	March 2010	202	4.26346	1.014050	0.847	0.919	-1.837	393	0.067	< 0.001
	March 2011	193	5	5	0.877					
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	March 2010	202	4.48475	1.016149	0.749	0.280	-2.517	393	0.12	< 0.001
	March 2011	193	2	3	0.799					
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	March 2010	202	4.34514	0.802314	0.787	0.641	-2.410	393	0.016	< 0.001
	March 2011	193	9	6	0.828					
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	March 2010	201	4.06159	1.274993	0.919	0.106	-3.940	392	< 0.001	< 0.001
	March 2011	193	2	9	0.917					
			4.54740	1.167299			-3.947	391.120	< 0.001	

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha

(present author)

The analysis of the quantitative data resulted in some statistically significant results (see above paragraphs). In addition, the magnitudes of means mostly were medium or even small. The comparison of the results between t1 (March 2010) and t2 (March 2011) showed that the number of significant results was reduced, i.e. according to the hierarchical level survey I showed four scales with statistically significant differences and survey II a year later showed only one scale with significant differences. According to the second part of survey II that was dealing with the middle management, no statistically significant results appeared. Nevertheless, wherever significant differences occurred, the scale of 'culture of performance and success' was one of them. Table 6.5 shows exemplary the results of the test of the total sample. All tables can be found in Appendix 11. The following section will bring together findings of the qualitative and quantitative analysis and discuss the conclusions.

### **6.3 Consolidation of qualitative and quantitative data according to the research objectives**

To examine the role(s) and influence of middle management related to organisational cultural change it is necessary to assess if cultural change really happened, or, if not, why the intended change did not occur. To analyse if there was cultural change going on, the results of the staff surveys as well as participant observations and interviews conducted during the phase of the main investigation (01.12.2009 to 31.12.2010) and the closing stage (01.01.2011 to April 2011) were checked for significant indicators. I regard it as a pre-condition to examine, if any cultural change was achieved before exploring influence and role(s) of middle management. Therefore, I first discuss findings that indicate if change really did happen.

#### **6.3.1 Organisational culture change at South Real Estate**

As the future search conference and the associated events there, were very important for the cultural change process, I will first discuss these in more detail. This conference delivered a lot of observations and data. All of these were important for the study process. However, some that are outstanding will be picked up. As the events in February at the conference in 2010 were regarded as an important key moment not only by myself but also by my colleague and the board, this event will be discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

The behaviour of many participants at the future search conference indicated that most of them were caught by the 'old' culture that was characterised by patriarchic structure and an observant attitude. Controversial discussions within this culture seemed to be not common. Hence, the participants at the conference were mainly passive, except for their work in action groups. Nevertheless, they were thoughtful following the CEO's statements and my presentation of the results of the expert interviews, as their body language showed (eye-contact, nodding, and no side-discussions, note-taking). Some of the participants had been interviewees during expert interviews at the preliminary stage (August to October 2009). They were keen to receive information about the results, as some of them told me when arriving and during the first break. My presentation about the results was followed intently, as facial expressions and gestures showed. Not only interviewees nodded several times, but other participants as well. Only one manager did not support the results. This was the only statement that disagreed with the findings of the interviews. No other manager joined in with a similar contribution. I regarded this as indicating commitment to my presented findings.

The tasks for the action groups and the course of the conference have been discussed in Section 4.4.1.1. Three action groups worked on the aspect of 'outstanding products'. The other two groups worked on soft aspects of the cultural vision. At the beginning, each group had some difficulties in understanding their task and estimating what was expected of them as results. When conducting process-open workshops and conferences like this, I very often see groups with these difficulties at the beginning. However, once they have found their way, the results are often outstanding and lead to a high motivation to follow with concrete activities. So, this was what I expected in this case also. These kinds of start-up problems can usually be solved by some more explanation by the facilitators, and in this case, by members of the board also. This worked for the three groups working on 'outstanding products'. They developed a structure, and it seemed that they felt much more secure with working on concrete ideas, where they could bring in their expertise from their profession. This impression was backed up later by some statements of group members, and by the fact that these groups were ready to present, not only in time, but presented the most practical and concrete of action lists.

The groups with the 'soft' aspects of the cultural vision seemed to have many more difficulties. Although facilitators and some members of the board spent more time in these groups asking questions, giving examples etc., they seemed to have difficulties in developing concrete ideas of how to implement an organisational culture with 'respectful interaction,

openness, clarity, encouragement and recognition' (group IV) and 'a culture of performance and success' (group V).

As the results of the interviews in the preliminary stage and the structural change in the organisation showed, cultural change had to be initiated quickly. The staff must be reassured that management was working on that change honestly. Therefore, the output of the conference must be concrete and tangible, by action. Group IV developed some rules and expressed some appeals to behave in the intended way. The group suggested a few measures, but called on the board and top management to initiate them. Acceptance of responsibility was therefore not apparent, although the suggestions were such that only a limited amount of approval or activity 'from the top' would have been necessary to initiate them, if only the managers had suggested these activities. These actions, which were regarded as particularly important by the group, could have been tackled by them long ago. Other suggestions, such as a family day or departmental introductions, were activities which could definitely make a cultural contribution, but could not bring about an actual change in terms of the cultural vision, due to time limitations (a family day can only be held once or twice a year). At most, they would be an aid to other permanent measures. One very concrete suggestion was directly confirmed and supported by the board: the conducting of a prompt staff survey (see Sections 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.1.2) to which the board immediately agreed. As the participants of this conference were all well-educated and all of them had obtained a university degree, I was surprised that they only developed some kind of head-lines. Depth of their argument was missing and even after enquiries of the facilitators, and the members of board partly joining this group this did not bring about better results. It seemed as if this group either avoided giving clear statements and taking responsibility for initiating concrete activities, or they did not regard this as a managerial task for them, or that they were overstretched with this task.

However, group IV worked harmoniously and no great controversies occurred. The situation in group V was different. This group had to work out 'culture of performance and success'. Their discussion went round in circles. While some group members were quite active, others were much more silent. I could observe, that one or other of them started to make a comment but was interrupted repeatedly and so started to become less active. To give them an idea, I asked them in different ways, what a culture like this would be like and how an organisational member like their staff would know if, and how, he or she would behave accordingly. In other words, how they would define 'performance' and 'success' and what this means for people working in administrative departments and for others. It seemed the group could not, or did

not want to, provide concrete ideas or give definitions on which they may later be measured themselves. Differences in an understanding between administrative managers and the others became apparent. In addition, participants who carefully asked for the consequences of that for a low-performer were not able to become happy with that statement. So, the group did not manage to give a definition and present an action plan as to what the organisation, and they should do to create the culture of performance and success. In fact, in their presentation their key aspect was 'pride' in the organisation and the rest would follow automatically. Their actions therefore included an 'open day' as one project, a visitation of construction sites for employees, the introduction of an employee newspaper etc. These actions were affirmed by the board (i.e. an employee newspaper is now published four times a year since 2010), but in fact the group did not answer the most important question: What would a culture of performance and success be like? As with group IV, it seemed as if this group either avoided giving clear statements and take-over responsibility initiating concrete activities, or they did not regard this as a managerial task they had, or that they were overstrained with this task.

After this conference, the data of the expert interviews was revisited. Within these interviews it was noticeable that only two members of the board mentioned aspects that could be subordinated to 'culture of performance and success' (3B1 and 9B1). This issue was mainly discussed during the board workshop (November 2009).

The analysis of the 'old culture' showed that many managers did not feel free to make decisions, take over responsibility etc. For example as stated by one interviewee in the expert interviews (12M1; translation by the author): "*In the beginning, decisions of decision-makers were revised by higher ranks, so often and so irreproducible, till no one decided anything anymore.*" Another interviewee (17) stated: "*There were less information, hence there was no security. But rumors and discussions on the corridor.*" As a consequence of this managers avoided decisions if they were not 100 per cent sure or there was the remote possibility of making a mistake, or being accused of causing one. The lack of a positive culture of mistakes seems to be a sensible explanation for the difficulties of the action groups. A definition of 'performance and success' in this context could be experienced as danger and so caused fear. So, avoidance of defining it is a probable consequence of that. An answer would always necessitate a discussion of how to handle people who do not perform and do not have any success and what was regarded as performance or success. The results of the staff surveys also showed that the aspect of 'culture of performance and success' showed the most significant differences (Appendix 11). Between 2010 and 2011 the mean was increasing from

3.92 to 4.18 (complete sample). Also, the mean according to the level of employees without managerial responsibility rose from 3.87 to 4.13. This can be regarded as an indicator, that the issues 'performance' and 'success' had been set about actively. However, although this scale developed in the intended way, the findings suggest that more work has to be done to solidify this value. In addition, the development of the scale only gives information that a 'culture of performance and success' now is becoming part of the organisational culture. It does not say anything about the reactions to that by employees and managers. Nevertheless, the changing behaviour of the middle managers at the workshops and within the interviews (as discussed in the following paragraphs) indicates that they more and more share this cultural value.

The reactions of participants after the conference were quite different and also suggested that at that point of time the cultural change was facing a great obstacle. Some complained that the work assignment had not been clear enough, others that the members of the board told them different things when joining the groups. With this, they separated their personal responsibility for the results of the group works. Others again were angry about the negative statement at the end of the conference. One participant put it in a nutshell when he told one member of the board: "*First, you cut off our balls, now you demand, we shall have them!*" [translation by the present author]. At a meeting on the following day of the conference, we (myself, my colleague, the board) agreed that now quick action had to follow to use this energy for the initiation of positive activities. Beside the information of the employees about the conference, the CEO reported that the way he had formulated his critique may have been a little bit too rough for the participants and he apologised for that. With this, he took responsibility for his behaviour and so gave an example of the desired culture as role model. The energy set free by this conference and its course led to a cultural discussion and made clear that the board was honest with this process of cultural change. In addition, it wanted management to take action themselves and not wait for top management to do so. During the conference, middle managers reacted like all the others. There was no observable difference between them and the other participants at the conference. Therefore, the findings according to the entire group of participants can be transferred to them as well.

The differences in behaviour and style of discussion between the future search conference and the workshop conducted with the middle management in May 2010 were amazing. From the beginning, the workshop was affected by openness I had not observed before. The participants entered the workshop and immediately began to greet and talk freely. No signs of any tension could be recognised. Also, the participants seemed to seek contact with every



member of the board that joined the workshop. During presentations the participants were not only actively listening, but this time taking part in discussing and sometimes answering back. I could not observe any hesitations to start discussions and answer back. This changed behaviour could be regarded as an indicator that the cultural aspects of 'respectful interaction' and 'openness' were becoming part of shared values. This interpretation was also affirmed during the semi-structured interviews with middle managers (August 2010). One stated (25M2): *"Now, we go to one another and start a discussion, which did not happen before. We talk much more relaxed with each other and quickly come to decisions. Agreements partly happen already at lunch."* (translation by the present author).

The work within action groups this time was also considerably different to the work within the action groups during the conference. This was also apparent by the results of these groups. The participants discussed the results with regard to their own department and teams, and also with regard to the entire organisation. In comparison with the conference, their recommendations for actions this time were not only more concrete and showed more depth, but also included actions that they themselves would do, or activate.

Hence, at the end of the workshop, we could realise that first, the middle managers were much more involved in the process at that point of time, and at least the style of interaction within this group of managers and the board had started to develop in the intended sense of the cultural vision. The managers showed that they were aware of their responsibility, not only to do good operational work, but also in acting as an example for culturally-aware behaviour for their staff. Also, they no longer avoided a clear statement about interaction with low or high performers. In addition, they asked for training for their group, not only to grow together as a team, but also in the form of the structured employee conversation (appraisal interview). During the group presentations, a lively discussion took place. Pros and cons were challenged, and by the end the results were agreed. While the future search conference closed with an explosion, this workshop closed with participants who expressed their satisfaction (board and managers) and left with laughter and relaxed faces. According to Lewin's (1946, 1958) steps of change, we now had reached the step of moving.

At the beginning of March 2009, the CEO gave a strong example for openness during an employee meeting: He informed the entire staff about the status of certain contract negotiations which were extremely confidential. The CEO informed and asked the staff not to talk about this outside the organisation, as this would have disastrous consequences.

Afterwards, he told me that he was thinking seriously about that step and consciously decided to dare this. He wanted to give a clear and unquestionable example of openness, which was an important value for him. The reaction of staff members showed him that the decision was right. No-one talked about that outside the organisation, but a lot of people came over to him and expressed their surprise. According to Martin (2003) without trust, no stable and sustainable work relationship can develop. Trust is necessary in any situation where decisions about working-conditions are made (Martin 2003). South Real Estate was facing great changes. Besides, the findings of the interviews suggested that the former culture was to some extent mistrusting. Also, employees expressed their doubt, if the organisation was handling the cultural change seriously. With his information about the negotiations the CEO became vulnerable to the organisational members. If the deal would have failed, his position would have been endangered. So, he not only gave a model of openness, he also made a move to change to develop more trust within the organisation.

At the employee meeting in June 2010, where I joined as an observer as participant more signs of a changing culture could be observed. Again, the CEO gave different examples of activities that referred to the cultural vision and showed that the former culture was history. For example, he was one of the first at the meeting facility and so demonstrated the importance of this meeting for him. Also, he did not leave immediately at the end but took time to make some side-talks before going. With this behaviour, he demonstrated the importance an employee meeting has, and underlined the authenticity of his statements about the importance of communication.

The CEO's words referred, at several points, to the cultural vision. For example, when he talked about 'openness and interaction', he thanked the employees for keeping the information about negotiations that he had given the meeting before as confidential. At this point, I observed a lot of smiling faces that seemed to relate well to this proof of trust they had given each other. When the CEO talked about a 'culture of performance and success', he referred to examples inside the organisation. Here, he highlighted individual teams who had demonstrated their performance. As these examples were not only from the daily business, but were also not so exceptional that no one else could achieve such a performance, they could serve as models for the others. Also, they made clear the understanding of the board about 'performance and success'. In addition, with these examples, the cultural vision became very practical and not as artificial as the one or other might have thought before. The

behaviour of the managers and middle managers again, was similar to the workshops with them.

Nevertheless, the meeting showed that there was still work to do, to achieve the new culture. At the end of the meeting, the audience was invited to ask questions, but no questions were asked. This could mean that the audience did not dare to ask questions or that it was fine for them to know they would receive more detailed information via their managers. On the other hand, some employees asked for more information about their contracts when the next structural changes would be established. These changes were planned for autumn 2010. Here, a discussion started. The statement of one top manager that *"For now, you will keep the conditions of your former work contract"* led to observable restlessness by concerned people. This showed in restless movements on the chairs, murmurs and side discussion. It was known in the organisation that a consulting firm (not my colleague and me) had been commissioned to review the salary and bonus structure and to develop proposals, if necessary, for how they could be adapted to the market. There were justified fears amongst some people that this would mean a downward adjustment for them. The reactions showed that the employees were still afraid of structural changes and their sensitive reaction to the *'for now'* can be evidence that they still awaited whether the board would be serious with cultural change, too. The above cited manager noticed the disturbance immediately and told the audience, that he did not use these words with any intention to keep himself free for any other activity and that this formulation would have no impact for him. One participant said: *"That's a Freudian slip!"* This event showed that although first developments were noticeable, trust was still easy to destroy and some organisational members were following the cultural process with a wait-and-see attitude.

I wondered how I should interpret the fact that after the presentation of the results of the employee survey no questions were asked, but at the end of the discussion specific questions were still being posed about the restructuring. Firstly, the explanation already given above is definitely possible. On the other hand, this could be interpreted as a sign that the subject of 'organisational culture' is important to the employees, but is still seen in a relatively abstract manner and the transfer to daily work is not yet complete. While at a general linguistic level terms such as achievement and success or open communication are advocated, they arouse resistance amongst staff when applied to a particular person and their position. Then, they certainly lead to an involvement, which is reflected in actual questions and comments. All the same, this situation can also be interpreted from a cultural standpoint. The manner in which

information is communicated in the case of restructuring, and employee insecurities and fears, is always an act where cultural values are manifested – or not manifested as Hatch’s model of dynamic cultural change discusses (Hatch 1993, Section 2.3.2). In this case, organisational culture is actually tangible and perceptible. At the same time, this situation has shown how carefully employees listen to the wording of statements by top managers. One phrase was immediately interpreted negatively and seemed to stir mistrust. Once again, this example underlines how important it is to sensitise the management to these aspects, as it immediately leads to reactions and attitudes amongst those affected. It is also apparent in this case that some of those affected may perhaps be participating in the cultural change superficially, but are in actual fact resisting it. An example from a completely different context illustrates this. In Germany, the subject of alternative energy for power supply is passionately discussed and many people advocate the expansion of wind and solar energy. However, as soon as high voltage lines are to be built in their own neighbourhood to transport the thus generated energy or a gas power station is planned for their own town, active resistance is stirred in protest movements, which are aimed at stopping the constructions in question. Therefore, in the same way that politicians and entrepreneurs have no choice but to deal with this form of resistance and to enter into intensive dialogue, managers should not disregard this passive resistance when dealing with changes such as those taking place at South Real Estate. In such a case, they must rigidly adhere to the cultural values which they would like to see implemented in their communication and in the way they handle this resistance. According to the stories and information about the culture of mistrust and fear in former times, employees now seemed to be encouraged to ask even critical questions and they experienced a board and management that answered and discusses more with them.

The cultural changes that became apparent by the analysis of the qualitative data can be supported by results of the comparisons between the staff survey I in March 2010 and staff survey II, section 1 in March 2011 (Section 6.2.1, Appendix 11). All comparisons between groups at 2010 and 2011 showed a positive development of the means. The t-test that was conducted to compare the results between March 2010 and March 2011 related to the complete sample (total) offered three scales (culture of performance and success, openness, and encouragement) that showed statistically significant differences between the two survey periods. The t-test related to the employees without managerial responsibility also provided a statistically significant difference for all scales. Again, the means developed positively. Although the t-test according to the executives did not show significant differences, the

development of means were positive, too. The number of questionnaires that have been sent back with personal annotations was nearly the same (2010: 27; 2011: 26). Whereas in 2010 four respondents sent the questionnaire back with their personal signature, in 2011 eight respondents did this. The personal annotations in the majority still point to aspects within the organisation, where the cultural vision and lived culture differ. For example one stated *“I do not think that within the organisation there is an orientation according to performance or that this performance is measured in the same way.”* On the other hand one noted *“The organisational culture is noticeable lived in some units. However, some units are still separate”* (translations by the present author). However, although the annotations point to still existing deficits, the overall result of the measurements in all items between t1 and t2 indicate a clear advancement. Nevertheless, the annotations were taken seriously by the board and have been discussed in detail. In 2010 the annotations generated a number of activities and so the employees could observe that their participation in the surveys was sensible.

Therefore, the results of the quantitative measurements as well as answers within the interviews and observations led to the suggestion that cultural change really did happen at South Real Estate. At the semi-structured interviews (August 2010), middle managers were asked to assess the cultural change at that time on a scale of 1 (very low) to 10 (very much). On average, interviewees assessed changes since the conference and the workshop on the 1-10 scale at 5.75 and the changes in comparison to summer 2009 with 5.08. Examples of observations and statements during interviews even indicated that the cultural vision started to affect the assumptions and values of acting organisational members. As one interviewee of the middle managers stated (12M2): *“There is more regularly and definitively more open and full information. Goals are articulated clearly and activities are following. The realisation of pronouncements – there is a high credibility”*. The above discussed findings about the cultural change at South Real Estate not only demonstrate that change had happened, also the involvement of middle management into the cultural change seemed to be successful.

Changes related to the organisational culture were conducted and planned consciously and these activities led to changes, as Hatch’s model (1993) suggested. Based upon this, the following sections will examine the data according to middle management role(s) and influence. The data have been analysed as explained in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.

### **6.3.1 The importance and influence of middle management during the cultural change**

The importance and impact of middle management as to cultural change was examined by the conducting of interviews with some middle managers and the board in 2010 (Sections 5.1.2.4, 5.2.2.1) as well as by an additional part at the staff survey in 2011 (Section 5.3.2). In addition, observations were carried out. By this, I was able to understand the middle management from different perspectives: themselves, lower management, staff and board.

The organisational cultural change not only was driven by the board. Right from the beginning the middle management not only was invited but also included in the process. During one interview with the board (December 2010) they estimated the importance and impact of middle managers as very high (on a scale from 1 to 10 with an average of 8). One member of the board (9B2) stated *“They have the central role (...). For me, they [the middle managers – annotation by the author] are the essential positions from where culture is going to be carried into the organisation. A broad exemplifying by their own lives happens within the direct contact with the employees.”* And another answered the question of the importance of middle managers for the cultural change process (10B2): *“A vital importance!”* In contrast to the first section of staff survey II, the second section was also sent in by members of the board.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variances was conducted to explore the impact of level on the assessment of importance of middle management. Subjects were divided into four groups according to their level (group 1: employees without managerial responsibility; group 2: division heads; group 3: department heads; group 4: board). There was no statistically significant difference between the groups at the  $p < .05$  level in the scores  $F(3, 140) = 1.242$ ,  $p = 0.297$ . The actual difference in mean scores between the groups was small. The effect size of 0.03 also indicates a small effect (appendix 11). According to the results of the survey all levels regarded middle management as highly important (appendix 11). Although the assessment of the board is smaller (mean 4.65) than the others, the means on the 1 to 6 scale still can be regarded as high.

The middle managers who participated in the semi-structured interviews in August 2010 were also asked to assess their importance according to the cultural change. They assessed themselves at a value of 7.6 (board: 8), although they also pointed out the importance of the

board, respectively the top management. One (12M2) justified his estimation “...because I live daily business in my environment and have the most contacts to the staff. If I would not transfer, then the board would have difficulties.” 22M2 said: “I think, we are very effective, 7 or 8.(...) Role model that has influence and multiplies”. The estimation the participants of the middle management interviews gave are supported by the results of survey II, section two. On average, the means are 4.90 and higher, even 5.8 (item 1: “Middle management is important for implementing a corporate culture that is actively practiced within our organisation.” Appendix 9a).

Survey II, section 2 also asked to assess, the power of middle management to actually bring about change (item 13) and to sustainably infect life into a cultural change process would be considerable (item 14) that are summarised in the group ‘influence’. An ANOVA analysis was conducted to explore the impact of level on the assessment of influence (Appendix 11). Subjects were divided into four groups according to their level (group 1: employees without managerial responsibility; group 2: division heads; group 3: department heads; group 4: board).

There was no statistically significant difference between the groups at the  $p < .05$  level in the scores  $F(3, 136) = 1.290, p = 0.280$ . The actual difference in mean scores between the groups was small. The effect size of 0.03 also indicates a small effect. Nevertheless, the group of department heads (group 3; lower management) estimated middle managements actual power to bring about change with the lowest mean of 4.15, whereas the other groups attribute a higher influence (means between 4.24 to 4.90). The self-estimation of the middle management (group 2; division heads) showed the highest mean with 4.90.

It seemed that the self-image of middle management in the time between August 2010 and March 2011 has developed positively. During the semi-structured interviews the participants were asked to assess their influence on a scale of 1 (little influence) to 10 (high influence). They estimated their influence with an average of 6. The difference between these results indicates that in the meanwhile middle management became more conscious about their roles during the change process.

The fact that middle managers assessed their personal influence and power in March 2011 clearly higher than the other groups could possibly cause different conflicts. First, the perception that their activities would be more effective bears the danger of disappointment if things come out differently. This disappointment could reduce their motivation to work upon

cultural change. Intrinsic motivation to develop the change was mentioned by some middle managers during the interviews in August 2010 as a very important driver of activities. On the other hand, the self-concept at this point also supports the motivation to bring about change and so it is likely that activities would follow.

In addition, the board regards the influence of middle management with a mean of 4.50 as high. Probably, this assessment will cause the board to support the cultural activities of middle managers. But again, if the board delegates the responsibility of cultural change completely to middle management, this would be counterproductive, as the importance of top management still is without question.

The survey was conducted under the promise of anonymity. Therefore, relationships between the results of individual middle managers and the cultural assessment within their unit could not be conducted. However, one middle manager and his unit explicitly asked for a separate analysis. This unit regarded the organisational culture predominantly positive with means of 5.17. The manager was a supporter of the cultural change and during the workshops he was always playing a very active part. Therefore, I assume that within his unit he also was culturally active. Although other external factors can hardly be excluded, this indicates the impact of this middle manager on the process of cultural change.

Both, the results of the quantitative analysis and of the qualitative demonstrate that all levels within South Real Estate regard the group of middle managers as important for cultural change. In addition, they attach the power of influence to them. Hence, the results of survey II (second section) and the interviews and observations lead to the following proposition:

**Proposition 1:** Middle management plays a crucial role in the cultural change process.

### **6.3.2 The roles of middle management during organisational culture change**

The literature indicates that middle managers play certain roles during strategic changes (Section 2.4.4; Mantere 2008; Wooldridge et al. 2008): implementer, synthesiser, championing, and facilitator. During the interview with the board in December 2010 I asked them, which roles they would assign to middle management as part of organisational culture change without mentioning these strategic roles. They mentioned roles like: trainer, role model, controller, feedback provider, multiplier, and translator, agent, carrier, and interpreter.



The role of multiplier was mentioned by three interviewees. Survey II, section 2, asked for the level of agreement to certain roles: multiplier, translator (to employees, to other managers, and to management), trainer, role model, feedback-provider, champion, and facilitator (items 5 to 11). Beside these roles, Wooldridge et al. (2008) discuss a role called 'synthesiser'. A synthesiser is defined by Wooldridge et al (2008) as someone who translates information between top management and the levels below them. As the board had mentioned the role 'translator' (item 6), I decided to take this role and did not ask additionally for the role of synthesiser. The descriptions the board gave to the role of multiplier showed a conformance to the role of implementer. To reduce the complexity of the questionnaire and to avoid mixing similar roles, I decided to take the roles as named by the members of the board (see also Section 5.3.2). Table 6.6 shows how far the groups agree to the statements, i.e. "5. Middle management is the multiplier of organisational culture." Table 6.7 shows the results of the means to 'rating of the role'.

**Table 6.6 Agreement to roles – means**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Employee without managerial responsibility</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Division heads (middle managers)</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Department heads</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Middle management is the multiplier of organisational culture.	4.87	0.847	5.10	0.876	5.31	0.855	4.40	1.949	4.91	0.908
Middle management is the translator of cultural information to employees.	4.98	1.062	5.40	0.843	4.92	1.1256	4.80	2.168	5.00	1.110
Middle management is the translator of cultural information to other managers.	4.85	1.068	4.60	0.966	4.67	0.985	4.20	1.924	4.79	1.088
Middle management is the translator of cultural information to the management.	4.82	1.182	4.40	1.075	4.50	1.314	3.60	2.074	4.72	1.236
Middle management is the trainer for culture-conscious behaviour.	4.41	1.154	4.50	0.850	4.62	1.325	3.80	1.789	4.41	1.172
Middle management is the cultural model for others.	4.37	1.308	4.70	0.949	4.62	1.261	4.20	1.924	4.41	1.297

Items	Employee without managerial responsibility	Std. Deviation	Division heads (middle managers)	Std. Deviation	Department heads	Std. Deviation	Board	Std. Deviation	Average	Std. Deviation
Middle management is the provider of feedback on behavior commensurate with the agreed cultural rules.	4.57	1.150	4.60	1.075	4.54	1.266	3.80	1.789	4.54	1.176
Middle management has a lot of contact with employees, customers and contractual partners. Therefore, he or she has the opportunity to observe these people's reactions and to champion them at the top to bring about change.	4.85	1.107	5.56	0.726	5.08	0.862	4.80	1.304	4.92	1.078
Middle management is a facilitator between employees and upper management.	4.95	1.142	4.70	1.494	4.92	1.240	4.80	1.095	4.93	1.165

(present author)

The board assessed three roles with a mean less than 4.00: translator, trainer, and feedback-provider. However, the other groups in principal agree to all roles. An ANOVA test was conducted to explore the impact of level on the assessment of the roles. Items 12.1 to 12.7 asked the respondents to develop a ranking of the role (see next paragraph). Therefore, these items use a different scale and have been excluded for the ANOVA testing. Subjects were divided into four groups according to their level (group 1: employees without managerial responsibility; group 2: division heads; group 3: department heads; group 4: board). There was no statistically significant difference between the groups at the  $p < .05$  level in the scores  $F(3, 140) = 1.112$   $p = 0.346$ . The actual difference in mean scores between the groups was small. The effect size of 0.02 also indicates a small effect. However, the difference between the assessment of board and middle management according to the above mentioned roles could cause conflicts as this could be an indicator for differing expectations. In addition, one person will hardly be fulfilling all of these roles. However, the standard deviations show that within the groups the level of agreement is not always homogeneous. Whereas the standard deviations of the middle management (division heads) suggest a homogeneous understanding and assessment of the roles, the board seems to be heterogeneous. Nevertheless, according to the small sample of five persons within the group 'board' the standard deviation has to be handled with care.

Therefore, I asked the participants to develop a ranking of 1 to 7, with one as the most important role etc. The examination of these results was complex. Therefore, I decided to check the resultant means and to take the lowest mean as most important etc. Table 6.7 presents the roles and means. Table 6.8 shows the ranks according to the groups and means. In the case, where two roles achieved the same value, I allocated them on the same rank and continued with the next but one rank (i.e. feedback-provider and facilitator /division head).

**Table 6.7 Rating of roles - means**

Role	<i>n</i> Mean	Staff	Division Head	Department Head	Board	Total/Average
<b>Multiplier</b>	<i>n</i>	85	8	12	5	110
	Mean	4.79	2.13	3.00	3.20	4.33
<b>Translator</b>	<i>n</i>	84	8	11	5	108
	Mean	3.85	3.88	4.00	3.20	3.86
<b>Trainer</b>	<i>n</i>	84	8	11	5	108
	Mean	4.70	4.25	4.64	2.60	4.56
<b>Role Model</b>	<i>n</i>	84	8	11	5	108
	Mean	2.86	2.38	2.27	1.60	2.70
<b>Feedback Provider</b>	<i>n</i>	84	8	10	5	107
	Mean	3.94	4.75	4.00	3.80	4.00
<b>Champion</b>	<i>n</i>	84	8	11	5	108
	Mean	3.71	5.88	5.45	5.80	4.15
<b>Facilitator</b>	<i>n</i>	85	8	11	5	109
	Mean	4.02	4.75	4.18	5.20	4.15

*n* = total number of answers

(present author)

**Table 6.8 The roles according to their importance**

Importance	Staff	Division Head	Department Head	Board	Total
1	Role Model	Multiplier	Role Model	Role Model	Role Model
2	Champion	Role Model	Multiplier	Trainer	Translator
3	Translator	Translator	Translator	Multiplier	Feedback-Provider
4	Feedback-Provider	Trainer	Feedback-Provider	Translator	Champion
5	Facilitator	Feedback-Provider	Facilitator	Feedback-Provider	Facilitator
6	Trainer	Facilitator	Trainer	Facilitator	Multiplier
7	Multiplier	Champion	Champion	Champion	Trainer

(present author)

The results are very different. For example, the staff ranks the role of multiplier as the less important one whereas the division heads (middle management) rank this role as the first place. Although the role ‘role model’ is ranked second by the division heads, the results clearly indicate that there is a high agreement about the importance of this certain role. However, this role was also mentioned during the middle management interviews. Quite interesting is that although the roles ‘translator’, ‘trainer’, and ‘feedback-provider’ were those with the least agreement of the board, the board put them in the middle with their ranking. On the other hand, the role ‘role model’ (cultural model) is regarded as the most important one, but also was the one that showed the lowest mean of agreement in total. However, all roles

have found agreement. Although the ranking of these roles differs between the groups, the role 'role model' clearly is the most important one. In addition, the different rankings provide information for the future work. A different understanding of roles is likely to cause stress and conflict, as out of these roles, certain expectations of the role-bearer accrue. Nevertheless, these findings suggest the following two propositions:

**Proposition 2:** The roles of middle managers during strategic change (implementer, synthesiser, champion, and facilitator) are valid for cultural change, too.

**Proposition 3:** Besides the roles, middle managers have within strategic changes (implementer, synthesiser, champion, and facilitator), cultural change demands for additional roles as role model, feedback-provider, and trainer.

### **6.3.3 Cultural activities of middle management with regard to their importance and influence**

The findings so far indicate that middle management is important for cultural change, it has influence onto the process and that it adapts certain roles during it. The next question is how far the knowledge or self-assessment of influence and importance of roles lead to noticeable activities. Items 15.1 to 15.7 therefore asked if a middle manager would appropriately fulfill each role. In comparison with the above discussed ranks the results are interesting (Table 6.9).

The highlighted lines provide results where the ranking of the group considers this role as important and the realisation of this role is regarded as deficient. As the table shows these discrepancies happen four times at assessments of the board (multiplier, translator, trainer, and cultural model) and once according to the group of employees (translator). In all these cases, middle management's self-estimation is clearly different, as they regard the fulfillment of the respective roles to be much higher (means of 4.00 to 4.78). Again, these differing results indicate the possible trouble spots inside the cooperation between board and middle management, or between middle management and its subordinates (employees).

**Table 6.9 Fulfilment of roles according to the levels**

Role	Group	N	Rank	Mean
Multiplier	Employee without managerial responsibility	95	7	3.82
	Division head (middle management)	9	1	4.78
	Department head	11	2	4.27
	Board	5	3	3.60
Translator	Employee without managerial responsibility	94	3	3.88
	Division head (middle management)	9	3	4.33
	Department head	11	3	4.27
	Board	5	3	3.00
Trainer	Employee without managerial responsibility	94	6	3.67
	Division head (middle management)	9	4	4.00
	Department head	11	6	3.82
	Board	5	2	2.60
Cultural (role) model	Employee without managerial responsibility	94	1	4.11
	Division head (middle management)	9	2	4.56
	Department head	11	1	4.36
	Board	5	1	2.60
Feedback-provider	Employee without managerial responsibility	94	4	4.26
	Division head (middle management)	9	5	3.78
	Department head	11	3	4.09
	Board	5	5	3.40
Champion	Employee without managerial responsibility	92	2	4.13
	Division head (middle management)	8	7	4.13
	Department head	11	7	4.00
	Board	5	7	3.00
Facilitator	Employee without managerial responsibility	92	5	4.14
	Division head (middle management)	9	5	3.78
	Department head	11	5	4.27
	Board	5	6	3.20

(present author)

An ANOVA test was conducted to examine group difference significances according to the realisation of cultural activities (Appendix 11). Subjects were divided into 4 groups according to the level (group 1: employees without managerial responsibility; group 2: division heads; group 3: department heads; group 4: board). There was no statistically significant difference between the groups at the  $p < .05$  level in the scores  $F(3, 136) = 0.863$   $p = 0.462$ . The actual difference in mean scores between the groups was small. The effect size of 0.02 also indicates a small effect (Appendix 11).

However, half of the middle managers, interviewed in August 2010 mentioned the importance of intrinsic motivation to support and implement organisational culture change. In addition, the participants were asked how they estimated the percentage of middle managers who would take an active part in the (cultural) change process. Their valuation was from 50 per cent to 95 per cent with an average of 70 per cent. This result indicates that in August 2010 already the majority of middle managers seemed to be committed to the cultural change process. According to the presented literature (Glietz 2011, Section 2.4.4) this commitment is regarded to be an important factor for successful change processes. As everyone is not strongly motivated intrinsically, it is interesting to know, if there is anything else that supports the acceptance of cultural development as a managerial task. Therefore, participants were asked what kind of framework they would need to be more involved with the cultural process, and what needs to be done to convince the rest of them.

As enabling factors were mentioned: clarity about planned activities and responsibilities, extensive information and continuous agreements, continuous presence of the issue 'organisational culture', consequent tracking of the topics out of the workshops, qualification of staff and managers, authentic and honest behaviour of the board, freedom to implement ideas, convert promises, positive feedback of colleagues. Authenticity of the board was mentioned by every middle manager. Nevertheless, all of them stated that a lot of things already had happened to that time and that it would be vital to follow this process further. Mantere (2008) had identified enabling conditions that would allow middle managers to take-over as the agency for strategic change (Section 2.4.4). These conditions are firstly, information from top management to middle management, not only about facts, but also background etc. Another factor was the linkage to daily work, allowance and authorisation to make changes, and respect for daily work. These enabling factors middle management had expressed during the interviews and the factors, discussed from Mantere (2008) are very congruent with these.

Members of the board joined all workshops with the middle management at least during some hours. Every time, the workshops included a part with broad information about current projects and organisational issues. In addition, an employee newsletter was developed and is now published four times a year. The first issue was published in June 2010. In addition, since 2010 staff meetings are conducted regularly to keep the employees informed. As the results of the staff survey and the comparisons between t1 and t2 (Sections 6.2.1, 6.3.1) had shown, the



level of cooperation developed. Although the cooperation between departmental borders still had the potential to become better, even here the results were improving. The observations about behaviour of middle management and their discussions showed that they were giving feedback to each other, discuss 'organisational culture' and what that means for daily activities etc. The managers organised workshops at the interfaces autonomously to solve potential conflicts and got clarity about responsibilities etc. and so took-over responsibility. However, although the importance and influence of middle managers was perceived as high, the results related to their activities at the staff survey seemed to be relatively low. This could indicate a gap between theoretical knowledge about importance and influence (power) and the use of this to initiate cultural activities and keeping this issue running. In addition it could be that although middle management is initiating cultural activities respectively acting culturally aware the organisational members do not perceive this. In this case it could be sensible to work with middle management to express how its activities relate to the organisational culture.

The findings of this research indicate that the approach to cultural change at South Real Estate enabled middle managers to be an active part within the change process. We cannot know how the organisational culture change would have been proceeded if middle management would not have been integrated in such an intensive way. However, the change process was conducted by a top-down strategy as well as a middle-outward strategy by activating and supporting middle management to take-over cultural responsibility and acting instead of only reacting. The future search conference at the beginning of the main investigation caused the 'middle' of the organisation to identify with the issue of 'organisational culture' and the associated activities supported the middle management to work at it and to take-over responsibility. Middle management was clearly affected. In addition, other organisational members as staff were integrated into the process by different interventions (staff surveys, discussions within the units, expert interviews, staff meetings). Hence, the change was conducted by a combination of top-down-, middle-outward-, and bottom-up strategy. South Real Estate today is still working with the middle management to advance its development and support cultural aware behavior.

Lewin (1947, 1951) suggests as a third step to 'refreeze'. This poses the question, when there is a time for refreezing an organisational culture. I understand organisational culture as a dynamic process (see Chapter 2). 'Refreezing' on the other hand is statically. However, the results of this research suggest that the cultural vision at South Real Estate was realised to a

noticeable status. Hence, the change can be regarded as successful, although there is still work to do to sustainably secure the achieved and further develop the culture. When coming to South Real Estate more than a half year after the second staff survey and this research the cultural changes are still noticeable and contacts confirm this either. The time-span within which the cultural change not only started but led to perceptible changes suggests that a cultural change can be initiated in a time-span of clearly less than seven years. Hence, the results support the following propositions:

Proposition 4: If organisations create an environment that enables middle managers to take over responsibility for cultural change, it is very likely they will do it and support the cultural change process.

Proposition 5: If cultural change is conducted by a combination of top-down, bottom-up, and middle-outward strategy, cultural change may be implemented in less than seven years.

## 6.4 Summary

The results of the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data have been discussed in the previous sections and with regard to the research objectives interpreted. This led to the formulation of five propositions:

1. Middle management plays a crucial role in the cultural change process.
2. The roles of middle managers during strategic change (implementer, synthesiser, champion, and facilitator) are valid for cultural change, too.
3. Besides the roles, middle managers have within strategic changes (implementer, synthesiser, champion, and facilitator), cultural change demands for additional roles as role model, feedback-provider, and trainer.
4. If organisations create an environment that enables middle managers to take over responsibility for cultural change, it is very likely they will do it and support the cultural change process.
5. If cultural change is conducted by a combination of top-down, bottom-up, and middle-outward strategy, cultural change may be implemented in less than seven years.

These propositions are based upon rich data that was collected by the conducting of core AR cycles and thesis research cycles. This offered the opportunity to apply mixed methods and therefore, the findings have been suggested by more than one single approach to creating the data. However, this research was conducted in one certain organisation. Therefore these propositions are likely to require further testing in different contexts.

## **CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION**

### **7. Overall conclusion and recommendations**

This research aims to answer, whether middle management is important and influences cultural change. The findings support the previous stated five propositions according to their importance, influence, roles, and realisation as part of the organisational culture change activities. This chapter now discusses how the findings will contribute to existing literature about middle management and discuss the limitations of this research. The chapter will be closed by recommendations for further research and present practical implications for the implementation of cultural change in organisations.

#### **7.1 Overall conclusion**

At South Real Estate, organisational culture was very much linked to the activities of management, and its behaviour. The importance and influence of middle management was confirmed. The importance not only was assessed by self-evaluation of the middle management itself but also from the top management, lower management and the staff. Although the importance of top management and the board is not questioned, the results show that a full integration to use middle managements potential is sensible. Therefore, I disagree with the literature that puts into question, if middle management is needed. However, their potential can adopt two directions: to support change or to work against it.

South Real Estate succeeded in integrating the middle management. So, the majority of this group supported the change or at least did not work against it. This seems to be an important factor for the organisational culture change that happened within this organisation and functioned like an amplifier.

The contents of the workshops always had a strong relationship with both with the cultural vision and the management tools that were taught always were linked with them. By this, the issue of organisational culture was not regarded as an issue that was existing outside

operational challenges and demands. Moreover, the middle managers learned to think about culture and management activity as two sides of the same coin.

Mantere (2008) had identified enabling conditions that would allow middle managers to take-over as an agency for strategic change. These conditions are firstly, information from top management to middle management, not only about facts, but also background. Another factor was the linkage to daily work, allowance and authorisation to make changes, and respect for daily work. These enabling factors could be confirmed for organisational culture change as well.

The cultural change at South Real Estate started in spring 2009. At the end of April 2011, I was able to confirm that this change not only had started but had reached a level where it could be experienced and one could regard as a really change of culture. This was a time-span of only two years. The results of the second staff survey proved there had been significant development in the direction of positive values. In addition, the observations during the various interventions support this as well. According to Hatch's (1993) model, artifacts and symbols representing the new cultural vision were visible. The consequent behaviour of members of the board and many other managers also, suggest that this was grounded in the internalisation of the vision. South Real Estate did not stop to set organisational culture onto its topics. Moreover, they still work with the middle management to develop its maturity and continue to make meetings with the entire staff and to publish an employee newspaper. These and other activities are intended to assure the achieved cultural change. In so far one could define this as 'refreezing'. However, as stated organisational culture is a dynamic concept. Therefore, slightly adaptations or even changes may occur in some years again. However, organisational culture at South Real Estate today is clearly different than before spring 2009. Like the iterative action research cycles, the development of organisational culture can be regarded as having similar iterative cycles.

The change process was conducted by a combination of top-down (activities of the board) and bottom-up (employees meetings, staff survey, presentations and discussions within the team). In addition, South Real Estate decided to develop their middle management. So, this group became more mature and finally developed into agents of cultural change. Hence, at South Real Estate a threefold combination was realised by the addition of middle-outward activities.

The findings during the action research and thesis cycles indicate that organisational culture is an important issue in organisational change, as the literature already discusses. In addition, I found, that at South Real Estate middle management did more than only played a crucial role in cultural changes. As the issue of organisational culture within South Real Estate was always discussed in combination with the operative business, this topic became visible and practical. Due to this close relationship, organisational culture became less academic for the organisational members. Although this research was conducted in one individual organisation, the findings suggest that as long as organisational culture and daily management and business are not handled separately, but as one entity and the top management create a supporting environment, middle-managers take over the challenge and become agents of cultural change.

However, it is very likely that middle management can only be significant for cultural change, if top management really wants a strong and active middle management. In addition, top management has to demonstrate that they accept and respect this middle management when they search openly, and controversially, for solutions as the board of South Real Estate did. A middle management that is acting like that can be uncomfortable, as they ask, demand and act independently. Due to the results of my research, I am convinced that cultural change can be initiated successfully, when consequently integrating middle management by a middle-outward-strategy in the above discussed way. This offers the chance to conduct a cultural change that achieves its goals in a shorter time-span than seven years as stated in the literature with regard to complexity and depth.

So, based on the findings of this work, I can answer my research question 'Does middle management influence cultural change and if so, which roles does it play' as follows:

Middle management is important for organisational culture change and can influence this. If organisations support middle management in line with its level of maturity, and demonstrates convincingly that they really want them to act self-responsibly and to take over activities, middle managers are likely to emerge as agents of cultural change.

## **7.2 Limitations of this study**

The issue of generalisation and theory generation in the context of AR is discussed widely (for example: Coghlan & Brannick 2010; Eden & Huxham 1996a; Saunders et al. 2009). Any

single data collecting method used is to be monitored according to its validity and reliability in order to serve research standards. As the research project is conducted in a very individual situation, the interpretation of qualitative data is always subjective. Therefore, it is likely another researcher will arrive at different interpretations and conclusions. This raises the question of generalisation of the findings.

Eden and Huxham (1996) discuss three issues relevant to the generalisation and theory generation of AR. First, AR must have implications. The results should have the potential to inform other contexts, at least as suggestions. Within this work, I have discussed the importance of engaging with cultural change and middle management. The results of this research have demonstrated that with the support of middle management, a sensible cultural change was managed successfully. The results can help other organisations to develop a change design that can support projects to accomplish the desired changes. The second issue according to Eden and Huxham (1996) is that AR must have explicit linkages to theory and therefore will help conceptualise the particular experience. The cultural change was based upon activities informed from the research literature. The results support findings other researchers have published in the context of strategic change. Moreover, this research demonstrated that these findings can be transferred to organisational culture change too. Therefore, a linkage between theory and research is given and my aim to diminish the gap in the literature is achieved. Third, the generalisation is to be expressed through the design of tools, techniques, models and method and their basic design has explicitly been related to the theory. Chapter 5 discussed the choice of methods and their reliability and validity in appropriate depth. However, the conditions found in organisations are always very individual. At the beginning of the research at South Real Estate a new top management team had just started their work. In addition, many employees felt the need for a new organisational culture. Therefore, the time was advantageous. So, what was useful and worked at South Real Estate may not prove as useful and work in other organisations, or at another time. Moreover, every case needs an individual strategy and precise coordinated activities with regard to the maturity of the organisation and people within it. However, basic conclusions based upon the results can be drawn (Section 7.3). Therefore, this demand by Eden and Huxham (1996) is also fulfilled.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations. First, South Real Estate is a medium-sized organisation. Therefore, the distance between different organisational staffing levels is not

great. Contacts between these levels can be found more often than in bigger organisations. This certainly supported the development and change at South Real Estate. The entire group of middle managers was not very large (13). Also, they were all highly educated. In addition, the initial situation was very special. The organisational culture in the years before the new board started its work was characterised by aspects that caused a strong desire within the whole organisation for a change. Employees, who were working for South Real Estate for many years, still remembered a time, where the organisational culture was experienced as supporting and good (before the merger). Therefore, I could build upon memories of that time and use them to demonstrate that a change to a new culture would be possible.

Also, the organisation very quickly, during this time, experienced economic success. So, individuals were positive that their activities would be useful. The people experienced not only negative aspects regarding fundamental changes (change of department, new departmental structure, some colleagues had been dismissed, some employees had to face a reduction of income), but, they were also all experiencing that these changes worked and helped the organisation to stabilise their economic situation.

But, I believe the most important factor was the board. From the very beginning, the entire board, especially the CEO, demonstrated a strong and clear will to support and achieve cultural change. They really allowed middle managers to act in a responsible way. This was demonstrated regularly at discussions, decisions etc. Certainly, the consultancy work during this time (core AR cycles) also added to this success, as we pushed the issue of organisational culture, when the managers were in danger of losing sight of it due to the daily work demands. However, it is always difficult to separate single factors and label them accordingly. What we (me, my colleague and the people at South Real Estate) experienced was a journey that sometimes appeared to be like a roller-coaster (especially the future search conference). And at the end of this journey, South Real Estate showed indicators for a cultural change that was achieved.

With this research, the role of middle managers in cultural change has been explored. It indicates that middle managers can play a crucial role in organisational culture change. The activities at South Real Estate and their consequences demonstrate how middle managers can be involved in this change process. It clearly shows how important it is to integrate cultural



and operational thinking and to overcome a separation of those issues. Hence, this work contributes to literature about cultural change as well as to literature with a middle management perspective.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

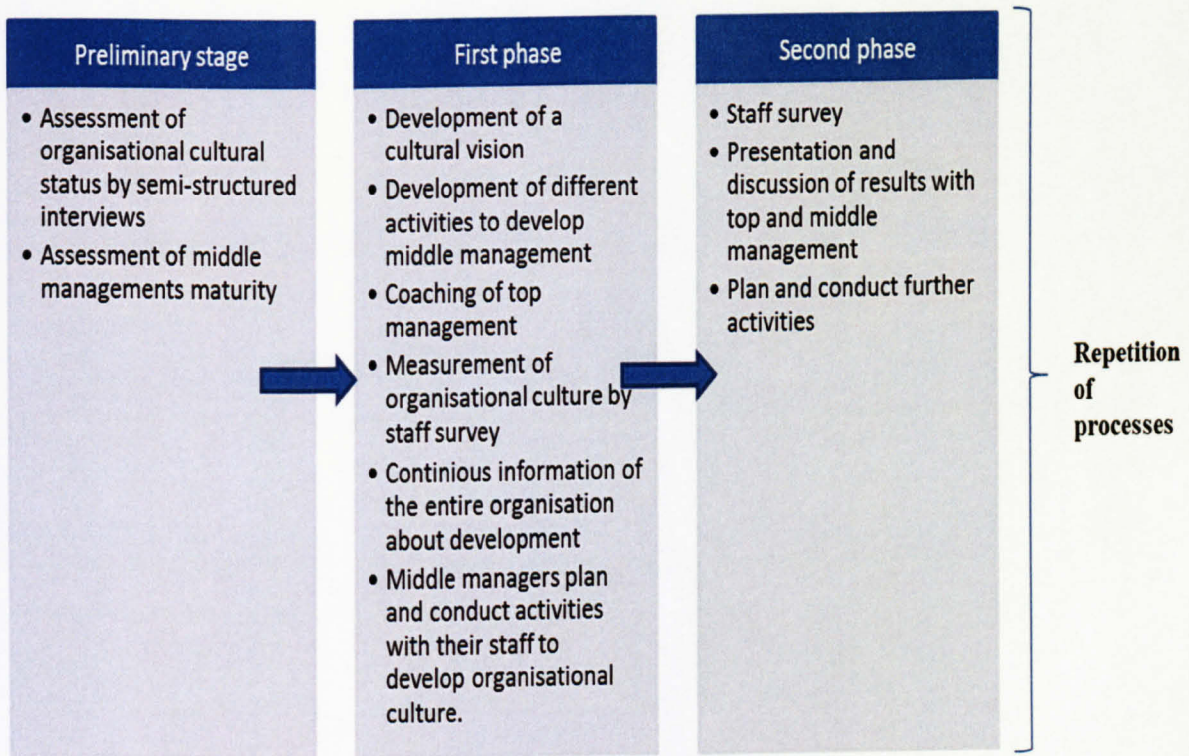
The following section will give some recommendations that can be drawn from the results for organisations. A pre-condition for a middle management playing a crucial role in organisational cultural change is that top management supports it accordingly. In addition, a certain maturity of middle management is needed. Therefore, it is sensible to assess the level of maturity at the beginning of the change process. According to the level of maturity, interventions for its development would have to be planned and conducted. This work demonstrated that a middle management whose cultural past was affected by authoritarian structures is suitable to support change. Although demands to perform new roles and take over responsibility for organisational culture first caused irritation (future search conference), the potential of middle management is essential for the change.

Another beneficial precondition is the external attendance of this process. Organisational culture change is supposed to be an incremental respective fundamental change (Section 2.3). Therefore, fears and resistances are likely to come up. In addition, if organisational culture is regarded as something that has to be changed top management might be associated with that 'old' culture. This makes it much more difficult to adopt another perspective and to regard a problem from a meta-level. A consultancy that has experience in organisational culture change and the work with top and middle management should be assigned to accompany a process like such as this. Many organisations today employ change specialists who are acting as internal consultants. However, these consultants are likely to be associated with the organisational culture to be changed. Therefore, they themselves are likely to struggle with the same difficulties as the rest of the employees. Therefore, external consultants should support projects like these. It is very likely that a mature and starched middle management acts self-confidently and it may become inconvenient to discuss issues thoroughly when management does not act like a simple subordinate. Therefore, top management also has to learn to deal with this. Hence, coaching of top management and the board that accompanies this learning process is useful. Such coaching can hardly be conducted by internal consultants. In addition, cultural changes should be measured over time. This helps assess the

advancement, and detect open fields. The experience at South Real Estate also showed that the facilitation of workshops by professional outsiders was very supportive.

The events at this medium-sized organisation can be used as a model for designing cultural change processes within other organisations. Successful cultural change can be achieved by following the model, presented in Figure 7.1.

**Figure 7.1 Model of cultural change**



(present author)

The arrows show how information from the previous phase supports the following phase. In addition, the repetition of the process presents the dynamic. The results of the continuous measurements give information on how the organisational culture should be developed further and what corrections for the cultural mission statement should be initiated. The conduct of additional semi-structured (qualitative) interviews offers deeper information about the cultural status, and the maturity of middle management. This model requires between two and four years to complete, depending on the initial situation found.

#### **7.4 Recommendations for future research**

This research is based on action research in one organisation. Invariably, future research is needed to set the findings on a broader basis and in particular to explore the role of middle managers in cultural change in other sectors. It could explore, whether middle managers in other medium-sized companies and sectors take over the same roles (implementer, synthesiser, champion, facilitator, role model, feedback-provider and trainer), and whether they also influence organisational culture change by becoming an active part into the change process. In addition it could be examined, if they take-over responsibility for organisational culture and develop a cultural aware behaviour if their organisations support the change. At South Real Estate there was evidence that the cultural change be achieved in less than seven years. As it is always difficult to identify single variables, I am convinced that the middle-outward-strategy was one major success-factor. However, by conducting another AR project in an organisation of medium-size, this could be explored further.

Additional surveys, based upon the findings of this research could test the propositions in various organisations by using a questionnaire. This quantitative approach could be complemented by expert interviews like I conducted at South Real Estate.

In addition it would be of interest to explore ways in which these findings might be transferred into organisations others than medium-sized. As the literature review discussed, organisational changes are successful if organisational culture is regarded (Chapter 2). Action research always requires the need to solve a concrete problem. Therefore, AR could be used to accompany a cultural change process in another (large) organisation. The results of my research and experiences could be used to design an AR project. This would offer rich data that again could be used to be tested by comparative studies using questionnaires.

However, the field of research about middle management still offers many opportunities to conduct research that is at the same time academic and practical. In many organisations I can see the potential of middle management to serve as leverage. However, this potential is often not used. The reasons for this remain unclear. The results of this and future research in the field of middle management and organisational culture change could help developing a framework. This framework could be used to plan a middle-outward strategy and so support the intended culture change.

## **7.5 Final remark**

The results of this research indicate that middle management appears crucial for organisational cultural change. To exploit its whole potential, organisations have to develop an environment that enables middle managers to take over the explored roles and show self-responsibility. Also, the entire organisation has to learn that thinking and acting operationally always includes cultural thinking and acting, too. If boards and top management develop a mature middle management that is not only used as a carrier of strategic information from above to the working level as well as their involvement in daily work, then the results can flow beyond that of successful cultural change.

This research was only possible because of the support of South Real Estate. Not only the board but every single respondent supported this work. Everyone immediately agreed to take time for me, whenever I asked. Some even noted wishes for good luck for me related the questionnaires of staff survey II, section 2. These experiences have made me happy and proud of my involvement.

## CHAPTER 8 REFLECTIONS

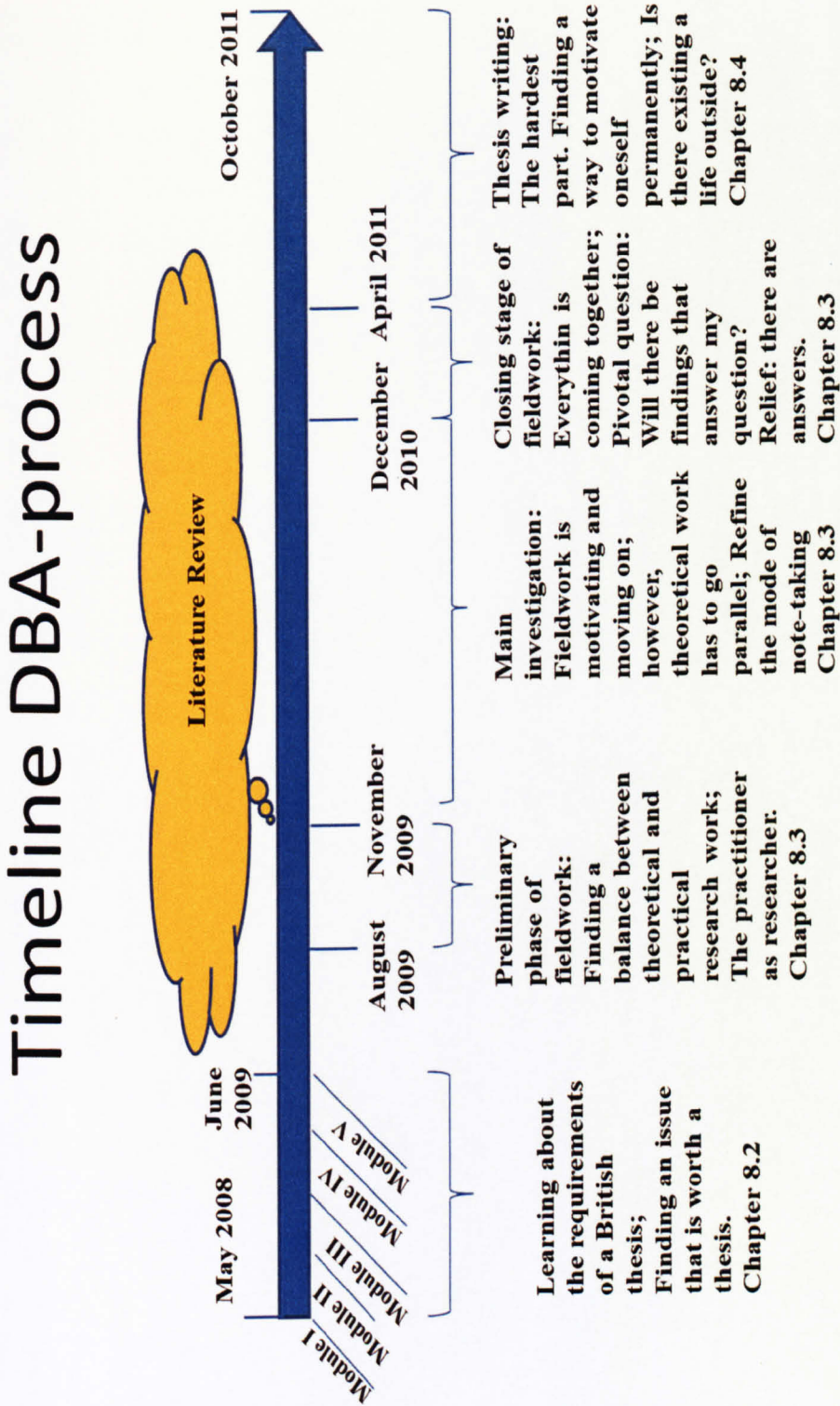
### 8. Reflective Diary

#### 8.1 Introduction

A DBA-Thesis is not complete without a reflective diary. This diary presents the learning process a DBA student experiences. It covers my development according to the compulsory modules and during the practical research work as well as thesis writing.

I experienced the time of my DBA as a journey where I developed from a consultant practitioner into a researcher as practitioner. When working, I sometimes had the feeling that what was written in management literature and sometimes offered as problem solutions for complex situations by consultancy firms was too shallow. Therefore, I was interested in further development of my qualification after my MBA. I found the DBA programme at the University of Surrey, Guildford and was quickly sure that this would meet my requirements. This was supported by feedback from one Professor of the University of Hamburg, who is also a member of my MBA Alumni Club. He also recommended this programme to me. The programme appeared to me to be well-structured, and promised enough support to go through four years part-time, while still facing the necessity of earning money. Also, the University of Surrey has a good reputation, and as I often work internationally, it was important to me to write my thesis in English at a British University. Nevertheless, the question remains, if the amount of money invested into a postgraduate study will be worth the effort. Not only university fees have to be considered but in addition, travel expenses and the time invested in this work have to be regarded. During the time of the DBA process, especially during the time of the research work and thesis writing, I reduced my work as a consultant and did not invest the usual time into work acquisition. This meant for me, a decrease of income. However, manifold reactions of clients and friends showed me that the decision was right. When I was doing a facilitating job for an international client with participants from different countries, including Great Britain, the British participants reacted obviously positively, when I mentioned my postgraduate study at the University of Surrey. This and other reactions proved for me, that my decision was right. The following figure shows the phases of the DBA-process in a timeline.

Figure 8.1 Timeline DBA-process



(present author)

## 8.2 Compulsory modules

The first year was characterised by five modules (Table 8.1) that took place in Germany, but were taught mainly by Prof Gilbert from the University of Surrey. The group, I met at the first weekend consisted of ten other (male) students from different business backgrounds and precognitions. During any module, extensive hand-outs were given, as well as some basic literature and recommendations for further reading. This material appeared to be very useful, not only for writing and passing the requested assignments, but also during later thesis work. As my husband at this time was writing his PhD Thesis, the material was the subject of many fruitful discussions at home.

**Table 8.1** Compulsory modules

Module	Content
I	Philosophical underpinnings
II	Quantitative methods
III	Qualitative methods
IV	Critical evaluation of research
V	Proposal writing

These modules gave me the opportunity to experience the demands of a British thesis. Also, the assignments were a means of constantly developing the correct academic writing style, as a thesis in a language that is not one's native language is a challenge in itself. I realised that although my English was good enough for work and reading, academic language and efforts differed and feedback showed me where I would have to work further on my skills. The first feedback upon my English was a little frustrating, up to this point I was used to being praised for my language skills when I was visiting Great Britain or working within English speaking surrounding. However, I welcomed this feedback as a great chance to further develop. This process of improvement went on with every chapter and section I wrote, and sent to my supervisor.

A group of five students (including me) formed a learning group. We met regularly at my office in Mannheim and discussed the contents of the modules and challenges of assignments. The contact with members of this group still continues. Not only have friendships developed, but also professional contacts and common work on business projects was conducted. The climate within this group helped a lot, especially when a member was feeling down and

unsure about the DBA process. Everyone supported each other which was a good experience. I would recommend to every DBA cohort to form such groups, as these will help throughout the complete study process.

### Module I: Philosophical underpinnings

The aims and objectives of this module were to introduce to us the needs of the DBA and give background information about the programme. Also, we were taught about differences between inductive and deductive approaches to research design and insights were given into epistemological and ontological underpinnings of research. Another important issue was the finding and assessment of secondary data.

The discussion during this module was very inspiring as it deepened my understanding of science and showed me different perspectives. I learned to identify my personal bias, as well as bias that was uncovered in research works by other researchers. A basic understanding of philosophical paradigms and of scientific language helped me later on, when I was writing my own work and had to point out my personal standpoint and philosophical cognition in alliance with my research strategy and methods. Besides, I was happy to realise that I did not have difficulties in reading and understanding academic (English) texts. The diversity within 'my' cohort, according to the individual business background, supported fruitful and controversial discussions during the workshop. Although, we were four participants who were working inside the consultancy business, there was no feeling of competitiveness. At the end of this workshop, I was motivated to take on the following steps of the programme. Also, I felt confirmed in my decision to join the DBA programme at the University of Surrey.

### Module II: Quantitative methods

This module exposed us to the differences in research design approaches and enabled us to construct a valid and reliable measurement instrument. SPSS was introduced and we got access to this programme for further research work. Basis aspects of statistics and the appropriate interpretation of data were taught.

At this time of the programme, I was already sure that the use of quantitative methods would be part of my research, although I was not clear about the details. The work with SPSS, and first and foremost, the use of the results was quite important to me. As I did not have too much knowledge about this issue, nearly everything was interesting for me. While I find it relatively straightforward to formulate questionnaires and collect the results with SPSS, the



analyses still are challenging. So, beside the offered material in the workshop, I expanded my library with publications about statistics and the work with SPSS to help me in doing the analysis as well as possible. Besides, since taking this module I read the published results of research quite differently and much more critically. I look for the validity and reliability of the work immediately, when reading, and check information given about the sample. I think, that today, I am a much more critical reader.

### Module III: Qualitative methods

The module about quantitative methods was followed by the qualitative module. This module introduced us to aspects of qualitative techniques and the ontological and epistemological foundations. Also, case study design was taught and techniques of qualitative data collection were presented and discussed.

Unfortunately, I could not attend this module, as it was rearranged, due to schedule problems. At the new date, I was already committed to a client for facilitating a workshop. My colleagues in the learning group informed me fully after the workshop and Dr Julie Gore kindly gave me support by telephone. Anyhow, the writing of this assignment was more difficult for me in comparison to the others as my most important learning channels are audio and visual. So, the most learning output for me always have been personal contacts and discussions. This, I was missing here.

Although I could not join the workshop, I thought about working with a mixed approach where qualitative methods would be incorporated (although some quantitative methods would be part of it too). The literature and hand-outs on the workshop, as well as the assignment, proved to me that a qualitative approach would fit my personal philosophical underpinnings and view on the world. Now, as I have learned so much more about the differences and advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative methods, it is easier to decipher the reasons why I often had the impression of inadequacy of interventions in organisations. The functionalistic perspective, with its implications for the use of quantitative methods often does not fit the complex reality of organisations, with its organisational members acting within it. As those interactions are often driven, or at least accompanied, by non-rational attitudes and interests, qualitative methods and the knowledge about these are a better fit to issues regarding organisational culture or organisational development. Before the DBA programme, I worked according to this standpoint but now I have the terms and background to base the reason for my activities on solid academic ground. The personal development,

started here, continued during the following modules and even more during fieldwork and writing-process.

#### Module IV: Critical evaluation of research

During this module, we learned how to critically review literature. Texts were examined according to strengths and weaknesses. Since this workshop, my reading has developed significantly. Although critical reading was already heightened with the second module, this expanded. The intellectual challenge and discussions with David and my colleagues were inspiring. But also, I realised more and more what difficulties may occur to me during my research work. The way of reading an article or book as critical as asked for, would take much more time than I was used to in my reading up until that time. In addition, questions of how to build up a reference system that would help me organising and – most important – finding again important quotes and contents occurred for the very first time quite demanding. I realised that every mistake, would very likely cost me a huge amount of time.

When I am reading management literature today, I question the basis of the statements, I ask for the references – and often realise that authors have copied ideas and models from others, but have given no reference. This module also very much sensitised my awareness for plagiarism. This was evident, when a famous politician in Germany was accused of plagiarism in his doctoral thesis. I judged this case much more critically than I probably would have done before. Therefore, I decided to run every chapter, I write through the offered software to detect plagiarism and similarities. I find it very helpful that the University of Surrey offers the students the use of the relevant software. This gave me a lot of security.

#### Module V: proposal writing

This module was dedicated to how one can write an adequate research proposal. The discussion in this module about my research idea and what I was probably facing was very helpful, as it gave me a much clearer picture of the strategy I would choose.

The writing of the proposal was a different challenge than the assignments before had been. Here, I was forced to think through my research idea for the very first time. I had to write it down in a way that it would be declared worthy of becoming a DBA thesis and that would be at least good enough to find a supervisor who would give me a chance. During the writing of the proposal, I faced the difficulties of finding a system of note keeping, doing a literature review in a much more discursive way and to store my notes in a manner that would enable

me to find them again, in case of need. Something, I had already realised in Module IV but now it came apparent. The feedback on my first proposal was not as satisfying as desired. I had to rewrite the work, which first demotivated me a bit. But the experience to pass after this and being assigned to a supervisor was a very good feeling. This feeling even grew stronger when I first met Prof Mark Saunders and he offered me feedback in a way that I was able to improve with every step I made.

The Modules equipped me with important knowledge. They were essential for me, to start the next level to achieve the DBA: the research work. As shown, every module had contents that helped me to find a structure for my work and supported me with information that was useful at every step of the research work. Whenever, I was uncertain of how to work on, a look at the hand-outs and my notes gave me preliminary ideas, and the recommended literature was always a good start. Another challenge during this time was to find an issue and relevant research question that would be assessed as worth being explored by a doctoral thesis. At the beginning of the modules, I was uncertain about this and the idea in my mind was quite nebulous. The only thing, I was certain about was the fact that I wanted to research in the field of organisational development and change. It was important for me to find an issue that I could use in my consultancy business after the DBA. Therefore, I was lucky to hear that one of our clients would face a broad change. At this point of time, I had already read a lot about organisational culture. I had recognised that the information about middle management during a cultural change seemed to be non-existent – at least in research terms. As South Real Estate thought about the cultural change as well (as one issue beneath others), I suggested to accompany this part of the change process with regard to the middle management by a doctoral thesis. When every board member agreed to this, I was happy and relieved.

### **8.3 Research work**

As soon as I was facing my research questions, I started the literature review. The review lasted till the day of submitting my thesis, as I wanted to make sure that current publications would be regarded. The field work unfolded in the time between May 2009 and April 2011. This time was characterised by intensity and tension that gave me a lot of motivation. It was a great challenge to develop further the theoretical background when at the same time, the change of the organisation happened. There was parallelism of activities that taken together

was absolutely motivating and demanding for humility and respect. Sometimes, it felt like sitting in the front car of a roller-coaster, especially at the end of the future search conference, where I was afraid of losing 'my' organisation. This time taught me a lot. As I decided to work with an action research strategy, permanent reflection was already a part of it. It was a combination of research and learning in action. Over this time, I learned to organise my notes in quite a different way than I had before. If one once faces the situation that one does not know what former notes meant, or cannot be read any more, the learning curve about this during research is quickly raised. Every mistake, or even inattention, costs a lot of time and nerves, when it comes to the writing-process. As discussed in the chapters about data collection (Chapters 4 and 5), many activities have been initiated. Sometimes it was not easy to differentiate between the activities concerning the consultancy work and those concerning the research. Borders sometimes were fluid. It was important for me, to always be aware of what role I was adopting when I met members of the organisation. Especially, when I developed the questionnaire for the second staff survey, the balancing between the demands of the organisation and their understandable wishes and the kind of data collection I needed for my research was a process of discussion with my colleagues and the organisation's board. As it was important to receive a high response rate during the survey, the length of extension of the questionnaire should not be too great. This is only one example. But with good will and understanding for the demands of each other by every affected party, we were able to solve all of these problems.

The level of motivation during field work was always very high. The positive support by the CEO and other board members really helped. In addition, most other managers in the organisation were interested in my work and I often could experience how important it was for them to be helpful but at the same time always honest on what information they gave to me. This gave me the belief that the information I received was not biased by social expectancy.

During the research work, my husband and I discussed matters a lot. The experience of the work (modules and research) showed me that consultancy based on profound research knowledge is what I was so often missing before, when I was looking at consulting companies. But, although one has a research background and takes to heart research principles, it is important to demonstrate to the client that you know about the real world and will not confuse the organisation with theoretical ballast that may not have any impact on the

success of the organisation. To put into the foreground academic behaviour and attitude often alienates organisational members, instead of building up trust and a good working-level.

My husband's and my own experience during our research work will lead to a new alignment of our own company into a think-tank. This seems to be the most important outcome of our research efforts. As I realised this is what we have been doing before, but now I was able to express it, and so the research work gave me a new direction for my consultancy work. We regard our business future in working on organisational questions and problems with a multi-disciplinary approach with the attempt to regard the complexity of organisational reality. We already had one symposium in our office where we (and three more colleagues) presented and discussed our ideas with important clients. As I had the great experience not only to carry out lot of research work but also finding results that would be of great interest for organisations, I presented my work during this symposium. The reaction of the audience was supportive, although they discussed the material controversially. This discussion influenced my conclusions and final remarks in the thesis. Therefore, I am very grateful for the participant's dedication.

#### **8.4 Thesis writing**

I found a citation by Ken Follett that describes very well what I experienced in the writing process:

*The research is the easiest.*

*The outline is the most fun.*

*The first draft is the hardest,*

*because every word of the outline has to be fleshed out.*

*The review is very satisfying.*

During the field work, I could use all my years of experience working with organisations and groups. For the writing of a thesis, I could hardly come back to former writing processes. So, this part of the DBA programme was the hardest for me. I was very happy with my supervisor who always found the right words and comments to motivate me and to develop my work further. Sometimes, just a few questions gave me direction and I was able to work on them. With every chapter, I developed my writing. At the beginning, I was too descriptive in my

style. Writing in a foreign language was quite another challenge to be faced. So, learning the process of thesis writing covered different issues. When I started writing, I was looking for existing theses to get a feeling for structure and maybe the one or other idea about how to write. Most management theses I found – especially in Germany – were quantitative research, with hypotheses-testing and so on. But I did not find one that worked with an action research approach. So, I really had to develop my personal structure and style. At the beginning, I felt unsure about that, but very soon I realised that this would give me a lot of freedom concerning how to adapt the thesis to the iterative process of the research work.

The development of a stringent and logical argument is based on extensive literature reviews. In the beginning, I had difficulties finding the appropriate way of organising notes, and references etc. to fit my learning and working style. I have always been much better at practical work with people, and never had any problems with working in a practical way for long hours and over long time-spans. That was fun and no stress to me. But, sitting at the desk, writing for hours and studying the texts were a quite different experience. Nevertheless, I learned to do even this, and found great fulfilment, when a section or even chapter was finished and the feedback of my supervisor was more or less positive. Good time-management was vital. Beside this, I learned how difficult it can be to stay focused on one issue and not to lose oneself in the breadth of literature and other interesting topics you find, when searching. When writing the method-chapter, I was facing a deep hole of frustration. I had the feeling of not advancing. For days, I was thinking and thinking, but could not write down a line. But, suddenly the knot opened and the pages were filled quite easily. An experience like this is a lesson learned for life. Now I know, when facing a situation like this again in the future, that I have the ability to manage it.

During the time of thesis writing, I did not just meet my supervisors when I had finished a chapter. Beside this, workshops at the University with other students and their supervisors were very helpful. The decision of our DBA group to conduct these workshops in Great Britain was the right one. I must acknowledge how surprised I was about the openness of everyone during these workshops. I realised that every attending professor was really interested in my work and discussed it with me at a detailed level. This was a good experience! The recommendations given during these workshops also influenced my work and helped me to develop ideas more clearly. I would clearly recommend for following groups to take the chance of attending the workshops after the modules at the University of Surrey. One not only feels much more a part of this academic family, but also the time spent

in the library and discussions with the other supervisors and students was a really productive one that I did not want to miss. It was worth every Euro.

During the re-writing process it was important to examine, whether I had really given answers to my research questions. Also, I had to revisit the literature, as the time-span between the first writing of the literature review and this point was long. What had been published in the meantime? But finally, I was able to send my first completed draft to my Supervisor. That was a great feeling, I will never forget. During the time, I send it to Prof Saunders and our meeting four weeks later, I enjoyed for the very first time since I started with the DBA-programme, to drink a coffee with my friends without having a bad conscious because I was 'wasting' my time and not working on my thesis. At this point I realised for the first time, that the process really stressed me, although I mostly enjoyed it. But it is important to find a time, where you finish this journey, before you feel too much stress or frustration because you have the feeling of working without an end. Especially during 2011 I reduced my assignments with clients and work acquisition. Therefore, it was important for me to come back to work again to earn my living. A last rewriting process demanded the need to keep the self-motivation high. For days I disappeared behind my desk and had the strange feeling of transmuted into a Nerd with no external contacts, fast food and lack of fresh air and sunshine. However, my husband, family and friends put up with my behaviour and I kept my concentration for the thesis writing without any personal damages.

## **8.5 Summary**

To put it in a nutshell: The DBA programme was a big adventure for me. But, the modules and the interaction with my supervisor helped me to survive this adventure. I do not know if I would ever have started the programme, if I had really anticipated what was coming with it. But, it was worth every sleepless night, increase in weight and invested Euro. During the DBA, my way of thinking and discussing changed noticeably. Also, it changed the way I look at, and work in, organisations today. I examine literature much more critically than before. However, I will also enjoy reading thriller and crime literature again, when I finally have faced the oral successfully. The further development of our own a company is a very important point for us. My husband and I are deeply convinced that this is the most important 'output' of our research and thesis-writing experiences. So, the things we have learned will certainly go along with us for the rest of our business-life.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Letter of intent (German)

Geschäftsführung South Real Estate

An alle  
Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter der  
South Real Estate

03.08.2009

#### **Wissenschaftliche Begleitung während des Veränderungsprozesses**

Sehr geehrte Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter,

am 27.05.2009 haben wir Sie im Rahmen der Mitarbeiterversammlung des Unternehmensbereichs über die neue Strategie und Organisation informiert.

Neben den organisatorischen Maßnahmen finden flankierende Maßnahmen in den Bereichen Kompetenz-, Führungs- und Kulturentwicklung statt.

Beim Erfolg einer Reorganisation spielen kulturelle Faktoren eine wichtige Rolle und wir sind uns deren Bedeutung bewusst. Deshalb freuen wir uns sehr, dass die Veränderung der kulturellen Faktoren im Rahmen einer Dissertation wissenschaftlich begleitet wird.

Frau Martina Nieswandt wird im Rahmen ihrer Studien mit Vertretern aller Unternehmensebenen zu verschiedenen Zeitpunkten Einzelgespräche führen. Die Analysen sollen in entsprechende Maßnahmen einfließen, um diesen Prozess optimal zu unterstützen.

Ziel der Studie ist es herauszuarbeiten, wie im Rahmen einer Reorganisation eine Kulturveränderung erfolgreich implementiert werden kann. Bitte unterstützen Sie hierbei Frau Nieswandt im Interesse von uns allen – sollte sie in der einen oder anderen Angelegenheit auf Sie zukommen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Unterschriften aller Geschäftsführungsmitglieder



## **Appendix 1a Letter of intent (English)**

To all employees of  
South Real Estate

**The Management of South  
Real Estate**

03 August 2009

### **Management research as an accompaniment to the change process**

Dear members of staff,

On 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2009 we informed you about the new strategy and organisation within the framework of the staff meeting.

Besides the organisational measures, accompanying measures in the areas of competence, management and cultural development will take place.

Cultural factors play an important role in the success of reorganisation and we are conscious of their importance. Therefore, we are very pleased that the alteration of the cultural factors will be accompanied by management research within the framework of a doctoral thesis.

As part of her studies, Ms Martina Nieswandt will conduct interviews with representatives from all levels of the company at different times. The analyses are to be incorporated in corresponding measures to optimally support this process.

The aim of the study is to work out how a change of culture can be successfully implemented within the scope of a reorganisation. Please support Ms Nieswandt, in the interests of us all, should she approach you for whatever reason.

Best wishes

Signatures of all members of the Board

## Appendix 2 Covering letter Nieswandt (German)



Martina Nieswandt, MBA  
Konrad-Adenauer-Ring 75  
69214 Eppelheim  
mobil: 0172 6361308  
Mail: [M\\_Nieswandt@t-online.de](mailto:M_Nieswandt@t-online.de)

### Dissertation in Ihrem Unternehmen

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

wie Sie von Ihrer Geschäftsführung erfahren haben, wird die Veränderung der kulturellen Faktoren in Ihrem Unternehmen im Zuge der Reorganisation im Rahmen einer Dissertation wissenschaftlich begleitet.

Ich freue mich sehr, dass mir diese Gelegenheit gegeben wird und möchte mich und das Projekt Ihnen kurz vorstellen:

Als freie Unternehmensberaterin erlebe ich regelmäßig, wie einflussreich kulturelle Aspekte auf den Erfolg von Unternehmen sind. Dadurch reifte in mir der Wunsch, diese Beobachtung wissenschaftlich zu untersuchen. Daher nehme ich seit dem Mai 2008 am Dissertationsverfahren der Management School der University of Surrey teil mit dem Ziel den Titel eines „Doctor of Business Administration“ (DBA) zu erlangen. Der DBA wurde in den 20er Jahren an der Harvard Business School entwickelt. Ziel ist es, die Managementforschung mit wissenschaftlichen Methoden zu verbinden. Dabei wird großer Wert darauf gelegt, möglichst praktische Fragestellungen zu bearbeiten.

Mein Forschungsziel ist es daher zu untersuchen, wie sich konkret die Veränderung – damit ist natürlich eine Verbesserung -- einer vorhandenen Unternehmenskultur während einer Reorganisation erzielen lässt. Die Forschung hat sich mit Veränderung von Unternehmenskultur bisher überwiegend im Rahmen von Fusionen beschäftigt. Reorganisationen wurden bisher kaum beachtet.

In der nächsten Zeit werde ich daher mit verschiedenen Vertretern/innen aus Ihrem Unternehmen Einzelgespräche führen. Diese erfolgen anonymisiert, so dass Vertraulichkeit gewährleistet ist. Die Auswertung und Analyse der Gespräche wird von mir persönlich vorgenommen. Die Ergebnisse sollen dazu dienen, Handlungsanleitung für die Unterstützung der Veränderung abzuleiten. Es werden Vertreter/innen aus allen Geschäftsebenen und –bereichen befragt, auch wurde bei der Auswahl der Stichprobe der Betriebsrat berücksichtigt. Die Auswahl der Anzahl von Personen erfolgte im Verhältnis zur Gesamtmitarbeiterzahl. Ich freue mich, dass auch Sie zu dieser „Stichprobe“ gehören und darauf, Sie persönlich kennen zu lernen.

Ich werde mich jeweils mit Ihnen für eine Terminkoordination in Verbindung setzen. Die Gespräche werden voraussichtlich ca. 45 Minuten dauern. Zu Beginn werde ich Ihnen

noch einmal den Hintergrund der Studie erläutern und eine Vertraulichkeitserklärung mit Ihnen sowie weitere „Spielregeln“ vereinbaren. Wenn Sie Fragen haben, dann rufen Sie mich bitte einfach an oder senden Sie eine E-Mail.

Die Interviews werden zu verschiedenen Messzeitpunkten durchgeführt, so dass auch Veränderungen festgehalten werden können.

Ich bitte Sie herzlich, genau wie Ihre Geschäftsführung, meine Forschung zu unterstützen und bedanke mich schon jetzt dafür!

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martina Nieswandt'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some stylized flourishes.

Martina Nieswandt

## Appendix 2a Covering letter Nieswandt (English)



Martina Nieswandt, MBA  
Konrad-Adenauer-Ring 75  
D-69214 Eppelheim  
Mobile: ++49(0)172 6361308 Email:  
[M.Nieswandt@t-online.de](mailto:M.Nieswandt@t-online.de)

### Thesis in your company

Dear Sir/Madam,

As you have learnt from your management, the alteration of the cultural factors at your company in the course of reorganisation will be accompanied by scientific research within the framework of a thesis.

I am delighted that I have been given this opportunity and would like to briefly introduce myself and the project to you:

As a freelance management consultant, I regularly experience how influential cultural aspects are on the success of companies. As a result, I felt the need to investigate this observation scientifically. Therefore, since May 2008 I have been taking part in the dissertation process of the Management School of the University of Surrey with the aim of gaining the title of "Doctor of Business Administration" (DBA). The DBA was developed at Harvard Business School in the 1920s. Its aim is to combine management research with scientific methods while attaching great importance to dealing with practical issues if possible.

The aim of my research is therefore to examine how the alteration, and, needless to say, the improvement of an existing corporate culture can be achieved in practice during reorganisation. Up to now research on this subject has mainly concentrated on a change of corporate culture within the scope of mergers. Reorganisations have scarcely been observed so far.

In the coming weeks I shall therefore conduct interviews with various representatives from your company. They will be conducted in an anonymised form to ensure that confidentiality is guaranteed. I shall personally evaluate and analyse these interviews. The results are to be used to formulate guidelines to support the change. Representatives from all business levels and departments will be interviewed; the works council has also been taken into account when selecting the random sample. The number of persons was chosen in relation to the total number of employees. I am pleased that you also belong to this "random sample" and look forward to meeting you in person.

I will contact you to arrange a time for a meeting. The interviews will probably take about 45 minutes. At the beginning, I will explain the background to the study to you once again and agree a declaration of confidentiality with you as well as other "ground rules". If you have any questions, simply call me or send me an email.

The interviews will be conducted at different times and so any changes can be recorded.

I sincerely request that you join your management in supporting my research. Your help is much appreciated!

Yours faithfully

Martina Nieswandt

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martina Nieswandt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

## **Appendix 3 Information and consent form (German)**

### **Information über die Studie und den Datenschutz**

Hiermit informiere ich Sie über das Forschungsprojekt, für das ich Sie gerne interviewen möchte und über die Vorgehensweise. Da datenschutzrechtliche Dinge betroffen sind, ist Ihre ausdrückliche Einwilligung und Information erforderlich.

Die Verantwortung für das Projekt und die Durchführung der Interviews liegen bei Martina Nieswandt. Im Rahmen der Analyse soll herausgefunden werden, wie im Rahmen der Reorganisation auch eine kulturelle Veränderung initiiert werden kann. Bei der Studie wird eine Strategie gewählt, die als ‚Action Research‘ bezeichnet wird.

Zu Beginn der Studie wird eine Stichprobe von Personen aus allen Ebenen des Unternehmens und über alle Bereiche hinweg zu verschiedenen Meßzeitpunkten befragt. Darüber hinaus werden auch externe Partner befragt. Diese Interviews erfolgen zum Teil persönlich, zu späteren Zeitpunkten ggf. auch als Telefoninterview oder als Fragebogen. Die Ergebnisse werden gespeichert und ausgewertet und fließen so in die Dissertation ein.

Dazu sichere ich Ihnen folgende Vorgehensweise ausdrücklich zu, damit Ihre Angaben nicht mit Ihrer Person in Verbindung gebracht werden können:

- ✓ Ich gehe sorgfältig mit dem Erzählten um. Das Gespräch wird mit einem Aufnahmegerät aufgezeichnet und anschließend von einer von mir beauftragten Sekretärin übertragen, so dass ich die weiteren Auswertungen persönlich vornehmen kann.
- ✓ Alle Personendaten werden anonymisiert. Ihre Angaben werden so ausgewertet, dass keine Verbindung zu Ihrer Person hergestellt werden kann.
- ✓ Ihr Name und die Kontaktdaten werden von mir nach Beendigung der Dissertation bzw. deren Bewertung gelöscht. Die von Ihnen unterschriebene Erklärung zur Einwilligung in die Auswertung wird in einem gesonderten Ordner an einer gesicherten Stelle, nur für mich zugänglich, aufbewahrt. Sie dient lediglich dazu, bei einer Überprüfung durch den Datenschutzbeauftragten nachweisen zu können, dass Sie mit der Auswertung einverstanden sind. Sie kann mit Ihrem Interview selbst nicht mehr in Verbindung gebracht werden.
- ✓ Das Protokoll selbst wird nicht veröffentlicht. In Veröffentlichungen können jedoch einzelne Zitate eingehen, selbstverständlich ohne dass erkennbar wird, von welcher Person sie stammen.

Das Interview ist freiwillig, das heißt, Sie können auch bei einzelnen Fragen die Antworten verweigern. Auch die Einwilligung ist freiwillig und kann jederzeit von Ihnen widerrufen und die Löschung des Interviews verlangt werden.

Ich bedanke mich bei Ihnen für die Bereitschaft, mir Auskunft zu geben und damit die Erstellung der Dissertation zu ermöglichen.

**Einwilligungserklärung zum Interview und dessen Auswertung im Rahmen der  
Dissertation von Martina Nieswandt an der University of Surrey, Großbritannien**

Ich bin über das Vorgehen bei der Auswertung der persönlichen Interviews mit einem Handzettel informiert worden (u.a.: die Abschrift gelangt nicht an die Öffentlichkeit, Anonymisierung, Löschung der Daten, Aufbewahrung der Einwilligungserklärung nur im Zusammenhang mit dem Nachweis des Datenschutzes und nicht Zusammenführbarkeit mit dem Interview).

Unter diesen Bedingungen erkläre ich mich bereit, das Interview zu geben und bin damit einverstanden, dass es protokolliert, anonymisiert und ausgewertet wird.

---

Unterschrift

---

Ort, Datum

## **Appendix 3a Information and content form (English)**

### **Information about the study and data protection**

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about the research project for which I would like to interview you and about the approach used. As data protection issues are involved, your express approval and information are required.

Responsibility for the project and execution of the interview lie with Martina Nieswandt. Within the framework of the analysis, the aim is to find out how cultural change can be initiated within the scope of reorganisation. A strategy is chosen for the study that is called 'action research'.

At the start a random sample of persons from all levels of the company and across all departments is interviewed at various times. In addition, external partners are interviewed. These interviews are conducted partly on a face-to-face basis and partly, if applicable, by telephone or by means of a questionnaire at a later date. The results are saved and evaluated and are thus incorporated in the doctoral thesis.

I can expressly assure you that the following procedure will be applied to prevent your data being connected with you personally:

- ✓ I will handle the information you give me with care. The conversation will be recorded and then transcribed by a secretary entrusted by me, so that I can carry out any further evaluation personally.
- ✓ All personal data will be rendered anonymous. Your data will be evaluated in such a way that no connection can be established with you personally.
- ✓ I shall delete your name and contact data after the thesis has been completed or after its assessment. The declaration you sign giving your consent to the evaluation of your data will be stored in a separate file at a secure location to which only I have access. It will merely be used to prove that you have consented to the evaluation should a check be carried out by the data protection officer. It will then no longer be possible to connect it with your interview.
- ✓ The transcript itself will not be published. Individual quotes may be included in publications, but, naturally, it will not be possible to identify from whom they originate.

The interview is voluntary, so that you may refuse to answer individual questions. Your consent is also voluntary. You may retract it at any time and demand that the interview will be erased.

I would like to thank you for your willingness to give me information and thus enable me to prepare my thesis.



**Declaration of consent to the interview and to its evaluation within the framework of the thesis of Martina Nieswandt at the University of Surrey, Great Britain**

I have been informed about the procedure for evaluating the personal interview by a leaflet (e.g. the transcript will not be made public, anonymisation, erasure of data, storage of the declaration of consent only in connection with the verification of data protection and non-linkability with the interview).

Under these conditions, I consent to giving an interview and I agree to it being recorded, anonymised and evaluated.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Place, Date

## **Appendix 4 Interview-checklist expert interview (German)**

### **Interview-Chekliste Erstinterviews Dissertation**

1. **Vorstellung** Martina Nieswandt, DBA und Forschungsansatz. Projekt und Ziele sowie Spielregeln und Datenschutzvereinbarung (1 Exemplar an Interviewee)
2. **Biographische Fragen** (erklären warum): Alter, Qualifikation, ,Erwerbsbiographie bei Schörghuber, insbesondere Dauer, Führungsspanne

#### **Externes Mikro und Aufnahmegerät einschalten!**

### **3. Kultur *Corporate Culture***

#### **3.1 *Ist-Zustand***

Was verstehen Sie persönlich unter dem Begriff ,Unternehmenskultur’?

Wie wichtig ist Ihrer Meinung das nach Vorhandensein/die Existenz einer ,UK’ für ein Unternehmen?

Wie würden Sie die UK vor dem 1.4.09 beschreiben (Führung, MA-MA, Kunden/Externe)?

Wodurch wurde diese Kultur beeinflusst? Welche Auswirkungen hatte diese?

Was war daran positiv? Warum?

Was war daran negativ? Warum?

#### **3.2 *Soll-Zustand***

Wenn Sie an die Zukunft bzw. die neue Organisationsstruktur denken: Wie sollte/müsste eine UK Ihrer Meinung nach aussehen, damit die Ziele erreicht werden?

Welche weiteren Auswirkungen – außer Zielerreichung – hätte diese Kultur?

Was von der ,alten’ Kultur sollte erhalten werden?

Wovon sollte man sich verabschieden?

Was müsste Ihrer Meinung nach geschehen, um diese neue Kultur nachhaltig einzuführen?

Auf einer Skala von 1-10: Wie würden Sie die „alte“ Kultur und den Stand heute einstufen?

Gibt es seine Frage, die ich noch hätte stellen sollen?

#### **4. Abschluss**

Bedanken und weitere Schritte erläutern.

## **Appendix 4a Interview-checklist expert interview (English)**

### **Interview-checklist concerning initial interviews for the thesis**

1. **Introduction** Martina Nieswandt, DBA and research approach. Project and objectives as well as ground rules and data protection agreement (give one copy to interviewee)
2. **Biographical questions** (explain why): age, qualifications, employment biography in real estate, especially duration, span of control

**Switch on microphone and recording device recorder!**

### **3. Culture**

#### *3.1 As-is analysis*

What do you personally understand by the term ‘organisational culture’?

How important is the presence/existence of a ‘Organisational Culture (OC)’ for a company, in your opinion?

How would you describe the OC prior to 1 April 2009 (management, employee-employee, customers/external partners)?

What factors influenced this culture? What effects did it have?

What were the positives? Why?

What were the negatives? Why?

#### *3.2 Target state*

When you think about the future and/or the new organisational structure: What should/must a OC be like, in your opinion, to enable targets to be met?

What other effects (apart from target attainment) would this culture have?

What aspects of the ‘old’ culture should be preserved?

Which should be discarded?

What should be done, in your opinion, to introduce this new culture on a sustainable basis?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the 'old' culture and the current status?

Are there any other questions I should have asked?

**4. Final part**

Thank the interviewee and explain further steps.

## Appendix 5 Table of categories I (English)

<b>Step 1: Naming</b>	<b>Culture of performance and success</b>
<p><b>Step 2: Explanation: What are the characteristics of this culture?</b></p> <p><b>The explanation is based upon the information given to me during the interviews and board workshop.</b></p>	<p>A culture of performance and success is characterised by the fact that it creates the cultural foundations for making performance and success possible. In such a culture, the will to succeed is supported and promoted; success is celebrated and not just aspired to. If someone makes mistakes, the persons concerned are supported in making corrections and they are given the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. However, the same mistakes should not be made repeatedly. In this case, the concerned person will be confronted with consequences.</p>
<p><b>Step 3: Examples</b></p>	<p>(selection of statements during expert interviews in catchwords)</p> <p><u>Answers related the former organisational culture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions are not really implemented</li> <li>• Winner/loser mentality</li> <li>• Tendency for inflexibility</li> <li>• No acceptance of responsibility</li> <li>• Risk aversion</li> <li>• We did our job independently of those at the top</li> <li>• Are always receptive</li> <li>• Decisions are not taken</li> <li>• Unprofessional decision-making</li> <li>• Excuse culture</li> <li>• Resignation</li> <li>• High fluctuation</li> <li>• Self-preoccupation</li> </ul> <p><u>Answers related to a desired future organisational culture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer of competence and responsibility</li> <li>• Make quick decisions</li> <li>• Become a knowledge community</li> <li>• Control, but within reason</li> <li>• Trust in employees' abilities</li> <li>• Hire good people</li> </ul>
<b>Step 1: Naming</b>	<b>Respectful interaction</b>
<p><b>Step 2: Explanation: What are the characteristics of this culture?</b></p> <p><b>The explanation is based upon the information given to me during the interviews and board workshop.</b></p>	<p>This culture is characterized by a climate of trust and community. People pull the same rope and help each other. Nevertheless, even critical issues are expressed.</p>
<p><b>Step 3: Examples</b></p>	<p>(selection)</p> <p><u>Answers related to the former organisational culture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mistrust instead of trust</li> <li>• Separately not together</li> <li>• Awkward interaction</li> <li>• No thinking beyond departmental boundaries</li> <li>• Formation of groups</li> </ul>

	<p><u>Answers related to a desired future organisational culture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement in communication i.e. personal instead of email</li> <li>• Develop community</li> <li>• Exchange with one another</li> <li>• Involve employees</li> <li>• Capacity of executive staff to integrate people</li> </ul>
<b>Step 1: Naming</b>	<b>Openness and clarity</b>
<p><b>Step 2: Explanation: What are the characteristics of this culture?</b></p> <p>The explanation is based upon the information given to me during the interviews and board workshop.</p>	<p>A culture of openness and clarity is characterised by an open communication about positive as well as negative aspects. Feedback is provided and there exists orientation about goals and procedures.</p>
<b>Step 3: Examples</b>	<p>(selection)</p> <p><u>Answers relating to the former organisational culture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions protracted</li> <li>• Decisions short-lived</li> <li>• Defective information flow</li> <li>• No open communication</li> <li>• Lack of credibility at the top</li> <li>• Old guiding principles were not really practised</li> <li>• No goal clarity</li> <li>• Decisions not comprehensible</li> </ul> <p><u>Answers related to a desired future organisational culture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Clear competences</li> <li>• Clear orientation</li> <li>• Clear signals</li> <li>• Comprehensive decisions</li> <li>• No acceptance of contrary action</li> <li>• Authenticity</li> <li>• Transparency</li> </ul>
<b>Step 1: Naming</b>	<b>Support and recognition</b>
<p><b>Step 2: Explanation: What are the characteristics of this culture?</b></p> <p>The explanation is based upon the information given to me during the interviews and board workshop.</p>	<p>A culture of support and recognition is characterised by appreciation, respect and motivation. People are allowed to work, and be self-responsible. Where needed, people receive support from their supervisors and the organisation.</p>
<b>Step 3: Examples</b>	<p>(selection)</p> <p><u>Answers related to the former organisational culture:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsettled employees</li> <li>• Unease amongst employees</li> <li>• High level of bureaucracy/control</li> <li>• Out-dated hierarchical thinking</li> <li>• Guidelines through to operative level</li> </ul>

	<u>Answers related to a desired future organisational culture:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring about claim</li> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Appreciation</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Motivation</li> </ul>
<b>Step 1: Naming</b>	<b>Outstanding products and satisfied customers</b>
<b>Step 2: Explanation: What are the characteristics of this culture?</b>  <b>The explanation is based upon the information given to me during the interviews and board workshop.</b>	A culture of this kind is characterised by a high education of organisational members and a high customer-orientation.
<b>Step 3: Examples</b>	As there did not exist a culture like that required before, nothing has been mentioned. The participants expressed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication at the interface</li> <li>• Quality awareness</li> <li>• Customer orientation</li> </ul>



## Appendix 5a Table of categories II

<b>Step 1: Naming and definition</b>	<b>Personal attitude to change</b>
<b>Step 2: Explanation: What are the characteristics of this?</b>	The personal attitude is demonstrated by expressions of commitment or non-commitment to the cultural mission statement (verbally and non-verbally).
<b>Step 3: Positive and negative examples (interviews and observations)</b>	<p><u>Positive examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive verbal expressions about the cultural mission statement</li> <li>- Positive non-verbal expressions about the cultural mission statement</li> <li>- Behaviour according to the cultural mission statement</li> </ul> <p><u>Negative examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative expressions about the cultural mission statement</li> <li>- Negative non-verbal expressions about the cultural mission statement</li> <li>- The manager does not initiate any activities to develop the cultural status inside his or her unit.</li> <li>- The manager does not act according to the cultural mission statement</li> </ul>
<b>Step 1: Naming and definition</b>	<b>Exercise of roles</b>
<b>Step 2: Explanation</b>	The manager acts according to the roles as implementer, synthesizer, champion, and facilitator. His or her activities show attributes of these roles. Roles that cannot be distributed to one of these roles suggest the existence of additional roles.
<b>Step 3: Positive and negative examples (interviews and observations)</b>	<p><u>Positive examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Middle managers initiate changes within their unit to implement the desired organisational culture (implementer).</li> <li>- Middle managers channel cultural relevant information upward to top management.</li> <li>- Middle managers channel cultural relevant information from the environment of the organisation to the top management to reshape the organisational culture.</li> <li>- Middle managers encourage subordinates and colleagues to engage in idea generation and other exercises with the aim to anchor and develop the organisational culture.</li> </ul> <p><u>Negative example:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Middle managers stay passive or even show activities that are dysfunctional for cultural development.</li> <li>- Middle managers show no cultural activities at all but concentrate on their other managerial tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 1: Naming and definition</b>	<b>Influence onto cultural development</b>
<b>Step 2: Explanation</b>	Middle managers demonstrate how they culturally influence. In addition, this category asks for their personal assessment of their influence and the assessment by other organisational levels.

<b>Step 3: Positive and negative examples (interviews and observations)</b>	<u>Positive examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Middle managers demonstrate by a concrete example how they influenced the cultural development (positively or negatively).</li> <li>- Middle managers estimate their level of influence positively.</li> <li>- Other levels regard the middle management as culturally influential.</li> </ul> <u>Negative examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Middle managers do not regard themselves as influential.</li> <li>- Other levels do not regard the middle management as cultural influential.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 1: Naming and definition</b>	<b>Realisation of cultural activities</b>
<b>Step 2: Explanation</b>	<p>Activities of middle managers show that they not only express themselves according to the cultural mission statement. In addition, they follow activities to further develop the culture and ask those in their environment to regard the cultural mission statement within their activities as well and support cultural activities within their unit.</p>
<b>Step 3: Positive and negative examples (interviews and observations)</b>	<u>Positive examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activities by middle managers can be allocated to the cultural mission statement.</li> <li>- Middle managers develop cultural activities within their unit not only once.</li> <li>- Middle managers talk about the issue of organisational culture periodically.</li> </ul> <u>Negative examples:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Middle managers' activities have not changed according to the cultural vision but are carried out the same way as before.</li> <li>- Middle managers have not integrated cultural reflection respectively activities in their day-to-day work.</li> </ul>

**Appendix 6 Staff survey I (German)**

# **Befragung zur Unternehmenskultur**

## Hintergrund und Ziele der Befragung

Liebe Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter,

die Geschäftsführung hat das Ziel, die Unternehmenskultur unserer Gruppe nach einer Ära, die nicht frei von Gefühlen der Angst und Lähmung war, mit Ihnen allen gemeinsam zu verändern und zum Positiven weiterzuentwickeln. Sie hat mit den Führungskräften des Unternehmens einen Leitsatz entwickelt, der künftig das Selbstverständnis des Unternehmens in wenigen Worten darstellt.

Wie bereits in der letzten Woche vorgestellt, lautet er:

*Durch eine Leistungs- und Erfolgskultur,  
gelebt in respektvollem Miteinander, Offenheit, Klarheit, Förderung und Anerkennung  
steht die South Real Estate für hervorragende Produkte und zufriedene Kunden*

Um sich ein klares Bild davon zu machen, wo unser Unternehmen heute im Hinblick auf die oben zum Ausdruck gebrachte, angestrebte Kultur steht, hat der Führungskreis unserer Gruppe vor wenigen Tagen im Rahmen einer gemeinsamen Tagung beschlossen, eine Mitarbeiterbefragung durchzuführen.

Wir bitten Sie, den Fragebogen offen und vollständig auszufüllen. Unser Vorhaben wird durch eine externe Beraterin, Frau Martina Nieswandt, wissenschaftlich begleitet.

Damit Ihr Beitrag absolut anonym und vertraulich bleibt, erhalten Sie gleichzeitig mit dem Fragebogen ein Rücksendekuvert, das direkt an Frau Nieswandt gerichtet ist. Sie übernimmt auch die Auswertung.

Es ist unsere feste Absicht, die Ergebnisse der Befragung zu nutzen, um hieraus sinnvolle Maßnahmen zur Stärkung unserer von Respekt, Offenheit und Klarheit gekennzeichneten Leistungs- und Erfolgskultur abzuleiten.

Je offener und ehrlicher Sie uns antworten, umso schneller und klarer wird uns bewusst, wie weit der Weg noch ist, den wir gemeinsam zu gehen haben und mit welchen Themen wir diesen starten können.

Bitte senden Sie Frau Nieswandt den ausgefüllten Fragebogen bis spätestens 19.03.2010 zurück.

Hierfür vielen Dank im Voraus!

Unterzeichnet vom Vorstand

## Vorgehensweise

Im Folgenden werden Ihnen verschiedene Aussagen vorgelegt. Diese sollen Sie auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6 bewerten. Bitte gehen Sie dabei wie folgt vor:

Beispiel:

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft voll zu)
Erfolge werden bei uns gefeiert.						

Wenn Sie der Meinung sind, dass diese Aussage gar nicht zutrifft, dann setzen Sie bei 1 ein Kreuz. Sehen Sie diese Aussage als voll erfüllt an, dann kreuzen Sie im Feld 6. Für Ergebnisse dazwischen nutzen Sie bitte die Skalen zwischen 2 und 5. Dabei gilt, dass die Werte 2 und 3 eher eine negative Tendenz und die Werte 4 und 5 eher eine positive Tendenz zum Ausdruck bringen.

Bitte nehmen Sie Ihre Bewertungen eindeutig vor. D.h., keine 2,5 oder 4,5 oder ähnliche Werte verteilen. Wenn Sie Ihre Bewertung ändern möchten, dann schwärzen Sie das falsche Kreuz eindeutig, damit es nicht zu einem Fehler bei der Auswertung kommt.

# Fragebogen für alle Mitarbeiter/innen

## Allgemeine Angaben:

### Alter:

- Bis 30 Jahre   
 31-45 Jahre   
 Ab 46 Jahre

### Ich gehöre zum Ressort:

- Ressort I   
 Ressort II   
 Ressort III   
 Ressort IV   
**bzw. arbeite bei**  
 Ressort V

### Dauer der Betriebszugehörigkeit (innerhalb der Holding):

- 1 – 5Jahre   
 >5-10 Jahre   
 10 Jahre und länger

### Ich bin (Angabe freiwillig!)

- Mitarbeiter/in ohne Führungsverantwortung   
 - Führungskraft unterhalb der Geschäftsführung   
 (disziplinarische Führung mind. einer Person)

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft voll zu)
1. Wenn mir etwas auffällt was man verbessern könnte, ergreife ich die Initiative, auch wenn es nicht meinen persönlichen Arbeitsbereich betrifft.						
2. Wenn ich mich besonders engagiere bzw. Initiative ergreife, dann erfahre ich Unterstützung:  - von meinem direkten Vorgesetzten - von meinen Kollegen - aus anderen Bereichen  <i>Bitte alle beantworten!</i>						
3. Es ist wichtig, auch über die normale Arbeit hinaus Ideen und Aktivitäten zu entwickeln.						
4. In meinem Arbeitsumfeld gibt es Menschen, die durch ihr Engagement andere begeistern.						
5. Personen, die keine/bzw. schlechte Leistungen zeigen  - werden bei einer Verbesserung unterstützt.						

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft voll zu)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Erfahren bei fehlender Veränderung Konsequenz.</li> <li>- werden vom direkten Vorgesetzten konfrontiert.</li> </ul> <p><i>Bitte alle beantworten.</i></p>						
6. In meinem Arbeitsumfeld wird jeder gleich fair behandelt.						
7. Wenn ich gute Arbeitsleistung bringe, erfahre ich von meinem direkten Vorgesetzten Anerkennung.						
8. Auch kritische Punkte werden respektvoll angesprochen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- von meiner Führungskraft</li> <li>- von meinen Kollegen</li> </ul> <p><i>Bitte alle beantworten.</i></p>						
9. Zur Erledigung unserer Aufgaben ziehen wir alle an einem Strang <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- im Team</li> <li>- im Bereich</li> <li>- über Bereichsgrenzen hinweg</li> </ul> <p><i>Bitte alle beantworten.</i></p>						
10. Ich kenne die Erwartungen meiner direkten Führungskraft an mich.						
11. Ich erhalte Informationen, die nachvollziehbar und verständlich sind.						
12. Ich kenne die Ziele des Unternehmens South Real Estate.						
13. Mein direkter Vorgesetzter handelt konsequent.						
14. Ich erhalte alle Informationen, die ich benötige, um meine Arbeit erfolgreich zu erledigen.						
15. Es wird sowohl über Positives wie Negatives gesprochen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unter den Kollegen</li> <li>- zwischen direktem Vorgesetzten und Mitarbeitern</li> </ul> <p><i>Bitte alle beantworten.</i></p>						
16. Wenn ich eine Kritik habe, spreche ich den Betroffenen direkt an.						

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft voll zu)
17. Kritik äußere ich auch gegenüber meinem Vorgesetzten.						
18. Ich erlebe eine offene, klare Kommunikation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- zwischen Führungskraft und Mitarbeiter</li> <li>- innerhalb des Teams</li> <li>- über Ressortgrenzen hinweg</li> </ul> <i>Bitte alle beantworten.</i>						
19. Ich werde fachlich unterstützt.						
20. Meine direkte Führungskraft kennt meinen Weiterbildungsbedarf.						
21. Meine direkte Führungskraft fördert meine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fachliche Entwicklung</li> <li>- persönliche Entwicklung</li> </ul> <i>Bitte alle beantworten.</i>						
22. Wer Leistung zeigt, erhält <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perspektiven</li> <li>- Unterstützung</li> </ul> <i>Bitte alle beantworten.</i>						

Wenn Sie noch etwas zum Thema Unternehmenskultur mitteilen möchten (freiwillig):

Wir bedanken uns für Ihre Unterstützung. Bitte senden Sie den ausgefüllten Fragebogen mit dem beigefügten Kuvert direkt an Frau Nieswandt für die Auswertung.



**Appendix 6a Staff survey I (English)**

# **Survey on Corporate Culture**

## **Background and goals of the survey**

Dear members of staff,

After an era which has not been devoid of feelings of fear and paralysis, the management aims to work together with you all to change the corporate culture of our group and develop it for the better. It has devised a cultural vision with the company's executive staff that represents the company's future image in a few words.

As already presented last week, it runs as follows:

*By way of a culture of performance and success,  
expressed in respectful interaction, openness, clarity, encouragement and recognition,  
South Real Estate stands for outstanding products and satisfied customers*

A few days ago, within the framework of a joint meeting, the management team of our group decided to conduct an employee survey to gain a clear picture of where our company stands today in terms of the culture expressed above which we are striving for.

Please fill in the questionnaire candidly and in full. Our project will be accompanied scientifically by an external consultant, Ms Martina Nieswandt.

To ensure that your contribution remains absolutely anonymous and confidential, you will receive a return envelope with the questionnaire, which is addressed to Ms Nieswandt directly. She will also carry out the evaluation.

It is our firm intention to use the results of the survey to derive meaningful measures for strengthening our culture of performance and success characterised by respect, openness and clarity.

The more candidly and honestly you reply, the quicker and more clearly we will see how far we still have to go on this joint path and what issues we can tackle to get started.

Please return the completed questionnaire to Ms Nieswandt by 19 March 2010 at the latest.

Thanks very much in advance!

Signed by the CEO

**Method**

Various statements are presented to you below. You should rate them on a scale of 1 to 6. Please proceed as follows:

Example:

Statement	Rating					
	1 (does not apply at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (absolutely applicable)
Successes are celebrated at our company						

If you think this statement does not apply at all, then place a cross by 1. If you think this statement is absolutely applicable, then place a cross in box 6. Please use the scales from 2 to 5 for results in between. The basic principle is that values 2 and 3 express more of a negative tendency whereas values 4 and 5 are more positive.

Please carry out your evaluations clearly, i.e. do not give any scores of 2.5, 4.5 or similar. If you wish to change your rating, black out the wrong cross clearly to avoid errors in the assessment.

# Questionnaire for all members of staff

## General information:

### Age:

- Up to 30 years
- 31-45 years
- 46 years and older

### I belong to the following department:

- Department I
- Department II
- Department III
- Department IV
- or work for**
- Organisation Y

### Length of service with the company (within Holding):

- 1-5 years
- >5-10 years
- 11 years and longer

### I am (optional!)

- an employee without management responsibility
  - an executive under the board
- (disciplinary management of at least one person)

Statement	Rating					
	1 (does not apply at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (applies totally)
1. If I notice something that could be improved, I take the initiative even if it does not relate to my personal area of work.						
2. Whenever I am particularly committed and/or take the initiative I receive support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- from my direct superior</li> <li>- from my colleagues</li> <li>- from other departments</li> </ul>						
<i>Please answer all the statements!</i>						
3. It is important to develop ideas and activities outside daily work too.						
4. In my working environment there are people who inspire others through their commitment.						
5. People who do not perform/perform badly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- are given support to improve</li> <li>- suffer the consequences if they do not improve</li> <li>- are confronted by their direct superior</li> </ul>						

Statement	Rating					
	1 (does not apply at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (applies totally)
<i>Please answer all the statements.</i>						
6. Everyone is treated equally fairly in my working environment.						
7. When I perform well I receive recognition from my direct superior.						
8. Even critical points are discussed respectfully: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- by my manager</li> <li>- by my colleagues</li> </ul>						
<i>Please answer all the statements.</i>						
9. We all pull together to get our work done <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in the team</li> <li>- in the department</li> <li>- across departmental boundaries</li> </ul>						
<i>Please answer all the statements.</i>						
10. I know what expectations my direct superior has of me.						
11. I receive information which is transparent and understandable.						
12. I know what the aims of South Real Estate are.						
13. My direct superior is consistent in his/her actions.						
14. I receive all the information I need to do my work successfully.						
15. Both positive and negative issues are discussed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- amongst colleagues</li> <li>- between direct superiors and staff</li> </ul>						
<i>Please answer all the statements.</i>						
16. When I have a critical issue I speak to the person concerned directly.						
17. I also express criticism to my superior.						
18. I experience open, clear communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- between managers and staff</li> <li>- within the team</li> <li>- across departmental boundaries</li> </ul>						

Statement	Rating					
	1 (does not apply at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (applies totally)
<i>Please answer all the statements.</i>						
19. I receive professional/technical support.						
20. My direct superior knows my further training needs.						
21. My direct superior promotes my <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- professional development</li> <li>- personal development</li> </ul>						
<i>Please answer all the statements.</i>						
22. Those who extraordinarily perform are given <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prospects</li> <li>- support</li> </ul>						
<i>Please answer all the statements.</i>						

If you would like to say anything else about the subject of organisational culture (voluntarily):

Thank you for your support. Please send the completed questionnaire in the attached envelope directly to Mrs Nieswandt for analysis.

## **Appendix 7 Interview-checklist middle manager August 2010 (German)**

Interview der Middle-Manager vom Mai-Workshop 2010-08-16

1. Welche der vereinbarten Aktivitäten sind seit dem WS erfolgt?
2. Auf einer Skala von 1-10: Wie stark hat sich die Kultur seit dem Workshop verändert?  
Wie seit Sommer letzten Jahres?
3. Auf einer Skala von 1 bis 10: Wie wichtig ist Ihr Einfluss auf die Unternehmenskultur in Ihrem Umfeld? Warum?
4. Wie war die Reaktion der MA auf die Ergebnisse der Befragung?
5. Welche kulturellen Veränderungen erleben Sie?
6. Welchen Einfluss nehmen Sie darauf?
7. Wie wirksam ist Ihr Einfluss? Skala 1-10, Warum?
8. Wie unterstützen Sie die UK in Ihrem täglichen Tun?
9. Woran machen Sie fest, dass sich dies auswirkt?
10. Was unterstützt Sie dabei, an dem Thema dran zu bleiben?
11. Was hindert Sie daran?
12. Welche Unterstützung benötigen Sie von oben, um kulturell wirksam zu sein/werden?
13. Wie oft ist die Unternehmenskultur für die MA ein Thema? Skala 1-10
14. Wie hoch schätzen Sie den Anteil der Middle-Manager ein, die sich aktiv an dem kulturellen Veränderungsprozess beteiligt?
15. Was müsste geschehen, damit alle Middle-Manager sich aktiv in den kulturellen Veränderungsprozess einbringen?

Vielen Dank!

## **Appendix 7a Interview-checklist middle manager August 2010 (English)**

Interview conducted on 16 August 2010 with members of middle management who took part in the May workshop

1. Which of the agreed activities have taken place since the workshop?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much has the culture changed since the workshop? How much since summer last year?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is your influence on the corporate culture in your work environment? Why?
4. What was the employees' reaction to the results of the survey?
5. Which cultural changes are you experiencing?
6. What influence do you have on this?
7. On a scale of 1 to 10, how effective is your influence and why?
8. How do you support the corporate culture in your daily tasks?
9. What leads you to conclude that this has an effect?
10. What encourages you to persevere with this topic?
11. What prevents you from doing so?
12. What support do you need from the top to be/become culturally effective?
13. On a scale of 1 to 10, how often is corporate culture an issue for the staff?
14. In your opinion, what percentage of middle management actively participates in the cultural change process?
15. What would have to happen to make all members of the middle management get actively involved in the cultural change process?

Thanks very much!



## **Appendix 8 Interview-checklist board interviews December 2010 (German)**

**Interview am 13.12.2010, GF South Real Estate**

- 1. Welche Veränderungen in der Unternehmenskultur können Sie feststellen? Woran machen Sie diese fest? Beispiele?**
- 2. Welche Bedeutung für den kulturellen Veränderungsprozess haben die Mittelmanager? Skala 1-10**
- 3. Wenn Sie an die gezielte Veränderung der Unternehmenskultur denken: Wie würden Sie die Rollen bezeichnen, die die Mitglieder des mittleren Managements innehaben?**
- 4. Wie erfolgreich füllen diese Manager diese aus Ihrer Wahrnehmung aus? Skala 1-10**
- 5. Welchen tatsächlichen Einfluss auf die Veränderung der Kultur haben diese Manager aus Ihrer Sicht? Skala 1-10**

## **Appendix 8a Interview-checklist board interviews December 2010 (English)**

**Interview-checklist for the interviews on 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2010 with the top management of South Real Estate**

- 1. Which changes in corporate culture can you identify? How have they come to your notice? Can you give some examples?**
- 2. What is the importance of middle management in the cultural change process on a scale of 1 to 10?**
- 3. When you think about the targeted change in corporate culture: How would you describe the roles played by members of the middle management?**
- 4. In your estimation, how successful are these executives at fulfilling their roles on a scale of 1 to 10?**
- 5. What actual influence do you think these executives have on the cultural change on a scale of 1 to 10?**

## **2. Befragung zur Unternehmenskultur**

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**Bitte senden Sie den ausgefüllten Fragebogen bis zum 31.03.2011 direkt an die von uns mit der Auswertung beauftragte**

**GP Energy Project Consulting  
Frau Martina Nieswandt  
T 6, 23-24  
68161 Mannheim**

**Vielen Dank!**

## **Hintergrund und Ziele der Befragung**

Liebe Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter,

genau vor einem Jahr haben wir eine Mitarbeiterbefragung durchgeführt, bei der wir uns ein Bild davon machen wollten, wo unser Unternehmen im Hinblick auf den kulturellen Leitsatz steht, der entwickelt worden war:

*Durch eine Leistungs- und Erfolgskultur,  
gelebt in respektvollem Miteinander, Offenheit, Klarheit, Förderung und Anerkennung  
steht die South Real Estate für hervorragende Produkte und zufriedene Kunden*

Ihre Führungskräfte hatten Sie damals über die Ergebnisse und Maßnahmen informiert, die sich daraus ergeben hatten. Wie angekündigt, möchten wir diese Befragung nun wiederholen, um herauszuarbeiten, welche Veränderungen es gegeben hat bzw. wo noch Themenfelder sind, die es zu bearbeiten gilt.

Aufgrund der damals geführten Gespräche haben wir bei einer Frage eine Konkretisierung vorgenommen, die anderen Fragen entsprechen dem Fragebogen vom vergangenen Jahr. Wir bitten Sie, insbesondere den Fragebogen, Teil 1 offen und vollständig auszufüllen. Unser Vorhaben wird durch eine externe Beraterin, Frau Martina Nieswandt, wissenschaftlich begleitet. Bitte senden Sie den Teil 1 der Befragung direkt an Frau Nieswandt. Sie übernimmt wie im vergangenen Jahr die Auswertung.

Im Rahmen ihrer Dissertation stellt Frau Nieswandt noch weitere Fragen, die Sie dem zweiten Teil der Befragung entnehmen können. Wir bitten Sie, dass Sie sich auch hier einige Minuten Zeit nehmen, Frau Nieswandt bei ihrer Doktorarbeit zu unterstützen und diese Fragen ebenfalls für sie zu beantworten.

Es ist unsere feste Absicht, die Ergebnisse der Befragung zu nutzen, um hieraus sinnvolle Maßnahmen zur Stärkung unserer von Respekt, Offenheit und Klarheit gekennzeichneten Leistungs- und Erfolgskultur abzuleiten.

Je offener und ehrlicher Sie uns antworten, umso schneller und klarer wird uns bewusst, wie weit der Weg noch ist, den wir gemeinsam zu gehen haben und mit welchen Themen wir diesen fortführen können.

Bitte senden Sie Frau Nieswandt den ausgefüllten Fragebogen bis spätestens 31.03.2011 zurück.

**Hierfür vielen Dank im Voraus!**

Unterzeichnet vom Vorstand

## Vorgehensweise

Im Folgenden werden Ihnen verschiedene Aussagen vorgelegt. Diese sollen Sie auf einer Skala von 1 bis 6 bewerten. Bitte gehen Sie dabei wie folgt vor:

Beispiel:

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft voll zu)
Erfolge werden bei uns gefeiert.						

Wenn Sie der Meinung sind, dass diese Aussage gar nicht zutrifft, dann setzen Sie bei 1 ein Kreuz. Sehen Sie diese Aussage als voll erfüllt an, dann kreuzen Sie im Feld 6. Für Ergebnisse dazwischen nutzen Sie bitte die Skalen zwischen 2 und 5. Dabei gilt, dass die Werte 2 und 3 eher eine negative Tendenz und die Werte 4 und 5 eher eine positive Tendenz zum Ausdruck bringen.

Bitte nehmen Sie Ihre Bewertungen eindeutig vor. D.h., keine 2,5 oder 4,5 oder ähnliche Werte verteilen. Wenn Sie Ihre Bewertung ändern möchten, dann schwärzen Sie das falsche Kreuz eindeutig, damit es nicht zu einem Fehler bei der Auswertung kommt.

# Fragebogen für alle Mitarbeiter/innen (Teil 1)

## Allgemeine Angaben:

**Alter:**

**Ressort:**

- Bis 30 Jahre
- 31-45 Jahre
- 46 Jahre und älter

**Ich gehörte bis zum 30.09.2010 zum**

- Ressort I
- Ressort II
- Ressort III
- Ressort IV
- Ressort V

**Dauer der Betriebszugehörigkeit (innerhalb der Holding):**

- 1 – 5Jahre
- >5-10 Jahre
- 11 Jahre und länger

**Seit dem 01.10.2010 gehöre ich zum Ressort:**

- Ressort I
- Ressort II
- Ressort III (a)
- Ressort IV (a)
- Ressort V (a)
- Ressort VI (b)

**Ich bin (Angabe freiwillig!)**

- Mitarbeiter/in ohne Führungsverantwortung
- Bereichsleiter/in
- Abteilungsleiter/in

**Ich arbeite im Bereich bzw. in der Abteilung (Angabe freiwillig!):** \_\_\_\_\_

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft voll zu)
1. Wenn mir etwas auffällt was man verbessern könnte, ergreife ich die Initiative, auch wenn es nicht meinen persönlichen Arbeitsbereich betrifft.						
2. Wenn ich mich besonders engagiere bzw. Initiative ergreife, dann erfahre ich Unterstützung: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- von meinem direkten Vorgesetzten</li> <li>- von meinen Kollegen</li> <li>- aus anderen Bereichen</li> </ul> <b>Bitte alle 3 Unterpunkte einzeln bewerten!</b>						
3. Es ist wichtig, auch über die normale Arbeit hinaus Ideen und Aktivitäten zu entwickeln.						

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft voll zu)
4. In meinem Arbeitsumfeld gibt es Menschen, die durch ihr Engagement andere begeistern.						
5. Personen, die keine/bzw. schlechte Leistungen zeigen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- werden bei einer Verbesserung unterstützt.</li> <li>- Erfahren bei fehlender Veränderung Konsequenz.</li> <li>- werden vom direkten Vorgesetzten konfrontiert.</li> </ul> <p><b>Bitte alle 3 Unterpunkte einzeln bewerten!</b></p>						
6. In meinem Arbeitsumfeld wird jeder gleich fair behandelt. Das bedeutet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- die Arbeitsbereiche erhalten in <u>gleicher Weise</u> die Arbeitsmittel, die sie zur Arbeitserledigung benötigen.</li> <li>- Die Einhaltung geltender Spielregeln wird von allen gleichermaßen eingefordert.</li> <li>- Alle Personen werden grundsätzlich in gleicher Weise behandelt.</li> </ul> <p><b>Bitte alle 3 Unterpunkte einzeln bewerten!</b></p>						
7. Wenn ich gute Arbeitsleistung bringe, erfahre ich von meinem direkten Vorgesetzten Anerkennung.						
8. Auch kritische Punkte werden respektvoll angesprochen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- von meiner Führungskraft</li> <li>- von meinen Kollegen</li> </ul> <p><b>Bitte alle 2 Unterpunkte einzeln bewerten!</b></p>						
9. Zur Erledigung unserer Aufgaben ziehen wir alle an einem Strang <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- im Team</li> <li>- im Bereich</li> <li>- über Bereichsgrenzen hinweg</li> </ul> <p><b>Bitte alle 3 Unterpunkte einzeln bewerten!</b></p>						
10. Ich kenne die Erwartungen meiner direkten Führungskraft an mich.						
11. Ich erhalte Informationen, die nachvollziehbar und verständlich sind.						
12. Ich kenne die Ziele des Unternehmens South Real Estate.						

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft voll zu)
13. Mein direkter Vorgesetzter handelt konsequent.						
14. Ich erhalte alle Informationen, die ich benötige, um meine Arbeit erfolgreich zu erledigen.						
15. Es wird sowohl über Positives wie Negatives gesprochen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unter den Kollegen</li> <li>- zwischen direktem Vorgesetzten und Mitarbeitern</li> </ul> <b>Bitte alle 2 Unterpunkte einzeln bewerten!</b>						
16. Wenn ich eine Kritik habe, spreche ich den Betroffenen direkt an.						
17. Kritik äußere ich auch gegenüber meinem Vorgesetzten.						
18. Ich erlebe eine offene, klare Kommunikation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- zwischen Führungskraft und Mitarbeiter</li> <li>- innerhalb des Teams</li> <li>- über Ressortgrenzen hinweg</li> </ul> <b>Bitte alle 3 Unterpunkte einzeln bewerten!</b>						
19. Ich werde fachlich unterstützt.						
20. Meine direkte Führungskraft kennt meinen Weiterbildungsbedarf.						
21. Meine direkte Führungskraft fördert meine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fachliche Entwicklung</li> <li>- persönliche Entwicklung</li> </ul> <b>Bitte alle 2 Unterpunkte einzeln bewerten!</b>						
22. Wer Leistung zeigt, erhält <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perspektiven</li> <li>- Unterstützung</li> </ul> <b>Bitte alle 2 Unterpunkte einzeln bewerten!</b>						

**Wenn Sie noch etwas zum Thema Unternehmenskultur mitteilen möchten (freiwillig) benutzen Sie gerne die Rückseite oder fügen Sie Blätter bei).**

Wir bedanken uns für Ihre Unterstützung. Bitte senden Sie den ausgefüllten Fragebogen direkt an Frau Nieswandt für die Auswertung (s. Deckblatt).



## **Teil 2 (Doktorarbeit Martina Nieswandt)**

Liebe Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter,

die Veränderung der Unternehmenskultur wird von mir im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit wissenschaftlich begleitet. Diese Doktorarbeit schreibe ich in Großbritannien an der University of Surrey, Guildford, die einen sehr guten Ruf unter anderem im Bereich der Managementforschung hat.

Bei meiner Beschäftigung mit dem Thema „Veränderung der Unternehmenskultur“ ist mir aufgefallen, dass die Rolle der mittleren Führungsebenen in der Forschung bisher so gut wie gar keine Berücksichtigung findet. Daher liegt hierauf mein Forschungsschwerpunkt.

Mit ist bekannt, dass Sie alle viel Arbeit haben. Dennoch bitte ich Sie herzlich, mich durch das ausfüllen des beigefügten zweiten Fragebogens aktiv zu unterstützen und mir diese Fragen offen und ehrlich zu beantworten. Sie würden mir damit einen großen Gefallen tun!

Meine Planung sieht vor, dass ich im Spätsommer meine Doktorarbeit abgebe und dann (hoffentlich) zum Ende des Jahres die mündliche Prüfung absolvieren kann. Im Anschluss daran, werde ich eine Zusammenfassung meiner Erkenntnisse erstellen, die ich Ihnen auf Wunsch selbstverständlich auch zur Verfügung stelle.

Ich bedanke mich bereits heute, dass Sie sich die Zeit nehmen, nicht nur den Fragebogen für Ihr Unternehmen sondern auch den zweiten Teil für meine Studien auszufüllen!

Wenn im Folgenden von mittleren Führungskräften die Sprache ist, dann sind in diesem Fall Mitglieder der Bereichsleitungen gemeint.

Vielen Dank!

*Martina Nieswandt*

## Teil 2 (Doktorarbeit Martina Nieswandt)

### Allgemeine Angaben:

#### Alter:

- Bis 30 Jahre   
 31-45 Jahre   
 46 Jahre und älter

#### Ich gehörte bis zum 30.09.2010 zum Ressort:

- Ressort I   
 Ressort II   
 Ressort III   
 Ressort IV   
 Ressort V

#### Dauer der Betriebszugehörigkeit (innerhalb der SUG):

- 1 – 5Jahre   
 >5-10 Jahre   
 >= 10 Jahre

#### Seit dem 01.10.2010 gehöre ich zum Ressort:

- Ressort I   
 Ressort II   
 Ressort III (a)   
 Ressort IV (a)   
 Ressort V (a)   
 Ressort VI (b)

#### Ich bin (bitte angeben- Danke!)

- Mitarbeiter/in ohne Führungsverantwortung   
 - Bereichsleiter/in   
 - Abteilungsleiter/in

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft/ stimme gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft/ stimme voll zu)
1. Für die Umsetzung einer gelebten Unternehmenskultur in unserem Unternehmen sind die mittleren Führungskräfte wichtig.						
2. Der Einfluss der mittleren Führungskräfte auf die Organisationskultur im täglichen Arbeiten ist hoch.						
3. Ohne das (kulturelle) Vorbild der mittleren Führungskräfte kann die Organisationskultur nicht verändert werden.						
4. Wenn die mittleren Führungskräfte die kulturellen Werte einer Unternehmung nicht teilen, kann sich die Organisationskultur nicht entsprechend verändern.						
5. Die mittlere Führungskraft ist Multiplikator der Organisationskultur.						
6. Die mittlere Führungskraft ist Übersetzer von kulturellen Informationen zu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mitarbeitern</li> <li>- anderen Führungskräften</li> <li>- Geschäftsleitung</li> </ul>						
7. Die mittlere Führungskraft ist Ausbilder für kulturbewusstes Verhalten.						
8. Die mittlere Führungskraft ist kulturelles Vorbild für andere.						
9. Die mittlere Führungskraft ist Feedback-Geber auch über Verhalten gemäß der vereinbarten kulturellen Regeln.						

Aussage	Bewertung					
	1 (trifft/ stimme gar nicht zu)	2	3	4	5	6 (trifft/ stimme voll zu)
10. Die mittlere Führungskraft hat viele Kontakte zu Mitarbeitern, Kunden und Vertragspartnern. Dadurch hat er/sie die Möglichkeit, deren Reaktionen wahrzunehmen und diese ggf. nach oben für Veränderungen zu verfechten.						
11. Die mittlere Führungskraft ist Moderator zwischen den Mitarbeitern und der oberen Führungsebene.						
12. Bitte bewerten Sie die o.g. Rollen nach ihrer Wichtigkeit, wofür 1 für die wichtigste Rolle steht und 7 für die am wenigsten wichtige. Jede Wertung darf nur einmal abgegeben werden. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multiplikator</li> <li>- Übersetzer</li> <li>- Ausbilder</li> <li>- Vorbild</li> <li>- Feedback-Geber</li> <li>- Verfechter (siehe Frage 10)</li> <li>- Moderator</li> </ul> <b>Bitte bewerten Sie jede Rolle!</b>						
13. Der Einfluss der mittleren Führungskraft, tatsächlich in ihren Bereichen eine kulturelle Veränderung einzuführen ist groß.						
14. Der Einfluss der mittleren Führungskraft, tatsächlich in ihren Bereichen eine stattgefundene kulturelle Veränderung nachhaltig mit Leben zu füllen ist groß.						
15. Die mittleren Führungskräfte füllen ihre Rollen jeweils angemessen aus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multiplikator</li> <li>- Übersetzer</li> <li>- Ausbilder</li> <li>- Vorbild</li> <li>- Feedback-Geber</li> <li>- Verfechter (siehe Frage 10)</li> <li>- Moderator</li> </ul> <b>Bitte bewerten Sie jede Rolle!</b>						
16. Die mittleren Führungskräfte sind in die Umsetzung der Organisationskultur aktiv mit einbezogen.						
17. Die mittleren Führungskräfte sind in ausreichendem Umfang in die Umsetzung der Organisationskultur einbezogen.						
18. Die mittleren Führungskräfte beachten bei ihren Handlungen kulturelle Aspekte.						
19. Die mittleren Führungskräfte thematisieren die Organisationskultur regelmäßig.						

Ich möchte mich persönlich bei Ihnen für Ihre Unterstützung bedanken. Ich weiß es zu schätzen, dass Sie sich die Zeit für diese zusätzlichen Fragen im zweiten Teil genommen haben!

*Barbara Münnow*

## **2. Survey on Corporate Culture**

—

**Please send the completed questionnaire directly to the person we have commissioned to conduct the evaluation by 31 March 2011 at:**

**GP Energy Project Consulting  
Mrs Martina Nieswandt  
T 6, 23-24  
68161 Mannheim**

**Thanks very much!**

## **Background and goals of the survey**

Dear members of staff,

Precisely one year ago, we conducted an employee survey to gain an impression of where our company stood in terms of the cultural vision which had been developed:

*By way of a culture of performance and success,  
expressed in respectful interaction, openness, clarity, encouragement and recognition,  
South Real Estate stands for outstanding products and satisfied customers*

At the time your managers informed you about the results and measures which had emanated from this. As announced, we would like to repeat this survey now, to work out what changes have taken place and what subject areas still need to be addressed.

On the basis of the discussions which took place then, we have made one of the questions more detailed, whereas the other questions correspond to the questionnaire from the previous year. Please fill in the questionnaire candidly and in full, especially Part 1. Our project will be accompanied scientifically by an external consultant, Mrs Martina Nieswandt. Please send Part 1 of the survey directly to Mrs Nieswandt. She will be carrying out the evaluation like last year.

As part of her dissertation thesis Mrs Nieswandt is asking some further questions, which you will find in the second part of the survey. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions as well to support Mrs Nieswandt with her doctoral thesis.

It is our firm intention to use the results of the survey to derive meaningful measures for strengthening our culture of performance and success characterised by respect, openness and clarity.

The more candidly and honestly you reply, the quicker and more clearly we will see how far we still have to go on this joint path and what issues we can tackle to get started.

Please return the completed questionnaire to Ms Nieswandt by 31 March 2011 at the latest.

Thanks very much in advance!

Signed by the CEO

## Method

Various statements are presented to you below. You should rate them on a scale of 1 to 6. Please proceed as follows:

Example:

Statement	Rating					
	1 (does not apply at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (applies totally)
Successes are celebrated at our company						

If you think this statement does not apply at all, then place a cross at 1. If you think this statement is absolutely applicable, then place a cross in box 6. Please use the scales from 2 to 5 for results in between. The basic principle is that values 2 and 3 express more of a negative tendency whereas values 4 and 5 are more positive.

Please carry out your evaluations clearly, i.e. do not give any scores of 2.5, 4.5 or similar. If you wish to change your rating, black out the wrong cross clearly to avoid errors in the assessment.

# Questionnaire for all members of staff (part 1)

## General information:

### Age:

- Up to 30 years
- 31-45 years
- 46 years and older

### Until 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2010, I was a member Of the following Department:

- Department I
- Department II
- Department III
- Department IV
- Department V

### Length of service with the company (within the Holding): Since 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2010, I belong to the following Department:

- 1-5 years
- >5-10 years
- 11 years and longer

- Department I
- Department II
- Department III (a)
- Department IV (a)
- Department V (a)
- Department VI (b)

### I am (optional!)

- employee without management responsibility
- division head
- department head

I work in the division or in the team (optional!): \_\_\_\_\_

Statement	Rating					
	1 1 (does not apply at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (applies totally)
1. If I notice something that could be improved, I take the initiative even if it does not relate to my personal area of work.						
2. Whenever I am particularly committed and/or take the initiative I receive support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- from my direct superior</li> <li>- from my colleagues</li> <li>- from other departments</li> </ul>						
<b>Please rate all 3 sub-points individually!</b>						
3. It is important to develop ideas and activities outside daily work too.						
4. In my working environment there are people who inspire others through their commitment.						
5. People who do not perform/performance badly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- are given support to improve</li> <li>- suffer the consequences if they do not improve</li> <li>- are confronted by their direct superior</li> </ul>						

Statement	Rating					
	1 1 (does not apply at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (applies totally)
<b>Please rate all 3 sub-points individually!</b>						
6. Everyone is treated equally fairly in my working environment. This means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the work groups are provided with the equipment they need to do the job <u>in the same measure</u>.</li> <li>- Everyone is equally expected to comply with the applicable rules.</li> <li>- All persons are treated equally.</li> </ul> <b>Please rate all 3 sub-points individually!</b>						
7. When I perform well I receive recognition from my direct superior.						
8. Even critical points are discussed respectfully: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- by my manager</li> <li>- by my colleagues</li> </ul> <b>Please rate all 2 sub-points individually!</b>						
9. We all pull together to get our work done <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in the team</li> <li>- in the department</li> <li>- across departmental boundaries</li> </ul> <b>Please rate all 3 sub-points individually!</b>						
10. I know what expectations my direct superior has of me.						
11. I receive information which is transparent and understandable.						
12. I know what the aims of South Real Estate and its divisions are.						
13. My direct superior is consistent in his/her actions.						
14. I receive all the information I need to do my work successfully.						
15. Both positive and negative issues are discussed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- amongst colleagues</li> <li>- between direct superiors and staff</li> </ul> <b>Please rate all 2 sub-points individually!</b>						
16. When I have a critical issue, I speak to the						



Statement	Rating					
	1 1 (does not apply at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (applies totally)
person concerned directly.						
17. I also express criticism to my superior.						
18. I experience open, clear communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- between managers and staff</li> <li>- within the team</li> <li>- across departmental boundaries</li> </ul> <p><b>Please rate all 3 sub-points individually!</b></p>						
19. I receive professional/technical support.						
20. My direct superior knows my further training needs.						
21. My direct superior promotes my <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- professional development</li> <li>- personal development</li> </ul> <p><b>Please rate all 2 sub-points individually!</b></p>						
22. Those who perform extraordinarily well are given <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- prospects</li> <li>- support</li> </ul> <p><b>Please rate all 2 sub-points individually!</b></p>						

**If you would like to add something on the subject of corporate culture (voluntarily), please use the back of this page or attach further sheets.**

Thank you for your support. Please send the completed questionnaire directly to Mrs Nieswandt for analysis (see title page).

## **Part 2 (doctoral thesis of Martina Nieswandt)**

Dear members of staff,

The change in corporate culture is being accompanied by me scientifically within the framework of my doctoral thesis. I am writing this doctoral thesis in Great Britain at the University of Surrey, Guildford, which has a very good reputation, amongst other things, in the area of management research.

When dealing with the subject of "Changing Corporate Culture", I noticed that the role of middle management has virtually been ignored in research until now. Therefore, this area will form the focus of my research.

I know that you all have a lot of work to do. Nevertheless, I would be grateful if you could actively support me by filling in the attached second questionnaire and answering the questions candidly and honestly. You would be doing me a big favour!

If all goes to plan, I will be submitting my doctoral thesis in late summer and then (hopefully) taking my oral exam at the end of the year. After that I will prepare a summary of my findings, which I can, of course, forward to you on request.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time not only to fill in the questionnaire for your company, but also the second part for my studies!

If middle management is referred to below, then members of the divisional management are meant.

Thanks very much!

*Martina Nieswandt*

## Part 2 (doctoral thesis of Martina Nieswandt)

### General information:

#### Age:

#### of the following Department:

- Up to 30 years
- 31-45 years
- 46 years and older

#### Until 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2010, I was a member

- Department I
- Department II
- Department III
- Department IV
- Department V

#### Length of service with the company (within the Holding): Since 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2010, I belong to the following Department:

- 1-5 years
- >5-10 years
- > 10 years

- Department I
- Department II
- Department III (a)
- Department IV (a)
- Department V (a)
- Department VI (b)

#### I am (please fill in - thanks!)

- an employee without management responsibility
- a division head
- a department head

Statement	Rating					
	1 (does not apply/I do not agree at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (applies/ I agree totally)
1. Middle management is important for implementing a corporate culture that is actively practised within our company.						
2. The influence of middle management on organisational culture in our daily work is considerable.						
3. The organisational culture cannot be changed without the (cultural) model of middle management.						
4. If middle management does not share the cultural values of a company, the organisational culture cannot be changed accordingly.						
5. Middle management is the multiplier of organisational culture.						
6. Middle management is the translator of cultural information to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- employees</li> <li>- other managers</li> <li>- the management</li> </ul>						
7. Middle management is the trainer for culture-conscious behaviour.						
8. Middle management is the cultural model for others.						
9. Middle management is the provider of feedback on behaviour commensurate with the agreed cultural rules.						
10. Middle management has a lot of contact with employees, customers and contractual						

Statement	Rating					
	1 (does not apply/I do not agree at all)	2	3	4	5	6 (applies/I agree totally)
partners. Therefore, he/she has the opportunity to observe these people's reactions and to champion them at the top to bring about change.						
11. Middle management is a facilitator between employees and upper management.						
12. Please rate the above-mentioned roles according to their importance, whereby 1 stands for the most important role and 7 for the least important. Each score may only be given once <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multiplier</li> <li>- translator</li> <li>- trainer</li> <li>- model</li> <li>- feedback provider</li> <li>- champion (see question 10)</li> <li>- facilitator</li> </ul> <b>Please rate each role!</b>						
13. The power of middle management to actually bring about a cultural change in their divisions is considerable.						
14. The power of middle management to actually sustainably inject life into a cultural change that has taken place in their divisions is considerable.						
15. Members of middle management each fulfil their roles appropriately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- multiplier</li> <li>- translator</li> <li>- trainer</li> <li>- model</li> <li>- feedback provider</li> <li>- champion (see question 10)</li> <li>- facilitator</li> </ul> <b>Please rate each role!</b>						
16. Middle management is actively involved in the implementation of organisational culture.						
17. Middle management is sufficiently involved in the implementation of organisational culture.						
18. Middle management takes cultural aspects into account in their actions.						
19. Middle management regularly broaches the issue of organisational culture.						

I would like to thank you personally for your support. I really appreciate that you have taken the time to answer these additional questions in part two!

*Barbara Reinhardt*

## Appendix 10 Return rates surveys I and II

### Survey I

returned question-naire without department	Department I		Department II		Department III		Department IV		Department V		Total							
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%						
staff	47	24	51,06	11	2	18,18	40	20	50,00	110	51	46,36	66	25	37,88	274	122	44,53
Management	6	2	33,33	2	2	100,00	8	3	37,50	6	11	183,33	5	4	80,00	27	24	88,89
without level	8	9		3			5			15			13					53
total return departments	53	35	66,04	13	7	53,85	48	28	58,33	116	77	66,38	71	42	59,15	301	199	66,11

### Survey II

returned question-naire without department	Department I		Department II		Department III		Department IV		Department V		Department VI		Total											
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%										
staff	10	60	33	55,00	54	11	20,37	43	19	44,19	28	31	110,71	78	20	25,64	36	9	25,00	299	133	44,48		
division head	5	4	80,00	3	3	100,00	3	2	66,67	0	0	0,00	1	0	0,00	1	0	0,00	1	0	0,00	13	10	
department head	1	3	300,00	1	1	100,00	3	3	100,00	3	2	66,67	4	2	50,00	3	0	0,00	3	0	0,00	15	11	73,33
without level	13	6		7			3			7			5										13	
total return departments	66	46	69,70	58	22	37,93	49	27	55,10	31	40	129,03	83	27	32,93	40	0,00	327	167	53,18				

## **Appendix 11 Results of ANOVA and t-tests**

Significances (Survey I) according to age

Scale	Distribution	N	M	SD	$\alpha$	Sum of squares	Eta squared	df	F	Significance
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	36	3.9683	0.83028	0.817	0.043	< 0.001	2	0.025	0.975
	31-45 years	99	3.9318	0.90844						
	46 years and older	52	3.9556	1.00866						
	Total	187	3.9454	0.91854						
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (7 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	36	4.2778	0.99617	0.847	0.228	< 0.01	2	0.112	0.894
	31-45 years	99	4.2617	0.94755						
	46 years and older	52	4.3427	1.12500						
	Total	187	4.2873	1.00401						
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	36	4.5208	0.97353	0.749	3.602	0.02	2	1.827	0.164
	31-45 years	99	4.4057	0.97624						
	46 years and older	52	4.7308	1.03711						
	Total	187	4.5183	0.99738						
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	36	4.2943	0.79724	0.787	0.606	< 0.01	2	0.454	0.636
	31-45 years	99	4.3276	0.75106						
	46 years and older	52	4.4427	0.94084						
	Total	187	4.3532	0.81411						
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	36	4.3750	1.33949	0.919	3.596	0.01	2	1.094	0.337
	31-45 years	98	4.0066	1.20894						
	46 years and older	52	4.0804	1.37266						
	Total	186	4.0986	1.28243						

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha; F = F-ratio

Significances (Survey I) according to length of service

Scale	Distribution	n	M	SD	$\alpha$	Sum of squares	Eta squared	df	F	Significance
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	1-5 years	64	4.1743	0.74810	0.817	5.689	0.06	2	3.481	0.033
	>5-10 years	47	3.7303	0.97632						
	>10 years	72	3.8971	0.97856						
	Total	183	3.9512	0.91622						
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (7 items)</b>	1-5 years	64	4.5603	0.86815	0.847	9.326	0.04	2	4.771	0.010
	>5-10 years	47	3.9802	1.08600						
	>10 years	72	4.2455	1.02209						
	Total	183	4.2875	1.00884						
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	1-5 years	64	4.6549	0.89579	0.749	3.009	0.02	2	1.489	0.228
	>5-10 years	47	4.3245	1.11061						
	>10 years	72	4.5486	1.02490						
	Total	183	4.5282	1.00789						
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	1-5 years	64	4.4164	0.74785	0.787	0.872	0.05	2	0.665	0.515
	>5-10 years	47	4.2470	0.86840						
	>10 years	72	4.3911	0.82300						
	Total	183	4.3629	0.80822						
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	1-5 years	64	4.4604	1.26683	0.919	14.313	0.02	2	4.511	0.012
	>5-10 years	46	3.8076	1.32905						
	>10 years	72	3.9289	1.20659						
	Total	182	4.0852	1.28371						

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha; F = F-ratio



### Significances (Survey I) according to level

Scale	Distribution	n	M	SD	$\alpha$	Sum of squares	Eta squared	df	F	Significance	
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	125	3.8658	0.89935	0.817	6.705	0.06	1	8.757	0.004	
	Executive under the board	24	4.4429	0.72998		Between groups		112.551			147
	Total	149	3.9587	0.89765		Within groups		119.256			148
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (7 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	125	4.1792	1.03276	0.847	6.089	0.04	1	6.199	0.014	
	Executive under the board	24	4.7292	0.72660		Between groups		144.400			147
	Total	149	4.2678	1.00837		Within groups		150.489			148
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	125	4.4340	1.01458	0.749	2.884	0.02	1	2.913	0.090	
	Executive under the board	24	4.8125	0.88234		Between groups		145.549			147
	Total	149	4.4950	1.00146		Within groups		148.434			148
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	125	4.2894	0.82949	0.787	2.865	0.05	1	4.431	0.037	
	Executive under the board	24	4.6667	0.65074		Between groups		95.057			147
	Total	149	4.3502	0.81341		Within groups		97.923			148
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	124	4.0168	1.35438	0.919	4.403	0.02	1	2.540	0.113	
	Executive under the board	24	4.4847	1.09138		Between groups		253.021			146
	Total	148	4.0927	1.32332		Within groups		257.423			147

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha; F = F-ratio

Significances (Survey II) according to age

Scale	Distribution	N	M	SD	$\alpha$	Sum of squares	Eta squared	df	F	Significance
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	33	4.1406	0.82121	0.795	2.362	0.02	2	1.826	0.164
	31-45 years	94	4.1236	0.78222						
	46 years and older	52	4.3806	0.83217						
	Total	179	4.2014	0.80784		116.163		178		
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (9 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	33	4.4736	1.10349	0.877	1.205	0.01	2	0.624	0.537
	31-45 years	94	4.4090	0.93091						
	46 years and older	53	4.5975	0.99435						
	Total	180	4.4763	0.98076		172.177		179		
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	33	4.6768	0.88161	0.799	2.657	0.02	2	1.509	0.224
	31-45 years	94	4.7012	0.92331						
	46 years and older	53	4.9607	0.99687						
	Total	180	4.7731	0.94096		155.830		177		
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	33	4.3896	0.71667	0.828	2.730	0.02	2	2.100	1.125
	31-45 years	94	4.4951	0.82381						
	46 years and older	53	4.7241	0.82602						
	Total	180	4.5432	0.81110		117.761		179		
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	33	4.7096	1.13003	0.917	1.432	0.00	2	0.553	0.576
	31-45 years	94	4.4924	1.11548						
	46 years and older	53	4.6352	1.17944						
	Total	180	4.5743	1.13440		228.919		177		
						230.350		179		
Middle management (section two of questionnaire; including board)										
<b>Importance of mm (4 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	32	4.8203	0.77832	0.826	2.921	0.03	2	2.060	0.131
	31-45 years	81	4.8601	0.77704						
	46 years and older	47	5.1436	0.98044						
	Total	160	4.9354	0.84757		111.301		157		
						114.222		159		
<b>Roles (9 items)</b>	Up to 30 years	32	4.3737	0.55307	0.897	0.435	<0.01	2	0.689	0.503
	31-45 years	81	4.4053	0.47382						
	46 years and older	47	4.5078	0.69320						
	Total	160	4.4290	0.56067		49.547		157		
						49.982		159		



Significances (Survey II, part one) according to length of service

Scale	Distribution	n	M	SD	$\alpha$	Sum of squares	Eta squared	df	F	Significance	
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	1-5 years	66	4.3605	0.84491	0.795	2.210	0.02	2	1.693	0.187	
	>5-10 years	39	4.0915	0.69072							<b>Between groups</b>
	>10 years	65	4.1563	0.83389							<b>Within groups</b>
	Total	171	4.2207	0.81133	<b>Total</b>	111.245		169			
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (9 items)</b>	1-5 years	67	4.6107	1.02243	0.877	1.460	0.01	2	0.762	0.468	
	>5-10 years	39	4.4161	0.85657							<b>Between groups</b>
	>10 years	65	4.4248	1.00126							<b>Within groups</b>
	Total	171	4.4956	0.97768	<b>Total</b>	162.497		170			
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	1-5 years	67	4.8172	0.95316	0.799	0.555	<0.01	2	0.309	0.735	
	>5-10 years	39	4.6859	0.92608							<b>Between groups</b>
	>10 years	65	4.8256	0.95513							<b>Within groups</b>
	Total	171	4.7904	0.94399	<b>Total</b>	151.491		170			
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	1-5 years	67	4.57904	0.74859	0.828	0.221	<0.01	2	0.176	0.838	
	>5-10 years	39	4.5101	0.79068							<b>Between groups</b>
	>10 years	65	4.6052	0.83246							<b>Within groups</b>
	Total	171	4.5703	0.78708	<b>Total</b>	105.314		170			
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	1-5 years	67	4.6555	1.13187	0.917	0.611	<0.01	2	0.237	0.789	
	>5-10 years	39	4.5513	1.20741							<b>Between groups</b>
	>10 years	65	4.5249	1.09343							<b>Within groups</b>
	Total	71	4.5821	1.13002	<b>Total</b>	217.080		170			
Middle management (section two of questionnaire, including board)											
<b>Importance of mm (4 items)</b>	1-5 years	64	5.0091	0.78807	0.826	0.444	<0.01	2	0.303	0.739	
	>5-10 years	41	4.9350	0.81042							<b>Between groups</b>
	>10 years	53	4.8868	0.96397							<b>Within groups</b>
	Total	158	4.9488	0.85273	<b>Total</b>	114.163		157			
<b>Roles (9 items)</b>	1-5 years	64	4.4456	0.50691	0.897	0.231	<0.01	2	0.355	0.702	
	>5-10 years	41	4.3863	0.56703							<b>Between groups</b>
	>10 years	53	4.4861	0.63989							<b>Within groups</b>
	Total	158	4.4438	0.56755	<b>Total</b>	50.572		157			

<b>Influence (2 items)</b>	1-5 years	62	4.3306	1.03601	<b>Between groups</b>		0.646	2	
	>5-10 years	39	4.1667	0.89834	<b>Within groups</b>		174.384	150	0.283
	>10 years	52	4.2596	1.21466	<b>Total</b>		172.029	152	0.754
	Total	153	4.2647	1.06385					
<b>Realisation (11 items)</b>	1-5 years	63	4.0638	1.10312	<b>Between groups</b>		2.382	2	
	>5-10 years	39	3.7614	0.91294	<b>Within groups</b>		164.586	151	1.093
	>10 years	52	3.8760	1.06153	<b>Total</b>		166.969	153	0.338
	Total	154	3.9238	1.04465					

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD36 = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha; F = F-ratio

**Significances (Survey II) according to level**

Scale	Distribution	N	M	SD	$\alpha$	Sum of squares	Eta squared	df	F	Significance
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	132	4.1249	7.79972	0.795	6.048	0.06	2	4.707	0.010
	Division head	10	4.7667	0.89112						
	Department head	11	4.6364	0.73718						
	Total	153	4.2036	0.82082						
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (9 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	133	4.4403	0.97694	0.877	3.825	0.03	2	2.053	0.132
	Division head	10	4.7667	1.03498						
	Department head	11	4.9899	0.71225						
	Total	154	4.5007	0.97190						
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	133	4.7719	0.89594	0.799	4.757	0.03	2	2.685	0.71
	Division head	10	4.7750	1.40658						
	Department head	11	5.4545	0.99886						
	Total	154	4.8209	0.95142						
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	133	4.5679	0.74618	0.828	2.785	0.03	2	2.437	0.091
	Division head	10	4.9250	0.98460						
	Department head	11	4.9886	0.63849						
	Total	154	4.6212	0.76304						
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	133	4.6105	1.13075	0.917	2.498	0.01	2	0.974	0.380
	Division head	10	4.6667	1.45721						
	Department head	11	5.1061	0.76111						
	Total	154	4.6496	1.13234						

Middle management (section two of questionnaire)

<b>Importance of mm (4 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	113	4.9410	0.79648	2.721	3	0.297
	Division head	10	5.3250	0.50069	100.065	137	1.242
	Department head board	5	4.6500	2.05852	102.786	140	
	<b>Total</b>	141	4.9846	0.85685			
<b>Roles (9 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	113	4.4799	0.59484	1.165	3	0.346
	Division head	10	4.4763	0.37076	47.814	137	1.112
	Department head board	5	3.9875	0.94724	48.978	140	
	<b>Total</b>	141	4.4595	0.59148			
<b>Influence (2 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	109	4.2431	1.04884	4.422	3	0.280
	Division head	10	4.9000	0.96609	151.900	133	1.290
	Department head Board	5	4.1538	1.14354	156.321	136	
	<b>Total</b>	137	4.2920	1.07211			
<b>Realisation (11 items)</b>	Employee without managerial responsibility	109	3.9719	1.02342	2.702	3	0.462
	Division head	10	3.8714	1.21655	138.766	133	0.863
	Department head Board	5	3.2545	0.69651	141.469	136	
	<b>Total</b>	137	3.9472	1.01991			

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha; F = F-ratio

**Significances (Survey II) according to change of department**

Scale	Distribution	n	M	SD	$\alpha$	Significance	t	df	Significance (two-tailed t-test)	Eta square
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	No change	71	4.4732	0.83820			3.952	190	< 0.001	0.08
	Change	121	4.0069	0.75934	0.795	0.369	3.851	135.343	< 0.001	
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (9 items)</b>	No change	71	4.8396	0.92754	0.877		4.288	191	< 0.001	
	Change	122	4.2233	0.98275		0.188	4.354	153.450	< 0.001	0.09
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	No change	71	5.0704	0.93368			3.708	191	< 0.001	
	Change	122	4.5444	0.95989	0.799	0.270	3.735	149.809	< 0.001	0.07
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	No change	71	4.8587	0.69723			4.394	191	< 0.001	
	Change	122	4.3519	0.81323	0.828	0.058	4.575	164.916	< 0.001	0.09
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	No change	71	4.8603	1.06967			2.893	191	0.004	
	Change	122	4.3657	1.18714	0.917	0.073	2.974	159.044	0.003	0.04

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha



T-test total

Scale	Distribution	n	M	SD	$\alpha$	Significance	t	df	Significance (two-tailed t-test)	Eta square
Culture of performance and success (9 items)	March 2010	202	3.922822	0.9150915	0.817	0.128	-2.928	392	0.004	< 0.001
	March 2011	192	4.179427	0.8188897	0.795		-2.936	390.594	0.004	
Respectful interaction and recognition (9 items)	March 2010	202	4.263465	1.0140505	0.847		-1.837	393	0.067	< 0.001
	March 2011	193	4.450207	1.0055751	0.877	0.919	-1.837	392.454	0.067	
Clarity (4 items)	March 2010	202	4.484752	1.0161493	0.749		-2.517	393	0.12	< 0.001
	March 2011	193	4.737927	0.9813855	0.799	0.280	-2.519	392.953	0.12	
Openness (8 items)	March 2010	202	4.345149	0.8023146	0.787		-2.410	393	0.016	< 0.001
	March 2011	193	4.540518	0.8088938	0.828	0.641	-2.409	391.863	0.016	
Encouragement (6 items)	March 2010	201	4.061592	1.2749939	0.919		-3.940	392	< 0.001	< 0.001
	March 2011	193	4.547409	1.1672995	0.917	0.106	-3.947	391.120	< 0.001	< 0.001

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha

T-test manager

Scale	Distribution	n	M	SD	$\alpha$	Significance	t	df	Significance (two-tailed t-test)	Eta square
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	March 2010	77	4.011688	0.9395959	0.817	0.463	-1.848	135	0.067	<0.001
	March 2011	60	4.299167	0.8548333	0.795		-1.870	131.738	0.064	
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (9 items)</b>	March 2010	77	4.399351	0.9743626	0.847		-0.411	135	0.682	<0.001
	March 2011	60	4.471500	1.0742452	0.877	0.434	-0.406	120.460	0.685	
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	March 2010	77	4.567143	1.0199121	0.749		-0.299	135	0.765	<0.001
	March 2011	60	4.662500	1.1533160	0.799	0.166	-0.291	118.620	0.771	
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	March 2010	77	4.431818	0.7538441	0.787		-0.299	135	0.609	<0.001
	March 2011	60	4.475000	0.9363678	0.828	0.166	-0.291	111.555	0.615	
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	March 2010	77	4.134286	1.1406386	0.919		-1.340	135	0.183	<0.001
	March 2011	60	4.408000	1.2432213	0.917	0.537	-1.325	121.277	0.188	

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha

T-test staff

Scale	Distribution	n	M	SD	$\alpha$	Significance	t	df	Significance (two-tailed t-test)	Eta square
<b>Culture of performance and success (9 items)</b>	March 2010	125	3.868080	0.8990916	0.817	0.243	-	255	0.016	<0.001
	March 2011	132	4.125000	0.7994077	0.795	-	2.424	247.733	0.016	
<b>Respectful interaction and recognition (9 items)</b>	March 2010	125	4.179760	1.0326809	0.847	-	2.416	256	0.038	<0.001
	March 2011	133	4.440602	0.9770904	0.877	0.568	2.085	252.517	0.038	
<b>Clarity (4 items)</b>	March 2010	125	4.434000	1.0145832	0.749	-	2.081	256	0.005	<0.001
	March 2011	133	4.771955	0.8958875	0.799	0.037	2.840	247.481	0.005	
<b>Openness (8 items)</b>	March 2010	125	4.291760	0.8292117	0.787	-	2.829	256	0.005	<0.001
	March 2011	133	4.570075	0.7463208	0.828	0.110	2.837	249.068	0.005	
<b>Encouragement (6 items)</b>	March 2010	124	4.016452	1.3542527	0.919	-	2.828	255	<0.001	<0.001
	March 2011	133	4.610301	1.1306152	0.917	0.016	3.826	240.260	<0.001	
										3.802

Note: n = number of surveys returned; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; df = degrees of freedom;  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha

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