A psychodynamic approach to individual learning and personal development in organizations:

How can the concept of organization-in-mind and Gregory Bateson’s type III learning help to explain organizational member’s personal growth?

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0.1 Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to an explanation of single individual learning and personal growth of employees in organizations. The work represents a literature review that strives to build a bridge between the realm of business, this means working in an institution, and the realm of personal growth and personality development. For this reason, a psychodynamic approach will be reconciled with the learning framework of Georgy Bateson, especially his type III learning.

Based on psychodynamic considerations especially those of Melanie Klein, it will be argued that external events can shape inner reality and vice versa. It will be illustrated that personal traits including autobiographical factors as well as what happens to a worker and how he or she interpret it, can have an influence on their way of seeing their own person and the world around. No employee comes to work as a blank sheet. On the other hand, also what happens in a company during the process of fulfilling tasks, making decisions, meeting expectations and rules by cooperating with other human beings, can have an influence on a worker's reality.

This interplay will be pooled in a concept called organization-in-mind where an organization is not seen as something external but something internal. It is treated as a mental object inside the psyche of a worker which is shaped by external events and their unique interpretation by the individual employee. It will discussed that the organization-in-mind can say something about the person holding it because the interpretations can be seen as a product of past experiences of a worker. How a person responds to a certain context can be rooted in already learnt behaviour. Being aware of the existence and gaining knowledge of this mental picture can be a chance to learn something about oneself and lead to personal growth.

In order to help explaining how growth of a personality can look like, the ideas of Georgy Bateson are introduced. His considerations take into account the complex nature of human communication. I have chosen his type III learning because it goes beyond only changing values or actions but addresses a redirection of one-self in an existential sense. By revealing unknown learnt behaviour, thought patterns or belief systems, a person can gain more freedom and scope of action to consciously choose how to react to internal and external stimuli. This can finally result in a redirection of how one used to see the world and their own existence. Maybe one becomes a wiser person by reflecting honestly and openly on what happens to one through and at work.

Key words: individual learning, personal growth, psychodynamics, Gregory Bateson, wisdom
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0.2 Foreword

“A man walking is never in balance but always correcting for imbalance.”

Gregory Bateson

Whether we are conscious or unconscious about it, we as humans, are constraint to choose. Following the ideas of Frankl in this regard, a person has the last freedom of choice. This means that I can decide how I, as a self-conscious human being, take a stance towards what happens to me. This can be seen as the last freedom we have in every situation no matter how precarious it may be. This thought is crucial when reading this thesis because personal growth means being aware and actively taking responsibility to use of this freedom more consciously. For this reason, I want to give a short but rather extreme example borrowed from the American psychoanalyst and novelist Allen Wheelies (1975). It may help to understand what is meant by having the last choice and being free within determination.

We can imagine a man standing in the long line for the gas chambers at Auschwitz. He sees the sign at the door, the man in front of him says “Showers”, but he knows what really happens there. The man now has an inside struggle within himself. He is struggling between shouting out “They will kill you! Run!” or saying nothing at all. In this very moment this option is his whole life. If he shouts he will die immediately by getting shot, if he remain silent he will die some minutes later in the chamber. From an outside perspective, history can label him as a sole victim, with no freedom but only constraints. However in the consciousness of the man it makes an important and great difference whether or not he experience having a choice. If he does not perceive this option he can’t live his freedom. He then only sees the constraints and thinks “nothing is possible.” On the other hand, if he realizes that he has a last freedom to choose, he can commit to this freedom to the last breath. This can be seen as the centre of learning and personal growth, which means to broaden the scope of choice on how to take a stance (internal and/or external) to whatever circumstances one is facing.

A leader for instance can and even has to set goals and restrictions, can caution for errors or as a ultima ratio, fire people. What makes the difference is the inner attitude chosen towards one’s actions. I can use my power to guide and encourage people because I can see things in them they do not realize yet or I can abuse my power for self-aggrandizement. If I have to fire somebody after several warnings, I may have to because otherwise my team would fall apart. I argue, the main point is, if the difficult situation I am currently faced with, is important to me or not. Making the decisions that someone will lose his job can be hard and though and I
may have to deal with contradicting forces inside myself. If I choose to look at myself and the situation I face in a consciously and brave manner, I may realize that it is me who is deciding. Finally, even if I don’t like to fire him or her, I have to because I used my freedom, even in pain. This realization can be hurtful but can help me to mature and grow. It is up to me to understand myself, handle and bear the uneasiness or the tragedy of the situation.

This introspection, also with help from others, is in the author's view the basis for understanding oneself the world around one. If I am feeling unworthy, I probably tend to put people down on my level by insulting or blaming them. On the other extreme I can try to push myself up, pretending I am a hero, making no mistakes at all, not to feel and cover my felt unworthiness. I, personally, strive for enhancing my inner peace with myself and others. I believe that compassion towards oneself is a decision that can be taken. It is the requirement for being compassionate towards others.

I think that this attitude can be applied to the organizational realm too. It is one strong belief of mine that work can be more than the exchange of lifetime and effort against money. I think that work activities and how people treat each other at their workplace can be used to promote human development and support people to gain new competences, new insights about themselves and others. I believe it is possible to work effectively and efficient and at the same time not lose emotional connection. These firm believes are the main reasons that guided me to write this thesis with the focus on personal growth. I strive to attribute more understanding and give insights about this issue. It may be one building block used to improve the lives of people in organizations.

In order to help explaining what this could look like, I focused on learning from a psychodynamic perspective. I am a fan of novel and inventive sources. This is why I discuss ideas of the Austrian-British psychoanalyst Melanie Klein. Her object relations theory inspired other scientists like Hutton, Bazalgette and Reed to think of the organization as a mental object inside the psyche of an organizational member. In addition to that, the ideas of the British anthropologist, social scientist, linguist, visual anthropologist, semiotician, and cyberneticist Gregory Bateson also influenced my thoughts about life in general and left marks throughout this thesis. I would not claim to fully grasp all his ideas because of their finesse. His learning framework and his application of logical types towards the nature of communication was a rich source for the development of NLP, the understanding of schizophrenia as well as therapy in general. Also Argyris and Schön were inspired by Bateson when developing their famous single-and double loop learning approach.
In this work I assume that there is no absolute truth, rather different subjective perspectives. Watzlawick (2011) and Foerster (2013) mentioned how dangerous it can be to not know that one holds a reality but not the reality. The ambition of this work is to emphasise this subjective way in order to take responsibility for oneself, one's world-view and freedom on how to respond to internal and external circumstances. Self-development can lead to self-knowledge and maybe to more tolerance towards different views and opinions. It can help to understand oneself and the way one deals with others in a more detailed way and finally bring a person to a state of humbleness about the mystery of life and to wonder about being conscious about being conscious. Acknowledging the not-knowing, the constant flux of life and the invitation of lifelong learning.

Throughout the thesis different examples are given in order to illustrate, sometimes quite abstract considerations. The focus was to provide a general theoretical understanding of the psychodynamics that can occur when people come together in an organization, at work, in order to pursue a certain goal. It should deepen awareness that an organization can be seen as a mental construct that is influenced by interaction and external events and also shapes those. To learn in this regard means to explore, acknowledge and possibly question or change one’s way of seeing the organization and through this, also oneself.

It is crucial to mention that this master thesis does not cover specific how to practices regarding personal development and growth. Nevertheless it can be suggested that such a process should be accompanied by educated therapies, coaches and trainers and would take several weeks or even months. It could be helpful to create a holding environment for the client that is willing to find out more about his or herself. The application can be useful for mentoring programs for leading positions. Also it could be supportive to conflict management when personal motives of clients play a crucial role in long lasting conflicts. Anyway the examination about what and how methods can be applied can be part of a dissertation or other further work.

0.3 Introduction and Overview

Probably science can never fully grasp what the organization is as such but a scientist can strive to improve and connect theoretical models. In this work I strive to help to improve the model by applying a psychodynamic approach towards individual learning and personal growth. Following Schulze & Stabell (2004) learning and the creation of knowledge cannot be separated from human actions. We can argue that what people know is continuously shaped
by individual as well as social practices. What we can learn and know is seen as bound to interactions of and between human being and can therefore not be managed as a separate object: In other words: To understand what it means to learn and to create knowledge it is crucial to understand human beings and their interactive processes (Nonaka et al., 2008). In this thesis, learning is seen as strongly bound to and interwoven with the individual human being. Considerations about what learning can mean and how we can learn to learn are seen as an opportunity for personal growth. For this reason there are six main chapters which build on each other. The line of argumentation starts from the bottom up, illustrated in the graphic below. The bold letters show the name of the chapter whereas the boxes inside represent the main topic of each chapter.

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The first chapter is about psychodynamics. This approach takes into account the unconscious and unacknowledged factors of the human psyche. The aim should be to give a basic knowledge and understanding of what mental objects are and how they can emerge. It will be discussed that mental objects are connected to feelings, thoughts, wishes, expectations and desires. For this reason this chapter should give an overview on the psychological forces within us and how people can deal with them and in order to handle them better than worse. By dealing with psychodynamic considerations it can discussed how a person is able to understand and acknowledge his/her own thoughts and feelings and by this can increase self-awareness. Observing own behaviour actively bears contradictory and unpleasant feelings which can lead a novel understanding of a situation.

For this the psychodynamic theories like the structural model of Freud, splitting, projection, projective identification and paranoid-schizoid and depressive position are part of this chapter. It will be discussed how external events can turn into inner mental objects and that people metaphorically swallow external circumstances. Further it will be mentioned that people use social defence mechanism in order to protect themselves. If too extreme, social defence mechanism can lead to a distortion of reality, where individual perception get blurred and detection and correction of errors are inhibited. Furthermore this may lead to the narrowing of one’s perception. This can be curial in situations such as firing employees. Here the management is confronted with the challenge of being though and firing people. This can be connected to feelings of guilt and anxiety. Instead of bearing this burden, external consultants could be hired to do the work or the management engages in playing good cop, bad cop. From the employee's perspective, the sword of Damocles is hanging over their heads with the fear of who will be the next one fired. The constant threat can lead to uncertainty and a paranoid state, where every message and information will be checked in order to prove who will be fired or not. Also workers can tend to reduce their uncertainty by seeing other colleagues as inferior. This may allow them to live under the illusion of “they but not me, will be next”. Here the focus is on the individual level. The collective level such as group dynamics by Bion (1961) are not taken into account. Regarding this concept unconscious processes occur in groups as well, but it would break the mould to discuss that in detail here. However, for a general understanding of the topic, the work experiences in groups from Bion can serves a good literature source.
The second chapter discusses a socio-psychodynamic model that links the psychodynamic approach with the realm of work. It will be discussed that, from a psychodynamic standpoint, doing a task at work can raise anxieties of failure. The question is how an institution deals with this phenomenon. If unable to process anxiety properly, the organization respectively the individuals tend to resort to social defence mechanism. They often result in a working-relationships which is less personal, emotional plane and the feeling of personal responsibility can decrease. Although bringing relief in the short run, such working-relations can get dysfunctional or at worst, provoke neurotic behaviour in the long run.

Furthermore, it will be argued that the sole use of psychoanalytic knowledge could lead to insufficient attention to the structure of an organization and would be too narrowly considered for understanding its complexity. Instead organizations and groups are considered as social-technical systems. In the discussed model, an organization is meant as a collective that commonly agreed to carry out certain functions in order to fulfil a primary task. This task means the reason, the purpose why the organization exists. Derived from that there is a primary risk of failing to fulfil the task. Failure is inter alia possible because one can never anticipate all consequences nor have all the relevant information when making a decision. This circumstance can lead to anxieties that institutions try to process. If anxieties get too strong and are not bearable any more, they have to be processed via social defence mechanism. This can result in changed work structures. In other words: internal forces shape externality. For instance there can be high pressure and risk in intensive care unit. The staff there is confronted with anxieties connected with daily tasks. A simple mistake could have mortal consequences. As a result work routines can be changed in order to have less direct and empathic contact to clients. Observed from outside such developments can convey the impression of irrationality and ineffective in pursuing the purpose of the institution. For employees defences can lead to some relief and provide stability. Nevertheless in the long run they can lead to even more guilt and anxiety.

In chapter three the realm of complexity theory helps to round up the phenomena that are discussed in the first two chapters. It is said that through their interconnectedness and complexity, individuals as well as groups are not per se predictable. This means that if and what kind of social defence mechanism emerge, cannot be said in advance. It will be discussed that systems like a group in general need some degree of chaos to perform change. This means that a crisis can be a chance to find creative solutions and to learn. On the other hand, too much irritation can lead to uncertainty and rigidity, intensifying the crisis. The aim
is to find the right balance between stability and instability. If a person or a group is able to tolerate unpleasant feelings long enough to realize and reflect on them they can bring about change. Instead of instantly acting on those feelings, there is a chance for learning. A breakdown can be used to gain new understanding and insights. This is crucial because the risks of failure, uncertainty and anxieties exists. For this reason these phenomena should not be neglected. On the contrary it seems to be worth to deal with them in order to change something for the better.

To further grasp this possibility of change it makes sense to examine the psychodynamics of work as well. They deal with understanding what it can mean for an individual to participate in an institution. Hence in chapter four it will be argued that work can have a socio-psychological function. Deranty (2009) for instance argues that work itself – the performance of a task or job by a subject – can serve a function because one has to adapt to different circumstances. By this he means that by going to work, social integration is possible. The subject is facing objective and social constraints during work (rules, regulations, expectations, different requests and moods of other human beings) that he or she has to handle or adapt to, to some degree. Peculiarities have to be left or change to some degree as an employee enters the realm of work. In other words: the performance of work is one way an individual has to relate to the world. This means that work can have a psychological function, people are compelled to adapt.

Combining the psychodynamic theory with considerations about the adaption, we come to the fifth chapter. It is about the concept of organization-in-mind based on Hutton et al. (1997). The organization-in-mind represents a mental image inside the psyche of a single worker or employee. It is what the individual perceives in his or her head how activities and relations at the workplace are organized, connected and structured and how colleagues and interactions with them are perceived and classified. It will be discussed that external events can shape inner reality as well as inner mental objects can have an influence on external events. Dynamics are seen as circular, as interactions can shape the organization-in-mind and the other way round. What is inside can shape the outside and vice versa. This is to say that the concept deals with internal stimuli as well as external stimuli and their interplay. This constant interaction can form an inner representation about how an individual member perceives “the” institution he or she works in. In other words: The mental object inside the member’s psyche. The result is a model in my own head, it is my reality. An organization, is here meant as
something that is experienced by its members. One cannot point to it because it is not something outside but immaterial.

It will be argued that the perception of the organization-in-mind is bound to the single individual and that different people interpret the same situation differently. As a result every person has a more or less distinct mental image of what the organization is. To acknowledge that there are different mental pictures which can help to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunication by talking about something common but meaning something different. For this reason it will be discussed how the organization-in-mind can help to explain to understand why and for what people behave as they behave. This is to say that working with the organization-in-mind is a possible way to reveal individual factors of the person that created it. In other words: How one sees his or her organization can say something about oneself. The connection between me as the creator of the organization-in-mind and the events at work as a main building factor, can represent a chance to explore my inner world and own idiosyncrasies. Eventually knowledge about the construction can be a chance to re-construct it anew. It will be discussed that talking about how one thinks, feels and describes the organization one is working in, can be a rich source of information and can help to explain how personal growth with an extension of scope of action is possible. By discovering how this mental object was constructed, a re-interpretation of past events and different interpretations in future is be possible. One may come to realizes that one has a, but not the image and that others have different realities. In other words: The organization-in-mind as a constant synthesis of external factors that get interpreted by a unique person, can allow to deduct information about the individual. This can result in advanced self-awareness, where a person can reach a state of extended individual autonomy. He or she has more freedom and possibility to consciously choose how to react to internal and external stimuli.

This brings the line of argument to the realm of learning and personal growth. Learning is in this work discussed as the individual and constant renegotiation on how a person relates to what happens to him or her. It can mean to step out of the used and familiar way of thinking (Peschl, 2007). Hence learning is here seen as dynamical and transformational process (Antonacopoulou, 2001). It can lead to personal growth, a change in personality and deeply ingrained habits and finally to more tolerance and compassion towards oneself and others. To address this of learning and personal growth, the sixth part discusses the learning framework of Gregory Bateson. Especially his type II and type III learning are taken into consideration. At first it will be discussed that in their common learning theory Argyris and Schön neglect
aspects why people defend themselves. In their single- and double loop approach, they deal with the fact that people try to avoid embarrassment but they do not go further. This means that they do not consider the issue of anxieties and do not ask why people try to defend themselves. It will be argued that examining these points can help when it comes to learning and personal change because the request to learn can hurt and when under stress, people tend to regress psychologically.

This is why learning in this thesis deals with psychological regression, anxieties and defence mechanism. In order to do so, the complexity of human communication has to be taken into account. Bateson’s considerations help seeing communicative acts as happening on different logical levels. This is to say that the role of patterns of relationships, certain contexts, feelings and meta-communication have to be considered as well. It will be argued that meta-communication and the role of context are about the negotiation of pattern of relationships. This is to say that there is an urge for humans to know how the communicative partners relate to each other. It is about the meaning, the classification spoken words have. It will be discussed that the context of a situation can determine how following actions and words are interpreted and that people have learnt how to respond to certain contexts in a certain manner. This means that the process of learning is also social and related to contexts and can shape one's reality. For instance a person that, as a child, made the experiences that authority means danger, will, when facing an authoritarian relationship at work, probably and habitually (re)act as if the new contexts exhibit the same pattern of relationship as during infancy. Basically the person is not able to make a distinction between past and present contexts.

With Type II and type III learning of Bateson, it is possible to help to explain that a person can learn about the context in order to distinguish it from past experiences. Inner governing rules, principles and thought patterns can be revealed. A person can experience reasons why he or she reacted as he or she reacted, gain more freedom to choose on how to react from now on. It will be argued that with this a point is reached where one discusses the issue of how people perceive the world and themselves in it. In other words: Learning acquires an epistemological character and consists of more than learning a skill. People have their framework or schemata and central to this is their so-called self. This is meant at the level where one is oneself in an existential sense, beyond personal and characteristically traits. Learning of this kind means to discover how one-self is learning. It is about learning how to learn, to consider questions on how do I learn and how do I know. Learning is considered as going beyond changing the individual action or underlying values. It is about changing
personality in an epistemological matter towards personal growth. It will be discussed that a person can learn to see with new eyes, where old concepts of how the world ought to be got tested and perhaps replaced by new, more appropriate one's. Finally this process can lead towards more wisdom about oneself and the world one lives in.

0.4 Relevance

“No work is possible without the active involvement of the workers”.

(Deranty, 2009, p. 81)

We can assume that a (business) organization is more than rational economic calculation like efficiency and effectivity. Rather it can be seen as a result of inter alia psychic and human elements like wishes, feelings, expectations, blockades, resistance and enthusiasm (Baecker, 2003). When working in an institution one can be confronted with individual and collective unconscious and sometimes irrational processes. Such processes can manifest themselves in external events as well as the individual personality of an organizational member. They can shape how one perceives his or her institution. Basically, the firm can frame the person as well as the person can frame the firm. This is important in when it comes to questions of culture and when conflicts arise.

Regarding Adams (1994), the organizational culture approach does not account for unconscious mechanism in a sufficient manner. Even though inter-subjective aspects are taken into account, there is, regarding her, a reduction of elusive phenomena to visible data in order to grasp them (Adams and Ingersoll, 1990; Barley, Meyer and Gash, 1988). This means that the attempt to understand and examine a culture via visible data like working routines, company logo, room arrangements or behaviour in meetings, is operating with the outcomes of underlying dynamics but not with the cause of them. For instance through social defence mechanism and group dynamics, organizational culture can be shaped too, whereas the roots can be found in the psychodynamic and unconscious realm. We can say that they can have roots in peoples mind. In other words: What is seen as culture can be inter alia the outcome of inner processes. The way how people perceive their organization, the way how people interact with each other and unwritten rules of a company can be rooted the minds and personalities of persons. People adapt to certain situations and this adaption is to some degree a product of already learnt experiences. At the same time, every member participates in the constant
production of what can be called organizational culture by even this adaption. But who is adapting?

Starting at the single individual, most members of a company are mature and they have already assimilated a set of believes about themselves, others and the world. They do not arrive as a blank sheet and already established believes have a strong influence on how, what and why they learn or do not (Mezirow, 1997). The way how people think and feel about “their” company is part of their identity (“I am a HR-Manager…”) and belongingness (“… and I work at company XYZ”).

Acknowledging that can be crucial when it comes to conflicts in organizations because the way of interpreting and acting towards externality is often deeply ingrained in the psyche of a person. For instance, two leaders have a deep and long lasting conflict about what windows the new company building should get. They fight with each other and avoid constructive collaboration. We can argue that such behaviour is not only harmful to the company but beyond rational reasons. The real conflict is probably not about the windows, but about who has more power, more to say (von Hertel, 2009). A possible leader identity could be: “I am a strong leader, worked here for more than ten years and subordinates see me this way. I did so much for this company and for that reason my choice is the only right one and has to be realized.” In this case there might be no detection and distinction of personal feelings like haughtiness that enable a consciously chosen reaction that have the broader picture – the company and colleagues interests – in mind. Here the argument is that a rational way of solving this (like pro-contra argumentation) is even not possible or not enough, since personal needs and wishes are involved. This can lead to a lose-lose position in Friedrich Glasl’s model of conflict escalation. The last step in this framework is called “Together into the abyss”. Here personal annihilation is accepted in order to defeat the opponent (Glasl, 2013).

Now one can say that it would be of interest why there is destructive spiral. In this particular case why there is a need of being superior over the other and wherefore this behaviour occurs. So one could ask why a leader sticks so long to such a minor decision. There is the argument that there is a need for appreciating the human psyche and its interplay with its surroundings. This seems to be crucial when it comes to understanding why or wherefore people behave as they behave or by what or wherefore work structures are the way they are (Lohmer, 2008). Seeing it this way, individuals in organizations are not assumed to be completely rational nor irrational. There is both in constant interplay and to ask for the root or purpose of what can be observed can lead to the human psyche with its dynamics and mental objects.
In sum psychodynamic considerations can be helpful to broaden the understanding of conflict situations. In addition to that, considering psychological aspects when trying to understand organizational culture, can help to deepen awareness about inner causes of behaviour. When working in an institution with other human beings, unconscious and sometimes irrational feelings and actions can occur. As uncomfortable as they often are, to bracket them out, does not alter their existence. On the contrary, more understanding about psychological processes can help to use a broader range of information. This can help to handle or solve conflict situations or a crises differently. A certain amount of people spend about 40 hours per week in a working environment, what they experience and how they adapt to it can be used for their personal development. For this reasons this work should provide a theoretical consideration in order to help explaining individual learning in the realm of business organizations. If applied in practice, this may help to improve lives and can unveil misunderstandings regarding interaction, communication and collaboration. As already mentioned, it is possible to utilise these concepts for therapy and coaching based mentoring programs for leadership positions. In addition to that one can argue that, in general, wise(r) persons in a company can handle complex situations in a nuanced way and are more creative regarding solutions for challenges and obstacles.

0.5 Research so far

The discussed socio-psychological and psychodynamic mechanisms do not represent objective data but rather subjective and intersubjective one. Nevertheless they can still be measured qualitatively to deduce scientific insight. Over time the attention of organizational theory shifted towards the subjective perception of the world in and of institutions. This can be seen by the movement around organizational culture and in general by an interest away from directly observable “objective” data towards “intersubjective” one (Diamond, 1988). New approaches like that of Weick (1995) or Morgan (2006) include a more abstract, namely cultural perspective.

Besides that, the literature on organizational learning strives for integrating the individual as well as the organizational perspectives. Researches focus on organization and management development, strategic management and organizational culture. Learning is seen as a never ending process, where new information is challenging existing ideas and so on. Novel perspectives on the future create new routines through a dialogue. People show themselves their meaning structure to each other (Dixon, 1994). Research taking into account cognitive
limitations (see inter alia: Levitt & March, 1988; Kahnemann, Slovic & Tversky, 1982) as well as prior learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Weick 1995). Further political games are considered (Pfeffer, 1981) as well as cultural and structural aspects of organizations (Levinthal & March, 1993; Salaman & Buttler, 1994). All these were seen as barriers to efficient learning. To be effective and efficient, learning is about the detection and correction of errors (Argyris, 1976). Whereas Weick & Westley describe learning as disorganizing and increasing variety. For them organizing is to forget and to reduce variety (Weick & Westley, 1996).

No matter if one strives to forget and reduce variety or trying to disclose errors, there are in any case human beings involved. One way to take into account the human factor into organizational studies is by reflection and considerations of identity. It can be said that the aim of reflection is to develop insights from past events and to apply them to future actions. It is to step back from experience and to observe oneself during perceiving the world (Berman, 1990). It is this a process of cognitive as well as emotional quality where learning occurs as the individual develops conclusions in order to use a different approach regarding the external world (Daudelin, 2000).

One result of reflection can be the emergence of creating an identity. Regarding Albert (1977) and Kofman & Senge (1993), the individual identity depends upon both, a personal part and a part that is shaped from relationships with others. Organizational identity deals with the question of how member define the organization and their identification with it (Gioia & Thomas, 1996). Members agree on the meaning of an organization by sharing basic assumptions to routinely coordinated action (Schein, 1985). Thus, there exists a mutual interdependence between psychological processes of individuals on the one side and organizations on the other side (Turner, 1987).

One can derive from that, that organizational identity is rooted in participants need for identity. The organization is, similar to the single human being seeking to maximize self-esteem in order to have a stable identity. In addition to that identity can be threatened when it comes to reflecting and challenging the status quo. For this reason the human psyche uses defence mechanism to obtain and protect its identity the same way as organizations do via social defence mechanism (Brown & Starkey, 2000). According to psychodynamic considerations, every request to learn may cause a narcissistic wound to the persons psyche and the institution since one has to admit imperfection (Lohmer, 2008). We can conclude from this, that a request to learn or personal change per se is often not without psychological
resistance. In order to get insight on how external events can influence internality, a theoretical psychodynamic overview is given in the first chapter. As some of these influences occur unconsciously, the structural model of Sigmund Freud serves as a starting point.

1.0 The theory of psychodynamics

“...But I'm a million different people from one day to the next...”

Bitter Sweet Symphony – the Verve

1.1 Model of personality by Freud

The psychodynamic theories and methods described and applied in this thesis are mostly rooted in psychoanalytical theories and findings of Freud. His psychoanalytical approach is the basic theory in order to understand unconscious processes in the human psyche (Halton, 1994). For this reason his model is shortly discussed here. His model of personality describes three basic elements that work inside and are inter alia influenced and shaped by the outside world.

![Diagram of Freud's model of personality](https://sites.google.com/site/aboutschizophrenia/psychoanalysis-theory)

The element at lower left represents the ID. It consists of wishes, desires and drives. Most of these activities happen unconsciously and automatically. For instance the desire for food...
comes automatically and one has not to consciously think about it. Its working principle is that of pleasure. By this is meant everything one is wishing for. The SUPER-EGO represents the moral self. Social beliefs of what is judged as right or wrong are part of this. It is mainly established from the outside by socialization and education and works through the principle of what ought to be. The instance in between is the so-called EGO. This instance can be seen as the feeling of being a person and having an identity. The task of the EGO is to balance impulses coming from the ID with moral standards established by the SUPER-EGO. It functions as a constant mediator between different and often contradicting stimuli. For instance a person feels the desire to eat a second piece of cake. In addition to that the SUPER-EGO judges this desire as greedy. The in between, the EGO has to mediate those impulses. It thereby underlies the principle of reality, where things happen consciously such as thoughts, logic and comprehension (Freud, 1944). We can conclude, that even though our human psyche, especially our identity, seems stable to us, it is a product of steadily rebalancing forces. Those dynamics are called psychodynamics.

1.2 Psychodynamics and the unconscious

Again, the term psychodynamics is rooted in the psychoanalytic theory by Freud. Basically, psychodynamics describe the relationships between different psychological forces in one’s psyche. Freud, amongst others, discovered that there are also hidden and not acknowledged aspects of the humane psyche. Even though not experienced consciously, such mental processes influence conscious processes. Unbeknownst to a person they cannot be controlled. For instance, the avoidance of conflict can represents a situation where unpleasant feelings get pushed underground instead of displaying anger or resentment frankly and properly. Without conscious awareness the SUPER-EGO can judge and block impulses coming from the ID. As a result, one may not say what one actually wants to say. Naturally, it also depends on the situation if this is helpful or not. So it might be clever to block impulses of saying swear words.

As mentioned in the structural model such mechanisms can be influenced and shaped by external events. Therefore, psychodynamics nowadays takes into account the interaction between psychic and social spheres (Ahlers-Niemann, 2007).

This means that if a person suppresses and denies the existing anger, he or she might do this because the expression is evaluated as socially inappropriate and negative consequences are expected. For instance there could be the danger of a social and a self-made judgment like:
“You are such a negative person.” The individual then has to handle that in order to maintain a stable identity. On the one hand there is the feeling of anger. On the other there is the need of not being judged negatively by colleagues. One question that can be raised now is: What identity has a person then? Angry, cowardly, socially intelligent? One can argue that they are all part of it. Nevertheless they are contradicting and not all comfortable. In order to solve that dilemma the person may represents values and actions of honesty, integrity and calmness. This makes it possible to still see and show oneself as a calm and positive person. In other words: If the person lies to others as well as to itself at least there is an stable enough sense of identity.

In sum the described mechanisms are so-called social defence mechanism. They serve a psychological function and are all parts of unconsciously driven motivation and action (Antonacopoulou, 2001).

1.3 Defence mechanism

1.3.1 Individual level

To be able to establish and maintain a well-balanced and stable identity, the human psyche uses social defence mechanism. Fundamentally, defence mechanism are engaged in order to avoid psychic pain, resolve conflicts and to support and increase self-esteem (Brown, 2000). To do so sometimes unpleasant and unwanted feelings have to be pushed out of one's own inner world. To get them away they can not only be suppressed but split up or projected onto other people. An important work that is concerned with how defences work is that of Melanie Klein. It will be discussed here in order to explain how people deal with unwanted mental states.

The following considerations are mainly based on what can happen during infancy. It is clear that not infants but adult work in institutions. Nevertheless we all behave like infants at times and according to psychodynamic theory especially when exposed to tricky situations. Under stress people tend to regress to such early development states. The aim of this chapter is therefore to provide a basic and general understanding of how external events can shape individual perception - especially via the creation of mental objects. These theories are later employed to the field of learning and to the realm of work in organizations.
1.3.1.1 Theories of Melanie Klein

Melanie Klein developed the theory that infants tend to project their young ego from pain and uncomfortable states by splitting up unwanted and dangerous elements. These elements are then projected onto another person. In psychoanalytical terms it will be projected onto another “object” (Klein, 1975).

1.3.1.1.1 Splitting

One example for splitting and projecting are children in play. Often a child represent different feelings through different characters or animals. Creations of the “only good fairy” and the “pure bad witch” can be examples for this. In order to relief from internal conflicts between contradicting emotions like hate and love, the infant not only splits the emotions, it projects them to other –outside- objects. This is crucial because sometimes a new-born faces that the mother, perceived as a never ending source of love, is sometimes not available. In order to deal with that, the child’s hate and frustration as well as the love towards the parent a re “outsourced”. This means that now a mother-picture consisting of a “good fairy” and a “bad witch”. All in one person. The child then attributes feelings of affection to the fairy-image inside the mother and hate towards the witch-imagination (Klein, 1975). A similar process to splitting is called projective identification.

1.3.1.1.2 Projective identification and introjection

The term projective identification consist of two parts. The projective- and the identification part. The first one is described by the human ability to use different sensory channels in order to send signals. Signals can include words, facial expressions, meta-communication and intonation. Attributing own unwanted feelings from person A to person B is a projection. If A receives the signals from the psyche of B, there is an identification with B. This means that the receiver literally swallows the sent signals and integrates them in his or her mental world. In psychodynamic terms person B created an introject (inner object) with what has been sent by A. When this finally leads to an alternation, respectively a manipulation of B's state of mind, the projective identification has succeeded. The subject identifies itself with the introjected object coming from the external. This is possible only if the recipient has free capacities and resonates with what the sender has sent. In other words: Sender and receiver both have unconsciously agreed, that the receiver must have a certain feeling about something. Only on this hidden agreement a projective identification is complete (Lazar,
2004). As a result this can lead to an inner world consisting of all the experiences we made since embryonic state. In other words: Via proactive identification inner objects called introjects can emerge. They represented what was outside and are now part of the person. In general everything that is perceivable via senses can be introjected. Whereas every introject has a certain context and a unique feeling. It can be loved, heated or feared. To influence behaviour, the person needs to identify integrated objects. These can provoke feelings of envy or rivalry, or feeling such as pride or inferiority, depending on the situation one is confronted with (Lazar, 2004). So in sum introjects can be a psychic integration of external events. They can represent a way where something from outside the person gets inside the person. These theoretical considerations are of importance because as will be argued in chapter five also the organization can be an introject of its members. Now two main mental position that infants can face during their development will be discussed and how they can occur in a company in rounds of dismissals.

The first is called paranoid-schizoid position: back to the realm of infancy, the whole pool of phenomena like splitting, projection and identifying by infants was summarized by Klein (1975) under the position of “paranoid-schizoid”. The word paranoid refers to the chasing part of anxieties and schizoid to the splitting character against anxieties. For example: a child is totally dependent on adults to survive. In its first six months, it is not able to perceive a difference between its body and the external world. It perceives its mother and itself as being one entity. For this reason a new-born that cries unsuccessfully because of hunger, perceives a fear of death. The danger of not getting enough or no food at all is life-threatening. As there is a unity for the child, its own massive anxiety is split and projected onto mother or father. The child gets paranoid about the danger and the possible consequences as well as about its' originally own feelings of rage and hate that were then perceived as being in the parents (Klein, 1975). After about six months a change can occur. This is because the infant is now able to distinguish between its own self and other persons.

The so-called depressive position is reached. This means to have the ability to perceive polarity. Own feelings can eventually be assigned and integrated to oneself and do not have to be split and projected onto other objects. This is to give up the comfortable simplicity of projecting and facing the complexity of internal and external reality. For instance when the child realizes that the parent is a distinct person with own feelings like guilt, feelings of sadness or hate about the splitting and projections can come up in the infant (Halton, 1994). This kind of sadness is the reason why the word depressive is used but not in the common
way of adult melancholia. Instead it represents the ability to have ambivalence and to be able to care for someone that is not oneself and may feel different. The child evolves a broader tolerance regarding the conflictual nature of human relationships. This is crucial because later in life, to have reached the depressive position, sets the basis for tolerance, caring, repairing and help. It can be argued that this is a point of maturity and the foundation of a creative way of living. Further it can help to pursue aims in a constructive manner (Lazar, 2004). The possibility of losing a job from both, the employee’s and the management’s view, will illustrate those dynamics.

**Employee perspective:**

The realistic possibility of losing one’s job can be seen as an occasion to develop a paranoid position. This can result in an active search for things and symbols in order to find the inevitable. Staff lives in a constant state of threat and uncertainty, where everything that happens will probably be tested to find out if it has any significance regarding the firing scenario. Also fantasies, that one is a victim of the next string of lay-offs, can emerge. A schizoid position on the other hand, would be to split up and project these uncertainties about job-security in order to live in an illusionary reality with the credo: “that will not happen to me.” Here colleagues can be seen as inferior, so they are the ones getting fired, not oneself (Lazar, 2004).

**Management perspective:**

To fire people that were attached to the company for years or who may have a family to provide for is an extreme burden to the conscience. This is why management can sometimes face feelings of guilt and anxiety. In contrast to the staff, they are in the paranoid-schizoid position because of their position as bearer of bad news. They can be afraid of possible results of firing a person. To get rid of these unpleasant situation, precarious decisions were often translocated into working groups and not bound to the people affected. Ungrateful tasks get delegated to consultants from the “outside”. This procedures spares the management to get directly confronted with existential fear, shame or rage by their staff. But if there is no direct contact to the persons fired the paranoid-schizoid position is hard to overcome. In order to reach a depressive position one needs to be emotionally concerned. Without any emotional connection there is no empathy and no consolidation is possible. On the one hand the act of firing requires a sufficient level of aggression and emotional coldness. This can lead to a situation where the firing process creates an ambivalence in the management. This can result in two different roles in a company. One is fulfilling the paranoid-schizoid role, which is
appropriate to do the dismissal. The other consists of being the person that offers compassion and consolation, acting out of the depressive position (Lazar, 2004).

Eventually it is important to mention that defence mechanism in general are needed to keep a stable feeling of identity and therefore psychological healthiness (Kohut, 1971). Such mechanism can be functional, necessary and helpful to regulate conflicts that arise during the development of a stable ego and identity. They get problematic if they are used excessively (Lazar, 2004). They then have a negative contribution to psychological health and are symptoms of pathological disorder (Brown, 2000). Here the focus is not on the pathological side like serious mental-illnesses. The processes are discussed because they can occur in everyday life and in organizations. One can face them in different graduations in between the paranoid-schizoid positions and the depressive position. The purpose is to give a basic understanding of the possible interplay between externality and internal causes from a psychodynamic perspective.

1.3.1.1.3 Conclusion

The psychodynamic considerations discussed here should provide insight and help to explain how external “things” like the feelings of other people can be integrated in one's mind. Simply said, how can the outside get to something inside and what consequences are possible. It should help to gain understanding of the nuances regarding the relationship between external objects and the inner world of human beings. Again, those processes often happen automatically and unconsciously in order to cope with an otherwise consciously intolerable situation (A. Freud, 1966; S. Freud 1949). To get relief from strong feelings like anxiety, anger and conflicting feelings such as love and hate for the same person, individuals tend to split, project and identify in interplay with fellow human beings. Most of the time, the originator as well as the people involved are unaware about the nature of the defensive acts and the consequences they bring about (Argyris, 1982). So one can argue that defence mechanism help to see a problem or the difficult emotion not in oneself but in others, because this is the easier way out. What are the consequences?

If individual social defence mechanism get too extreme, they can lead to a distortion of reality, where individual perception gets blurred and the detection and correction of errors are inhibited. Also one’s perspective may be narrowed. This is due to the diminishing attention to events that do not fit to what is expected, when faced with threatening or unexpected situations (Mezirow, 1997). The possibility of losing one’s job was serving as an example for
these dynamics. Whereas the employees can get paranoid and search anxiously for evidence that they are the next ones fired, the management can be in a dilemma between being tough, doing the hard work of firing and feeling guilty when deciding on the fate of some employees. As a consequence there could be a distortion of reality at both sides, including a black-or-white mentality or an incapability of differentiation between the self and others (Halton, 1994). This can also happen in groups and institutions (Sievers, 2001).

1.3.1.1.4 Considerations towards learning

One possibility to overcome can be found in acknowledging the existence of defence mechanism and understanding their working principles. When a person knows that projections and introjects can exists he or she can start to explore and question them. This can be one way of how a psychodynamic approach can enrich theory about the learning of individuals. Maybe as a result, a person can overcome a paranoid-schizoid position full of fear to reach a depressive position with the ability to handle uncomfortable states of mind differently. Instead of projection, a person could develop a broader tolerance for the complex nature of human relationship. This could include that:

“… we can tolerate the feelings long enough to reflect on them, and contain the anxieties they stir up, it may be possible to bring about change.” (Halton, 1994, p.17)

Whereas tolerating feelings here means not to passively suffer but rather actively bear a uncomfortable situations. This is to say that one gets more knowledge and control over one's way of seeing the world. This may lead to more awareness and an ability to let contradictive and unpleasant feelings co-exist. The process develops to resign a narrow an anxiety-driven perspective to a more differentiated and holistic view, a more realistic understanding of a situation (Hutton, et.al, 1997). From this perspective learning can consist in using the opportunity to test fantasies against facts, instead of assumptions and projections as a main source of information (Lazar, 2004). This way a persons can develop more awareness of projections and introjects (Halton, 1994). In other words: if a person is able to understand and acknowledge own thoughts and feelings, self-experience increases. Own behaviour can be observed in response to what is going on around one in the workplace (Allcorn & Godkin, 2011). Awareness is thereby the first step, since testing fantasies against facts includes utterances to inform other people. The willingness to share own self-experience including feelings of anxiety or anger is not easy at all. Leaders, brave enough to make themselves
vulnerable by showing their insides are often respected for their wisdom and insight (Allcorn & Godkin, 2011). Once expressed, one can test if anybody else shares the them or feels differently. In any case, knowledge enables to encounter that would not be available otherwise (Halton, 1994).

Before examining the topic of learning in more detail, it seems important to extend the psychodynamic consideration to the realm of work. On this basis the following chapter will discuss how psychodynamic theories can be enriched with socio-psychodynamic considerations. The focus is to explain how anxiety is connected to decision making and performing tasks at the workplace. People have to deal with uncertainty, the risk of being wrong and incomplete information. It will be discussed that this can lead to unpleasant states of mind and that those can influence external structures like work-routines in order to bear them. For this reason, the Tavistock theory is discussed in the following chapter. This theory helps to enrich the psychodynamic theory towards the social realm of work.

2.0 Socio-psychodynamics in Organizations: Tavistock Theory

“Water which is too pure, has no fish.”

Zen proverb

2.1 History

This theory was initiated at the Tavistock Clinic in London. In the beginning of the 1920's, some professionals voluntarily worked in the clinic about one day per week to pursue psychodynamic treatments. The aim of the institute was multidimensional: to offer treatment, to do research in order to improve prevention and to teach skills. In comparison to other hospitals at that time, the staff included not only physicians, neurologists and psychiatrists, but also psychologists, social workers and anthropologists. This was the foundation of a combination between medical and social sciences that represents a distinguishing feature of this theoretical framework.

After the war the British government was worried about the productivity levels in the economy. An Industrial Productivity Committee was founded with single training projects. One of those projects tasks was to learn and conduct research about unconscious group processes at the workplace. This paved the way to a precise recognition of unconscious forces and how negative effects in institutions could be mitigated. According to the elaborated theory, organizations and groups are considered as social-technical systems. They can be seen
as a result of the interaction between a task itself, the appropriate techniques, the technology to fulfil that task and the social and psychic world of the organization and its members. Simply said, both views, the social and the psychoanalytical are considered in this theory. Solely working from the psychodynamic angle can heighten the general awareness and sensitivity to unconscious dynamics but without creating appropriate conditions in order to use these new insights. The sole use of psychoanalytic knowledge could lead to insufficient attention to the structure of an organization and would be dysfunctional for the understanding of its complexity (Amado, 1995). Hence, a lack of a conditional-framework to process and handle new conscious information leads to feelings of depression and frustration (Menzies, 1990). On the other side, if only the social perspective is taken into account, already existing psychological determinants like unconscious needs, are probably not met by the new structures (Obholzer, 1994). In order to take this into account, a systemic psychodynamic approach, acknowledges not only peoples psyche and their unconscious processes but also the circumstances at work. This covers the context of work including roles, tasks, strategies and structures (Amado, 1995).

2.2 The Model

The model illustrated here was proposed by Larry Hirschhorn and is based on the purpose of a firm and how it deals with fulfilling it. In this model an organization is meant as a group of people that have agreed to carry out functions in order to fulfil what is called a primary task (Hirschhorn, 1994).

2.2.1 Primary task

This task represents the origin and the purpose of why the organization exists. It is a primary a heuristic term that is bound to an ongoing discussion about what the aim of an organization is and in what direction it wants to steer. General associated questions can be: “What is your primary task?” “Why and for what purpose do you exist?” and “How good gets it accomplished? For instance the primary task of a transport service can be to bring people safely from A to B.

This concept becomes more detailed because every system or subsystem has, in every moment, a task that the system was established for - the ensemble of all single primary practices (Hirschhorn, 2000). This is crucial in order to decide how one should fulfil his or her own job and how to measure performance (Rice, 1958, p. 32f.). Knowing the primary task of
a whole organization can enable to evaluate if an individual task contributes directly to the primary task or not. We can think about the transport service and a possible idea of the quality-standard department that argues for an enhancement in bus-engine-service. The task followed can include a higher amount of technician working hours. That would lead to higher ticket prices. So the company is faced if the idea of the single department and if the included tasks serve the primary task of the whole company or not. We can see that there are often conflicting aims between different departments in one and the same organization. This is why the concept of the primary task is strongly bound to the business strategy. This makes this concept a key function regarding the interaction between members of an organization including leaders and their subordinates (Obholzer, 2000). Once confirmed, the primary task sets limits to the organization and its members. Within these limits, the psychological needs of members determine the culture, structure and mode of functioning of an organization (Menzies, 1970). This is subsumed by a primary risk that consist of inter alia decisions that have to be made by single individuals in order to fulfil the general intent of a company.

2.2.2 Primary risk

Seen from an individual level, the primary risk of a company to fail can inter alia depend on the single decisions taken. Seeing it this way, the primary risk can represent the uncertainty a person is experiencing when confronted with the possibility and risk to choose the wrong task. In other words: The felt risk by a worker to make – in regards to the primary goal of the company – a wrong decision. This can include to do something that is, at the end, not doable or not participating to the overall primary task of the institution. This risk seems to be ever present and it can be helpful to look at it from an existence-philosophical standpoint.

One can say that in the moment when a human being is aware of the possibilities it has, a conflict and a dilemma begins between good or bad, right or wrong (Kierkegaard, 1980). This goes in line with Derrida, who stated, that every decision is always a moment of madness. This is owed to the fact, that one simply can never have all the information needed, nor can one anticipate all possible consequences (Clegg et al, 2017). That means that a fully responsible decision is never characterized by full certainty and security (Weiskopf, 2004). In sum this can lead to a situation of ambiguity and consideration. Hence this can be a burden for employees no matter if blue-collar or white-collar. The knowledge of not-knowing, not having full certainty, can lead to a feeling of anxiety. The line of argument is that it can be crucial how people in an organizations handle anxieties that are connected to their work and tasks. For this reason the term anxiety will be disused here.
2.2.3 Anxiety

“Anxiety may be compared with dizziness. He whose eye happens to look down the yawning abyss becomes dizzy. But what is the reason for this? It is just as much in his own eye as in the abyss, for suppose he had not looked down. Hence, anxiety is the dizziness of freedom...“

(Kierkegaard, 1980, p. 72)

For grasping the nature of anxiety it is first crucial to draw a distinction from fear. This is relevant because the term anxiety is, at least in German language used inflationary. For instance, “Angst vor dem Krieg” is exactly spoken “Furcht vor dem Krieg”. This is because fear relates to something. In contrast to that, anxiety is in general perceived as vague, abstract and undirected (Mentzos, 1984). The characteristics of being “unexplored” and “unpredictable” differentiates anxiety against fear. This goes in line when looking at the term anxiety from an existential philosophical perspective, where anxiety is described as indefinable for the subject in the inherent moment. In other words: anxiety is frightening inter alia because it is not fully and really graspable. It does not refer to something definite. The frightened person cannot simply determine clearly to what the anxiety relates to (Heidegger, 2007).

Applied to decision making, the freedom to choose can be similar to the possibility of possibility. We have possibilities to decide about other possibilities (possible actions). This scope of uncertainty and not fully calculable risks makes the term anxiety not clearly definable and therefore different to fear (Kierkegaard, 1980).

From a psychological standpoint one can say that it would be irrational to not feel anxious about uncertainty or risk. This can be a normal reaction. Conscious awareness of what Freud called “signal anxiety” (Emanuel, 2000). Anxiety seen as an emotion, should give an impulse and motivate to move, to do something, to get “in motion”. It can lead to precautions and can increase attention. Applied like this anxiety can be healthy, whereas at the other end of the scale, it can become a force that gets chronic and disabling. Then we talk about an “anxiety disorder” (Kahn, 2001). For this work, the term anxiety is used as a sense of a threat to fundamental human needs. This could be the need to be emotionally safe and feel connectedness with others, to not feel helpless. This way anxiety can be described as a frightening sense of being in an unexplored scenery in the presence of unpredictable strangers (Odgen, 1992). In other words: One is overwhelmed by a situation, not able and to make full
sense out of what is happening within and around oneself. This can get visible when forced to making an important decision. The person has to deal with the uncertainty of the outcome, with the fact that not all factors can be controlled and the risk of doing wrong. This speculative quality characterize anxiety. One simply does not know and cannot grasp it and that can be cruel.

So far it has been discussed that an organization can have a primary task. This is the overall purpose of why the company exists and what it wants to contribute. In addition to that every single task in a company can be compared to the overall task of the institution. With fulfilling the task there is the risk of failure. This could be in form of unpredictable chances in the environment or through wrong decisions. I was further argued that the performance of a task entails making decisions. As there never is full certainty and security about the correctness of a decisions, this can lead to anxieties. As decision makers we cannot estimate all the consequences a certain choice may bring about but nevertheless we are to some degree forced to decide. This can be a burden for human beings and can influence organizational culture and working structures. In order to illustrate what and how this can look like an example of the firm Apple is given here.

2.2.3.1 Example of Apple

In the mid of 1990, Apple was in a process of swaying between two different definitions about what their primary task should be. The question was if the firm should continue to be the huge innovator or if it should become a mainstream computer-producer with affordable prices for a huge range of customers? The answer to this question was of enormous importance since every task follows this entrepreneurial decision. If the corporation wanted to be competitive regarding prices, it should have others competitors allowed to clone the Mac. One consequence of that option would have been to quit high profit margins. Instead, profits would have been generated through high quantities and through establishing its operating system as a standard in the industry. The second choice would have been to not allow the Mac to be cloned, continuing to earn high margins and to maintain being an innovator. Already plans existed were Apple should be divided into two different companies. One for hardware and one for software. It was never realized but it shows how the companies’ decision makers were torn in between the alternatives facing and the risks of every option (Charlton 1997).

To get an idea of the situation and how it was perceived by the parties involved, the story about the Macintosh in 1990 can be helpful. At that time the Macintosh-OS had a totemic
status within the corporation. Suggestions made from programmers about improvement of the software were seen as betrayal and not “Maclike” (Moosberg, 1996). A connection became apparent between rigidity on the one side and fluctuation on the other side. Steve Jobs was even polarizing inside the company. He split the company by raising the Macintosh-team as something sublime compared to other departments. The team was above rules and regulations, a pirate flag was hoisted up to mark their different status. One hypothesis, supported by Guy Kawasaki, one of the important decisions makers at the time, was that Apple did not possess the capacity to handle another revolution like the Macintosh (Kawasaki, 1990). In sum we can argue that the reason for the divergence on the primary task at Apple lay in leaders' inability to let go the past success and let this part of the company history come to an end. The fact that a lot of pleasure, enthusiasm and identity was invested in this successful times, may have led them to perceive ambivalent feelings toward the Macintosh. To overcome that, a rigid code of conduct was established in order to suppress new innovation, not because of fear but because the Macintosh was seen as perfect. Form a psychodynamic perspective they were not able to confess their hate beside, and especially in contrast to that, the love that they felt regarding the famous Macintosh-project (Hirschhorn, 2000). One reason why their dilemma remained covered can be seen in the threat of negative consequences regarding the decisions and the anxiety about the whole situation.

2.4 Menzies study

“Every social defence depersonalizes relationships at work and distorts the group's capacity to accomplish its (primary) task”

(Hirschhorn, 1988, p. 10)

In the hospital, as the object of investigation, the well-established view was that every nurse should be able to serve every patient. In Menzies eyes, the term and the profession of a nurse was idealised, were it was a matter of fact that one is born as a nurse, and not made. To protect the nurses from too stressful emotional involvement, patients were in the nurses view transformed to tasks that have to be performed. This objectification of the subject client was visible because the nurses spoke about “the liver in bed ten” instead of Mrs. Mayer that suffers of liver cirrhosis. As a result, the relationship between the nurse and the patient got less empathic. Also a patient was cared for by a number of different nurses but no nurse was particularly responsible for any patient. This redistribution of responsibility helped the nurses to handle anxieties involved with their task. In turn the change of being less concerned with
patients triggered feelings of guilt. The nurses were not able to treat every patient as an individual any more.

In addition to that, there were also consequences in how work was structured. To eliminate the risk of making mistakes, rigid procedures, even for relatively trivial tasks like giving pills, were established. There was use of an extensive sequence of double and triple cross-checkings for giving pills and syringes. Consequently, these practices led to a demoralising culture with irrational procedures, self-doubt and the lack of opportunities for taking initiative. The social defence mechanism were maladaptive in fulfilling the primary task of the hospital effectively. As a result high drop-out rates under the student nurses emerged. Still, the conflicting culture was long standing and difficult to deal with. The defences reduced the burden only on a short term basis. After all, the anxiety level among the staff remained high and the work culture deteriorated (Menzies, 1970).

2.3 Conclusion

In the Tavistock model at the beginning of this chapter it is illustrated that anxieties have to be processed in some way. If is not possible for an organization respectively the individuals to process uncomfortable and painful states properly, social defence mechanism can start to operate. As a consequence working-relationships could get less personal, emotional plane and personal responsibility can decrease. From a short term perspective defence mechanism provide relief, but in the long run, working-relations get dysfunctional or at worst, provoke neurotic behaviour (Lohmer, 2008). The Macintosh example discussed that the people at Apple were not bear and deal with contradicting emotions and feelings. Anxieties and insecurities led to a dilemma that inhibited effective leading. Another famous example was that by Isabel Menzies. In this study Menzies explains how participants in a teaching hospital for nurses operated with different defence mechanism against uncertainty, fear and guilt. In order to deal with this situation social defence mechanism occurred. There was for instance an objectification process going on that allowed the nurse to keep emotional distance to the suffering patients. Whereas the emotional disconnection again lead to feelings of guilt by the nurses and possible change the working relationship again. In sum we can say that the way emotions are connected and intertwined to the task at work and vice versa are from complex nature. For this reason it can help to take into considerations some principles of complexity theory.
3.0 Connection to complexity theory

“..Because the nature of mutual shapings cannot be known until they are witnessed.”

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 208-209)

The first element discussed here is emergence. It means that complex phenomena develop over time and therefore can not be discovered in advance. If one assumes that social defence mechanism as well as the creation of introjects are considered under this concept, one can derive that the development of strong interconnected systems like an individual inside a complex working environment are not per se predictable (Reason & Godwin, 1999). In other words, we cannot know in advance in what direction an organization or an individual steer - what phenomena will occur at what time will form. Following complexity theoretical considerations, one has to find out what pattern emerge over time. It is not possible to predict in advance what will happen due to the uniqueness and the highly dynamic interactions between interdependent components. In this case, the single individual in his or her working environment consisting of other colleagues, structures, tasks and risks.

As a consequence strict planning and setting-up narrowly defined goals beforehand can be not enough. Working with individuals as well as with groups is seen as a process of deep experimental engagement and is accompanied with unbiased curiosity. Giving up some control and expectations is required. Metaphorically speaking, this attitude is comparable to what Morgenthaler (1987) wrote about the psychoanalytical way of investigation. He describes the process of inquiry as seeing a table at a party. There were a lot of participants that celebrated, danced, drunk, ate, stole and got crazy. The analyst is like a delayed guest that does not know what happened exactly or why. The only things he/she sees are some outcomes or artefacts. Applied to individuals in organizations, groups and members are not already gone guests at a party that is already over. They are still in active celebration and thus cannot predict in detail how and what the party will be like, due to its high complexity. The outcome emerges over time like a way originates during walking in a untouched field.

Secondly, the term chaos is discussed. From the stance of complexity theory it means that emergent processes can occur in a space described as “edge of chaos”. This is to say that complex dynamic systems like individuals in institutions perform best when they are not in total order but when they are close to the transition to chaos (Reason & Godwin, 1999). A consequence could be seen in the hospital example where more rigid control destroyed the culture even more. To say it with Oscar Wilde: “Without order nothing can exist-without
“Chaos nothing can evolve.” Applied to organizations this can mean that if a group or an individual is facing irritation and situations of chaos it is the attitude that can turn the scales. This can be a balancing act. On the one hand uncertainty about what to do can lead to creative solutions and out-of-the-box thinking. On the other hand too much uncertainty can be destructive, leading to anxieties and rigid defence mechanism. So we can ask the question, what is the difference that makes the difference between not too much and not too little chaos.

One answer can be the ability to establish an attitude and atmosphere of acknowledging and tolerating the chaos and bearing the confusion in brings. If one assumes that, in general, people tend to uphold order and prefer stability, this seems not to be simple work. Establishing an open state of mind of seeing what comes requires braveness, trust and hope.

It may be accompanied by strong feelings of anxiety and frustration. If already existing anxieties are not bearable, social defences make a situation even worse. Employees can fall back into rigid stability in order to protect themselves (Reason & Godwin, 1999). One solution of this dilemma is when people are able to tolerate uncomfortable feelings like anxieties long enough to reflect on them (Halton, 1994). When a person reaches such a state of mind, he or she is able to recognize the chances and the inherent potential of a breakdown like a crisis, chances are that ambiguity and uneasiness get handled in order to emerge a new order. For the nurses example, this could mean that they recognize their stress and pain when working with patients. They do not strive for numbing the pain by depersonalization of relationships to patients but work on different solutions. In sum we can say that social defence mechanism as well as possible solutions happen in the realm of work. For this reason further considerations about what work is or can be to the individual should be given. The following lines of argumentation are, that work itself can fulfil a psychological and social function.

4.0 Psychodynamics of work

“Work is a demarcation from oneself, inscription in a different history: a collective history crystallised in social genres that are generally sufficiently equivocal and diverging to allow and demand of each and everyone that they ‘put in their own contribution’ (mettre du sien) and get out of themselves.”

(Clot, 2004, p.71)
In general the definition what work itself is, seems a classical conundrum in sociology (Grint, 1991). The psychodynamics of work means the nature of work-experience for the subject that performs the work (Deranty, 2009). People can react to work with their psychic and physic resources, it can literally bind them to the outside world (Hirschhorn, 2000). This can be seen as an analogy to Freud’s reality principle, where it is said that work is the strongest tie that connects an individual with reality (Kirchler, 2011). In regards to the ideas of Dejours and Clot, work can be defined as a “directed activity” with a threefold structure: “Towards others, by the subject, through the object” (Deranty, 2009, p.70). Following this one can say that the aspects of work can be seen as a triangle consisting of an instrumental meaning a prescriptive aspect, a subjective aspect and a lifeworld aspect.

This triangular definition of work allows for a more differentiated view about the impacts and functions of workers experiences. Without having a reductionist view on the topic, work is conducted as more than carrying out a functional task in an instrumental way (Deranty, 2009). Rather, ordinary work situations consist of inter alia unexpected events, inconsistencies or anomalies. It is not fully predictable regarding the behaviour of other workers, clients or management. For this reason the argument is that there is no pure mechanical, instrumental work as such. Rather there are always some social and psychological aspects involved (Dejours, 2007).

Nevertheless to grasp the nature of work in its full diversity can be complex. All of the three dimensions in the graphic are mediated through each other and no one element can stand isolated on its own. The psychological, the cultural and the technical cannot be separated. It would go too far to fully elaborate all dimensions and their interplay in detail here. What is of importance are the resulting insights. Namely, that thorough the deep embeddedness of the subject in work, social integration is possible. Hence, through labour in a community of
practise, the use of culturally defined techniques to make an intervention in the world, the subject can be enriched. It is crucial to mention that this process is ambiguous, since it can result in domination, exploitation or in individual fulfilment through work but there is also a chance of useful integration through work (Deranty, 2009). In other words, the subject can face objective and social constraints during work (rules, regulations, expectations). Hence, he or she is hold on to adapt. This can include subjective liberation through work and a potential for education and self-realization (Deranty, 2009). Seeing it this way work can enable people to learn and to relate to the real world (Jakubik, 2011). By entering the domain of work, subjective idiosyncrasies have to be left out to some degree as the wider society is less intimate as the family, for example. A person is confronted with new problems and a huge part of what we learn in life is the result of efforts in order to try or to solve problems (Høyrup, 2004). This is why work itself has not only a central psychological impact but also a function (Deranty, 2009). Assuming that working activities and infrastructures around could be designed and organized in order to promote human development, people could be supported to grow and develop new competences, new understanding and insights about themselves as well others (Høyrup, 2004).

From this it can be argued that the realm of work in an institution – the individual subject and circumstances he/she faces at the workplace - can serve as a link between the human side, namely individual psychodynamics, and the organizational side like the socio-psychological function of work. In other words, we can say that what people experience at work and how they perceive their organization can have an influence on them and is influence by them. What is “in between” is their mental picture of the organization. This mental image is shaped by faced anxieties, social defence mechanism, work structures, job roles and different colleagues. On the other side, any worker has to individually adapt to those events to some degree. He or she is adapting with his or her personality. This is to say that the unique history of a person influences how events are interpreted. The chosen way to assist in explaining individual learning and growth in this thesis is about exploring how an individual feels and thinks about the organization it works in. This leads to the concept of organization-in-mind. A model labelled after Hutton, Bazalgette and Reed. It is used to link and explain possible interplays between two considerations already made. First the idea of introjection – how external events can lead to the creation of internal mental objects. And second the theory of social defence mechanism – how internal states of mind like anxiety can influence external work structures. The considerations about the organization-in-mind should help to gain
understanding about the possible reciprocity between external circumstances at work with internal reality of an individual.

5.0 Organization-in-mind

“…the organisation that is happening is not just out there -it is in me”

(Hirschhorn, 1988 in Hutton et al., 1997)

This chapter discusses the idea that an organization is not something outside but an internal mental image inside an employee's or worker's psyche.

The organization-in-mind is thought of as an introject that is created from external events that are interpreted by the individual. The mental object can then influence inner processes that shape the reality of the individual worker. Therefore, the organization-in-mind is thought of as an interplay between external events and internal processes. It will be argued that how a worker interprets a certain situation, depends on inter alia already made experiences, respectively autobiographical factors. This can help to find out unique personal traits because the interpretations a worker makes, are themselves a product of past processes and experiences. This way the concept of organization-in-mind can help to reveal unknown thought patterns or belief systems a person holds. To learn about possible reasons for interpretations helps to explain personal growth.

Following this “in-mind” approach, the concept of what an organization is, is approached differently. An organization is not be thought as a thing out there because no one can point to where an organization exactly is. Rather an organisation can be seen and explained as a mental picture inside the psyche of an organizational member. The concept of an organization-in-mind here is considered as a product of an intersubjective-external arena and a psychological-inner arena. In other words, one can think about a mental object inside a members psyche that is the product of two interconnected realms. The first realm is an inner-psychological realm that is called the psyche or the inner reality of a person. This includes internal stimuli and conclude experiences, thoughts, feelings of the past. The second, intersubjective realm can be describe as circumstances, external events and situations that a person experiences.

As an outcome between those two, an introject, the organization-in-mind, can emerge. This object consists of already made experiences and their interpretation by a unique individual
during constant interaction with the environment and with other colleagues at work. In other words, the individual metaphorically swallows what he or she experiences at work and forms a mental picture of the organization. So the concept of organization-in-mind can be seen as a synthesis of a constant interplay between individual-psychological as well as socio-psychological processes. Simply said, external events shape internal events and vice versa. This reciprocity can be visible through individual anxieties that can lead to social defence mechanism and influence organizational structures. The outcome of changed structures can then again trigger certain feelings within members that have to be processed or dealt with (Hutton et al., 1997).

Hence the organization as a mental picture can be seen as “synthesized being” that is constantly evolving (Nonaka & Toyama, 2002). During interactive process of constant evolvement, individuals can change themselves and their environment (Nonaka et al., 2008). Hence the organization-in-mind can be described as the product of communicative interactions between interdependent members (Stacey, 2003). This is to say that the organization-in-mind is socially influenced as well as through individual factors (Sievers, 2001).

Even though a person can deny, project or suppress how he or she thinks and feels about the organization he or she belongs to, it can be argued that there are effects on behaviour and perception depending on how the organization-in-mind looks like. An example of two persons (A and B) that work in the same organization can further illustrates that.

![Image of A and B with different mental pictures](image)


We assumed that A and B want to agree on an action that was performed by A. After they agreed, A leaves the situation but does something (from “B’s” perspective) completely different. The point here is that both have a different mental object about what the organization is for them. In other words, their picture of their organization-in-mind is different
because inter alia A and B are different (inner-psychological realm) and perceived different external events (external-intersubjective realm).

Even if they verbally agreed on a certain action, they probably interpret what was said in their unique way. In this case A is interpreting in terms of squares whereas B in triangles. This can by the case because, beside autobiographical factors, A would describe the organization as a square and B as a triangle. Again, the different figures can be seen as introjects where people, metaphorically spoken, swallow or take into themselves, aspects of what is happening around them. Those aspects are the built into inner objects that are real for the person perceiving them. For A his square is real to him, but it is not the same as the “real” people and situations that formed it. In other words, his square can be seen as a map but it is not the territory. His mental object is one image – a reference of reality. The same way as a name references something but is not the thing it denotes.

The purpose here is not to find out if the company is more a triangle or more like a square. It is not to find out if A is more right then B. Rather one can argue that the acknowledgement of one's own picture as well as the consideration of a different one by the other, seems crucial. This is connected to learning in psychodynamic terms which was discussed in chapter (1). It was said that learning can consist of testing fantasies against facts and does not use assumptions and projections as main source. Applied to the concept of organization-in-mind, it is argued that to see the picture one has as an irrevocably fact seems obstructive to effective collaboration. To think that the organization is really and only a pure triangle can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication. Perhaps A and B verbally agreed but still mean different things. For this reason it can help to communicate openly about how they give meaning and how they see the organization. This means to test their organization-in-mind towards the other's. This helps to gain knowledge that there can be different pictures for different people. Seeing it this way includes to doubt possible convictions that one has “the” appropriate picture of what the organization is. In addition to that to gain knowledge about how the triangle and the square got formed can be a way to find out something about oneself and others. This is because the introject of the organization is inside oneself and was created by oneself.

We can argue that how the organization-in mind looks like and was created, depends on inter alia past experiences and autobiographical factors of a person. As a result, for this thesis the focus is on the inner individual side. Due to this concept it is seen as a creation inside a person’s psyche and can be a helpful source for learning and personal growth. This way “Organisation-in-the-mind' helps me to look beyond the normative assessments of
organisational issues and activity, to become alert to my inner experiences and give richer meaning to what is happening to me and around me.” (Hutton et al., 1997, p. 2). For this reason the main focus is on the inner-psychological realm. Two issues are discussed in more detail. First the role of identity, since the mental picture of the organization-in-mind here is thought of as being part of the identity of a member. And second the role of subjectivity that means that every single member perceives external and internal stimuli different. This means not external events but what a person does with that experiences is the main interest here.

This is not to say that external events are per se minor or negligible. But, following Viktor Frankl (1996), it is the individual that has the last freedom to decide how external events are seen, no matter how cruel they may be. For this reason the focus will be on the single individual and its interpretations of external events.

5.1 Role of identity

It was mentioned in chapter (4) that work can bind the subject to reality and serve a psychological function. Furthermore, that the individual has to adapt to circumstances at the workplace to some degree. Hence, work, having this psychological function, can provide means for individuals to acquire a sense of assurance and identity (Diamond, 1988).

If a person spends about 40 hours a week in a company for years he or she will be influenced by that (Buchinger, 1997, p. 10). He or she may say: “I am a shy controller in company xyz.” If company xyz promotes a climate of good error-culture this will also probably impact on identity. For instance the organization-in-mind of the controller may change from “a place where I have to be careful regarding stating mistakes made” to “a place where I receive respect even when I do something wrong.” But also identity can switch. The initially shy person may become open and state mistakes immediately and with more self-confidence. Also regarding the meaning of a certain gesture, some external response is needed (Stacey, 2003).

For instance one sees oneself not as a controller because of pure isolated actions but because of daily interactions with working colleagues and role-expectations of a controller. In other words, external events and interactions between organizational member can shape individual identity.

In sum we can say that a change in identity can happen through reciprocity and mutual recognition of surroundings, not in pure isolation. Following this there is a “need of something else” in order to change and develop an identity. This can be seen as similar to the
“I and you” relations of Martin Buber. Basically, he said that a human being becomes an “I” only by a “you”. By this he means that identity is build up through having some sort of relation to surroundings (Buber, 2005). This seems necessary in order to understand individual experiences at the workplace and its connection with identity. Within interpersonal relationships at work, people commonly construct an individual picture of themselves and “their” organization. That can play a central role to develop a sense of identity and the feeling of belongingness. It can set what people think and feel about what “their” organization is for them, what their role in it is and what they can or could be. It can fosters growth and set limits. This depends on the subject and its individuality he or she brings to work.

Eventually, it seems worth mentioning that the connection of identity and work can also have harmful effects on the individual. This could be the case, when people identify themselves with their job in a way that they neglect their social life. One can argue that the function of work gets then overemphasized and abused. These effects are seen as important to deal with but are not covered in this thesis. For further literature, works of Schnell, Höge & Weber (2018) are be suggested.

5.2 Role of subjectivity

“Experience is not what happens to a man, it is what a man does with what happens to him.”

Adlous Huxley in Mylopoulos & Regehr, 2007

It was said that by having a relation to surroundings like external events and other persons, a person can create a sense of identity and belongingness towards his or her organization. In addition to that, it is the person of the worker that interacts with the environment. This interaction is now discussed as something individual and unique. It is subjective in a sense because every member brings in a unique history and therefore a set of particular responses to a certain situation. Everyone can have an own way of perceiving the world depending on already made experiences in private as well as in company life. In other words, different mental pictures about the organization-in-mind can be rooted not only in different experiences at work but in different biographical factors. That can lead to unique interpretations and classifications of external events. For instance if A is a leader he probably made different experiences at work then B, who is an assistant. They not only both have different job roles and expectations to fulfil, they have probably grown up in different families, attended different schools, learnt different skills and have unique traits. If A got punished in childhood
when making a mistakes, he will probably fear being frank about misunderstandings during work and rather hide them whenever possible. This can led them so see and give meaning to situations they face differently. In other words, how a person’s organization-in-mind looks like, depends on inter alia the subject that created it. The exclusive personality of a member can have an influence on how experiences at work get interpreted and how the organizational image look like (Buchinger, 1997). We can assume that when faced with a problematic situation, people differ in how and if they define and label the situation as problematic. For some a drawback can be a challenge to improve for others a reason to resign. Different interpretations are inter alia seen as a result of past framing processes and made experiences. As a consequence, the subjectivity involved in the creation of the organization-in-mind can serve as a path to further explore one’s own frames of perception. This is then further discussed in the sixth part.

5.3 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to discuss theoretical contributions on the idea that an organization is not something outside but an internal mental image. It should help to explain what the organization-in-mind is and why it could be used in order to gain more information about other perspectives as well as to learn something about oneself as the creator of it. Basically, the line of argumentation was to combine the external events can shape the organization as an inner object and further, that this inner reality can again shape external events. It was argued that there is an interdependency, a constant interplay, between internal and external processes. This dynamic was named after the ideas of Hutton et al. namely, organization-in-mind. This concept represents an active part of one’s inner world and often unconsciously dictates thoughts and feelings and therefore affects behaviour (Hutton, et.al, 1997). As already mentioned in chapter (1), even though the introjected objects are real to their creators, they are here discussed as being not the “real” things out there. In others words, they are like maps but not the territory (Korzybski, 2010). As a possible result every member of an institution can perceive it differently. To acknowledge and understand possible differences can foster effective collaboration and communication.

In addition to that the organization-in-mind can differ from person to person due to individual's history and past experiences. It is based on inter alia the individual character of a single organizational member. It can support the feeling of belongingness and a sense of identity (Stacey, 2003). For this reason the way how the organization-in-mind looks like can
say something about the person holding it. Why person A sees the company as a square and not as a triangle is not only rooted in external events but in how such events get interpreted by the person. In other words: The personal biography of A has an influence on how he experience the experience. A’s past experiences let him to interpret external event as square-and not triangle-like. B, consciously or unconsciously decided to interpret the organization as a square.

What are possible consequences of this?

We can conclude that the examination of the organization-in-mind as an individual construct can be a chance and a way to learn something about oneself. It can be an opportunity of personal growth when working with an organisational member. This bring the line of argumentation to the issue of learning. It will be discussed in chapter six.

6.0 Learning

“He would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying.”

Friedrich Nietzsche

In this chapter learning will be discussed from an individual and psychological perspective that is social and context related. Learning is discussed as being bound to complex communicative acts that are about patterns of relationships, certain contexts and meta-communication. It will be discussed that learning how to respond to contexts can shape the individual's reality. In contrast to the common learning theory of single- and double loop learning that neglect why people defend and regress in stressful situations, the role of emotions and anxieties are included. It will be shown that communication happens on different logical levels where a certain context classifies how what was being said and done is interpreted by a person. This means that during our socialization, we learnt to respond to certain contexts in a certain manner. Long lasting and innermost rules and governing rules can influence the way we think, feel and act. Often people do not know how and why they came to interpret a situation in a certain way. As a result they unconsciously act as if a present context is the same as a familiar past context. Learning and personal growth can occur if a person is able to distinguish between past and present contexts. A person can begin to learn about learning and learnt behaviour.
6.1 General aspects of learning

It is hard for one theory to define and describe learning from an individual perspective satisfyingly. It can be seen different depending on the paradigmatic view one is choosing (Jakubik, 2011). In general, the process of learning consists of psychological, biological and social factors. Individual genetic dispositions, group norms and situational factors can affect the meaning and value of learning (Antonacopoulou, 2001). In this thesis the focus will be on the individual, namely on the social and psychological perspective of learning. Even though learning in this thesis is, to some degree considered as a social phenomenon that can include communication and contextual considerations, the focal point will be on the individual perspective. Biological or neurological aspects of learning are not taken into consideration.

As mentioned at the beginning, a vast amount of literature about learning in organizations, exists. In this thesis two common organizational learning theories will be shortly discussed. This is single and double loop learning by Argyris and Schön (1978). Subsequently, possible limits of those theories are discussed and possible aspects of meta-communication and the role of context are taken into account. People tend to negotiate their relationship during an interaction. That happens in addition to the exchange of verbal information. It will be examined that communicative acts can be distinguished by applying different logical levels. This is crucial when it comes to learning because people learnt from past events how to respond to contexts in a certain manner. In other words they classify how actions and words are to be meant. This can shape their worldview and reality, lead to misunderstanding and irrational behaviour. How people respond to what they face is seen as deeply rooted in them and changing what was learnt for years can go beyond changing actions and underlying values. It will be argued that this considerations are not sufficiently incorporated in single and double-loop learning by Argyris and Schön (1978).

6.2 Single- and Double Loop learning

6.2.1 Single Loop learning

According to Chris Argyris (1990) humans try to avoid pain and embarrassment for themselves as well as by upsetting others. They like to maintain control, want to win, produce outcomes they prefer and expect. In order to describe that, he describes two theories of action: theories-in-use and espoused-theories-of-action. The first theory basically deals with how people actually behave. For instance, deception in order to avoid unpleasant emotional states.
In contrast to that are so-called “espoused-theories-of-action”. This deals with what people say and believe about how they behave. This can include values and beliefs that a person claims to hold but does not act towards. In other words, people do not practise what they preach.

A missing congruence between “theories-in-use” and “espoused-theories-of-action” can result in “defensive reasoning”. This is used by people to protect themselves from potential threat and embarrassment. Causes for that can lie in an inability to cope with failures or result from a high ideal image of themselves. As a consequence people have the pressure to behave consistently and perform effectively (Argyris, 1990). In other words: they try to do the (expected) things right.

### 6.2.2 Double Loop learning

Double loop learning strives to overcome this by focusing on the expectation and underlying values that lead to certain actions. The aim is not on doing thing right but on doing the right things. What is right should be discovered via explicit expressions of positions and assumptions. This means that rational reflection and open inquiry about what is right. In others words, to turn the inside out makes it possible to test mental models and values and probably correct them. For instance, people openly discuss and find out that it has no negative consequences to admit mistakes. This can be seen as a change in the underlying value-judgement about how mistakes are seen. Now they know that to admit mistakes is not harmful they may behave differently. People change their actions as a result of changed underlying values. This is what Argyris and Schön (1978) called “double loop learning”. Through frank discussions it should be examined what the underlying mental models are and whether they need to be that way. Learning can occur if the defensive routines are revealed and people acknowledge their mental model and underlying values (Argyris, 1990). This theory is quite helpful in order to learn in an organization. Nevertheless, possible limits of this approach are discussed.

### 6.2.3 Limits to Single- and Double-Loop learning

On defensive reasoning Argyris stated: “What I call defensive reasoning serves no purpose it except self-protection, though the people who use it rarely acknowledge that they are protecting themselves.” (Argyris, 1990, p.80). We can derive from that statement that for Argyris, the defensive reasoning serve only one purpose – that of self-protection. One could
see defensive reasoning in this way as an end in itself. Self-protection from embarrassments or threats serves exactly that function - period. In this thesis this is seen as one possible limit of this approach. This is because it could be of interest why people persist on self-protection. This would require us to dig deeper and see the self-protection from threats and embarrassment as a mean to an (unknown) end. Simply said, to assume that there are various reasons for defence and it could be useful to find out what those reason are. This acknowledgement seems to lack in single and double loop learning. Argyris mentioned that a change in organizational defensive routines is “without getting into such issues as anxieties and deep psychological defences.” (Argyris, 1990, p.29). Here we can see that he leave aside the role of anxieties and deep psychological issues when talking about learning. Referring back to the nature of anxieties as a normal part of work and decision making, Argyris neglects this important point here. Applied to double loop learning his statement can be interpreted in a way that there is then nothing to feel embarrassed about, if a person is expressing itself in front of others in order to reveal own values and mental models. One could conclude that there is then no justifiable need by a single individual to avoid or defend against threats. This view on learning seems not sufficient and too simplified. Due to psychodynamic considerations, every need to learn can be a sort of narcissistic wound to the person since one has to admit imperfection (Lohmer, 2008). This means that the need to learn is accompanied by the acknowledgement that one is not perfect. This can hurt because the concepts of how one sees oneself and how the world relate to the self-concept of identity (Mezirow, 1990). Journeys into unknown and unpredictable areas of identity, can cause anxieties because the already known identity is destabilized (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984). It is painful to challenge long lasting values, beliefs or even habits as they gave stability about one’s own person (Antonacopoulou, 2001). The process of learning can questions and move what was familiar. In other words, admitting or showing possibly wrong values and mental models can be hurtful for the individual. To question underlying assumptions is often met by resistance due to its anxiety-evoking character (Allcorn & Godkin, 2011). This can be seen as a justifiable reason to defend and resist revelation. There is a risk that one will be perceived as incompetent when confessing a lack of knowledge or wrong values and so giving up the established image of oneself (Stacey, 2003). Following this, we can disagree with Argyris, saying that personal change should deal with the issues of anxieties and deep psychological defences.

This can be supported by the issue of psychological regression. This means that people tend to regress when faced with an overwhelming situation. When in stress, people tend to
automatically cope with an overwhelming situation by exhibiting long-established behaviour. This is because such behaviour worked at a certain time and is familiar to them. One can see regression as a psychological survival mechanism where required attention is not on the capacity to double-loop-learn but to defend ones position at any cost (Hirschhorn, 1980).

The example of the two leaders having a deep and long lasting conflict about the windows, can here again serve as an example. It was said that the real conflict is probably not about the windows as a thing, but about something personal. Maybe who has more to say, more power over the other (von Hertel, 2009). From the point of psychological regress, the leaders could feel stress and fear losing a very important fight. A fact-based tenancy can turn to bigoted stubbornness, where one's window option is defended at any cost. Not accidental this scenery looks childish from an outside perspective. We can imagine that in such a case, it would be hard to openly discuss about underlying values as in the double-loop approach.

6.2.4 Conclusion

One can conclude from this, that a negation of psychological regress and irrational behaviour can lead to organizational theory perspectives where what is seen as in-discussable and not clearly visible, is left out of perspective regarding organizational behaviour (Adams, 1994). As a result it seems to be crucial not to deny irrational conflicts nor psychological regress. This means not to classify such phenomena as “common insanity”. On the contrary, conflicts, anxieties and irrational behaviour can supply helpful information about the organization-in-mind and so about personal idiosyncrasies. Argyris and Schön (1978) disregard this aspects in their learning theory. Especially psychological regression, the role of anxieties and the question why people tend to defend themselves. According to Visser (2007) also adaptive behaviour, the matter of context, relationship and meta-communication are lacking in their approach. This leads to the consideration that learning has to deal with psychological regression, anxieties and defence mechanism. In order to do that the complexity of human communication must be taken into account. The role of patterns of relationships, certain contexts, feelings and meta-communication are considered. Communication, behaviour and values are seen as quite complex and interdependent, working on different logical levels.

For this reason this thesis take a different learning approach and point of view into consideration. This approach deals with the complexity of human communication as well as learning. It discusses rational as well as irrational and paradoxical circumstances in human behaviour (Bennis, 1969). It will be argued that meta-communication and the role of context
is about the negotiation of patterns of relationships. This means that the acknowledgement of not only what was said but how it was said. This brings the topic back to the human being that interpret/give meaning to what it experiences outside (Lutterer, 2002).

6.3 The role of meta-communication

Basically, meta-communication describe the communication about communication. This means that besides verbal communication being the words said, simultaneously, communication about the content and the relationship are exchanged. This happens mostly non-verbally and classifies the interaction. Take for instance the situation of a couple is sitting in their car standing in front of a red traffic light. After the traffic light switches to green he says to her: “Look! It’s green!” This communicative act is more than what was said in words. What the wife behind the wheel will understand – respectively interpret – depends on inter alia how the husband said it and how the wife sees the relationship to her man. Maybe she will give the utterance the meaning of being offensive and get angry. Then she could think: “You don’t have to tell me how to drive, I can do that on my own!” Maybe she will interpret it as a helpful information and stay calm.

We can also assume that how the man pronounces his words has an influence on how his wife will understand them. Whereas his pronunciation can again depend on what he thinks about the relationship to his wife. One can see this can get quite complex. The curial point here is that the communicative act is always more than the words said. The difference that makes the difference if words are perceived as offensive or helpful lies in the patterns of relationship between the couple. If their relationship is seen as asymmetrical by the woman she probably will interpret the words spoken in favour of that. This happen automatically and is often not explicit. Rather people often unconsciously guess what meaning a verbal message could probably have. In general to guess, how what was said, was meant, happens without full awareness and with little effort. This is because during socialization, people learnt for good reasons how daily interactions are meant to be interpreted (Bateson, 1973). In other words, we learnt how to read the meta-communicative sings. Otherwise we would always have to ask: “How do you mean that?” This is to say that meta-communication can only to some degree be consciously influenced and people adapt their behaviour accordly (Bateson, 1978; Watzlawick et al, 1974).

In sum, people classify what was said. This makes the act of communication complex. Meta-communicative and verbal messages are mixed together in daily conversations. Beside the
verbal aspect of a message there are negotiations about the pattern of relationship between the people communicating. This is crucial because the relationship aspect influences how what was said is classified. Irony works on that principle. If the receiver is not sure if this was meant as a joke or not, he or she may ask: “Was this meant as fun or serious?” If the person making the ironic statement is not familiar – the pattern of relationship is not clear- it is even harder to find out how it is meant without asking. This constant interplay between communicative message and meta-communication can be subsumed under the term context. By simultaneously communicating about the pattern of relationship, communication between human beings is contextualized. Meta-communication can serve as a building block for the emergence of a certain context.

6.4 The role of context

Bateson (1972) was well aware of the complexity of communicative acts. He imaged an infinite hierarchy in communication. This includes messages, meta-messages, meta-meta-messages and so forth, deterministically influence the interpretation of subordinated messages. Meta-communication sets the context on which basis what was said will be interpreted.

For instance a certain context (e.g.: this is play) is built on meta-communicative interactions. We can think of a father that wrestles – not aggressively and with a smile on his face - with his son in the living room. Out of this the son can predict that the context is one of “play”. The son knows that the pattern of relationship is kind of loving and not hostile. Automatically he can punctuate the action of wrestling as playful act.

There is no need to communicate that via direct speech. On the contrary, explaining in detail how the situation is to be seen can have the conversely effect. A sentence like: “Please be aware that everything from now on is a play-fight and not real.” will lead to disinterest by the son and destroy the situation.

In contrast to this example, when an employee wrestles down his or her boss in a meeting, the situation will probably be interpreted differently, because the context is “business” (Tosey & Mathison, 2008). Even though, play and real fighting may look similar from outside and involve almost the same behaviour, the context, namely the category of activity affects how certain actions and behaviour will be interpreted by participants. It is the difference that makes the difference (Bateson, 1973).
Put in simple terms, the context “this is play” can be seen as a class that sets the frame of how events that follow will be classified. Thinking about classes and classification in communication leads to distinguishing the complex interwovenness of communicative acts by applying different logical levels.

6.5 Multiple logical levels of communication

Bateson was inspired by the multiple logical levels established by Bertrand Russells' *Theory of logical types* (Russells, 1921). Basically, the work by the British philosopher and mathematician distinguishes between different logical levels of abstraction. In his theory a class of types is seen from a different logical type than the members it contains and classifies. For instance, the class of “business organization” is itself not a business, but its members, like accountancy firms or car manufactures, are. Also the name of a thing is itself not a thing, but a classification of, and a reference to it. Name and thing, class and members are of different logical types. This led Bateson to the consideration that a context is as a class that is from a higher logical type than the elements or members it classifies, namely certain actions or verbal expressions.

The story of how Bateson observed a dolphin trainer at work in a sea-life park in Hawaii can help to illustrate this concrete thought. With classical conditioning a dolphin got rewarded by the trainer if it performed a desired behaviour. Once a certain behaviour was learnt, the rewards stopped. After some instances without rewarding, the animal, untypically excited, tried another type of trick that never occurred before (Bateson, 1979). For Bateson the animal took a step higher, to another logical type and learnt that only new behaviour will be rewarded (Visser, 2003). “It was acting as if able to distinguish between the class of behaviour that would be rewarded and the class of behaviours that would no longer be rewarded.” (Tosey & Mathison, 2008, p. 17). There was a shift from information about an event to information about a class of events. The animal learnt about the context through repeated examples (Tosey & Mathison, 2008). In this case, the animal was not only able to distinguish between different stimuli but also about instrumentality itself. The mammal had insight about the class of the situation it was in. This was perceived as a different level of learning, namely the ability to discriminate the instrumentality (Bredo, 1989). In other words, besides the instrumental conditioned learning of getting a fish when showing a certain behaviour, the dolphin was at the same time learning to recognizing the interactive context - the sequence of certain stimuli reinforcement – between itself and the trainer (Visser, 2003). This led Batson to the conclusion that the context of a certain situations determines meaning in how actions are
interpreted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This way a certain context works as an indicator for an embodied and experiential reality. For Bateson our entire worldview is influenced by contextual experiences (Lutterer, 2002).

Eventually, it is worth mentioning that contradictions between what is espoused to go on and what one believes is really going on can be understood in terms of context and meta-communication. Just as a message sent by one person sets the context for a certain class of responses by the other person. Often this leads to unclear situations (Visser, 2003). Especially when what is said contradicts with how it is said. For instance, if a boss asks for completely honest feedback regarding his leadership style this may lead to a dilemma for the person being asked. The subordinate has to carefully ponder how honest the boss wants the feedback. To do that one has to know (or guess) what the context is in order to deduce what class of responses are expected as appropriate. The way how people handle difficult situations or dilemma out of mismatches between communication and meta-communication are further explored by the double bind theory. This theory is however not further discussed in this paper. The interested reader may however refer to the works of Tosey & Mathison (2008).

In sum it was said that the context of a certain situation can determine how actions are interpreted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Now one can ask why humans react differently toward the same context and what factors are the causes of such differences. One possible reason was already mentioned in chapter (5), namely subjectivity. In other words, a communicative act in a certain context is not only influenced by the actual situation but as well by the individuals past experiences. It was mentioned that with socialization and education during childhood, humans have learnt to read and respond to a variety of contexts. Past learning experiences can have an influence on how they behave, see themselves and the world. learnt, people have learnt how to respond to certain contexts in a certain manner.

In order to further illustrate these considerations and combine them with the concept of organization-of-mind, an example will be given now. This can help to explain the limits of single- and double loop learning and why people tend to psychologically regress during stress, and furthermore why people resist and defend familiar patterns of reaction. Roughly said, this can provide useful insights to understand why people often do not know better and react and behave in irrational ways.
6.5.1 Example: Subordinate and authority

Assuming that a subordinate generally fears repercussions from figures of authority in an extreme manner. Whenever called to report, he or she immediate thinks and expects the worst. Everything the boss says or does is interpreted to fit the expected pattern of relationship: “This is dangerous for me. I need to be careful. Better I don’t say anything that could provoke him”

Here the concept of organization-in-mind can serve as a possible way to explore learnt behaviour. As mentioned in chapter (5) the organization-in-mind can be influenced in two ways. From the outer-intersubjective realm (external events) and by the inner-psychological realm (already made experiences that formed the way how the individual perceives the world). It was said that how a person describes and perceives the institution he or she works in can say something about the person holding it. Out of simplification, we assume for now that the boss is acting in a calm way that does not give reason to feel threatened by him. Hence the focus is on only on the inner-psychological realm whereas the intersubjective is excluded.

To stick to the example, why the person sees the company as a dangerous and threatening place can be rooted in the personal biography. Assuming that a mentor asks the person: “How would you describe the organization you work in?” “How do you feel about your work?” “What would be a fitting metaphor for your organization?” Chances are that the answers can be a chance to further explore what makes the organization to a dangerous and threatening place. This can finally lead to past experiences like the pattern “authority means danger means submission”. Because the person learnt that authority events should be interpreted and classified as dangerous. This is then the person’s individual contribution to the mental picture of the organization-in-mind. In other words, the image of the organization-in-mind as a dangerous and threatening place can be used to reveal individual ways of perception. The unique perception of the employee can be seen as the result of past learning experiences, where such experiences are learnings about how to respond to certain contexts.

Following this it is possible that one reason why the person sees the company as a dangerous place lie in earlier experiences. Probably he or she grew up in a family where any bad behaviour was punished by complete withdrawal of affection. The child learnt to interpret such situations as dangerous and not to disagree with the parents. Any sort of resistance would be perceived as life-threatening for the child, because it totally depends on its parents. The
result can be seen as an introject of a punitive mother that “lives” inside the persons psyche and affects perception and behaviour. If not being reflected, this introject works on in the – now grown up- adult at work. In this example this can lead to a pattern like “authority means danger means submission”. This conviction can be deeply ingrained and part of the worker's identity. When entering work, the worker brings along his or her past experiences and swallowed introjects. As a result also the mental picture of the company may be framed as an unsafe place because external situations are expected and perceived to be unsafe as well.

If the employee is not able discriminate between past and present contexts, he or she will react as learnt and used to. The inability of distinguishing between the context of “being at work” and the context of “being an underage child” can lead to a punctuation of the situation as if it were like it was during infancy. Roughly said, past contexts are mistaken with present contexts. Already learnt behaviour is habitually reproduced. Whenever the context seems to deal with an authority, the behaviour will be guided by the fear of exploitation (Tosey & Mathison, 2008).

As a result the consequent behaviour in a conflict situation with a authority figure is not to do anything that would justify self-assertion. Out of a feeling of danger and threat, the person can perceive himself or herself in the job environment as unworthy and powerless. He or she is not able to defend himself or herself. The same way as it was dangerous during infancy to revolt against the parents, now any sort of anger has to be avoided and suppressed. When facing an authority figure at the workplace, the situation and actions are interpreted automatically as expected, namely threatening (Visser, 2003).

6.6 Conclusion

In sum a person habitually acts as if the new contexts exhibit the same patterns of relationship as during infancy. There is no distinction between past and present contexts and a tendency towards psychological regression. As a result a person behaves and reacts as learnt (Bateson, 1973).

By using the concept of organization-in-mind as one result of learnt ways of perceiving the world, it is possible to find out deeply engrained reasons why a persons sees the company in his or her unique way.

Here, one can argue, possible limitations of single- and double loop learning made visible. It was said that double-loop learning is about the discussion of mental models and underlying
values. When asked to openly discuss underlying values, it is possible that a person will resist any direct confrontation because this could mean to give up one’s familiar ideology. This can further lead to stress and anxiety and may cause psychological regression and defensive actions. Finally, how people respond to what they face seems deeply ingrained in them. This can affect not only actions and underlying values but the whole personality.

In sum this paragraph was discussing how learning is interlinked with context, subjectivity and the organization-in-mind. Even though this is thesis about the individual that learns, learning itself is seen as social and related to context (Tosey et al, 2011). As a result learning can so far be described as an enacted and embodied change in relation to contexts (Tosey, 2006). Learning how to respond to contexts can shape the individual reality. These considerations will now be further discussed in the next paragraph, where the focus will be on the work of Gregory Bateson, namely his learning framework.

### 6.7 Gregory Bateson’s learning framework

In this section the learning framework of Gregory Bateson will be discussed. It was chosen because it can serve as bridge between psychodynamic considerations of the organization-in-mind and the role of individual learning and personal growth. In the example of the subordinate it was already mentioned that learning in this way is about gaining knowledge and awareness about a context. This allows an individual to learn about own interpretations and can lead to personal growth because one can change and reveal deeply ingrained habits. This is named learning type II. It can support personal growth and lead a person to have more freedom in choosing his or her reaction. Based on this, it will be argued that by this sort of personal growth, a person can be touched in an existential sense. This is to say a person starts to face up to deeply ingrained governing rules and principles. Here learning type III comes into play. It describes how a person perceives herself or himself and the world around. This discovery is seen as learning to learn. One is concerned with how oneself is learning and knowledge is created. This goes beyond changing actions or values and can lead to a redefinition of how one experiences one's whole persona and the world around. This presents an epistemological shift and can be a path towards more wisdom.

Now, let us begin by exploring the framework. The following learning framework is focused in essence on how interventions in human systems are operating. This approach sees learning on multiple and circular levels, simultaneously, subtle and tacit (Tosey & Mathison, 2008). What will be discussed here will also build up on the previous sections. More precisely, that
communication can happen on different logical levels - so does learning. Poetically speaking, the following considerations should help to see the big picture instead of isolated parts, perceiving patterns and relationships instead of isolated “things” (Hawkins, 2004).

Bateson’s levels of learning can be seen as a framework more than as a fully elaborated theory. There are in total five levels considered, shown in Table 1.

| Learning IV | “…would be change in Learning III, but probably does not occur in any adult living organism on this earth.” |
| Learning III | “…is change in the process of Learning II, e.g. a corrective change in the system of sets of alternatives from which choice is made.” |
| Learning II | “…is change in the process of Learning I, e.g. a corrective change in the set of alternatives from which choice is made, or it is a change in how the sequence of experience is punctuated.” |
| Learning I | “…is change in specificity of response by correction of errors of choice within a set of alternatives.” |
| Learning 0 | “…is characterised by specificity of response, which – right or wrong - is not subject to correction.” |

Table 1: The levels of learning


Before two single types of learning will be discussed it is important to mention the characteristics of the framework in general.

The framework has the following characteristics:

- Higher levels of learning are not in general superior to lower levels. Instead, they function in a generative way, with hindering as well as liberating effects (Senge, 1990). By this is meant, that the levels are recursively interconnected, where outcomes of one level can influence the self also on another level.

- In contrast to a strict hierarchy, the levels occur simultaneously. Different levels of learning operate in parallel (Bredo, 1989).

It is not necessary to discuss all types of learning here. For this thesis learning II and learning III are singled out, because the author came to the conclusion that they serve as a useful theoretical considerations that helps in explaining how individual learning and personal
growth together with the psychodynamics ideas of the concept organization-in-mind are possible. The framework is chosen because it takes into account the complex nature of human communication and learning. Irrational or paradoxical behaviour is not excluded but seen as a product of past learning experiences. A learning process never happens in isolation, it is relational and contextual but also bound to emotions. This way it can be linked to the realm of psychodynamics and was chosen for this work.

6.7.1 Learning II

The illustration shows that learning II consist of a change in the set of alternatives from which choice is made. Further it states that the interpretation of experience is changed.

What does that mean?

Basically, that an individual is learning when it learns about the classification of certain activities in a certain context (Tosey, 2006). The person gains insight about the class of the situation he or she is in to. The employee can realize that not every authority figure is exploitative nor dangerous. He or she can experience that self-assertion is possible and not dangerous. He or she can chose to react differently and have more options available on how to react.

To be more detailed, this is possible because, as mentioned, a context can be seen as a class of events and actions. The context is from a different logical type that its members and works like a guide for a person’s actions and behaviour. People classify actions and words in regards to what they think the context is (Tosey, 2006). When the context is “authority situation at work” but the person classifies it as “being an underage child where any authority is dangerous”, events and words that follow will be classified as expected and not as they really are. The events of “authority situation at work” are made to members of the class “being an underage child where any authority is dangerous”. This can happen automatically without conscious knowledge by the person.

As an additional point, different contexts includes certain actions and exclude others. For instance unjustified critique by the boss will not be revealed by the employee due to fear. The present situation is classified in the old context this does not allows for defence of oneself. On the contrary, if the person is able to learn about the present context, he or she has the possibility to react differently. This is the pivotal point here. There is then a change in the set of alternatives from which choice is made. In other words, the individual has more freedom to
choose on how to interpret and react whatever he or she faces. There is less automatic response out of already learnt behaviour. So learning II consist of gaining awareness and knowledge about the context in which a certain activity takes place. There is then a change in the way how events are interpreted (Bredo, 1989). The set from with choice is enriched, freedom to choose is broadened.

As the communication with the authority figure at work consist of different logical levels, the person learnt something about the events and about the class that classifies those events. In other words: “...the notion of levels makes clear that learning, for example, is a contextual affair; one not only learns, but simultaneously learns how to learn.” (Tosey, 2006, p. 2). The person learns and at the same time learns how to learn. This means that learning can be seen as a parallel process. By realizing and making the experience that the pattern “authority means danger means submission” is not true in all cases, because figures of authority do not always exploit, the person learns. At the same time, even if an authority figure would try to exploit, the person can now take a stance since the situation is not perceived as overwhelming any more. This also represents learning.

This is to say that by learning about the pattern of a context, the way how events are interpreted can change. This is then a chance to find out about the inner governing rules and principles. For instance the person realizes reasons why he or she reacted as he or she reacted. During therapeutic and/or coaching sessions in a mentoring program, the individual could reveal possible roots about the fear of exploitation by figures of authority. Within a holding and safe environment and the relationship with the coach/therapist/mentor, already learnt patterns on how to interpret and react in specific contexts can be acknowledged and changed. A shift is possible from gaining information about an event to information about a class of events. The person gains insight about the class of the situation he or she was in.

It seems appropriate to again mention that in this example, external events gave the individual no justified reason to classify the authority situation at work as dangerous. Simply said it was assumed that the boss is a nice person. The main contribution to the picture of the organization-in-mind as dangerous lay in the employee's unique history. Obviously, that is not always the case. It is definitely conceivable that if an authority figure leads tyrannically this can shape the organization-in-mind as being dangerous to the employee as well. Also in this case, working with the employee’s organization-in-mind can be a source to find out more about how authority is lived out at the workplace. Further work sessions with the authority
figure can be done directly or the employee receives help to finding proper coping mechanism for the specific situation.

In sum learning this way can result in personal growth, where, next to values and actions, also long-lasting habits are changed. There is an extension of scope in action where an individual has more freedom to choose how to react to what happens to him or her. In order to further discuss how personal growth may occur on a deeper level, type III learning will be discussed in the next paragraph.

6.7.2 Learning III

“If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, Infinite.”

William Blake

6.7.2.1 Definitions

Regarding Tosey et al. (2011) Bateson’s view on learning is quite abstract. There is no clear consensus among scholars how to define learning III explicitly. In the illustration above learning III is defined as not only dealing with a change in the set but in the system of sets of alternatives from which choice is made. This means that by learning III one deals with the self of a person and touches an epistemological realm, respectively how a person is seeing the world and itself in it. It is about exploring how one is learning.

The following illustrates this idea. A person engaged in learning II is not only gaining information about an event but also information about a class of events. The person is able to identify the specific pattern of a situation in a specific context. This describes a change in the set of alternatives. Basically, learning to learn about a certain context (learning II) is learning III. It can be a chance to find out more about inner governing rules and principles. Here learning III comes into play. In other words, to master learning II is learning III. A person engaged with learning II is not only gaining information about certain events and about a class of events but about the inner governing rules and principles that lead and led the person to see events, contexts and itself in a certain way. Essentially, learning III deals with how people perceive the world and themselves in it. This “how” here will be called their framework or schemata. This entails the subsumption of underlying premises, learnt responses to contexts and belief systems.

At the centre of such a framework or schemata is the so-called self of a person. The Self is here described as - “the level where I am myself in an existential sense.” (Peschl, 2007,
This self can be described as the human being one and is beyond his person, character and traits, beyond roles and expectations. The self enables a person to say “I” and “me”.

Learning III deals with this concept of self, it has epistemological qualities. This means that to discover how one-self is learning. In other words, to learn how to learn, to consider questions about how can I learn and know. This is not about changing skills, values or habits, it is about changing oneself. More precisely, it denotes a redefinition of self, the possibility of a complete redirection of how one was used to see the world and one's own existence.

For Bateson such a reorganization of self can occur in psychotherapy or in religious conversation. He described that learning III:

“... certainly must lead to a greater flexibility in the premises acquired by the process of learning II – a freedom from their bondage... but any freedom from bondage of habit must also denote a profound redefinition of self.” (Bateson, 1972, p.304).

This is to say that redefining the concept of the self in order to interpret experience differently, can lead to a deep and serious reorganization of character (Bateson, 1973). By this is meant a change in the system of sets of alternatives from with choice is made. One’s own character becomes kind of irrelevant (Bateson, 1973). In contrast to type II, this learning can be thought of as a different system of grammar (Tosey et al, 2011). It can lead to what Mezirow (1990) describes as a complete redirection of perception and engagement in regards of one’s own person and the world one is living in. Two examples can help to illustrate this.

6.7.2.2 Example: Fish in Sea & Truman-Show

Let’s try to make the theme of redefinition of the self more graspable by using a metaphor. We can imagine a fish in the sea. Roughly said, for the animal, its life is, beside other external objects, all about water. Its consciousness mind is familiar and used to perceive sea-life as the actual and only “real” world. The fish’s framework and mind-set is made to live in water. It might be unbelievable and anxiety provoking to imagine something like non-water. One can argue that this would be similar to giving up a stable sense of identity and worldview. The following ideas depict a framework that would allow the fish to jump out of the water, into something new- at least for a while. This means that by stepping outside the old and familiar way of seeing the world, one could see with fresh eyes (Hawkins, 1991).
Also the so-called paradigmatic shift in the realm of science by Kuhn (1970) can serve as an example for the epistemological qualities of learning III. For instance Einstein’s postulate about the relativity of time was such a paradigmatic shift.

Another example is the movie “The Truman Show”. Here, the main actor called Truman lives in a gigantic film set under a huge dome, disconnected to the outside world. Truman himself perceives the broadcast TV show as his normal life. At one point he finds out the truth, that his life is arranged and he is the main actor of a TV show. This is after a spotlight, that should represent a star, falls down directly in front of him. Truman becomes sceptical and starts to question the reality and belief systems of his life. He begins to realize that everything was not as it seems to be.

The moment when he finds out the truth, for him represents a massive and inevitable revolution of his seeing the world and his own person in it. A once familiar reality, including mind-set, character, and worldview, is changed disruptively (Tosey, et al. 2011). After disclosure, Truman himself and how he perceives the world is never the same again. The revelation can be seen as learning III where Truman’s system of set of alternatives has changed. More precisely, the way of reconstruction (learning III) can be seen as a result from contraries in learning II, this concerns his life before the exposure. In other words, there was no plausible way for him to classify the event of the falling spotlight in his set of alternatives so far. As a result he starts to question underlying premises and belief systems and the concept of his-self is redefined.

For sure, the example of Truman is an extreme case. Nevertheless, it can be said that certain belief systems work like rules that set limits to people. If there is no chance to question certain rules as such, they can work similar to the artificial prison Truman lived in. As Watzlawick (2011) showed, inner convictions about how the world is, tend to create exactly this reality. If a person has the unquestioned conviction that he or she is unattractive, he or she probably will be shy and reserved towards other people. As a result other people will not likely talk to him or her. This then works as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Beginning to question such underlying premises and belief systems can lead to a redefinition of the self.

Consequently, learning III is not purely about intellectual games. It is not about trying something on a surface level but being touched by it existentially. This is a process where one gets in contact with one’s self - “the level where I am myself in an existential sense.”(Peschl, 2007, p.138). It can be seen as a transcendental domain that goes beyond the realm of personality, personal skills and competencies. It goes beyond what Polanyi (1966) and
Nonaka (2003) termed tacit knowledge. It touches a human being on the fundamental level of being (Peschl, 2008). How can this look like?

**6.7.2.3 Example: The Othello Conundrum**

At this point of this work the psychodynamic considerations at the beginning can serve in order to help to understand learning and personal growth.

Learning III means to question one-self in an epistemological sense, doing so is strongly related to psychological realm. The process can be accompanied by emotions like envy, jealousy and anxiety. It can inter alia operate beyond language and the experiences made are not of pure intellectual form (Tosey, 2006). For this reason learning III can be enriched with psychodynamic theory because of the mutual involvement of unconscious and conscious elements in the learning process. Contradicting emotions, projective identification and the creation of introjects can be involved.

All this makes learning III quite complex. The result cannot be planned in detail (Tosey et al, 2011). The outcome emerges and one does not know what will be there until it is there. This is similar to the psychodynamic approach where one is finding truth inside oneself, but one will never know in advance where the journey ends and what someone will find. In other words, learning III is a journey to unknown places.

A drama written by Shakespeare can help to illustrate these considerations on learning III via psychodynamics. The conundrum presented is a fight within the psychic forces inside a military leader. Even though fictional, the events dramatized what can occur, although probably not that dramatically, in everyday life as well. It can serve as a helpful example to illustrate the dynamics of inner as well as outer conflicts in human psyche of a person holding a leadership position. It may also help to explain what it can mean to be engaged in learning III and grow as an individual.

Murray Stein (2011) uses Shakespeare’s Othello to illustrate the inner dynamics inside the psyche of a leading person as well as how this mind-set is interwoven with and affected by outer reality. The plot consist of black-skinned Othello who is a successful general in the Venetian army. He eloped with Desdemona, the daughter of a senator and secretly married her. Due to his foreignness the marriage was only accepted after a long period of defence. Still, there is resistance against their love. It comes from Iago, a bearer low in the military hierarchy that cannot bear the fact that Othello has such a beautiful and young wife. In
addition to that he is full of hate because he was overlooked for the position of lieutenant. Instead of him, Othello chose Cassio. Iago plots revenge and starts to persuade Roderigo, who is also in love with Desdemona, that Cassio betrays Othello in having a relation with Desdemona. For that Roderigo should kill Cassio. Further Iago gets Cassio drunken while being at work, with the result that he is removed as a lieutenant whereas Iago gets the position. In power of his new position, he begins to produce fake evidence in order to persuade Othello that his wife has an affair with Cassio. Besides that, Othello himself is getting older and losing eyesight, what made him more dependable on Iago, in him he fully trusts. Over time he is more and more filled with anxiety that his wife could reject him because of his lacking vitality. Taking serious what Iago has intended to implant in him, Othello kills Desdemona in a rage of jealousy. As he finally finds out that everything was enacted by his trusted Iago, he commits suicide (Stein, 2011).

6.7.2.3.1 Considerations

First of all, Iago is not only an external person, he can be seen as representing an inner object inside Othello mind. This can be described as introject as discussed in chapter (1), where people metaphorically swallow external realities by identifying with them. (Klein, 1975) The projective identification was possible because both parties – in this case Othello and Iago – made it happen. It is remarkable that the nature of Iago's character is quite similar to the internal mental object of Othello's. The inner object influences Othello’s mind by blurring everything that seems to be “good” with resentment.

There is a crucial temptation scene in the plot that shows these dynamics. In this scene Iago invades Othello’s mind by slandering about the integrity of Cassio. Totally in doubt, Othello asked what Cassio has said and Iago replies “Nothing, my lord; or if – I know not what” (Honigmann, 1997). This response triggered the hardly graspable and uncertain quality that characterize anxiety (Heidegger, 2007). This “nothing” in the answer works as a placeholder for rich interpretation by Othello, increasing his state of persecutory delusion. Othello reads and constructs something out of this blank space. The “nothing” gets a presence inside him that terrifies and haunts its subject (Stein, 2011).

This was possible because feelings of envy and jealousy were blind and weak spots of Othello. They probably root in his black skin colour and his constant fight for his right to exist and love, where other white colour Venetians had not to do that. As a consequence Othello’s perception got shaped of the world around him and his interpretations about it. In other words,
Othello himself constructs his reality as if it would be that way. This can be described as learning to respond to certain context in specific ways. There was no test of fantasies against facts by Othello and so the perception of his world was attacked.

It was mentioned that two emotional forces mainly steer Othello. It was the feeling of jealousy about Desdemona and Cassio and envy towards his young and good looking wife.

**Jealousy**

It is described by an intolerance or even hate regarding the relationship between two other parties, where the person of interest is showing more affection towards a third member. The focus of jealousy is directed towards this third party (Klein, 1975a). Repeatedly, Othello’s feeling of jealousy are a product of Iago manipulative influence and the resulting introjection in his mind. At one point Othello is not able to tolerate the pain any more and is frantically searching for “the truth” in form of visual proof. Trying to require observable data, Othello may witness and verify something, but due to his distraction it will be of blurred and illusionary manner. In other words, all his judgement is spoiled and as he has lost his cognitive ability to just examine and explore the presence without immediately engaging in an unthoughtful evaluation. He will see what he wants to see (Stein, 2011).

**Envy**

In contrast to jealousy, envy consist of two parties. As a destructive emotion, envy aims for damaging the person better off. The German term “Schadenfreude” describes it well, where one is feeling pleasure because another person is not. An envious person is therefore often grounded in hate, actions towards the other person are often deceitful and mean. In contrast jealousy, envy concerns people that are loved (Klein, 1975a). Regarding the drama, Othello raises feelings of envy toward his wife because she is still young and beautiful, whereas he is losing vitality (Stein, 2011).

**Implications:**

The story can demonstrate the importance of understanding own pattern and autobiographical factors in order to more consciously act instead of automatically react. It can show that it is crucial to explore one’s own inner reality in order to be able to find blind spots, be less vulnerable towards manipulation and be able to acknowledge what feelings belong to oneself and what to the other. In Othello’s case, he was not able to understand that Iago’s activities were grounded in Iago’s own envy and jealousy. Othello was not able to distinguish what
originates from himself and what comes from Iago. As a consequence, through introjection, the enemy was not only outside but inside Othello (Stein, 2011).

From a psychodynamic perspective learning could occur if Othello would be able to acknowledge his own feelings and withstand the pain, without ignoring or passively suffering. Rather by the acknowledgement that it is there and he has to find an appropriate and chosen reaction to it. He may tolerate those unpleasant feelings to test his fantasies (e.g. that Cassio is betraying him) against facts.

Also from Bateson’s learning framework perspective, learning III could occur through introspection. It would be different to learning II because Othello could not only have learnt to distinguish between different contexts, this means to detect and reveal the projective actions by Iago, but learnt how to distinguish, detect and reveal by knowing himself, his patterns, weak and blind spots that shaped his “way of seeing things” in more detail. This can then be beyond changing values or actions but a redirection of how Othello was used to perceive his own existence. He could experience a new concept of his self. Through emphatic counselling he can start to explore and find reasons for his jealously and envy. This can bring him in touch with his self in an existential sense. By discovering how he was accustomed to see his person and the world around, he could begin to recognize that his constant fight for love and equality is rooted in his hate and his envy towards others because he is has black skin colour. One can argue that to face racist acts was painful for Othello, decreasing his self-esteem and influenced how he learnt on a deep level. He could realize that there is something beyond that hate. In other words, to realize that he is not the hate but he (himself) feels hate.

One possibility is to accept what happened to him and to mourn the resentment and the feeling of inferiority. In a secure setting he could begin to see himself through fresh eyes in an existential sense because he realizes that life ask questions of him and he has to take a position (Frankl, 1996). In German the term “Verantwortung” describes this better, since the word means that one has to give an answer about the circumstances, to take a stance.

If Othello could admit that he is losing power while getting older, he may be able to handle the conflict in a less disastrous way. He would take an active position to the inevitable fact of evanescence. He could acknowledge that there are emotions in him that may not fit to his self-image and that it is, no matter what, a fact that he is envious about the same person he at the same time loves. This does not mean that there is no possibility to change what is possible to alter and not to defend against attacks. But one can argue that the better a person has identified and accepted own weaknesses and blind spots the better he or she can set
boundaries and take a stance in a balanced way. This is described as an act towards personal growth. Othello can gain more freedom on how he reacts toward what he faces inside as well as outside. Through more self-awareness, individual autonomy can increase and there is less automatic and unconscious reaction but more actively chosen action.

Now a last example will be given. Similar to the Othello case, it deals with psychodynamic forces. In contrast to the drama of Shakespeare it describes a scene that can occur in daily life in organizations.

6.7.2.4 Example: Old manager

Lohmer (2008) describes the case of a top manager, Mr. K. at the age of 50 years. Mr. K. enjoys high reputation in the company but there is one serious problem. There are no young talents that can be built up to future managers in order to do the leading work autonomously in the future. This will get problematic for the organization because, one day Mrs. K will retire and his succession still remains unresolved. Every time a young employee starts to improve, serious conflicts lead to a drop out. Mr. K. is disappointed of his employees that do not satisfy the expectations. This led Mr. K. to an attitude of doing tasks on his own because the others are not able to do so.

Lohmer (2008) describes the problem as an unconscious one regarding the top manager. Precisely this theme is described as Mr. K. inability to promote potential leaders. This would mean to cede power, to be rendered unnecessary and to face the fact of getting weaker and older over time. As a result, after being proud for “his” young employees, he starts to feel a feeling of unease. He quickly gets annoyed by any autonomous actions of the youngsters. He feels betrayed and not respected because they undertake activities that were not arranged with him. This leads him to demonstrate his power and reprimand his employees in public. The result can be seen as self-deception by him. This means that from the perspective of Mr. K., his anger is justified because of the deviant behaviour of the youth. On the other side he has a blind spot and neglect certain aspects of his psyche and self. This means that he does not expose the fact of evanescence and the envy towards the young and powerful employees. In other words, Mr. K. cannot afford to acknowledge the pain of losing strength and power, he cannot support the youth. This can be supported when people draw their self-worth only from their work (Lohmer, 2008).

Learning could occur if it is possible for Mr. K. to deal with his psychic reality. We can suggest that such a self-examination can happen in a one-on-one coaching or mentoring
setting. In such a setting, the ability and braveness to acknowledge envy, anger and hate towards the youth can be seen as maturity, not as a weakness. Following the theoretical considerations about the organization-in-mind, it can be helpful to closely look at how the top-leader describes “his” firm and the people in it. If he sees his company as a place where the young disrespects the old, this can then be a source to find out about unacknowledged feelings. Form a psychodynamic perspective it could be possible for Mr. K. to test fantasies against facts. For instance he could find out that not every autonomous act by an employee is meant as offensive. In addition to that learning III could occur. If Mr. K., metaphorically speaking, peels off his layers, he could be touched by his self in an existential sense. He can find out about his innermost governing rules and principles. He may come to realize that his self-image is strongly depending on his work and having power and control over others. One can conclude that realizing this can be seen as what Bateson (1973) meant with one’s character becoming irrelevant. Dealing with the fact of getting older and letting things go, could lead him to see himself and the world with new eyes. He could actively choose to take himself less seriously and share his knowledge with the youth instead of defending himself. This can have positive effects on the team and the organization as whole (Lohmer, 2008).

Eventually, it seems important to mention that we can further speculate about possible reasons and implications of Mr K. intentions, motives and reasons for behaving in a certain way. Anyway, the main purpose of this was to discuss how psychodynamic theory, the concept of organization-in-mind and the learning types of Bateson can help to explain individual growth. This path towards growth can be seen similar to self-development as in the psychology of Jung, where growth of this kind is described as the process of individuation. The cultivation of each individual's natural in-born potential, to become the person that one is (Stein, 2011). In order to develop a more holistic concept of perception one has to examine and probably reformulate the framework of how events in life are interpreted. Through enhanced awareness it is possible to have a more inclusive and discriminative perspective towards life (Mezirow, 1990). It is this what can be called a step toward wisdom with a stable attitude towards one's personality, life and world (Kohut, 1978).

6.7.2.5 Wisdom

“Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is organized life.”

Immanuel Kant
Acquiring knowledge and getting wiser represent a source that never ends and one that provides new viewpoints, the development of new interpretations and relationships with the world in and around oneself. “Knowing what we know” and “knowing what we do not know” is the ignition for a learning journey in order to learn more about one's experiences, patterns and relationships. This sounds paradoxical, since knowledge is extended through the admission of not-knowing (Tosey & Mathison, 2008). At the beginning one does not know for sure what it will be like (Yorks & Nicolaides, 2006). The experience manifests that there is not “the truth” out there, rather perceptions is bound to and cannot be separated from its perceiver. Put simply, a person knows more by not-knowing which can be mysterious as well as liberating (Bateson, 1973). This is not seen as an esoteric state but as a highly philosophical process of trying to understand oneself and the environment (Peschl, 2007). Seen from a constructivist perspective, one is one’s own author in constructing knowledge. The aim is to reduce self-related blurs but at the same time be aware that one’s own perception of reality is limited. This can be a chance towards a development of an “inner knowing and not-knowing” and can lead to a transformation of acting in the world rather than on the world. There emerges an attitude of “letting it come to you” instead of “looking for” (Senge, et al., 2005). It is a dynamic interplay between being connected to the world as well as steering oneself and taking responsibility. Wisdom can be about finding a dynamic balance between openness and receptiveness and between construction and projection. Being aware of own constructional and projection activities and in parallel be open to environmental dynamics in order to receive perturbations.

Irritations can lead someone to scrutinise habitual mental maps, to question the taken-for-granted (Peschl, 2007). Errors, mistakes and crisis are opportunities to learn about oneself and the company one works in. Paired with curiosity and braveness, a wider and enriched view of oneself, more tolerance for us and the world we live in, can be reached. All this can be seen as a never ending process of progressive integration (Peschl, 2007). This is especially true for the integration of unwanted and unpleasant or repressed feelings and thoughts.

The same way as a man walking is never in balance but always correcting to imbalance, life is never in full static balance but always floating. Trying to establish a world free of disturbance would result in distorted reality (Watzlawick, 2011). To think and lead an organization works as if it would act pure rational without any irrational or paradoxical behaviour seems naive and neglects the complexity and humaneness. In Zen-tradition: “Water which is too pure, has
no fish.” Instead, awareness about one’s own contradicting dynamics can enhance understanding of others.

Being far on the path of personal growth can work as a stabilizing mechanism. Following Jakubik (2011) all knowledge is embedded in and between human beings, their actions, interactions as well as in situated practices. So we can ask the question raised by Eliot (1963, p.161): “Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?” Applied to organizational theory, one possible result of this question could be that organizations can benefit from people that are already engaged with type III learning and so possibly reached some point of wisdom. Beside people that “just do it” (learning I or single-loop learning) and people that strategise (learning II or double-loop learning), persons of wisdom are needed (learning III) (Hawkins, 1991). In other words, a person having reached some state of wisdom may function as a counsellor and a trust person inside the company. Such people can systemically reflect over institutionalized boundary judgements of the existing system (Reynolds, 2014). By this is meant to discover the way how and why the institution became the institution it is now. Furthermore, exploring the organization’s history may help to anticipate what limitations affect the present (Snell & Chak, 1998). This is to say that learning, personal growth and gaining wisdom is possible as any impact at work can be used to develop and unfold. If learning III happens, may it be in therapy, coaching or in another activity, not only knowledge will change but also the person itself has changed (Jakubik, 2011).

Everything discussed so far was based on the presupposition that learning has a positive outcome. It seems worth to mention that there is never a guarantee that a process of personal growth leads to positive results at all times. There is a risk that working with one’s self concept and a radical change in worldview can be dangerous for the person. In the following limits and dangers of learning III will be discussed.

6.7.2.6 Limitations and dangers on Learning III

Learning in this this sense does not have to be the ideal way to personal growth per se. It is crucial to mention that learning is not always benign and helpful. This is to say that learning in general should not be seen as “holy grail” because of certain dangers and limitations.

At the personal level, there is no assurance that people have a better life after such learning experiences (Tosey, 2008). Gaining more knowledge about oneself can be stressful or lead to burnout, provoke jealousy or exclusion (Jakubik, 2011). The awareness of not-knowing or to uncover wrong assumptions may foster discouragement. Instead of enlightenment, the
questioning of self can lead to psychosis or depersonalization. This can be because the sense of identity is shaken and fragmentation during transition may occur (Tosey, 2006). The consistency within allows us to say: “This is me” and the engagement with the world in a confident manner might get out of balance through questions that entail learning (Carr, 2003). This sense of consistency can be described as “ontological security”, where the individual experiences his or her own being as alive, whole, real and substantial in time and space (Laing, 1960). In other words, a person feels belonging to itself as curial and real. This is why some form of unconscious patterns are precious and needed and should therefore not be analysed (Bateson & Bateson, 1998). A lack of ontological security is therefore associated with psychotic conditions like manic-depression, paranoia or schizophrenia (Laing, 1960). There is a small line between breaking up used pattern in order to grow and causing harm by overwhelming experiences or re-traumatisation.

The discussed considerations about complexity theory can help to explain this dialectic. Some amount of crisis, suffering from pain or uncertainty can lead to a change of personality. On the other hand too much of it can be destructive, leading to anxieties and rigid defence mechanism. This causes justified resistance to change, as stability and ontological stability are preferred and irritation avoided. This is to say that a well-educated coach, trainer or therapist should be able to anticipate how much is enough and what is too much for the client. Here it can help to refer to a therapeutic ethos: In any form of psychodynamic approaches the counselling person has to be aware and to be able to deal with what “comes up” on the client's side in order to give proper support. People defend themselves if needed to the last, if their self-esteem and how they perceived their reality starts to break. One should be prepared and educated to handle such emotional states of emergency in a wise matter. In addition to that, Irvin Yalom mentioned that one should never take something (a symptom, illusion or fantasy) away from a client, if one is not able to, at the same time, provide sufficient substitute and a holding environment based on trust and empathy (Yalom, 2010). Further it is crucial to let the client set the pace and manner of his or her examination. Even if the counselling person has a different opinion on the client’s behaviour, the client is responsible whereas the counsellor state what consequences certain behaviour may have.

6.7.2.7 Ethical considerations

In general, all knowledge based on the psyche of human beings can be used to manipulate them against their will. The more one is confronting the human being with his or her psyche, the more power one has to use or misuse it. In one Spiderman movie it was said: “With great
power comes great responsibility.” The same is true here. Hence, if one assumes that there are motives for a company to get access to as much potential of its members as possible, there lies the danger that all specific insights will be abused. The whole human being including its soul should become a resource in order to make profit. Therein lies a danger that the individual should merge in the collective self of a company (Friebe & Lobo, 2007). This works against Kantian ethics that say, that one should never treat humans as mere means to an end (Bowie, 1998). As one of the main purposes of ethics in social research is protection of vulnerable participants, one should be aware that there is the danger of instrumentalization of psychological knowledge. Further the question could be raised of to what degree an employee is selling not only his or her time and working power to a company but also his or her mind. Is the solution of a personal workers problem, originated years ago but triggered in the company, in the responsibility of the company or not? And if so, how can one distinguish what affects what? This can be questions for further research.

7.0 Discussion

“Know thyself!”

_Ancient Greek aphorism at the temple of Apollo - Delphi_

Figuratively speaking, we cannot just simply look at life as a movie, because we are in the movie (Follett, 1924). From a sociological stance, man can be seen as a social product of society as well as society as a product of man. They mutually shape each other (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Man was and is formed by external circumstances. At the same time we can argue that we have the freedom to choose our interpretation. Seeing it this way, life can be both: determination of circumstances and freedom to take a unique stance for them (Wheelis, 1975). Further, every act of observation is meant as being subjective. That things seem to be, is not to say that they are so (Wittgenstein, 1982). The point is not to debate which reality is “better” or “more true” than the other but about if people suffer by it or not (Foerster, 2013). This is the basic premise underlying this thesis. The focal point was the single individual and how it acquires knowledge by interacting with the world. This means that getting to know oneself can help in getting to know the world and other humans. This work strives to help to explain on a theoretical level how it is possible to grow as a person. For this Bateson’s type II and especially type III learning were introduced. In addition to that the concept of
organization-in-mind based on psychodynamic considerations helped in understanding the realm of personal growth in an organizational context.

Based on psychodynamic considerations it was discussed that the human psyche uses social defence mechanisms to establish and maintain a well-balanced and stable identity. People can split and project uncomfortable feelings onto other people. This led to the theory of introjection. This means that a person literally swallows sent signals by another individual and integrates them in his or her mental world. In psychodynamic terms, the person created an introject (inner object) with what has been sent by the other person. Basically, this means that something external then becomes something internal. Such a mental object can influence behaviour and further interpretations about external events. Learning in this sense can occur if the person is able to tolerate the feelings long enough to reflect on them instead of splitting or projecting them onto other people. This describes not passively suffering from uncomfortable feelings but actively choosing to bear them in order to work with them. As a possible consequence, the person is able to question and test own constructions about how the world “is” or “should be”.

Expanding the view to a social and work perspective in organizations, the Tavistock-model was discussed. It states that every organization has a primary task that it wants to fulfil and therefore a risk to fail. This can lead to anxieties because we cannot simply know all possible consequences of a decision nor have all the information. Uncertainty is something one has to deal with, anxieties have to be processed. One way to do that is via social defence mechanism. That means that work and tasks are changed in order to avoid anxiety-provoking situations. This can get dangerous as relationships at work can get distorted. In sum the strategy to handle uncomfortable emotional states can represent, in contrast to the theory of introjection, something internal that manifests itself in something external.

Combining these thoughts that internal influences external and the other way round, one can argue that these processes are quite complex. For this reason considerations on complexity theory were introduced. This is to say that some irritation, crisis or pain is needed in order to break up the used order but too much can hinder the process. In addition to that, the complexity regarding the interdependency can demonstrate that what can occur in learning and change is never fully predictable. Learning this way is a journey to unknown places.

In any case, people have to be able to participate at and in work. For this reason the psychodynamic of work assist in understanding how working in an organization can serve a
psychological function. As the worker have to let go of idiosyncrasies to some degree when he or she starts to work or participate in an institution, he or she is held on to adapt. This individual and unique adaption in the realm of work then serves as a link between the psychodynamic and the social perspectives. This is to say that internal as well external factors and their interplay are linked by the individual and his or her unique way of adaption to what happens to him or her at the workplace.

Following these considerations, people are shaped and are held on to adapt to inter alia anxieties of failure, social defence mechanism, work structures, job roles and different colleagues. Hence the worker is adapting according to his or her personality. This is to say that the unique history of a person can have an influence on how events are interpreted and adaption occurs. One way to tap into individual learning and growth is through exploring how an individual feels and thinks about the organization he or she works in. This concept is called the organization-in-mind and is an inner representation - an introject- inside a worker's psyche. It consists of perceived external events and their interpretations, whereas the interpretation are depending on the unique personal factors like history and autobiography. Seeing it this way, the organization is a synthesized being inside a person. This mental construct is constantly changed during interactions between individuals and their environment. “The” organization is nothing outside but an inner product of communicative acts. As people are different and unique, examining their organization-in-mind as their creations can be a way to uncover own unknown patterns and prior learnt behaviour. This is a way of self-examination and learning that can lead to personal growth. This process is strongly related to feelings like anxieties, hate, fear or anger. They can be seen as an evaluating guide for social situation. As a social phenomenon, they are created during the exchange with environment and work and can function as a coping mechanism in order to adapt to changing circumstances. Hence emotions can be seen a useful servant to an individual in social life (Finemann & Gabriel, 2000).

These aspects were not sufficiently covered by Argyris and Schön in their theory on single- and double loop learning. They say that people try to protect themselves via social defences but do not ask why people do so. Asking this question can allow go beyond their concept of learning. In addition to that, we saw that Argyris and Schön do not pay sufficient attention to that learning can hurt. To start with, a person has to admit imperfection. It was argued that this can hinder people to openly discuss or admit their underlying values. This can be supported by the phenomenon of psychological regression during stressful situations. People try to cope
and adapt to a situation with already learnt, long-established behaviour. To neglect that can mean letting go a chance of getting precious insights about inner governing rules and conflicts of people.

For this reason and in addition to anxieties and defence mechanism, the complexity of human communication was taken into account. Specifically, the patterns of relationships, certain contexts, feelings and meta-communication. It was argued that a communication consists of multiple logical types whereas the context of a certain situation classifies single events in a certain way. This means that people have learnt to respond to specific contexts in a certain manner and to determine how actions are interpreted. These past learnings happened during socialization in childhood or during adolescence and can be deeply ingrained in one’s worldview. If my experience was that authority is dangerous I will probably interpret conflict situations with my boss differently then if not. This is to say that people can mix up past with present contexts. They are not able to distinguish that the situation now is not like the situation as it was. They act as if and interpret the situation as expected. This way learning how to respond to contexts can shape reality. It can affect the whole person and its view of the world, not merely actions or underlying values. Personal growth can then go far to the core of a person. That was described as the self of a person in an existential sense. Exploring this leads to revealing the innermost governing rules and principles one holds. It is important to understand in an epistemological way how one learns. This is called learning type III. It is not about reaching a state of pure receptiveness and a total impartial state of mind but more awareness and emphasis on deeply ingrained rules and believe systems in order to be able to work with or change them (Peschl, 2007).

When thinking about the examples given, this can be described as a journey. The learning process is not a strict plan written in advance nor an already existing product (Stacey, 1992). Such self-development can include unpleasant and “negative” feelings like hate, anger or envy. The psychodynamic theory acknowledges that and is unbiased about spiritual abyss. There is no disguise and rejection of “bad” feelings. The general attitude is stated by Terenz: “I am human, and I think that nothing of that which is human is alien to me.” Negative feelings are seen as part of human nature and the awareness and the ability to let the contradictory, painful and socially despised co-exist, leads to a more realistic understanding of oneself (Hutton, et.al, 1997).

This is crucial when a person is able to relax and allow inner representations to come to surface he or she is able to undercover feelings and thoughts about a specific institution and
helps to clarify them. One can reach a higher degree of freedom where a mind-set of how things ought to be are replaced by an attitude of creative engagement to deal with what really is in a specific situation (Hutton, et.al, 1997). This includes to develop an ability to allow different distinctions about how things are or should be. Maybe one comes to the acknowledgement that the own perception of how the world seems to be is unique not true in absolute terms. In other words, there isn't merely pure black or white but mostly some sort of grey. It are not things as such that worry us but the image and meaning we gave them, the world depends on our individual perception (Epictetus, 2009). Such insight can lead to personal growth where knowledge about the construction can be a chance to re-construct anew. One has more freedom and possibility to consciously choose how to react to internal and external stimuli. This can then lead to being wiser whereas such people in organizations can encourage others to discover and share their cognitive assumptions. Once on the surface, individual mental maps can be explored towards limitations and idiosyncrasies, revealing their relative nature. The curtain can fall and a general appreciation of the limited and therefore relative understanding of reality emerges. Ideally, this way of perception is replaced by an enriched understanding of oneself and others. Metaphorically spoken, one can see a fuller picture but never the picture, realizing that the organization-in-mind is different for everyone and there is no absolute truth. Hence, people are able to switch through different perspectives, gaining a more holistic and systemic view on their and other lives. Changes in behaviour towards others may occur, appreciation and humbleness are more profound (Bartunek & Koch, 1994).

8.0 Outlook

“The longest journey, is the journey inwards.”

Dag Hammarskjöld

The current thesis mainly examined the theoretical considerations of how a form of consultation regarding learning with the concept of organization-in-mind and personal growth could look like. To elaborate how this can be applied in detail and put into practice, could be part of further work like a dissertation. Due to its depth and the included risks it make sense to collect empirical data on a long run, for several months. Possible approaches could be based on the systemic-phenomenological and the constructivist viewpoints. Also cybernetic principles can be used for building such a learning framework/approach. One way to undercover and question certain mind-concepts could be via play. Though play is acting as if,
people in organization can playfully test chosen fantasies against others. Possible question that can support this are: “Who am I?”; “What person do I want to be?“; „What can I be?“; „What kind of organization are we?“; “How do we want to be?” and „What can we be?”. This can be supported by work of Winnicott namely “playing and reality” (Winnicott, 1979). She explains that infants learn to cope with anxieties through experimenting and role plays. That helps them to handle future scenarios. In an organizational context it can be asked if this testing of reality and identity can be done and if yes how. Functional stupidity (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012) and scenario planning may serve as sources for inspiration.

It is suggested that there is a counselling person needed that accompanies that process. He or she can provide a meta-level that enables a transformation of a client's system from one state of conception to another. This is an encounter from being to being where the counselling person enables the client to take into account the possibility of: it could be different too (Watzlawick, 2013). To do that, the agent itself has to develop and possess this ability in person. This includes deep personal exploration and inter alia the exploration of neglected and negatively connoted parts of one’s own personality. This was named shadow-side by Jung and can consist of anger, guilt, shame, hate, envy and grief (Bartunek & Koch, 1994). This is the side that a person seldom, if all, shows to others; characteristics that are hidden in the dark (Stein, 2011). With a counsellor that knows and accepts his or her blind or repressed spots, an alternative experience can be discovered by the client (Bartunek & Koch, 1994). In other words, the most precious “tool” one can offer as a consultant, coach or counsellor, is oneself. If the consultative person went through divers and difficult and often painful states in personal live, he or she can support and offer elaboration of hidden or neglected aspects to the client (Yalom, 2010).

Although this process is done with a counsellor, one can argue that the experience of deep personal change itself cannot be communicated sufficiently and completely in classical terms like verbal or written communication. Some sort of outcome or result of type III learning is most beyond the realm of language. In other words, it cannot be fully described to reach a point of learning III, for oneself to be touched in an existential sense. It has to be experienced. The word experience is rooted in the Latin word *experientia.* It means to experiment, to proof and do trials (Daudelin, 2000). Learning through experience sets the focus on the learner that is actively involved. His or her experiences are the source of new knowledge even though the learning person cannot always put in words what they experience (Tosey & Mathison, 2008). They might say: “Words fail me.” This can occur if a person is seized by a situation and
experienced feelings cannot be explained verbally satisfactorily. This can be seen as the intangibility of experience as is what Wittgenstein meant when he said: “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.” (Wittgenstein, 1922 p. 109).

For that reason the arts, like music, dance or through painting work as a reference point for a transconceptual understanding as it is meant here. A song or a painting that “touches us” communicate and create meaning inside of us. At the same time, the piece of art is not the experience itself (Maritain, 1968). Put another way, a great work encompasses more than the author. Art consists of inter alia being observed by an observer. “The artist gives the beholder more to do, he draws him into the magic circle of creation and allows him to experience something of the thrill of making which had once been the privilege of the artist.” (Gombrich, 2000). In a similar way a counselling person can offer support and invite a client to explore his or her own nature. This type learning and gaining knowledge is therefore a change in epistemology, an alteration in the form of knowing and learning. It requires more than “just” a change in subject matter or sole reflection about the learning process itself. It is learning about learning (Tosey et al, 2011).

Staying with the arts can help to grasp possible difficulties in such a counselling process. It was discussed that people have so-called schemata that help them to interpret and organize their experiences. One question could be how a consulting agent can help to move an existing client’s system from one mode to another mode of understanding. This can be tricky because the consultant is operating on exactly that schemata of understanding that is chosen to be changed. There is also a danger of misinterpreting the client’s situation, because of applying a different mode of understanding. This can be pooled to asking how it is possible that a mode of understanding can be the medium for understanding itself. (Bartunek & Koch, 1994). Expressed in art this is illustrated by the hand that draws itself. Paradoxical and not fully graspable.
At this point it can be helpful to refer back to the logical types of Russell in the learning framework of Bateson. The riddle can be understood as a confusion of different logical types (Bateson & Bateson, 1988). Both the system of the client as well as the external agent operate on schemata to pinpoint their perception in order to interpret their experience. These schemata function as a medium for creating meaning. One way to make schemata obvious is to talk about how one sees the world and what believes systems exist that influence how things “are” for the client. Nevertheless, there still has to be one schema operating in order to interpret the transformation and its results.

When it is possible for a client to leave the overarching schemata that constitutes his or her reality, this seems to be a peculiar leap. A hardly describable jump out of the used and familiar frame. We can think of it similar to one famous trick of Baron Munchhausen that pulls himself out of the bog, by pulling on his own hair (Watzlawick, 2011). What is left can be seen as non-schematic and trans-conceptual and cannot understand itself. Here one is to some degree leaving the realm of common science and can begin to touch the meta-physical or mystics (Bartunek & Koch, 1994).
9.0 Sources


Berman, M (1990): ‘Mexico on my Mind’, In Resurgence, No 139


