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DIALOGUE IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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DIALOGUE IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT

*Conditions and possibilities of understanding, co-action and change
in European air traffic control*

PhD Dissertation

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1 Introduction

The central topic of my research is dialogue. Looking around me now, my surroundings in the narrower and the broader sense, I must say I still cannot imagine a more adequate topic. I used to work as organisation developer, and I accompanied several projects, developments and changes in various organisations as change management expert. Dialogue between those affected by the change is a critical element of my approach to organisation development as I learned it from my tutors. During my assignments, I have always had the feeling that any change is condemned to death at medium term at maximum without that. I was surprised to learn that this was not considered evident by all. Working with executives, but also with prominent representatives of my own profession, I had to realise that this was not obvious even for responsible managers and renown counsellors. On the contrary, my dialogue initiatives sometimes actually even provoked resentment and resistance. I became uncertain. Is my concept wrong then, somehow? Should I redefine myself as OD expert? As a first step, I set out to study theories of change management as OD practitioner. Later on, I could do the same as full-time academic. By then I had already defined the broader topic of my research: What do change management theories say about the right way of change management? My previous professional experience has made it clear that no universal answer existed. No answer that would lead to the right solutions in any situation, at any time and place. Everything depends on the organisation: the reality of the given organisation, at a given time, under specific conditions.

The focus point of my research thus originated basically from change management. I examined the types of change addressed by the change management theories¹. I came to the conclusion that the more complex the changes they address, the more central partnership, cooperation and dialogue between management and employees are in the model. The deeper the changes they operate with, the more they affect the deepest cultural layers of organisations, the more essential the dialogue component is for the model.

At this point I felt the urge to examine in more detail what the theories concerned actually meant by dialogue. And I was curious to see for myself what dialogue really meant, irrespective of the arguments of management schools. While exploring the dialogue concepts of change management theories, I stepped out of the framework of change management and the discipline of management in general to take a look at what other disciplines meant by dialogue.

This research strand turned out to be more relevant and decisive than I expected. I invoked the dialogue theories of philosophy, theology, literary science and cultural anthropology (sociology) and created a dialogue model inspired by their merger. Actually, the disciplines concerned have made more progress in understanding and defining dialogue than mine. Also, the current attempts of management schools are enriched and guided by their answers (and questions).

The conclusion of the theoretical research is that organisational change will only be genuine and permanent if it affects also the cultural deep layers, i.e. the values, assumptions and logics

¹ I regarded as typical the theories taught at the leading business schools.

underlying organisational behaviour. In the conceptual system of dialogue philosophies, this *touching* means *understanding*. Not agreement, not some modification introduced under duress, but mutual and common understanding – which, paradoxically, is concurrent with change of necessity (cf. effect theory).

In the organisational context, understanding has several layers. Organisational reality is created by individuals, jointly; the outcome is something common, but individuals can only move about (understand, change, develop) in it within their respective own worlds. “Cultural self-understanding” is an individual action, and community or collective self-understanding is the sum total of the interplay and alignment of such individual actions. It is this permanent movement back and forth along the individual – common – community axis and the dynamic of understanding –alignment – co-action that is the essence of change, and also the essence of dialogue. The conditions of dialogue are also the conditions of understanding, co-action and change.

The empirical part of my research investigates how the above takes place in organisational reality. I considered it important to choose a field of empirical research where my topic (change, change management, dialogue) was topical and prominent, and I ended up with the European aviation industry and in particular air traffic control. The thesis explains in detail the correlations between this topic and the research question.

2 Theories of change management

It has become almost self-evident by now that constant change is here to stay in the everyday life of organisations (Barnard and Stoll, 2010; Burnes and Jackson, 2011; Drucker, 2001); it is inevitably present in every organisation and every industry (By, 2005; Cummings and Worley, 2001). Change is driven by the need for adaptation to survive in the current turbulent business and economic climate (Dobák, 1996; Bakacsi, 2005; Robbins et al., 2010); the need for continuous growth as a primary business objective (Karp, 2005; Drucker, 2001) and an immanent feature also of capitalism that is the operating medium of the organisations (Zizek, 2016); and by the ever-present general business fashion trends. The trends include TQM from the seventies on, IT developments in the eighties, BPR in the nineties and efforts to alter and develop organisational culture after the millennium (Burnes, 2011). Today's overriding goal is continuous change, not as a source of gaining a competitive edge, but as the only guarantee of the survival of the organisation. "It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory", says W. Edwards Deming (quoted in: Armenakis and Harris, 2009, p. 127).

The above developments led to the explosive growth of the number of research, empirical and theoretical papers on change management in the past 40 years (Kerber and Buono, 2005; Gelei, 1996; Dobák, 1996). As Gelei put it in an article written in 1996, "it is almost impossible to take stock even of the number of topics being discussed" (Gelei, 1996, p. 55) – and the situation has aggravated since 1996.

Albeit change, the capacity for change is an organic and necessary part of the life of organisations, and this organisational phenomenon has been the topic of numberless researches and publications, according to a 2008 survey of McKinsey & Company, almost two thirds² of the organisational change programs do not achieve their intended results (Burnes and Jackson, 2011; Burnes, 2011; Sirkin, Keenan and Jackson, 2005; By, 2005; Beer and Nohria, 2000).

By (2005) and the authors he quotes offer several explanations for the above. In their opinion, the technical literature itself has contributed to low success rates by the contradictory and rather confusing theories and approaches it conveyed. There are many superficial analyses, and with only a few exceptions, the empirical and theoretical findings and models applicable to organisational change and its management rely on assumptions that had not been tested by the authors (By, 2005) and so they may have been applied later on at the wrong place or time or in the wrong way (Kerber and Buono, 2005). The assumptions concerned refer to the nature of change (what can be regarded as change), the role of managers, key factors of change (identification of key factors), the nature of the senior – subordinate relationship etc.

The most recent publications make efforts to treat their assumptions more explicitly (Cummings and Worley, 2001; Armenakis and Harris, 2009), and some technical articles actually categorise the change management approaches based on their hidden assumptions (Kerber and Buono, 2005, 2011; By, 2005; Burnes, 2011; Pettigrew et al., 2001).

² The error rates quoted there refer to general organisational change programmes. For change-of-culture programmes e.g. the corresponding rate is 90%. (Burnes, 2011)

In summary, the assumptions of the various change and change management approaches are so diversified that their only common denominator is that **at the end of the change process something is done differently than before** (Robbins et al., 2010).

According to a more specific and nuanced version of this definition applied to the organisational context, **organisational change is something that results in the alteration of a key feature of the organisation**. However, 'key feature' could mean anything in practice: technology, operating processes, outputs, structure, power hierarchy, culture (Dobák, 1996, based on Sz. Kis). *And who, on what basis (authorisation, legitimacy) will decide what to consider a key feature in the given organisation?* The answer depends to a large extent on the paradigmatic position of the respondent. The traditional or mainstream schools approach the organisations from the side of contingency theory (Dobák, 2006; Bakacsi, 2004), distinguishing *proactive change* (targeting the alteration of the conditionality defined by the environment), *preactive change* (coping with predicted changes in the environment) and *reactive change* (adaptation to changes in the environment) based on the correlation of organisational change and the environment of the organisation (Bakacsi, 2004; Csedő, 2006).

In terms of the content of change, the traditional schools distinguish *incremental* and *radical* change based on the scope, extent and range of change and the hierarchic levels affected by it in the organisation³ (Dobák, 1996; Bakacsi, 2004; Csedő, 2006). Incremental change typically involves gradual, step-by-step change, whereas radical change means the simultaneous and more extensive alteration of several organisational features.

As for the process of change, the most frequent distinctions are made along its two main dimensions: based on its *speed or tempo*, the change can be episodic (discontinuous) and continuous, and in terms of the underlying *intent* (or: *control* exercised over change) intended and unintended.

This paper reviews the basic change types along these two dimensions to identify the most popular change management theories and the change types they discuss. The theories concerned are identical in that they search for the ideal tool (kit) leading the (manager) to success in the given change process. They focus on managers; if they do consider the employee perspective at all (cf. Armenakis and Harris, 2009), that is to draw conclusions that will give management certain clues. They want to understand the employees to make the *executives' tools* for change management more efficient, to help the manager achieve *his* goals more efficiently.

The paradigmatic difference dividing organisational theories (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) is obviously mirrored in the theories of organisational change. Our assumptions concerning individuals and/or organisational reality will determine our attitude and connection to the discourse on organisational change.

The difference between my research and the mainstream schools is that, instead of the goals set by the executive for himself and the ways and means (reasons) by which he achieves (or does

³ For further viewpoints and more detail on the differences see Dobák, 1996, p.191.; Bakacsi, 2004, p. 287.; Csedő, 2006, p. 23.

not achieve) them, my interest lies in how what happens in the process of organisational change is produced by the joint action of management and staff, superiors and subordinates. My approach is therefore basically constructivist (interpretative).

Accepting the claim that employees in today's organisations tend to contribute more and more of themselves (their ideas, emotions, a growing part of their personality) to the organisation, that is, "they are more psychologically present" (Hirschhorn, 1997, p. 9), the interpretation of organisational phenomena (e.g. change) as collective creations is definitely not a thought experiment. Employees bring themselves into the organisation; they are its parts and creators, not its passive "victims" (Tsoukas, 2002). As a result of organisational change, *we do* something differently – for me, the point here is the 1st person plural. *We*, together, collectively, do something differently, and what I find most interesting is how this comes about.

However, I cannot ignore the mainstream schools of my field, I must not overlook them. My task as a researcher is not only to ask specific and relevant questions and try to give adequate and valid answers to them, but also to place my questions and answers in the discourse of my chosen discipline. This is the reason why I will discuss the change types identified in the relevant literature and assign the leading and known change management theories to the type they are closest to.

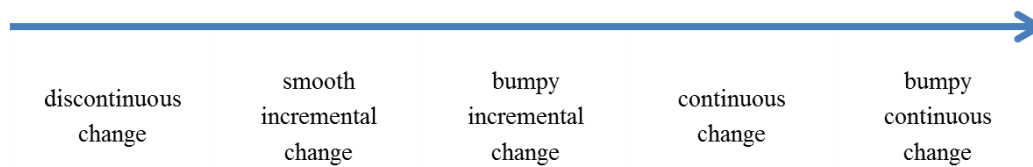
2.1 Types of change in the relevant literature

2.1.1 Dichotomy based on pace of change

The early change management theories had agreed that the organisations needed quasi-steady-state periods to function efficiently (Rieley and Clarkson, 2001; By, 2005). This does not mean a state without any change whatsoever: there is no live organism, whether an individual, a group, an organisation or any system composed of subsystems (Schein, 2002), that would be completely unchanging, even at the level of its subsystems. Homeostasis is typical of every living organism, and reflects the state of continuous adaptation to the changing environment (Schein, 2002⁴). By lack of change we mean a quasi-steady state where the integrity, the predicable operation of the given system (individual, group, organisation etc.) is maintained, and that gives the system a sense of security, a certain stability and its identity (Schein, 1996).

Today's approaches to organisational change can be assigned to two major subsystems based on their view of the change/quasi-steady state relationship, i.e. whether they assume a sequential order of quasi-steady periods and *periods/episodes* of change, or categorically deny the occurrence of quasi-steady states in a well-functioning organisation of our days.

⁴ This concept of the change of organisms is based on the work of Kurt Lewin. See Schein, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002.



1. Figure. Types of change. Author's diagram based on By (2005)

Further points can be defined along the axis of episodic/discontinuous to continuous change; based on By (2005), I will consider the following change types: discontinuous, incremental, bumpy incremental, continuous and bumpy continuous.

The main characteristic of **discontinuous change** is that major internal problems or serious external constraints trigger significant and fast shifts, easy to separate from everyday operation, at strategic, structural or cultural level or a combination of these three. The shifts/changes are then followed by longer periods of consolidation and peace. Changes of this type can also be conceived of as sudden, one-off, rare breaks with the past (Pettigrew, 2001), when the focus of management is directed at a major project or a well-definable object of change (Kotter, 2008).

Incremental change is continuous change that can be divided into well-definable periods in terms of time, scope and subject matter. Each unit of the organisation addresses a single problem, a single change at a time, but there is always something to deal with, to change. The reason for the change may lie without or within the system and include minor or major strategic shifts due to the continuous strategic revision process that affects the entire organisation and demands some, bigger or smaller, change on behalf of every organisational unit/sub-system. There are two sub-categories within incremental change based on how even, periodic and predictable the objects of the changes are. Today there is almost no *change following a uniform distribution*; instead, one may speak of *bumpy incremental change* or, as the authors quoted by By (2005) put it: a recurrently interrupted steady state.

The literature offers several definitions of continuous change. In terms of the above typology, By's interpretation of **continuous change** differs from the concept of incremental change in that this process is not a by-and-large uniform one affecting the entire organisation. By continuous change he means continuous adaptation, i.e. changes that can be interpreted at the level of the operational/organisational unit. Certain authors (e.g. Luecke, quoted in By, 2005) therefore do not consider these two categories different, and suggest to merge the categories of continuous and incremental change (as interpreted by By). By, however, argues that this would mean disregarding the extent, the scope, of the change, i.e. whether it takes place at the level of the organisation or a subsystem, whether it affects the strategy or some local aspect. As in the case of incremental change, By distinguishes even and bumpy (continuous) change. This fine-tuning mirrors the volatile aspect of continuous change, i.e. the alternation of more and less intensive periods in the operational change processes.

Somewhat in contrast with the terminology of By, Pettigrew et al. (2001) mean by **continuous change** uninterrupted change unfolding and taking shape during the process itself; "a new

pattern of organizing in the absence of explicit a priori intentions.” (Pettigrew et al., 2001, p. 704) These two different concepts of continuous change foretell the distinction of change types along another typical dimension that of intent. Note, however, that Pettigrew assumes an initial intent to change, and unintendedness refers to the specific content, the aim, of change.

Kotter (2008) also builds up the definition of continuous change on its being continuous as opposed to a one-off major project, involving the continuous adaptation of such organisational elements as the competencies or organisational culture.

Accordingly, in what follows I will use the term ‘continuous change’ to denote a process involving the entire organisation, the content of which unfolds/is specified during the process itself.

Incremental vs. continuous changes have their respective advantages and costs. Of course, what is an advantage in one type, can be conceived of as a deficiency or drawback in the other and vice versa.

Incremental change has the advantage that the turmoil, chaos and vulnerability associated with continuous change is absent, and the costs are also lower. However, as pointed out by dozens of authors, the achievements of the one-off large-scale changes are difficult (or impossible) to preserve. They keep creating and keeping up a permanent internal focus, developing a basically reactive and defensive attitude to the environment, and they generate new routines that again turn out to be something to be changed sooner or later. (By, 2005)

INCREMENTAL CHANGE	CONTINUOUS CHANGE
Periods of rest, without uncertainty Lower costs Less vulnerable organisation	Achievements get fixed better (in a permanent, stable way) Active, proactive attitude to the environment Results in less routine operation
Achievements are difficult to make permanent Reactive, defensive attitude to the environment Supports routine operation	Permanent uncertainty More vulnerable organisation High costs

1. Table. Incremental vs continuous change: advantages-disadvantages (Author’s table)

Awareness of the visible advantages and drawbacks does not automatically mean that the initiators/executors/persons in charge of change can deliberately choose one type or the other. This type of control, its possibility, is the basis of another fundamental distinction between the various types of changes.

2.1.2 Dichotomy of intended/unintended change

The intended/unintended dichotomy is based on whether the organisational actors⁵ can plan, direct, manage, deliberately control the change process.

Unintended change takes place in an unplanned way, not deliberately, without being coordinated and controlled at organisational level. That is, by unintended change I mean a change that just *happens* to the organisation (Cummings and Worley, 2001). The changes concerned can be minor or major organisational changes or even radical ones (e.g. crisis), or cases of permanent improvement based essentially on the trial-and-error method applied in everyday work that will occasionally spread to the whole organisation (Kerber and Buono, 2005). Such continuous everyday changes are a natural part of organisations (Wheatley, 1999), the results of “natural evolutionary changes” (Schein, 2002, p. 34), that do not necessarily promote the enhancement of organisational efficiency (Schein, 2002).

There are three main types of **intended change**. Kerber and Buono (2005, 2011) distinguish directed, planned and guided processes of change.

Directed change is initiated and directed from the uppermost hierarchic levels of the organisation. They depend on the authority of the managers, and on the degree of accommodation to/acceptance of change by their subordinates. Consequently, the main task of the managers is persuasion, the treatment/addressing of the emotional reactions of the members of the organisation.

Planned change may start at any hierarchic level and can be initiated by any actor of the organisation; the only requirement is the support of top management. The most widespread and popular change management theories concern planned processes of change. They serve as a map, a project management tool for the leaders of change. They emphasise that the primary function of change leaders is to identify and involve the organisational actors concerned and establish their commitment. The importance assigned to participation notwithstanding, the preservation of the results of the initiative and the results of change is a strategic task and responsibility; the need for change, its aim and vision and the feasibility of the process is decided at the uppermost strategic level

Guided (facilitated) change takes place in the context of a turbulent business/economic/social environment with many simultaneous and overlapping changes occurring in the organisation: these changes emerge, unfold, transform established practices and operating models or test new ideas. Guided change strives to exploit the professional expertise and creativity of the members of the organisation or, to use a nicer expression, to grasp the opportunities inherent in them, and supports and encourages their independent initiatives. The changes concerned are organic parts of the life of the organisation, they basically take for granted the commitment of the members

⁵ I deliberately refrain from referring to one or several organisational actors or group of actors (e.g. managers, initiators of the change, agents of change, employees, etc.), because the change management schools identify different actors as drivers and/or key actors of organisational change.

to the organisation and their contribution to its goals. This approach does not want to tell the actors of the organisation what they should do and why, but rather inspires them to grasp the opportunities of change, and design the activities.

The special, internal tension inherent in this type of change is due to the fact that change itself is intended, but its implementation is not. The process of change is minimally controlled, the goals are not set in advance, nor can they be defined in advance. The direction, the aims unfold during the process, and it is a question of the specific change management concept being applied whether it will take a final form (e.g. action research, Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) or not (e.g. learning organisation, Senge, 1990 ab, 1993).

In summary: the research literature identifies several types of change. One fault line dividing the researches concerned into two major groups is whether they consider the relationship between change and the quasi-steady state typical of the organisations as being discontinuous, incremental or continuous. Another fault line lies along control being exercised over the change process, i.e. to what extent the initiators and/or leaders of the change can and/or want to assert their intents during the process.

There are also unintended organisational changes. These are essentially changes that cannot be planned and controlled, such as crises or natural, unintended innovation or evolutionary development processes. Unintended changes are present in the everyday life of organisations but, interesting as they are, they are not part of my research. When an organisation starts to deliberately, intentionally unfold and disseminate some organisational innovation project within its own framework, we no longer speak of “natural” innovation, but of organisational learning or planned change, and that can already be interpreted within the scope of the phenomena investigated by this research.

2.1.3 Well-known change management theories by type of change

This chapter identifies the types of change treated by the known change management models. It was a major dilemma of my research how deep I should dive in the ocean of crisis management theories. The term ‘ocean’ is no exaggeration. As indicated already, the number of researches dedicated to organisational change and change management underwent rocketing growth in the past 40 years; it is impossible to survey the range of their topics (Gelei, 1996), or even the change models mushrooming in their wake. Today, there is no self-respecting consulting company⁶ without a change management model of its own. Therefore, mapping the theories and models of change management is an impossible mission. However, a closer look at the theories makes you realise that there is nothing new under the sun. Indeed, there is no novelty compared to the mainstream theories being taught at business schools. So I simplified

⁶ Here are some examples of the change management models of Hungarian consultants: Flow Csoport (<http://flowcsoport.hu/services#valtozasvezetes-es-kulturafejlesztes>), ICG (<http://integratedconsulting.hu/filozofiank/valtozasmenedzsment/>), Grow (<http://grow-group.com/valtozas-menedzsment-tanacsadas/>).

things by considering the established models general ideas, and assuming that any new model would correspond to one or a combination of these.

Management of **DISCONTINUOUS** organisational change had been the most widespread and popular approach until quite recently. The reason for its popularity lay in the functionalistic management concept prevailing in organisational management and its promise of the fast and efficient attainment of the targets. Its attitude to change, the organisation and the stakeholders was determined by such concepts as resistance/opposition, sources of information, key staff, stakeholders and authority.

An excellent demonstration of the DISCONTINUOUS – GUIDED change management concept is provided by the change strategies developed in the seventies by co-authors **Zaltman – Duncan** (1977) based on their experience. The four strategies making up the model are designed to help the executives shift the behaviour of organisational stakeholders in favour of organisational change. That is, organisational change, its aim and content, are determined by management, the leaders of change, and in that process – as is obvious from the tell-tale names of the strategies – employees are the negative actors to be managed somehow. The leader may choose one of four change management approaches, taking into account the change situation and its main characteristics. These so-called situational characteristics are the following: anticipated level of opposition, relationship of the organisational actors with (formal or informal) power to the change (do they support it, have they realised the need for it, etc.), power of the initiators of change, commitment of stakeholders, degree of urgency/necessity of change for ensuring the adaptation of the organisation and rate of risk of failure and the threat it represents for its future. The facilitative, re-educative, persuasive, or power-based⁷ strategy matching the situation ever has to be chosen accordingly.

Some authors expressly emphasise that organisational change and corporate strategy are inseparable concepts (By, 2005). Today's organisations consider it a universal truth that the capacity for change is crucial for survival: "Change or die!" (Robbins et al., 2010, p. 516) If so, change can be regarded as a strategic competency and also a strategic objective, and a standing order or assignment for change management.

As explained above, **INCREMENTAL** change is composed of well-definable phases in terms of time, scope and subject matter, when the individual units of the organisation treat a single problem, a single change at a time. Continuous and periodic strategic supervision actually defines such phases of change for the organisation. But changes induced by innovation also result in such phases (Bouwen and Fry, 1991). These strategic changes, whether major shifts or minor fine-tuning efforts, affect the whole organisation and demand smaller or bigger changes on behalf of every unit or sub-system.

The change management typology matching *strategy implementation* is associated with the name of **Nutt** (1987). The main difference between the four implementation strategies (intervention, participation, persuasion and edict tactics) lies in how far Leader No1 involves

⁷ For a more detailed comparison, see Annex 1.

others in strategy-making, the setting of the strategic goals and expectations and the preparation of the strategic action plans, and who these “others” are⁸.

The change management typology associated with innovation is hallmarked by the names of **Bouwen and Fry**. Their article (1991) describes mainly innovation strategies. The term “innovation” as they use it means “the development and implementation of new ideas by people who over time engage in transactions with others within an institutional order” (Bouwen and Fry, 1991, p. 37). That is, in their interpretation, innovation and change are one and the same thing. In the course of change, the (predominant) logic of the old routine is challenged by a new logic (that of change). The success of innovation depends on the quality of interaction between the two logics. In their research, the authors identified four core strategies for the meeting of the two logics. The first three models (power, sales, expert⁹) correspond almost completely to the power/persuasive/re-educative strategies of Zaltman – Duncan on the one hand, and to Nutt’s persuasion, intervention and edict strategies (Gelei, 2011) on the other. Only the fourth fails to fit. The confrontational/learning strategy mobilises cultural levels and offers a totally different qualitative level for the meeting of the two logics (see Chapter 2.2.3.). The termination of the process is followed by a longer period of consolidation and rest, when the new or innovation logic of the process of change becomes the dominant logic.

Beer and Nohria (2000) distinguish two fundamental changes and change management approaches based essentially on two factors. One is change of type “E” focusing on the hard components of the organisation and the other is change of type “O” stressing the soft components. The distinction does not rely exclusively on the focal point of change: this dichotomy can be detected also in the style and process of change management. The change concept underlying change management of Type E corresponds exactly to that of *guided and discontinuous* change and the one behind Type O to *planned and discontinuous* change. For, the main difference between the two is that while Type E approaches the change process top-down, Type O adopts what is essentially a participative approach. Forcing by persuasive and power tools is opposed to involvement, the intent of creating commitment.

Kotter’s 8-step model (Kotter, 2006, 2007, 2008), probably the best-known change management model, is akin to the above Type O model. Kotter had designed his model that became most popular in a short time almost 20 years ago (Preface of the Editor of Harvard Business Review to Kotter’s article, 2007). The steps or stages are arranged in a strict sequence, and failure may derive from missing one step or following the wrong order (Kotter, 2007).

In Kotter’s opinion, the key factors of successful change management are motivation and commitment, a powerful coalition supporting change, vision and communication and the institutionalisation of the results on the everyday life of the organisation. Later on Kotter himself acknowledged that change management scenario and key factors had to be supplemented. One reason for that was turbulence in the business/economic world has kept intensifying after he created his model (i.e. second half of the nineties) (Kotter, 2008, 2012). In

⁸ For a more detailed comparison, see Annex 2.

⁹ For a more detailed comparison, see Annex 3.

the new era, instead of being scarce phenomena, strategic changes and major organisational changes in their wake became increasingly frequent, recurring more often than every few years. Kotter realised that his model in itself did not offer a suitable methodology for coping with such frequent changes; instead, flexible solutions had to be integrated in the organisational structure to permit continuous adaptation. This has led to Kotter's so-called **double operating order theory**¹⁰, which means a **CONTINUOUS, PLANNED** change.

Action research (abbr.: AR) also brings **CONTINUOUS, PLANNED** change to the life of the organisation. AR is a change process having a twofold aim: to solve some organisational problem and to contribute to scientific knowledge on the organisations (Grasselli, 2009). From the perspective of science, the academia, the main thesis of AR is the following: "If you want truly to understand something, try to change it." (Schein, 1996 p 64 based on Kurt Lewin). In this context, change is but a "pretext", an ideal medium. In addition to the enrichment of scientific development, of scientific-level knowledge, AR explicitly wants to contribute to solving real problems.

Looking at AR from the perspective of the manner of contribution to solving real problems, i.e. from that of practice (change management), it is only slightly different from organisational development. Coghlan and Brannick (2014), for example, identify organisational development (OD) as an AR implementation option. Bakacsi on the contrary qualifies action research as the "dominant process model" of organisational development (Bakacsi, 2005, p. 75.). The basic literature on Organisational Behaviour, however, treats the two apart (see: Robbins et al, 2010; Cummings and Worley, 2001).

Besides the explicit aim of contribution to scientific knowledge, the other difference between action research and organisational development is that action research undergoes dynamic development during the process itself (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) and therefore treats the iterative quality of changes, i.e. one change leading to another, *much more deliberately* than OR. Action-activity in one process generates another action, i.e. the next step of the change process (Grasselli, 2009). That is, action research tends to bring continuous change and organisational research incremental change in the life of organisations.

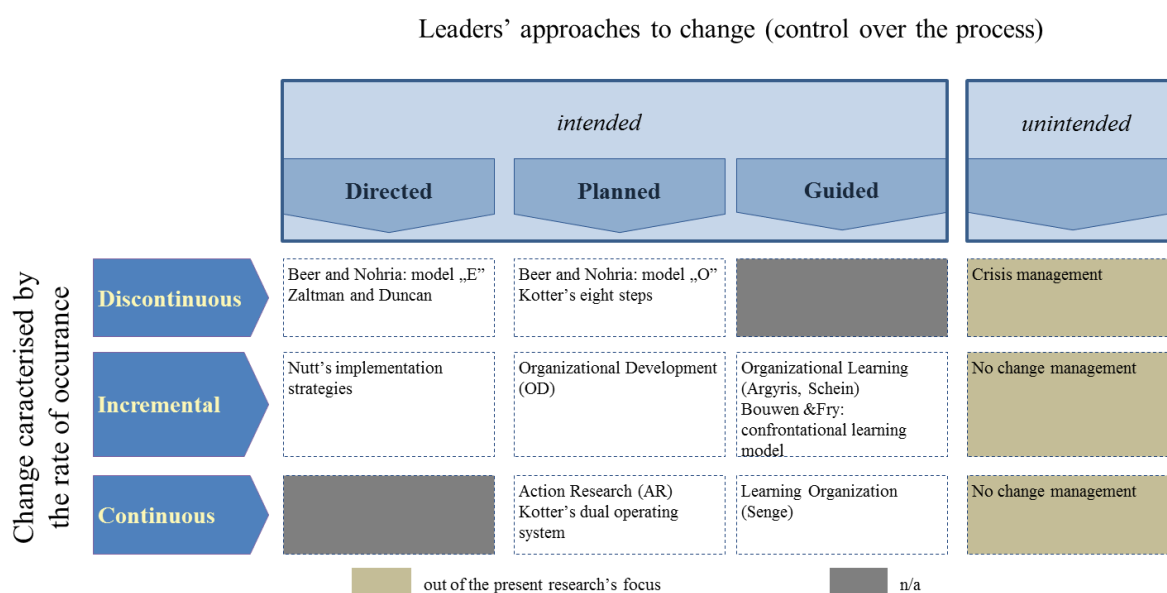
The most complex change management approaches do not define themselves as change management schools. They consider change and learning inseparable twin-concepts. In their

¹⁰ Kotter himself emphasises that the everyday management of organisations requires some kind of stable operation (and the traditional hierarchies, the known management processes are adequate for this), but supplementary structural elements need to be established to detect and identify any dangers and opportunities in the organisational environment. This second(ary) operating system is the structural element that guarantees the organisation's capacity for fast response to changes in its environment. It focuses on the environment (business, industrial environment) and the organisation and the continuous monitoring of the correlations and linkages of the two; this is what it analyses and evaluates and then converts into strategy and strategic action. The term "second" means that it supplements the traditional (hierarchical) order of operation of the organisation, and doubles the operation of the organisation. (Kotter, 2012)

Kotter calls this supplementary structure a strategic network due to its network-like quality and strategic focus. (Kotter, 2012) Kotter strives to capitalise on the advantages of simple organisations such as start-ups (Dobák and Antal, 2010) in larger, more structured organisations as flexibility deriving from the networked operation of such smaller organisations.

opinion, change is an immanent part of the life of organisations in the 21st century, and organisational learning is the organisational competency that ensures long-time survival. There are several **organisational learning** approaches (see the typology of Edmonson and Moingeon in: Edmonson and Moingeon, 1998), but I was concerned primarily with the theories to which this learning/change parallel could be applied (the best-known ones being those of Edgar **Schein** and Chris **Argyris**). That school differs from the others in that research focuses expressly on the individual, and instead of simply urging a change of (individual or organisational) behaviour, it considers the alteration of the assumptions, the ways of thinking underlying behaviour the keys to success. The common denominator of these theories is the assumption that real change in a human system will manifest itself also in the altered behaviour of the individual. A change of behaviour, in turn, requires a cognitive change: the individual perceives, understands, sees and interprets the world in a new way, i.e. the (human) system changes (Watzlavik et al., 1974), and this is reflected and shown also by the change of behaviour (that is merely a symptom, a consequence). This phenomenon is called second-order change (Watzlavik et al., 1974; Palmer et al., 2009) or double-loop learning (Argyris and Schön, 1978).

Organisational learning is, in this sense, “an organisational self-knowledge process in which the organisation acquires growing awareness of its situation, objectives and operation – by reflecting on the accumulated collective experience, and challenging certain things regarded as given beforehand –, and can therefore operate with growing efficiency and effectiveness.” (Gelei, 2002, p.6) Given the nature of the process, it can only be a **GUIDED**, FACILITATED procedure. And it may happen in certain organisations that self-knowledge acquisition becomes a permanent process, an integral part of everyday life. If so, we speak of a **CONTINUOUS** state of change, i.e. operation as **learning organisation** (Senge 1990ab, 2006; Senge and Koffman, 1993).



2. Table. Distribution of the well-known change management theories by frequency and control over change (Author's compilation)

I have shown above the change types identified in the literature and I classified the best-known change management theories according to the change types they aspire to solve. Note the external, pseudo-objective¹¹ researcher perspective adopted in my approach. Although the researcher can classify and analyse changes according to his/her own categories, in practice, it is the subjective assessment of the members of the organisation, not of the researcher, that will decide whether a given process qualifies as organisational change. The two parties may also have different opinions on the type of change embodied in the process, whatever the relevant researcher/expert definitions say.

In another paradigm, organisational change is defined as the outcome of the interpretation processes of the given organisation. In the social constructivist paradigm (Blaikie, 2007) “The organization is no longer considered as an entity, a-given-out-there (...). An organization is, rather, a negotiated social reality with a certain degree of shared meaning.” (Bouwen and Fry, 1991, p. 38)

In the context of change management, this approach could be interpreted as follows: “Organisations have their own more or less shared interpretation of what they should regard as key organisational characteristics and what as the change of the given organisation (...). These organisational contents are the products of the history of the organisation, of its past and present meaning-identifying and problem-solving processes. As a matter of fact, organisational changes can only be understood and indeed the content of organisational change can only be defined through the understanding of organisational processes.” (Gelei, 1996, p. 72)

The decisive majority of the change management approaches does not follow this interpretative/constructivist trend, but adopt a basically functionalist attitude and look for the tool(kit)s that will bring the manager to success in the given change process. They focus on managers (leaders); if they do adopt an employee perspective (see Armenakis and Harris, 2009), they do so to draw conclusions that provide clues for leaders. They want to understand the employees with a view to make the change management tools of managers more efficient and to let managers achieve their goals as effectively as possible.

The paradigmatic difference of organisational theories (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Scherer, 2002; Blaikie, 2007) obviously characterises also the theories of organisational change. Our assumptions concerning individuals and organisational reality determine our attitude and connection to the discourse on organisational change.

Let’s look at my own researcher position defined in this project. My position has crystallised during the mapping of the theories of organisational change and in the process of the research. What I find interesting is not how and why (why not) a manager achieves his aims, but how the co-action of managers and subordinates produces what happens during organisational change. As a result of the change, *we* do something differently – and the point here, for me, is the 1st

¹¹ This expression implicitly implies my own paradigmatic position. I would not have considered it authentic to use the term “objective”, because I do not believe in the researcher’s independent/external viewpoint. For more detail on the objective/subjective dilemma, see: Scherer, 2002.

person plural. We, together, collectively, do something differently, and what I find most interesting is how this comes about.

However, I could not ignore and overlook the mainstream schools of my field. My task as a researcher is not only to ask specific and relevant questions and give adequate and valid answers to them, but also to place my questions and answers in the discourse of my chosen discipline. The moment I realised what researcher perspective I wanted to adopt to look into this subject matter, I reviewed the known change management theories once again, deliberately, from this perspective. The resulting reading is described in the following chapter.

2.2 Levels of cooperation in change management theories

As mentioned above, the decisive majority of change management theories is functionalist, whereas the constructivist approach implies a radically different paradigm (Blaikie, 2007). At this point, I set out to investigate whether the change management schools thought in terms of communities. To use the functionalist terminology, what relationship, what type of cooperation and co-action they assumed and prescribed for the processes of change. Or, to ask the same question from a managerial perspective (of course, there are many presuppositions inherent in this wording): What level of employee involvement do the known change management theories consider ideal (the pledge of success)?

The early (and the best-known) change management theories focus on employee resistance (resistance coming from the members of the organisation). Change means an alteration of the status quo, and resistance is bound to appear (Zaltman and Duncan, 1977; Bouwen and Fry, 1991; Nutt, 1987). The inherent assumption is that the employee is not necessarily a cooperating partner; in this approach, the employee is not part of the “we”, and should therefore be forced, manipulated, persuaded, maybe educated, but at the least assisted (Zaltman and Duncan, 1977; Nutt, 1987). Or perhaps be encouraged, motivated, made committed (Beer and Nohria, 2001; Kotter, 2006, 2007, 2008), and for this reason be involved in various phases of the process.

Obviously, the conceptions that consider the employee if not an adversary, but some kind of outsider are quite remote from the one in which managers and employees shape organisational change together and change develops in the wake of their cooperation. In these theories, the employee is the necessary evil in the process whereby the manager tries to realise his goals. However, the more participatory approaches take something for granted: the necessity of change must be declared at management level and communicated *top-down*, and those who are “down” must be involved as a next step. Consequently, even if they do not regard employees as “instruments”, they do not consider them equal partners either.

Based on Robbins (2010), the theories of change management can also be classified according to their point of departure, i.e. what they assume (take for granted). The choice of focal point determines the role given by management to employees in the process of change.

The **solution-centred schools** regard the *problem and consequently the aim of change as given (defined by management or an external expert)*, and they provide solutions, i.e. tactics,

strategies and aids, for that problem, i.e. for the effective management of the specific change concerned. The **problem-focused** approaches assume that the solution, the steps to be taken is determined by the nature of the problem. They step back and consider problem identification – with the active contribution of employees -- the first objective. The **culture-oriented** change management schools see change as a continuous process of collective self-reflection, where the success of change depends on the depth of the effort and its collective nature.

2.2.1 Solution-centred change management schools

The solution-centred change management schools (e.g. Zaltman and Duncan, 1977; Nutt, 1987; Beer and Nohria, 2000; Kotter, 2006, 2007, 2008; partly Bouwen and Fry, 1991) *declare that the aims and directions (the problem to be solved) are set by the manager(s), but to do that one has to address also the fact that the organisation includes also employees.* The suggested ways and means of “dealing with them” differ by school.

ZALTMAN AND DUNCAN (1977) openly speak of manipulation, forcing by power tools or, in a softer version, of awareness-raising and facilitation. The difference between the four implementation strategies defined by NUTT (1987) lies in how far the top executive involves others in strategy-making, in setting the strategic goals and preparing the action plans, and who these “others” are (external experts, key stakeholders and elected committees are the only groups mentioned at all).¹²

The first three of the four so-called innovation models defined by BOUWEN AND FRY (1991; for an excellent Hungarian summary, see Gelei, 2011) are very similar to the typologies of Zaltman – Duncan and of Nutt. The power, sales, expert and confrontational – learning strategies in the theory of Bouwen and Fry refer to the clash between the dominant logic determining the past and the new logic of innovation/change in the context of organisational innovation, i.e. organisational change. The authors use the term “dialogue” to denote the meeting of the two logics, their interaction, but it seems more adequate to call that “negotiation”. The difference between the four innovation models¹³ lies in how the various reality interpretations, logics, or the “various organisational actors as owners of the different logics” (Gelei, 2011, p. 148) negotiate with one another.

The first three strategies give one-sided control to management (typically responsible also for defining the strategy) introducing the change, the new logic. Control is exercised over the discourse of the parties and the object of the change. In the power strategy, the stronger party, typically management, one-sidedly forces its own “reality definition and action logic” onto the other party” (Gelei, 2011, p. 149) The sales strategy applies less force and a “smooth approach” (Bouwen and Fry, 1991, p. 42), and the expert strategy relies on cognitive persuasion (Bouwen and Fry, 1991). Only the fourth, the confrontational—learning strategy differs from the typologies of Zaltman-Duncan or Nutt in that the meeting of the dominant (old) and change

¹² For more detail, see Annexes 1 and 2.

¹³ For a detailed comparison, see Annex 3.

(new) logic entails “their sincere dialogue without taboos and distortions, based on equal participation” (Gelei, 2011, p. 150)

BEER AND NOHRIA (2000) see the key to successful change in the sequential alternation of changes of Types E and O, stressing that Type E should be the first, since that is what focuses on the hard elements of the organisation in what is a *top-down* approach. Employee participation can only come later, after the alteration of the hard elements considered the most important by management. It goes without saying that the direction and aim of the change is defined by the manager(s).

Although in KOTTER’s graphic example (the case of the penguins, Kotter, 2007) the necessity of change is recognised by someone who is not in management, his role ends and control is taken over by the latter once they are convinced of the necessity. Management must generate a feeling of urgency in employees to ensure motivation. They have to inform them of the market, the rivals, market competition and financial performance, the expected trends, and all this has to be communicated in a clear way “to make the status quo seem more dangerous than launching into the unknown.” (Kotter, 2007b, p. 98) Besides using rational arguments, it is important to impact on “the non-analytical side of the brain” (Kotter, 2008, p. 35) of employees, i.e. the way they *feel*. This “impacting” closely resembles the concept of manipulation that Zaltman and Duncan had treated openly.

Every step proposed by Kotter (generating a sense of urgency, setting up a steering group, development of a vision) is a management task. Although he speaks of setting up a coalition to steer the process (to direct the changes in cooperation with the manager), a key criterion of the coalition is that its members must agree with the actual situation of the organisation, the challenges, opportunities, and the causes and means of any change (Kotter, 1999, 2007ab; 2008, Bakacsi, 2004) as interpreted by management. Thus Kotter’s model may seem highly participative, but cooperation with a team selected by the manager and nodding to the manager’s goals and requirements is not real cooperation: they do cooperate with the manager, unilaterally. The cooperation is certainly not a reciprocal process.

2.2.2 The problem-focused change management schools

Robbins (2010) assigns organisational development and action research to the category of **problem-focused change management approaches**. But Kotter’s (2012) double operation model also belongs here. As compared to the previous schools, these take one more step back and do not consider it evident that manager(s) see clearly what needs to be changed in the organisation to improve its effectiveness. *Taking a step back* means in this case a review, a diagnosis of the organisation to find a **common (collective) answer to the questions: Where are we now? What is the problem? How could things be improved?** These questions bring to the surface phenomena that are really relevant to *the whole organisation (not only the manager(s)), and explore the real and jointly interpreted problems.*

Problem-oriented change management approaches make explicit their humanistic-democratic values based on which they view organisations, change processes, and co-action by the members of the organisation.

1. **Respect of people:** individuals must be seen as people capable of assuming responsibility, as conscientious, and caring.
2. **Trust and support:** an essential feature of a healthy and effective organisation is trust/confidence, credibility, and an open and supportive atmosphere
3. **Sharing power:** effectiveness necessitates the reduction of power, and control linked to the organisational hierarchy
4. **Confrontation:** if we keep sweeping problems under the rug, we have no chance of true growth and change. It is important to face up to the real problems openly and honestly.
5. **Participation:** the more people we involve in the decision making process, the likelier it is that they end up becoming committed to implementing the changes. (Robbins et al., 2010)

However, the most important value is **cooperation** based on the above, which refers to relationships among the members of the organisation, as well as to the connection of external experts to the organisation (Robbins et al., 2010; Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Gelei, 2012).

Developing cooperation among the organisation's members is at the same time both the *objective*, and the *instrument* of intervention in ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (OD), given that the steps applied by OD assume, and render indispensable, cooperation among advisors, and the organisation's members. (Cummings and Worley, 2001)

The basis of cooperation, of the relationships within the organisation and between advisors and members of the organisation is the so-called **democratic dialogue** (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). The qualifier *democratic* stands for the fundamental values described above. And *dialogue* in this case means an honest and open dialogue on problems, difficulties, or even strengths, positive features during which a common understanding is reached. That dialogue is more important in the process than anything else, it is "through conversation that things start to change." (Robbins et al., 2010, p. 529)

This approach already implies that change is *a common creation* beginning with its very definition (objectives, directions, vision, etc.), and including the process itself. It is also stated that the process of creation by a community is dialogue. Dialogue and, what is more, democratic dialogue is an element that appears in every step of the organisational development process and thus becomes the pledge of the effectiveness, and the success of the process.

At the same time the diagnosis, and the interventions that bring about change are *limited*, and are focussed on objectives specified in advance in tandem with the leaders. The diagnosis may reveal that the real issues lie somewhere else, but the contract between client and outside expert sets a limit to the scope of problem specification, solutions and interventions. (Cummings and Worley, 2001) While the contract is subject to on-going reflection and supervision, the ultimate client in the process is management (French and Bell, 1993; Bakacsi, 2005), and that imposes

certain limits on organisational development. That means, then, that the democratic dialogue is by all means at the mercy of top management's intentions (decision), good-will and commitment.

The steps of ACTION RESEARCH (AR) correspond to organisational development to the extent where this process also rests on diagnosis; action, the steps of intervention rely on that diagnosis and are followed by evaluation. However, "the evaluation leads to the repeated diagnosis of the situation based on what is learned from the previous action cycle" (Grasselli, 2009, p. 66.) Similarly to organisational development, a real order, a research question can only be defined following the diagnosis, together with the client.

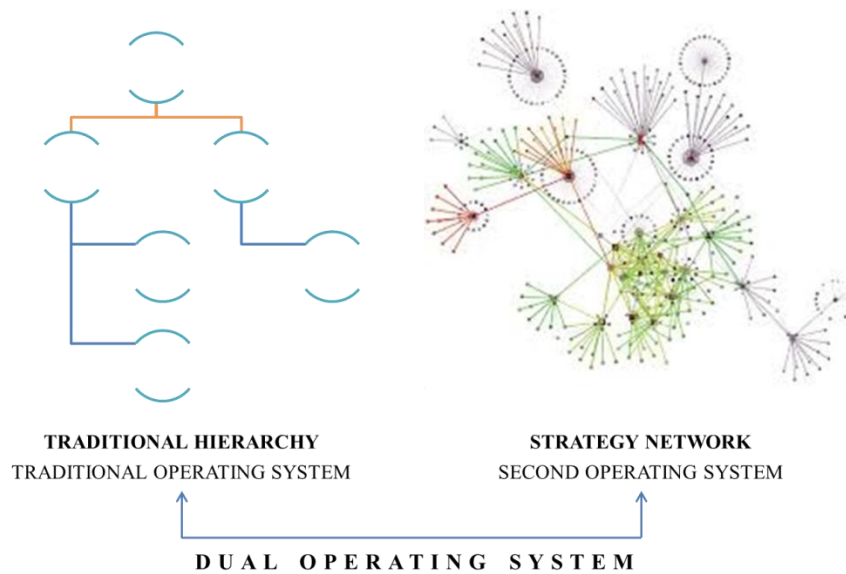
A characteristic similar to organisational development, essentially determining the fundamentals of the process, is **collaborative democratic partnership** (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014), which exceeds the democratic dialogue characterising organisational development in that it builds even more powerfully on involving the members concerned by organisational change in *each and every* step of the process. So then, in organisational development, the decision is *always* with the top managers of the organisation, including deciding who, when, how and to which members the organisation should provide feedback, and what specific order should be placed on the basis of the diagnosis, and what action, and what steps should follow the diagnosis. Differently from the above, in action research, partnership cuts across the entire process, thus rendering all decisions even more democratic and resulting in co-decision (Robbins et al., 2010; Bakacsi, 2005) with all persons concerned in each of the topics listed above. The person in charge of this *cooperation is the action researcher (advisor)*. *This is an important qualitative feature of the process: as opposed to organisational development where the client, the highest-ranking officer appointed to manage the process determines the extent and the quality of involvement and cooperation.*

The clear similarities between organisational development and action research fail to render the distinction between the two schools either simple or unambiguous. Some regard organisational development a sub-type of action research just for that reason, whereas others see it the other way around, and label action research the dominant model of organisational development. Possible explanations of their difference is irrelevant for our current subject, and I have presented them in a previous chapter (see Chapter 2.1.1.).

The third example of a problem-focused change management approach apart from OD and AR, is KOTTER'S DUAL OPERATING SYSTEM MODEL (Kotter, 2012). Here the author attempts to describe how to capitalise on the advantages of simple organisations such as start-ups (Dobák and Antal, 2010) in larger, more structured organisations as flexibility deriving from the networked operation of such smaller organisations.

Kotter claims that a second operating system is the structural element that ensures that the organisation can respond to changes around it at the necessary speed. In its focus is the on-going monitoring of the (business, industrial) environment and the organisation and the correlations, connections between the two, and it keeps analysing and evaluating these, and translates them into *strategies*, and *strategic actions*. The word "second" means that it

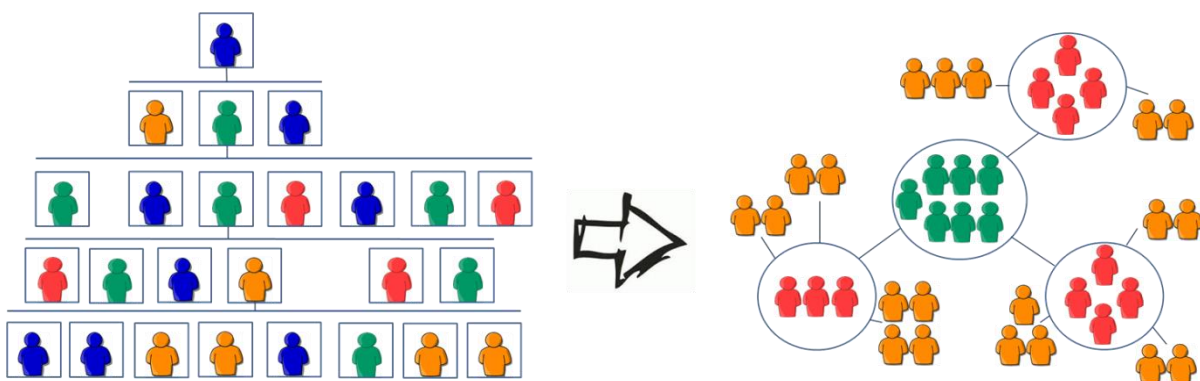
supplements the organisation's traditional (hierarchic) operating system, and that makes the organisation's operation two-fold or dual.



2. Figure. The basic logic of Kotter's dual operating model. Source: Author's figure based on Kotter, 2012

In terms of its nature, the supplementary or second structure is *networked*, which applies to its operation and its connection to the hierarchic organisation structure. Due to its networked nature and strategic focus, Kotter calls this complementary structure a **strategic network**.

- Its members represent all levels of the organisation: employees 'arrive' in the strategic network from all levels, from the topmost to the lowest.
- Its structure is similar to the solar system: there is a *steering coalition* which, like the Sun, takes a central and decisive role in the solar system. The *groups preparing the strategic decisions* of the steering coalition are the planets of the solar system, and the employees *supporting their work* behave much like moons or rather satellites in the solar system. The latter's role is primarily to transmit information to groups preparing decisions and defining problems and also away from these, to the organisation's other members after such decisions or guidelines have been made. These 'satellites, and 'planets' are flexible depending on the specific issue or problem at hand. That ensures the high level of flexibility and the adaptability of the system.



3. Figure. The relationship of conventional hierarchy and the strategic network. Source: Kotter, 2012, p. 49.

So then, what we are discussing is a partly modified version, coded in organisational structure, of Kotter's 8-step model. The cardinal points of the previous model (voluntarism, steering coalition, group jobs, leadership instead of management, vision, shared objectives, continuous communication, etc.) are transparent as basic principles, here, too, but it guarantees through a structural solution that *each* level of the hierarchy, groups of employees much larger than in the previous model, should contribute to defining and jointly interpreting the objectives, and the direction and triggers of the change. As a matter of fact, this is now about an on-going, institutionalised process of joint thinking – and, *at a certain level*, joint decision-making (dialogue) – involving each group of employees. Kotter, however, fails to describe what he means by “*certain level*” in any more detail, thus implementation and execution remain strongly organisation-dependent, and even more manager-dependent.

2.2.3 Culture-oriented change management schools

In Robbins' (2010) typology, the third type of change management schools is that of the so-called **culture-oriented change-management approaches**. These approaches do not define themselves as change management schools, a fact explained by the way they see change. In their view real change concerns two levels: the cognitive and the behavioural level. There is no change as long as there is only cognitive recognition, but there is no change either if behaviour changes, but the adjacent guiding principles, the mental models (Argyris and Schön, 1974; Argyris, 1977, 1991, 1994; Senge, 1990 ab, 2006) and, at a cultural level, the deep layers of culture (Schein, 1981) or the dominant logic (Bouwen and Fry, 1991) remain intact.

(Real) change for them is identical with second-order change (Watzlavik et al., 1974; Palmer et al., 2009) or with double-loop learning (Argyris, 1977; 1991; 1994), to be realised at both organisational and individual level. At organisational level, *organisational learning* must be made part of the culture, and this is the basis of the learning organisation concept (Senge, 1990 ab, 2006). While elaborating the concepts, the best experts of the theory have identified broader, complex, individual, personality-related, cultural, and social issues which must be brought down before these lofty ideas can materialise.

The fathers of the ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE¹⁴ trend (Edgar Schein, Chris Argyris) analysed and considered one by one chiefly the individual and organisational cultural hindering factors that block these genuine (i.e. both cognitive and behavioural) change processes. Their suggestions to dismount the obstacles may be viewed as a type of change management concept given the fact that they *define actions for organisations wishing to learn, develop, and change*.

¹⁴ Organisational learning has several trends (Edmonson and Moingeon, 1998); the ones that are relevant from a change management point of view are those that regard and interpret organisational learning as a process of change (Edmonson and Moingeon, 1998; Gelei, 2002; Pulinka, 2015).

The following table is a summary of the adequate responses (ultimately the change management actions) to be given:

	Adjacent hypothesis: the main obstacles of organizational change	What to focus on when bringing down factors that hinder learning?	What is a necessary condition to organizational learning?
Edgar SCHEIN	The <i>shared, tacit presumptions</i> embedded deep into the organizational culture, and the inconsistency of these.	On essential, shared presumptions, beliefs, and values.	Dialogue: identifying shared presumptions jointly.
Chris ARGYRIS	<i>Interactions</i> between the organization's members, the tacit principles (so-called theories-in-use), self-defence strategies, a lack of interpersonal competences.	On interpersonal interactions, and their development must be first focused on.	Individual and joint reflections (dialogue): valid information, free, and well-founded choice.
Rene BOUWEN and Ronald FRY	The quality of <i>interactions</i> between the organization's members (one-sided control, lack of dialogue).	On the quality of interactions between dominant logic and the new/change logic (open confrontation, equality, consensus, valid and shared information).	Dialogue: creation of shared interpretations.

3. Table. Summary of culture-oriented change management theories. Based on Pulinka, 2007, p. 41, with modifications

Edgar **SCHEIN** sees the main obstacles of organisational learning in the deep-lying assumptions and paradigms of organisational culture. If there is inconsistency or controversy between these, they will prevent organisational learning. However, the deep dimensions of culture may have elements that are in themselves obstacles to organisational development because they are opposed to the organisational objectives, or to their modalities of implementation. (Schein, 1981; Edmonson, 1996)

The task is to bring to the surface the deep-lying, tacit routines, assumptions and beliefs discussed above, i.e. **cultural self-understanding**. (Schein, 1981; Gelei, 2006; Edmonson, 1996) The **precondition** to self-understanding is **dialogue with each another**, within subcultures, and also with groups having some different culture. (Schein, 1993). Schein regards this process of dialogue the “the true artistry of change management.” (Schein, 1996, p. 61)

Chris **ARGYRIS** assumes that “organizational learning is a process of detecting and correcting error.” (Argyris, 1977, p. 116). He investigated during his research and advisory projects what organisational and individual hindrances there are in this process. He came to the conclusion that one develops *mental models* from childhood on that help us solve emerging problems fast and effectively. These models represent the totality of rules that determine not only our own behaviour, but also the way in which we read or interpret others' behaviour. Whenever we come up against an obstacle or a problem, we keep returning to these same models. (Argyris and Schön, 1974; Argyris, 1991, 1994) The really interesting thing about these models is that when we solve a problem or overcome a dangerous situation, we do not really follow the rules that

we think direct our actions. He calls these espoused theories, and they are often contrary to the theories-in-use. (Argyris and Schön, 1974; Argyris, 1977, 1991, 1994) Very few people are aware of the difference between the two. (Argyris, 1994)

Espoused theories can differ a great deal, while theories-in-use always go back to any of essentially 4 *basic motives*: assert own control unilaterally to achieve the purposes as you perceive them (1), maximise winning and minimise losing (2), minimise eliciting negative feelings (3), be rational and minimise emotionality (4)¹⁵. The last means that we set well-defined targets, and evaluate our performance and behaviour regardless of whether we have hit or miss them. These may be called defensive routines. (Argyris and Schön, 1974; Argyris, 1977, 1994)

The objective of the above strategy is avoiding the appearance of vulnerability, risk, and/or incompetence. That defensive strategy prevents us from reviewing our own behaviour along with the underlying assumptions. (Argyris and Schön, 1974; Argyris, 1977, 1994) The more we wish to prove that somebody is defensive, the more defensive he will become. (Bakacsi, 1996)¹⁶

Argyris claims that that this learning inhibition is strongest in those people who are the most qualified and the most successful, because they can come up with the best explanations for their own behaviour, and their successes and achievements make their assumptions and mental models seem justified. (Argyris, 1991, 1994)¹⁷

Defensive routines exist also at an organisational level. “These consist of all the policies, practices and actions that prevent human beings from having to experience embarrassment or threat and, at the same time, prevent them from examining the nature and causes of that embarrassment or threat.” (Argyris, 1994, p. 81) One does not usually ask a colleague/subordinate/leader questions targeted at assumptions and values guiding behaviour. One rarely analyses the reasons of the development or sustainment of behaviour; instead, we usually examine and tries to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. If someone still targets a question at what hides behind the apparent facts, it is usually regarded as annoyance or backslapping. (Bakacsi, 1996)

The short-term gains, however, (e.g. to appear competent, avoid bad feelings) deprive us of the possibility of learning – at either individual or organisational level.

¹⁵ For a more detailed description of a so-called Model I see Table 1.

¹⁶ For a more detailed description of the principles determining individual behaviours [the basic model (Model I), and the desirable model (Model II)] see Table 1.

¹⁷ In Salman Rushdie’s autobiographical book Joseph Anton he writes the same as follows: „He was remembering something Günter Grass had once said to him about losing: that it taught you more profound lessons than winning did. The victors believed themselves and their worldviews justified and validated and learned nothing. The losers had to re-evaluate everything they had thought to be true and worth fighting for, and so had a chance of learning, the hard way, the deepest lessons life had to teach.” (Rushdie, 2012, p. 201)

Theories of action

Governing variables for action	Action strategies for actor	Consequences on actor and his/her associates	Consequences on learning	Effectiveness
I	II	III	IV	V
MODEL I				
Achieve the purposes as I perceive them	Design and manage environment so that actor is in control over factors relevant to me	Actor seen as defensive	Self-sealing	
Maximize winning and minimize losing	Own and control task	Defensive interpersonal and group relationships	Single loop learning	Decreased
Minimize eliciting negative feelings	Unilaterally protect self	Defensive norms	Little testing of theories publicly	
Be rational and minimize emotionality	Unilaterally protect others from being hurt	Low freedom of choice, internal commitment, and risk taking	Little testing of theories publicly	
MODEL II				
Valid information	Design situations or encounters where participants can be origins and experience high personal causation	Actor seen as minimally defensive	Testable processes	
Free and informed choice	Task is controlled jointly	Minimally defensive interpersonal relations and group dynamics	Double loop learning	Increased
Internal commitment to the choice and constant monitoring of the implementation	Protection of self is a joint enterprise and oriented toward growth	Learning-oriented norms	Frequent testing of theories publicly	
	Bilateral protection of others	High freedom of choice, internal commitment and risk taking		

4. Table. Argyris' principles determining behaviour: MODEL I and MODEL II. Source: Argyris, 1977, p. 118, with modifications.

Argyris recommends primarily the **development of interpersonal competencies** to bring down this type of obstacles to learning. To achieve that the individual must first face the shock of realising how they actually work, and what tacit assumptions hide behind their actions. This means **self-reflection** and self-understanding. That must be followed by devising their new operating principles (MODEL II). (Argyris, 1977) That is, the review of the principles adhered to is also a double-loop learning process, and the process of reflection must be established for the long term on both individual and organisational level (MODEL II). That institutionalised reflection is already about the operation of the learning organisation. Argyris does not submerge deeply in analysing this operation; instead, his writings and his work (Smith, 2001; McLain Smith, 2013) describe the road leading there, and how to dismount the obstacles encountered on your way.

It is interesting that I have found no explicit reference to this process of self-reflection being called a *dialogue* in any of Argyris' work. He keeps referring to individual and common self-understanding, to the way in which we should mutually help each other understand how we work, and what we should change to be guided by cooperation rather than self-defence. It is an important statement by Argyris that self-understanding requires other people (Argyris, 1977). And the establishment of cooperation requires on-going collective reflection. Common or collective reflection is a two-way process: the group as a community reflects on its operation

and the mental maps determining it (assumptions, prejudices, beliefs, etc.), and on how the group as a community assists the individual in facing up to his own, individual, mental model. In my reading, that is the same self-understanding dialogue process that Schein labels “dialogue”.

The theory of **Bouwen and Fry** (1991) based upon case studies relates to the literature of organisational change much more explicitly than that of the above two authors. The co-authors examine organisational innovation processes, and come to the conclusion that real innovation and change can only happen in an organisation if the representatives of the old (dominant) logic conduct a *dialogue* of essence with the representatives of the new logic bringing the change, and they create the new operating logic in the course of their cooperation.

Logic in the present case refers to the dominant mind-set, the *paradigm of action* (Gelei, 2011) which determines the way in which organisational actors view the environment, the relationship of the organisation with its environment, the necessary and adequate steps, objectives, and the corresponding internal workings and behaviours.

Bouwen and Fry claim that organisational changes are about the entry on the scene of a new logic that challenges the *raison d’être* (correctness) of the old (dominant) logic. The resulting level of learning depends on the quality of the interaction forming between the two logics: “compliance and passive followship, imitation and adoption, cognitive learning through insight, or communication and orientation on valid data.” (Bouwen and Fry, 1991, p. 42) As I mentioned above in Chapter 2.1.1. , in the strategy modelling the first three interactions, the new logic has unilateral control over the content and the direction of change, and thus also over the newly forming operational logic. That is exactly why Bouwen and Fry emphasise that the innovation thus created (change) cannot become established in the organisation on a long term, because it fails to rest on the universal, common understanding, genuine learning, and cognitive and behavioural changes of all members of the organisation (Bouwen et al., 1992). Only the ***confrontational learning strategy*** brings about genuine organisational change and learning, and dialogue, a high quality interaction between the two logics, is the process of that strategy (Bouwen and Fry, 1991). The authors themselves make that strategy correspond to the operation of Argyris’ Model II, and that is partly why I felt appropriate to use the term *dialogue* when presenting Argyris’ Model II, despite the fact that Argyris himself does not use it.

That following table presents the main features of the confrontational learning strategy:

	Confrontational learning model
1. Role of the leader	Coach- facilitative leader with process knowledge
2. Characteristics of the communication process	Facilitating confrontation; 2-sided cognitive-emotional restructuring
3. Basis for decision making	Through consultation and consensual validation
4. Main tensions in the process (critical success factors)	Concerns of all parties involved
5. Criterion for effectiveness	Common sense shared meaning
6. Sequences of action patterns	Experimenting – evaluating – questioning : learning cycle
7. Effect for learning/adaptation in the organization (or mechanism causing the change)	Communication and orientation on valid data
8. Designative contingencies	Interdependency necessary for goal achievement

5. Table. Main features of Bouwen-Fry's confrontational – learning model (dialogue-model). Source: Bouwen and Fry, 1991, p. 42, with Author's addenda.

Similarly to almost all of the writings of Argyris, Bouwen and Fry also place great emphasis on the internal tensions in the dialogue, and the fact that it is a time-consuming and tiring process.

In summary of the organisational learning theories we can claim that Edgar Schein, Chris Argyris and co-authors Bouwen – Fry all offer a solution to what promotes individual, community and thus organisational learning and development. The recurrent element in these recommendations is dialogue. For the above authors, dialogue is a common reflective process of interpretation. They regard the process of dialogue as an important tool of revealing, understanding and modifying shared thinking schemes, logics and assumptions. In all these theories, this common self-understanding is the basis of joint future decisions and actions, and of cooperation of substance.

Tsoukas' (2002) observation whereby a main feature of post-bureaucratic, post-modern organisations is that employees tend to bring much more of themselves 'into' these organisations is relevant at this point. They no longer stand for just knowledge or physical strength at the workplace; their emotional-psychological presence has become much more powerful. This has two consequences: they are less and less authority-driven, and are meanwhile increasingly internally guided. And simultaneously, "to the extent they are more psychologically present at work, they expose more of themselves to others; hence, they are more vulnerable." (Tsoukas, 2002, p. 15). Thus it is a task for both the scientific environment and for daily practice to render organisations as safe as possible even from that point of view. Make them places where we *can* show ourselves, and where it is *worthwhile* for us to do so. This line of thought connects closely to the next change management school, the learning organisation concept.

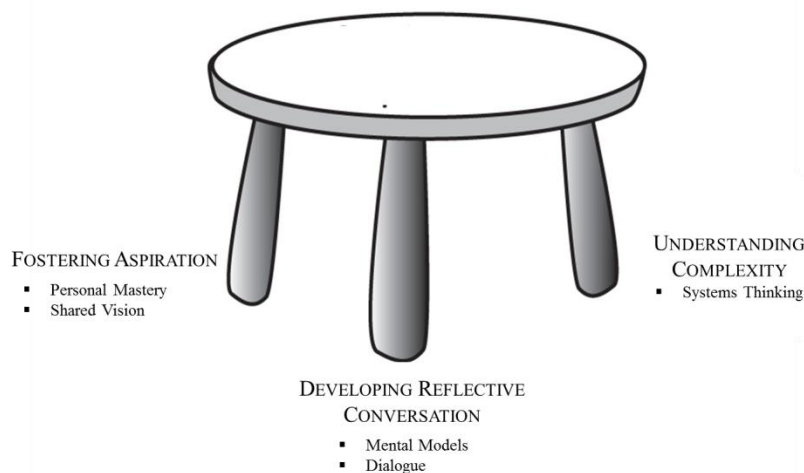
Another well-known (and rather popular) school of culture-oriented change management is the LEARNING ORGANISATION MODEL. Peter M. Senge, credited for being the father of the learning organisation concept, made a list – much like Argyris and Schein – of the barriers hindering individual and organisational development and learning. Senge, however, analyses these obstacles within a broader social-cultural framework. He identifies several social-cultural

dysfunctions (e.g. management is identical with control, diversity is labelled as a problem, excessive competition, lack of trust, etc.), and attributes extra importance to three factors as the major obstacles to change: fragmentation, competition focus, and the problem of reactivity. (Senge, 1990ab; 1993; Koffman and Senge, 1993).

Senge sees the solution of the above problems in the creation of the learning organisation, because we need a medium that offers a possibility for changing our way of thinking, where the medium itself thinks differently and is characterised by a changed mode of operation, a changed *culture*.

The most important feature of the learning organisation is that it is in **constant change since it is characterised by learning continuously**. “The organisation having the ability of continuous learning and renewal. Qualities it must have include organisational self-diagnosis (self-understanding), and (lasting) operational development based on the same: exploration, awareness-raising and deliberate alteration concerning the theories we adhere to, our ways of (individual, and organisational) problem solving, our mistakes (!), deeper systems dynamics, our mechanisms for creating a shared vision, our communication patterns, mental maps, our personal objectives, hidden cultural assumptions and modes of operation.” (Gelei, 2012, p. 52-53.)

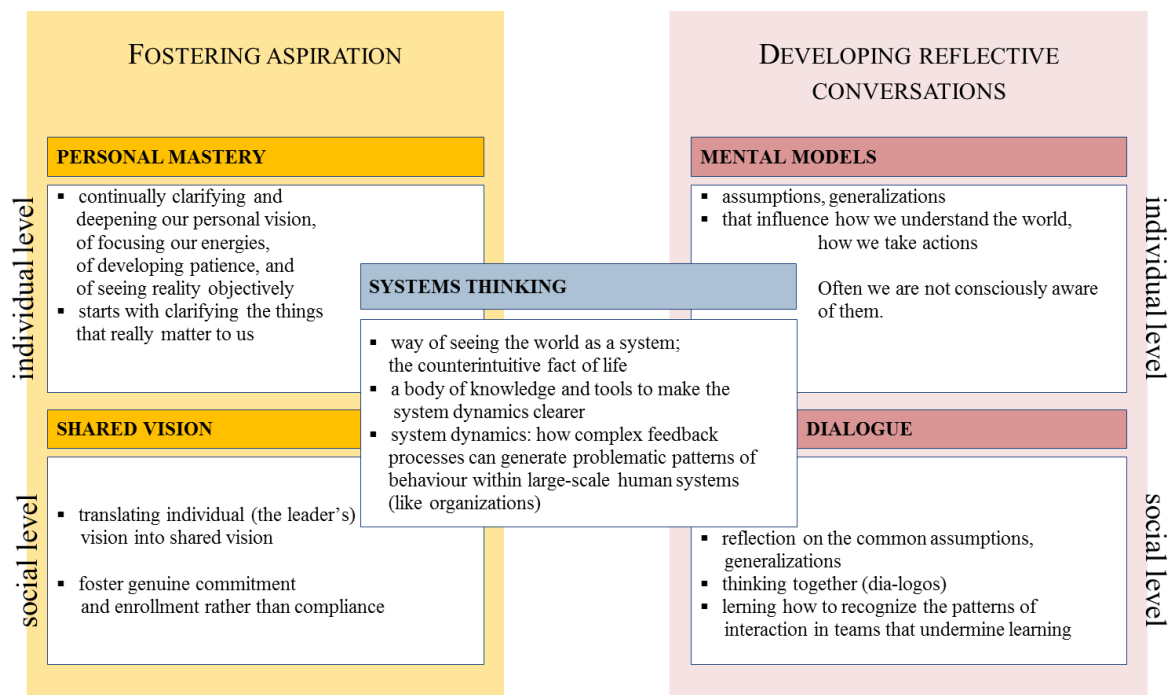
That operation is not easy, and it takes a great deal of time and energy to create. In his book, Senge established the fundamentals indispensable for building a proactive organisation. His 5 principles are as follows: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, collective learning and dialogue, and systems thinking (Senge, 2006).



4. Figure. The 5 principles of the Learning Organisation. Source: Senge, 1990a, p. xi

The basic concept is built on the paradox that organisational learning is impossible without the individuals who constitute the organisation, but it is more than the sum of individual learning. It is not enough for the individual to learn; first, the others are also a necessary ingredient and, second, in a learning organisation learning must be realised at a community level. “Three core learning capabilities: fostering aspiration, developing reflective conversation and understanding

complexity” (Senge, 1990a, p. x) All of these may be interpreted at both an individual and a community level. The following figure describes briefly the five basic principles along these lines.



5. Figure. The five basic principles (Our own figure created on the basis of Senge, 1990ab).

Senge then, sees the above five principles as the precondition to being a learning organisation. The point of existing as such is no other than leaving behind old ways of thinking and learning how to be open to one another, and how to make efforts to ensure that we increasingly understand how we work as individuals and as a community, as an organisation guided by shared objectives and directions, working together to achieve these objectives. **A self-understanding dialogue that is to reach a shared conclusion is likewise an inseparable part of this existence.** In expressing his thoughts, he says no more/nothing else than the theories of organisational learning, and he keeps referring to the works of Argyris or Schein (Senge, 1990a, 2006). His approach, however, is different: he starts out from the social and organisational aspect, and from that point he gets all the way to the individual.

Taking the change management perspective to interpret the above theories, two things need highlighting: lack of control, and voluntarism. Double-loop learning, defined as “change” in the theories, concerns deep layers at both individual and organisational level; therefore, the process of learning/changing is impossible to map in advance. These deep layers are tacit in the first place, hard to access, and of course even more difficult to challenge, and change. The process of change is thus subject to a minimum rate of control, objectives *are* not, and *cannot* be specified in advance. The direction, the objective is formed in the course of the process, during the collective action, the *co-actions*.

The other important, immanent feature of these theories is that organisational and individual learning closely interrelate: there is no organisational learning without learning by the people

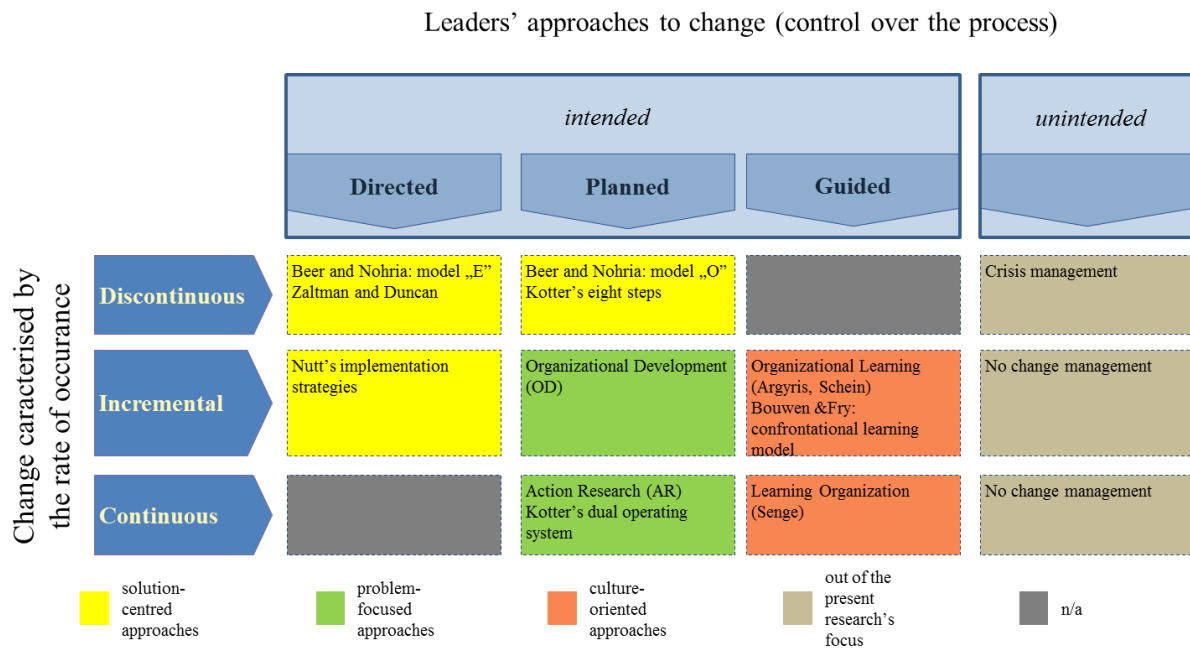
constituting the organisation.¹⁸ And learning – both at individual and organisational level – concerns the deep-lying principles that determine our acts and decisions (cognitive schemes/mental models/cultural deep layers). Bringing these to the surface, examining and challenging them cannot happen ‘from the outside’, by force, by order, only on a voluntary basis, by looking ourselves honestly in the face. In other words, the learning process is a *voluntary* self-reflecting process, and at an organisational level it is a voluntary common act. That cannot be enforced or prescribed at either level. But it also means that it cannot happen without organisational members. Involving colleagues and treating them as partners is therefore a necessary, indispensable element of these models and theories¹⁹.

In sum we may say that the early change management theories did not regard staff members as cooperating partners; instead, they saw the main task of change management in handling their predictable opposition/resistance (by manipulation, communication, pretended or controlled involvement, motivation, incentives). Problem-focused schools make cooperation the key to change management, and dialogue is already a central element in these approaches. And culture-oriented theories label dialogue the key to change management. Partnership, cooperation, co-action are critical parts of these change management schools.

Another interesting observation belongs here. If one considers change management schools in the light of the type of change they want to address, one cannot fail to notice that the more complex the change they contemplate, the more they talk about dialogue and substantial, genuine, and mutual (!) cooperation among the members of the organisation. The more organic part of its daily operation an organisation regards change, the more important partnership, cooperation, and dialogue will become.

¹⁸ The opposite of this, i.e. is there individual learning without organisational learning, is already less obvious. Senge, convinced that a supportive reflective environment (culture) is a must for individual self-reflective learning, deemed the establishment of learning organisations highly important. Given that the western Jewish-Christian cultural tradition (Huntington, 1998) works along essentially different values, these circumstances ideal from a learning/change point of view must be implemented within an organisational framework. Another concept claims that the decisive circumstance is not the western Jewish-Christian cultural tradition, but the operating framework of organisations, i.e. capitalism (Žižek, 2016). But whether we regard the broader civilisation or capitalism as the operating framework, changing it is truly a larger challenge than creating learning organisations. But even that is not a simple task.

¹⁹ We are still left with an interesting dilemma, namely who in an organisation decides on becoming a learning organisation. Can top management decide without involving staff? In the light of the organisation’s essential values, the answer is negative. Moving on: Is it realistic to assume that colleagues have the right and the option of refusing learning in such a decision-making situation? The theories fail to give an explicit response to these dilemmas.



6. Table. Change management theories by change and focus of change management (Author's table)

How do partnership, cooperation, co-action and dialogue relate to each other in these change management approaches? At this point of my research I felt an urge to investigate in more detail *what exactly they meant by 'dialogue'*. And, management science notwithstanding, *what IS 'dialogue'*?

At this point I will diverge from the path covered by my research. That is because parallel to discussing the dialogue concept of change management theories, I moved beyond the limits of change management and management science in general, and investigated what other fields of science meant by 'dialogue'.

That parallel research turned out to be much more relevant and more decisive than I expected. That is because literary science, theology, anthropology (sociology), and philosophy are a great deal ahead of our scientific discipline in understanding and defining 'dialogue'. Their answers (and questions) enrich and guide the current, and – as I see it – very incipient attempts of the various management disciplines. I will now therefore side-track from (or temporarily abandon) the literature of change and of management science in general, and investigate what other disciplines mean by 'dialogue'. I will thereafter return to my own area of science, and link it up with the other sciences. Later I will also present the way in which the dialogue concepts of our discipline relate to the more general perception adopted by other disciplines (philosophy, anthropology, literary science, theology).

3 Dialogue

Dialogue is a topic on the borderline of several disciplines: philosophy [the Ancient Greek, primarily Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, in: Störig, 2006, Török, 2009; Martin Buber (1923); Hans G. Gadamer (1968)], literary science (Bahtyin, 1929ab; 2006), theology (Török, 2013; Patsch, 2013, 2015; Nagypál, 2013), sociology (Buda, 1988; McDermott, 2009; Eisenberg, 2009), communication theory (Horányi, 2013), anthropology (Geertz, 1973, 1983) and management science (Bohm, 1990; Schein, 1993, 2003; Senge, 1990, 2006). The social sciences concentrate on different aspects of dialogue depending on the focal point of their investigations. I reviewed the theories concerned as part of my research and came to the conclusion that, instead of being contradictory, they complement and sometimes even amplify each other's results. This chapter presents a special dialogue model that is the quintessence of my interdisciplinary research and readings.

The different approaches agree on three points. Firstly, they consider **dialogue a special type of communication**.

Communication in the broadest sense means “All of the procedures by which one mind can affect another.” (Weaver, 1949, p. 95.). If we accept the claim that communication can be interpreted also between animals (Wilson, 1972), or even at the level of cells (Stent, 1972), not only between human beings, *mind* should be replaced by *life forms* here. The meaning of the word *communication* can also be specified further, but such refinements are already a matter of scientific interest (Horányi, 1978), and paradigmatic stance (Griffin, 2000).²⁰ Since the present paper does not focus on a communication theoretical problem, I will not demonstrate these issues further here.

Communication is thus the procedure by which one life form can affect another. It is the *quality* of this “affecting” that determines whether a given communication action can be considered a dialogue. The dialogue theories of the different disciplines explore this quality from their respective perspectives. I consider these quality criteria the necessary, but not sufficient preconditions of dialogue, to be discussed in detail later on (section 3.1.).

Secondly, dialogue theories agree on the outcome, the essence, the result of dialogue. From literature through sociology to philosophy, the theories agree that the **essence of dialogue is understanding achieved by its participants**. A special discipline, hermeneutics, has evolved on the borderline of literature and philosophy, rooted in theology and legal science, to study the phenomenon of understanding (Török, 2009; Grondin, 2002).

Instead of discussing the excessive topic of hermeneutics in depth, I will deal only with its statements – and, due to its hermeneutics quality, its questions – concerning dialogue as speech

²⁰ For example, the cybernetics-based concept of communication defines it as message or information transmission (Watzlawick, 1977); social psychology as interpersonal influencing; semiotics focuses on the transmission of meaning; phenomenology highlights the common construction of meaning etc. (Griffin, 2003).

act. Understanding in the context of dialogue will be the topic of the second part of this chapter (Section 3.2.).

The implicit assumption underlying every “dialogue philosophy” – that is also the third point of agreement of the theories covered here – is pointed out in Habermas’ theory of communicative action. As Habermas puts it, “with the choice of a specific sociological concept of action we generally make specific ‘ontological’ assumptions” (Habermas, 1984, p. 85), that is, when we use the word “dialogue”, we implicitly assume something about the relationship of the parties to each other and to the world. The assumption is that “The actors (establish interpersonal relations and) seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement” (Habermas, 1984, p. 86). “The central concept of interpretation refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions of the situation which admit of consensus.” (Habermas, 1984, p.86) Some kind of coordination of action is typical of every action type (teleological/strategic, normatively regulated, dramaturgical) identified by Habermas, but only in communicative action does the *opposing party appear as cooperating partner, as companion, co-actor*, and not as some kind of opponent, adversary (strategic action), audience (dramaturgical action) or an element of the social group that is the vehicle of the common normative system (normatively regulated action). In communicative action, the subject is not a lone actor: *he/she cannot be interpreted without the other party, the partner*. In other words, one actor of the interaction presupposes the other, does not exist without the other; that is, the focus is not on a lone actor, but on the relationship of the participants of interaction.

In summary of the above (and in anticipation of the following): dialogue **is a special form of communication where connection of a special quality is established between interdependent life forms so that they can reach mutual understanding**. The quality criteria of the connection itself and of the understanding are the necessary and sufficient conditions, respectively, of dialogue. Where this special quality of the connection of life forms is realised, we speak of a **dialogic (speech) situation**. If some degree of understanding²¹ is reached as well, we speak of dialogue.

3.1 The necessary, but not sufficient, conditions of dialogue

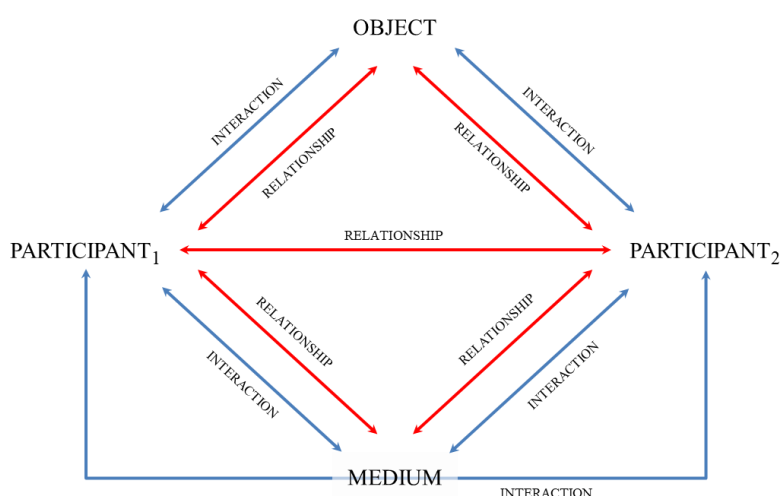
In dialogue, the communicative action takes place (generally) between two **subjects**. The subject involved in dialogue is a human being, but according to some theories it can also be super-human (e.g. organisations, groups), sub-human (animals, plants) or transcendent (e.g. the deities of certain religions) (Buber, 1923; Horányi, 2013). Since the topic of my research is the human dialogue, I will dispense here with the investigation of the communicative actions of other life forms, however interesting they might be.

Dialogue can be interpreted between more than two subjects, but “there is certainly no dialogue without participants” (Horányi, 2013, p. 23). You can have a dialogue with yourself alone, but

²¹ A distinction will be made between the definitions of agreement, understanding and knowledge, and of reaching an understanding, “finding your feet with others” (see Chapter 3.2.). In anticipation, I refer to these as “various degrees of understanding”.

also with several others, in a group²². Horányi (2013) stresses that, given the cognitive limits of human attention, there is obviously a ceiling to be taken into account; Miller's (1956) well-known 7+/-2 thesis sets the limit at 9 persons. Bohm (1990) raises that figure to 30²³ based on his experience of working with groups.

Dialogue has an **object** that is the topic of the conversation of the subjects. A dialogic process, an **interaction**, is taking place between the participants, but there is also a **relationship** between them. That is, dialogue as communicative action is the product of an interaction (process) and a relationship (connection). The interaction of the two (or more) participants is not direct, but indirect, mediated by a transmission **medium** such as the written text or the spoken language. The interaction/relationship can be interpreted not only between the participants of dialogue, but also between the medium and the subject, or the subject and the object of dialogue.



6. Figure. Basic model of dialogue. (Author's figure)

In this model, the emphasis is on the interactions *and* relationships of the model elements (subject(s), object, medium). It is the relationships and their special realisation that make dialogue more than communication pure and simple. One must study the special characteristics one by one to interpret the various dialogue definitions correctly.

3.1.1 Relationship and interaction of the participants

Irrespective of the number of parties to dialogue, besides the communicative action (process), there is also some kind of relationship between the subjects.

INTERACTION is a speech act where, at any given point in time, one participant is talking and the other is attentively listening. The interaction of the participants can only be

²² And, as mentioned, you can have a dialogue also with material, natural and transcendental life forms such as a tree, a Doric column or a deity. Such relations lie outside the scope of my investigations, but see e.g. Buber, 1923, p. 80 – 82, 149 – 155.

²³ In his opinion, this limit has physical reasons in the first place: “some 30 persons can still be placed comfortably in a circle” (Bohm, 1990, p. 22).

indirect (the role of the transmission medium will be discussed in more detail in the following Chapter 3.1.3.).

During the interaction, one participant uses signs (a medium) to show (reveal) something of himself to the other(s). This definition makes it possible to interpret dialogue not only for the spoken language, but also for the reader and the written text. Self-revelation, self-expression are active roles, whereas that of the other party acting as receiver/listener is a more passive one. It is a most important criterion of dialogue that the **active – passive or speaker—listener roles are sequential** (Habermas, 1987; Török, 2013; Fehér M., 2013): the continuous alternation of these roles is the so-called **symmetry condition** of dialogue (P. Szilcz, 2013). The word “passive” is meant in relative terms: instead of being completely passive, the more passive party “listens with highly intensive energy” (Bohm, 1990, p. 10).

Based on the examination of the 1981 Paris debate between Gadamer and Derrida²⁴, Fehér M. (2013) adds to the symmetry condition that “sequential” here means more than the mere chronological succession of the alternating roles: without a **relevant response** to what was heard, to its content, the action will be no more than a “dialogue of the deaf” (Fehér M., 2013, p. 42), with the participants conducting two monologues.²⁵ A relevant response, a relevant relationship means that you react, respond, to what was said, on the basis of what was said, when it is your turn to play the active role.

That is, reaction requires adaptation and hence implies a certain **vulnerability**. Similarly to the order of sentences in a text²⁶ (Pléh, 2014), the order of the speakers, i.e. who speaks first, is of relevance in a speech act. The action may take different turns depending on that and also, as Fehér M. (2013) highlights based on Kant, certain **power positions** are inherent in this **order**. The person who starts or terminates dialogue has some advantage over the other(s). The person who speaks first or who initiates dialogue is at an advantage, since the next person has to react to/adapt to what was said. Of course, the latter may choose not to react, but tell his own ideas instead, but that would lead to the already mentioned “dialogue of the deaf”.

This **power asymmetry** can only be eased by the interrelationship of the participants, including their attitude to each other and to the situation upon entering dialogue, that will prevent any abuse of their power positions. Let’s mention here in passing something to be discussed in more

²⁴ Fehér M.(2013) quotes as a further example the similarly inconclusive 1929 Davos debate of Cassirer and Heidegger. Bohm (1990) mentions as a similar example the relationship of Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr that had been quite good in the beginning of their career. I would like to refer as counter-example to the 1973 Royaumont debate of Adorno and Goldmann (Adorno – Goldmann, 1973): although it was Adorno who started the conversation there, the series of reflections of the participants on each other and on themselves had gradually led to their (Adorno’s and Goldmann’s) better understanding of themselves and also of the agreements, similarities and differences of their thinking. Indeed, that debate (dialogue) is a very nice example of the possibilities inherent in non-agreement. I will return to this topic in Chapter 3.2.

²⁵ Literary theory calls this situation the *Chekhovian dialogue*. In the dramas of Anton P. Chekhov, the actors are so immersed in their own world and emotions that what may seem a dialogue in the drama is actually a series of parallel monologues: the actors expect and receive no relevant answer, no reaction of merit, from each other. The conversations are therefore divergent and varied, leading nowhere, having no common topic, with no hope for triggering some change in the drama, in the lives of the actors. (Gereben, 1980)

²⁶ Pléh (2014, p. 987) refers to the following example: “(a) Feri hit the cat against the ground. The cat meowed desperately. (b) The cat meowed desperately. Feri hit the cat against the ground. The meaning of the text is obviously not the same with the two orders.”

detail later on: if one party approaches the other with openness and genuine attention; if his aim is not to obtain control or power over him, but to cooperate to reveal the truth, he will certainly not exploit the power advantage due to the order of the speakers.

That is, the special relationship of the participants to each other and to the dialogue situation – a precondition of dialogue itself – does not eliminate, only remedies, the power positions inherent in the sequence of speakers.

Before expounding the special relationship of the participants, let me highlight how, in what state of mind, each of the **PARTICIPANTS** should enter the situation.

Every party to dialogue is situated and biased, but also free, autonomous and authentic. These are big words, and the weight of their semantic connotations makes it imperative to expound their meaning here and now to arrive at a correct interpretation of dialogue.

The subject of the understanding process, the understanding subject, the participant of dialogue is situated and biased. Being **biased** refers to the **motives** and **preconceptions, assumptions, prejudices and expectations** underlying the process of understanding, of entering dialogue (Gadamer, 1984). Each participant enters dialogue with an aim (Bohm, 1990), for a reason (Buber, 1923) and with preliminary, often implicit or tacit assumptions, in possession of certain pieces of information (Habermas, 1979, 1987). These circumstances apparently limit his understanding by “determining the courses of understanding in advance” (Grondin, 2002, p. 165). In fact, however, these are the “conditions of understanding” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 277), as “we understand and aspire for the truth because we are driven by expectations of meaning” (Grondin, 2002, p. 158) and we have questions.

As for the expectations of meaning or the preconceptions, some promote understanding while others lead to misunderstanding. It is a key problem of hermeneutics how to distinguish the “true” preconceptions from those that lead to misunderstanding. According to Gadamer, “Often temporal distance can solve question (...), namely how to distinguish the true prejudices, by which we understand, from the false ones, by which we misunderstand.” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 298. Temporal distance lets you step back from your preconceptions/prejudices and subject them to critical review and reflection.

Bohm (1990) also considers revisions and “suspension” of the preliminary goal system (Bohm, 1990, p. 52) the solution. Suspend your motives, aims, causalities for the time being to **free** yourself: “I and Thou freely confront one another in mutual effect that is neither connected with nor coloured by any causality.” (Buber, 1937, p. 51)” “Causality does not weigh on the man to whom freedom is assured.” (*ibidem*, p. 52), “...wills without arbitrary selfwill.” (Buber, 1937, p. 59), “the winds of causality cower at his heels” (Buber, 1937, p. 9). We have to free ourselves of our prejudices and explore our prejudices since “It is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 272)

This is an important paradox of dialogue: you need to enter the process freely, without expectations and prejudices, but there is no real personal commitment to dialogue without motives, a personal cause and aim, and neither would we enter the process in their absence.

Note in connection with assumptions that, whether tacit or not, they may be tested during dialogue. A related issue is the **claim to truth**, one of the four validity claims identified by Habermas (1987)²⁷. This means that what is being said by the speaker tells the truth about the world, with the proviso that his words are based on information available to him and on his assumptions. In case of disagreement, these assumptions are to be brought to light/reviewed. However, from the speaker's perspective, the essential thing is that these assumptions exist and, more importantly, they can be investigated, overridden and modified. Beyond the suspension of cause, aim and motive, and the testing of the assumptions, freedom also means that the individual(s) in the process enter the dialogue situation without being under any constraint (Habermas, 1987). You cannot enter dialogue under some constraint, dialogue being the "meeting of two freedoms in freedom" (Mazgon, 2013, p. 138).

The **situated** quality of the understanding party refers to his being determined historically (Gadamer, 1984) and socially (Bahtyin, 1929a; Bourdieu, 1968).

Social determination needs no refining: the social group that you are a member of endows you with a special perspective. A text, a situation or a work of art will be interpreted differently by a white-collar or a blue-collar worker (Bahtyin, 1929a; Bourdieu, 1968).

In the interpretation of Gadamer, situatedness is historically determined (Gadamer, 1984; Grondin, 2002). The so-called history-of-effect principle is based on the recognition that the same as literary oeuvres are interpreted differently by historical era, the works themselves will also elicit different interpretations in each era" (Grondin, 2002, p. 161).

Historical determination applies to every understanding subject, irrespective of whether he faces a text or a speaking party, and irrespective of his relationship to the historical era that gave birth to the text. We are part of a given historical context ourselves, and "the history of effect expresses at the first level the requirement to become aware of one's hermeneutical situatedness" (Grondin, 2002, p. 161). On the other hand, we all have our (his)story arcs, and it is far from irrelevant where exactly we are in it at a given moment. This is reflected by the well-known phrase of the Ancient Greek philosophers: "you cannot step twice into the same river". The river will not be the same on the second (or nth) occasion, and neither will you (Gaarder, 1991). This has serious implications for understanding (Chapter 3.2.) since it follows from that above that understanding is always created in relation to a specific dialogical relationship, between the given participants, there and then.

Situatedness, bias and prejudices are closely related to freedom. For, to be free in a relationship, you need to be able to keep your distance from all of these (Gadamer, 1984), to suspend them (Bohm, 1990).

²⁷ The validity claims identified by Habermas are rather difficult to integrate in the dialogue model being presented here. Habermas says that in communicative action (such as dialogue) "the participants (...) reciprocally raise validity claims that can be accepted or contested" (Habermas, 1984, p. 99) These expectations specifically related to "the utterances of speakers" (Habermas, 1984, p. 216), that is, what is being heard. They can be linked, somewhat clumsily, to dialogue criteria described in the present chapter.

The meaning of **autonomy** is also associated with freedom: “freedom without barriers (...) self-protecting restraint” (Bohm, 2011, p. 10). Freedom means also liberation from the protection of your identity (Bohm, 1990). In a relevant dialogue, the subjects quickly move to essential things, typically tacit assumptions that determine the bases of their ideas of the world and also their identity. Protecting your identity is an instinctive response. If your most fundamental beliefs are challenged, you experience that as an attack on yourself and activate your mechanisms of self-defence (Bohm, 1990; Argyris és Schön, 1978). These defence mechanisms are natural and instinctive, yet you must learn to recognise and suspend them. A truly autonomous person is free also from his own identity but, at the same time, enters dialogue relationship with that identity – another paradox.

The participants of dialogue are **authentic**, “rooted in their self-identity” (Ádám, 1998, p. 46). Their attitude to dialogue, its object and the other participant(s) is not neutral (P. Szilcz, 2013; Fehér M., 2013). The party entering dialogue is self-reflectively aware of this bias. It is exactly this bias that makes dialogue genuine: you enter dialogue driven by your genuine relationship with its object (for more detail about this relationship between the object and the subject, see Chapter 3.1.2.).

Being biased does not make a person closed. I not only accept the other participant, his identity and bias, but I am also **open** to him (Fehér M., 2013). “All that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the other person or text.” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 271) I “accept the other with his being different from me, as other, as different” (Hankovszky, 2013, p. 86). That is, openness refers to both the alteration of my own assumptions and the understanding of the world of the other. I suspend my own assumptions and aims, I appear as I am to the other party, and I also accept the other as he is.

We have certain assumptions concerning the other participant(s), their attitude, intentions and also their preconception concerning ourselves, when we enter dialogue (Pléh, 2014). The attitude/relationship should be characterised basically by the **hermeneutics of trust** (Fehér M., 2013).

From the point of view of the more passive participant, the hermeneutics of trust equals the assumption that the other party may be right. You permit the assumption that what he says is true, or at least *coherent* in his own world (Adorno, 1973; Bohm, 1996). That is, you “suspend” your opinion and adopt an open-minded attitude, receiving what the other communicates and even asking questions in case of any inconsistency or incomprehension, considering these clues to specifying, differentiating or modifying the utterance of the other, rather than seeing them as signs of weakness and an opportunity to expose him. “If we want to understand, we will try to make his arguments even stronger.” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 327) “A person trying to understand a text is prepared for the fact that it will tell him something. That is why a hermeneutically trained consciousness must be, from the start, sensitive to the text’s alterity. But this kind of sensitivity involves neither neutrality with respect to content nor the extinction of one’s self, but the foregrounding and appropriation of one’s own foremeanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one’s own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one’s own foremeanings.” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 271-272)

This does not mean shutting an eye to inconsistencies “...this coherence is possible only as a distinction between coherence and incoherence; and to grasp the truth content always means the ability to distinguish the truth content from the false.” (Adorno, 1977, p. 130)” The crucial thing is again the *reason* why you point out the inconsistency/incoherence/falseness: if your objective is to understand the other more deeply, to see his opinion and ideas more clearly, and not to beat or at least control him by pointing out some inconsistency, incoherence or falsehood, then your act, i.e. the pointing-out, is in your common interest. There is no real understanding without this moment of criticism (Adorno, 1977). This critique, this pointing-out, is meant to perfect, to specify, the otherness of the other.

From the perspective of the active participant, on the other hand, the hermeneutics of trust means the assumption that the other (the listener/receiver) wants to understand him, that’s why he listens “with intensive energies” (Bohm, 1990, p. 10) – as opposed to the hermeneutics of suspicion, where the aim is deconstruction, catching the other in the act, exposing him (Fehér M., 2013) or, on the side of the active participant, covering things up. The hermeneutics of suspicion undermines dialogue: being suspicious of the other party makes understanding impossible or at least highly dubious, and “this declaration is of the self-verifying, self-fulfilling kind: it will produce what it surmises.” (Fehér M., 2013, p. 55) If you are suspicious, you will look for what might corroborate your suspicion; you will see weakness as evidence and not as opportunity.

The hermeneutics of suspicion therefore excludes the possibility of dialogue: it makes it fundamentally impossible. But the inverse is not true: the hermeneutics of trust will not automatically ensure understanding. “By saying that understanding is possible between us, I open the way to reaching an understanding, but understanding itself is not created yet” (Fehér M., 2013, p. 55) The hermeneutics of trust is a necessary condition of dialogue, but it is not sufficient.

It is a critical divide line in the hermeneutics of trust/suspicion whether you get what you see. If you spot something suspicious in the other, you accept that at face value. If you spot trust, on the other hand, that needs verifying and “it is enough in itself to raise suspicion” (Bauer, 2013, p. 65). Bauer’s (2013) paper details the reasons for that: a specific world view based on experience, the social norms, the role of the senses.

Several philosophers wrote about trust being a rare, unusual and surprising phenomenon in the societies ever. This “represents a particular view of the world and of man” (Bauer, 2013, p. 66), but there is no doubt as to the presence of this attitude in a certain proportion of people”. Consequently, someone entering a dialogue with trust can expect surprise and uncertainty (lack of trust) on behalf of the other party. “All you need to defend yourself against tactically, that is, suspiciously, is the overwhelming, disarming power of trust” (Bauer, 2013, p. 68).

Another reason of the suspicious attitude to trust is the uncertainty concerning trust itself. Can I accept trust at face value? Can I assume that someone showing trust has good intentions? Trust may be a guise of manipulative intentions, of some hidden strategic action against the communicative action in dialogue (Habermas, 1984). Manifest ill-will is certainly sincere. Trust

is not necessarily that. This is due to the social norm that showing trust is the right attitude, whereas ill-will, hostility, is wrong – so it needs to be hidden, concealed (Bauer, 2013).

Bauer's (2013) last argument concerning the suspicious attitude to trust is that trust is not accessible to the senses; you cannot verify it by your senses, so you are exposed to the other party showing trust, its indirect (maybe feigned) signs. This also enhances uncertainty.

In my view, of the four validity claims identified by Habermas (truth, rightness, truthfulness or sincerity) for the speaker, the **truthfulness or sincerity** claim is linked to both the hermeneutics of trust and the authenticity of the participants. This means that “the manifest intention of the speaker is meant as it is expressed” (Habermas, 1984, p. 99), that is, he truly reveals something of himself (Habermas, 1979). Authenticity is a difficult issue: it is the only validity claim that cannot be discussed rationally during dialogue; it can only be demonstrated *a posteriori*, after a long time, by consistent behaviour (Felkai, 1993). The fourth of Habermas' claims, **intelligibility**, is the most trivial, but also the most difficult to fit in the present dialogue model. This claim means that what is said in dialogue should be intelligible/comprehensible to the other participants – the utterance should be loud and clear, if it is a speech act, etc. As for the underlying requirements to be met by the participants, it is most logical to include them in the model at this point: intelligibility presumes that the participants have the necessary linguistic and communicative competencies. Linguistic competence refers to the ability of self-expression through language, through words (Felkai, 1993), and to the non-verbal communicative competencies, i.e. “being in command of the universalia constituting dialogue” (Felkai, 1993, p. 377).

In conclusion: the parties entering dialogue are situated, biased, but also free, autonomous and authentic; they are driven by trust, they are sincere and intelligible/comprehensible (having the necessary linguistic and communicative competencies), and their authenticity is most likely to follow from the foregoing. Now let me move on to presenting the relationship of the parties to dialogue.

The **RELATONSHIP** of the parties taking part in dialogue is basically an **I-Thou** relationship in the sense of Buber. The I-Thou relationship can be understood from the I-It relation. In the I-It relationship, the I is the ego looking at the other as an object, the object that he uses or experiences. In this relationship, the It is under the control of the I. The I in the I-Thou relation, on the other hand, appears as a person entering into a relationship with other persons, and “The aim of the relation is (...) contact with the Thou.” (Buber, 1937, p. 63), i.e. a reciprocal back-and-forth relationship. “The Thou appears (...) simultaneously as acting and as being acted” (Buber, 1937, p. 30”).

Bakhtin calls this relationship “a most interesting sociological document between **man and man**”, and identifies it as “the sharp perception of the other person as other and your own self as plain I” (Bakhtin, 1929, p. 355).

The relationship is always **reciprocal**: “...it affects me, as I affect it.” (Buber, 1937, p. 10, 15). Reciprocity is a bi-directional process (Fehér M., 2013): in a dialogical relationship, it is

impossible for you to affect the other party without his affecting you²⁸. As the participants of dialogue, we are both affecting and affected parties simultaneously. It is this effect that makes the relationship real (Buber, 1923): if it affects me, then *something* really happens. I will not exit the relationship unchanged, as I entered it.

The relationship is **direct** – meaning two things. Firstly, it cannot be established through an intermediary (e.g. mediator, interpreter, peacemaker), as opposed to social interaction that is always mediated by a medium. Secondly, the relationship/connection between the parties is direct in the sense that “No aim, no lust, and no anticipation intervene between I and Thou.” (Buber, 1937, p. 11). This claim is in line with what Bohm calls the suspension of the aims, desires and assumptions. According to Buber, these circumstances, if present, would stand between the participants and put an end to the directness of the relationship. Bakhtin (1929a) associates directness with the requirement that the subject entering dialogue must get rid of his social determination, enter dialogue “independently of all social communities –wherever he might belong” (Bakhtin, 1929a, p. 355), and be in the relationship “barely”.

That is, we enter into a reciprocal, direct I/Thou relationship with the other party, suspending ourselves, our assumptions and aims. The authors do not question the idealistic nature of a relationship of this kind. “The Thou meets me through grace – it is not found by seeking.... We have to be concerned, to be troubled, not about the other side but about our own side, not about grace but about will. Grace concerns us in so far as we go out to it and persist in its presence; but it is not our object.” (Buber, 1937, p. 11 and 76)

The relationship aspires at **completeness**. We enter the game withholding nothing of ourselves, with our whole being (Buber, 1923; Bohm, 1990; Török, 2013), in transparent self-revelation (P. Szilcz, 2013). Any taboos in dialogue infringe on its directness (Buber, 1923), and represent no-go zones activating our defence routines and as a consequence they undermine dialogue (Bohm, 1990). Self-revelation, however, is always a **risky** venture concurrent with tension. “This is the risk: the primary word [Thou] can only be spoken with the whole being. He who gives himself to it may withhold nothing of himself.” (Buber, 1937, p. 10). Risky, since you can never be completely sure whether the other enters the dialogic relationship in all sincerity or just pretends to do that to achieve his goal. That is, he may feign a partnership-based, co-operative I/Thou relationship, while standing in the I/It paradigm, the strategic action paradigm (unwittingly or deliberately feigning it) (Habermas, 1987).

The process of entering the dialogue relationship with your whole being, your full identity and also open to the revision of your (tacit) assumptions and beliefs representing the basis of that identity is far from being **tension-free** (Patsch, 2013). Bohm (1990) expressly stresses that this is a natural concomitant of dialogue, it cannot be avoided, only accepted, and “If you are capable of understanding dialogue in its real relevance, you will stick to it despite the difficulties” (Bohm, 1990, p. 40).

²⁸ It is an interesting dilemma how Buber can then speak of dialogue between a thing (the object) and a person. Buber says that when he is faced by an object in dialogue that comes to life per se as interpreted by the I, in its relationship to the I, that is, the I has an impact on it. For example, although a work of art is made by its creator, when you enter into a relationship, a dialogue, with it, that is its real creation. (Buber, 1923)

3.1.2 Relationship and interaction of the subjects and the object of dialogue

The participants of dialogue relate to its object personally (**subjectively**): subject and object are not **independent** of each other. So, there is a **RELATIONSHIP** between the object and the subject: the object mobilises (Török, 2013) the subject of dialogue²⁹, who is **not neutral** to the object (Fehér M., 2013).

The object of dialogue is not independent of its subjects, but it does not depend on them either: **it is not under the control/power of either participant**, it cannot be possessed at all. Furthermore, **it is not specified in advance**, since its definition would put into a power position the participant(s) who define(s) it. In other words, the object of dialogue **unfolds between the participants**, it is also dynamic, **not constant in space or time** (Buber, 1923; Bohm, 1990; Török, 2013).

Situatedness, a feature of the participants discussed above, applies also to the content that is being understood. A statement that is understood “cannot be released of the conversation where it is embedded, and that is the only place where it carries a meaning.” (Grondin, 2002, p. 166) Understanding takes place in a given situation, “here and now”. Once you exit the situation (dialogue), it will merge with your past experience and become part of the set of assumptions of subsequent dialogues. Therefore, the understood content **cannot be objectified**; it does not exist in isolation from the given situation. And one more thing it will not be: it will not be something that you can **dominate or control**. For, understanding is a *personal sharing* of a situation, in this case dialogue, the dialogic relationship.

Dialogue of the subjects, the parties to dialogue, is concurrent with the continuous dialogue, the **INTERACTION**, of its object and its subject. This follows from the subjective relationship, from personal involvement: as a participant of dialogue, I keep reflecting on its object and my relationship to it. (Török, 2013)

3.1.3 Relationship and interaction of the participants and the medium

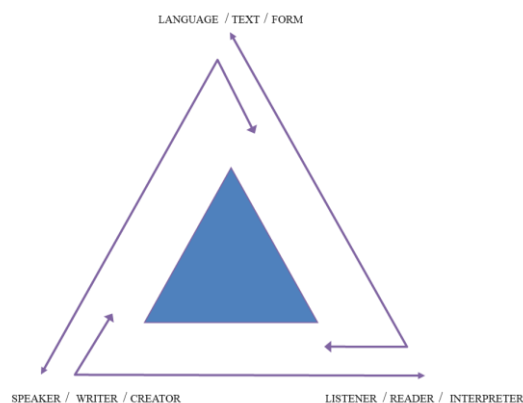
The process taking place between the participants of dialogue is indirect, its vehicle being a medium such as the **spoken or written language** (Fehér M., 2013; Sárvári, 1999; Török, 2013), but **culture** can also be interpreted as medium (Geertz, 1983).

The medium, be it language or culture, is **dynamic**, i.e. continuously changing. Change is its generic feature (Jakab, 2014) – suffice it to refer to the continuous change of the Hungarian language or the culture surrounding and determining us –, but it is also characterised by a certain local dynamic manifesting itself in dialogue (Sárvári, 1999).

²⁹ Cf. the idea of St Thomas of Aquinas on the two types of communication: locutio, where the audience is not interested in what they hear and illuminatio that “tells you something” (P. Szilcz, 2013, p. 59).

The study of the **INTERACTION AND RELATIONSHIP** of the subject (i.e. the participant of dialogue using the language) and the medium itself is another field of hermeneutics. This paper cannot present the relevant highly diversified ideas of hermeneutics in depth, as it is not meant to explain (help understand) the problems of this discipline, but I will outline the most important hermeneutical problems that concern also the dialogue model.

The medium in between the participants of dialogue completes the hermeneutical triad of roles in a situation: speaker/writer/creator – listener/receiver/reader/interpreter and language/text/form.



7. Figure. The hermeneutical triad of roles. Author's figure.

It is a fundamental hermeneutical dilemma **how the participants of the triad determine each other**. Is the speaker determined by language (the reader by the text)? Or is it language that is determined by the speaker (the text by the reader)? Or are both speaker/writer and listener/reader determined by language? As Buber puts it: “Actually speech does not abide in man, but man takes his stand in speech” (Buber, 1937, p. 39). To what extent can the creator of the text (the writer) affect the interpretation of the receiver (reader) in a dialogue situation³⁰? How do I as speaker affect how the listener interprets what is heard?

Does a **single correct reading** exist at all? If the receiver (viewer, reader, interpreter) of the text (work of art) interprets it differently from what was intended by its creator, does that qualify as *misunderstanding* or “illusory understanding (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 176)? Or is there an **endless series of potential readings**, as stated by extreme Hermeticism (Pogonyi, 2003), each depending on the interpreter ever? Or are there **certain limits imposed on interpretation** by the intention of the text (and its author)? (Eco, 1998, 2013)

In my opinion, the issues of interaction, mutual determination and interpretation within the hermeneutical triad are solved by the requirements applicable to the relationship of the parties

³⁰ To illustrate the problem from the point of view of the creator (writer or speaker), let me quote from an interview with writer Péter Esterházy: “The books related to so-called reality differently. *Revised edition* related otherwise than let’s say *Harmonia Celestis*. But in vain is the relating different, as I see it, the result is always a work of fiction in some sense. That is, the moment we give it a form, that form in itself implies a fictional status. Of course, this does not eliminate the difference of the various texts, in the way they are linked to so-called reality. But however hard one tries, it is not certain that he will be believed. So this is why sometimes *Revised* was received, read as a novel. You know, I really did not want that then, for personal reasons. I wanted it to be the naked truth. But there is no naked truth on paper. No naked truth.” (Esterházy, 2015)

to dialogue, i.e. the symmetry condition (alternation of active and passive roles) and the requirement of relevant reaction to content. These are the guarantees of the (correct) understanding of the other party and, what is more, of focusing dialogue situation on reaching (creating) a common understanding, rather than on the correct interpretation of the words or thoughts of the other. Focusing on how I as participant interpret correctly the words of the other participant means objectifying the I/Thou relation, reducing the other participant to mere text – and that is contrary to the I/Thou relation set as a condition of dialogue and described above.

The dialogical relationship as interpreted by Buber, however, does not solve the hermeneutical problem of **whose language is used for the conversation, and what power problems** ensue.

If dialogue takes place in a language that is equally well-known to every party, one can assume that the medium has a **mediating** function only (Török, 2013). It is doubtful whether one can speak of mediation pure and simple even then, as even participants having the same mother tongue seldom know it in equal depths and their respective attitudes to language may also differ. Some can express themselves better in writing than orally – they will be at a disadvantage in an oral dialogue situation compared to those who are better at speaking.

There are also differences in the depth of language usage between native speakers of the same language. In his example, Bourdieu calls the intellectuals "the natives of high culture" (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 177), as opposed to the "... least educated, whose position when they face high culture is similar to that of the ethnographer watching a ritual in an alien society without knowing its code. (...) information provided in the work may exceed the decrypting [*perception* – *Author*] skills of the viewer who will conclude that it does not mean anything (...) for failure of decrypting it, i.e. converting it to an intelligible form." (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 178). The same incomprehension occurs in the dialogue of natives of high culture and persons with less schooling/education: *they may be native speakers of the same language, but do not speak the same language*. Such fault lines occur not only between intellectuals and "less educated" people (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 178), i.e. social groups, but also between generations (Woodward et al., 2015; Rosnati, Iafrate and Scabini, 2007) or within organisations, e.g. professional cultures, sub-cultures (Howard-Grenville, 2006; Gay et al., 2005) using, but not speaking, the same language and therefore failing to understand each other.

The medium will play a purely mediatory role in exceptional cases only; it is more general that the parties to dialogue do not speak the same language (in one way or another). In the latter case, the following options (and even more problems) may occur:

- (1) *They choose the language of one of the parties*. Obviously, the party whose language is chosen has an unavoidable competitive edge, a certain power over the other.
- (2) A *neutral language*, a "no-man's-land" (Fehér M., 2013, p. 40) is chosen, a third language that is alien to both parties, or a jointly created new "international common language" is called in (Eco, 1995, p. 345).
 - a. The *jointly created new language* raises a familiar problem: "the different languages could not be born from convention: if so, people would have to have had a prior language in which they could agree about conventions." (Eco, 1995, p. 352), that is, the power asymmetry indicated under Point (1) is recreated.

- b. The search for a universal language is a utopia going back almost two thousand years. Utopia, because if it means a newly invented or discovered language, it will not solve the fundamental linguistic problem of translation. And if it means finding a “*protolanguage*” or “*original language*”, some kind of a pre-Babel language “which included all others.” (Eco, 1995, p. 352), you disregard the enrichment of the specific languages since that time. “Europe (...) as the continent of different languages, each of which, even the most peripheral, remains the medium through which the genius of a particular ethnic group expresses itself, witness and vehicle of a millennial tradition.” (Eco, 1995, p. 344-345). Language is not constant, but a live phenomenon, and the proto-language, if it existed, would not be able to express the phenomena of our days.
- c. One solution could be a universal language *above all the known languages of our time*, capable of expressing all of their specialities and shades of meaning. A Jesuit monk was the first to write about a language spoken to this day in Peru and Bolivia that has been the source of continuous wonderment for the linguists studying it over a century. This language, the *Aymara*, “displayed an immense flexibility and capability of accommodating neologisms, particularly adapted to the expression of abstract concepts. (...) [*Like*] the language of Adam, (...) a philosophic language. (...) Aymara thought is based on a three-valued logic, and is, therefore, capable of expressing modal subtleties which other languages can only capture through complex circumlocutions. (...) Due to its algorithmic nature, the syntax of Aymara would greatly facilitate the translation of any other idiom into its own terms.” (Eco, 1995, p. 346-347)³¹. Even this perfect language could not solve every translation problem, since even if we could translate the ideas expressed in our languages to Aymara, this would not work the other way round: “once the perfect language has resolved these thoughts into its own terms, they cannot be translated back into our natural native idioms.” (Eco, 1995, p. 347). For, translation assumes that it is possible to match the contents expressed by the words of the various languages and the underlying spirituality. This, however, is not necessarily true, and this is the reason for the above translation problem. The words differ by language only, but the ideas expressed by the words (contents, spirituality) differ by individual. What we think of the world is determined by our history, our unique, personal experience. “For the bespectacled man, his own glasses, albeit almost touching his eyes, are further away as a part of the surrounding world than the painting hung on the opposite wall. (...) they do not see what makes them able to see and, similarly, they do not see that they would not see at all if they were deprived of what makes it possible for them to see” (Bourdieu, 1968, p. 177).

In summary of the above: **there is no common language**, we seldom speak a common language, not even if we are native speakers of the same language. Any attempt to create a “no-man’s-land” language would be futile: the real difference lies in that the content and spirituality

³¹ Dichotomy is the basis of bivalent logic: true/false, black/white.

expressed by the parties to dialogue through language (signs) are *different*. **Consequently, the clue to having a relevant dialogue is not the elimination of the linguistic differences, but understanding – that is also its essence and aim**, i.e. the interconnection of the contents expressed by words, the “spiritual connexion” (Buber, 1937, p. 25).

Real understanding requires no common language, no sign system that clearly conveys the emitted signals. For, the emphasis is not on the signals and the medium, but on what is denoted, the thoughts, the opinions. The road (the process) leading the participants to a relevant understanding at this level is dialogue.

This chapter discussed the criteria of those relationships and interactions – collectively, connections – of subject/object, subject/medium, respectively, of dialogue without which there is *no chance* for a dialogue of merit. The fulfilment of these criteria, however, is not sufficient; it does not guarantee dialogue.

THE PARTICIPANT(S)	THE OBJECT	THE MEDIUM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biased (<i>preconceptions, assumptions, prejudices, expectations, motives</i>) ▪ Free (<i>willingness of suspending the formers</i>) ▪ Voluntary (<i>no pressure</i>) ▪ Situated: socially and historically ▪ Claim to truth ▪ Autonomy (<i>without self-defence</i>) ▪ Authentic (<i>the object of dialogue has meaning</i>) ▪ Open (<i>to the other participant or to the dialogue</i>) ▪ Driven by trust (<i>1. the other party may be right; 2. try to make the other's argument even stronger/clearer; 3. show themselves straight out</i>) Truthfulness or sincerity(<i>long time!</i>) ▪ Intelligibility (<i>linguistic and communicative competencies</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Independent (<i>not under anyone's control</i>) ▪ Not specified in advance ▪ Unfolds in the process, between the participants ▪ Not constant in space or time ▪ Situated (<i>takes place in a given situation, here and now</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Written or spoken language, culture ▪ Dynamic (<i>continuously changing</i>) ▪ Independent (<i>not under anyone's control</i>) ▪ Power problem (<i>whose language is used</i>) ▪ Purely mediatory role in exceptional cases ▪ There is no common, neutral language

7. Table. Boundary conditions of the dialogue's elements. Author's compilation.

RELATIONSHIP between				
		The participants	The participant(s) and the object of the dialogue	The participant(s) and the medium
Dimension of connection	Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symmetry condition (<i>active/passive or speaker/listener roles are sequential</i>) Reaction = relevant response Power asymmetry (<i>power position and vulnerability</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subjective, not neutral Dynamic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynamic Local dynamics Biased (<i>compared to the other participant</i>)
	Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I/Thou relation Partnership Mutual, direct Reciprocal (<i>all participants are affecting and affected</i>) Direct (<i>1. cannot be established through an intermediary; 2. purity: nothing intervene between I and Thou</i>) Completeness: no taboos Risky Tension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reciprocal (<i>affecting and affected</i>) Mutually determined

8. Table. Boundary conditions of connections (relationships and interactions) in dialogue. Author's compilation.

As indicated already, the boundary conditions of dialogue are sufficient to create a dialogic relationship, but not a dialogue. The latter requires also understanding.

3.2 The essence of dialogue: understanding, speaking the same language, finding your feet with others

The representatives of the various disciplines call the same phenomenon by different names, i.e. the essence, outcome or sufficient condition (of dialogue). The essence of dialogue is mutual understanding: understanding the other and being understood by the other. A separate philosophical school has evolved to study the issue of understanding: **hermeneutics**. Before going any further, I have to set two limits to the hermeneutical line of my research.

Firstly, since my research is not within the scope of philosophy, I will only discuss hermeneutics to the extent its statements are applicable to/concern/say something about dialogue as speech act. *When I speak of understanding, I mean understanding in the context of dialogue.*

Secondly, the philosophical approach implies that I can only understand what I get to know to some extent. This line of thought, however, leads on to epistemology, to the philosophy/theory of knowledge (Bolberitz, 2005; Török, 2009), far beyond the scope of my research and my discipline, so I will only refer to it, without even attempting to expound the problem from this perspective (or depth, for that matter).

Before Heidegger, hermeneutics treated understanding mainly as a topic of theology and legal science. The philosophical schools concerned separated understanding and the use of what is

understood chronologically: understanding came first, application was a follow-up. Heidegger, and Gadamer who agreed with him, came to the conclusion that **understanding itself is also situated, i.e. what happens is the situated understanding of the situated subject.** Consequently, **understanding and application are not separate things.** We enter dialogue with a question, some motive and pre-conceptions/assumptions, “we are personally involved in every process of understanding from the start” and “understanding is also self-understanding and even facing ourselves. Consequently, in the process of understanding we *apply* some meaning to our situation, our questions”. (Grondin, 2002, p. 163, emphasis added by Author) Understanding is *personal* participation in the situation, in this case dialogue, the dialogic relationship (Gadamer, 1994).

A related issue concerns a common misunderstanding in connection with dialogue³² (Fehér M., 2013): *agreement* is not the aim of dialogue! There is no constraint in dialogue: “he who wants to understand does not have to accept what he understands.” (Gadamer, 1984, p. 381). Moreover, “applied understanding” is generated, and the application process is personal and affects the subject. I will never become the other – understanding cannot be complete and perfect.

Agreement means that the participants become united in their thoughts concerning the object of the communicative action (I deliberately avoid calling it dialogue), that is, the *otherness* of the two parties dissolves. In dialogue, on the contrary (as explained in connection with the hermeneutics of trust above), the aim is to perfect and specify the otherness of the other. I help the other unfold himself by my criticism (Adorno, 1973); I grasp the weaknesses, incoherence and inconsistencies as opportunities to let the otherness of the other unfold as much as possible. Who would enter a situation eliminating his very essence, his otherness relative to the other party? “The trick is not to aspire at some kind of inner spiritual compliance with your informant [*i.e. the other – Author’s comment*]. For, he would not contribute to such efforts because, as every human being, they prefer to consider their soul their own.” (Clifford Geertz, 1973, p. 202)

The acceptance and unfolding of the otherness of the other go so far as to permit the other to say ‘no’ to entering dialogue or to leave it if he so wishes. This relates to the freedom of the participants: dialogue must not bind you, dialogue is unconstrained. In this situation, the participant who would have remained in dialogue “must remain ready to continue or resume the debate or dialogue if an opportunity arises or the other party shows willingness to do that. That’s how he can honour most the otherness of the other...” (Fehér M., 2013, p. 63).

Developing/unfolding the otherness of the other is a reciprocal process; dialogue does not only put the otherness of the other in the focus, for that would create a one-sided situation that is contrary to the requirement of reciprocity in dialogue expounded earlier. Examples for that are the leader and members of a religious community, the therapist and the patient, and the “real educators” (Buber, 1923, p. 157) and their followers and, somewhat contrary to what Clifford Geertz says, I assign also the anthropologist to this category.

³² Gadamer was attacked primarily by Derrida, but also by Habermas, for that (Fehér M., 2013).

Clifford Geertz compares the task of the anthropologist to that of dialogue: “The aim of anthropology is to expand the world of human speech (...) by trying to converse with them [*i.e., the natives – Author’s comment*]” (Geertz, 1983, p. 181). The relationship of the anthropologist and the natives, however, cannot be compared to the above reciprocity criterion, since the native is not (necessarily) interested in the anthropologist observing and “thickly describing” him (Geertz, 1983), and making efforts to have a conversation with him.

The aim of the anthropologist is to understand the language of the natives, but not at the level of the words in the first place.

Understanding created in dialogue results in that the participants mutually understand each other, albeit they do not necessarily agree. Understanding is not meant in the linguistic sense, it is not equal to understanding the words used by the other party. We may understand (or rather know) the words being used, yet “We do not understand the people. (...) We cannot find our feet with them.” (Geertz, 1973, p. 13). That is, in the anthropological sense, understanding means “you can find your feet with them”, i.e. co-operate in certain things, act jointly.

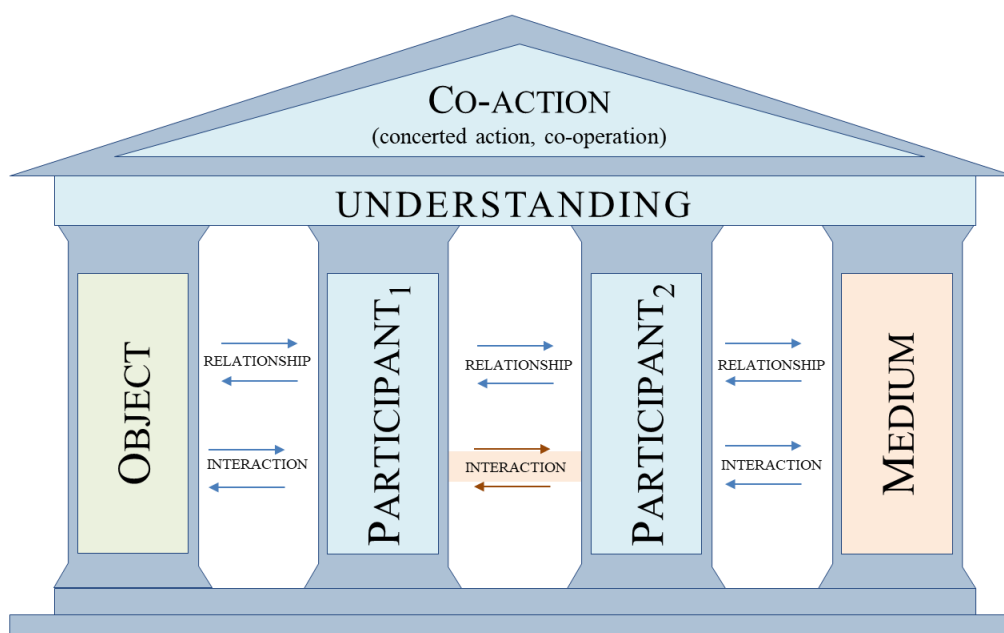
Understanding, cooperation and getting along presumes reciprocity. It is impossible to get along with someone who does not get along with you, to speak the same language, if it is not reciprocal (Fehér M., 2013). This results in a one-way I/Thou relation, something that is acceptable in the work of the anthropologist, but not in a real dialogue. “The word is actually a two-way act. It depends equally on he who owns it and on he who is addressed by it. It is the product of the interrelationship of the speaker and the listener. (...) The word is the bridge between myself and the other. Its closer end is supported by me and the more distant one by my dialogue partner. The word is the common area lying between the speaker and dialogue partner.” (Bahtyin, 1986b, p. 244-245) Understanding is reciprocal, understanding is shared by the participants, by I and Thou” (Buber, 1923, p. 47), “it unfolds in the intermediary field” (Veress, 2001, p. 28).

Fehér M. (2013) points to a very important feature by equating understanding and speaking the same language. “The reciprocities notwithstanding, understanding and speaking the same language do not necessarily mean agreeing. I understood him is not equivocal to I agreed with him. (...) We understood each other, although we disagreed on many things.” (Fehér M., 2013, p. 24). That is, if the participants understand each other at least to the extent of realising what they disagree on, a dialogue has taken place between them. Something has happened then, some movement, however slight, has occurred from dissensus towards consensus or rather a more consensual state of mind. Habermas identified this movement between dissensus and consensus with the claim for universal understanding as meant by Gadamer³³ (Fehér M., 2013; Grondin, 2002).

In summary of the above: **the aim and essence of dialogue** is not to reach an agreement, to achieve unity, but **to reciprocally unfold each other’s otherness, to understand each other, speak the same language and, ultimately, to become capable of concerted action, co-**

³³ Derrida also criticises the dissensus/consensus movement, and call the attention to the fact that this leads to the approximation of assimilation and the elimination of otherness (Fehér M., 2013).

operation through this mutual knowledge. The essence of dialogue is this mutual knowledge: “Take knowledge: being is disclosed to the man who is engaged in knowing, as he looks at what is over against him.” (Buber, 1937, p. 40) And this mutual and common knowledge is conducive to a very high level of cooperation (Habermas, 1987).



8. Figure. Relationship between understanding and the elements of dialogue and the possibility of cooperation and co-action. Author's figure.

Self-revelation is not under the control/power of either party; understanding, as Buber (1923) puts it, is a **matter of grace**. “Something that happens, instead of being done by us.” (Fehér M., 2013, p. 28) Something that you should strive for, that is in no way under the control of the parties, and **cannot be guaranteed**, for the same reason. In my opinion, this is the most prominent paradox of dialogue.

To sum up: **dialogue is a special communication act where a relationship (connection) of a special quality evolves between the parties, to achieve their mutual, but personal, understanding that provides for concerted action, for real and genuine cooperation.**

At the point of my theoretical research where I finally saw the above dialogue criteria clearly, I became unsure whether it made any sense to speak of dialogue if the process has such far-from-self-evident and highly challenging preconditions. This dilemma is treated explicitly by Martin Buber (1923) and also David Bohm (1990). Both stress the difficulty of the process itself and the relationship systems to be established. However, with the progress and development of the world in mind, both conclude that, despite the difficulties “There is no going backwards, but in the very moment of deepest need, a hitherto undreamt-of movement forwards and outwards.” (Buber, 1937, p. 50)

Reflecting on the above makes it clear that whether you believe in dialogue despite its difficulties and somewhat utopian preconditions depends largely on your fundamental approach to the world and to people. If you believe (hope, trust, aspire to believe) that man is good and mankind is capable of developing a positive future, then you will believe (hope, trust, aspire to

believe) also in dialogue. This is your decision, your choice; there are no rational arguments deciding in favour of one position or the other.

4 Change management theories and dialogue philosophies: A synthesis

In my capacity as a researcher, I focused first on change management. I examined the types of change (defined by the frequency/pace of change and by control exercised over it) covered by the known change management theories. Then I looked at what they considered the unit of change management, i.e. the primary object of their attention (solution, problem or culture). This latter typology determines also the depth of their interventions in the life of the organisation, the depth of the changes they deliberately introduce there. I came to the conclusion that the more complex the changes these models aspire to solve (i.e. the more continuous they consider the process of change and the less it can be controlled at everyday level), the more prominent the role they assign to the partnership of managers and employees, to their cooperation and dialogue. The same is true also for their foci: the more profound the changes they work with and the more those changes affect the deeper cultural layers of the organisation, the more inevitable the dialogue as model component.

At this point of my research I distanced myself from the management theories and turned to dialogue by adopting a broader disciplinary perspective. I called on the dialogue theories of philosophy, theology and cultural anthropology, and I set up a dialogue model by combining my own readings of them, so to say.

This chapter examines to what extent the change management theories treating dialogue explicitly contradict or agree with the dialogue theories of other disciplines. Is change management far away from these disciplines? Do their conclusions differ? Are the points of emphasis different? What similarities and contradictions are discernible? My comparison will be based on the dialogue model presented in Chapter 3.

The dialogue is explicitly mentioned in the following change management theories: organisational development (OD), action research (AR), organisational learning (work of Argyris, Schein, and fourth model of the theory of Bouwen and Fry) and Learning Organisation (the concept of Senge). In what follows, I will discuss the items in the list one by one.

4.1 Dialogue in organisational management and in action research

As explained in Chapter 2.1.1., the borderland between organisational development and action research is very narrow indeed. If there is any borderline between the two schools, it lies primarily between continuous and incremental change. This in itself is not relevant for dialogue as a phenomenon. There is no difference between the two schools in their specific interpretations of dialogue. They are driven by the same humanistic/democratic values: respect for people, trust and support, division of power, confrontation, participation. These values appear, maybe in other words, also in the dialogue philosophies. The main difference is that the *dialogue philosophies interpret these phenomena in more depth, also at ontological and epistemological level, than organisational development and action research.*

All in all, it is rather difficult to match these terms with the categories of the dialogue philosophies, since the OD/AR literature does not interpret in detail what is meant e.g. by credibility. The values represented by OD/AR are mainly targets: they want to move the organisations *towards* these.

The basis of cooperation and of relationships within the organisation, and between advisors and members of the organisation is the democratic dialogue according to both schools. The qualifier *democratic* stands for the fundamental values described above. And *dialogue* in this case means an *honest and open dialogue* on problems, difficulties, or even strengths, positive features during which a *common understanding is reached*. They state that dialogue is an interpretational process, where the role of the advisor/consultant is not only to collect and aggregate the viewpoints, but also to make the participants face their own contribution to what is identified as organisational reality during the interviews. That is, self-reflection is quite a prominent element here.

The only noticeable difference between OD and AR is the scope of the specific stages of the process at the various organisational levels, and the identity of the parties to the dialogue. In organisational development, the diagnosis and interventions leading to change are limited; they focus on the objectives defined in advance jointly with the managers. The diagnosis may reveal if the real problems lie elsewhere, but the contract, the diagnosis and hence the complete development process and *the object of the dialogue are kept under the unilateral control of the client*. The client, on the other hand, is mostly *top management of the organisation*.

The fact that management acts as client in the process would be no problem in itself, since a conversation must also be initiated by someone; dialogue is also started by someone; someone utters the first sentence. There is inevitably a certain power asymmetry, vulnerability between the participants, as indicated also by the dialogue philosophies. Asymmetry is coded in the dialogue. Organisational development, however, is much more exposed to manager(s) and their commitment than action research. “The underlying managerial paradigm for participation in OD was based on the equalizing of power idea. The stronger party empowers to some degree the weaker party (...) Participation in this rather paternalistic managerial practice is something offered by superiors to subordinates, but *can always be taken back*.” (Bouwen and Taillien, 2004, p. 139, italics mine).

Action research speaks more comprehensively of collaborative democratic partnership. As stated above, that relies much more intensively on involving the members of the organisation affected by change in *every step* of the process. Whereas in organisational development the decision lies *always* with top management and the process itself is “at their mercy”, in action research, partnership permeates the *total process* and – most importantly – it is the responsibility of the *advisor/consultant*. Collective partnership is to be guaranteed by the consultant. In this regard, the *object of dialogue* will not be independent here either, but rather *quasi-independent* – due to the more marked control exercised by the advisor over it. However, looking at the role of the advisor from the viewpoint of the hermeneutics of trust, we may assume that this independence will be realised. *Power asymmetry*, on the other hand, does exist also in this relation, in favour of the advisor but, as underlined by the dialogue philosophies,

the attitude and the quality of connection of the parties entering the dialogue can eliminate the risk inherent in this setup.

Why is the hermeneutics of trust more appropriate in the case of the researcher/advisor conducting action research than that of the advisor active in organisational development? Firstly, the AR expert risks his own credibility if he does not guarantee a collaborative guarantee democratic partnership in every step of the process. Secondly, the external expert is independent of organisational hierarchy. “Hierarchy is anti-ethical to dialogue and it is difficult to escape hierarchy in organizations. (...) Can those in authority really level with those in subordinate positions?” (Bohm, quoted in: Senge, 2006, p. 228) Hierarchy is relevant, and not only for the managers. Employees are often afraid to be honest and open in a dialogue process, discouraged by their fears (Senge, 2006). The establishment of partnership is a joint task in the organisational framework, but managers have a bigger responsibility also in that respect. They are to create a micro-climate in which the employees *dare believe* in the unfolding partnership.

Another dilemma encountered in the OD and AR dialogue concerns the ***voluntary nature of participation***. Can an employee say ‘no’ to having a dialogue with advisors/managers? Can the process be fully unconstrained? The OD/AR theories offer no explicit answer to the question. In my opinion, this is linked to the already mentioned hierarchy/partnership contradiction. If a partnership created initially by the manager is feasible, then an employee can say ‘no’. Here is an important addendum: saying ‘no’ in your capacity as employee will not undermine the entire dialogue process. At the most, you as individual employee will not take part in it or, if the group of employees says ‘no’ collectively, the dialogue may be “suspended”, but the dialogic relationship will prevail. However, if it is the manager who says no, that will undermine the dialogue, and the dialogic relationship itself will be terminated.

The notion of organisational, hierarchic situatedness complements the findings of the dialogue philosophies concerning situatedness. The philosophers refer to the historical and social situatedness of the parties to the dialogue. In the event of organisational change, it is to be added that the ***parties are situated also organisationally***. The *formal* as well as the *informal hierarchy, power network* puts the participants into certain (power) positions. What can be done about that? What do the dialogue philosophies say? Partnership should be created through the joint effort of managers and employees, but the role/initiative of the managers is more prominent. In the process, situatedness needs to be put on table as a pre-conception, and if it causes any jam or problem, it is to be reflected on. Efforts should be made to make ourselves and each other independent of it in the dialogic relationship. This is the common responsibility and task of the participants.

Another problem area in both organisational development and action research is the so-called ***aspiration at completeness*** in the interaction of the participants. Completeness in the sense of showing yourself completely, unreservedly, without taboos. Can such completeness be expected in the context of organisational change? The dialogue philosophies speak openly of this existential risk and the resulting inevitable tension of the dialogue situation. *How do the individuals react to the aspiration-at-completeness criterion of the genuine dialogue in the context of organisational change?* This is answered by the concept of the learning organisation.

If the connection, dialogue, is established and prevails, the individual participants can be present in this system of relationships completely, fully – but this then creates an atmosphere that is already called the “learning organisation” (Senge, 2006).

Another problem area in both organisational development and action research relates to the *directness of the interaction of the parties*. The principle of directness means two things: 1. there is no intermediary/mediation in the relationship, 2. the connection is clear (unobstructed): there is no taboo, no hidden intent, concealed presupposition or motivation etc. standing between the parties. This is the point where we should ask the question: Who are the subjects of the OD/AR relationships? Who are the parties conducting dialogue in these processes? In the advisor – managers – staff triad, who is having a conversation with whom? Why are the diagnosis, the interviews and feedback to managers needed?

That much can be said anyway that the content of feedback on the diagnosis findings may be the object of dialogue between members of the organisation. And as such, it can be an independent, common creation (not under the unilateral control of any of the parties). Does the role of the advisor end there? It either ends there, or it will focus afterwards on executing development actions to help the members get closer to dialogue, i.e. provide them individual and/or collective development that makes them more competent for a dialogue situation. This may take the form e.g. of communication training (collective development) or coaching (individual development) to enhance the hermeneutics of trust, eliminate any defensive mechanisms and strengthen reflection on tacit assumptions. However, these specific development situations are *no longer dialogic situations*.

The above line of thought gives the following OD definition a new interpretation and depth:

"Organizational development is a long range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly, through a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture with special emphasis on the culture of formal work teams with the assistance of a change agent or catalyst and the use of the theory and technology of applied behaviour science".

(Fench and Bell, 1990; p. 1)

“Organisational development is, essentially, support to human dynamic, behaviour development of the organisations based on the value-driven philosophy of/attitude to the process of organisational changes, an organisational intervention theory and methodology based on clear principles (dogma systems).”

(Bakacsi, 2005, p. 74-75.)

According to the above quotations, organisational development implicitly assumes that organisations are not ready yet for dialogue, for genuine co-action, and this is what gives organisational development its *raison d’être*. This deficiency is the immanent feature of OD. That is, *organisational development is about dialogue and, at the same time, the inability of*

the organisation to have a dialogue. Where the OD speaks of dialogue, it speaks of the lack of the relevant competencies and how to develop them. Where the OD speaks of the humanistic values it represents, it says that these are values to be developed in today's organisations, that is, there is usually some deficit there. The same goes for action research. Why would any action be needed if things were all right? If genuine cooperation based on real dialogue exists in the field under scrutiny (the organisation), no developer-researcher is needed.

In summary, OD/AR consider dialogue a conversational process that has several goals. (1) To let every level of the organisation present itself, if possible, i.e. to let them express how they see the actual characteristics of the organisation and its relationships. (2) To let the members of the organisation taking part in the process understand/reflect somehow, with the assistance of the external consultant, on their own role in/contribution to the status quo. (3) To let, if possible, the whole organisation see the whole picture, i.e. the organisation or what looks like based on the insights of the actors. Although OD stresses that its aim is to develop a common understanding, note that the picture resulting from Points (1) – (3) is not a common, but a communal interpretation. For, reciprocity, the two-way impact mechanism, reaction, response etc. detailed by the dialogue philosophies is missing – so this is no dialogue. **The primary objective of OD/AR is, therefore, to get closer to reality, to the ‘as is’ state, to the truth content of the organisation,** to face it at as many levels of the organisation as possible, but not in the context of a shared process.

Yet another important element of OD/AR is that they represent the humanistic objectives that are the bases of dialogue, but do not consider them evident. Indeed, the very existence of the OD/AR stems from the lack of these basic values that are the boundary conditions of the dialogue. Besides facing reality, the aim of OD/AR is to **create dialogic relationship**. And, as we know from the dialogue philosophies, a dialogic relationship is not a dialogue yet. This is the reason why OD/AR offer the **crudest dialogue model** of all the change management theories.

4.2 The dialogue in organisational learning

There are several organisational learning schools, but the relevant ones from the point of view of change management are those that regard as genuine change what *is accomplished at cognitive as well as behavioural level*. Usually Chris Argyris and Edgar Schein are mentioned (Edmonson and Moingeon, 1998; Senge, 1990, 2006) as the fathers of the organisational learning school in the narrow sense. In this chapter I will adhere to their definition of dialogue, of its criteria and the relationship of the latter to the concepts of the dialogue philosophies. Let me note in advance that interestingly enough Argyris does not mention the dialogue explicitly at all. He speaks of interpersonal interaction, a communication process. It is the authors whose work is based on his (e.g. Bouwen and Fry, Peter Senge) who call this interaction “dialogue”.

4.2.1 Dialogue in the theories of Edgar Schein

Edgar Schein's entire work revolved around the topic of personal change. Whatever he researched during his lifetime originated from this fundamental problem and gave it a partial answer. He constructed his model of personal change on the well-known unfreezing – cognitive

redefinition – refreezing model of Kurt Lewin (Schein, 1993, 1996, 2002, 2006a). However, he had realised already during his early research that personal change was closely related to that of the micro-community of the individual. “Change in attitudes and beliefs can occur only if the individual is physically and psychologically separated from his or her membership and reference groups or if the change program is targeted at the group level.” (Schein, 2006a, p. 46)

It is a central concept of his work that the behaviour of the individual (his decisions, judgements etc.) is fundamentally determined by deep-lying *norms and often tacit, taken-for-granted basic assumptions*. Challenging these or even bringing them to the surface is a very tough process and, again, the influence of the norm system of the community on the system of values and assumptions of the individual is of utmost relevance. “The longer we live in a given culture, and the older the culture is, the more it will influence our perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.” (Schein, 1981, p. 380)

The system of values and norms exists also at community level, when individuals making up a community for some time develop their system of norms and assumptions. This is the **culture** of the given community (e.g. organisation) (Schein, 1981, 1985, 1993). There are three factors at play in the development of culture, i.e. the system of norms and assumption: (1) the values of the individuals playing a lead part in the establishment of the community, their set of beliefs, assumption, norms; (2) the past experiences of the community, the conclusions drawn from them (learning experiences); (3) new values, norms and assumptions brought in by new members (Schein, 1992).

What are the implications of the above for organisational learning? Firstly, (1) culture itself is always the product of a learning process. Secondly, (2) culture keeps changing, it is not constant, and its alteration is a most painful learning process (Schein, 1981, 1999). And the third, most important statement is that (3) there is no individual learning without community learning. As a matter of fact, **learning is primarily a community action**. Fourthly and most importantly for my research (4) this community action is a *self-reflective, self-understanding process*. Together, with the assistance of an external expert, (5) we bring to the surface our hidden assumptions. Both this bringing-to-the-surface and the alteration of the assumptions is a *conversational process*. There are three options for inducing change in the conversational process: via the role model, by using the trial-and-error learning method or by insight. (Schein, 1996, 2002). **Schein calls this self-understanding, self-reflective, communal conversational process “dialogue”** (Schein, 1993, 2003).

Schein lists other arguments in favour of dialogue in addition to its being a communal self-reflective process and individual learning is impossible without community learning due to the individual’s existence in (determination by) the community. “The essence of this process was the management of the two kinds of anxiety (...): *survival anxiety* (if I accept the disconfirming data about myself or my situation, I may lose power, identity, or group membership, so I have to change or learn) and *learning anxiety* (learning something new may not be possible for me, I may not have the skill or motivation, or learning something new make me lose power, identity, or group membership).” (Schein, 2006a, p. 48, italics in the original). “The basic principle is that learning only happens when survival anxiety is greater than learning anxiety.” (Schein,

2002, p. 105) Survival anxiety can be enhanced by giving the individual the most precise and the highest amount of information on his situation and the reasons why change is a must. Most change management models define this model as the "Why story". You need the entire story that puts into context the established situation and sheds light on it.

Learning anxiety can be reduced, on the other hand, by creating a medium for the stakeholders where they feel psychologically safe. "The key to effective change management, then, becomes the ability to balance the amount of threat produced by disconfirming data with enough psychological safety to allow the change target to accept the information, feel the survival anxiety and become motivated to change" (Schein, 1996, p. 61). Schein says that although the focus of dialogue is on self-reflection, *psychological safety needed for the change is created in the process* (Schein, 1993), and this is of utmost psychological significance.

Thus Schein defines the dialogue as follows:

- It is a basic **process** for building *common understanding* in that it allows one to see hidden meanings of words
- **focusing** on:
 - getting in touch with *underlying assumptions* (especially our own assumptions)
 - *thinking process*
 - how our perceptions and cognitions are performed by our *past experiences*
- it is a **technology** that makes it possible for people to discover that *they use language differently*, that they operate from *different mental models*, and that the categories we employ are ultimately learned *social constructions of reality* and thus *arbitrary*
- a **way** of helping groups reach *higher levels of consciousness*.

That is, the dialogue facilitates rather than guarantees change. It is a **method and a philosophy** at the same time (Schein, 1993); it creates a more efficient, more deliberately operating group (community), where problem-solving, communication and conflict resolution will simply be better (more effective, more efficient). During dialogue, under the impact of common understanding and interpretation, a shared language, a shared mental model evolves in the group. This is what contributes to the establishment of psychological safety.

The concept that common understanding is the essence of dialogue is clearly reminiscent of the findings of the dialogue philosophies. Schein does not hush up the **excessive time demand** of dialogue, but that circumstance matches the findings of the dialogue philosophies reviewed above.

He highlights the *importance of active listening*, but whereas during active listening the focus is on the other party, "dialogue focuses on getting in touch with underlying assumptions, especially our own assumptions. (...) I discovered that I spent a lot more time in self-analysis, attempting to understand what my own assumptions were, and was relatively less focused on actively listening to others." (Schein, 2003, p. 30) I sense a shift of emphasis in this statement considering the dialogue philosophies and the dialogue concept of Schein. According to the dialogue philosophies, the essence is the interrelationship of the participants and their common understanding unfolding in the interaction. According to **Schein, on the other hand, dialogue is an inner cognitive process for which another party is needed. Ultimately, a common**

understanding of some kind is achieved, but the focus is on the individual, the I, and not on the I/Thou relation. The Thou, the other party does not turn into an It in the dialogue concept of Schein, but instead of the I/Thou relation, the focal point is occupied by the I.

Cultural determination plays a key role in his model. Our culturally coded rules of behaviour and interpretation exert a fundamental influence on our perception, interpretation and thus also on our behaviour (Schein, 1993, 1996, 2003, 2006ab). In the work of Argyris, these cultural codes are present as shared assumptions or shared mental models (for a comparison, see this section's part on Argyris below). Schein emphasises in this regard that every micro-community has its own, idiosyncratic cultural codes. The micro-community, on the other hand, does not necessarily equal the organisation that is the individual's workplace. On the contrary: the larger the organisation, the stronger the intra-organisational so-called sub-cultures that may have their own very strong mental models. The sub-cultures satisfy several psychological needs of the individual: the need for belonging, for membership concurrent with a status and identity of some sort (Schein, 1993, 2003).

To express their own identity, the subcultures develop also a language of their own. This is what expresses the above psychological boundaries most clearly: those who understand the language, who speak the same language, belong to us. Similarly to the functional and geographic subcultures in an organisation, there are also jargons or languages typical of these sub-cultures, and these sub-cultures alone. Schein stresses that the sharpest and also the most difficult to identify of all the fault lines (geographic/physical location, segmentation by function) is hierarchic segmentation, the system of sub-cultures by hierarchy, from the board sub-culture through that of the executives down to the bottom of the hierarchy. "Hierarchy-based subcultures not only are harder to detect but their affect is more devastating." (Schein, 2003, p. 36) He mentions by way of example that CEOs regularly complain to their advisors that however hard they try to achieve envisaged changes, they fail. Because the employees do not understand what they speak about in the first place or mess things up, because as it turns out they have misunderstood what management wanted. In Schein's opinion this is not a question of the employees' mental skills being inferior to those of management; it is due to the fact that despite their common native tongue, they do not speak the same language. In a sense it is more fortunate if their native tongues are different, since "using the same language (...) creates a greater risk that people will overlook the actual differences in categories of thought." (Schein, 2003, p. 36)

In a way, Schein's determination by subcultures means also that ***it is the organisational, hierarchical, historical and geographical determination of individuals that is reflected in linguistic usage.*** Language displays the situatedness of the participants.

Although in Schein's opinion language helps us express ourselves and be understood by others, it is also a barrier and a factor of determination. The parties to dialogue "are using words differently or have different mental models without realizing it. (...) We will need technologies and mechanism that make it possible for people to discover that they use language differently, that these operate from different mental models and that the categories we employ are ultimately

learned social constructions of reality and thus arbitrary. Dialogue is one such technology.” (Schein, 2003, p. 29)

Of all the change management theories, *Schein’s dialogue model is the only one that speaks of language being such a determining and at the same time separating factor*. Since he considers language a cultural element, it is also *dynamic and continually changing*.

According to Schein, the aim of dialogue is to **develop a shared language that is not controlled by anyone**: this is what provides for psychological safety and creates at least the possibility of significant connections and change. This is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition. Contrary to the conclusion of the dialogue philosophies that we must not insist on creating a common, independent language, a no-man’s-land, Schein believes in its feasibility and considers it key to common action.

Schein’s dialogue model includes some further elements, explained in less detail:

- *equality* of the participants (e.g. he proposes that they should always arrange themselves in a circle in the dialogue situation)
- *no group headcount limit*: even more than a hundred people can have a dialogue. This is contrary to Bohm’s maximum headcount of 30. Schein agrees that the time demand increases with the growth of group size and the focal point will tend to shift increasingly to the inner processes of the individuals.

Schein notes that the *focus of self-reflection is on the past* (our assumptions, determinative experiences dating from the past), whereas in *genuine dialogue it shifts to the present*, to what is happening here and now. This seemingly contradicts what I mentioned above, namely that in his opinion the primary focus is on ourselves, our own assumptions and preconceptions. As a matter of fact, Schein says that **culturally we are so unprepared for dialogue that first of all we have to discover the hindrances and, therefore, the first steps of dialogue should be directed primarily at ourselves**. “We have to learn to listen to ourselves before we can really understand others.” (Schein, 2003, p. 33) Once we have learned to recognise our unconscious mechanisms that come alive, we will be able to distance ourselves from them and put them in brackets, so to say. We’ll be able to be present with our entire personality, while at the same time suspending ourselves. (Schein, 1993, 2003) This idea brings Schein much closer to the concept of the dialogue philosophies.

What I find most fascinating in the work of Schein, however, is that **he is the only change management theorist dealing with dialogue who can adopt a critical stance to his theory**. He alone asks directly and specifically to what extent participation in e.g. dialogue can be voluntary in an organisational framework. On the one hand, obviously, *saying no is often concurrent with leaving the organisation*. Not necessarily because the employee saying “no” will be punished/sacked, but because the organisation “passes you by” if you cannot keep pace with it and cannot be an employee who is fully present there. Or, the process of learning/change would imply the alteration of internal values that are crucial to your identity and giving them up would be too much of a sacrifice. In the context of staying at the workplace or quitting it,

Schein calls these basic, existential values “career anchors”³⁴ (Schein, 1977, 1978, 1985, 1990, 2006c). The deeper the layers (assumptions, values) affected by the change, the more intensive the learning anxiety, and the bigger the **pain** concurrent with the change (Schein, 1999). In this situation, the employee may find it easier to exit the painful situation, i.e. leave the organisation. Today, however, it is more and more *typical that, under the given labour market conditions*, (Schein, 2002), *the employee cannot afford to quit*. That is, ***the statement that the employee can decide freely whether to take part in a change process and in dialogue leading to it is hypocritical in the best case, or rather phony.***

Schein compares what actually happens to the brainwashing programs and to coercive persuasion at times of war (Schein, 1961, 1999, 2002, 2006ab). “If you can coerce the person to stay in the setting, you can eventually get him or her to open him- or herself to considering alternative points of view toward an issue. In other words, if you can hold a person captive, you can sooner or later motivate him or her to change.” (Schein, 2006a, p. 43) In this sense, given the labour market and economic (capitalist) conditions, an employee is the vulnerable captive of his employer. And his choice is not based on real freedom.

“We cannot escape the moral choice that then have to be made. (...) For most members of the organization the choice between holding on to their prior beliefs and learning new beliefs, values, concepts, and behaviours is often not a choice at all. Not to learn means loss of job or career advancement. Learning therefore is a coercive persuasion process whether we admit it or not.”
(Schein, 1999, p. 166)

³⁴ “...elements were forged through successive experiences into a self-image that began to constrain career choices, set career directions, and specify what kind of organization or work setting was preferred. Once such a self-image began to jell, it operated like an anchor, keeping each alumnus in his or her safe harbor.” (Schein, 2006a, p. 47)

ELEMENTS OF THE DIALOGUE		CRITERIA OF THE DIALOGUE-PHILOSOPHIES
The participant(s)		Biased (preconceptions, assumptions, prejudices, expectations, motives) Free (willingness of suspending the formers) Voluntary (no pressure) Situated: socially and historically Claim to truth Autonomy (without self-defence) Authentic (the object of dialogue has meaning) Open (to the other participant or to the dialogue) Driven by trust (1. the other party may be right; 2. try to make the other's argument even stronger/clearer; 3. show themselves straight out) Truthfulness or sincerity (long time!) Intelligibility (linguistic and communicative competencies)
The object		Independent (not under anyone's control) Not specified in advance Unfolds in the process, between the participants Not constant in space or time Situated (takes place in a given situation, here and now)
The medium		Written or spoken language, culture Dynamic (continuously changing) Independent (not under anyone's control) Power problem (whose language is used) Purely mediatory role in exceptional cases There is no common, neutral language
RELATIONSHIP	Between the participants	Symmetry condition (active/passive or speaker/listener roles are sequential) Reaction = relevant response Power asymmetry (power position and vulnerability)
	Between the participant(s) and the object	Subjective, not neutral Dynamic
	Between the participant(s) and the medium	Dynamic Local dynamics Biased (compared to the other participant)
INTERACTION	Between the participants	I/Thou relation Partnership Mutual, direct Reciprocal (all participants are affecting and affected) Direct (1. cannot be established through an intermediary; 2. purity: nothing intervene between I and Thou) Completeness: no taboos Risky Tension
	Between the participant(s) and the object	Continuous reflection
	Between the participant(s) and the medium	Reciprocal (affecting and affected) Mutually determined

9. Table. The dialogue concept of Schein as compared to those of the dialogue philosophies. Author's compilation.

There are two points I would like to stress once more. Firstly, of all the change management theorists, Schein alone gives priority treatment to the language (the medium of interaction and

communication). Secondly, note his critical self-reflection that challenges the free choice, voluntary decision of the employee when it comes to participation in change, learning and dialogue.

4.2.2 Dialogue in the theories of Chris Argyris

Chris Argyris does not speak of dialogue specifically. He speaks of *individual and collective self-understanding*, of reciprocal assistance to understand how we function in reality and what we should alter in order to be driven by *cooperation instead of defence mechanisms*. This individual and collective self-reflection process is labelled “dialogue” by those who sum up the works of Argyris and use that as their foundation, e.g. Bouwen and Fry or Peter M. Senge.

Argyris proposes two models: a descriptive one, showing how people operate typically (within or without an organisation; Model I), and a normative one on how they should operate (Model II, see Table 1). The latter covers the self-reflective process and also double-loop learning. Model II is more than double-loop learning since it defines several further conditions. The two models together represent the dialogue model of Argyris.

Argyris starts out from the premise that information of adequate quality and quantity is needed for correct, informed, organisational level decision-making. The imperfect operation, imperfect problem-solving of the organisations is due to the fact that the stakeholders do not share information of sufficient and adequate quantity and quality among themselves. The reason for that is partly tacit: we are not even aware of the functioning mechanism (Model I) that prevents us from the adequate transmission of adequate information. The aim is to make both the information and the ideas and their carriers more clearly visible, *to let them manifest themselves as clearly as possible*. We should assist each other to promote this manifestation, and dialogue is our means for that. In the following, I will show which dialogue philosophy findings appear in the dialogue criteria defined by Argyris.

The main point in the work of Argyris is what the dialogue philosophies call the *autonomy* of the participants. This is the *principle of no self-defence* and as Argyris emphasises, we are not even aware of the presence of this self-defence mechanism. Self-defence appears also in the work of Schein as *fear of loss of face* (Schein, 1993). He says that face “is the social value that persons attribute to themselves as they enter any interpersonal situation. (...) We always present ourselves as something (...) And, in so doing, we always claim a certain amount of value or status for ourselves relative to the others in the situation. Others then must make an immediate choice: to grant us what we have claimed, or to either withhold confirmation or actually challenge us.” (Schein, 1993, p. 28). As a matter of fact, we are raised from early age to avoid hurting others, to be parties to the mutual face-saving effort for the sake of peaceful coexistence. Schein underlines that what Argyris identifies as defence routine is actually *cultural coding, a cultural belief*. (Schein, 1993) An even more important underlying thought, compared to the dialogue philosophies, is that if you identify yourself with your face or anything that is “something” – a name, a position, a title, conduct, belief etc. – then you actually *objectify yourself*. If so, in the I/Thou relation, the other will act as audience that applauds and confirms (cf. dramaturgical action) and, moreover, the I will also cease to exist and become It.

All the authors (Schein, Senge, Bouwen and Fry) rely on the work of Argyris to understand the functioning mechanism of the defence routine. For, Argyris describes in *outstanding detail* how this unconscious mechanism functions in practice – much more *specifically than the dialogue philosophies*. He opposes **productive reasoning**, i.e. when you are open to alter your own assumptions even if they are hidden to yourself or incoherent or false to **defensive reasoning**. A distance is created, and the I becomes more than the Face. Other criteria of the dialogue philosophies are also present there: the **truth claim** (show the truth); **openness** to the other, to the possibility that he may be right and openness to change. The paradox that although my underlying assumptions are my immanent parts we are not one and the same recurs here. We jointly inspect these concepts, not the person who expressed them, who is their vehicle. The focus is on the perspective, the opinion, the argument of the other, not his person. The object of dialogue is an assumption, idea, anything carried (brought in) by a party, and not the parties themselves who are present in the interaction in their **completeness**. There is no taboo, no concealing of emotions and opinions.

However, there is a very important difference in emphasis here between Argyris and the dialogue philosophies. In the opinion of Argyris, critique, self-revelation, openness to change are there to ensure that the individual and the community have the highest possible quality of knowledge to be able to take a better decision or adopt a more adequate conduct. His **argumentation is detached and it is based on the efficiency principle. He gives less emphasis to the connection of the persons involved**. This is not important for him. The dialogue philosophies, on the other hand, expressly emphasise the personal, I/Thou relation. I realised this shift (or rather lack) of emphasis in the theory of Argyris when I studied the work of Peter Senge. Senge relies very heavily on the theory of Argyris, but he goes beyond that. In the last chapters of his basic work (Senge, 2006) he already speaks of an explicit love relation and of friendship.

The two premises at the basis of the theory of Argyris are present also in the dialogue philosophies: (1) we are determined by our **assumptions**, preliminary, yet often hidden **preliminary concepts, prejudices**; (2) the individual can decide to become independent and **free of those**. Another important similarity is that Argyris also speaks of a **reciprocal, back-and-forth action** between the participants who influence each other and whose shared self-reflection process alters them (**effect principle**).

As for the relationship **between the participants and the object of dialogue**, in the opinion of Argyris there is a **subjective relationship** between the two: the individual is committed to the outcome of the process. The output of the self-reflection process is typically a common decision to change certain (shared) underlying principles and norms governing (organisational) behaviour. Argyris also emphasises that neither the process, nor its object **is under the unilateral control of either party**. He does not discuss language, the medium of dialogue.

The **completeness requirement** of dialogue – i.e. no taboos, no concealment; make conflicts, disagreements, opinions, assessments open – also appears in his theory. Moreover, he emphasises that self-reflection **is a lengthy process full of conflicts and risks** and the parties entering it **become more vulnerable, exposed** and can have no guarantee that another participant

would not abuse the situation. This is the point where several researchers call the attention to the dilemma whether **such openness and vulnerability, i.e. dialogue, is feasible at all in the context of an organisational-level process of self-reflection (learning)** (Easterby-Smith and Araujo, 1993, 1999; Smith, 2001). Can you afford to be as naive as that on the stage of organisational politics? The authors offer no solution, only stress that “the aim should be to incorporate politics into organizational learning rather than to eradicate it” (Easterby-Smith and Araujo, 1999, p. 13).

ELEMENTS OF THE DIALOGUE		CRITERIA OF THE DIALOGUE-PHILOSOPHIES
The participant(s)		Biased (preconceptions, assumptions, prejudices, expectations, motives) Free (willingness of suspending the formers) Voluntary (no pressure) Situated: socially and historically Claim to truth Autonomy (without self-defence) Authentic (the object of dialogue has meaning) Open (to the other participant or to the dialogue) Driven by trust (1. the other party may be right; 2. try to make the other's argument even stronger/clearer; 3. show themselves straight out) Truthfulness or sincerity (long time!) Intelligibility (linguistic and communicative competencies)
The object		Independent (not under anyone's control) Not specified in advance Unfolds in the process, between the participants Not constant in space or time Situated (takes place in a given situation, here and now)
The medium		Written or spoken language, culture Dynamic (continuously changing) Independent (not under anyone's control) Power problem (whose language is used) Purely mediatory role in exceptional cases There is no common, neutral language
RELATIONSHIP	Between the participants	Symmetry condition (active/passive or speaker/listener roles are sequential) Reaction = relevant response Power asymmetry (power position and vulnerability)
	Between the participant(s) and the object	Subjective, not neutral Dynamic
	Between the participant(s) and the medium	Dynamic Local dynamics Biased (compared to the other participant)
INTERACTION	Between the participants	I/Thou relation Partnership Mutual, direct Reciprocal (all participants are affecting and affected) Direct (1. cannot be established through an intermediary; 2. purity: nothing intervene between I and Thou) Completeness: no taboos Risky Tension
	Between the participant(s) and the object	Continuous reflection
	Between the participant(s) and the medium	Reciprocal (affecting and affected) Mutually determined

10. Table. Argyris's theory (dialogue model) in the light of the dialogue philosophies. Author's compilation.

Neither do the dialogue philosophies solve the dilemma; they only expound it. **The hermeneutics of trust will always be exposed to the hermeneutics of suspicion:** „...it is possible that someone practicing (...) the art of questioning and of seeking truth comes off worse in the argument in the eyes of those listening to it.” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 360) The contradictory nature of the trust/suspicion relation gives rise to further dilemmas, especially if you consider the fact that organisations are political scenes.

“Trust in itself is suitable for giving rise to suspicion. (...) Strangely enough, no such doubts arise in connection with ill-will. Ill-will is apparently always sincere, whereas trust *may be* sincere. (Bauer, 2013, p. 64, italics in the original). The reason for that lies, according to Bauer, in experience and the social norms. According to the social norms, ill-will should be concealed, and when it takes an open form it is certainly honest. Moreover, trust, “the good, trust is not accessible to the senses” (Bauer, 2013, p. 69), contrary to e.g. beauty that is inseparable from the manifestation of beauty to the senses.

It follows from the above that **trust will always raise suspicion in organisational politics.** Trust needs to be demonstrated again and again, continuously, and vice versa: trust has to be fought for again and again, continuously. This is somewhat contrary to the **credibility claim of Habermas**. Habermas states that this cannot be discussed rationally during dialogue, but will only be proved with time, by consistent behaviour – but this, exactly, is the crucial point: there is no such thing in organisational politics as having *sufficient time* to demonstrate credibility. This leads to **never-ending compulsive demonstration efforts**.

The other dialogue-related dilemma escalated by organisational political games is the following. The (historical, social and, as shown above, organisational) situatedness of the parties to dialogue is a key premise. The dialogue philosophies do not contradict that, they only emphasise that it needs to be brought to light, made the object of reflection during the process. But **what if, in an organisation, the past grievances are so big, so deep, that organisational situatedness generates suspicion on such scale as makes dialogue impossible?** What do the dialogue philosophies say about that? Most importantly, they do have an answer. Whether you as organisational researchers will be reassured by it is a matter of individual choice. “**The hermeneutics of trust (...) is itself final.** Curing the torn wounds is a noble objective but – however painful to accept – this intention cannot accomplish itself at its discretion, in a sovereign manner. Some wounds can be cured, others cannot – even if the latter may heal with time. If so, the only option is to silently withdraw from understanding.” (Fehér M., 2013, p. 61)

This made me hesitate again. *So, does it make any sense to speak of dialogue in an organisational context?* I can only quote Buber once more: “There is no going backwards, but in the very moment of deepest need a hitherto undreamt-of movement forwards and outwards.” (Buber, 1937, p. 50).

As I wrote in the conclusion of the chapter on the dialogue philosophies: whether you believe in the dialogue despite the difficulties and its idealistic preconditions **depends largely on your fundamental approach to the world and to people.** If you believe (hope, trust, aspire to believe) that man is good and mankind is capable of developing a positive future, then you will

believe (hope, trust, aspire to believe) also in dialogue. **This is your decision, your choice; there are no rational arguments deciding in favour of one position or the other.**

4.2.3 Bouwen and Fry: dialogue as interaction strategy

Bouwen and Fry speak of four strategies of organisational change. The four strategies depend on the way the old and the new logic meet. In the first three, the change (new) strategy has unilateral control over the old (dominant) logic. Substantive interaction occurs only in the fourth model. The *back-and-forth effect* identified by the dialogue philosophies is discernible between the two logics, *the authors apply the term “dialogue” to interaction in this case alone*, on the ground of this *reciprocal movement*.

In their words, the dialogue is “...a framework for understanding (...), a way to explore, mediate and cope with what we see as the core of an innovation situation: the tensions between dominant and new organizational logics.” (Bouwen and Fry, 1991, p. 38) The dialogue is thus a framework for *common, collective understanding*.

The success of dialogue depends on how shared the result is; to what extent the parties consider it their own on the one hand and a communal product on the other. The authors emphasise that, in addition to cognitive agreement, *emotional commitment* must also be present. I do not only agree with the result, but I/we have actually created something together with the others. Instead of some compromise, we have reached genuine agreement. This clearly reflects the position of the dialogue philosophies on agreement being the basis of concerted action and meaning more than the mere understanding of the words of the other or mere agreement with his position – because *personal part-taking*, personal presence is involved. From the perspective of the dialogue philosophies this also means that the *participant is not indifferent (neutral) to the outcome: the object of the dialogue is important to him*; this is the reason why he takes part in the process in the first place.

Several criteria are to be met to go down the road to common understanding. One concerns information, i.e. data, and at this point the model takes over the criteria set by Argyris. Bouwen and Fry expressly state that the confrontational –learning model corresponds to Argyris’ Model II. That is, valid data, valid information needs to be obtained and tested. To do that,

- every participant should share information in his possession *openly, without distortion and games* with the others; the same terms are listed by the dialogue philosophies, who add that trust is also needed to enter the game with an open mind-set. Trust builds up among the participants with time, parallel with the build-up of their individual credibility.
- the shared pieces of information should be specific enough, illustrated, comprehensible and suitable for testing (that is, be *open to any reaction from anyone*); this criterion appears in the intelligibility claim applicable to the participants, in the symmetry condition, the claim of truthfulness and openness.
- the parties should *keep asking each other* (many pieces of information may be tacit); as Sárvári puts it, the dialogue is the art of asking questions (Sárvári, 1993, p. 39).

- ***no taboos:*** the process must be characterised by openness of expression: ***let every party express his ideas, concerns and questions.*** These conditions are all present in the dialogue philosophies.

It follows from the continuous flow/testing of information that the ***objective of the process will also unfold as things evolve:*** it will be in motion, developing, unfolding, evolving in the space of dialogue. Alternatives will emerge and be tested and experimented with. This is why the possibility of committing errors or rather accepting it so important. This is fully in line with the boundary conditions of the object of dialogue: it cannot be fixed in advance, it will evolve between the parties, it will not be constant in space or time.

The process of course has certain negative aspects: this type of common action is highly ***demanding (exhausting)*** and full of ***tension and confrontation***. According to the co-authors, confrontation occurs mainly between the participants, and in connection with disclosing and accessing information on both sides. They, too, stress the relevance of the ***voluntary*** nature of participation: this has to be the individual, ***personal, decision*** of all the parties. The voluntariness (lack of constraints) is important in the dialogue philosophies. Confrontation and tension also appear in all of them.

For the outcome to be considered a collective product by all parties, the process is to be accompanied by reflection. In the context of the latter, the parties recurrently examine, jointly, how each of them feels in the process, to what extent they feel the community in the process, and their being a part of it etc. In the case described by the co-authors, the participants actually appointed someone to ensure that.

ELEMENTS OF THE DIALOGUE		CRITERIA OF THE DIALOGUE-PHILOSOPHIES
The participant(s)		Biased (preconceptions, assumptions, prejudices, expectations, motives) Free (willingness of suspending the formers) Voluntary (no pressure) Situated: socially and historically Claim to truth Autonomy (without self-defence) Authentic (the object of dialogue has meaning) Open (to the other participant or to the dialogue) Driven by trust (1. the other party may be right; 2. try to make the other's argument even stronger/clearer; 3. show themselves straight out) Truthfulness or sincerity (long time!) Intelligibility (linguistic and communicative competencies)
The object		Independent (not under anyone's control) Not specified in advance Unfolds in the process, between the participants Not constant in space or time Situated (takes place in a given situation, here and now)
The medium		Written or spoken language, culture Dynamic (continuously changing) Independent (not under anyone's control) Power problem (whose language is used) Purely mediatory role in exceptional cases There is no common, neutral language
RELATIONSHIP	Between the participants	Symmetry condition (active/passive or speaker/listener roles are sequential) Reaction = relevant response Power asymmetry (power position and vulnerability)
	Between the participant(s) and the object	Subjective, not neutral Dynamic
	Between the participant(s) and the medium	Dynamic Local dynamics Biased (compared to the other participant)
INTERACTION	Between the participants	I/Thou relation Partnership Mutual, direct Reciprocal (all participants are affecting and affected) Direct (1. cannot be established through an intermediary; 2. purity: nothing intervene between I and Thou) Completeness: no taboos Risky Tension
	Between the participant(s) and the object	Continuous reflection
	Between the participant(s) and the medium	Reciprocal (affecting and affected) Mutually determined

11. Table. Bouwen and Fry's confrontational/learning strategy model (dialogue model) in the light of the dialogue philosophies. Author's compilation.

In summary, the figure above shows those elements of the dialogue philosophies that are explicitly present also in the Bouwen-Fry dialogue model (confrontational/learning strategy). The figure implicitly indicates also what is ignored by the change model. The most important missing item is the preliminary bias of the participants, their organisational (social) situatedness, the issue of credibility, the relation of the parties to the object (bias) and the importance of the continuous reflection on the same. The co-authors implicitly speak of the

dismounting of self-defence, since their model is constructed with reference to Argyris. They do not go into the details of partnership. They do not speak of the effect of participation overall and of self-revelation on the individual (effect principle). The medium (language) as a problem is totally absent from the model.

4.3 Dialogue in the Learning Organisation

The concept of the learning organisation (LO) is the most complex change theory. Although the dialogue is one of the five principles, the principles themselves are so closely intertwined that they all offer certain insights into the dialogue. The main challenge for me was to arrive at a coherent and structured interpretation of dialogue as understood by the LO concept.

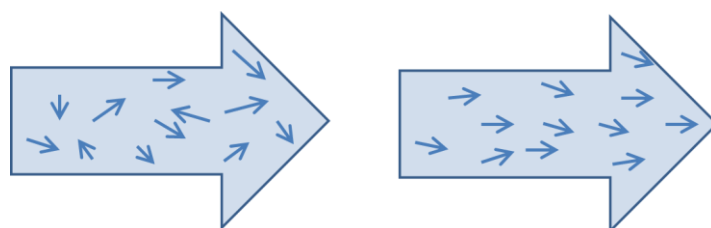
Senge constructs his dialogue theory mainly on the work of David Bohm and especially their conversations and philosophising. It is therefore not surprising that Senge's dialogue concept is the most complex of all, and the most akin to those of the dialogue philosophies in the broader sense.

According to Senge, dialogue is *interaction* where “a group access a larger pool of common meaning, which cannot be accessed individually.” (Senge, 2006, p. 223) “In dialogue individuals gain insights that simply could not be achieved individually. A new kind of mind begins to come into being which is based on the development of a common meaning.” (Senge, 2006, p. 224)

That is, he explicitly states that **dialogue is a process generating common understanding and meaning**. He explains that interaction does not only take place between individuals, but also “between our thinking and internal models” (Senge, 2006, p. 224). This position is close to Buber's idea that *the dialogue is interpreted not only among individuals*.

During dialogue, we reflect at individual, and also at community level on the assumption and mental models that determine our thinking. Since most of our assumptions are culturally coded, we speak of cultural self-understanding and of deliberate intervention and change at cultural level. This is strongly reminiscent of the ideas of Schein.

That is, for Senge, the **dialogue is, firstly, (1) an individual and social self-reflective, self-understanding learning process and, secondly, (2) an “inquiry into the future we truly seek to create”** (Senge, 2006, p. 212). During dialogue, some sort of synchronisation, alignment, channelling takes place among the participants. Senge illustrates the process by comparing it to the practice of those who do team sports or play in musical ensembles.



9. Figure. Alignment in the dialogue. Source: Senge, 2006, p. 217-218

It can be observed that every jazz musician in an ensemble has his part, role and function, but the “product” is more than the sum total, the consonance of the parts. The harmony that is created results in playing with music, in improvisations bringing out (creating) a miraculously new version of the piece. A *unique* work of art, *collectively created there and then* merges. “When a group of people function as a whole (...), plays as one” (Senge, 2006, p. 218). The emphasis is not so much on alignment, but rather on **a new level of joint action** that results in something new, something creative that **points beyond functionality and carries an aesthetic value**. The emphasis on communal creative power and its unique nature and on the “there-and-then” quality is typical of every dialogue philosophy. Let us underline, following in the steps of Habermas, that a certain level of alignment is typical of every type of action (teleological/strategic, normative, dramaturgical), but only in communicative action are the other parties interpreted as co-actors, as real partners. One actor of the interaction presupposes the other – he does not exist without the other. And *what is produced is also highly situative, created in dialogue, and it does not exist independently of it* (cf. the conditions applicable to the object of dialogue).

Moreover, this alignment *does not mean that the individual should sacrifice his individual interests*. The individual interest becomes an extension, a part of the common interest. “There is a commonality of purpose, shared vision and understanding of how to complement one another’s efforts” (Senge, 2006, p. 217). The dialogue philosophies do not illustrate the exact meaning of co-action as precisely as that.

Senge underlines that this requires two things on behalf of the participants: extreme openness and enormous tolerance. Diversity first leads to chaos, and alignment takes time. *Tolerating chaos is a major challenge*, extremely frustrating for managers and leaders trained to be in control. Frustration as an inevitable concomitant of dialogue is present also in the dialogue philosophies.

Openness is a complex term in the work of Senge. He distinguishes *reflective openness and participative/expressive openness* – the relationship of the two is shown in the figure below.

PARTICIPATIVE/EXPRESSIVE OPENNESS	REFLECTIVE OPENNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaking openly about one’s view • sharing our views for letting the others know what I think • talk at one other • one-sided: focus on expressing ourselves • examples: focus groups, organizational surveys • these forms of expressing fails to generate the commitment and shared understandings • lack of taking any responsibility for problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ speaking openly about one’s view ▪ sharing our views for making us more aware of the biases and limitations in our own thinking contribute to problems ▪ listen to one another ▪ two-sided: focus on understanding each other ▪ important: feedbacks, testing the views ▪ vulnerability!

12. Table. Participative and reflective openness. Source: Author’s table based on Argyris, 1994 and Senge, 2006

The difference between the two is attributable to what Habermas defines as action types. Participative openness is basically dramaturgical action where the other party is the viewer, the audience, the unilateral interpreter and receiver of what I share. The aim is that he should

understand me. **Reflective openness**, on the contrary, **cannot exist without the other**; it cannot be interpreted without a listener/receiver. We explore together what I speak about, we do the interpreting, the understanding together: **this interaction is bilateral**. This is the essence of communicative action. Let me recall briefly the dilemma of organisational development. The weakness of the diagnosis deemed so important by OD is revealed here. During the diagnosis, the employees tell the external consultant how they see the organisation. This is one-sided sharing, one-sided revelation: a dramaturgical action. Action research goes one step further by trying to interpret the shared content together. The diagnosis-exploring section of action research is that much closer to the real dialogue.

The underlying communicative vs. dramaturgical action opposition is present also when Senge compares dialogue and discussion. In *discussion*, different viewpoints collide; it is important to defend your own position, and the process leads to choosing/deciding in favour of one of the alternative views. In *dialogue*, on the other hand, the different viewpoints are shared for the sake of arriving at something new, something that points beyond the viewpoints being shared. Competition vs. **sharing/participation**, decision-making vs. **creation**. The difference between discussion and dialogue and its relevance is present also in the works of Schein (Schein, 1993; 2003), but with less emphasis than in those of Senge.

Note that, to achieve sharing/participation/creation, you must be able to become independent – or, as the dialogue philosophies say – **free yourself from your own views and opinions**. You need to be open to your underlying assumptions and their collective revision, and to their alteration. To do that, you **need to deconstruct your defence mechanisms** detailed in the works of Argyris discussed above. Senge says more than Argyris: besides speaking of individual assumptions and defence mechanisms, he stresses that the same exist also at community level. As a matter of fact, the message of Argyris is supplemented by Schein: **culture is the communal programming** that determines what you as community (organisation) do and how you do it. This determination needs to be **subjected to revision**. That is, the finding of the dialogue philosophies that the parties enter the dialogic relationship with their preconceptions, **and** in a historically, socially, i.e. communally determined state is also explicitly present here.

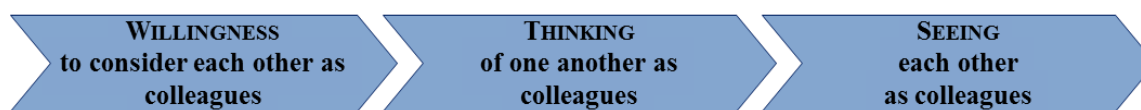
In addition to the suspension and revision of one's preliminary concepts, Senge sets two more conditions for dialogue: the participation of a facilitator (at least in the beginning of the process) and seeing each other as colleagues.

By **facilitator** Senge means a process facilitator who is somewhat more than a process consultant as interpreted by Schein (Schein, 1987). The process consultant is to keep up collective participation in the process, ensure that the participants feel the process and its outcome their own, and sustain the process. His tools are specifying/exploratory questioning, development-oriented questioning, mirroring, feedback, confrontation. He does not take over any responsibility for the process of understanding/interpretation from of the participants (as opposed e.g. to a medical person or an external consultant). The dialogue facilitator is more than that in the sense that he explicitly undertakes to influence the quality of the dialogic process through his knowledge and participation. However, the way he influences the process is a

demonstration of dialogue itself. There is a **power asymmetry**. But, as we know from the dialogue philosophies, this is a natural, existing, immanent property of dialogue. Instead of eliminating it, one should become aware of it and reflect on it. Moreover, the role of the facilitator decreases with time as the learning group progresses and acquires more routine in the dialogue (Senge, 1990, 2006). The solution to power asymmetry is the underlying attitude, the way the participants relate to each other and to the process. As stated by the dialogue philosophies: *power asymmetry can only be resolved by the relationship of the participants*. If you turn to the other openly, with genuine attention, because your aim is not to acquire control or power over him, but to cooperate with him in order to *reveal the truth*, you will not abuse the power advantage you may have.

The facilitator's function is thus to make the participants reflect on the degree to which they consider the process and the unfolding understanding their own. This implicitly comprises the requirement set by the dialogue philosophies for the interaction of the subject(s) and the object of dialogue. Namely, that the *participants must continuously reflect on the object of dialogue, their relation to that object*. And *that relation cannot be neutral*.

Trivial as Senge's precondition of seeing each other as **colleagues** may seem, this is quite a complex issue. It is not obvious, not clear. According to Senge, in order to relate to each other as colleagues, you need determination and continuous self-training.



10. Figure. Seeing each other as colleagues in dialogue. Source: Author's figure based on Senge, 2006, p.227-229.

The first step is to decide whether you really want this type of cooperation, this level of partnership. You have to take care to think of each other as colleagues, as partners of equal standing. This will lead to real partnership and equality. Senge does not go into the details of how or why this is necessary. In my opinion Buber's criterion of mercy belongs here: *mercy* as an unknown factor X beyond your power *is also needed for dialogue, for the dialogic relationship*.

Partnership and collegiality mean equality. This satisfies the dialogue criterion of *partnership* between the parties, but says nothing about Buber's I/Thou relation. However, in the most recent editions of *The fifth principle* (see Senge, 2006) Senge presents through cases how the learning organisations (learning work communities) are constructed at various places. And in these reports the stakeholders already speak of connection of a different quality between the participants that they find hard to interpret themselves. They compare their emotions developing and intensifying with time to *friendship*, a friendly relationship. I consider that the *manifestation of the I/Thou relation*.

To return to partnership, the weaker the agreement between the group members, the bigger the challenge of sustaining this partnership/collegiality. However, that relationship is the most effective counterweight to vulnerability due to self-revelation and participative openness. It

creates a sense of psychological safety for the participants, even if it is far from a real friendship. You will recall that Schein considers this psychological safety crucial. In his opinion, this is one of the most important proceeds of dialogue, of the dialogic relationship, in the context of learning and change.

At this point Senge makes explicit his disagreement with Professor David Bohm who expressed some reservations as to the feasibility of dialogic processes in organisations on the ground of this criterion. “Hierarchy is antiethical to dialogue, and it is difficult to escape hierarchy in organizations. (...) Can those in authority really level with those in subordinate positions?” (Bohm quoted in:³⁵ Senge, 2006, p. 228) On the management side, protecting their position and not showing any sign of inadequacy are forceful drivers. The inverse is present on the side of employees. If you take part in a dialogic relationship with your superior, fear will have a serious dissuasive effect. The oft-mentioned defence mechanisms, the wish to avoid even the appearance of incompetency are strong motives for the individual at every level of the organisation. The real question is whether **commitment to dialogue can overrule organisational situatedness**.

Besides the defence mechanisms, the other underlying concept is the hermeneutics of trust/suspicion. If you relate to your superior with suspicion, assuming that he might abuse your self-revelation and vulnerability, you will not dare show yourself. You will not believe in the possibility of genuine colleagueship between the two of you. As indicated above, the hermeneutics of trust will always be at the mercy of the hermeneutics of suspicion. “...it is possible that someone practising (...) the art of questioning and of seeking truth comes off worse in the argument in the eyes of those listening to it.” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 360)

Organisational situatedness has such strength that trust, moreover, needs to be demonstrated continually in the organisational framework. In a cultural/social medium where the level of trust is especially low, this is a special challenge. Several researchers active in several scientific fields have shown that the Hungarian conditions are just like that (Muraközy, 2012; Cserne, 2012; Györffy, 2012; Chikán, 2012). The situation therefore is far from simple, and all you can say again and again is that **it depends on your basic view of the world and of human beings whether you will give dialogue a chance despite its rather Utopian preconditions**. This is an individual, personal decision, to be taken by each of us.

The following table shows to what extent the dialogue as defined in Senge’s learning organisation concept corresponds to the criteria of the dialogue philosophies.

³⁵ Senge quotes Bohm at several places by referring to their dialogues during common work rather than to a specific work, as in this case. (Senge, 2006, p. 414)

ELEMENTS OF THE DIALOGUE		CRITERIA OF THE DIALOGUE-PHILOSOPHIES
The participant(s)		Biased (preconceptions, assumptions, prejudices, expectations, motives) Free (willingness of suspending the formers) Voluntary (no pressure) Situated: socially and historically Claim to truth Autonomy (without self-defence) Authentic (the object of dialogue has meaning) Open (to the other participant or to the dialogue) Driven by trust (1. the other party may be right; 2. try to make the other's argument even stronger/clearer; 3. show themselves straight out) Truthfulness or sincerity (long time!) Intelligibility (linguistic and communicative competencies)
The object		Independent (not under anyone's control) Not specified in advance Unfolds in the process, between the participants Not constant in space or time Situated (takes place in a given situation, here and now)
The medium		Written or spoken language, culture Dynamic (continuously changing) Independent (not under anyone's control) Power problem (whose language is used) Purely mediatory role in exeptional cases There is no common, neutral language
RELATIONSHIP	Between the participants	Symmetry condition (active/passive or speaker/listener roles are sequential) Reaction = relevant response Power assymetry (power position and vulnerability)
	Between the participant(s) and the object	Subjective, not neutral Dynamic
	Between the participant(s) and the medium	Dynamic Local dynamics Biased (compared to the other participant)
INTERACTION	Between the participants	I/Thou relation Partnership Mutual, direct Reciprocal (all participants are affecting and affected) Direct (1. cannot be established through an intermediary; 2. purity: nothing intervene between I and Thou) Completeness: no taboos Risky Tension
	Between the participant(s) and the object	Continuous reflection
	Between the participant(s) and the medium	Reciprocal (affecting and affected) Mutually determined

13. Table. Criteria of the dialogue philosophies and the Learning Organisation concept. Author's compilation.

Senge does not discuss the medium, and he does not speak of the dynamic of the relationship of subject and object. However, this dynamic is obviously present during the development of a common vision. Most conspicuously, he does not speak of the absence of external constraints and of voluntary participation, although this is the biggest dilemma of the learning organisation concept: Who will initiate becoming a learning organisation? **Can top management make that**

decision, without involving the staff members? Is it possible to have a discussion process to decide on turning the organisation into a learning one? Considering the core values of the theory, the answer is negative. But let's move on: **Is it realistic to assume that the employees have the right and possibility to say no to learning in such a decision-making context?** The theory gives no explicit answer to these questions.

At this point we encounter a dilemma concerning the medium that is strongly reminiscent of the problem identified by Schein. When top management starts to speak of learning organisation, mental models, common vision, dialogue etc., they *speak a special language*. A language based on a specific vision of the world and of man and, let's be realistic, one that implies a new way of thinking that is alien to mainstream organisational existence. Even if they win the employees over for their cause (and the way of winning them over is also a major dilemma), they have a *very definite advantage in using this language* relative to the employees. Moreover, the language of the learning organisation is a managerial, business language, more familiar to upper management than to their colleagues in other positions anyway. As Schein puts it, the subcultural differences in the hierarchy are the least visible, the strongest and the most devastating. Schein is the author who gives most thought to this linguistic difference and the dangers inherent in it. **How can the linguistic asymmetry be balanced?**

Schein's answer is that a common language, that of real partners, without any hierarchy, should be developed in the dialogic process. The dialogue philosophies on the contrary say that *the linguistic differences cannot be resolved or solved*. The solution to this power asymmetry lies elsewhere: in the essence and aim of the dialogue as a means of understanding the connection of contents expressed by words: of "spiritual connexion" (Buber, 1937, p. 25). For *real understanding does not require a common language* or any other medium that can transmit the emitted signals clearly. *The emphasis is not on the signals and not on the medium, but on what is denoted, the thoughts, the opinions*. Yes, let's make it explicit that the initiator is at an advantage, that power asymmetry exists and can only be resolved by the relationship of the participants and the quality of their interaction. If understanding is achieved, the linguistic power asymmetry becomes irrelevant. **And this understanding is given priority treatment and it is considered the essence of the dialogue not only by the learning organisation concept, but also by the great fathers of organisational learning.** By ranking understanding above all else, most paradoxes and hindrances inherent in the process will be resolved.

4.4 Summary

According to the dialogue philosophies, the dialogue is a special type of communication where a relationship (connection) of a special quality is created between the participants in order that they come to a mutual, common and also personal understanding that makes their concerted action and genuine cooperation feasible. The change management theories that consider dialogue a critical element of the change process are completely in line with this definition.

For, the aim of change is to ensure the concerted progress, collective action of the members of the organisation heading in the same direction. This alignment is expounded in most detail by Senge. Alignment, however, requires a common understanding and a common interpretation of what we are, how we function, and where we are heading. Personal and communal/collective self-understanding is needed. In the opinion of Bouwen and Frey, this common understanding and interpretation manifests itself in a common logic (thinking framework), in that of Schein in a common language.

Organisational development, the action research schools and Schein and Argyris put the emphasis on the fact that, at individual as well as organisational level, we are very far from the pure connection assumed in the dialogic relationship. Therefore, they prefer to discuss the first steps to be taken to develop a dialogical relationship. The dialogic relationship, however, is only the necessary, but not the sufficient condition of dialogue. The most important component of the dialogic relationship is the process of individual and communal self-reflection. According to Argyris, this reflection focuses on our unconscious defence mechanisms that determine our operation. Schein underlines the hindering effect of the same routines, and interprets them exclusively at community level, while stressing that the individual will not step on the path of self-reflection unless the community creates an atmosphere of psychological security for him.

All in all, the above schools and authors speak of the same thing as the dialogue philosophies, but they add that the first step to construction is deconstruction, i.e. the identification and dismounting of the wrong, ingrained behaviour patterns. The individual, however, cannot reflect, nor change, without the assistance and contribution of the community.

Another point of difference concerns the boundary conditions of dialogue discussed in the context of the establishment of the dialogic relationship. They do not discuss these conditions as comprehensively as the dialogue philosophies. They emphasise instead, and that is very important, one or another of these conditions, based on their empirical experience. The OD/AR stress the truthfulness claim, Schein the language and the pre-conception, Argyris the mental models, and the autonomy (lack of self-defence mechanisms) of the individual, Bouwen and Fry the relevance of emotional presence and the collective constructionist nature of the process. (For a more detailed comparison, see Table 9.)

	WHAT IS DIALOGUE?	FOCAL POINTS	MAIN DILEMMAS / STATEMENTS
OD/AR	Honest, open conversation, during which -some level of understanding is reached, -dialogic relationship is created.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claim to truth (getting closer to reality; feedbacks; reflections) Getting closer to the dialogic relationship among the members of the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parties are situated organisationally. Can an employee say 'no' to having a conversation with the consultant/managers? Can the process be fully unconstrained? Who are the parties conducting dialogue? (consultant/managers/staff) Organisations are not yet ready for dialogue. First step: creating boundary conditions of dialogue.
SCHEIN	Self-reflective, self-understanding conversational process, a community action, which aims to create a common understanding and a common language. These two facilitate the co-action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep-lying, tacit, taken-for-granted basic assumptions (deep level of culture) Language (existing, common) Defensive routines, which are culturally coded and exist also at community level Psychological safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will a common language emerge, is it necessary? Does an employee have a real free choice/make a voluntary decision? There is no individual learning without community learning. We are personally unprepared for dialogue and it is culturally coded. First steps should be directed primarily at ourselves, with the help of the others. First steps focus on the individual, the "I"
ARGYRIS	Individual and collective self-reflective, self-understanding learning process, interaction, which aims a higher quality of knowledge, for better decisions, and for a more effective behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autonomy: no self-defence, showing ourselves straight out, productive reasoning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can we leave organisational politics out of consideration? Is such openness and vulnerability feasible in the context of an organisation? What if past grievances in an organisation are so deep and the resulting suspicion is so intensive that they make a dialogue impossible? We are personally unprepared for dialogue. The first steps should be directed primarily at ourselves, with the help of the others. First steps focus on the individual, the "I"
BOUWEN & FRY	Substantive, back-and-forth interaction between the dominant and the new logic, during which a common understanding and a socially created, brand new logic is reached.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process of social construction Feelings, the emotional presence, the emotional commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is such openness and vulnerability feasible in the context of an organisation? Can an employee say 'no' to having a conversation with the consultant/managers? Can the process be fully unconstrained? The continuous reflection on the process is necessary.
SENGE	An individual and social self-reflective, self-understanding learning process, interaction, which generates common understanding, and a larger pool of common meaning (which cannot be accessed individually), and which facilitates the true, real co-action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-action in details: alignment, individual interest becomes an extension, reflective openness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the leader(s) make a decision on becoming a LO - without that would it be a co-decision with all levels of the organisation? Can an employee say no to building a LO? How can power asymmetry coded in the hierarchy be resolved? Can organisational situatedness be overruled by commitment to dialogue? How?

14. Table. Dialogue concepts of change management theories: A comparison. Author's figure.

Of all the authors, Peter Senge is the one who approaches dialogue in the most complex way and whose approach is closest to that of the dialogue philosophies. Actually, the dialogue philosophies do not go into such details of *the meaning of collective action* as he does. The essence of collective or co-action, in the focus of the entire dialogue, is to create high-quality *alignment* (1). The individual interest does not dissolve in the common interest, it does not come to an end or get subordinated in the dialogue process. As emphasised by the dialogue philosophies, otherness does not end, but gets sharper. Senge says that *the individual interest becomes an extension* (2). The third component of co-action is the *I/Thou relation* (3).

Schein, Argyris, and the OD and AR schools take a step back from dialogue, putting the emphasis on what culturally coded (Schein), learned (Argyris) behaviours are to be eliminated individually, with the support of the community, to let the dialogic relationship be created. In these initial processes the focus is on the I. The Thou will not necessary turn into It, but the I tends to pay more attention inwards and less to the I/Thou relation. The I/Thou interaction is the central element in the model of Bouwen and Fry model and that of Senge. These are the two concepts where explicit emotional commitment, the relevance of emotions is discussed as well. Because the I/Thou relationship does not leave the participants unaffected. OD, AR, Argyris and Schein are more detached, putting more emphasis on the cognitive/mental processes as schools/researchers. Basically, this is the relation that will decide what action type we speak of in the sense of Habermas. Co-action is a communicative action where the other party is Thou,

where an I/Thou relation exists. In all the other action types (dramaturgical, strategic, normative) the other party is It, and the relation is an I/It one.

In an organisational framework, this relationship system is basically coded for the I/Thou relation. For, why does the individual join the organisation? To achieve something that is important to him personally (money, self-realisation, belonging etc.) and for which others are needed. This is a pure I/It relation. I have to take into account the others (relationship system of strategic action), I have to meet their expectations in order to remain a member (normative action) or for them to act as audience to the self-revelation of the individual (dramaturgical action). **Can the individual be expected to develop this confidential, personal, deep I/Thou relation at his workplace?** *The moral weight of this issue is made clear by Schein alone*, but he only unveils it, without offering a genuine solution.

In summary, the **change management theories are supplemented by the dialogue philosophies. They complete the picture of dialogue by their more detailed interpretation of the dialogic relationship, by the interpretation of the existential/ontological depths of understanding.** At the same time, **they answer the dilemmas of the change management theories:** power asymmetry, situatedness, language being a problem, vulnerability, trust, unresolved grievances. Table 9 shows the dilemmas rendered sharper by the specific schools. The answers of the dialogue philosophies to the dilemmas is summed up in my table below.

DILEMMAS OF THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT THEORIES	THE ANSWERS OF THE DIALOGUE-PHILOSOPHIES
How can power asymmetry due to language usage, sequence (e.g. who is the initiator), familiarity with dialogue be solved?	This is a natural, existing, immanent property of dialogue. The solution to power asymmetry is the underlying attitude, the way the participants relate to each other and to the process. As stated by the dialogue philosophies: power asymmetry can only be resolved by the relationship of the participants.
Will a common language emerge/is it necessary?	There is no common language. Any attempt to create a “no-man’s-land” language would be futile. Real understanding requires no common language, no sign system that clearly conveys the emitted signals. For, the emphasis is not on the signals and the medium, but on what is denoted, the thoughts, the opinions. The road (the process) leading the participants to a relevant understanding at this level is dialogue.
Considering the openness and vulnerability aspects, is dialogue feasible in an organisational framework?	The hermeneutics of trust will always be exposed. It depends on your basic view of the world and of human beings whether you will give dialogue a chance despite its rather Utopian preconditions. This is an individual, personal decision, to be taken by each of us.
How can suspicion towards trust be dispelled?	The hermeneutics of trust will always be exposed. Trust will always raise suspicion in organisational politics. Trust needs to be demonstrated again and again, continuously, and vice versa: trust has to be fought for again and again, continuously.
What if past grievances in an organisation are so deep and the resulting suspicion is so intensive that they make dialogue impossible?	The hermeneutics of trust is itself final. Curing the torn wounds is a noble objective, but this intention cannot accomplish itself at its discretion, in a sovereign manner. Some wounds can be cured, others cannot – even if the latter may heal with time. If so, the only option is to silently withdraw from understanding.
Can organisational situatedness be overruled by commitment to dialogue?	It depends on your basic view of the world and of human beings whether you will give dialogue a chance despite its rather Utopian preconditions.

15. Table. Dilemmas of the dialogue concepts of the change management theories and the answers of the dialogue philosophies. Author’s compilation.

The main strength of the change management schools is that they rely on experience. Schein’s writings reflect almost 50 years of experience as consultant (Schein, 2006ab). Argyris developed his models on the basis of more than 6000 corporate cases (Dixon, 1996). Bouwen and Frey analysed 13 innovation projects, monitoring them for 8-18 months (Bouwen and Frey, 1991). In the books of Senge (1990, 2006), one case study follows the other. This empirical basis is all the more important since their conclusions are akin to those of the dialogue philosophies, that is, they confirm the latter. A further contribution of the change management theories to the philosophy of the dialogue is the **exploration of the relevance of organisational**

situatedness and the presentation of its functioning mechanism (in the works of Schein, Senge in the first place). The **theory of Argyris on the defence mechanisms** is significant: it presents the functioning mechanism of self-defence at the level of the individual in more depth than the dialogue philosophies, and Schein complements that by the presentation of the community-level mechanism (mutual face-saving). A further contribution by the change theories is the **specification of co-action in the works of Senge**, but in my opinion this needs to **be supplemented by all means by Buber's concept of the I/Thou relation and Habermas' theory of communicative action to make it complete.**

In summary: the change management theories are neither on the wrong path nor far from their target when they try to interpret the dialogue. My theoretical research has shown to me that it is really worthwhile lifting your head from your own discipline and looking around to find out what other sciences say about phenomena that you consider important. I believe in interdisciplinary dialogue, and I also hope that my theoretical research described here serves as its demonstration and shows its value.

5 The empirical research

5.1 Research topic, assumptions and aim of the research

My **research topic** is dialogue in the context of organisational change. The first sections of this thesis presented the relevant theoretical/technical literature background. The essence of the theoretical constructions is that real organisational change requires co-action and, that in turn, requires mutual and common understanding (NOT agreement). I presented in detail other assumptions of the theories concerning either the dialogic relationship or the participants, the medium (the mediating element) and the quality of their interrelationships. The same can also be regarded as the **assumptions of my research**, since we can speak of a dialogic relationship if these assumptions are established. And we can speak of dialogue if mutual and common understanding is also achieved.

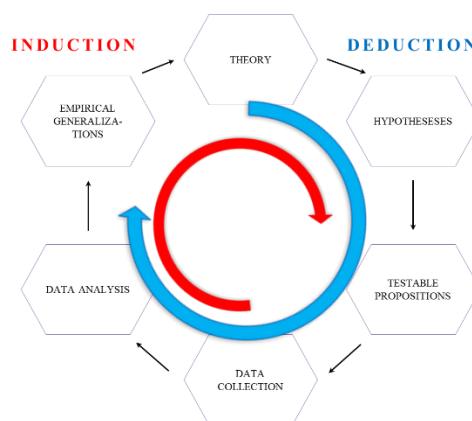
A general researcher's dilemma, independent of my topic, occurs at this point. In everyday organisational reality, how is it relevant whether a dialogic relationship or dialogue exists in the sense of the theoretical constructions among the members of the organisation? How should I treat the distance between the theoretical constructions and the forces that are *actually* shaping organisational reality? How can the two be linked? How do I look upon the theoretical constructions? What is their function in organisational reality and in the research? These are important epistemological issues, and the answers shed light on my researcher's paradigm (my assumptions, objectives).

The aim of my research is complex. Firstly, I want to understand what kind of dialogue goes on in a *specific* process (case) of change (1). I chose an **interpretative** approach; therefore, I had to explore and present *local meaning* based on the experience, interpretations and explanations of actors in the case under study (2). After that, I compared this local social construction, local in terms of space and time, to the theoretical constructions described in the relevant technical literature. *In other words, I brought the local social construction and the theoretical construction into dialogue with each other* (3). And what does all that lead to? The theoretical construction changes through the understanding of the local, social construction (it is expanded, differentiated, upgraded or corrected, or some of its components are challenged); it will be reflected on anyway (4). The mutual aspect of the effect principle as we know it from dialogue, however, is present also here: theory uses the inputs of local meaning, but the research itself and the role of the theoretical constructions in it do not leave the local meanings, understandings and interpretations unaffected either. "With the help of theory, we can 'notice' previously unperceived phenomena; new things may become interesting and meaningful, and we can communicate about them by naming them" (Gelei, 2003, p.137).

I did not formulate any hypotheses during my research since this would not have matched the qualitative/interpretative approach (Gelei, 2003). As a matter of fact, **the logic of my research implies a different view of hypotheses in the traditional sense.**

Firstly, I use the assumptions that can also be regarded as hypotheses in a deliberate way, making them explicit and the subject of continuous reflection during the empirical research.

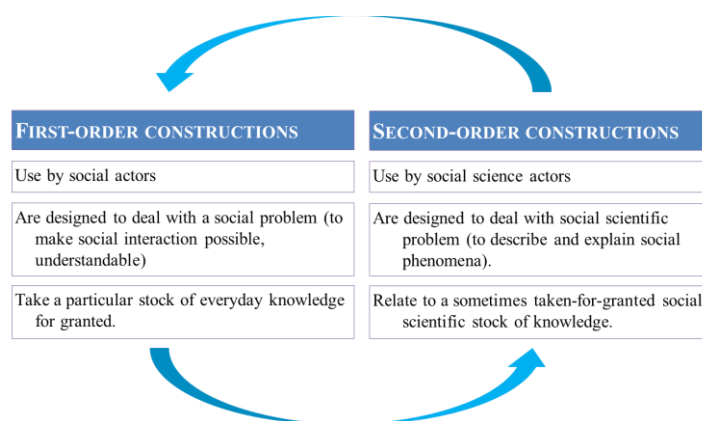
Secondly, abductive logic, considered suitable for hypothesis-generation by traditional research logics (deductive, inductive), becomes the basic logic of my research (Blaikie, 2007). The essence of *deductive* logic is that there exists a preliminary theoretical model that is to be tested. *Inductive* logic, on the other hand, collects and analyses data and the theory is produced after an adequate number of observations, data and analyses is available.



11. Figure. Inductive and deductive logic. Source: Blaikie, 2007, p.81, modified

In **abductive logic**, the relationship between the two, i.e. theory and conclusions drawn from observation, is sequential, iterative. Even more importantly, there is an identifiable paradigmatic difference in this logic relative to the other two, namely that it lifts into the research the meanings, interpretations, motivations and intentions of social actors, ignored by the other two.

It considers the individual and collective interpretations *first-order constructions*, and the social science constructions using them as their building-blocks, i.e. theories in the traditional sense, *second-order constructions* (Schütz, 1963; Blaikie, 2007).



12. Figure. First- and second-order constructions. Author's figure. Source: Schütz, 1963b, pp. 337-339

According to abductive logic, second-order constructions should derive from first-order ones. Therefore, as a first step, it is to be understood and described how actors see and interpret that segment of the world that is relevant for the researcher; what are the underlying motives and intentions, and what collective processes of interpretation and understanding are taking place.

The second step is to transform these first-order constructions into second-order ones. The followers of abductive logic emphasise that although at this point the researcher uses his³⁶ own, technical (artificial) language, that language must derive from lay language (Winch, 1958) and remain as close to everyday language as possible (Blaikie, 2007).

In simple terms, first the local understandings and interpretations of the research unit must be understood and described, while the theoretical construction defined by the theories are *suspended*, and this description requires to understand, master and use the linguistic constructions of the unit itself. To raise the first-order constructions, local in space and time, to the abstract level (limited generalisation), you already invoke the second-order (theoretical) concepts created by previous (in my case e.g. literary, anthropological, philosophical, theological, management science) research. “Abductive logic requires hermeneutical dialogue between the expressions and interpretations of first-order constructions and the technical concepts of second-order constructions and their interpretations.” (Blaikie, 2007, p.101)

5.2 Research questions

The topic of my research is dialogue in the context of organisational change. The results of the theoretical research warrant the statement that, for organisational change to be genuine and lasting, it is to affect also the cultural deep layers, that is, not leave the values, assumptions and logics underlying organisational behaviour unaffected. In the conceptual systems of dialogue philosophies, this *touching* means *understanding*. Not agreement nor modification under duress, but mutual and common understanding – which, however, is concurrent with change of necessity (cf. effect principle).

In the organisational context, understanding has several layers. Organisational reality is created by individuals, jointly; the outcome is something common, but individuals can only move about (understand, change, develop) in it within their respective own worlds. “Cultural self-understanding” is an individual action, and community or collective self-understanding is the sum total of the interplay and alignment of such individual actions. It is this permanent movement back and forth along the individual – common – community axis and the dynamic of understanding –alignment – co-action that is the essence of change, and also the essence of dialogue. The conditions of dialogue are also the conditions of understanding, co-action and change.

The empirical part of my research examines how the above materialises in organisational reality. The road to grasping this general level leads through the in-depth understanding of specific local situations. Not in the sense of inductive logic, but in line with the philosophy (paradigm) of dialogue, by bringing theory (second-order construction) and practice /

³⁶ Throughout the paper, personal pronouns are understood as referring to both sexes.

organisational reality (first-order construction) into dialogue. My main research questions are the following:

I. What does dialogue mean to the individual and the community in the specific change process for organisational actors concerned by it?

As a first step, I must put away, “suspend”, the theoretical, second-order constructions, to understand the actual (local, *hic et nunc*) collective interpretation of dialogue. **What is the first-order dialogue construction in the chosen field of research? Why? How has it emerged?**

I start out from *individual interpretations*, and examine whether any *patterns* exist. Do small community or maybe *occupation-specific (organisational-unit-specific) interpretations* arise? *How?* **Does a single, local, common interpretation emerge? Or, maybe, what fragmented, semantic small communities exist according to the interpretations of dialogue?** Do these micro semantic communities, if any, coincide with the occupational or other subcultures? Further questions main arise during the investigation:

How do these micro semantic communities, if any, relate to each other? How do they interact, what maintains them and their differences, i.e. fragmentation? Who has what explicit or hidden interest in maintaining this fragmentation?

II. What are the interrelationships of the organisational actors concerned by the change characterised by? Why? What quality (kind of) *understanding* is achieved among them? Why? So dialogue of what quality is created thereby?

How do the organisational actors concerned by the change describe their interrelationships and connections? How do they experience these connections and their features? Do they feel understood? Why? Why do they (not) feel understood? What is their opinion about whether they understand the other actors? Why?

The above questions already bring in the theoretical, so-called second-order constructions. This is the point where I would move from the local to the general semantic community. Dialogue theories further break down dialogue to dialogic relationship systems and understanding. Although dialogic relationship without understanding exists, the theories do not consider that dialogue. I adopt the perspective of the theories, their conceptual arsenals, to re-interpret the local semantic community, lifting it thereby into the (social) science discourse. I bring first-order constructions into dialogue with second-order ones.

III. What is the relationship between already existing second-order constructions with local first-order constructions: What do first-order constructions strengthen or weaken; how do they expand, specify or maybe destroy social science theories? And, vice versa, from a theoretical point of view, can what is created between the actors be considered dialogue? Is it possible that although they themselves actually experience the relationships and processes unfolding among them as dialogue, it would not fulfil the criteria specified by the theories?

My research started out, basically, from change management. I wanted to better understand the role of dialogue in change management at theoretical level and in the context of a specific case to enrich the understanding of organisational change. Therefore, after answering the above questions, it will also be important to reflect on **what I have learned about organisational change as a phenomenon. What do I say about organisational change in the light of the understanding achieved through my empirical research? (IV.)**

5.3 Research methodology (case study) and the case under study

The identification of the research questions is followed by a discussion of the methodological issues. Which research methodology, which data generation technique fits most the questions? Based on my research topic (dialogue) and questions, it was obvious that the **case study would be the most adequate method for my research**. “In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.” (Yin, 2003, p.1). Gelei (2002) underlines that, despite its popularity, this methodology is far from being uniform. Differences exist based on the goal of the research (theory-building, generalisation or ‘thorough exploration and understanding of the local context’” (Gelei, 2002, p.163). As explained already, my goal is the last one, due to both by my researcher’s stance and also the specifics of the research topic. According to the typology of Huws and Dahlmann (2007), one can distinguish exploratory, explanatory and exemplary cases based on the goal of the case study and its point of departure, i.e. its basis.

Since my goal was to examine the theoretical dialogue model through a specific case, i.e. to understand how the dialogic situation and perhaps the dialogue itself arises in a specific, real, situation, I considered it obvious that I should use the **explanatory case study** methodology. At the same time, I thought that a descriptive case like this must have some relevance, usefulness, also for the side of practice – in this sense, it can certainly **be interpreted also as exemplary**. The case study methodology has made it imperative to find a field where this research topic was topical, live. Then I had to define in this field a system having its proper borders (Stake, 1996), i.e. the case itself.

5.3.1 The research field

I considered it important to choose a research field where topic of the research (change, change management, dialogue) has topical and outstanding relevance. Therefore, I selected the European aviation industry and in particular air traffic control. But why is this topic such a pressing agenda item in today’s European air traffic control?

5.3.1.1 Industrial background and how it relates to the research topic

In 2004, the European Union adopted a new legislation package (Single European Sky, SES) that will alter European air navigation services and especially air traffic control service most radically. The primary goal is efficiency enhancement through the elimination of fragmentation and, for the airline companies, cost-trimming. (Crespo and Fenoulhet, 2011) This is to take place in a technological environment undergoing most turbulent development anyway, where adaptation to normal technological development already represents a major challenge for air navigation service providers (ANSP), and lagging behind or skipping development and change is no option given the specifics of air traffic.

European decision makers knew from the start that this change could not be executed without comprehensive, extensive and complex change management. Also, that it was vital to convert to practice such key concepts and ideologies as employee commitment, stakeholder involvement, winning over the employees responsive to change, and partnership (Bakker, 2011). As depositary of this effort, the European Union obliged employers at European, regional and national level to establish and operate dialogue processes in institutionalised frameworks (Ballesterio, 2011). The dialogue processes concerned mean institutionalised social dialogue.

Social dialogue is a special type of dialogue that has its own literature (Bácsi, 2012). The word “dialogue” refers here to a legal category rather than dialogue in the philosophical sense. “Social dialogue includes every kind of negotiation, consultation or exchange of information between representatives of government, employees and employers, in every area which may be a common interest, in the area of social policy and economic policy.” (Bácsi, 2012, p.15)

Note that the terminology may cause certain confusion. Social dialogue is part of labour relations. “Labor relations deal primarily with an examination of the opposing interests and conflicts between the actors: trade unions, (...) employers and government. This covers the economic, social and political environment which defines their relationships, the process and rules of conflict resolution (and the makers of these rules) as well as the effects of these factors on the labor market and on the organization of labor.” (Bácsi, 2012, p.14)

Two things follow from the above. (1) If the trade unions do not take part in the processes, we speak of employee, not industrial (labour) relations (Beardwell and Holden, 1994). (2) Labour relations represent a legal category and are therefore subject to rules that differ by national law (and country) (Ishikawa, 2003). “In the Anglo-Saxon countries, the concept applies primarily to bilateral relations between employers and employees, which are also impacted by external players such as the government or the trade unions. In France, however, it includes several stakeholders and represents not merely an economic approach, but encompasses rights, obligations and a complex system of responsibilities which lend a specific status to employees. In continental Europe, the collective regulation of employment relations is thus deeply

ingrained in other social subsystems, which is not the usual approach in Anglo-Saxon countries.” (Bácsi, 2012, p.14)

The confusion due to the combo of identical terminology and (radically) different underlying logics is present also in European air traffic services’ communication. To simplify things: when the British speak of dialogue they mean something totally different from what is understood by their German or French partners. Given this non-explicit misunderstanding, I consider it important to declare that my present research does not concern labour relations. By “dialogue” I do not mean the corresponding legal category, and my objective is not to investigate the legally institutionalised processes. I approach the dialogue phenomenon from the side of change management, and by “dialogue” I mean the formal and informal processes and cooperation forms of members of an organisation.

So, here is a European industry in the midst of large-scale change and aspiring to manage it in a deliberate way that has recognised the necessity of dialogue and operates relevant processes. Today’s European aviation industry is clearly the “guinea pig” of my research, but the need for understanding the topic (change, change management, dialogue) is also present in the industry itself (Baumgartner, 2011).

The other reason for choosing the aviation industry is its being a special market segment where the special knowledge and professional skills of the representatives of the relevant key professions (pilots, cabin crew, air traffic controllers, airport service staff) places them in a power position relative to management occupying a relatively higher position in organisational hierarchy. The industry has always been known (infamous) for its ongoing employee/employer disputes and tensions (Bruch and Sattelberger, 2001). The reason why these disputes could escalate was the forced partnership between the employers and employees concerned. Pilots cannot be struck down by threat and force in disputes they regard as important. If they incidentally go on strike, that can cause the airline employing them serious financial and quantifiable prestige loss.

A case closely related to my topic is the story of **LUFTHANSA**. In 1991, Lufthansa came close to bankruptcy. No more than 8 years later, in 1999, the company realised the biggest profit in its history of more than 70 years. “In eight years, the company had gone from the brink of bankruptcy to becoming one of the world’s most profitable airline companies.” (Bruch and Sattelberger, 2001, p.250) An article by Heike Bruch and Thomas Sattelberger dating from 2001 analyses this change process in detail, identifying its learning points. “Core elements of this strategy involve providing space for reflection and dialogue despite the crisis pressure, building networks of change actors and creating durable platforms for emotional mobilization and reflection on action.” (Bruch and Sattelberger, 2001, p.249) The critical elements of the process responsible for the success were dialogue, consensus-building, trust-building between management and employees, and partnership especially with employee interest representations.

In his article of 2011, Eric Arne Lofquist presents a negative example, also from aviation. He describes the event concerned to show the need for coherence and consistency between the culture of the organisation and the strategy applied in the change process. “Managerial choices and actions, such as: consensus building, communication and use of participation during

deliberate change process, can positively influence attitudes towards change. However, it will also show that a sudden reversal from a participatory process to purely top-down implementation can lead to a breakdown in consensus and trust, leading to internal and external resistance, and the premature collapse of a change process.” (Lofquist, 2011, p.223) The case of **AVINOR**, the Norwegian airport and air traffic service provider, exemplifies that the success of the strategy depends on whether it corresponds to the context of change, in the given case the culture of the organisation undergoing change. Without an in-depth knowledge of the culture there is a good chance that culture itself will be the greatest hindrance to change. At Lufthansa, management paid special attention to this circumstance throughout the process (see the so-called mental change programme in: Buch and Sattelberger, 2001). The other major difference between the two cases was to what extent partnership, the real (!) involvement of employees at all levels, and especially the groups with critical power, was part of change management. Lufthansa put a strong emphasis on assuring involvement: management slowed down the projects critical to change and contrary to the interests of the groups concerned “not to risk consensus with the works councils (unions).” (Bruch and Sattelberger, 2001, p.251) At Avinor, on the other hand, management underestimated the power of air traffic controllers (ATCO) playing a key role in the company, and they mostly stopped short at informing them of the change events. Management announced participation in the beginning, but “their [ATCO’s] opposition to several decisions was not acknowledged by the leadership” (Lofquist, 2011, p.238). Indeed, management reacted to intensifying opposition by replacing the former participatory change management style by purely top-down implementation. This shift and the weight of the air traffic controllers had led to the failure of the process of change and later on of management overall, despite the fact that the owner (the Norwegian government) gave them full support.

In my reading, the message of the above two cases is that, at European level, communicating the weight of dialogue should be based on conclusions drawn from past experience. **Dialogue is a critical element of change management in aviation, as professionals familiar with the industry know very well.** In the course of my research I have not met with any study focusing expressly on dialogue processes implemented in the context of aviation industrial changes.

5.3.1.2 Presentation of the organisation and the process of change: the ANSP and the p-SHIFT Project

Within the industry, the focus of the research was further refined by my awareness (due to my previous work experience) of a project of strategic significance, targeting sufficiently complex and deep changes. Moreover, I was informed by my contacts in the industry that the top manager in charge of the project and the project manager communicated from the start that dialogue between the participants was highly important for them personally.

My research field was an East Central European air navigation service provider organisation (hereinafter: the ANSP), and one of its change processes of strategic relevance. The goal of the change was to alter the basic work organisation system of a specific unit; a “paradigm change” as those concerned referred to it themselves. In the present thesis, the project is referred to under the alias of **p-SHIFT Project**.

Within the ANSP, three units are in charge of air traffic control³⁷. For the sake of anonymity, they will be referred to as Units A, B and C, respectively; I will not tell specifically which unit the p-SHIFT Project belongs to.

The purpose of the change is three-fold: the infrastructure of Unit B is in need of upgrading, and the ANSP wants to apply an innovative solution to not only modernise the so-called hard assets pool and the work equipment, but also fully reconsider the technological background of work there (2). All this is needed because, as described above, European aviation is being restructured and air navigation services must implement major efficiency improvements (3). That is, change is motivated by both internal and external constraints, and it is both reactive and proactive.

The new technology will completely change the work of controllers at Unit B. To preserve anonymity, I cannot quote my interviewees literally, but the new technology will actually change everything in their lives: not only the way individual controllers do their work, but also methods of work applied within co-working teams.

Unit B will thus undergo full-scale change in terms of both control technology and method of work, i.e. a “paradigm change” as those concerned refer to what is happening to them. The new technology requires a brand new approach and way of thinking.

“They have altered the system of it all. (...) [*At the old Unit B*] we used to sit in a circle, side by side, in a small space. We communicated there, side by side. The monitors are there. Here, on the other hand, separate workstations have been made (...). But this is not how [*a Unit B controller*] works. He has to speak to the others, communicate with them, coordinate them. Thus what had existed at the [*old unit*], the working style, has fallen apart when a completely different concept was realised.” (Walt³⁸, controller)

“Most of my energy [*sitting there at the new unit*] was absorbed by not believing I was participating in a video game. That this was real. And I had to concentrate on this being real. (...) Kind of synthetic...you do not feel the traffic, nothing. You know [*at the old unit*] you know everything, what happens, where you are looking, you orient yourself. Your colleague is sitting there by your side, you see and hear him. Whereas here: nothing. You are completely separated.” (Ryan, controller)

³⁷Air traffic control has three units. 1. ACC is in charge of the upper flight regions. That is, ACC controllers control aircraft at FL 100 to FL 660 (1 Flight Level equals 100 feet, but it is not measured from ground level, but from a theoretical reference level) in the given air space. 2. APP (or: Approach) is responsible for the terminal manoeuvring area. APP controllers mediate aircraft between the airport tower staff and the ACC controllers, and control planes present in, or taking off or landing in their zone. 3. Airport tower controllers are in charge of the ground movement of aircraft at airports and during their landing and take-off. To preserve anonymity, I will not specify in my thesis which of the three units is concerned by the change under study; I will only refer to it as Unit B.

³⁸ For the sake of anonymity, I gave the interviewees common English names as aliases, indicating also their role in the project (middle manager, project manager, controller). References to membership in the special expert team are also included (e.g. PanTeam member). This will be discussed in more detail later.

For the majority, this involved more than a change of technology and basic professional operation: it was an emotional trauma.

“Look, I have been there since 1983, the opening [*of the unit*] (...). I started everything here (...), I have been there since the first day. We were the ones who provided the first daytime service. They moved there at midnight (...), and in the morning the first daytime service was cast on us. So you can imagine, we are in an emotional symbiosis. Sure, it will be very bad to move out from there. It will leave a tremendous gap in you.” (Adam, controller, PanTeam member)

“I sometimes dream I am sitting in here [*at the new unit*], and I see what would happen, that trouble is coming, but I cannot do anything against it. As in a movie... A nightmare!” (Sentence uttered at the participatory observation session)

Furthermore, the organisational fit, the position of Unit B controllers will also change since (a) physically, they will be much closer to other ANSP units; the micro-community that used to be at a distance from the everyday life of the organisation will become much more intensively integrated into it; (b) Unit B that had worked with a somewhat obsolete technology will suddenly move to the vanguard of working technology not only at the ANSP, but also globally.

The complexity of the change is enhanced by its having many stakeholders. The various stakeholders / participants – to recall the dialogue theories – have, of necessity, different assumptions, prejudices, motives, expectations and interests. According to the dialogue theories, this is always so, irrespective of the field of research. It has been obvious from the start that I would have to use simplifications due to the excessive number of stakeholders. I would not be able to examine the situation from the perspective of all players, since that would be excessively time-consuming. Section 5.3.2 describes in detail how and to what I narrowed down my research.

Why did I think this would be an adequate field for my research? I had worked in the ATM Industry for almost 4 years. I was informed by my former colleagues that the top manager in charge of the project and the project manager communicated from the start that they wanted to build the process on dialogue between the participants. That is, efforts to have dialogue pointed beyond the usual industry requirements. On the basis of discussions conducted with former colleagues before the research, I concluded that this dialogue has actually been achieved among the participants. Of course, my understanding at that time was no more than superficial, it could not be any other. Before deciding to choose this as my field of research, I did two things.

1. I contacted the project manager and a change management advisor who supported the project as external expert. I obtained preliminary information also from them, to examine whether the theoretical conditions of dialogue (see Chapter 3) were met in the given organisational situation. What I have learned confirmed that ANSP and its p-SHIFT Project could be a good field of research. This was still a superficial understanding; I treated the existence of dialogue only as a condition.
2. I contacted the leader of the p-SHIFT Project again, and asked him to seek approval for the research from his superiors. I drew up a summary of my theoretical research and its outcomes, the foci of the planned empirical research, the potential interview questions,

the planned number of interviewees and their time demand for them. I touched upon the issue of disclosing the data. The research was approved by the head of the division in charge of professional developments, and I was informed of it by the project manager. However, shortly after the first interviews, the project manager quit the company. Therefore, before the other interviews, I contacted the head of Unit B, who approved the research but asked to make the organisation anonymous.

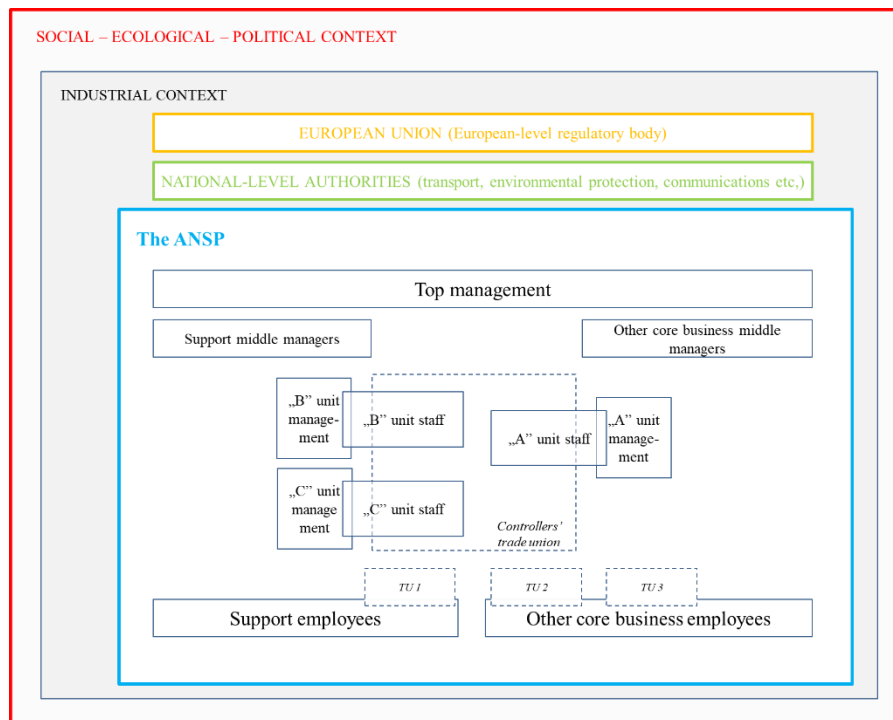
5.3.2 From research field to case

In this section, I present how and why the research focus has been narrowed further within the field of research. Not within the research topic, but within the field of research. Narrowing, of course, implies a more restricted scope of understanding and of the conclusions referring to the second-order constructions.

The ANSP operates in a highly regulated industry, like all the ANSPs (see previous chapter). No technological development can be implemented without a series of official licensing procedures. In addition to national-level official examinations and licenses, there may also be European-level ones. Of course, the ANSP, as organisations in general, is not independent of the social-ecological context that represents its narrower and broader environment.

The ANSP is a functional organisation. Its functions include traditional support areas, such as economy and finance, HR, public relations directorates. Then there is the so-called core business including the already mentioned 3 units of air traffic control and the closely related, typically technical, areas (technical development, maintenance, IT). Between the support and the core business areas, there is also a hybrid one, the special area responsible for aviation safety. As I interpret it, this is a support function which, however, cannot be considered a traditional support activity.

It is a special feature of the organisation that it has several trade unions set up by profession. From the point of view of my research field, the most important among them is the trade union of air traffic controllers. The decisive majority of controllers in non-management positions is a member of this trade union; it carries a big weight and considerable power within the organisation. This is not specific to the ANSP, but typical of the whole industry (see Section 3.1).



13. Figure. Social, economic and organisational context of the research. Author's figure.

It is also important that there is an overlap between management and employees in the field of air traffic control. Typically, managers active in this field also act as air traffic controllers. There is no overlap between the controller staffs: typically, a given controller working at Unit A will have no service license for Units B or C.

It has been clear from the start of the research that *the field of research would not extend beyond the level of the organisation*. I had neither the money, nor the time to interview also official or European-level stakeholders during the research.

Since the change concerned directly the controllers, it was clear that I had to put the emphasis on the core business areas. For time management reasons, I once again decided in favour of diminishing my scope as much as possible, i.e. *to focus exclusively on the core business, in particular air traffic control and in particular Unit B*. It would be important to understand and experience what happens in the special fields of aviation safety, HR or technical development, but I had to narrow my scope to arrive at a manageable quantity of data.

The real dilemma at this point was whether to put top management in the focus. Finally, I decided to remain within my field of interest and not to examine the understanding and views of top management. This had the following reason. Top management is the group that is most exposed to the owners in the background. The ANSP is state-owned. Such political vulnerability could have

1. distorted the results, because sincerity in interviews with top managers is determined by the political games ever going on in the background. This is my assumption, but its verification lies beyond my real research questions (albeit not the topic). I ought to have

dealt with the issue in depth due to its potential distorting effect, but the effort would not have produced commensurate added value for my research.

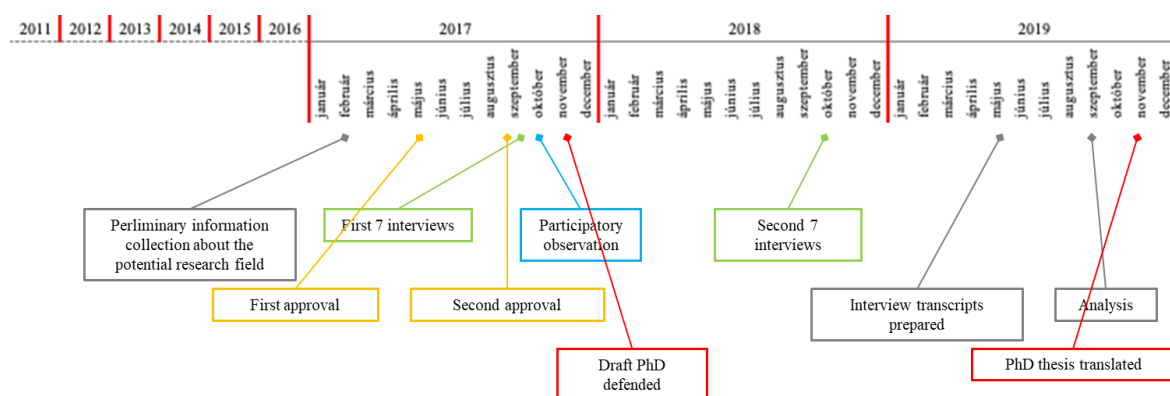
2. The outcome of the research could have made top management vulnerable if they actually presented themselves, their experience and understandings. This, too, is an assumption, but I could not know more of the underlying dynamic, but had to take into account the potential effects of my research. I sincerely believe that in such cases you should “sacrifice” the completeness of the research: the research will have effects that cannot be controlled -- let’s not do any harm in any case.

Thus within the research field and the chosen case, the focus is on the development of dialogue within the ASNP, between Unit B management and technical staff, in the context of change under the p-SHIFT project.

5.3.3 Time horizon of the case

The idea of the p-SHIFT occurred at the ASNP in 2011. Following the relevant top management decision, the p-SHIFT Project started in 2013. I started to collect information on the project as potential research field in February 2017. Following contact with the organisation and a brief preliminary examination, I got the first approval for the research in May 2017. I had to have this re-confirmed with the leader of Unit B in September 2017 due to the personnel changes mentioned above.

The interviews were conducted in two phases, 7 in the period from 31 July to 4 October 2017, and another 7 from 19 to 30 October 2018. The participatory observation session took place on 13 October 2017.



14. Figure. Time horizon of the case and the research. Author’s figure.

Although the interviews covered 12 months and, actually, more than 12 months passed between the first and the last, this was no problem for the case since *there was no change / event of relevance for change management over these more than 12 months. The stances have not changed; “the situation remained the same”*(Christian, project manager).

On the other hand, I took a deliberate decision to make 30 October 2018 the final date of the research. Whatever has happened in the meantime, is not part of the research, not part of the

case. When I started the analytical phase, I *relay* had no information at all about the case, the research field, in that period. If my friends started to speak about a related topic, I left the room or I asked them not to discuss it in my presence.

The research case has thus been further narrowed: **Development of dialogue in the ANSP between Unit B management and technical staff in the context of change under the p-SHIFT project from the start of the project (2011) to October 2018.**

Due to the distinct data survey periods (the dates of the interviews), my research can be considered quasi-longitudinal, but my **approach is basically retrospective**: I analysed the retrospective narratives of the interviewees. The retrospective methodology is definitely preferable in the interpretative, understanding-oriented approaches, because such approaches focus on individual perceptions and *their individual and collective interpretations*, and not on the distortion-free facts, correlations and events. However, “the assignment of meaning is always a posteriori” (Gelei, 2002, p.168, based in Risberg, 1999).

5.3.4 Research questions reloaded in the light of the specific case

Now that the specific case and its scope are known, I will reformulate my research questions presented in the previous section. These questions are the starting point for the interview questions (see Section 5.4), and they represented the foci of my analysis (Chapter 6). **My finalised research questions are thus the following:**

- I. What is the individual and collective meaning of dialogue in the context of change under the ANSP p-SHIFT project for the technical staff of Unit B, directly affected by the change? What is the *first-order dialogue construction* among them in the p-SHIFT change process?
Why? How has it emerged?
Are small-community-specific or maybe *occupational-cultural-level (organisational-unit-level) interpretations* created? *How?* Does a local, common interpretation emerge? Incidentally, what fragmented *semantic micro-community interpretations* does dialogue have? If such semantic micro-communities exist, do they coincide with any groups defined by the occupational or other sub-cultures (e.g. top management – non-top management)?
How do these semantic micro-communities, if any, *relate to each other*? How do they interact, what maintains them, their differences, fragmentation?
Who has what *explicit or implicit interest* in maintaining this fragmentation?
- II. What are the *relationships* between the technical staff directly affected by the p-SHIFT change in the ANSP characterised by? Why? What (quality of) *understanding* has been achieved in the ANSP among the technical staff of Unit B affected directly by the p-SHIFT change? Why?

How does the technical staff of Unit B, directly concerned by the p-SHIFT change, describe the relationships / connections that had evolved among them? How do they experience them and their characteristics? Do they feel understood? Why? Why not? What do they think about understanding other players? Why?

- III. What is the relationship between the already existing second-order constructions and the local first-order ones? What do the latter strengthen and weaken, how do they expand, differentiate, specify or maybe destroy the constructions of the social science theories? And, vice versa, can what has emerged among the players be considered dialogue from a theoretical point of view? Is it possible that although the actual relationships / processes are experienced as dialogue, they do not meet the relevant requirements set by the theories?
- IV. What have I learned about the phenomenon of dialogue in the context of organisational change? What have I learned about the possibilities of understanding, co-action and change?

5.4 Detailed research report

This section presents in detail my *further* methodological decisions and their rationale. In qualitative research, validity is demonstrated first and foremost by full transparency (Guba & Lincoln, 1996; Maxwell, 2005; Mason, 2005), warranting the following considerations:

- what interview questions were formulated on the basis of which research questions and why (validity)
- presentation of not only the research in general, but also of the treatment of any preliminary assumptions/expectations before or during data collection (reliability)
- accurate and detailed presentation of the data generation process (reliability)
- what have I done in the analytical phase to remain sensitive to contrary/different evidence (validity))
- guarantees of accuracy (use of dictaphone, transcripts etc.).

The data survey methodology most suitable for my research topic and questions is the interview and, in particular, the semi-structured interview. My research questions essentially target the semantic micro-communities; my goal is to understand the actual, local, individual situation from the point of view of the individual – there is a perfect fit between the research question and the methodology (interview). “The main reason for conducting qualitative interviews is to understand ‘how individuals construct the meaning and significance of their situations... from ... the complex personal framework of beliefs and values, which they have developed over their lives in order to help explain and predict events in their world.’” (Burgess quoted by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe in Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe , 1993, p. 73,)

Unexpectedly, **I had an opportunity also for participatory observation**. During the interviews, one of the managers mentioned that I could watch them at work during the first ‘live’ operation, when the aircraft were controlled for 5 days from the new unit, in October 2017. This was the first live testing of the p-SHIFT technology. I spent half a day there, and I will dedicate a separate subsection to presenting this methodological experience.

5.4.1 Sampling strategy, data collection: preparation and execution of the interviews

My research methodology obviously requires *qualitative sampling* (Gelei, 2002), i.e. finding a small sample embedded in the context, theoretically oriented, and deliberately, purposefully chosen, since the focus here is on the phenomenon itself (dialogue in the context of change). The case itself is a well-defined system (Stake, 1996), and as its scope within the research field became clearer and clearer, so did sampling take shape step by step.

I considered the following for *sampling* applied for the interviews (sampling strategy). It was important to speak with controllers for and against the change. An executive drew my attention to the fact that the opinions of some had changed, so I wanted to speak also to someone who experienced that. There was a further criterion differentiating the controllers: a panel of controllers was assigned a key role in the change. As an internal expert project team (called Panther Team, PanTeam for short, by the project management) they expressed their opinion on every proposal, and sometimes they also had to draw up technological implementation proposals themselves. I tried to take that into account, i.e. to find, if possible, supporters, opponents and persons whose opinion had changed among them.

Of course, it was important to speak to the leaders (leader of Unit B and his quasi-deputy). There was a change in management during the project, so in addition to the actual leader, I had to interview also the manager who had launched the whole change. The deputy leader was the same person throughout, and he was also interviewed.

I interviewed the project manager, but since he left the company in an early phase of my research, I also interviewed his successor. I made an interview with an HR expert who held a training course for Unit B controllers concerned as a part of change management. Because of the weight of the trade union, I considered it important to interview a Unit B controller holding a responsible position in the trade union. ***A total of 14 interviews were made, 8 with Unit B controllers (covering one quarter of the staff there). All managers of Unit B were interviewed.***

I compiled the sample together with a Unit B manager and the project managers according to the above criteria. The first interview was conducted on 8 August 2017 and the last on 30 October 2018. Implications of this time span have been discussed in more detail in the previous section.

I conducted a total of 14 interviews of **63 minutes on average**. The shortest one lasted for 31 minutes and the longest for 91. Two double interviews were made.

One of the **double interviews** was requested by an interviewee I selected. First I was afraid this was a sign of lack of trust in me. During the interview, however, I found out that the two persons concerned were very good friends who kept discussing the whole change project and their attitude to it among themselves. This double interview will have special relevance later, since the dynamic between the interviewees, perceptible during the interview, demonstrated an important, organisation-level phenomenon related to change and dialogue.

The other double interview was requested by me: I wanted to interview the project manager and the internal expert in charge of change management (who was later appointed project manager after his predecessor left the company) together. This was the first interview I conducted under the research, and it was not meant to yield in-depth knowledge, but rather to provide an insight into the framework structure: the history of the project, the change process and the players. Separate interviews were planned with both of them at a later date, but since the project manager left the organisation, I could only realise that with the expert (who became the new project manager)

I saw no difference between the single and double interviews in terms of the atmosphere of trust and depth either then or in retrospect, while reading the transcripts. The double interviews had a more intensive dynamic, more information (data) came to the surface per unit of time. For the same reason, I consider it a more difficult genre and I will avoid it in the future if possible.

The interviews were **recorded**, with the consent of the interviewees. The records were then **transcribed**.

Before each interview, I provided a brief summary of the following:

- (1) The PhD process and where I was in it
- (2) A brief sketch of my research topic, in 2-3 sentences, focusing on the technical aspect
- (3) Sampling logic (why I chose the interviewee concerned, who helped me choose the names, what I expected of the interviews and the interviewees)
- (4) Complete anonymity of interviews stressed (I would use quotes in the thesis exclusively if the interviewee could not be identified through it in any way)
- (5) Further phases of the research, issue of public disclosure included
- (6) Finally, request for using a dictaphone and promise that it can be stopped any time
- (7) Before each interview, I explained that although I had worked in the industry before, i.e. I am familiar with their world, I might ask interpretative questions that might sound strange to them, because “you should know that”. However, since I was present as researcher this time, I could not take anything for granted, irrespective of my past experience.

This was a relatively long *introduction* taking up a minimum of 10 minutes, because I was also asked several questions (mainly concerning Points 1, 3, 5 above). In retrospect, however, I can say that it was crucial, because it has contributed, in my opinion, to the consolidation of a certain level of trust. A clear context and an understanding of the situation and the roles, as well as my and the other's limits and objectives are the bases of honest and open conversation/dialogue.

I was asked to switch off the *dictaphone* on two occasions. What is more important, *all interviews raised topics where I felt I should offer to switch it off*. In 5 interviews, the interviewees thought this option over for minutes. That is, in half of the 14 interviews, the dictaphone was quite a challenge for the interviewees when they discussed certain topics. I consider this an important indicator of the tension and sincerity of the interviews, and it has confirmed my decision to leave top management out, since such situations arose without exception in connection with questions concerning the latter.

In 10 of the cases, the *place* of the interviews was the ANSP headquarters, typically offices where I could be alone with the interviewees. There were two exceptions: one interview took place at the ANSP library, a more public place, but as it was empty, the openness of the venue could not influence the honest atmosphere of trust. In the other case, the venue was the bigger conference room which, unfortunately, the staff there started to rearrange at about the middle of the interview. This, however, seemed to disturb only my concentration, and it was a hindrance when the transcript of the interview was made. I repeatedly proposed to the interviewees to go and look for another venue, but they were so engrossed in their topics that they would not hear about it. As for the external venues, neither the café, nor the pastry-shop was a good choice: the noise dulled my concentration and was also a considerable problem when the transcript was made.

I perceived no difference in confidence levels depending on whether an external or internal venue was used, despite my preliminary assumption that interviewees would be more open at a neutral external place. But no such effect was perceivable: all interviewees were open and had strong emotions concerning the topic; they wanted to speak about it and managed to completely disregard the venue. This *attitude* was typical of all of my interviewees, without exception: they *wanted* to speak about this topic. Impulses, anger, tension, disappointment, withdrawal dilemmas and the tense openness of the wish to understand were all strong emotions generated by the topic that made them reveal themselves. I will discuss this in more detail during the analysis; the reason why I refer to it now is its relevance for the interview situation. The interviewees were open and sincere, some actually bluntly honest. I attribute this honesty to three factors: 1) the appropriate introduction, 2) we used to be colleagues in this industry (this is highly important in air traffic), and 3) their strong emotions concerning the p-SHIFT project.

5.4.2 Participatory observation

The case study methodology does not make it imperative to apply several data survey techniques, but it is commendable to use several data sources to enhance reliability (Stake, 1996; Yin, 1994). Although it was not in the plans, I had the opportunity to observe the controllers of Unit B working at their new place.

I conducted the first interviews between July and September 2017. At that time, I interviewed also the then leaders of Unit B. They suggested that I could take a look at the new place if I was curious to see it in operation. I spent half a day there, in October 2017³⁹.

I prepared the *observation criteria* based on the relevant theory and not the interviews conducted by then, but they corresponded to the foci of the interviews. I arrived with a notebook (*field diary*), and took lots of notes in the beginning of the observation session, but as I got more and more involved, I only wrote down the most meaningful sentences. I noted down attitudes and sayings as I recalled them at the end of the day, in retrospect.

Work in the operational room or the tower cabin, as well as entry and presence there are subject to strict aviation safety regulations. The general rule is that the attention of controllers must not be diverted during work. Thus my presence there started as observation. The DSV (deputy supervisor, quasi group leader) had been informed of my arrival in advance, and told the controllers why I would be present (*open researcher's role: declared presence of the researcher*). I sat down in the back, the rear section of the operation room, with the notebook in my hand, but within earshot of the controllers. The DSV sat at approximately the same place. First the staff did not pay attention to me, I did not feel my presence having a distorting effect. As I recorded in my notes, "basically good atmosphere, normal work, teasing, jokes instead of gossiping about those present".

I observed the interactions of those at the new place (5 persons), but they were also in continuous contact with colleagues at the old place providing so-called shadow service. Communication between the two groups was basically about p-SHIFT, but typically not its technological aspects.

First the DSV addressed me, at a low voice to avoid disturbing the traffic controller colleagues. My presence turned into *participatory observation* already at that point. We did not only talk, but he involved me: he explained what was happening, how each device worked, what actually happened in the room and why, what the colleagues were speaking about. As we approached the working staff also physically, and traffic has diminished, more and more colleagues joined the discussion. Finally, I was sitting among them. Instead of the technology, the conversation was mainly not about the change and how they experienced it. I did not ask any questions, they told me things. But they obviously knew about my research and its topic, so this may have influenced their choice of topic. Anyway, I obtained lots of data on their individual and collective attitudes to the p-SHIFT project. I even acquired an understanding about the group

³⁹ With a more specific date, the names of the controllers in service at Unit B that day could be identified. This would compromise anonymity, so I will not be more specific.

dynamic within the unit, triggered by the change. This understanding cannot be considered general, since I only saw one group on duty. Later on, however, my experience there confirmed the patterns I identified during the analysis of the interviews.

All things considered, I experienced a highly effective and rich data collection technique in the form of participatory observation. *Real time* observation, the *case being visible in its context* and the fact that I got an insight into *interpersonal behaviour* made data acquired there highly important – if only due to my research questions. It is equally true, however, that this is a rather time-consuming method. (Huws and Dahlmann, 2007; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1993)

Since this was a single occasion, I consider participatory observation a *complementary methodology* here. In retrospect and considering my research questions, I think I should have relied more forcefully on it: I should have observed 3-4 more teams and conducted my group and individual interviews on that basis. This methodological procedure would have fitted my research questions best.

5.4.3 Interview questions: from research questions to the reality of the case

My empirical research started out from the theoretical questions presented in Section 5.2. After identifying the specific case and defining its scope, I expressed my research questions in more specific terms in Section 5.3.4. I then had to subdivide the questions concerned, breaking them down into smaller partial questions, and moving further away from the theoretical aspects. As a matter of fact, I translated my questions to the language of the research field.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	SUB-QUESTIONS	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
WHAT DOES DIALOGUE MEAN TO THE ORGANISATIONAL PLAYERS AFFECTED BY THE SPECIFIC CHANGE PROCESS, BY CHANGE?	Opening	When and how did you first get in touch with the p-SHIFT change?
		How has your relationship with this process of change developed? [How are you connected to the process of change? What would be the ideal participation/linkage??]
		Who are affected by the change? How?
		How are they related to the process of change?
	What does dialogue mean to the organisational players affected by the specific change process, by change?	How would you describe dialogue taking place in the p-SHIFT change process? What is dialogue in the p-SHIFT process of change <i>for you</i> ? What does it mean <i>for you</i> ?
	Does a local, common interpretation evolve? What is the first-order dialogue construction in the chosen research field?	Analytical task, not interview question:
	What fragmented, semantic micro-communities are defined by dialogue? Do the semantic micro-communities, if any, coincide with the sub-cultures?	Analytical task, not interview question:
	How do the semantic micro-communities interact, what maintains them, what maintains the differences and fragmentation? Who has what interest in this fragmentation?	In your opinion, how do others relate to dialogue? How does this affect you?

WHAT ARE THE <i>RELATIONSHIPS</i> OF ORGANISATIONA L PLAYERS AFFECTED BY THE CHANGE CHARACTERISED BY?	How do the organisational players affected by the change describe their interrelationships/linkages themselves?	How would you describe the interrelationships of those affected by the p-SHIFT process of change (drawing)?
	How do they experience these interrelationships and their characteristics?	How are you affected by what you were talking about (i.e. these interrelationships, their quality)?
	What is the relationship between the already existing second-order constructions and the local first-order constructions?	Analytical task, not interview question:
WHAT (QUALITY) OF <i>UNDERSTANDING</i> IS ACHIEVED AMONG THE ORGANISATIONA L PLAYERS AFFECTED BY THE CHANGE?	Do they feel understood? Why? Why do they (not) feel understood?	What is your opinion of the quality of understanding among the players affected by the change? Do they understand each other? Do they understand themselves? Why?
	What do they think of whether they understand the other players? Why?	Analytical task, not interview question:
	What is the relationship between the already existing second-order constructions and the local first-order constructions?	Analytical task, not interview question:
	What do first-order constructions strengthen and weaken, how do they expand, differentiate, specify or maybe destroy the social science theories?	

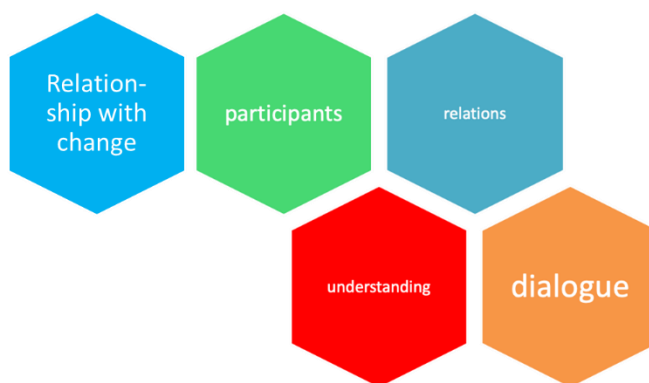
16. Table. Correlations between research questions and interview questions. Author's compilation.

his “translation” or “conversion” was not a single act, but a process: I experienced from interview to interview how *I should have formulated my questions* to help the interviewees understand, understand correctly and as thoroughly as possible, what the question pertained to. How did I know it was (well) understood? Because the question launched a conversation; there was no need to insert an interpretative phase before the conversation. An interpretative phase can take lots of time from an interview, but sometimes it is obviously needed, because the interviewee asks questions back, clearly indicates he does not understand the questions.

Sometimes it is less obvious, because he starts to answer, but I must realise he/she does not answer the question.

The *order and/or wording of the questions was modified* on the basis of the experience of the first interviews. Questions strongly relying on theoretical constructs (“dialogue”, “understanding”) sounded so strange in the interviews that they had a negative effect also on the more confident atmosphere we managed to create. Therefore, I left these to the end of the interview and used other words. For example, instead of “connecting”, connection or relationship, or I reformulated the question: What is your relationship with each other like? Instead of “quality of understanding”, e.g. “in your opinion, what does he see of how you are thinking about the project? Do you think he understands you? Do you understand him?” I also experienced that as I got further away from my theoretical research in time, I found it easier to let go of the theoretical constructions. It became easier to reformulate them, to stress their essence and use the words of the interviewees to move on.

My efforts to find answers to my questions by using the words of the interviewees, that is, the local language, were assisted by one more thing: the “conversion” process did not simply entail a reformulation of the questions, but it has also *reduced their list*, so much so that by the time of the last interviews, instead of a list of questions, I arrived with only 5 expressions, corresponding, basically, to the foci of my research.



15. Figure. Foci of the empirical research. Author's figure..

The function of the 5 foci in my research was to be able to concentrate on my research objectives and at the same time understand the semantic world of the interviewee. I experienced two things during my first interviews. (1) I lost contact with the interviewee, his world, because I applied strong theoretical terms that he had not experienced, could not relate to. In these cases, I had to re-establish my relationship with the interviewee as a precondition of their honest openness. I lost (lots of) time that way. (2) Where I “let go” of the theoretical constructions, I became deeply engrossed in the interviewees’ reality, but I lost touch with the real subject matter of my research. I felt swept away by the interviewees; we remained within the scope of the broader topic (dialogue, change), but lost our “handhold”. Such endless drifting, however, cannot lead to comprehensive, deep and genuine understanding.

Theoretical constructions were not the only thing that hindered data collection during the research. The *research field itself implied an extra difficulty as I used to be part of it*. I had to be on the alert: although I often seemed to understand the local language typical at the organisation, this was a trap for the researcher. My personal experience of the local culture, conditions, relationships and concepts could well lead to distortion and errors. Therefore, I had to make special efforts to eliminate such effects while conducting and also analysing the interviews. I could not treat as evidence the words, nor any statement about the local conditions. I applied several techniques to overcome this problem:

1. **RESEARCH DIARY:** Already before the first interview, I started to write a personal report that functioned as a mirror of my own assumptions, preliminary beliefs and emotional attitude. What do I relate to the topic, the interviewee, the organisation? What do I think? Feel? Unfortunately, I was not persistent enough in writing my research diary. I documented the participatory observation session closely, and recorded certain things before and after it, but then I stopped using it. This had organisational and time management reasons; it was not a technical decision. In retrospect, I feel its lack: I could have used it as secondary source (I could have analysed, in particular, my impressions recorded after an interview), and it would have been essential also for weighting the validity criteria (validity, reliability, accuracy).
2. **RE-READING/SECONDARY READING OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS:** In the second round, instead of the content, I focus on the interview as act of communication. How did I ask my questions? How did I use words? Did I consider a keyword, a statement evident? Typically, in the interviews conducted in the autumn of 2017, i.e. much closer in time to defending the draft thesis, I used definitely more theoretical terms to ask questions. In such cases, the interviewees almost always started asking questions back. By the time of the autumn 2018 interviews, I was further away from theory, and constructed the conversations more from the words of the interviewees. Consequently, these interviews went smoother. In the future, I would have to spend much more energy on the quality of questioning: in the early interviews, I used very many closed (yes/no) questions, whereas later on I typically either corrected myself (“Let me re-word the question”) or used open questions from the start. My familiarity with the research field was no problem. Typically, it was the interviewees who referred to it and in such cases I clarified the situation, e.g.:

“I have certain guesses, of course, as I used to work in this industry. As researcher, however, I do not address these issues. As if I knew nothing.”

3. **PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEWS:** I must tune my attitude to the other person; my behaviour should be defined by being interested in the other, his worlds, ideas, emotions. The will to understand him. Not as a person, and that is where focusing becomes important, but as an individual experienced in dialogue. This is important for decoupling, but also to let the first-order constructions surface as such in the data collection phase, to reduce the distorting effects of second-order constructions.

I was surprised by the relevance of the third technique. It had seemed relatively simple and obvious at first sight. But it was not easy to achieve, nor to maintain it. With time, as more and

more interviews were completed, it became easier. It was difficult when we were sitting in a noisy environment (confectionery shop, café) or there were several interviews one after the other. Sitting over from one interview to another made it very difficult to get attuned to the next interviewee. My experience, however, was that if I could prepare emotionally for the interview situation and I focused more intensively on the other person, that in itself reduced the effects of second-order constructions and my bias due to previous experience. Reading through the interview transcripts, I felt this has been confirmed: I knew which were the interviews where I could not get attuned to the next one, and where the right circumstances were missing. In these interviews, I asked more leading or theoretising questions that I had to correct later (previously, I called this the interpretative phase) – or I could not use the answers in the analysis.

5.4.4 Analytical phase

During **data analysis**, in the **interpretative phase**, the researcher has three tasks: to structure the data, sum up obvious meanings (contents) and unfold hidden meaning (underlying content) (Kvale, 1996)

The most frequent data analysis techniques are coding and labelling: a system of categories is established, and the interview transcripts as texts are coded according to these categories (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1993; Kvale, 1996). There are also other data analysis techniques, namely the following (according to Gelei (2002, p.181) and Kvale (1996, pp.187-204; 210-228)):

1. *Meaning condensation*: reducing the meaning of a given text/paragraph into more concise statements;
2. *Meaning categorisation*: establishment of a system of categories and systematic coding;
3. *Narrative structuring*: analysis of the chronological and social structure of the text (as narrative);
4. *Meaning interpretation*: unfolding of deeper, more implicit meanings by getting behind the surface phenomena, re-interpreting the original message;
5. *Ad hoc methods*: a combination of the foregoing.

According to Gelei (2002), the interpretative paradigm is matched by meaning interpretation. I chose this method of data analysis, but I also applied meaning categorisation.

In the context of **meaning categorisation**, I analysed the interview transcripts according to the recurrent topics and patterns of several interviews. Then I used these categories as codes to re-analyse the interviews. This was important since *the objective of the research was to explore and understand local meaning* and this, in turn, is constructed out of individual interpretations, i.e. the individual interpretations of those directly affected by the p-SHIFT project and in particular the interviewees among them, and through the dynamic between them.

The same local meaning is being explored in the context of **meaning interpretation**, but a different strategy is applied there. In this case, I analysed the interview transcripts by focusing on the world of the interviewee and sketching his individual reading in the first place. Then, as I proceeded from interview to interview, I identified the semantic micro communities and defined their common interpretation. When I understood the micro semantics, I could take a look at the processes going on among these semantic micro-communities from a higher level, to understand how *they created together what was happening, i.e. organisational reality*.

5.5 Quality assurance: validity problem and solutions

From the point of view of validity, the crucial question we can ask about any piece of scientific writing (article, book, thesis) is *why we should believe the writer/researcher all that*. How should I as reader know that the results are accurate? (Maxwell, 2005) Validity is no other than guaranteed reliability and accuracy. This short section interprets these concepts and reflects on the validity of the present research.

Let me make a brief detour first: the quality assurance criteria at play are the heritage of the positivist paradigm, of mainstream social and human science research. For researches adhering to other paradigms, it is quite a challenge to interpret these quality criteria (validity, reliability, accuracy). Speaking of the quality criteria of the constructivist paradigm, for example, Guba and Lincoln (1996) speak rather of trustworthiness, credibility and misunderstanding, opposing these to the criteria of the positivist (i.e. traditional) paradigm (validity, reliability, objectivity). With due respect to joining a broader scientific community by my research, I will rather aim at identifying the local interpretation of established, customary terms. What does validity (reliability, accuracy) mean in a qualitative research? How can I guarantee it in my own research?

Validity is guaranteed in qualitative research by the strong and continuous, self-reflective presence of the researcher, rather than by procedures or methods. (Maxwell, 2005) The quantitative method is allegedly objective, that is, it assumes that re-measuring the same thing by the same device by someone else would yield identical results (Mason, 2005) – that is, the research is independent of the person of the researcher. In qualitative research, the researcher himself is also an instrument, and that turns over the validity/reliability measure as interpreted in the quantitative procedure. This is not to say that validity and reliability should not be expected in qualitative research, only that they are reinterpreted and more difficult to seize and call to account.

In practice, guaranteeing validity means that the researcher tries to filter out any elements that distort the interpretation and consequently reduce validity. Based on Maxwell (2005) and Mason (2005), I compiled a list of questions to check the validity and reliability of qualitative research as an aid for self-testing my research. The table below presents my researcher efforts to reduce any validity-decreasing elements.

RESEARCH PHASE	Validity-checking question	Has it been presented in the thesis?
DATA GENERATION STAGE	What is the research question?	In addition to presenting my research questions, I also demonstrated how they developed/were adapted to the given case in view of the research case.
	Validity and reliability become relative in qualitative as compared to quantitative research. For, validity related to the research objectives and circumstances, it can be evaluated in relation to them.	
	What is the objective of the research? What does it want to measure? To analyse?	Presented in the research report.
INTERPRETATION STAGE	How does sampling relate to the research question?	The sampling strategy, its rationale and relationship with the research objective have been presented.
	Is sampling relevant? (Size, other features)	See previous point-
	Does the publication/thesis present the data generation process?	The data generation stage has been presented in detail, its difficulties included.
	Does the data generation process match the research question?	It has been shown how the two match.
	What guarantees the accuracy and thoroughness of data recording? Are the interviews recorded? Are interview transcripts fed back to interviewees – if such transcripts have been made?	Recordings and literal transcripts have been made. I presented the difficulties in detail.
	What guarantees the completeness of the data: Have <i>literal</i> transcripts been made of the interviews?	Literal transcripts have been made of the interviews.
THEORY-MAKING STAGE	Have preliminary assumptions, expectations, prejudices been explored before the start of data analysis or the start of the empirical research?	I reflected on the assumptions. In the analytical phase, I reflect on these assumptions several times.
	How did you treat their preliminary assumptions during interpretation/while drawing up the explanations?	I applied permanent individual reflection to ensure validity. The research diary has also helped me do that.
	Correlation between explanation and research question: Did they explain what they wanted to explain?	I gave itemised answers to the research questions in view of the analyses.

What happens to different data/counter-examples?	Typically, I simply presented them to the reader, leaving it to him to judge them.
Are alternative explanations, e.g. results of previous research or of researches by others or previous experience of interviewees presented?	Partly, in the chapter presenting the aviation business.
Has feedback been requested on the results from people knowledgeable about/familiar with the topic? From people unfamiliar with the topic?	<p>This function is fulfilled by the opponents and the thesis supervisor.</p> <p>I sent the analytical part to a colleague who used to work in the aviation industry to provide feedback mainly on whether the degree of anonymity was sufficient.</p>

17. Table. Checklist for the validity of qualitative research. Author's compilation.

6 Results

After reading the interview transcripts I obtained an accurate picture of the clearly identifiable, distinct, semantic micro communities. At the same time, I realised which patterns and topics recurred in most interviews or were important in a given semantic community.

- 1) The following **micro-communities** or **common semantic communities** can be identified in the p-SHIFT project: within the groups of *top management*, *project management*, *Unit B management (middle managers)*, *Unit B staff*, 3 distinct semantic communities could be identified. These micro-communities would not necessarily be the same if we focused on other topics, other changes. Thus, importantly, these are not communities that are given from the outset, but groups I could identify based on the analysis as existing / constructed only in the cross-section of the p-SHIFT project. These are semantic communities that partly coincide with certain sub-cultures: those of top management and employees, and of experts. I will present their perspectives separately when discussing the results. When I understood the semantic micro communities, I could take a look at and understand their interactions from a higher level, and saw that they created collectively what was happening, i.e. organisational reality.
- 2) **Patterns are the recurrent foci of the perspectives:** these are topics my interviewees repeatedly talked about without any prompting. *What did they speak about when I asked them about dialogue in the experienced in the context of the p-SHIFT change?* Of course, it was also exciting to analyse the answers and ask *what they did not speak about. What was missing? What were they silent about?* The various semantic communities interpret and narrate the patterns concerned in different ways:
 - a. *role of the staff in the dialogue,*
 - b. *role of the Panther Team⁴⁰ in the dialogue process*
 - c. *role of Unit B management in the dialogue process*
 - d. *impact of top management (“C” level) on the dialogue process*
 - e. *role of project management in the dialogue process*
 - f. *role of trade union in the dialogue process*

To ensure traceability, I decided to present the results by focus point, but discuss each topic according to the respective readings of the various semantic communities.

6.1 Role of employees (staff) in the dialogue

The present Unit B is located far away from the ANSP headquarters and represents a separate world. This is the common interpretation expressed by managers, controllers working

⁴⁰ For the staff working at Unit B, the p-SHIFT project materialised when project management and Unit B management set up a 10-strong expert team. The members of the team were controllers working at Unit B, not in executive position; the team was called Panther Team (PanTeam) under the project. For more detail, see Section 6.2.

at Unit B or the project manager: they all spoke to me about the local semantic community of the Unit B staff the same way.

“...this is an isle-plant. At 6:30 a.m. (...) the shift change [*of Unit B workers*] starts from the ANSP, and at 7:30 p.m., they return there. Until then nobody sees [*those working at Unit B*]. (...) In recent years, not even [*Unit B managers*] have been there (...). They were rarely seen there. Practically, it is fully isolated... a small state within a state.” (Roger, controller⁴¹)

“[*Unit B*] is like a poor studded dog (...). From time to time, we get some leftovers.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“Controllers [*working at Unit B*] love their work. They like to be there; on the one hand, they are a little authoritarian, on the other, they can feel free, they are independent and what do I know. (...) And the work environment itself. So it is perfect for them as it is (...), this is what they love.” (Maurice, project manager)

“... I would not like to leave [*the old Unit B*] myself. (...) It is a different feeling, this is the emotional part. I think there is almost 100 % agreement on that. (...) That is, it is good to be there.” (Elijah, PanTeam member, controller)

“A controller [*working at Unit B*] is emotionally attached to the profession, and air traffic control is only a part of it. A very big part is [*Unit B*] itself. The physical building, being there, the freedom there, separateness. (...) The ANPS is somewhere, at a distance, on the edge of the horizon – but they are Unit B.” (Ben, middle manager)

In this separate world, controllers are locked up together. They work in a total of 5 small groups (of 5-6 persons each, plus the group leader). The composition of each group is permanent, and they work together in one shift (12-hour day and 12-hour night shifts). Thus the staff of Unit B represents a closed world composed of even smaller micro-teams, 5 in all. Controllers working at Unit B regularly spend longer periods of time with the same 4-5 other people – and they will talk, intentionally or not. This is important for my topic because, ***due to being locked up together, regular conversation about the change emerges within the staff without any special change management action***. I did not examine whether these micro-teams represented separate semantic communities. I had interviewees from each of the small groups, but not more than 1-2 by team. The interviews did not identify these small teams as separate semantic communities. I have found the fault line creating semantic micro communities elsewhere among them.

“Probably all spoke about it with their team mates. (...) In our group this was a lively topic.” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

“But lots of communication [*among controllers*] that is usual: only when they are among themselves.” (Christian, project manager)

“They have spoken about it [*i.e. the project*], and this is a topic, because they keep discussing it when they are among themselves, and thus (...) a little info enters the system and they discuss it from every side among themselves.” (Maurice, project manager)

⁴¹ For the sake of anonymity, interviewees are referred to by common English names as aliases. I additionally indicated their role in the project: middle manager, project manager, controller. There are also references to membership in the expert team: “PanTeam member”.

“Anyway, I can hardly imagine that say X or Y then returns to his groups and has some experience but would not speak about what he saw, what happened, with the others.” (Aaron, middle manager)

This separate world of B Unit workers had also other effects on the changes. The examination of the p-SHIFT project as case has shown the following specific feature of the micro-community: *they create and nurture a B Unit reading of the world around them*, the organisation, the top management, the change. Besides the dominant narrative, *secondary or counter-readings can only emerge at individual level* and these *do not constitute a community*. For, *those who disagree are marginalised by the community of the dominant narrative*: they are expelled from the community.

“I do not agree with what the very ardent opponent colleagues [*are saying*]. (...) I do not usually say that, because they would lynch me for it⁴² ...” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

“This is rather, as I see it, not about defending yourself against some external enemy or external threat, but about belonging to a group. The herd spirit. The school of fish. All strive to remain inside.” (Tom, middle manager)

“If they want to freak somebody out, beyond a certain point they will certainly do it. (...) Look at him, he can be put down. You can go after him, deliberately freak him out, that’s for sure. You start to continuously excuse yourself and everyone is driving in the opposite direction in your lane. Who can stand that?” (Elijah, PanTeam member, controller)

“And there were colleagues in this team who admitted, face to face, that as a matter of fact there was no problem with this [*with p-SHIFT*]. It is possible to work in it. It will even be good. (...) But they would not say so explicitly.” (Ben, middle manager)

Once a dominant reading emerges within the group, it is very difficult to challenge that. It is emotionally stressful, and not all would undertake it. *Individuals respond to that by seclusion*, and the **micro-community becomes fragmented: small isles of individuals** emerge.

In this narrow, closed micro-community where the participants are in constant interaction, certain **fault lines** can be identified in connection with the p-SHIFT change. The divide is whether *the isolated controllers retain a certain degree of (or: any) openness to each other and to dialogue in the context of the p-SHIFT change*.

I could identify three types of persons on the basis of the interviews:

- controller, *open* to dialogue initially, in the beginning of the project, but closing all doors later due to experience in the meantime:

“...I was (...) say shocked by that and I haven’t been in a good mood since then. And I am thinking, if we continue the project (...), then I say I have done everything that could be done so far. I accept responsibility also for what did not turn out well. But then let [*someone else*] take over my place and see what it is like to do it.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“We should have kept aloof from the very start. Already from the idea itself, then f.ck them, let them eat what they cooked. Let them eat it.” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

⁴² The treatment of strong expressions, often four-letter words, was a problem during the analysis of the results. I used ... in obscene words, but I considered it important to keep them in the text, because they depict the strong emotional content and the impulses of the interviewees.

“I think by the time [*we got involved*] the point that everyone contested in the beginning has already been decided... the room has been designated. Everyone took a look and said what is this, it cannot be done there. [*Management answered:*] <<But we’ll make it there >>. And then, of course, everyone was just standing there, saying what, not even the foundations are important enough? That’s it, settled, do that. Then who would think we would really make efforts to make things the way they should be in any other fields later?” (Robin, controller)

“[...*it was derailed*] when they said this was the new unit. And we said no. And they said yes, sure. You know, what determines the whole thing is the premises.. (...) If they failed to invest sufficient energy and time already there... [*I understand that*] the time constraint was extremely important. They knew they had to be ready by a certain time. Then, of course, I cannot communicate with my staff, taking into consideration [*what they say*].” (Roger, controller)

- controller *perceived* by the others as *aloof* from the start:

“The emotional attitude to Unit B is brutally perceptible. (...) there’s an emotional approach and an intellectual one. As for the emotional, I completely agree, I do not wish to leave Unit B either. (...) And among those who do not want it and would not like to move, I think the majority (...) cannot just make a cut, saying now I answer how working from here could be solved. When a questionnaire is laid in front of them, the answers are dominated by emotions.” (Elijah, PanTeam member, controller)

“Only [*to let us understand them*] they should be receptive. But so long as visceral rejection prevails, it is not certain that there is a will to be receptive.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

Some (...) retired into their shells at the first moment and decided it was not suitable. (...) they retired into their shells completely (...) Sooner or later, they poison the whole group.” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

- controller *open* to the dialogue process to some extent:

“Some people consent to using this [*communication*] channel, i.e. if I go there and ask a question, they answers. If I send out a questionnaire, they complete,s it. That is, some consent.” (Christian, project manager)

“My stance was that if they had decided it, it was inevitable, we could not alter it. However, if a change like that would be implemented some time, I would very much like to be part of it (...), eliminate things that do not have a place there.” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

Persons **PERCEIVED BY THE OTHERS AS BEING ALOOF SINCE THE START OF THE p-SHIFT PROJECT** constitute a more or less *uniform semantic community*. They **do not consider interaction** between themselves and other actors (other staff, PanTeam members, middle managers, top managers, project managers) in the context of the p-SHIFT change **meaningful communication**. They miss real feedback, meaningful answers to their propositions. **They have the feeling that not even their questions and the problems or risks they point out are understood**. They receive no answers or if they do they are incomprehensible for them.

“But... no one is interested in our opinion. Anyway, no one is really interested in our opinion.” (Hans, controller)

“And it would be dialogue if They took into account what we asked. From their point of view, this is a success story, because we have already worked from here for more than one day. Practically, we have solved everything (...). Only (...) with our routine, that we have been here for 25 years and such, with this routine, we do the work. (...) And when you work, they risk your professional service license. But (...) we won’t share the risks if something happened.” (James, controller)

“...as if your spouse brought home a woman,... And you tell [him], now what do you think to bring a woman here? This brown? And so next day he brings home a blonde: Now is she more to your taste?”
(James, controller)

This was the reading I identified as the **dominant narrative** concerning the p-SHIFT project. **Those who share the dominant narrative think they are not understood, and respond by locking themselves up – not as a community, but as individuals.** Although a semantic community has been established, that is, they have a common interpretation of the situation surrounding them, in October 2018 their *conversations among themselves* were *not real dialogues*. *Rather common ventilation events*. The double interview was an excellent example. Several times, I witnessed the phenomenon that apparently conversing interviewees were actually did **parallel monologues**. They did not pay attention to showing understanding to the other even in each other’s company. At the single interviews, it was the choice of words and the consistent and exclusive use of the first person singular that made the same clear to me.

OTHER STAFF MEMBERS perceive only aloofness. They do not understand why they “tighten up”, and in this sense **it is true that no understanding is achieved**. The **response to that is often impatience and reciprocal aloofness**.

“Researcher: ...I must ask this specifically, namely how do you speak about that among yourselves otherwise? When you sit down with these very locked up people?

Adam: It is impossible.

Researcher: Why?

Adam: (...) He is like that. You cannot do anything with him.

Researcher: How would you describe him? What does this depend on?

Adam: A d.c.k.” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

“These are guys who I don’t know if they want to see the correlations. (...) Really, they are intelligent people, and cannot understand what things are about. (...) It’s better if I do not have to speak to him.”
(Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“...if he can understand it. But as I say (...) that I think (...) that none are adults. (...) put it rougher, none of them are (...) They have no emotional intelligence. (...) No brain intelligence. (...) Because they are not interested. (...) They do not want to think it over. It is even possible they would be alarmed if they started to think it over and realise that yes, it could be seen from that point, there may be some truth also in that. And it is possible they get frightened (...) and step on the brake.” (Elijah, PanTeam member, controller)

However, there is almost general agreement that what they perceive among the aloof persons is not visceral isolation, but **these people are in an emotional phase concerning the change, whereas the others are at the rational/professional level**.

“When they get questionnaires, the answers are predominated by this emotion. (...) the conversation is not serious. The conversation (...) is not serious, because it is motivated by emotion. (...) But they should start thinking. (...) They are not receptive. (...) It’s like asking what should I do to make the national football team play in the world championships finals next year. Nothing, because you cannot build a castle out of sh.t. (...) You can, but it is a brutally long process. (...) Lots of time. (...) I am impatient. What I understand already, I brutally cannot understand why the other cannot understand it as well.” (Elijah, PanTeam member, controller)

“Most people do not have a problem with the new technology, but with live control being done from the new Unit B. (...) This means that it is not the concept itself that is the problem. Not the technology, the system, but the emotional part that control will not take place there but here. (...) Maybe he does not know it himself. Maybe he does not know that his fear is essentially about that. (...) That he may think his main problem is that the counter is semi-circular, but as a matter of fact his problem is that he should come out of [Unit B]. (...) It is not certain they understand themselves.” (Ben, middle manager)

“Controllers working at Unit B are emotionally attached to the profession, and air traffic control is only part of that. A very big part is Unit B itself. The physical building, being there, the freedom, the isolation. (...) The ANPS is there somewhere, at a distance, on the edge of the horizon – but they are Unit B.” (Ben, middle manager)

It follows from the above that for them, it **does not qualify as being understood if they are in an emotional state, but the responses they get come from a rational/professional dimension**. This is not an adequate response for them and, therefore, they do not feel understood.

This dynamic has *led to the complete fragmentation* of an otherwise strong community, the staff of Unit B. By October 2018, there was no meaningful dialogue about the change within the small communities either; they had no meaningful connections with each other.

“An endless conversation. (...)” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

“We do nothing for this. (...) [*The change*] is important, but all expect the solution to come from another. [*In me*] something has snapped...” (Hans, controller)

“Now you cannot know what is on now. (...) All seem to get along with that, I believe.” (Robin, controller)

I had first-hand experience of the concrete group dynamical realisation of fragmentation. In October 2017, I had the opportunity to do participatory observation at the new Unit B in live operation (see Section 5.4). They were basically working, but in periods when the traffic smaller, the controllers staying inside conversed with each other. The following is a quote from my notes taken during my stay there:

“Basically good atmosphere, normal Unit B work on. Teasing each other, jokes, gossiping about others (not those present). p-SHIFT mentioned, some tension appears. Standing rigidly, focusing, when the predator picks up the scent, stands still, concentrates, listens intently. The team perceptibly falls apart, walls arise, not towards me, but towards each other. And all talk out of their respective bastions. Perceptible tension. Contrasts with joking, teasing, comradely comments.”

For me, the most important lesson was that a strong professional and human community is no guarantee for the establishment of real dialogue among its members. Similarly, it is not sufficient to aim at understanding, but this also has to be made visible – and this, in turn, requires **responses that are adequate to the condition of the other**.

As for its own responsibility in this situation, the **STAFF** was of the opinion that since Panther Team had been set up, the staff of Unit B was represented in shaping the change. Therefore, *they had no responsibility* in the given situation.

“They worked in it, They could express any opinion. The others have not seen it. We have not been involved in it. That is, the whole validation took place without the rest of the staff seeing it.” (Robin, controller)

“The victim’s role is a convenient position to take.” (James, controller)

I see a particular phenomenon here: self-exoneration, neglect of individual responsibility – ***we are represented, so we have no responsibility ourselves***. The *sense of community, the feeling of project ownership is missing* from the p-SHIFT project. On the side of the staff, this is a project that we are the victims of, even if the individual who joins it tries to exert an influence on it.

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT resonates to this narrative, ***identifying itself with the “other side” or the role of the “oppressor”***. This identification takes place even if they are also looking for their own, personal, responsibility in that the staff was *left out* of the project, and was *not involved* collectively. This **enhances the we/they reading**: the duality of they – those who had been left out, and we – who left them out. These two parallel readings **reinforce each other, raising ever higher walls** between the players.

“Thus the staff really, actually does not experience this p-SHIFT as a process, but receives excerpts only on a quarterly basis. And they do not experience it as a process. (...) How could it have been done a little bit better, more like a process, with everyone being part of it? (...) Because otherwise they do not see that. (...) And then the staff would become a little bit party to the management processes.” (Aaron, middle manager)

The interviews show that, **instead of agreement, common interests or common goals**, the **STAFF wants mutual understanding and concerted goals**.

“From the side of employees, you of course understand it. The employer has a different point of view. One understands also that.” (Robin, controller)

“...this is not a question of voting among the people. Management decides it. Higher considerations were at play here. (...) This thing had to be started, shoved down their throats somehow. Because just think if they made Unit B sit down to ask their opinion about coming in here to control. Everyone would have stood up and went home. That is (...) this could not be polled. Bluntly, it had to be decided and started. (...) it should have been done so that (...) we force it down the throat of the staff, then ask them not whether it should be done or not, but how it should be done.” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

“This is a business measure, like, but it is not certain that it would also enhance safety and efficiency. (...) I understand and accept lots of things. (...) The work schedules, the new Unit B etc. I understand the business issues in lots of fields. Only so long as I am a simple B Unit controller, I do not want these. (...) I do understand, but do not want it, because each step makes my situation worse. Obviously, if I were the suit’n tie guy, I would also press it through the staff, because that is in the interest of the company. Obviously, I look at the individual. Myself. How much free time I have, how much money for it, what are my working conditions like.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

They consider it obvious that employers / top management / managers have other interests than the employee /controller /professional level. I see a contradiction on the side of the staff: ***if the old Unit B is emotionally so very important for them, why do they stay aloof from a change that would alter the very bases of that?*** Why do they stick to the convenient “we are represented, so we have no responsibility” explanation?

“This [situation] is maybe like a Jacuzzi. ... a hot tub where it is good to sit. (...) We sit in the Jacuzzi, drink our cocktails, talk and grumble. And then we get out of the Jacuzzi, go home and in the next service shift, we sit back into the Jacuzzi and grumble again a bit.” (Roger, controller)

I call this the **convenient illusion of powerlessness**.

6.2 Role of the Panther Team in the dialogue process

For the staff of Unit B, the p-SHIFT project was created when project management and the management of Unit B set up a 10-strong expert team. The members of the team are controllers in non-management positions working in Unit B; under the project, the team is called Panther Team (PanTeam). Previously, the p-SHIFT change was discussed exclusively within a narrow group of executives, and the staff knew nothing about it.

“We attended an [international] conference where a foreign presenter said something with reference to the [ANSP] p-SHIFT solution. And as I say I knew nothing about that. I asked [a project member who was present] whether that was true. He said yes, of course, it was so. (...) And then I said don’t be silly, why don’t we know about this? (...) That’s really embarrassing. That we are sitting here, the four of us, and three of us are not in the project, know nothing about it, and you know everything about it. And a guy, a German or a Dutch one or what is worse someone from New Zealand tells you what the p-SHIFT solution of the [ANSP] is....” (Ben, manager)

Panther Team expected volunteering applicants. As for the mission, function and responsibility of PanTeam, I came across highly different interpretations. This marked difference was already indicative of the fact that *the function of the PanTeam was not coherent, clear and fixed*.

Both the PROJECT MANAGEMENT and the MANAGEMENT AND THE STAFF WORKING AT UNIT B think Panther Team *started out as a voluntary initiative*, but for lack of a sufficient number of applicants, further members were delegated unilaterally. **THE STAFF WORKING AT UNIT B** *considered pseudo-volunteering* a contradiction in terms that has *undermined its credibility* from the start of PanTeam. Both PanTeam and non-PanTeam member controllers see it like that.

“But this was not something voluntary, but by delegation. This is no dialogue. No co-working if someone has to be designated for it.” (Robin, controller)

“Then came that Panther Team had to be formed. No one wanted to apply for it.” (James, controller)

“...I told those about whom I knew [they were members] that this is awfully important, what do you know. Irrelevant whether they are “volunteers”. Because they were mad why they were forced into such a thing. (...) And many did not understand the importance of it.” (Roger, controller)

“....at random.... you, you, you and you. They designated ten persons this way. (...) And they said it was no problem you did not have time, in the summer with the child or at home on leave. Do what you want, you will be ordered in.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“Then there was this thing called Panther Team that I was put into by force [by my leader then]. (...) I was there from the first moment when we had to work with it. (...) I told him that was none of my business and please leave me alone. But two persons are needed by group, and I will be one, and that’s it. (...) He

also knew that I was not very keen on this idea. (...) But he thought I would look good there, see, that's a person who had been opposed to it from the start but is now on Panther Team. (...) Roastering system. Today you work there and that's it." (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

The **B UNIT MANAGEMENT INTERVIEWS** have also confirmed that membership was not fully voluntary, and some managers were actually surprised that the designated persons let themselves be forced.

"But this we have told them, kids [*the test*] must be done. (...) We request two persons. If you do not apply, unfortunately, you will be delegated there. And they were simply delegated there. With the same type of delegation as if they were trainers or attended training. (...) It was their duty." (Aaron, middle manager)

"I am very proud of them, so to say, because they actually invested lots of time and energy to stay there, control and express opinions. Even if they were cranky, they at least expressed an opinion. They completed the forms and helped an enormous lot. (...) I wonder (...) why they did not hinder the whole thing, because the whole could also have been a lot worse." (Aaron, middle manager)

"Panther Team, when it started, really [*strove*] to embrace the whole spectrum, that is, there were supporters, totally opposed and neutral persons. Young, elderly, boys, girls. [*They tried*] to create a representative mix." (Tom, middle manager)

WITHIN THE STAFF OF UNIT B, stories told about the operation of PanTeam during the project ***further damaged the credibility of PanTeam in their eyes***. My aim during the research was not to check the truth content of such stories, but to understand what they meant for the staff members and how that affected their interrelationships, the development of dialogue.

The basic message of the stories was that PanTeam members had no *real* authorisation to act in the change process as equal partners of the managers and the project management. According to the narratives, *as a matter of fact, the managers were not open at all to the negative opinions of experts*, and some critics even said such opinions were hushed up by management. This relayed to the staff the message that ***the operation of Panther Team had no dialogue function***. There was no meaningful dialogue, it was only a façade.

"There was a Panther Team member who happened to tell his opinion and was never invited again. And his opinion was taken out. And neither was he asked any more afterwards." (Robin, controller)

"...well, with him there was a case as I know it that [*name*] wrote down that it was shit. And then afterwards [*he was told*] you should not write things like that. [*To which he answered*] Now, look, and what if I did not write down anything else either. [*To which the manager said*] of course, fine. And then [*name*] did not write down anything anymore and was then left out, because he wrote 'shit' and so his opinion was left out of it all." (Roger, controller)

"He [*the Unit B manager*] had a 10-strong so-called Panther Team. He selected some members and delegated others. If someone wrote something negative, this has now [*in retrospect*] been revealed that he was told not to say anything at all and they cherry-picked from the rest what was positive, and forwarded that [*only*] to top management..." (Hans, controller)

"...he was told not to come any more. This [*I know*] from first-hand information. Two persons were certainly told not to write anymore." (Hans, controller)

It is quite certain that *the role, responsibility and function of PanTeam were not clearly defined at its start*. Initially, the **STAFF** considered it obvious that they were invited to dialogue, that is, Panther Team would have a real effect on the directions, concept and process of the change. However, the selection method (pseudo-volunteering) and the narratives emerging and disseminated midway completely discredited Panther Team.

“As a matter of fact, they said it would not be good like that [*about the concept, the directions*], in my opinion. But they were not the ones who took decisions. So these processes did not take place like the decision is that controllers say this is OK, so checkmark, approved; they only tested the existing [*decisions*].” (James, controller)

“Well, the Panther Team... clearly, they were the staff experts. The staff experts designated ‘voluntarily’ [*sarcastic*] by the staff. (...) They were meant to validate the whole story. To tell whether it was good or not.” (Roger, controller)

“...management decided they wanted that, and looked for a leader, a leader for the whole and people who could be “herded”. Possibly, they would write down, cautiously, that [*this thing*] was not perfect, but that it was very good it [*included*] this or that.” (Hans, controller)

“...I told them, they want to validate this whole sh.t by your presence. Your names will be on it, so it will be recorded in the history books like there was a Panther Team and these were its members and they were the ones who heated the seal for the paper.” (Roger, controller)

At the end of 2018, the understanding of **NON-PanTeam-MEMBER B UNIT CONTROLLERS** *was that PanTeam was only a test team*, they had no actual influence, there was no co-decision.

THE INTERPRETATION OF PANTHER TEAM MEMBERS of their own role did not differ essentially from that of the staff. They also felt that *pseudo-voluntary* involvement serving as the basis of the composition of Panther Team *had a negative effect on its operation*. Those who were forced to be on the team had a less responsible and less enthusiastic attitude to their tasks, and that frustrated the others. Consequently, *PanTeam did not function as a team of partners establishing dialogue, thinking collectively, but as expert individuals working side by side*.

“...well, we had these feedbacks and I wrote my ideas in these feedbacks as to when, in which direction, to which point. And when I wrote something negative, then [*name*] said I should correct it to one grade higher, because if I give 2 only for this or that, that would have to be justified to the [*authority*] on an extra page. I said, you know what? Then leave me out if this, and from that time on I (...) did not complete the feedback forms. (...)” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

[*Some joined PanTeam??*] “not voluntarily, and singing and all enthusiastic. This is reflected also on the work. Some sat back, folded their arms and did nothing. The others can do nothing but denigrate. So there is no constructive debate in it.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“It was forced labour for part of them. The number of applicants was not sufficient. (...) The team should not have been filled up with forced labourers. Because that’s how Panther Team was filled.” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

It was not *clear to them either what their role, task and responsibility was*. Even motivated PanTeam members became disappointed later, because they would have liked to think collectively about the developments, in a *responsible* way. But even the more motivated

PanTeam members did not feel that the project management and the then management of Unit B were counting on them in that. **They do not feel they had any elbow room to to influence things.**

“...when I got involved in this (...), the core concept had already been laid, that’s what it would look like. And there was no question of what it should look like, how it should be, but were to develop that and full stop. (...) Last year, at the time of the demonstration operation, Panther Team listed lots of things, but they have not been corrected in the meantime and there is no sign they would be corrected in the foreseeable future.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“... in the meantime, I was also in service. It was not sure I could be present at every discussion. Then I missed something. For that reason, I was not informed about the news. I went in the next time and I was surprised it was like this and not like that, as we agreed on the last occasion. (...) So, in my opinion, a technical change (...) can only be executed with a permanent team working together all the time and knowing about everything. And we carry out the decisions consistently after having discussed them and passed a decision.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“Day by day [*we tried to speak about thus*]. We try to speak also with management and the project management, but we face complete rejection. Complete rejection. That is, apart from the (...) technical details, such as merging three mice into one and solving the movement of the cursor in the system -- they are partners in that. If I want the lamp to stand this way and not the other way. (...) But to understand [*what we actually mean*], I think that is lacking. (...) Panther Team is also no more than a beauty-spot. (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

It was not clear to PanTeam members whether *they were meant to represent their own opinion or their small groups*⁴³ at the talks. Their responsibility was not clear to them either: do they simply tell their personal opinion or are they authorised to disagree? *Is PanTeam an expert body or the representative of the technical staff, responsible for the outcome?* Typically, they do not have a common opinion on that.

“We tried to mediate and implement what the staff wanted. (...) If there were any personal ideas, needs, the [*PanTeam member*] discussed it with the others.” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

“Therefore, I feel I am rather a core member of the team. And there were negotiations [*where I was told*] I am only one of the 40 or so controllers, (...). And it was not certain my idea was good.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“there was no information flow either towards us as Panther Team or towards myself as key person. But the whole staff did not know anything. And in my opinion that was a great error on behalf of management, there was no weekly newsletter where they could tell this is happening, we are progressing towards that (...) Sometimes they asked me what happened. And at that time they asked me things I have never heard about yet myself either. (...)” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

Based on the stories of PanTeam members we can state that *no semantic micro community has emerged among the PanTeam members*. They did not become a real co-thinking team involved in dialogue. Whereas, theoretically, Panther Team was the key dialogue forum in the process of change. Its **fragmentation had several reasons**: the already described *selection method*

⁴³ As a reminder: Controllers active at Unit B work in a total of 5 small groups (of 5-6 persons each, plus the group leader). The composition of each group is permanent, and they work together in one shift (12-hour day and 12-hour night shifts). Thus the staff of Unit B represents a closed world composed of even smaller micro-teams, 5 in all.

(forced or voluntary), and its effect *on the motivation of PanTeam members*. Moreover, group dynamic within Panther Team was very strongly influenced *by how they perceived the attitude of the staff to them*.

“They spat on us. (...) They thought we were against them, because we wanted p-SHIFT and that was the reason why we took part in it. (...) some called us traitors and what do I know what.” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

“I do not usually express [*my opinion*], because they might lynch me for it...” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

“The opinion of the staff [*concerning p-SHIFT*] is clearly very negative, and it has very often come up, specifically it was said that Panther Team is lying, that is, to the staff. We recorded [*earlier*] the errors. During the present [*p-SHIFT*] training, the staff is also saying that this is not good as it is. And if we had said that last year, then why is it still so? Why did the company do nothing? And they do not believe us if we say we reported that last year, because then why did the company do nothing about it?” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“[*The project managers*] organised a dinner and we got Panther Team T shirts and so on. Now, I would not put this on at work, because it would provoke scrappy remarks to say the least. And there were some who actually kept it a secret that we were receiving such things.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“I clearly remember that, when there was nothing there yet, and we sat down there on the chairs and they said this is where the *new* Unit B would be. (...) Everyone was laughing, what a bullshit. This keeps coming to my mind. I look at the world, didn't they think the same about the train when a horse-drawn carriage overtook the first train? (...) I accept that this is another horse-drawn carriage now, that can be laughed at, because it is worse than the old Unit B used to be, but this now is a [*direction*], that would end in (...) getting on a train speeding by 300. (...) This is still the horse-drawn carriage. It should not be laughed at.” (Elijah, PanTeam member, controller)

It is easy to read among the lines that **PanTeam members did not have the feeling they had a real mandate at all**.

On the other hand, when I spoke to **NON-PanTeam-MEMBER CONTROLLERS**, *I did not experience any anger or temper on their behalf at the PanTeam members*. If they expressed any criticism at all, that was rather about the unspecified nature of the role itself, or they put the behaviour of PanTeam members down to that.

“No one had such negative feelings towards them. ... it has not even occurred to us that they might not have formed an adequate opinion [*in the project*], ... there was nothing like that.” (Robin, controller)

“I think they knew what their role was, only its relevance was not clear to them, how relevant it would be. That where we have arrived by now might be due to their softness or laziness or indifference (...).” (Roger, controller)

Why, then, did PanTeam members feel rejected? My analysis suggests that the problem was not their PanTeam membership, but that the individual opinions of PanTeam members did not coincide with the dominant reading of the p-SHIFT Project. As described in the previous chapter, the strong small community of staff working at Unit B marginalised and ousted those who did not agree with the dominant narrative. PanTeam members experienced the same as any another controller working at Unit B: those who do not agree with the dominant reading, *automatically identify themselves as going another way. So they either did not voice their*

disagreement openly and kept aloof, or they did voice it and accepted being ousted and solitary. The outcome was the same for PanTeam members: the emergence of separate isles of individuals feeling that they are not understood.

PanTeam is typically missing from the stories of **PROJECT MANAGERS AND MIDDLE MANAGERS**. Project managers and also middle managers sought direct contact with the staff at Unit B, and spoke of Panther Team *as an expert panel*.

“So for a technological development like this, the opinion of Panther Team is requested, and then we embark, say, on a technological development based on the opinion of the majority.” (Aaron, middle manager)

“Dialogues were always about come and take a look and tell your opinion, what would you change. There were many, very many such instances. It is a fact that there were very many of these. With those on Panther Team.” (Aaron, middle manager)

All in all, we can say that Panther Team’s dialogic function **was a great opportunity**. However, the selection method of the team, their unspecified role, the narratives spreading in the organisation on events between executives and Panther Team members and the internal dynamic of the staff working at Unit B as small community completely **undermined the role of this dialogue institution in the eyes of both the management and the staff working at Unit B**.

6.3 Role of middle managers in the dialogue process

The staff of Unit B has two leaders: the head of Unit B and his deputy. In addition to their management position, the leaders are also air traffic controllers, but they have smaller workloads than the normal staff working at Unit B (they have a lower number of working hours).

Two changes occurred in the management structure of Unit B during the p-SHIFT project, in the spring of 2017: one structural, the other personnel-related. The positions of Unit B managers were merged with the corresponding functions of another unit pursuant to the relevant decision of top management. After that, a new manager was appointed to this function, and the previous leader of Unit B was transferred to another directorate. He remained in touch with the p-SHIFT change in the sense that typically he was the person who represented the project as expert at international events (presentations, conferences etc.) He had no decision-making capacity, only representational duties. My interviewees spoke of the events taking place after the spring of 2017 without even mentioning the previous leader: in the context of the p-SHIFT project change, his contacts with the staff were practically terminated.

IN THE EYES OF CONTROLLERS WORKING AT UNIT B, at the time of the start of the p-SHIFT project, the then leader of Unit B was at a disadvantage – due to his perceived style and perceived relationship with the staff at Unit B. Nevertheless, the majority (except for those who locked themselves up from the start) *believed that it was possible to establish a dialogue in the context of the change*, because they believed in the necessity or constraint of the change.

“The reason why I accepted [*PanTeam membership*] was not that I agreed with the essence of the project, namely to move from the old Unit B, because I have never in my life agreed with that. (...) The reason why I joined it was, one, that I was interested in this opportunity, the technology. The possibility to develop professionally in some direction, in something that is a world novelty (...). Second, if they will shove it down our throat anyway, (...) let’s try to do something to make it useable. I think of myself a little as a brake or a herder.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“The reason why I applied [*for PanTeam membership*] was that I thought if it has been decided, then it is inevitable, so we cannot change that. However, if such a change takes place one day, I would very much like to be part of its management and eliminate things that have no place there.” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

“If that is a must and top management wants to go that way, you feel it is possible to go against the tide, but why would you. Let’s rather (...) try to turn it into something useable, something good.” (Aaron, middle manager)

That is, since the majority of the staff **considered the change itself important, leadership style or the degree of personal acceptance of the leader** was no reason for refusal; it **did not infringe on their *initial* openness for dialogue**.

My other important understanding concerns the emotional charge of the change. As I have already described several times, this change affected **the technical staff concerned** not only technologically and organisationally, but also **emotionally** (see Section 5.3.2). One of the managers defined this *as emotional resistance*.

“Controllers working at Unit B are emotionally attached to the profession, and that is air traffic control only in part. Quite a big part is Unit B itself. The physical building, being there, freedom, standing apart. (...) The ANPS exists somewhere, at a distance, on the edge of the horizon – but they are Unit B. And if they are deprived of that, i.e. if Unit B, their coming here did not exist any more, this is a trauma for them. And they are all afraid of it. (...) I don’t know how [*they could be pushed out of that*].” (Ben, middle manager)

The research has shown that **MIDDLE MANAGEMENT cannot and will not address this emotional aspect**. Their **attitude** to the project has been **determined by a professional/rational logic**.

“And then you can technically say, look, that’s just trash. That I try (...) that when I sit there, I am a controller. When I say these things, I really say them as I see them from the point of view of traffic control. (...) Not because I am the boss, but because this is actually my experience.” (Aaron, middle manager)

“The success of the system will depend on the degree of its usefulness. What I saw, as Unit B controller on the one hand and (...) as middle manager on the other, as manager working at Unit B, was that the key to this is in our hands. We must fight fiercely to make this system good, useful, useable by us. I had that one goal in my mind.” (Tom, middle manager)

“We address this human part continuously, try to treat it, but somehow we do not always succeed or I don’t know. That’s the thing I know least about. I am basically more familiar with the realia, i.e. technological development, than with how the human part could be improved.” (Aaron, middle manager)

“When I think that even the most trivial arguments are answered by such meaningless responses, and they visibly keep aloof, they are tense. It is not the arguments that take effect, but the emotions. Then I let go already. I cannot exert an influence on emotions, I can argue against arguments, facts, concepts – I can. But his emotional attitude is such that it is not open, not receptive, then I only insist for a certain time.” (Ben, middle manager)

For them, addressing the human/emotional aspect means exactly **understanding** and **making things understood**:

“It is highly important to bring to the surface the real fears. (...) he has at Unit B his freedom...but this may also be a reflection of a general fear of all novelty or of proximity [*to the other units of the ANSP*]. These should be identified, what the controllers are actually afraid of. By individual interviews. Or if they could be persuaded to declare it, but that would also require the feeling that what they write is not the whisper of wind in the desert.” (Ben, middle manager)

“What I am most curious of, is the rate and reason ... of refusal of the whole concept. Because we do not know that.” (Ben, middle manager)

“I would put much more emphasis on communication. (...) To understand [*myself*] and the circumstances that make it imperative to take a decision.” (Tom, middle manager)

It was an important and general realisation of middle management that **it is critical to ensure a continuous and regular flow of information** in this process of understanding, preferably through personal, physical, presence.

“Of course, I meet those working at Unit B when I work outside there. (...) My presence there is an indication for them that they can speak to me, I am not a vague somebody, but flesh and blood. And (...) with controllers, they accept those who are there, near them.” (Ben, middle manager)

“That is the staff really, actually does not experience this p-SHIFT as a process, but receives excerpts on a quarterly basis. And they do not experience it as a process. (...) That is, [*Panther Team*] could experience it as a process and become part of it, but the staff could not become part of the whole change, because they really got only such excerpts, parts.” (Aaron, middle manager)

What I consider controversial in the narrative of the managers is that the majority have realised that this emotional situation should be addressed first, but it **required too much energy and time** on their side. It was not clear for them **whether the energy investment was worthwhile**.

“It absorbs much more of my energies, (...) considering the human side... This is much-much-much more tiring for me: to move negative thinkers [*out of that stance*], or to conduct dialogues with them. Nor do I necessarily want to move them out if it... Of course, it would be good if they were a bit more active or active again, than that, but after a while I do not put energy into it, because what for. The 80:20% rule. I will not invest 80%.” (Ben, manager)

“I did not even think of entering that [*i.e. what lies behind the emotions*]. I think that requires lots of time and energy, I did not plan to go into it at such depth. Maybe I would have to, after a while, but now, as is, I say not that. (...) Maybe, if I had nothing else to do, only this.” (Ben, manager)

Not addressing emotions generates a feeling of not being understood in the **STAFF**, and that in turn results in some controllers keeping aloof. This is particularly intensively expressed towards the top management:

“The controller changes with difficulty. They cry whatever the change [*top manamegemt say*]. Because they feel their schemas, routines, self-assurance threatened, and that is one of the bases of their work. And [*the executives*] know that and from that point on, this type of fear is ignored. (...) Because that’s the controllers crying, but they will get used to it.” (Roger, controller)

“[*The executive*] said that’s simply resistance and they would get used to it. (...) And also, that locks up the other party. Because if I want to tell sincerely what my problem is and (...) the reaction is that you will get used to it or that that is simply resistance... then after a while I might say, if possible, leave me alone, don’t ask me. Or if you ask me, I will not answer, because why would I. So (...) to what extent they take me seriously and how I experience that.” (Robin, controller)

Thus, on one side, there is a firm drawing of the line: I do not work with emotions. On the other side, this provokes keeping aloof – and that makes the executives feel powerless in their dealings with the controllers, as mentioned already. They could take certain steps, but they do not, because that would absorb too much energy and time. The **convenient illusion of powerlessness** again.

MIDDLE MANAGERS obviously think that, **as managers, they must identify with the content of the change (p-SHIFT)** in the broader sense. When it comes to specifying the details, on the other hand, they typically participate and express their opinions as controllers, that is, they do not represent the insights of the staff, but they have their own opinions as active controllers.

“Well, by becoming unit manager, but actually already when I had my [*job*] interview, [*my direct superior*] asked me whether I could identify this concept, because I had to represent it as executive. I cannot snake out if it, so I should only accept [*the position*] if I can stand by it and embrace it. As for me, at that level, I thought I would not keep aloof, and I haven’t kept aloof of p-SHIFT to this day.” (Aaron, middle manager)

“...there was a Unit B staff meeting. I also heard it for the first time there. (...) Thus I started out with respect to this whole story feeling I did not like it and I was opposed and totally adverse to it. Then the project started (...) and, well, being a practice-oriented guy... (...) like it or not, it had to be done. As middle manager, of course [*this is*] a sandwich situation, whether you like it, do not like it, but something had to be presented.” (Tom, middle manager)

“...no one should expect this to be a reversible process. No one should expect that. It would require an earthquake or something even bigger for all that to be ploughed in and put in the trash bin. This is too much money, too much energy, heads would have to fall, very many, and perhaps even that of [*the head of Unit B*] to terminate this.” (Ben, middle manager)

“Why did I not resist [*top management*]? (...) I found myself in a multiple sandwich situation. I called it doing ballet on a mine field.” (Tom, middle manager)

There is an assumption in **THE STAFF** that perfectly coincides with this, namely that **top management expects** Unit B managers to demonstrate clear commitment to their strategic guidelines. But their narrative also has a special secondary reading:

“As a man, you understand that those who get there, professionally also, into that position... would be caught between two fires. Maybe they are even prepared for that, they also know it. But as I see it [*after a while*] something snapped. They drew the attention of the [*executive to the fact that*] unless he supported this, there were other candidates for the position.” (James, controller)

“...this, too, is corridor gossip, we’ll never know..., that the attention of [*the manager*] had been drawn to being excessively humane with the people there. (...) That is, it was openly gossiped that [*the manager*] had been told if he had any further plans here, he should be much more committed to management.” (Hans, controller)

“As if there were some kind of requirement towards him. As if he were told that hey you, pay attention, see what you are doing, learn where your place is. Before saying things like I don’t know what. Know that this [*the project*] is a priority ANSP project, and be so kind, don’t encourage them. What do I know. This is but a scenario.” (Roger, controller)

“He [*i.e. the manager*] is but a rank-and-file soldier. So he cannot really appeal either.” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

“[*The manager*] as management member has to stand by top management, he has no choice. But he nevertheless tries to be a bit staff-centred and that (...) is perceptible to the maximum.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

It is important to read another, **more concealed, message** of the above staff attitude between the lines: the dichotomy of **you (controllers) – we (top management), they (controllers) – we (top management)**. **They** are merely the instruments, the objects of achieving a certain goal, not co-thinking partners. To me this shows that the **staff sees no chance for real partnership given by its own middle managers, and that is transitive**: as a matter of fact, it is **top management** that does not consider them real partners, and according to the assumption of the controllers, it **expects middle management not establish partnership relations with them either**.

In the context of the staff narratives, I have already presented the dynamic created jointly by staff and top management and resulting in middle management being cast / allegedly assuming some kind of “coercive” role. Middle management ends up looking for its own, personal responsibility in the staff *being left out* of the project, *not being involved* collectively in the process. By doing so, it **intensifies the we vs. they reading**: they – the left-outs, we – who left them out. The above interpretation, the implicit expectation attributed to top management that no partnership (“we” feeling) should be established between middle management and staff, enhances that. Moreover, these two parallel readings **reinforce each other, raising ever higher walls** among the actors, i.e. staff – middle management – top management.

6.4 Role of project managers in the dialogue process

Independent of the management change in Unit B, the project manager has also been replaced. Controllers working at Unit B have a basically uniform opinion on project management, and there is no difference between the interpretations of PanTeam and non-PanTeam members. In the eyes of the **CONTROLLERS**, project management (whether the old or the new project manager) **carries no weight** in the change process. They saw some difference between the two project managers’ assessment of the relationship between staff and project management.

“The [*project manager*] I don’t think he communicated with the staff at all. With Panther Team, yes. (...)” (Robin, controller)

“The [*project manager*] did not come in when [*live operation was on at the new Unit B*]. He (...) sent reports, wrote them somewhere. (...) He was the person to whom whatever you said ... (...) He was so

soft-spoken anyway. That is, the kind you never know what they think, I think that type. So it was utterly superfluous to talk to him about anything.” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

On the other hand, it was generally observed that the staff felt they got no response, no feedback concerning the problems and questions they raised. ***They perceived interaction, but did not consider that meaningful communication, rather parallel monologues.***

“But neither does he [*the project manager*] ask the question. I told him to ask a single question, whether you can work from there or cannot work from there. Now not whether the camera is nice or not nice. This is not the question. This is practically a dialogue between the deaf.” (Hans, controller)

“We have not seen much dialogue for quite a long time. Sometimes the [*project manager*] sends a questionnaire of some sort and who knows what (...) then all write their opinion about it. Grade 1 is the worst. And then 90% of staff rated it 1 or 2, but nothing happened afterwards. (...) We have read it in a summary report.” (Robin, controller)

“As before, we have to write a survey on each occasion, like, what we like, what became better or worse. And then those are rather targeted, that is, none is about whether you can or cannot work here. In the most recent one, for example, they upgraded image quality. The question now is not whether you can work from here or not, but whether images became better.” (James, controller)

“The [*project manager*] is weightless. That’s the correct term.” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

“...the opinion is that they do not listen to it, or that we write it down, they listen to it but then it somehow disappears and does not get back to us. (...) Say, say we pour [*our insights*] into the tube, and nothing comes back. Then why should we shake our a.s?” (Hans, controller)

“Now OK that there is lots of change management and Panther Team, and negotiations and human factor analysis etc. But we do not necessarily see the result of all these feedbacks. (...) [*There was once a survey after the live operation session*] ... then I asked them why, what will be the outcome of all that. And then they were looking at me with wide eyes, saying what, well, they would write a paper about it. That’s very good, I said, but now 40 people have expressed their opinions and they are curious to see what the summary opinion is. This has not even occurred to them.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

That is, in most cases they consider **interaction unilateral, typically not personal** (it takes place through questionnaires), **and there is no real feedback** – no relationship, no meaningful connection.

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT is looking for the role and responsibility of project management in this story. It is not clear to them where the responsibility and impact of project managers on project operation comes to an end (e.g. in involving them), and where their own, middle manager’s duties begin.

“...for example, there was a consultation [*at the top manager*] where I was only present because the [*other middle manager*] was not there or I don’t know. And then I told them this is something the controllers fear very much, and that I would also support technology D because it is much better also from the point of view of change management. And then the [*top manager*] said OK, then technology D remains. (...) But the [*project manager*] (...) said we should not even think of technology D.” (Aaron, middle manager)

„The whole business would have been smoother if the opinion of the professional field were also asked [*by project management*]. I think that with a decision of such weight, this could have been expected. And from the point of view of the project, the [*project manager*] also has absolute responsibility. Of course, he asked [*top management*]. [*Top management*] passed a decision. He as project manager or programme

leader came up with a proposal. Pros and cons were presented, but he did not do that on the basis of opinions gathered from the professional field, but based on his own opinion.” (Tom, middle manager)

PROJECT MANAGEMENT feels they are in a special sandwich situation. On the one hand, as they see it, they must **comply with the various professional and other expectations** of top management, middle management and controllers, respectively. They have a mediating, connecting, some kind of bridging function. They represent the parties, the expectations back and forth, and it is their task that the p-SHIFT project should meet these expectations.

“There’s a schizophrenic state like that for certain. That I feel it is my task to represent both at some level, Whereas, to be completely honest, I don’t identify 100% with either.” (Christian, project manager)

“I hear from the utterances[*of top management*] ...that they are beginning to have enough of the complaints and hysteria of the controllers. Referring back to that I collect more feedback, try to listen to the voice [*of controllers*]. This also has the proceeds that (...) now they should go to hell. One should be careful with how wide the valve is opened.” (Christian, project manager)

“We are connected by lots of threads. They do not have an overview of them, [*the controllers*]. (...) When he says there is technological solution E and let’s take this technology E out. Well I cannot take out such a thing from the middle of a system. (...) That would have massive financial implications. (...) Obviously, there is a financial limit to that. And it obviously has public procurement and legal limits as well.” (Christian, project manager)

In addition to **conveying understanding between the parties**, the project management would also **like to be understood**, and at the moment they do not feel understood by either top management or the controllers.

“They have no idea [*controllers*], they either do not want to accept or are not interested in what is behind the fulfilment of a request they raise. There are two things. Two processes. One is the validation of the request that they completely disregard. That is, he personally [*has a valid*] request he expresses. And he does not take into account that I as project manager must have a (...) validation step. So there is a request list and a to-do list. For them the two are blurred. In vain do I say... I try to always express and communicate it to them. I am really interested in your opinion, tell it to me. But telling it to me does not mean it would be realised 100%. (...) I am not sure it will go through as it is.” (Christian, project manager)

“Top management does not even want to understand [*the project*] technically. They must present a success story. [*Management says:*] ’UUUh, show a success story. Not possible? Oh, f.ck you.’” (Maurice, project manager)

One of the main conclusions of my interviews with both project managers was that **this role was extremely tiring for them**. After a while they lost their motivation, got worn out, show symptoms of burn-out. This situation crushes them.

“Not a rewarding role, in my opinion. (...) I also try to make myself aware of it, that it is because I am standing in the middle, because my task is to know these two sides, to understand them. [*Accepting*] the role is deliberate, but I struggle with how it should be executed.” (Christian, project manager)

“...we do not receive the positive feedback that would be justified by the work done. There is no retaliation, by the way. Only: Why is this project not making progress? Why didn’t we do anything again? (...) We carry the project and move it forward, (...) but this is not up to the expectations of top management.

(...) Obviously, it causes them frustration. (...) Results in a kind of burnout, disappointment, lack of motivation.” (Maurice, project manager)

According to the project managers’ own declaration, **dialogue was a central element of their project management method** from the start. One of the essential elements of this dialogue was to define jointly the road to the vision, that is, the professional concept, at least according to the project management. The **OTHER PROJECT ACTORS** experienced this as having received a finalised something, decided upon at the time of the launch of p-SHIFT. But as to who had decided it, they had only guesses and assumptions. The project management sensed that, but offered no explanation and according to my analysis, I must say they did not even look for an explanation, but accepted the situation. One reason might be some kind of burnout on their part that I will explain in more detail later in connecting with the project management.

“The [*top manager*] set the strategic goal, but not the road leading there. I think that (...) the project had actually started like that, that we’ll be learning, (...) the road leading there has not been designated. That yes, it could have been put together jointly, based on dialogues. And that’s how the story started. So I think a starting position like that is good and healthy by all means. Obviously, a certain elbow room would have been left anyway, whether... resources constraints due to the budget or organisational structure. But as to what and how to realise things within that, that was completely open.” (Tom, middle manager)

“This is how it looked to me, this was the image I developed.. that there were 3 fuglermen there, who told you what, and they wanted to line up the rest by their side, with force rather than persuasion. (...) They had a concept that was ONE concept. But that, of course, was highly different from what Panther Team then proposed.” (Ben, middle manager)

“The basic concept, I don’t know where it came from, and that, let’s say, would be an essential point. Whether it started out from the [*project manager*] or the [*middle manager*]. (...) When I got involved, the basic concept, that it would be like that, was there already. And there was no question of whether it should be like this or that or what it should look like, only that we’ll develop that and full stop.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“[*Panther Team*] did not even know what it was all about [*at the start of the project*]. How should I say..., they got the snowball suddenly emerging from the fog in their necks. (...) But there was clearly a finished something there already. At concept level, counter level, visualisation level, work technology level, I don’t know what level. And then they were the staff experts. It was their task to validate the whole story.” (Roger, controller)

The question arose during my interviews with the project managers **whether mainstream project operation and general organisational operation could bear such a degree of openness (i.e. no specific project goals defined in advance)**. **PROJECT MANAGEMENT** experienced that, despite every effort, **this kind of openness was alien even to the organisational actors themselves** who were perplexed by it.

“From a project management point of view, it was shit, there was no deadline. The scope has been changing continuously.... (...) The budget was open, its scope was open, we could only achieve partial results. (...) So what kind of project is that, really?!? (...) There was no concept. No one with a vision, a tangible vision. Only, the methodology of it all could not be realised here [*in the ANSP*]. For, [*it is a requirement here*] to tell in advance how much you would spend, how many forints it would cost.” (Maurice, project manager)

“Because this was a permanently developing something, that is, there was no specific answer from the start either in terms of technology or operative concept. So there were no fully factual answers, and we tried to involve them [*the controllers*] in the planning. And it has always been returned with ‘no specifics yet’, so what could he [*do with it*]. A kind of pressure from two sides, that until something is not specific enough, you do not dare present it to him, because he would bitch about it because that is not enough for him. And when you show something specific, then that’s his problem because I was not involved in the planning.” (Christian, project manager)

At the start of the change, project management actually considered the novelty of this type of operation. In this deliberate phase, they paid more attention to establishing a dialogic relationship between the parties. Unfortunately, this initial effort at having a dialogue was then overwritten by the well-known, more traditional, project-based operation due to some top management/strategic events. The effect of the latter on dialogue will be presented in the next sections.

6.5 Impact of top management on the dialogue process (not-full reading)

It is important to emphasise again that no interview was conducted with top managers of the ANSP, so I do not know about their narratives. For the same reason, the analysis presenting their impact is not exhaustive (not full-reading). Their impact was important and strong; all of my interviewees spoke about it. In the present analysis, I will describe and analyse the relevant readings of the project management, of middle management and the staff.

The **STAFF ATTITUDE** to top managers was completely unanimous: all controller interviewees interpreted the role and relationship system of top managers in the p-SHIFT project very similarly, irrespective of whether they were PanTeam members or not. The image of top managers is determined basically by two things: credibility and distance. Several interviewees spoke of top management in a way that clearly showed that **they did not consider them credible**.

“[*Top management*] visibly does not believe in such humbug. They have nothing to do with technical matters. Nothing to do with everyday matters. He seems already at first sight a guy who could not hammer a nail in the wall. Write reports and lead projects, that he certainly knows well.” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

“... [*One top manager*] is not working at Unit B, [*the other top manager*] is not a controller.” (Robin, controller)

“There have always been (...) conflicts between the staff and – so to say – the others [- *the rest of the organisation*]. (...) Some work, mining coal in the mines, whereas on the other side more and more are speaking about how to fix a lamp on a rope, (...) who deal with (...) what should be done by the guy who is doing it. P.ss off.” (Elijah, PanTeam member, controller)

The above quotations clearly show that lots of anger has been accumulated in the controllers against top management. One reason for the development of the above narrative is **the perceived quality of the relationship** between top management and the technical staff

concerned by the change. Controllers working at Unit B *see no relationship* between themselves and top management. According to their words, the latter are not present in their lives physically either. None of the interviewees could recall any occasion in the p-SHIFT project when top management visited say the new operation room. They may, of course, have visited it at other times, but this is the narrative that has become ingrained in the staff. They feel *top management* is very far away, they distrust them and they even assume malice on their part.

They explain this by two things: (1) top managers are not interested in the change, they think it is the controllers' business (*your business*); (2) they understand everything and definitely know where to progress, this change is *their own business* – and actually they are not interested in dialogue: a me/you, we/you relationship system prevails.

“... that they in my opinion have no idea about what the problem is here and now. Or that we do not only say it is not good because we would not say anything but that, but because it actually is not good.” (Robin, controller)

“...they do not say let's go together and we'll get there. And when we get there, we'll celebrate together. They don't think we'd laugh and cry together. They think we'd be merry up there, and you will work with that system.” (Hans, controller)

“... if I want to develop it at the start by actually involving the controllers, I wouldn't do it like that. By doing it this way, everyone gets the message that it has actually been invented, that it has to be done, and that's it. This will not be a joint development, (...) if I don't have discussions with them, if I do not go there when control is in progress, and I don't ask.” (James, controller)

“I don't know how curious they are about us. Only if it takes a very definite stand [*the trade union*]. But otherwise they do not deal with it.” (Ryan, PanTeam member, controller)

“...there's a political will. (...) The political will means they disregard whether someone has understood it or not, it has been decided and that is it. That is, not to the left, not to the right. This is what we must have.” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

This distance *makes them question the intention of top management and the real goal of the change*: they do not understand, do not see the goal of the change.

“By the way, I still say I do not know whether someone is serious about this, what the goal is; really, I often do not see that someone actually thinks this seriously.” (Robin, controller)

“They want to do that, We really don't know why. What we see is that someone wants it very much, at all cost. Or something big must happen to wake them up.” (James, controller)

“...they did not convince the staff, not by force or in any other way. Why it was a must to participate and what success and development it could bring about. They could even have said kids, this may be a blind alley, but let's try. But there was nothing like that.” (Adam, PanTeam member, controller)

However, they have asked, almost without exception, *what the responsibility and what is more the interest of top management* was in keeping this distance. Because they thought such distance was not good in a change on such scale, and top management should also have seen that. And if they did see that, then sticking to it was “pseudo-naïveté” as one of the interviewees said.

“The question is where and why information received by top management gets distorted. This is one question. The other question is (...) why there was no feedback on behalf of top management that. hey you, we have received this information, is it OK? Instead, they only lit the incense and smoke arose: they told it to [*us, top management*] like it was, and we’d quickly accept it.” (Roger, controller)

The interviews suggest that the staff working at Unit B experienced a *culture of fear* underlying this pseudo-naïveté, where top management established an operating environment where no one dared tell top management any bad news or negative opinions.

“Otherwise, when there are such meetings [*between staff and top managers*], or such presentations are held, intentionally, a selected team is present. In my opinion to avoid even the chance meeting of any negative opinions.” (James, controller)

“Stalin, too, had only been told the good news. (...) He was not told any bad ones. He was told only the good ones, because if any negative things were told, those people would have been executed... They [*i.e. top management*] loved this [*the project*] very much, they wanted it very much.” (Hans, controller)

“Until people are afraid, they are trembling as to what to do, because they do not dare say no, do not dare communicate bad news. There will be no change until then.” (James, controller)

“[*Top manager A*] is at the mercy of [*top manager B*]. He is the master of life and death at the company, He expects to have projects. To talk big. [*Top manager A*] needs to really be onboard.” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

The controllers’ experience is that **top management does not establish contacts** between itself, the staff, itself and the change, by keeping its distance. There is no dialogue, but there is not even a chance for it..

“I don’t even know his name, because I am not really interested. How cares who is sitting there? (...) So these are being exchanged. The day after tomorrow, another will come. There will be a political shift, and another one comes. Who is that? A no one. I am not interested.” (Elijah, PanTeam member, controller)

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT is of the opinion that the staff does not understand top management, but **neither did top management do anything to make employees understand why the change was necessary**. They have received a *Why story*, but that was not intelligible enough for them, it was not detailed and comprehensive. They do not feel themselves mobilised, they do not feel they could authentically represent the change to the controllers.

“That is, among controllers, management tries to disseminate [*the reasons for the change*], but I think they do not understand and do not feel it (...), nor do I know how realistic it is. (...) Because controllers say there is no reality in it, and in the meantime [*management*] hides everything behind that. All change and development is hidden behind this. And I cannot say, I could not say, how realistic it really is.” (Aaron, middle manager)

“These are the things they say, and then you either believe it or not. Either accept it or not. (...) This, well, they could really have demonstrated this to us like at the level of a briefing, to try to understand. I do not want to horn in, I only want to understand what these top management decisions are, why they are made as they are. Why they go the way they do.” (Aaron, middle manager)

Yet another narrative appears among middle managers that is in line also with the staff interpretation presented above: **the culture of fear**.

“You don’t mess with the [*top manager*].” (Tom, middle manager)

“[*The top manager*] found it difficult to accept and did not tolerate if things did not turn out according to his concepts.” (Tom, middle manager)

The picture emerging from the narrative of the **PROJEC MANAGEMENT** is that **top management is not actually interested in understanding the staff** – only to the extent that this understanding *makes the achievement of the project goals easier and more effective*:

“Researcher: Is top management open to the controllers’ perspective?

Christian: No. Not in the least. (...) I think it is their own best interest to address it now and not under full strain.” (Christian, project manager)

“Generally, there is a kind of demand for understanding. If only to be able to challenge things. Understand? Or to be able to ask back a question of merit, that OK, old man, I understand it is not your problem, but now really? For certain, there is no full exclusion, but understanding is not the kind of understanding that I want to understand you to be able to help you. Or that I wanted to understand you to be able to take you where we should go according to me. No, but I want to understand you, to challenge you, whether you are really right.” (Christian, project manager)

According to the narrative of the project management, top management is simply **driven by other goals, other interests: to demonstrate success externally**.

“Value is something different for the controller and for [*top management*]. (...) [*For top management*], it is success. For controllers, the profession.” (Maurice, project manager)

“There was no [*professional*] guidance, really. There was no [*professional*] strategic thinking (...) no vision. (...) A success story was what they wanted.” (Maurice, project manager)

“There is no burden of proof. We have achieved something, good. That is, how should I say, we can already show something externally. Now we can better focus on not to f.ck up the story internally either, but to make it something you can endorse.” (Christian, project manager)

At the start of p-SHIFT, as presented in the previous sections, project operation was essentially determined by the effort to have dialogues. This has then shifted, due to a later top management/strategic decision, towards the well-known, more traditional project-based operation. Due to the decision of top management, the ANSP applied for participation in an EU project. The application was successful, but project operation supervised at European level was **associated with very strict deadlines**. After that, operation under the p-SHIFT project has changed.

“And then came this deadline that limited our room for manoeuvre. We could not realise the communication steps, the process, that would have been needed in our opinion (...). When this time constraint came in, lots of things were delayed and by the end it was really the human factor that had to be curtailed, training, that had to be curtailed, we could make the training courses at the very last moment only. (...) That is, exactly what we wanted to devote most time to, to familiarise the controllers with the system, to get them acquainted with it,... learn how to use it... And to try to fine-tune it based on experience. We allocated 6 months to that, and [*finally*] it became two weeks. That is, specifically because

of the delay of the technology, what would have been the essential thing had to be cut.” (Tom, middle manager)

“...imposing a time constraint on us, I think that was the fatal stab.” (Tom, middle manager)

Due to the time demand of the technological developments and **the tight deadlines** imposed on the ANSP from outside, **there was no time for dialogue that had been considered equally critical for middle managers and controllers at the time of the project launch.**

I could not help but notice during the analysis the **strong expressions** used by all of my interviewees without exception about the top managers and their relationship to them. This is true not only of the staff, but also for middle management. Expressions associated with death, fear and annihilation kept coming up. To me, this reflects the tension surrounding top management, and the intensive emotions concerning the p-SHIFT change.

According to both **MIDDLE MANAGEMENT** and **PROJECT MANAGEMENT**, however, **after the end of the successful tender, it would have been possible to return** to the original way of operation, **to drawing up a common concept based on dialogue.**

“The European tender expected a demonstration. Live operation. (...) It could all have been dismantled.(...) We make the demo, gather experience and then go back to the drawing table. (...) [*Project management*] stressed, because of course that was their responsibility, that we should perform under the tender. That is, he stressed and communicated that kids, anything is possible, no problem, this is temporary. The demo is over and you can disassemble and dismantle this. That’s how we set out.” (Tom, middle manager)

“They were not under time pressure that you must deliver by I don’t know when. There was only one pressure bearing on them, the tender, but as to that, we said (...), we communicated that it would be a success also if we could not [*implement the new technology*], but could list why not. But you must list why not. (...) That is, that they could play their role in this type of freedom with less concern; they were not afraid that if we would not validate there and then, we’d be stuck there until the end of our lives. But it was exactly: just tell why it is not good. (...) Now, of course, we obviously say already that it must be done. After the demo, no one can say it cannot be done.” (Maurice, project manager)

“And when we got there, [*top management*] said what do you think, we have invested so much money into it and now we should make a new one? You wanted it to be like that, it is like that, That’s the end of it. We’ll not make a new one. (...) Well, as to what lay in the background, I don’t know.” (Tom, middle manager)

„They [*i.e. top management*] have already been on a forced orbit. They have invested so much money and energy. It would have been an awful failure if it had not been realised. An awful failure. That is, he is on forced orbit already, so he will not let this *not* be realised, without having any real reasons behind that. Unresolvable reasons behind that.” (Aaron, middle manager)

It was in this tense situation that **a parallel organisational story** unfolded. The participants of the p-SHIFT project perceived the clashing of strong organisational objectives in this parallel organisational process.

“When this organisational game entered the scene, that has distorted the whole professional strand even further. This organisational thing, I’d rather say has distorted the whole story and especially communication. Because it has not only had an effect on top management, but also exerted a strong influence on (...) the utterances of controllers. (...) Some did not take a stand, but not because they did

not agree, but because they thought this is a bigger game, this held them back. (...)” (Tom, middle manager)

Later on, it was the result of this parallel organisational process that the head of Unit B was replaced and consequently exited also the p-SHIFT project. With the new Unit B manager, hope revived that p-SHIFT could revert to real dialogue. However, by the time of my last interviews, October 2018, such hope had mostly disappeared due mainly to the fragmentation of the staff presented already. Unless the new leader can overcome this fragmentation, there will be no community of individuals open to each other, wishing to establish contact with each other in which dialogue could unfold.

All in all, what I understood from the narratives of **MIDDLE MANAGERS AND PROJECT MANAGERS** was that **management is driven by other goals than the staff**: financial/business goals, positions in international relations, spectacular success externally. These are all relevant drivers for top management. They are as valid as the professional arguments of middle managers, project managers and controllers, or the emotional bias of controllers. At this point, one can discern the **complexity of the system of objectives motivating the participants of the change process**: there is a **sphere of interests, a professional/rational system of arguments and the emotional dimension**.

It is an important finding of my analysis that it is not only the different sets of objectives that make an organisation a complex system. Several change process may coexist in an organisation that will strongly interact. The dynamics of the objective sets of parallel processes influence each other. I wonder what could be done with these in the context of the dialogue processes of a given change also be on at the same time. The dialogue theories underline themselves that it is impossible to “suspend” our biases and situatedness in a dialogue situation. The only feasible solution is to make these transparent. However, within an organisation, sometimes one or several parties may have interests that go against transparency. That is, until transparency becomes an immanent part of organisational culture, such interests will always overwrite one of the core criteria of dialogue.

6.6 Role of the trade union in the dialogue process

I can say on the basis of the interviews that **THE WHOLE STAFF** (whether the interviewees were managers, PanTeam members, controllers or controllers playing an active part in the trade union) *was of the opinion that the trade union followed the events, albeit from a distance*. They perceived no direct contact, no effect, no active presence, despite the fact that a trade union presidency member is actually working at Unit B.

There were differences, however, in judgements concerning the *quality of this remote presence*. For controllers working at Unit B, it was a *positive, protective and retaining power*. For managers working at Unit B, a force they looked at with suspicion as a *permanent, potential source of danger*. Project management experienced the same.

“Question: Is it relevant, it has just come to my mind, that XY is a trade union member? In your opinion, is this relevant in this story?

Aaron: Not yet. In my opinion, not at all. If things already culminate in being obliged to come in, then certainly the trade union will have its opinion about it. But now, so far, in my opinion things are not so much at this level, so it absolutely does not get involved into it. I haven’t heard from any of the top leaders that the trade union had anything to say against this [*against the project*].” (Aaron, middle manager)

“Christian: But lots of communication is the usual, only when we are among ourselves, in the trade union Facebook group... And I have the feeling that only part of this will actually be released and make its way to us.

Question: By the way, why don’t they tell it at least to you?

Christian: Well, that may be due to several things. Obviously (...) part of it is tactics. (...) That they have an idea about what it would become in the end. And they certainly have also their own concept as to how they would be able to manage it...” (Christian, project manager)

“Thus you keep feeling it is shoved down your throat, and we keep improving this, and they cannot let it go and cannot understand this will never become something that works, because in the worst case trade union would mess it up.” (Walt, PanTeam member, controller)

„...the problem is that, as trade union, I don’t know at this point what could be done. Not much. If trade union repeats what the staff says, that will not alter what is happening. If management decides to nevertheless take it through everything and (*emphatically*) against the staff, then something could be done, but that is a different story already.” (Robin, controller)

I made no interviews with the trade union presidency; I did not study their interpretation separately, because it was not within the scope of my research. But interviews were made with several controllers working at Unit B who played an active role in the trade union. In their interviews, their trade union membership was not given any special emphasis. Unless I raised their TU status to the focus with my questions, they did not speak in that capacity, only as controllers working at Unit B – and their experience coincided with that of the average controller working at Unit B. This also confirms that they ***do not attribute themselves an active role in this story.***

According to the narrative of the staff working at Unit B, one reason for the above is that there is no common interest that the trade union could represent. **For, there is no unity: the staff working at Unit B is highly fragmented.** This interpretation is shared by the whole staff working at Unit B.

“We are dreadful cowards. Sheep. We cannot demonstrate such force as [*Units A and C*]. Unity.” (Hans, controller)

“I am looking for the error in myself, because if we get determined on this, [*trade union arrives*] at the same moment. When this leader change had to be prevented, they halted it at once. (...) ...the problem is with us.” (James, controller)

The trade union is looking for such common interest as could be represented in the p-SHIFT project. This was confirmed by a questionnaire they drew up and sent to all controllers working at Unit B not long before my research, investigating how the staff related to the p-SHIFT concept (see Annex No. 4), what they wanted/did not want in that context.

It also follows from all the above, however, that **my assumption that the representatives of the key professions have a power position in this industry** and this results in a forced partnership between employers and employees **is only partially true**. Although this power position on the employee side appears in the **p-SHIFT Project**, **it does not become an active force shaping the process**. Based on the analysis, I explain that by the lack of focus: it is not clear what such power could be directed at. **Fragmentation disperses the force of power**.

7 Synthesis: Answers to the research questions

As described in detail in Section 5.1, the research had several purposes. It followed from the interpretative approach that I examined first the experience and interpretation of the actors of the case under study (presented in the previous chapter). The present part provides answers the research questions based on the results.

The experience, interpretations and explanations of the actors of the research case reviewed in the previous chapter are the means of exploring *local meaning*. In what follows, I will discuss first the answers to Research Questions I, II and III pertaining to local meaning (Section 7.1). After that, I will compare this social construction with the theoretical construction presented by the technical literature (Research Questions IV and V, Section 7.2).

7.1 First-order constructions: p-SHIFT Project actors' local interpretation of dialogue and the dialogic relationship

The research questions under topics I, II and III refer to the local semantic micro-communities, i.e. the dialogue interpretations and experience “here and now”. These local social constructions – local in terms of space and time – are so-called first-order constructions.

Research Question I

What does dialogue mean in the context of the p-SHIFT change process of the ANSP for the technical staff working at Unit B? What is their *first-order dialogue construction* in the p-SHIFT change process?

The analysis has shown that **the participants do not feel they are in dialogue or in a dialogic relationship in the p-SHIFT Project of the ANSP**. The chapter presenting the results has described in detail how this situation arose and how the responses and manifestations of the actors interacted.

The individual narratives project a picture of *what dialogue among those affected by the ANSP p-SHIFT change means*. This local meaning can be compiled first and foremost expressions of what they feel is lacking. That is, the first-order construction of my research can be understood on the basis of what the interviewees miss from the dialogue process and dialogic relationships.

- 1) **Reciprocal honesty**, we can be honest and others are also honest with us. On the side of employees, this means that top management are open to any opinion, even if it is negative. They are receptive and listen to the opinion and ideas of PanTeam as

representative of the staff – even if that might affect their goals. On the side of middle managers, this is expressed in a more implicit way and addressed to top management. Middle managers accept the requirement to identify with the content of the change, but the way they speak about this suggests coercion. The expressions “whether you like it or not”, “I cannot snake out of it” or “do ballet on a mine field” are quite eloquent.

- 2) **Possibility of impacting** (co-decision). Staff, PanTeam members and middle managers have all pointed out that the meaning and credibility of dialogue is challenged if not even the basic project concept is designed jointly, as a co-construction, in a change project of such depth and relevance.
- 3) **Importance of personal interactions**: Staff considers personal communication the really credible form. This was expressed to managers working at Unit B, and also to top management, as something missed, as criticism and requirement. Middle managers themselves deemed the steady and regular flow of information if possible through personal, physical presence and interactions a critical factor.
- 4) **Being understood (does not imply agreement)**: It is important for the individuals to get matching reactions, answers and gestures to their own conduct and reactions. Reactions adequate to the other’s state are needed.
- 5) **Emotional presence, a priority requirement for executives**. Disregarding emotions may generate the feeling of not being understood in the other party, and it may distort the dialogic relationship and make dialogue impossible. One conclusion is that change management programmes should cover the sensitisation of executives.
- 6) A **strong professional and human community is no guarantee** for achieving meaningful dialogue among its members.

Are small-community-specific or maybe *occupational-cultural-level (organisational-unit-level) interpretations* created? *How?* Does a local, common interpretation emerge? Incidentally, what fragmented *semantic micro-community interpretations* does dialogue have? Do such semantic micro-communities, if any, coincide with any groups defined by the occupational or other sub-cultures (e.g. executives – non-executives)?

How do these semantic micro-communities, if any, relate to each other?

Individual explanations **turn into small-community narratives** due to the regular interactions of the members of a micro-community isolated from the ANSP as organisation – given their work schedules and work organisation. Regular interaction is thus due to a kind of constraint rather than the free decision of the individuals concerned.

Semantic micro-communities typically coincide with subcultures defined by organisational hierarchy: there are **distinct staff and middle management readings / explanations**. **Within the group of employees**, such communities are not shaped by whether someone has been cast in the role of senior expert in p-SHIFT (so-called PanTeam members) or not. **The fault line occurs along the individuals’ openness to dialogue concerning the change**, and it distinguishes 3 types of employees: (1) those who had been open at the beginning of the project

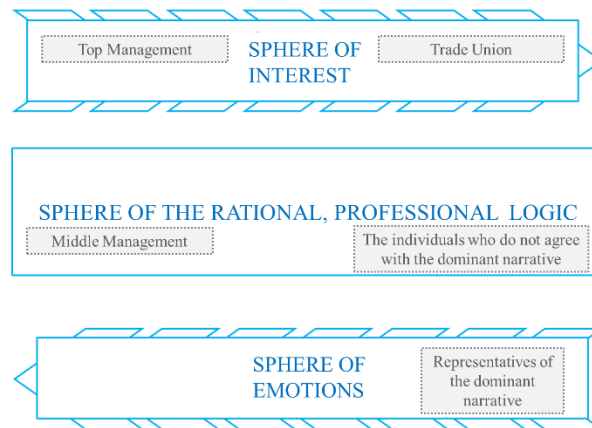
but then locked themselves up due to experience in the meantime; (2) those who had been perceived by the others as aloof from the start; (3) those who are still open to dialogue. Of the three employee groups, only the **(2) becomes a semantic micro-community** with a shared interpretation of the surrounding world, the p-SHIFT project and the role of specific actors within it. Interestingly, *a common semantic horizon has emerged which has also become the dominant narrative in the context of the project*. However, the individuals in the group concerned have not grown into a real community. Their conversations are no more than parallel monologues.

Even so, it is very difficult to oppose the dominant narrative. *The individuals who do not agree with it do not form a community; no dialogue and thus no common semantic micro-community emerges among them*. Individually, they all feel they are marginalised and not understood. Being afraid of complete marginalisation, they do not commit themselves to their own views openly – maybe they would not even know if they were in majority. *They become small isles of misunderstood individuals*.

Although a semantic micro-community has been formed among them, *the representatives of the dominant narrative have also become small isles of misunderstood individuals*. They have highly charged emotions. At the beginning of the p-SHIFT project, their strong feelings were triggered by the prospect of moving out of the old Unit B, as presented in the foregoing. Their emotional responses were countered by reactions that were not adequate to their emotional state. Executives and employees who approached the change on a technical/rational level gave technical/rational answers to these emotional displays. In the semantic community of the controllers, however, this was not an adequate response. Individuals "keeping aloof" were frustrated or disappointed *because they did not feel understood*. Moreover, employees typically in the technical/rational dimension *responded by reciprocal aloofness* to the emotional displays of the dominant narrative. This has produced a mutual feeling of not being understood and mutual aloofness/isolation.

The staff working at Unit B has disintegrated into small isles of misunderstood individuals. It has become totally fragmented and, typically, most individuals have locked themselves up in their respective private worlds.

Middle management is the group that has responded to the emotional displays they experienced by feeling misunderstood, but its members have not locked themselves up so far. This is explained by the appointment of a new Unit B leader that gave middle management an opportunity for renewal. **The new leader focuses much more on the employees and their emotions, whereas the previous Unit B leader gave priority to understanding top management and its goals.** This is confirmed by the dominant/most discussed themes in the interviews with the old and the current Unit B leader: the latter spoke mainly about the staff of Unit B and its emotions, and the former about top management and battling them.



16. Figure. Spheres underlying the p-SHIFT project and the place of specific quasi-communities there. Author's figure.

Top management and the trade union exert an indirect, yet strong, influence on this system of relationships. Basically, both keep their distance from the p-SHIFT project (although I did not get first-hand information about the interpretations of top management). Trade union, on the other hand, is looking for some (common) interest it could represent in p-SHIFT.

It is a **common feature of top management and the trade union that their clashes, interest-driven games in parallel organisational processes affect also the connections within p-SHIFT.** Staff looks at top management with suspicion; middle management has similar feelings about the trade union. Suspicion felt towards top management is partly transferred to middle managers and, in the eyes of middle management, suspicion towards the trade union to staff.

The sphere of interests dominated by top managers and the trade union raises another dilemma challenging the organisational feasibility of dialogue as theoretical construction. It is not only the different sets of objectives that make an organisation a complex system: **several change process may coexist there, and if interests predominate in one, that may discredit dialogic relationships in another.** According to the dialogue philosophies, the clear solution in such cases is to transparently demonstrate that it is not worth continuing the dialogue due to the parallel conflicts of interest. To temporarily suspend dialogue. However, *it is a special feature of conflicts of interest that one, the other or all parties may be counter-interested in transparency.* Thus **until transparency becomes a core value of organisational culture, this dilemma cannot be solved this way,** however obvious it seems according to the theories.

What maintains the differences, i.e. the fragmentation of the semantic micro-communities?
Who has what *explicit or implicit interest* in maintaining such this fragmentation?

Certain factors maintaining the differences, i.e. contributing to the emergence/preservation of the isolation of these three spheres, can be identified on the sides of each of the actor groups affected by the p-SHIFT project.

1. STAFF

- ***Dialogue by representation: a mistake*** (role of PanTeam members). As pointed out by the dialogue theories, there is no such thing as representational dialogue. Dialogue is always something personal, inter-personal. Alternatively, some kind of network-based operation must be ensured, with dialogue communities and connections between them (see Kotter, 2012, strategic network, Section 2.2.2), or everyone must be present at a big dialogue event (see Bohm, 2011, large group methodology, Section 4.2.1). On the other hand, it is an open question whether dialogue by representation could be achieved, despite what the theories say, if the role and responsibility of PanTeam members had been clear from the start of the p-SHIFT Project. I cannot give a definitive answer to this question based on my research; further researches would be necessary for that.
- ***Unilateral responsibility assignment***. If the content of the change is really important for the actor of the change, a sense of responsibility must be present. He could walk up to the other and make efforts to ensure that a given actor is understood by the others. The reason why this is not done differs by individual, but it could be apathy, burnout or even laziness.

2. MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

- ***Real understanding is not a unilateral cognitive act***, but emotional work: empathy, turning to the other. I/thou relationship (Buber, 1994).
- ***Unilateral assumption of responsibility***. Middle management unilaterally assumes responsibility for not doing its alleged duty, not involving the whole staff – this reinforces the We/They reading. More understanding would be needed about how we, together, could create something, and we ought to undertake any inconvenience that goes with showing the other that he, too, has a responsibility in this. This can also be interpreted as a kind of convenient absence from an unpleasant situation.

3. TOP MANAGEMENT

- ***Illusion of no impact***. Absence is also an action and in the given case it arouses suspicion. An actor of change who is part of the organisation must be aware of the fact that he will impact on dialogue in any case, whether by being absent or through a parallel organisational process.

4. PROJECT MANAGERS

- ***Unspecified mediator role (PanTeam)***. With a well-specified and appropriately communicated set of responsibilities and duties, Kotter's (2012) model of network-based dialogue would have been inherent in this setup. However, further research would be needed to pronounce a definitive judgement on that.
- ***Distance due to the mediator (project manager) role as obstacle to dialogue***: project management misinterpreted its role and responsibility which was not to function as a

channel of understanding and mediation. Their task would have been to provide time and space for dialogue for the other actors.

5. TRADE UNION

- **Impact of power demonstration.** Trade union power has an indirect influence in the p-SHIFT project. TU acted very forcefully, marshalling its considerable powers in parallel organisational events. Its effect on p-SHIFT manifested itself through middle management: although the trade union did not interfere in any relevant way in the project, it represented a constant threat to managers. The same is true for them as for top management: since they are part of the organisation where others try to establish dialogue, they must consciously face the fact that they have an impact anyway. If only through parallel organisational developments, by bringing the hermeneutics of suspicion into the system of relationships. This, however, destroys the dialogic relationships, that is, it has a negative effect acting against dialogue.

Research Questions II

What are the *relationships* of the technical staff working at Unit B, directly affected by the p-SHIFT change in the ASNP, characterised by? Why?

The chapter about the detailed results introduced two sub-questions generated by the breakdown of the above research question : How does the technical staff of Unit B, directly concerned by the p-SHIFT change, describe the relationships / connections that had emerged among them? How do they experience them and their characteristics? These questions have been answered in detail in the analytical chapter.

In summary, **none of the groups of participants feels to be in a dialogic relationship.** No dialogic relationship exists even among the representatives of the dominant narrative, in whose case it is clearest that they constitute a semantic micro-community.

Research Questions III

What (quality of) *understanding* has been achieved within the technical staff working at Unit B, directly affected by the p-SHIFT change in the ANSP? Why? Do they feel understood?

All, Unit B managers and staff alike, interpret each other's perceived reactions *without* trying to understand them. There are *some germs of understanding* generated by vague and superficial impressions which, however, *testify a certain amount of trust*.

These include the insight of middle management that resistance perceived on behalf of the staff working at Unit B actually reflects an emotional bias, or that the staff attributes, at least partly, the reactions of middle management to compliance with the alleged expectations of top management. These **attributions are the individual** (executive, employee) **explanations of a perceived** (staff/management) **behaviour**.

Small isles of misunderstood individuals emerge, with such degree of fragmentation that basically each individual is a separate isle. Some would still be open to dialogue, but they also show a kind of apathy, burnout. In this situation characterised by lack of energy and the inability to open towards each other the only hope lies in the new leader of Unit B. However, if the new leader cannot eliminate fragmentation, there will be no community of individuals open to each other and wishing to establish contact with the other, suitable for achieving dialogue.

7.2 Meeting of first- and second-order constructions

This section compares the social constructions? which is local in terms of space and time with the theoretical constructions advocated by the technical literature. *I must bring into dialogue the local, social constructions and the theoretical ones.*

Research Questions IV

What is the relationship between the already existing second-order constructions and the local first-order ones? What do the latter strengthen and weaken, how do they expand, differentiate, specify or maybe destroy the constructions of the social science theories? And, *vice versa*, can what has emerged among the players be considered dialogue from a theoretical point of view?

Is it possible that although the actual relationships / processes are experienced as dialogue, they do not meet the relevant requirements set by the theories?

As for the last question indicated above, it is relatively easy to answer it based on the research results since the participants do not feel being party to dialogue or dialogic relationships. It might be a good idea to examine in a future research a case where the participants report on experienced dialogic relationships and/or dialogue situations. I will return to this in Section 7.3 presenting the limits of the present research.

My comparison of first- and second-order constructions included an itemised investigation of how the dialogue criteria specified by the theories (second-order constructions) were realised / did not get distorted in the case under study:

1. criteria applicable to participants, the subject matter of the dialogue and the medium
2. relationship criteria
3. interaction criteria.

I will present the above in the summary table below. I used the comparison to establish what first-order constructions strengthened or weakened, how they specified / differentiated the theories or contradicted them.

What do the criteria refer to?	Dialogue criteria (second-order constructions)	Characteristics of the research case (first-order constructions)
PARTICIPANTS	Biased, of necessity (prejudices, assumptions, motives, expectations, preliminary concepts)	true
	Free (can and will become independent of the foregoing)	Controllers in the sphere of emotions do not want to become independent of their emotional motives at the start of the project. Later on, the reason for locking themselves up is that they got inadequate responses to their emotional displays. WE do not learn whether they could become independent of their emotions if they got adequate responses. The movement of top management and the trade union is basically driven by interests. To have a meaningful dialogue, these interests ought to be suspended temporarily. The present organisational situation does not reveal whether they would be capable of this, and if so, under what conditions and would the dialogic relationship be created then.
	Volunteering, lack of constraint	Not true, cf. selection of PanTeam members; coercion discredited the dialogic relationship between middle management and PanTeam members and indirectly also the staff at the start.
	Situated, socially and historically	True for all.
	Demand for justice (shows what is real)	True, e.g. I have not come across the distorting effect of past experience.
	Autonomy, self-defencelessness	Change is so relevant, so important for the staff of Unit B that no self-defence mechanisms took effect.
	Authentic: the subject matter is important for them	Clearly, the extent and stake of the change makes the subject matter of dialogue important for all participants.
	Open (to change, to the other participant)	This is where a basic difference is perceptible within Unit B. Some are perceived as being completely locked up by the others. All in all, separate isles of not being understood are formed.
	Hermeneutics of goodwill (1. the other may be right; 2. helps the other to show himself as accurately, as truly as possible; 3. openly showing yourself)	Suspicion detectable exclusively between trade union and middle management. (Note: the top management perspective and directly the perspective of the trade union have been left out of the research.) Middle management, although it recognises emotional bias, does not help those in the sphere of emotions clearly understand themselves and their being misunderstood, i.e. Point 2 is corrupted in this regard.
	Credibility	The selection of PanTeam members and gossip concerning its operation undermined the team's dialogue-related role and the credibility of its members. Due to the alleged indirect impact of top management, middle management starts with a credibility backlog ("constraint" of identification with the project directions).
	Intelligibility (linguistic and communicative competency)	I have not encountered any relevant negative statement during the research. My conclusion is that they (would) understand each other, there is no problem with their linguistic and communicative skills.
	Independent (not subject to anyone's control)	Not true; all participants reported the dialogue was undermined by lack of substantial co-decision on the directions of change and the real subject matter of dialogue.
	Not fixed in advance, unfolds among the participants	It was true at the beginning of the project, but in this period the actors battled with this (unfixed) subject matter, because there was no established organisational routine for working together. The European tender project and the subsequent alleged top management expectations, on the other hand, sent them message to the staff that the goal of the change, the subject matter of the dialogue, must not be challenged, since it had been defined by top management.
	Not permanent, either in space or time	True, but in the period after the European tender project, all participants of the project share the interpretation that top management has already fixed the subject. (Note: I have not investigated the change from the perspective of top management.)
MEDIUM	Situated: it is created in dialogue, does not exist independent of it	True
	Spoken or written language or culture	Not in the focus of my research.
	Dynamic, constantly changing	Not in the focus of my research.
		Not in the focus of my research.
	Power problem: who has an advantage, who is more familiar with it, whose language do we speak	Not in the focus of my research.
	Ritkán tisztán mediatív	Not in the focus of my research.
	Rather no real common, neutral language exists	Not in the focus of my research.

18. Table. Fulfilment of dialogue criteria in the p-SHIFT case. Examination of the criteria of participants, the subject matter of dialogue and the medium. Author's compilation.

In summary, if the criterion of lack of constraint is not met, all efforts to achieve dialogue are discredited. It is a dilemma whether an employee can actually say “no” to dialogue if top management has passed a decision about the direction of organisational change and that change would alter the basic working conditions of employees. Does the individual have a really voluntary and free choice in an organisational situation? The results suggest that *if the employee has a real opportunity to influence* the change through dialogue, he will *want* to take part in it. This applies to the criteria applicable to the subject matter of the dialogue, i.e. it is not subject to the unilateral control of either party. If this is not met, the credibility of dialogue is undermined and dialogical relationships are eliminated.

What do the criteria refer to?	Dialogue criteria (second-order constructions)	Characteristics of the research case (first-order constructions)
VIZONYOK	Relationships of PARTICIPANTS	I/Thou relationship
		No I/Thou relationship exists between any of the actors
		Partnership
		Staff assumed real partnership at the start of the p-SHIFT project; due to the events that took place during the launch and operation of PanTeam and the corresponding staff narratives, partnership between staff and middle management, staff and project management was terminated.
		Mutual, bilateral
		Mutuality had been present, but later on the actors got isolated from each other.
		Back-and-forth effect
		It had been damaged at the start of the project, due to the selection of PanTeam members, when no criticism could be expressed about the project (i.e. no substantial effect could be exerted).
	Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND SUBJECT MATTER	Changes the actors (effect principle)
		1. Previously open persons disappointed/locking themselves up due to their experience - effect exists, but it is negative from the point of view of dialogue. 2. Aloof from the start: they have not established any meaningful relation with others, the relationship had no effect on them, they have not changed. 3. Still open to dialogue, but locked up, i.e. despite their openness, the system of relationships emerging in the p-SHIFT project had a negative effect on them.
		Risky
Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND MEDIA	Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND SUBJECT MATTER	Includes tension
		True
		Necessary power asymmetry (power position and vulnerability)
		True (plus: informal power and vulnerability both perceived, see trade union); in the research case, power asymmetry in itself had no effect on dialogue.
	Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND SUBJECT MATTER	Subjective, not neutral
		True. Those in the rational/technical sphere also react emotionally to the change but they can suspend that, put it in brackets. The research has shown that dialogue would be feasible even if not all were in the rational/technical sphere. However, emotions require adequate response to prevent that individuals lock themselves up.
Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND MEDIA	Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND SUBJECT MATTER	Dynamic
		A well-identifiable group has locked itself up relatively early in the p-SHIFT project. Their relationship with the subject matter of the dialogue can be called stable. With the others, dynamism is observable.
	Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND MEDIA	Dynamic
		Not in the focus of my research.
Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND MEDIA	Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND SUBJECT MATTER	Local dynamic
		Not in the focus of my research.
Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND MEDIA	Relationship between PARTICIPANTS AND SUBJECT MATTER	Bias (identifiable relative to the other participant)
		Not in the focus of my research.

19. Table. Fulfilment of dialogue criteria in the p-SHIFT case. Examination of the criteria applicable to relationships.
Author's compilation.

In summary, I emphasise that irrespective of reciprocity and back-and-forth effects, it is basically the I/Thou relationship (Buber, 1994) that determines the dialogic relationship. It is very important to see how vulnerable the relationship criteria are: a top manager's ambiguous gesture / manifestation may cause very serious damage to the relationships, and that can erode, albeit maybe not definitively, the dialogue effort, its authenticity. The study of the present research case has confirmed the theoretical assumption that power asymmetry between the participants (whether formal or informal) has no effect on dialogue in itself; if the subject matter of the dialogue is important for the participants personally, they can disregard it.

It is also important to see and understand the relevance of parallel organisational events. If *I/Thou* relationships prevail among the parties in organisational occurrences in a parallel project, I can hardly imagine that an *I/Thou* relationship could be established also at some other forum.

Chapter 4 reviewed the theoretical dilemmas emerging through the comparison of change management theories and dialogue philosophies. Typically, the dialogue philosophies provide answers to these, but I would like to present also my own answers based on the research and analysis of the research case.

1) How can power asymmetry due to language usage and sequencing (e.g. who is the initiator, the client) and familiarity with dialogue (e.g. role of advisor) be resolved?

- a. Answer of dialogue philosophies: Power asymmetry is immanent to dialogue. Only the relationship of the participants, i.e. the underlying attitude of the participants to each other and the process, can resolve it. That is, if I turn to the other with openness and real attention, because instead of gaining control and power over him, my aim is to cooperate, to co-act, I would not abuse my power.
- b. The case has shed light also on formal and informal power asymmetry. The above answer of the dialogue philosophies is true for both types of power: the attitude to each other is the dominant factor that can overwrite any power relations. The analysis has also shown that the role of client / initiator is actually a power factor. Elbow room provided to participants is critical in the establishment of the dialogic relationship, the achievement of dialogue. If the participants feel they can exert a real influence on dialogue, on the subject matter of the change, such power asymmetry can also dissolve in the process.

2) Considering the openness and vulnerability aspects, is dialogue feasible in an organisational framework?

- a. Answer of dialogue philosophies: The hermeneutics of trust is always vulnerable. There are no rational arguments for it. It depends on your individual decisions and fundamental view of the world and man whether you believe in the meaningfulness of dialogue despite the difficulties and obvious risks.
- b. I encountered a partly related phenomenon during the analysis of the case. Those who were disappointed and therefore replaced their initial openness by locking themselves up did not experience vulnerability in the dialogue situation, but rather felt “we thought it might be possible”. This is closer to *trust regretted in retrospect* than vulnerability. If so, the answer of the dialogue philosophies applies also here, i.e. trust is inevitably risky unless it encounters reciprocal trust and openness to partnership shown by the other party.

3) How can suspicion towards trust be dispelled?

- a. Answer of dialogue philosophies: Suspicion towards trust is inevitable in the organisational context; trust requires constant demonstration and it must be fought for continuously. Credibility implies a never-ending “burden of proof”.
 - b. I think this has been demonstrated partly by the case. If the relationships of participants in parallel organisational developments are not characterised by the dialogic relationship system, and the developments concerned impact on the process aiming at achieving dialogue, even the temporary suspension of dialogue might be justified. This might be acceptable, but note that a suspended dialogue cannot be resumed where you left it off. Trust must be rebuilt to some extent in every case, and the problem here is its time demand. There are special actor groups such as top management or the trade union that must make more efforts to be credible in a dialogic process. My analysis of the research case has addressed these two perspectives unilaterally only, but the words of project management, middle management and staff have made it clear that both of the aforementioned actors must make serious efforts to be credible in the dialogic relationship.
- 4) What if **past grievances** in an organisation **are so deep** and the resulting suspicion is so intensive that they make dialogue impossible?
- a. Answer of dialogue philosophies: The hermeneutics of trust is finite itself. Some wounds cannot be healed; if so, the only option is to withdraw from understanding.
 - b. In the case under study, I did not find any incurable wounds. I rather saw confirmation of the theoretical assumption that if the subject matter of dialogue, change, is important personally and also individually to the staff, that would let them overcome their alleged or real past grievances.
- 5) Can **organisational situatedness be overruled by commitment to dialogue**?
- a. Answer of dialogue philosophies: It depends on your individual decisions and fundamental view of the world and man whether you believe in the meaningfulness of dialogue despite the difficulties and obvious risks.
 - b. The case under study suggests a partly positive answer: neither past events nor hierarchical positions can influence dialogue if its subject matter is personally important to all actors concerned. Parallel organisational developments, however, can make dialogue impossible. If so, the solution is its temporary suspension after which special efforts must be made to re-build the dialogic relationships.

What do the criteria refer to?	Dialogue criteria (second-order constructions)	Characteristics of the research case (first-order constructions)
<div>INTERACTIONS</div> <div> <div>Interaction between PARTICIPANTS</div> <div>Interaction between PARTICIPANT / SUBJECT MATTER</div> <div>Interaction between PARTICIPANT / MEDIUM</div> </div>	Symmetry criterion (sequential active/passive roles)	In the p-SHIFT project, symmetry is observed until there are real attempts at dialogue. After that, almost all are locked up; there is no real interaction. Thaw new unit head shows signs of the will to rebuild communication. Symmetric interaction is important for him.
	Reaction = meaningful reaction	One of the key reasons of fragmentation is that at the start of the project those in the sphere of emotions did not consider what they experienced during the dialogue attempts meaningful reactions. The lack of meaningful reactions was one of the most critical issues in this change.
	Direct (1. not mediated; 2. clear connection)	In the p-SHIFT project, the operation of Panther Team can be considered an instance of mediated interaction. Because of the unclarified nature of the roles, however, I cannot draw any conclusions as to whether this mediated interaction could have worked or not. Based on the interviews, it cannot be excluded that PanTeam could have functioned this way.
	Completeness (no taboos)	In particular with regard to the connections of top management, it is not true that there are no taboos. These taboos, whether real or assumed, poison the very bases of the relationships between top management and staff, and top management and middle management/project management, making dialogue impossible.
	Permanent reflection on the subject matter	Not within the focus of my research.
	Reciprocal influence (effect principle)	Not within the focus of my research.
	Mutual determination ???	Not within the focus of my research.

20. Table. Fulfilment of dialogue criteria in p-SHIFT. Examination of the criteria applicable to interaction. Author's compilation.

Since in the case under study the failure of the dialogic relationships was due to the unsettled nature of the basic relationships, I have learned less about the relevance of interactions. In vain are the interaction criteria – symmetry, absence of taboos among participants – fulfilled, no I/Thou relationship has emerged, no meaningful partnership unfolded and this, in turn, gave no chance for the establishment of a dialogic relationship.

One of the key points demonstrated by the case is the *critical importance* of adequate, meaningful reactions. The community of the dominant narrative did not consider the reactions they received / perceived meaningful, and this could be conducive to isolation and fragmentation.

Research Questions V

What have I learned about the phenomenon of dialogue in the context of organisational change? What have I learned about the possibilities of understanding, co-action and change?

One of the key points, confirmed by the research, is that if change is really important for the organisational actors, this, in itself carries sufficient weight to opens the way to dialogue that can override past organisational experience or organisational situatedness / bias. Parallel

organisational developments may occur that make it necessary to suspend dialogue, but it is possible to re-build it.

The organisation is a complex system where several events / developments take place concurrently, with their respective emotional, rational, objective or interest systems. Their interactions cannot be avoided, but they can be managed. One or another process can be suspended in favour of another, more important, one. Top management has an obvious task here, and it is to know that it sets priorities even unawares.

Dialogic relationship systems, dialogues, are not usual in the organisations of our days. Patience at the start is essential. Understanding is crucial when one or another actor of dialogue faces initial incomprehension. And, even more importantly, understanding is not just a cognitive act! Empathy is necessary to understand the emotional state of the other. Adequate, matching, answers must be given to the questions, dilemmas, emotional displays. A mediator, who could be an actor within the organisation such as project management, for example, may have a priority role in this early phase. Since we are speaking of a change process, this is the population that comes to mind. As quasi-independent actor, the mediator can promote mutual understanding between the parties, but note that its role is temporary. Its function is to establish contact, provide time and space for dialogue – and then leave the terrain to the participants.

7.3 Limits of the research and further research opportunities

This closing section reviews the limits of my research and presents further research opportunities as I see them now.

Sampling was deliberate: I was looking for an **industry where dialogue processes are supported by other forces (regulatory and organisational policy forces in the given case)**. This is obviously also one of the LIMITS OF MY RESEARCH; therefore, for the sake of the generalisation of the research results, it would be important to do empirical research on the same topic also in an industry and/or organisation where no such supportive forces exist.

As pointed out in the presentation of the results, in the case under study **I could demonstrate what dialogue meant (would mean) for the participants primarily on the basis of the sense of lack they experienced**. Again, for the sake of generalisation, it would be important to study a case where participants reported on experienced dialogic relationships/dialogue situations. Bohm takes a clear stand on this issue, saying that no dialogue is feasible in an organisation due to hierarchy being its immanent feature. “Hierarchy is antiethical to dialogue, and it is difficult to escape hierarchy in organizations. (...)Can those in authority really ‘level’ with those in subordinate positions?” (Bohm quoted by Senge, 2006, p.228) It would nevertheless be useful to identify and study organisational cases where at least part of participants spoke of experienced dialogic situations.

In the methodological part, I referred to the strength of participatory observation due to its real-time aspect and because I saw the case in context and saw interpersonal behaviour

demonstrating the dynamics at play among the participants of change. Had I used this method more intensively and deliberately, I might have come to further conclusions. **Participatory observation supplemented with collective interviews would have fitted my research questions better than the chosen methodology.** Since in the given case the focus of the interviewees was on the unsettled relationships of the participants, the direct observation of interactions would have promoted the understanding of the relevance of interactions in dialogue.

The most obvious limit to my research is **the absence of the top management and trade union presidency perspectives.** I still think I took the right decision under the circumstances, but the absence of their perspective is perceptible. I should conduct an empirical research also in an industry that is less permeated by politics, with a strong focus on the perspective of top management.

Similarly to any other quantitative research, the present venture has its limits in terms of generalisation: **we cannot speak of statistical, only of theoretical generalisability here.**

The POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS OF FUTURE RESEARCH follow from the above:

- to expand and differentiate the understanding of the role of dialogue in organisational change processes through **other cases.** It would be worth investigating as many different organisations/changes as possible, with special regard to differences in *size* (small, large, geographically dispersed or at the same place), *culture* (multinational company, family business, less dominant technical/rational culture, start-ups, art organisations, charities etc.) and *structural differences* (levels of hierarchy, small power distances);
- dedicate a separate research to the **top management perspective**, to understand their points of view, experience and interpretations, but also to find an answer to the question raised by Bohm: “Can those in authority really ‘level’ with those in subordinate positions?” (Bohm quoted by Senge, 2006, p.228)
- apply **discourse analysis** instead of the case study methodology to examine the dialogic relations, specific dialogue situations of the organisation/of organisational change.

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9 ANNEX NO. 1: STRATEGIES OF ZALTMAN AND DUNCAN

	POWER STRATEGIES	PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES	REEDUCATIVE STRATEGIES	FACILITATIVE STRATEGIES
ANTICIPATED LEVEL OF RESISTANCE	No commitment. Resistance and conflicts have high potential.	No commitment. Resistance and conflicts have high potential.	The relatively unbiased presentation of fact, the unlearning (unfreezing) of something prior to the learning of the new attitude/behavior are	The client system recognizes the problem, agrees that action is necessary, open to assistance,
	The change agents have enough power and/or resources for rewarding or punishing the target system.	The change agents are realatively powerless and/or have no direct control over the client system and/or are dependent on the target and/or have not enough	People who held power are rational, capable of discerning fact and adjusting their behavior accordingly when facts are presented to them.	People who held formal and informal power are engagedand recognize the problem as well.
KEY STAKEHOLDERS	Stakeholders are not engaged but weak to resist or can be motivated with financial or other incentives.	Stakeholders have low commitment, the change agents are relatively powerless over them.	Data provided stakeholders understand the problems and begin to solve them.	Key stakeholders are engaged; they need the resources for change.
MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	High time-pressure. Great magnitude of change, it is percieved to be risky and socially disruptive. The change agent has more knowledge about target system.	Great magnitude of change. Change is perceived to be risky, socially disruptive. Change agents are relatively powerless. No resources for motivating.	No time pressure. Greater discrepancy between client and change agent concerning the existence of problem, its character/nature, and the need for remedial action.	No time pressure. Great degree of consensus between client and change agent concerning the existence of problem, its character, and the need for remedial

15. table: Comparisons of characteristics of Zaltman & Duncan's four change strategies.
Source: Zaltman and Duncan, 1977

10 ANNEX NO. 2: STRATEGIES OF NUTT

	INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATI ON	PARTICIPATION IMPLEMENTATIO N	PERSUASION IMPLEMENTATIO N	EDICT IMPLEMENTATIO N
1. Need for change	MANAGER	MANAGER	MANAGER	MANAGER
2. Planning	MANAGER	MANAGER AND STRATEGY GROUP	EXPERT	MANAGER
3. Guiding the process	MANAGER, WITH COMMITTEES	MANAGER AND STRATEGY GROUP: experts and key stakeholders	MANAGER	MANAGER
4. Communication	MANAGER, WITH COMMITTEES	MANAGER AND STRATEGY GROUP	MANAGER	MANAGER (formal communication)
5. Execution (follow-up, reporting, motivation)	MANAGER	MANAGER	MANAGER	MANAGER

16. table: Comparisons of characteristics of Nutt's four implementation strategies. Source: Nutt, 1987

11 ANNEX NO. 3: FOUR MODELS OF BOUWEN AND FRY

	Power model	Sales model	Expert model	Confrontational learning model
1. Role of the leader	Authority figure with access to power resources	Sales person with smooth approach	Expert knowledge and expert power	Coach- facilitative leader with process knowledge
2. Characteristics of the communication process	Imposing/declaring change	Persuasion by all means of influence	Steps of problem solving or information processing rationality	Facilitating confrontation; 2-sided cognitive-emotional restructuring
3. Basis for decision making	Interest and power define criteria	Continuous exposure keeping attention	Rational criteria	Through consultation and consensual validation
4. Main tensions in the process (critical success factors)	Capacity to control exits and resources	Newness of the alternative	Discretion for participation	Concerns of all parties involved
5. Criterion for effectiveness	Quick technical – financial results	Rate of adoption and followship	Rational attainment	Common sense shared meaning
6. Sequences of action patterns	Start and restart regression	Consistent planning of stop-go	Linear step-by-step process (classic project management)	Experimenting – evaluating – questioning : learning cycle
7. Effect for learning/adaptation in the organization (or mechanism causing the change)	Compliance and passive followship	Imitation and adoption	Cognitive learning through insight	Communication and orientation on valid data
8. Designative contingencies	Crisis situation; lack of time; intended dependency	Indifference of target group ; one-sided interest	Predictable, highly structured situation	Interdependency necessary for goal achievement

17. table: Comparisons of characteristics of the four innovation models. Source: Bouwen and Fry, 1991, p. 42

12 Annex no. 4: Trade union questionnaire

Please, assist our work by answering the following questions.

1. Based on your experience concerning the current p-SHIFT concept...

1.a.	I support the current p-SHIFT Concept A	
	I support the current p-SHIFT Concept A, conditionally	
	I am opposed to the current p-SHIFT Concept A, but I would support the development of some contingency solution.	
	I am fully opposed to p-SHIFT Concept A	

1.b.	I support the current p-SHIFT Concept B	
	I support the current p-SHIFT Concept B, conditionally	
	I am opposed to the current p-SHIFT Concept B, but I consider the development direction (looking for solutions) OK	
	I am opposed to the current p-SHIFT Concept B, but I could support some modernisation/development trend (e.g. smart TWR).	
	I am totally opposed to any p-SHIFT Concept B	

2. What activity can you input into a possible problem solution? *(select all that apply)*

Panel participation.	
Expressing my opinion if asked (e.g. focus group interviews).	
Ready to tell my opinion if asked (e.g. individual interview).	
Ready to complete questionnaire surveys.	
I would not like to make any extra effort any more concerning this topic.	