

Dynamic Organisational Analysis

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Guiding questions: “please imagine a certain organisation you know...”

- *How do you see the reality and the quality of enterprises and organisations today?*
- *What is the impact of the proposed views on organisations? Do you have alternative views?*
- *To what degree do you think organisations can be influenced with regard to their internal dynamics?*
- *What is your favourite theory of organisations?*
- *Which perspectives and dimensions are helpful to follow and monitor the developments of organisations?*

Companies have fascinated me from the very beginning. I still remember the smell of oil and freshly roasted coffee in my nose, when I visited my father in “the firm” he was working in. It was a small regional wholesaler, which at that time still sold coffee, oil and crops in open form. Particularly the friendly faces of the blue-grey clothing of the workers and the white collared office people come to my mind. They liked their work and enjoyed it. Obviously I put in my mind that work in and for organisations principally can cause joy and fun. After those first experiences in the meantime I had the opportunity to see a lot of organisations, partly as employee, partly as external consultant. Mostly I found joy was not in the foreground in these organisations. But we can influence and change companies. In this sense the main goal of this article is to deliver the interest in organisations, to get a new picture of an organisation and to use practical approaches to intervene in organisations. You can use the new concept of organisational dynamics presented here for all kinds of organisations – industrial companies, service organisations, public organisations and non-profit-organisations. There are degrees of open and covered dynamics in every organisation. By identifying and working with these we are able to improve organisations. This article presents ten precise dynamics that are relevant for and in an organisation. This approach reduces complexity in an optimal way. We can measure an organisation, we can diagnose it, we can intervene and change it.

1. Transactional analysis and the new quality of economic development

1.1. Organisational transactional analysis

Transactional analysts have considered the phenomenon “organisation” since Berne. Eric Berne (1963) has used a wholesome perspective on organisations in his book “The Structure and dynamic of organisations and groups“. He considered the organisation in total with its principles and dynamics. Wagner (1981) and James (1975) then focussed on the individual and (its) his communication in the organisation. Also the transfer of TA-personality models on organisations like the one of Balling (2005) brings interesting perspectives. Schmid (2006, in this book) introduced the systemic view in Transactional Analysis in organisations. His role model focuses on an individual perspective of the organisation. Other concepts of Schmid (2004) regard the whole organisation. Hay (1993, 2006 in this book) has stressed the individual, professional and different character of organisational work and particularly a positive connotation of TA terms and concepts. Van Beekum (2006, in this book) has looked at the psychodynamic processes of the organisational processes. Mohr (2000) and Mountain and Davidson (2005) have made the step to view the organisation as a whole and to use terms, which are common in organisations.

The following contribution focuses the questions:

How can we regard the whole perspective on the organisation?

Which schedule helps to understand an organisation?

How is the impact of organisational dynamics on acting and reacting of the organisation?

The answers are given in a six step journey. You personally can get closer to the theme if you clarify for yourself which pictures you have constructed about organisations and other social systems. You can check what you see as responsible for development of organisations. The discussion is guided from a TA identity point of view. Modern TA identity means: based on real transactions, cybernetic, constructing models, oriented through a humanistic ethics and steadily developed in an international community of discussion. (Schmid, 1996; Mohr, 2005). This allows us to integrate the research, the considerations and the developments of the worldwide TA community.

“Organisational Transactional Analysis” regards the patterns of thinking, feeling and behaviour in organisations, and also the methods of diagnosis and intervention professionals in organisations use on the personal and the systemic level (department, whole organisation), all on the foundation of transactional analysis identity. It is related to economic and structural aspects, to goal orientation, to hierarchy and to systemic dynamics. (Mohr & Steinert, 2006, in this book)

1.2. A critical point in the development and the perspectives of organisations

Companies have come to a critical point. Data like turn over, revenue, profits or stock prices do not describe the real facts in the company and the right potential of performance. These data look back and do not give adjusted information for decisions. Also these data are guided by interests which show the company in a certain light. Stories like Enron and Worldcom show the bad extremes of the number logic and the potential moral hazard in the case. The pure numbers of these information systems are insufficient. But the numbers are not the only problem. News about a company often is the tip of the iceberg, even if it is served nearly daily in huge companies. The bigger part of the organisation is hidden for the most viewers and has to be revealed in its entirety by what follows. They often have a quality that makes one wonder that

anything is produced there at all. What is told about profit companies can also be transferred to social “companies”. Companies and other organisations make entrepreneurial ideas reality. The term enterprise means the active answering of a concrete challenge with the goal of being successful.

Globalisation nowadays has a quality, which is really new. Global economy has been known since the Greeks, Marco Polo, the Arabs and many other historical “globalisers”. But now the new technological development produces new conditions unlike earlier international developments of the economy. The eastern world of the so called “real existing socialist block” has imploded. The great gift for human mankind in this was that it went along without a great war, although up to this point of time in history all great powers had used their weapon arsenals in a war. Now there is more than ever before one global market. The second fundamental development is that the internet has brought us closer to the “just in time” one world. Hardly any organisation can escape this today. The sociologist Ulrich Beck describes the power play which has developed: "We live in a multi-dimensional one, polycentric, in which transnational and national protagonists play cat and mouse with each other." The protagonists are enterprises, state governments, supranational political institutions (EC, UN, ...), NGOs (Greenpeace, Amnesty International, ATTAC ...), (Beck, 1997, 195.) The weight of a single company management in comparison with for example democratic state organs has moved strongly. The influence of the companies has grown. Institutions, which are able to regulate the power play, at the moment, are still missing. Beck assumes that there is neither economically nor politically a hegemonic power or international regime. A disorganised capitalism globally arises. The interdependence of (the) strengths brings also new fields of activity for organisations. The NGOs can partly name concerns regarding states that governments cannot do for diplomatic reasons. Altogether, the current globalisation increases the complexity of the environment for all organisations.

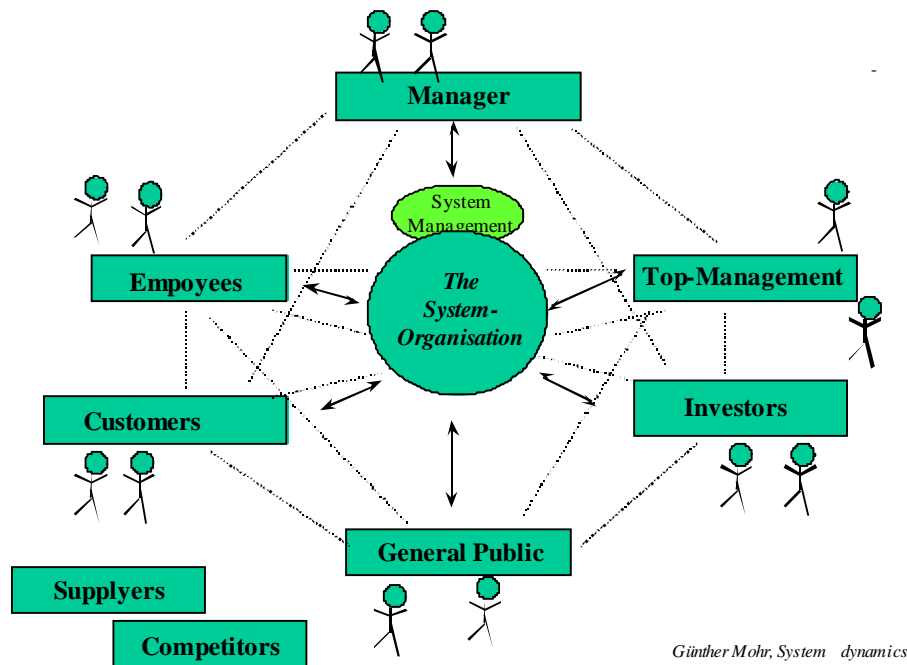
2. The real dynamics of the organisation

2.1. The deep structure of the organisation

An organisation comes into being if a single person or a group decides to accomplish a greater goal, which a single person cannot achieve. This process of the organisation in addition immediately gives rise to a system of relations. “System” means a mutual, interdependent work of the people in a relational net. This also concerns the different objectives, origins and interests of the people. All these aspects are more or less perceptible for the ones involved in the organisations. It is necessary to bring together the two prospects, system design and system emergence. This means to find out, which control dimensions characterise an enterprise in its inner dynamics and take influence away from conscious planning (system design) like the system’s self dynamics (system emergence)

An entrepreneurial system is a complex system. At first it lets itself be seen in many different aspects. An overview of the many facets occasionally shows the features of a chaotic organism. Numbers and times play a large role. People spend time with each other, move in rooms, sometimes meet. There are successes and defeats.

Some topics contain explosives, others are fatally boring. Some involved have several roles, “wear a lot of hats” and juggle with these (around), other act rigidly with a tunnel view. Others rather feel, sometimes even outside, as if they were on the edge and that they had nothing to do with the whole enterprise thing. Technology can be seen everywhere. Goods go in and data streams flow out. Different languages are spoken: "business economic", "technical", "IT-ic" "colloquial", “soft psychological”, "foreign". This starting point of a depth structure of the



2.2. The organisational system as relational partner

The knowledge about enterprises and organisations has gained essential new impulses from the research about living biological systems. Particularly the autopoiesis of systems gave important knowledge. The transfer to human systems like organisations and enterprises profited from it. The Englishman Stafford Beer and the American Peter Senge have given the phenomenon of the "system" and the "systemic" perspective great attention with respect to organisations. Peter Senge distinguishes between "system design" and "system emergence". (Senge, 2001) "System design" deals with the conscious planning and active design of organisation systems. Innumerable traditional consultants live on it and draw up linear design plans with a lot of ceteris paribus conditions. A company is analysed, a plan drawn up and then attempts are made to realise this plan in detail. In organisations the experience shows many substantial developments similar to John Lennon's sentence "Life happens while we make other plans". A question is there whether and how enterprises can walk along a successful path. The attention to this momentum is just as important for any intended influencing control. But how does the momentum take place exactly? Here the sentence "people make economy" has special meaning. But it isn't "the big men", who make that happen. The systemic interaction of the forces (Steinert, 2006, in this book) of an enterprise determines how much an individual can provide. Even if single persons have huge influence on social systems, this is possible only by a flanking or supporting attitude of other system forces. The executive board chairman can convert his charismatic side into following only when other system forces like the executive board colleagues or the other managers support him.

It is particularly true for larger enterprises, that even the system itself becomes an independent relational partner for the individual persons. And "the whole is more than the sum of the individual parts" as Aristotle noted. The depth structure can be judged by different persons differently. A human system itself developed particular habits and even determines "intelligence

and spirit of the system". This further is autopoietic (self-supporting) even if single persons change. Although the spirit of the depth structure is created by people, it becomes independent of them. Sometimes it appears that an enterprise has lost its inner strength. If one comes to these companies, everyone seems hopeless regarding the enterprise. People do their daily work but it is no longer clear "for what". There is no more inner strength for the organisation. Everyone still tries somehow to hold out but life and spirit have been lost. The inner power of an enterprise can be more or less strong. It even can be taken to the final breath (expiration). Sometimes this is noticeable very fast. But it always forms people through being in their roles. Every person who is involved in an organisational system in any way influences the impact of this system. Everyone brings in their own personality structure. Also of course some achieve more and others less influence. Power is a very effective systemic phenomenon in organisations. It can be used or abused. The spirit of a system can be determined by a leading person for a while. This determines everything then, but only if the others allow it. One hardly finds the Gorbachev effect, that one of those, who have slowly grown up in a system, changes the whole system. The question is: How are the aspects identified, which are relevant for the behaviour, thinking and feelings of the people in the entrepreneurial system?

The organisational system is different from other systems, particularly the family system. This aspect has nevertheless to be felt. The family picture is our first experience of a system and therefore appeals to the assignment for most people. The "entrepreneurial" puts the focus on the greater aim and the necessity of professional roles in the organisation system for creating a service, producing a product or concerning another formulation together. The relations are built through contracts not by birth, even in so-called family companies. Also the so-called Non-profit enterprises get increasingly more similar to the profit enterprises which openly propagate profit making.

Organisations have a high responsibility for (the) people. People finally spend a lot of their lives in organisations. Relations are cultivated there, and self-confidence gained. Organisations can be of great benefit for people in these areas. This is also true for 'employees' such as the customers of the organisation, executives, middle managers, investors and the public (around) connected with an organisation. They all form the organisational system. Suppliers are important and even competitors sit invisible at the meeting tables.

3. The model of organisational dynamics

The following model helps to get an optimal grip of the complexity and the real dynamics of company systems in order to influence them. I define organisational dynamics as the relevant dynamic patterns that characterise the organisation. An organisational system is described by four dynamic fields:

- Organisational structure
- Organisational processes
- Organisational balances
- Organisational pulsation



4.1. Organisational structure

The organisational structure contains the three dynamic dimensions: attention, roles and system relations, which work as structural conditions.

You may wonder that we start with attention, but according to modern brain research it is the main resource people can give and it is the main factor of monitoring all energies (people, investments, solutions) of an organisation. It seems to be a soft fact, but for the survival in the market and for the conditions inside of an organisation it is the hardest one. So we start with the basic dimension of attention: Where is the attention directed to in an organisation? Every organisation has its essential topics at a particular time. The attention energy goes there. Altogether, a ruling reality construction is created in a company. This one can be right or wrong, uniform or chaotic, clear or nebulous. Also the elements of the normative, strategic and operative management depending on specific attention. Official structure and identity specifications are more or less in a tension relationship with the culture actually alive. The ruling attention is the hardest investment in organisations.

In addition, for structure one finds the design of roles and their outer expression. They show the visible surface structure of an organisation to everybody. The roles are filled out by persons and are lived through this in their quality by the persons and their specific personality structures. On the other hand a personality also gets only as effective as one gets connected to a certain role in an organisation.

Besides the roles specific relational structures characterise a system. Relations at first exist at the role level and are also relevant at the level of the personalities. How strongly the role level characterises the relations and how strongly the personality level determines the scene. It specifies the dynamics of different organisations.

4.2. Organisational processes

Three basic dynamics, which are existent in every entrepreneurial system, describe an organisation on the process level: communication dynamics, problem solution dynamics and success dynamics.

All changes and all relations are put into scene by practical communication. Without communication nothing runs in an enterprise. The organisational sociologist Niklas Luhmann defines organisations even as communication connections. The practice nevertheless points out: If one looks at processes of change, attention is often given too little to the dynamics of communication. Companies often try to contradict Watzlawiks "you cannot not communicate". They fail.

The second basic process is problem solution. Organisation systems have the central task of problem solution. This starts already at the basic entrepreneurial service to produce solutions for the challenges of the market. It is also close to problems specifically established in every organisation. An extreme example of this is the attitude "there aren't any problems in our company". Characteristic problem solution patterns are the way for an organisation to make decisions or to handle conflicts.

In the third system process the following experience is mirrored: "No organisation lives without successes in the long run." All target processes have meaning only in connection with dynamics of success. The handling of the success dynamics is a central starting-point the system balances in the entrepreneurial acting for energy and motivation.



Günther Mohr, Systemdynamics

4.3. Organisational balances

Organisational balances are the dynamics of the states of balance an organisation major subsystems tend to. They are interesting in two dimensions: (1) the balances (B) in the long run development of a company and (2) in the vertical and horizontal structure and culture of an organisation at certain time, here called recursivity (R = recurring of the same principles in different parts and on different levels of the organisation). Both are essential principles for the development of systems. They show the basic striving of systems for order, safety and survival. But this basic trend still says nothing about the quality of the balance. It has to be checked (in

regard of) with regard to quality. The steady change, to which we so often pay lip service, must be brought home to the people again and again. It is only one side of change and many people in nowadays change projects actually hope for the quietness after the change. It is a strength to gain a balance in systems. Visions and destination points are intended future balances. One makes use of the balance trend with these instruments. Balances are frequently also backward-looking. What was once is transfigured and appears as a nostalgic balance in memory.

The recursivity dynamics refer to the aspect of how far systems show the same principles at different levels and areas. Like a Russian doll which contains several smaller reflections of it in itself, systems show structures similar to different levels. One doesn't always have to include the whole, but research points out the advantage of the recursivity of essential aspects. The "fractal counselling" system aims to touch all essential aspects through addressing a part which has strong recursive impact on others.

4.4. Organisational pulsation

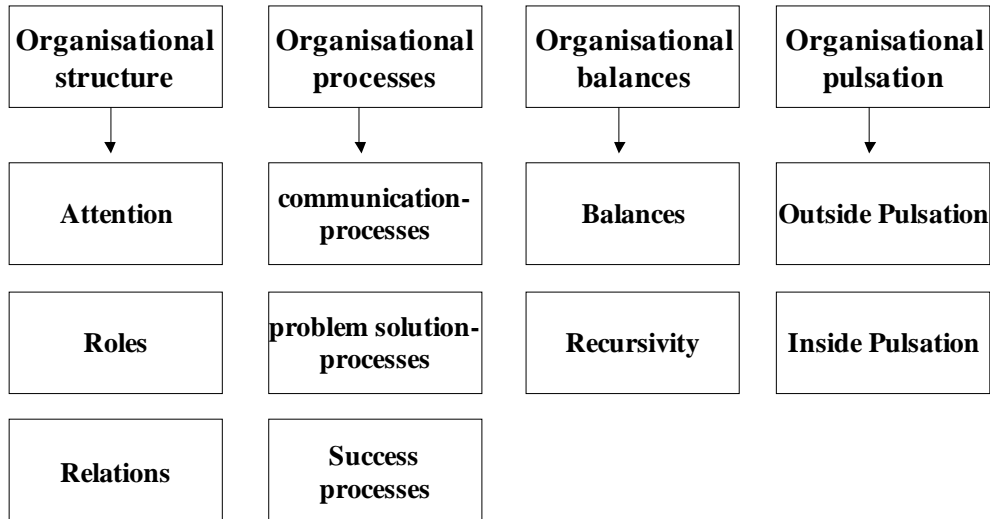
I define organisational pulsation as the dynamics and patterns that characterise the movements of an organisation at its outside and inside boundaries.

The dynamic change and quality of the outside and inside boundaries of a system is outside pulsation and inside pulsation (OP and IP). Organisation systems show movements in terms of pulsating at inner and outer borders. There are many ways of drawing the outside boundary. A trend is the flexibility of the drawing up of the boundary today. Charles Handy created the term "federal organisation", structures with different employee groups (Handy, 1993). Openness marks the basic ability of a system to let information, staff and other resources in and out.

The inside boundaries have consequences on the dynamics between subsystems. Areas, departments and groups represent subsystems in the company. But also women and men, senior and junior members, the people in the head office and those "on the market" can form subsystems of their own. Huge restructuring, strategic new positions of the entire organisation produce new subgroups. In a worst case scenario, many losers stand opposite some winners. However, subsystems always arise from the categories of the observers.

The four dynamics fields contain ten dimensions. The 10-ray-star and the following table show the most important prospects for an entrepreneurial system.

Dynamics in organisational fields



4. On the way to the integrative model

4.1. Diagnostical questions

You can start the consideration at each point. The following table shows the basic guiding questions that give the information about the dynamics.

Dynamic fields	The ten organisational dynamics	Questions
Organisational Structure	1. Dynamics of attention	What are the themes people are really dealing with and talking about? What is the relationship between the points of main attention and the points which should be regarded?
	2. Dynamics of roles	What roles exist in the system? What are the defining aspects of the role? How do the roles change from moment to moment?

	3. Dynamics of system relations	What are the structures and relations on the role and on the personal level? Which basic messages exist between the roles?
Organisational processes	4. Dynamics of communication	What are typical patterns of communication?
	5. Problem-solving-dynamics	What are “problems“ in the systems? How are problems dealt with?
	6. Dynamics of success	What is success in the system? How is success reached and failed?
Organisational balances	7. Dynamics of balances	What balances do people like to conserve? What balance is aimed at?
	8. Dynamics of Recursivity	How are similar principles realised in different parts and on different levels of the organisation?
Organisational Pulsation	9. Dynamics “Outside system pulsation“	How does the organisation react at the outside boundary with regard to people, resources and information? What means are used to get openness and closeness?
	10. Dynamics “Inside system pulsation“	What relevant subsystems can be found inside of the organisation and what is their impact?

4.2. Normative goals and combined transactional analysis tools

The following table shows normative positions regarding the dynamics and also the opportunities of using basic TA concepts for special analysis:

Dynamic Fields	The ten System dynamics	„Goals“	Examples of TA concepts
Organisational Structure	1. Dynamics of attention	Most attention is given to the relevant issues of the organisation. Normative, strategic and operative management is regarded. The main attention fits with the goals of the system	frame of reference, discounting / valuing
	2. Dynamics of roles	The structure of roles has the adjusted degree of differentiation. Role competences are sufficient. Roles change according to the inner and outer challenges of the organisation.	three-world-model; four-world-Model; Role model
	3. Dynamics of relations	Relations on role and on a personal level are productive for the organisation and the people in it. The basic messages on role and a personal level are appreciating	symbiosis / contract relations transference, here and now relations
Organisational processes	4. Dynamics of communication	The patterns of communication and their dynamics of change support the development of the system and are useful for the performance and the health of the people.	open transactions, games / positive pattern processes
	5. Problem-solving dynamics	Problem identification and solution support the organisation Frames of “problems“ are realistic with regard to tasks	discounting / valuing passivity / activity
	6. Success dynamics	Success is defined clearly, realistically and motivatingly Success is clearly evaluated and named Critical developments/ failures are analysed and used as chances for learning and change	strokes script processes

Organisational balances	7. Dynamics of balances	Stability and change exist in sufficient amount Balances of the past are perceived and regarded without illusions; the present is in the focus; equilibriums of the future (visions, strategic goals) are realistic Ways between the equilibriums are perceived	organisational script, cycles of development
	8. Dynamics of recursivity	Similar principles are realized in different parts and levels of the organisation.	positive and negative parallel processes
Organisational pulsation	9. Dynamics „Outside organisational pulsation“	At the outside boundary the system shows openness and closeness in a well adjusted form Means for an adjusted degree of openness are realised	boundaries
	10. Dynamics „Inside organisational pulsation“	The structure of the sub system is adjusted to the inside tasks and the outside market challenges .	group imago

Now with the organisational dynamics model we have an integrative model. Both “system design” and “system emergence” are included, the intervention and the development from the momentum (being) inherent in every system are addressed. Looking at a good conception for organisational dynamics means thinking about organisations theoretically, even if we sometimes look down on theory. But there is the statement of the social psychologist Kurt Lewin: "A good theory is the best practice." This refers to how important the conceptual orientation is for the procedure. A conscious and thought-out concept is indispensable for an entrepreneurial procedure. Otherwise the enterprise will be only a short economic event. Numerous enterprises of the New Economy had a too few thought-out concepts, were judged too highly and have failed because of the changing economic situation.

Mathematically described, the organisational system is a function of structure elements, processes, developmental paths and pulsation.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Organisation} &= f(\text{structure, processes, balances, pulsation}) \\ O &= f(S, P, E, P) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{System structure} &= f_1(\text{Attention, Roles, Relations}) \\ S &= f_1(A, Ro, Re) \\ \text{System processes} &= f_2(\text{Communication, Problem Solving, Success}) \\ P &= f_2(Co, Ps, Su) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{System balances} &= f_3(\text{Balance, Recursivity}) \\ E &= f_3(Ba, Re) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{System pulsation} &= f_4(\text{Outside Pulsation, Inside Pulsation}) \\ P &= f_4(OP, IP) \end{aligned}$$

If you identify these dynamics, you get information for acting:

The diagnostic estimation of an organisational or entrepreneurial system

the points for intervention to support constructive development and for the evaluation of the results of an OD project

the measurement of the future potential and the performance potential in an organisational system

5. A journey as conclusion

Sit comfortably for a moment. Become aware of your breathing. Feel cosy and light. You can keep your eyes open, look at the written words and nevertheless be completely relaxed, completely as you like now. There is no work to do.

Your relaxation becomes deeper and deeper with every breath. Let your mind become still. Think back to a time when you felt really relaxed, perhaps to an earlier situation when you felt completely at ease. Everybody knows the feeling of relaxation. And you feel very cosy, very light and enjoy it.

You are flying by spaceship from Mars to the blue planet, the Earth, and you get closer to Earth and to a country you know. Now you go in the perspective of a Martian.

You start a little journey with which we can enter the practical company world. You look at an organisation in which you are interested. This can be the company in which you are active. You also can choose an enterprise which you want to take under the magnifying glass for other reasons once for example because you want to work there as employee. The organisation is or was a phase for you and a life companion with whom you go or went for a while in your life. May be it had an important influence on the quality of your life. Or you just danced with this companion in your life. The assignment is just effortless.

And you see a company or other organisation, one you know and you are interested in. Perhaps it is your father's or mother's working place, your first company which they have got to know. Perhaps it is an organisation which you know now. Perhaps it is an organisation in which you work. Other people cannot see you as a Martian. You are invisible. You enter the building of the organisation by the entrance or by the back door.

What is your impression? What are the people doing there and dealing with? Where is the attention of the workers, where is that of the managers?

You look at the doors. You make notes about what you are seeing. The titles like manager, head of department, director, executive board stand there ... this and that. What roles can you identify? How are the relations in the company defined? What do the space and the furniture of the rooms tell? What do other symbols tell? You study this. Which people are in relation with other one in the organisation? Which persons are permitted to have contact with each other? Do the executives meet the employees?

Which people have contact with each other? You listen to the communication of people once, the messages, the verbal and non verbal. What typical patterns do you find? You suddenly see a door to another room and you are interested in what is behind this.

And as a Martian you can go through walls. The people just solve a problem there. How do they do this? What is the usual manner of the problem solution?

See another door now. You enter the room and notice that this room is about success. What is success, what is a failure in this organisation? How do you celebrate? After a while you feel pleasant and relax more deeply. You have watched the Martian enough. His notes are complete and he decides to leave the company. And he walks through the wall, gets on his spaceship and flies back to Mars. There he reports about the typical patterns in this organisation.

6. The ambivalence of organisations

Organisations are ambivalent. A messenger of the devil once came back from a visit to the human world and reported to the devil: "Lucifer, in human mankind a very good idea has been developed. That idea brings healing and happiness to all human beings. We have to do something. What shall we do?" Lucifer answered: "Make sure that the idea gets organised." Organisations are ambivalent. A good idea can be organised to develop good things. An organisation also can live for itself, become hindering and ruin the good ideas. Organisations are as variable as human beings are. There are family enterprises, which have existed for many generations and are built on tradition and steadiness. Also there are huge companies, in which ten thousand people work and which nurture a whole region. There are administrations, which would give Lucifer a lot of satisfaction. And there are new "start ups", founded every day. A huge variety of answers to economic and organisational challenges have survived against all striving to measure and be directed by benchmarking. But all organisations have something in common. All organisations have some characteristic dimensions with certain dynamics. And the dynamics overcome the separation in structural, cultural and strategic aspects. It allows us to integrate them.

The story of the Indian wisdom teacher Jiddu Krishnamurti gives further information about organisations. The theosophic society was a large spiritual community at the beginning of the 20th century. The society wanted to connect the great religions and to lead the single person to well-being through this. Krishnamurti was discovered in India as a boy and then trained at the best schools of England by the theosophic society. This was due to his charisma which he already had as child and teenager. The theosophic society expected, that he could become a second Messiah. When he then had been elected president of the theosophic society later within the 1920s years, the society organised a great convention. At this convention Krishnamurti got up and said: Firstly, I am not a Messiah. You must say good bye to (it) that idea. Secondly, I dissolve this organisation in my capacity as president, because an organisation cannot reach salvation, only the individual can. In Krishnamurti's organisation his message was accepted only enthusiastically by half of the members. The other half blamed him for it very much and continued organisational activities.

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