Cultural Change Management in Organizations from Competing Perspectives

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Since the 1980s, it has generally been accepted that corporations have cultures, and that corporate culture bears an important, if poorly understood, relationship to corporate performance. Figuring out how to measure, fine-tune, and adjust corporate culture has been a cottage industry within management consulting ever since, employing numerous psychologists, sociologists, management theorists, communication specialists, and occasionally anthropologists. Corporate cultures have been variously characterized as strong, weak, open, closed, flexible, rigid, innovative, traditional, or (more typically) some mélange of all of these. To better understand the relationship between corporate culture and corporate performance, perhaps it would be better to understand culture as a living, breathing entity, not a museum specimen to be examined under laboratory conditions – ethnographically, that is, in a natural rather than artificial environment.

In this paper we attempt to construct a dialogue between two contrasting perspectives on organizational culture, that of anthropology and that of management studies. One of us (Batteau) is an anthropologist with 10 years' experience working in industry and 30 years' experience in academia; the other (Villegas) is an engineer and management scholar with 6 years´ experience in industry and 22 years´ experience in academia. As we have looked into these competing perspectives, we have begun to realize that anthropological and management perspectives on culture are, as George Bernard Shaw said about the English and the Americans, divided by a common language.

We first describe the problem, of how a firm can "manage" its culture. We follow this with three case studies in the US and Colombia where cultural interventions had mixed results. We then contrast two bodies of theory, managerial and anthropological, to show that the contrasts between these two approaches to organizational culture derive primarily from the contrasting agendas of anthropology and management, and finally, we contribute a review of some concepts to take into consideration when making a path between the praxes of Anthropology and Management.

Keywords: Cultural Change, Anthropology, Management

> The Whole is more than the Sum of the Parts
> (Aristotle)

I: THE PROBLEM

Appreciations of corporate culture begin with the conventional, textbook conception of "a learned system of shared understandings" that anthropologists first developed at the end of the 19th century. Beyond this, however, agreement on what these shared understandings are, and the importance of their being *shared* (rather than imposed, or consumed, or mandated, or

simply spectated) lies in the fact that sharing creates kinship: we feel alike because we are alike, we have something in common, and it is this fact more than any other that gives culture, as contrasted to dictatorial mandates, its enduring power.

Once we agree that culture is something that is *shared* by a community, our next step is to inquire how it is mediated, represented, and articulated. For this, there is an ample literature on the cultural content of rituals, performances, myths and stories, and material objects that present a culture. For example, Michael Rosen's classic article, "Breakfast at Spiro's: Dramaturgy and Dominance" (Rosen 1985) describes the annual "Agency Breakfast" of an advertising agency, Spiro and Associates. At this carefully scripted ritual, the dominance hierarchies of Spiro and Associates are regenerated and reinforced. Some of the symbolic techniques through which these are dramatized include seating arrangements, agendas, and even the clothes one wears. Other descriptions of the symbolic mediation of corporate cultures include van Maanen's depiction of Disneyland, the "smile factory" (van Maanen 1991) and Kunda's description of "Engineering Culture" (Kunda 2006)

Once we accept that an organizational culture is shared rather than dictated, we encounter the quandary of organizational or corporate culture. On the one hand, many corporations, particularly those that have been in existence for a number of years, that have strong boundaries, and adequate resources due to market dominance, demonstrably do have a culture. In corporations such as these, one either fits in, or one leaves. On the other hand, for many corporations, the culture is weak or nonexistent, or at best a parody of the concept: casual Fridays, for example, or recreational interludes among the cubicles.

The resolution of this quandary is found in the observation that corporate cultures are *negotiated* as much as they are shared, and that the negotiations among cultures of command (typically management), acceptance, and inclusion, and their counterparts in corruption, resistance, and alienation, form a complex set of dialectics around which corporate actors navigate to pursue private or shared agendas (Batteau 2011). Where management integrity is strong, rank-and-file will put in overtime, "go the extra mile," for corporate objectives. Corporate legends, such as the IBM security guard who denied Thomas Watson access to an IBM building because he wasn't carrying his badge, and the respect Watson showed to her, reinforce a shared sense of integrity.

A corporate culture is more like a peace treaty, an agreement to avoid open hostility, than a kumbayah exercise in two-part harmony. As anyone with experience in politics knows, mutual agreements, once achieved, should not be broken, even if all parties are dissatisfied with them. For several decades after the 1930s in the American auto industry, a fragile peace prevailed between the UAW and the Big Three, despite mutual mistrust, simply because both sides saw it as preferable to the death toll that had marked earlier hostilities. The importance of this negotiated perspective is that it zeroes in on the dynamic or dialectic that propels organizational culture. This dynamic centers around the asymmetries of power within an organization, but its dialectic comes from the basic observation that power is never absolute: Even in prisons, to cite an extreme example, the subordinates (prisoners) have a rich (if hidden) lore of resistance and retribution, and prisoners have ways to take their revenge on guards who cross unspoken boundaries.

Corporate cultures, in other words, are unique orders, not the least because they resist management, at least in the "scientific" sense of the word. Although the corporate world has moved well beyond Frederick Taylor's orthodoxy, it is still struggling to find accepted approaches to alternatives in normative management.

II: CASE STUDIES

To develop these points we turn to an examination of three case studies where the ethnographic gaze was able to nudge well-established organizations toward change. In each of these cases the ethnographic perspective, listening to the multiple voices within the organization, was crucial to attempting change.

First Case Study: Change Management in the Air Force Materials Command

Our first case study comes from a project that Allen Batteau completed 16 years ago for the US Air Force, a culturally sensitive tool for change management. In this project the Air Force was seeking better ways to effect change within different operational and support units, and retained Wayne State University to direct the project. The project was called the "Readiness Assessment and Planning Tool Research" (RAPTR).

The tool had three components: a high-level assessment to assess the magnitude of the effort, an assessment of the current organizational state, and a Reference Model of Change Management that would guide the organization through a change management process, based on years of experience (codified into an expert system). The Reference Model of Change Management consisted of four stages:

- Strategic Assessment
- AS-IS Assessment
- TO-Be Design
- Planning and Implementation

Each of which had from five to eight tasks, activities, and options. The model was driven by an expert system which using a cultural assessment plus years of experience with military organizations, laid out a change management plan. For example, the first stage, Strategic Assessment, consisted of six tasks:

1. Kickoff
2. Conduct business overview
3. Assess business goals and opportunities
4. Conduct environmental scan
5. Determine project goals and opportunities
6. Determine Project scope

The final task, "Determine Project Scope," concluded with the activity "Develop executive approval."

The functionality of the tool that was best received by the Air Force was the High-Level Assessment, because it offered the perspective of an experienced outsider, balancing off change objectives, organizational complexity, schedule, and resources. It returned a response of green (go ahead with the change management project), yellow (proceed with caution), and red (STOP!). That's all. The effectiveness of this tool came both from its simplicity and from

the fact that first of all it tapped into some basic cultural issues such as organizational complexity and history, and second that it was presenting a fresh perspective to a very hierarchical organization, the Air Force. Using an ethnographic perspective to complement the hierarchic order was received as valuable by the command. The full report for this project is available from the Defense Technical Information Center, http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA375290

An important part of ethnographic praxis is the creative dialectic between insider and outsider perspectives. Real ethnography is far more than simply open-ended interviewing or other qualitative techniques. Real ethnography is immersive, meaning that the ethnographer spends substantial time within the community, and although never becoming a true insider, nevertheless becoming an amateur, in the dual sense of a novice but also a lover of the culture – yet also retaining his or her critical outsider perspective. In the military, a "can-do" attitude and chain-of-command orientation means that orders should never be questioned. Yet as any leader knows, changing a complex organization is a difficult operation, the success of which depends on numerous factors, including organizational complexity, resources (including schedule), and command support. By measuring these variables our expert system was able to give advice on project realism. It was this synthesis of insider and outsider perspectives that enabled the team both to understand some of the enablers of and obstacles to change and also communicate them in a meaningful way. Some of the most effective organizations, in fact, embrace this dialogue among multiple perspectives, in large part because it rescues them from "group think" or the insularity of what Mary Douglas called "thought worlds," and suggests new solutions for familiar problems.

Second Case Study: Medical Waste Management

Our second case study comes from the management of medical waste. During the period 2014-2015 an interdisciplinary group of 3 women engineers specialized in Public Health, Environmental Engineering, and Industrial Engineering evaluated the quality of the processes related to the management of Hazardous Biomedical and Health Care Waste in 8 high complexity hospitals in Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia.

The study was framed under the following definitions taken from international definitions and guidelines. According to the "Resources Conservation and Recovery Act" (RCRA) (Environmental Protection Agency 2002, 8)

> The term "hazardous waste" means a solid waste, or combination of solid wastes, which because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics may—(A) cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible, illness; or (B) pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of, or otherwise managed.

The Basel Convention defines hazardous biomedical and health-care wastes as (Secretariat of the Basel Convention 2003, 4): "Infectious health-care waste; Chemical, toxic or pharmaceutical waste, including cytotoxic drugs (antineoplastics); Sharps (e.g. needles, scalpels); Radioactive waste; Other hazardous waste".

The 8 hospitals referred in the study are located in the municipality of Medellín. The hospitals differ by their ownership, some are owned by the state, others are private, and still some others are owned by non-profit organizations. They are located very close to the center of the city of Medellín and what is common among them is the level of complexity of the services they render as all of them conduct surgeries that put in risk life and treat cancer. The waste they produce include high amounts (up to 2 tons per day, each) of hazardous waste (infectious, sharps, radioactive, chemical), being infectious (blood contaminated) waste the main percentage.

As for the patients, there are hospitals that help rich people and hospitals that help homeless people. However, hospitals that work with homeless people have the most experienced physicians, the more experience dealing with orphan and rare cases of immune diseases, and the most sophisticated technology. International patients that come to the city looking for treatment know that it is in these kind of hospitals that they can find organs transplantation. As the World Health Organization has said, poverty is a great cause of sickness and a healer becomes better by practicing (a steep learning curve).

A hospital may be seen as a hotel with a special kind of attention and it is in the hospitality side of treatment that expensive hospitals add value. It is for this reason that the most experienced hospital that treated homeless people decided to open a high end hotel type of hospital close to the airport to treat rich international patients. One of the reasons for this decision had to do with the fear of rich customers to get contaminated with the medical wastes of the poor. They wanted the expertise gotten from treating poor guys but not to get in touch with their poverty or their waste, perhaps in their minds, both might risk contagion.

There was a hierarchy of medical specialties. Surgeons were highly appreciated by the community and they behaved accordingly (see Figure 1: surgeon like USB, that shows how basic technology was built that unintendedly ended up reminding everyone of who the main characters were in the hospital). Even among surgeons, brain surgeons were located at the top of the social scale. All of this had an unexpected impact on the handling of the medical waste. For instance, the waste originated in the surgical rooms was evacuated more promptly than in any other areas. Many of these situations had not a rational technical explanation. For instance, from an engineering point of view, there was an unexplainable location of services with the largest production of hazardous waste on top of the buildings, where movement was limited by the existence of few and shared elevators. Why didn´t they put those services at the bottom of the structure where vertical movement was minimized? The response came from interviews to hospital directors (doctors themselves) who told us that the building was organized following the degree of complexity of the intervention (bottom-up from low to high complexity (and it was also a social category of status that among other things defined the decision power distribution in the organization)).

Figure 1: surgeon-like USB

Waste equaled risk, equaled impurity and so, even though in all the strategic orientations the words sustainability and environmental care were present, in the organizational structure the function was invisible or included in human resources, housekeeping, not even publicly mentioned. Blood was the corporal fluid treated as taboo and it is the very source of hazard in medical treatment. Health care employees at all levels worked with blood but didn´t mention it during regular conversations. The insights of the anthropologist Mary Douglas, in her classic *Purity and Danger,* are especially relevant here (Douglas 1966).

Socially also medical waste is a taboo. The study started in response to a big scandal of medical waste thrown on the streets of some cities in Colombia that created a public arousal against hospitals in Medellín that owned the wastes. The country was more capable of living with dead bodies on the street resulting from crime and violence than with cotton, needles, and bandages contaminated with blood of sick people (see Figure 2: Dressing to Visit Isolated Patients, that displays the degree of fear of contamination by germs among health care personnel)

Figure 2: Dressing to visit isolated patients

Changing the orientation of these health care professionals toward awareness of and accountability for the risk of their medical waste has for years long been impossible. The study concluded that professionalization had a lot to do with their resistance, as no undergraduate medical content included the phrase "hazardous waste". Anthropological history of the healing process was other issue as blood has been a taboo for Christianity (Leviticus 17:14) since the beginning of times and Colombia is a catholic country (see Figure 3: Catholic Icons in Hospitals).

Figure 3: Catholic Icons in Hospitals

Also asepsis is the critical state of any health care routine and its definition stands for being-free from disease-causing contaminants (for instance health care employees spend a lot of time in the ritual of washing their hands). Even the white clothing and color of the walls portray a strident message of cleanness. For all of the above, understanding that it was their job that put in hazard the public health became an insurmountable challenge at the individual, the professional, and the organizational levels (all the programs of risk reduction were directed toward patients, visitors, cleaning personnel, but health care providers). Even speaking of hazardous waste was seen by them as risking contamination, so they strongly refused to discuss their involvement in the problem. The team recommended that the topic had to be included in the medical professionalization processes, also that social marketing strategies focused on medical personnel were designed, and that symbols of waste´s hazards were publicly exposed by the side of the hand washing campaign and spaces to produce a cultural shock that created alert. In short, the *attitudes* toward medical waste and pollution were more important than the technical details of its handling as they determined all related managerial decisions inside the boundaries of these hospitals. It was a situation where the relationship between means-ends was non-rational but ritualistic, and for that reason

management theories provided no adequate lenses to see what was going on and how to handle it. In managing a process such as this, Anthropology may very well contribute the answers.

However, once those boundaries were crossed, the industry that transported, processed, and disposed of medical waste did not have any taboo nor ritual about their handling and treated them just as any other high volume hazardous industrial waste, now we were working in familiar grounds where means-ends relationships made managerial sense. (see Figure 4: Outside Treatment of Medical Waste by Non-Medical Industry). The initial proposition of the study was that the managerial processing of these residues was disintegrated between the hospitals and the companies they contracted for final disposal. Results of the study showed that the proposition was true as contractors handled the waste in a technically oriented fashion as given by the formulas of inventory logistics (packaging, transportation, storage, processing, and disposal within costs restrictions), while the handling inside the hospitals was somehow different. During field work no rational technical model could explain the reasons of the difference in the process and only by recurring to readings on the symbolism of blood could observed behaviors make any sense (Clark 1999). Inside and outside treatments were different and should be managed differently, and what was more intriguing, the connection between those two realities, highly ritualistic to highly industrialized, posed a huge challenge in managerial terms, what is an inquiry still pending resolution.

Picture 4: Outside treatment of medical waste by non-medical industry

As experienced engineers the team members had dealt with organizational change from the technical perspective and had found some resistance impossible to account for by our models. This comparative interdisciplinary multi-case study presented a very noticeable evidence of the incidence of culture in routine operations and resistance to change. One of the authors of this paper had spent some time visiting the Department of Anthropology in Wayne State University by invitation of Allen Batteau and as a result was aware of culture and of how to include cultural forms in the listing of things to observe during data collection. During 2 years cultural forms were observed intertwined with technical details of

the daily handling of medical hazardous waste inside the hospitals. Our recommendations came from our academic experience as professors and managers of local universities that told us that socialization into the medical discipline required the inclusion of the topic of hazardous waste covering not only technical but cultural aspects of that process. Also, the advice on how to enable change in practicing medical personnel was inspired by our experience with social marketing projects. Finally, because the hand washing programs was a core element in the education and routine of medical personnel and it was addressed to eliminate germs, we concluded that being hazardous waste similarly dangerous and by the same reasons, the organizations could transmit the message of danger using the same communication channels. More knowledge about culture could probably had advised us better on this last recommendation.

Third Case Study: Automotive Supply Chain

Our third case study involves the implementation of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and in-line vehicle sequence (ILVS) delivery over multiple tiers in an automotive supply chain. Sponsored by the Automotive Industry Action Group, this project sought to implement EDI from the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) down through the first, second, and third tier suppliers. The first tier suppliers manufactured complete systems such as seat kits, while the second tier manufactured components (such as cushions) and the third tier manufactured the basic parts such as cloth, springs, and fasteners. Although the suppliers initially resisted the implementation, a dramatic breakthrough was achieved when we brought all of the parties together in the same room at a neutral location, and negotiated a "gain-sharing" of the benefits. The classic relationship of mistrust and mutual suspicion between OEMs and suppliers in the American automotive industry (in contrast to the keiretsu of the Japanese industry) was overcome through a new medium of communication – the face-to-face meeting. This was an example of what the anthropologist Victor Turner called a "liminal space" – a space "betwixt and between," where normal conventions are set aside, and those sharing the space are able to bond.

The project went on to a successful conclusion, celebrated in Detroit, demonstrating a substantial savings in the manufacturing costs of vehicles using the techniques of EDI and ILVS. Despite this, these techniques were not significantly adopted. A follow-on project two years later, the "Voice of the Lower Tier" by Wayne State Anthropology doctoral candidate Kirk Cornell, using ethnographic observations at second-tier suppliers, discovered that below the first-tier suppliers (which tended to be large corporations), the second-tier suppliers, typically family-run companies were mistrustful of any initiatives from above. Although gain-sharing – "generalized reciprocity" – was the articulated aim of this initiative, the industry expectation of negative reciprocity still prevailed. In sum, the industry culture prevailed over what all agreed was a successful pilot project, and the success of the pilot project could not be easily replicated, due to the importance of a liminal space for the pilot.

A key part of the success was the ethnographic insights into the cultures of the companies in the supply chain. In Perrow's characterization of complex organizations (Perrow 1988), a supply chain might be considered a crucial segment of an industry, with its own culture, but also embracing multiple corporate and professional cultures. Within the automotive supply chain at all levels there is a shared pride in being part of a leading industry, but also a reflexive mistrust both of customers and suppliers. Only by respecting

these differences, and then using a liminal space – the offsite meeting – to overcome them, however temporarily, were we able to bring the tiers together around a new objective, "leaning out" the supply chain. We failed, however, to anticipate the cultural obstacles to scaling up the pilot into an industry-wide initiative: the general assumption was that the quantified success of the pilot would "speak for itself" and be readily adopted throughout the industry, with no need to replicate the cultural foundation of shared purpose that was the basis of success in the pilot.

III. THEORETICAL APPROACHES: MANAGEMENT THEORY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
Managerial Views

The above examples evidenced the reality of the pervasive presence of culture in formal organizations and of the need to integrate both managerial (resource-constrained, results-oriented) and anthropological (historical, evolutionary, human-oriented) methods for organizational cultural change. However, let´s take a closer look at the divide created by the differing agendas of management and anthropology.

One among many definitions states that "management is the transformation of resources into utility" (Malik 2010), and formal organizations are perhaps the most useful of such resources as (Blau and Scott 1962, 5) explained:

> "In contrast to the social organization that emerges whenever men are living together, there are organizations that have been deliberately established for a certain purpose….in these cases, the goals to be achieved, the rules the members of the organization are expected to follow, and the status structure that defines the relations between them…have not spontaneously emerged in the course of social interaction but have been consciously designed a priori to anticipate and guide interaction and activities. Since the distinctive characteristic of these organizations is that they have been formally established for the explicit purpose of achieving certain goals, the term "formal organizations" is used to designate them"

Both former definitions suscribe to the ideal of the rational approach to management which is still today the mainstream in the managerial scholarship.

However, as long as people are involved, they will socially interact and create non formal (informal) structures with their own shared system of understandings that influence their enacted reality and their behavior, as scholars that take part in the natural system tradition assert (the famous Hawthorne Experiment conducted by the psychologist Elton Mayo and the anthropologist William Lloyd Warner (Mayo 2015) is perhaps the most influential evidence of such situation).

When it comes to organizational culture managers often do not really know what to do, they can not get rid of it and they can not handle it. They do not know if such thing is a resource (which of course if it was they could make it into an asset or commodity, and sell it somehow making utility out of it); if it is not a resource maybe it is just a kind of environment and if so, managers should understand it and behave accordingly. Or, perhaps it is what social scholars call "a state of being" in this case of the collective being called formal organization, what brings it to the emotional universe and will have everything to do with the identity of the organization (very close to the bottom line and the branding, the

company value added, the marketing, the value of the company, if just someone could put a price tag on it).

The situation is complicated so, managers who have to "make things happen", put hands to the task of culture management (change, design, control, and so on) whether it works or not. In the managerial world practitioners are the main characters and scholars are the commentors of their practice. The publication industry includes journals that are practitioner-oriented including descriptions of problems and solutions (*Harvard Business Review* being perhaps the most important), along with research oriented journals such as Academy of Management. Some other publishers specialize in research with social focus and management, eventhough utilitiarian, qualifies as a social science (Sage Publications is a good example of such publishers).

A review of publications in *Harvard Business Review* showed that from March 5, 2001 to October 14, 2015; 14 cases and 3 articles published described the process of cultural change by using such means as the exercise of hierarchical power and control (constrain), negotiation with key stakeholders, leadership (persuasion), adoption of soft and hard technology (from applying behavioral science to quality control and adoption of ICT), communication programs, training, branding and strategic orientation, incentive programs, restructuring, empowerment, to enabling new social relationships among employees. In every case diagnosing the current organizational culture was the first step and the most uncertain one.

As for Academy of Management, the most influential publisher in *Management* (as measured by the impact factor index of its journals), the review showed that from August 1971 to January 2015, 10 articles were published with the phrase "culture change" in the title or the abstract, and that discussed the how´s of culture change. Those how´s included organizational development recipes, modifying the systems of categorical distinctions (named frames in the papers), creating awareness of industry-driven and institutional cultural elements, defining and promoting an inventory of desirable values and including stakeholders in the process, using change agents, training in new routines, and leveraging the efforts with effective communication programs.

From 1990 to 2015 Sage published at least 31 articles on change of corporate culture, 16 of which were published in journals specialized in management (2 in human relations, 4 in human resources, 2 in management education, 4 in organization studies, 2 in leadership, 1 in healthcare management, 1 in Administration and Society). The papers described success cases of cultural change in which leadership, organizational performance, quality control programs, participatory decision making (empowerment), awareness and acceptance of social diversity, learning, change of categorical distinction systems, management of the set of values predicated, and adoption of an evolutionary paradigm of those values (inspiration, implantation, negotiation, transformation) were used to leverage the change program.

What can be inferred from the literature review? Practitioners and management scholars recognize the unavoidable existence of culture, but being able to identify this construct is another thing which definitely is a very controversial terrain, they know it is all about people, not individuals but groups of people and that it is how people oriented strategies such as influence, coercion, control, incentives, managing the social landscape, negotiation, managing of cognitive processes (categorical distinction systems, learning, awareness), and managing the publicly stated values may help and in fact, has helped to change the organizational culture. However, the problem is the duration of such interventions because

one of the papers reported that to change the culture of a small group it took 5 years of intense coaching (managers don´t have 5 years, much less so when their performance is evaluated every 3 months).

No other strategies were documented in the literature review, however, considering that formal organizations are assemblages of chosen people, the selection and dismissal options (recruitment and firing) do exist to define who is going to become or continue as a member, a privilege that social organizations don´t have.

Finally, cultural change is related to the field of Organizational Development and Change and in any case is directed, as anything else in management, to improving organizational performance. What a desirable performance is becomes a political issue. The question that remains is how important it is after all to change culture, or wouldn´t it be better to learn to diagnose it and live with it.

Changing organizational culture is a big challenge for managers for what the expectations of their role is, which is "to do something" about things. In this case a "thing" (culture) that is intangible and tacit. To be able to do something implies to make that something explicit, to model that something, to understand how it works, to somehow make it into a type of machine, but culture by its very nature resist that definition. As Batteau (2012) discovered, the instruments used by managers to measure culture are flawed not only by faulty technical design of the instrument, but, what is more problematic, because culture can not be measured by instruments. From there, if you can not even make explicit that tacit thing, you can not handle it. It dissapears into the thin air.

Trying to manage the unmanagable culture, managerial work applies old known recipes of organizational change. Recipes that have worked in changing work routines (operations research, process management, structure redesign, behavior management, social engineering, spatial interventions, communication programs, even simulation) and that organizational power can control, be accountable for and, what is more important, make others accountable for. But as the old proverb says "you can bring a horse to water but can´t make it drink", using coercive measures alone doesn´t work. Managers include persuasion to the package by including negotiation, leadership, training, empowerment, reward systems, coaching, socialization, value management. The stick of control and the carrot of conversation.

The results of these efforts are very poor if measured in managerial terms wich is always the same, impact on improvement of organizational performance. In synthesis, organizational culture for managers is an annoying reality: difficult to define, impossible to model, very hard to change, and with not clear relationship to organizational performance, much more considering that the definition of goodness when is comes to performance is strategic (political, long term, reactive to external and internal environment, seeking of balance between competencies and requirements, visionary of future desired states of being).

There is still more: culture is conservative and organizational behavior is dynamic. The time frames of evolution are not synchronized . The window of opportunity for organizational change is given by the movement of the global economy that nowdays is very fast while the change of culture is slow social motion (evolutionary). Managers are paid for being capable of responding in time and are measured by their agility and effectiveness of response. It is why culture and culture change are still now, in spite or their importance, a second order topic to management.

How to create a dialogue among these disciplines in spite of their differences in scope and intent? Let´s raise the unit of inquiry from the organizational to the societal level where formal organizations are embedded. Pfeffer (2010) accurately asserts that "companies and their management practices profoundly affect the human and social environment" and it is where Anthropology has been producing theory since its inception. By moving from the methods for change into the motives and effects of organizational change the dialogue goes from tactics into strategy where the survival of the organization resides. In other words, organizations affect society and by so doing they determine their own survival chances. Discussing sustainability is the theoretical terrain where the dialogue between Anthropology and Management may add academic and social value.

Anthropological Views

On the other hand, within the apparatus of anthropological theory, there are numerous perspectives that can be brought to bear to understand and possibly to change corporate culture. Without any presumption of priority, some of these are:

Meanings of Technology - Most disciplines have long since abandoned the view that technology is simply about tools and utility, recognizing that tools encode multiple cultural values, including magic, identity, the authority of the state, and class domination. Thus, when corporations uncritically adopt new technologies simply because they are new, or "cool," or because competitors are adopting them, they are making a cultural statement. American business perhaps uniquely fetishizes technology, and the search for technofixes is alive and well in business. Although this is not the place to develop a critical perspective on technology, we can observe for the moment that for many corporations, what Bryan Pfaffenberger calls "technological fetishism" is an important part of their culture (Pfaffenberger 1988). The RAPTR tool, described above, gained credibility because it was an expert system, whereas a two-legged expert could have easily been rejected. Thus, by leveraging (but not buying into) the cultural attitudes toward technology, we were able to effect real cultural change.

Reciprocity and The Gift - In every human society, reciprocity and gift-giving are an important part of how the society is stitched together. Marcel Mauss's pioneering work, *Essai sur le Don*, describing the triple obligation within a gift (to give, to receive, and to reciprocate) was followed by Marshall Sahlins's classic "On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange." Sahlins observed that reciprocity can take three basic forms (generalized, balanced, and negative), and that each of these can form durable ties among communities: Negative reciprocity, which might be characterized as mutual predation ("I'd better steal from you before you steal from me") is an apt characterization of industrial relations in numerous industries and regions. In such an environment negotiation becomes a zero-sum game. Generalized reciprocity, by contrast, is a statement that "we are all in this together." Although there can be numerous mitigating factors here, it is easily demonstrable that a central dynamic in the cultures of corporations of any size is the form of reciprocity, not only between labor and management, but also between the corporation and its suppliers, management and the shareholders, and the business and its customers. A "brand," for example, although nominally owned (trademarked) the corporation, is in fact a good shared

between the producer and the consumer – it creates a bond between the two, and "brand loyalty" is a prized achievement for any consumer-oriented company.

Sahlins stressed that "primitive" exchange was less "exchange among non-complex societies" and more "fundamental" or "basic" exchange. His distinction among generalized, balanced, and negative reciprocity takes on a new coloration when one adds a layer of the intentions of the parties: a "gift," which is a token of generosity, takes on new coloration when one discovers that the gift-giver's intention was to put the recipient in a difficult, perhaps subordinate position; contractual reciprocities such as those of the supply chain, which on the surface may appear "balanced," are often a cover for attitudes of mutual predation. This added, second dimension of intentions creates a rigidity, a resistance to change, as we discovered in the EDI project. More generally, rigidity of relationships often underlies resistance to technological innovation (Batteau 1996).

Purity and Pollution and Danger – The anthropologist Mary Douglas, in her classic book *Purity and Danger*, identified "pollution" as simply "matter out of place" – within any system of categorical distinctions (the basic structuralist view of culture, going back to Durkheim and Mauss), to place something where it doesn't belong is not just disorderly, but potentially disgusting. These are familiar concepts within anthropology, and their obvious extension in the business world is in concepts of branding. Brands are totemic markers, and brand extension is a fundamental business strategy, yet to brand a product is not merely a matter of slapping a logo in it, but creating an identification (i.e., kinship) with it. The Ralph Lauren Polo brand has been extended to pickup trucks, which fit with the rugged image of the brand, but extending the brand to, say, kitchenware obviously would not.

The importance of this perspective for corporate culture is to recognize that in every corporation there are certain stylized behaviors that are in part definitive of the culture: In the tough-guy macho culture of consulting firms, shouting is acceptable, whereas an excessive emphasis on refined table manners and polite conversation would simply mark one as "not one of us." In other cultures, it is just the other way around. "Matter out of place" can be extended to "behavior out of place," which is equally polluting.

Performance Margins – From research on human factors in flight safety comes an important concept, that of safety margins (Rasmussen 1997; Batteau 2001) for example. Commercial flight is the safest form of travel available, in large part because the entire industry is genuinely committed to flight safety. "Safety culture" is an articulated mantra within the industry. Every aircraft has a "performance envelope" – a set of boundaries of speed, altitude, and attitude which it cannot exceed, and "pushing the envelope" – venturing to the edge of the performance envelope is only for daredevils. Astute pilots recognize their own performance envelope, and know how close they can get to the actual performance limits of their aircraft and their flying skills. The actual performance limits of an aircraft are documented, but performance margins are tacit knowledge.

How does this apply to the corporate world? Quite simply, Ken Lay of Enron was pushing envelope of a particular business model, and crashed and burned. More prosaically, by setting unrealistic goals, or objectives without adequate support, or with ignorance beyond one's temporal and spatial planning horizons, one risks catastrophe. Planning horizons vary enormously around the world, with some companies creating 500-year plans, while others in less stable regions feel that they cannot plan out beyond the next twelve

months. An awareness of these limitations – which many executives understand intuitively – is essential for pushing the envelope of corporate performance, and a fundamental dialogue in strategic thinking is to understand the balance among objectives, resources, and performance (the critical success factors).

Performance issues, however, have a different temporality within anthropology and management. Within applied anthropology, health, sustainability, and nutritional adequacy have received attention, but less so for industrial safety or efficiency. As a general, or perhaps over-generalized, statement, one might say that the temporalities of anthropology and management are different, with anthropology focusing more on the long term, whereas management is focused more on short-term, immediate results.

Rational Order – Organizations, almost by definition, are tied together by common acceptance of a culture of rationality. In contrast to charismatic movements and patrimonial orders, an organization embraces an acceptance of rational order, and deviations from this, whether in the form of nepotism or arbitrary management decisions, are seen as a violation of the rational ideal. The founder of an organization may be a charismatic individual, but other members of the organization have to conform more to the rational order. A problem that many young organizations face is how to replace the charismatic founder with a more rational order – a problem that Weber (1947) called the "routinization of charisma."

Behind this ideology of rationality lies the fact that rationality is about the means-ends calculus, and in the absence of agreement on the ends, there can be no agreement on the means. The goals of any business are far more complex than simply "making money," involving instead assumptions about temporality, locality, legality, and personality – in short, when, where, how, and who. A company might have an autocratic CEO ("my way or the highway"), or a more consultative leadership – or no leadership at all. With ample resources and market position, companies can drift along for months or years with little strategic direction, and rudderlessness becomes a conventional (or at least convenient) assumption within the company.

Critical Models of Culture – Whisperers – A basic principle of any hierarchy is that feedback flows more efficiently downward than upward, a fact that conscientious managers do their best to correct. Managers who are too self-absorbed or too assertive with their power communicate, even subliminally, to their subordinates, "shut up!" Subordinates are *always* more attentive to the boss, than vice versa. Thus some of the most important cultural messages within an organization are communicated by what Grant McCracken calls "the whisperers," people on the bottom who do not shut up but who simultaneously realize the perils of speaking up. These messages can be as completely varied as outright rejection of management priorities or a grudging acceptance of the corporate direction. A good manager knows that he or she needs to have "an ear to the ground."

Ethnography can also provide an ear to the ground, and optimally recognize that the whispers are more nuanced than simply the black and white of rejection and acceptance. Within any organization there are underground pockets of opportunity and resistance, and the astute manager seeking to innovate will discover these pockets of opportunity, and subtly support them. Lockheed's legendary "skunk works", a liminal space where innovation was sheltered, is a classic example of this. More generally, one could observe that the lower tiers

of a supply chain are where an industry's "whisperers" reside, and that listening to them – as we accomplished in our liminal space – can lead to industry-wide innovation.

Appreciating Ritual – "Ritual" is a central concept within cultural anthropology, and numerous studies (e.g., Turner 1969) document the importance of ritual for creating, reinforcing, and altering social bonds. The elements of ritual, particularly rites of passage, are well understood, and decoding ritual is part of the basic toolkit of any cultural anthropologist. Thus when one sees any repetitive action, particularly with a substantial investment of time and personnel yet not having an obvious "productive" consequence – a means/ends calculus does not apply to ritual – one begins to ask what *cultural* importance is attached to the actions. The "Breakfast at Spiro's described above is an obvious example of this.

A synthesis of the contrasting agendas of Anthropology and Management Studies is included in table 1.

Table 1. Contrasting Agendas of Anthropology and Management Studies

Concept	Anthropology	Management Studies
People	End	Means
Purpose of Inquiry	Descriptive	Prescriptive
Time Frame	Long	Short
Research Method	Ethnography	Case Study
Unit of Analysis	Groups	Individual, Group, Unit, Organization, Environment
Scope	Tends toward micro; "the miniaturists of the social sciences"	Defined by the purpose of management (control/dictated)
Organization	An object of critical inquiry	A means to an end
Definition of Culture	learned system of shared understandings	Asset, Restriction, Environment, Identity
Cultural Change	Evolutionary	Manageable
Critical Success Factors	• Theoretical coherence • Empirical grounding	• Productivity • Improvement of Corporate Performance
Blind Spot(s)	• Pragmatism • Reflexivity	• People are not commodities • People resist control

IV. USING CULTURAL THEORY

The importance of these theoretical perspectives is that they identify the points of leverage for cultural interventions, for managers and employees alike, to spot "here's what's going on," and to design interventions. An example of a cultural intervention might be a new communication channel (such as the Aviation Safety Reporting System created by NASA to provide a space for reflection on flight safety issues), reaching out to a new constituency (e.g., the re-positioning of FaceBook for news feeds), or a brand extension, including new products and new communities in one's market.

Further, the relationship of culture to power is important to keep in mind. Within any corporation, the asymmetry in power between labor and management, between corporation and customers, is a banal observation, yet it means that one side has greater leverage to

effect change than the other. That leverage is never unlimited, and the difference between leadership on the one hand and machine-like control on the other, is that the leader understands the countervailing agendas within the organization and works with or co-opts them. A leader's prime directive is to recruit and retain followers, an unspoken fact that every effective leader recognizes.

By definition, corporations exist within a régime of instrumental rationality, although there are enormous variations in this around the globe. In "family firms," for example, patrimonial values often overshadow instrumental rationality, even to the point of imposing the owner's religious injunctions. In other industries, celebrating "disruptive innovation," charisma often attaches to inventors. More accurately, one might say that within any given corporation there is an ideology of power, although the bases, rationales, and effectiveness of power vary enormously. Part of change management within a corporation inevitably involves disturbing arrangements of power that all members have at least tacitly bought into. Astute change management takes cognizance of the existing arrangements.

Power is thus the primary lever of cultural change, or more accurately, power deployed astutely. Just as it is impossible to reach any destination if you don't know where you are starting from, it is impossible to change a culture without at least a high-level understanding of the culture. The concepts laid out here – the meanings of technology, reciprocity, purity and pollution, performance margins, rational order, whisperers – can be seen as tools for comprehending a culture at the deeper level of its dynamics, more than just a superficial description of "the way we do things around here."

The importance of these perspectives is that they identify the dynamics of the culture. Culture, by definition, is a durable formation – it is resistant to change. Stories in the business press about a company that changed its culture three times in as many years clearly misapprehend the concept. Culture has multiple layers, and such matters as the dress code or the arrangement of furniture, while possibly expressive of deeper values, are only the most superficial – i.e., most easily manipulated or ignored – level.

Most importantly, the feedback loops that maintain a culture's stability are often subtle, intentionally so. For example, "work to rule", a favorite resistance tactic in some industries, can be seen as a rigid reciprocity, and the astute manager who sees his employees working to rule will ask himself, "what is going on here?" The astute manager will recognize that in rigidly conforming to the rules, his employees are whispering in his ear saying "we don't respect these rules." "Malicious compliance" is the ironic characterization of this attitude. A knowledge of the cultural dynamics of human behavior, even if intuitive, is an essential leadership trait. These cultural dynamics, however, vary widely among different nations and different regions, a fact that many managers discover only through stumbling over them.

V. SYNTHESIZING ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND MANAGERIAL APPROACHES

There is a fundamental dissonance between anthropology and management. This dissonance can lead to dis-harmony, or it can, as twentieth century musical composers such as Schoenberg and Webern discovered, lead to new tonal forms and aesthetics. Anthropology is a scientific endeavor to understand "what is going on here," whereas management is a practical effort to make things happen. Anthropology, with its approach of cultural neutrality, avoids making value judgments, whereas management is all about setting and evaluating priorities. Another way of stating this would be to observe that management

defines the ends, including unspoken ends of maintaining certain perquisites, whereas anthropology suggests the means, most notably those that might be dissonant with the managerial ideology of rational control. (Although a critique of managerial ideology is outside our scope here, we can recognize that it is no less culture-bound than any other organizational formation, and if too rigid can become an impediment to change).

As formal organizations today are built as social means toward the achievement of contemporary capitalist ends, participating people will be seen as "resources", sometimes called "human capital." This is a pill that is a hard to swallow for anthropology and the main resistance of some anthropologists to work in business anthropology is justified by this reality. If anthropologists consider that contemporary business (or business-like, as in the case of New Public Management orientations that bring to public organizations the procedures of private organizations) are too much a space to leave without attention because people inhabit in there more than at home, there are still issues to consider such as the window of opportunity for change. Managers in big corporations are evaluated every three months. They have to make merits (do something worth keeping their job) in such a short period. Grading the impact of the battery of change resources by the time they take to get results and the kind of results that can be expected is a necessary and pending undertaking. What, how, for what are unavoidable questions in every project in the business world.

From the managerial side, understanding that there is a gap of control, that groups will manage to do what they want to do and managers can do little or nothing to avoid it, is a requisite to succeed as a manager. At times, this resolves to "If you can´t beat them, join them," which can range from capitulation to co-optation. "Joining them" starts by understanding "them," a task for which ethnography and anthropology can make substantial contributions.

Might anthropology make the world a better place by putting its knowledge to the service of capitalism? It depends on how one defines "a better place" and how to get there. Changing the capitalist system may be done at the macro level by tearing capitalism down and putting something else in place (a revolution), or at the micro (organizational) level by redefining corporate performance to include social variables, such as the perspective of Corporate Social Responsibility has done by broadening the inventory of relevant political actors (stakeholders) beyond that of owners of capital (stockholders). Julian Friedland, a philosopher at the Fordham University School of Business, in *Doing Well and Good: The Human Face of the New Capitalism*, demonstrates that ethical behavior in business is not contrary to core business values of practicality and profitability (Friedland 2009). One section of this book, "The Role of Corporate Culture," practically invites anthropologists to wade in and craft solutions to managerial dilemmas of inflexibility, broken promises, and hidden agendas. Moving from practice to praxis in the universe of contemporary formal organizations under managerial control, equals to moving from the supply of methods for organizational change into the definition of ends of organizational change. A review of concepts to consider when making a path between the praxes of Anthropology and Management Studies is included in table 2.

Table 2. Concepts to Consider when Making a Path between Anthropology and Management

Concept	Dialogue
People	People vs. Employees, the effect of managerial control upon employee´s lives (multiple identities)
Purpose of Inquiry	Descriptive is a required stage of prescriptive
Time Frame	Roll the intervention out
Research Method	Case Study may include Ethnography (has to handle the scope for timing issues). Ethnography has to see managerial time of response as a restriction and work from there to define scope, goals, outputs, and methods. For case study, theory goes before field work contrary to ethnography. Most probably interdisciplinary work should be accomplished
Organization	Formal organizations are built to produce predetermined outputs
Definition of Culture	The closer theoretical construct as seen from managerial theory would be that culture is type of environment (you should know about it and behave accordingly but you have very limited control)
Cultural Change	There are inductors of routine behavioral change that according to the structuration theory eventually (in a long term evolutionary fashion) could lead to cultural change. Perhaps it would be better to think in terms of behavioral change instead of cultural change.
Critical Success Factors	Whatever you do it must improve corporate performance.
Blind Spots	Ethnography must work toward defining adequate ends of organizational change to be able to improve human condition in formal organizations.

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