

# Culture impact on leadership, innovation and change in Organizations

EXPLORATORY STUDY

Student ID 199125232 | MBA Leadership Innovation Change | November 2020

*To my sister Federica, my mother Luigina and my father Nello. Thank you.*

## Abstract

The paper provides an exploratory study about how culture in organizations can affect performances, employee's wellbeing, innovation, sustainability and long-term standing achievement. Models like Cultural Web, Kaleidoscope analysis, Forcefield analysis, Risks and feedback, Competing Value Framework are discussed and applied to a case study on the company Ericsson Telecommunications.

The study also provides some background and how national cultures can affect companies environments, along with a checklist to help identifying organization dysfunctions. One of the key outcomes is how to use models and tools to map organization cultures and identify weak and strong characteristics, including an assessment to benchmark how the Leadership is executing on building a functioning, safe, open and inclusive organizational culture.

Keywords: Forcefield analysis, culture of change, Kaleidoscope analysis, organization dysfunctions, Ericsson, SAFe, innovation, progress principles, culture improving creativity.

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## 1. Organizational Culture: so far, so close

*"A strong culture increases net income 756% over eleven years, according to a Harvard study of more than 200 Companies" - (Coyle 2018)*

Organizational Culture (OC), has been defined and described several times over the past decades. The word culture came from the Latin *cultus*, meaning *care*.

*Schein (1992) describe OC as:*

*"The deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously and define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment"*

*Hofstede (1993) define culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group or category of people from another."*

The common line across the analyzed definitions are humans/members, shared beliefs, tacit or granted assumptions and understandings.

I see a strong connection between culture and the word *"identity"*, described in the Oxford University dictionary as:

*Identity (noun):*

1. *the fact of being who or what a person or thing is.*
2. *a close similarity or affinity.*

### 1.1 WHY CULTURE IS IMPORTANT

*"Culture beats strategy every time" – Ericsson culture motto*

OC is important as it influence individuals behavior and even in companies people cannot be forced doing what they don't want. *Lane and Maznevski (2014)* provides an interesting view on how culture influences the individual behavior:

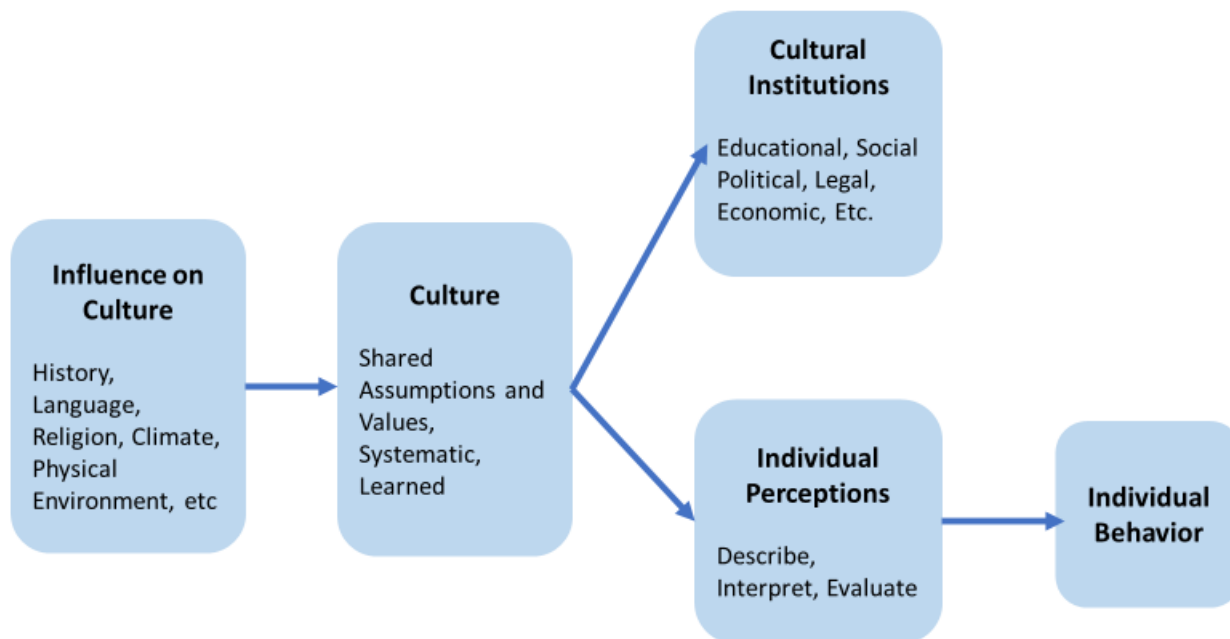


Figure 1 Culture Influence on Individual Behavior

## 1.2 MODELS AND THEORIES

OC origins are not easy to track, as it unfolds from psychology, anthropology, society studies and theories, business, markets, countries; it comprises extensive and various aspects.

In the business context, in my experience, most of the studies in the last forty years, focus on how OC can improve managing changes, innovation, creativity, employees satisfaction, productivity, management and leadership effectiveness. OC is analyzed to achieve something; it has little value if it is not related to specific contexts.

The beginning of OC concepts and model starts well before its application to factories and industries. Psychologists and anthropologists started analyzing culture since beginning of the thirties. *Ruth Benedict (1934)* explore this topic on societies and different ethnicities in “*Ritual*” and “*Pattern of Culture*”. *Malinowski (1944)* with the studies of collective consciousness provide a tangible example of how OC later studies derived from studies of societies and social behaviors. The origin of it would be studies related to civilizations which started thousands of years ago, therefore OC, anthropology and psychology have a wide common background.

In societies and ethnic groups, the culture is historically harder to understand and map, while in companies over time it did become one of the strongest topics, especially in management, leadership and consulting strategies. However, the modern approach still follows anthropologist models like *Geertz (1973)*, by studying in detail what happens in companies like processes, management and leadership styles, behavior, performance, attitudes and so on.

OC in business, strongly relates to what happens in organizations and Teams and how it influences the environment. According *Schein (1992)*, changing OC is one of the most challenging tasks in companies, as it consistently involves people psychology and anthropology. According to *Heskett (2012)*, what the most successful companies have in common is the strong focus and investments on working culture.



The “Iceberg” metaphor by *French and Bell (1999)*, illustrates the importance of formal and informal working culture:



*Figure 2 – Underwater Iceberg*

This metaphor emphasizes that a maximum of 20% of the iceberg goes above the water level. That leave the 80+% of OC to the informal part. The informal side contains most of the information needed to analyze, understand and improve OC. However, the model does not provide effective information on how to map and understand the informal part.

### 1.2.1 Three levels of culture model

The following table provide a summary of the model from *Schein (1996)* along with comments and critics:

<i>Level Name</i>	<i>Key points</i>	<i>Comments &amp; Critics</i>
<b>Artifacts</b>	<i>Formal culture, visible structures, processes, people interactions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It helps mapping what is evident and tangible</li> <li>• Analyze product and solution from a cultural perspective</li> <li>• The behavior could not reflect would people think</li> <li>• It's hard to evaluate the informal culture, therefore can assess around 20% of company culture</li> </ul>
	<i>Based on observation</i>	
	<i>Architecture and Design, physical environments, products and services</i>	
<b>Espoused Beliefs and Values</b>	<i>Ideals, goals, values, aspirations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be inconsistent across Teams and Orgs.</li> <li>• Observer can be influenced by its own beliefs</li> <li>• People can show company values alignment, but they can have different values that could lead to incompatible situations over time</li> </ul>
	<i>Ideologies</i>	
	<i>Rationalizations</i>	
<b>Basic Underlying Assumption</b>	<i>Unconscious assumptions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to assess the informal culture</li> <li>• Useful to identify show dysfunctions</li> <li>• It takes time to understand the taken for granted assumptions and how they affect the company</li> </ul>
	<i>Taken for granted beliefs and values</i>	
	<i>Feeling, perception, was of thinking</i>	

Figure 3 - Schein 3 levels

### 1.2.2 Risks and feedback driven model

Deal and Kennedy (1982) propose a model based on four generic culture topologies, where each topology belong to dimensions of risks and feedback, specifically High/Low Risk, Fast/Slow feedback:

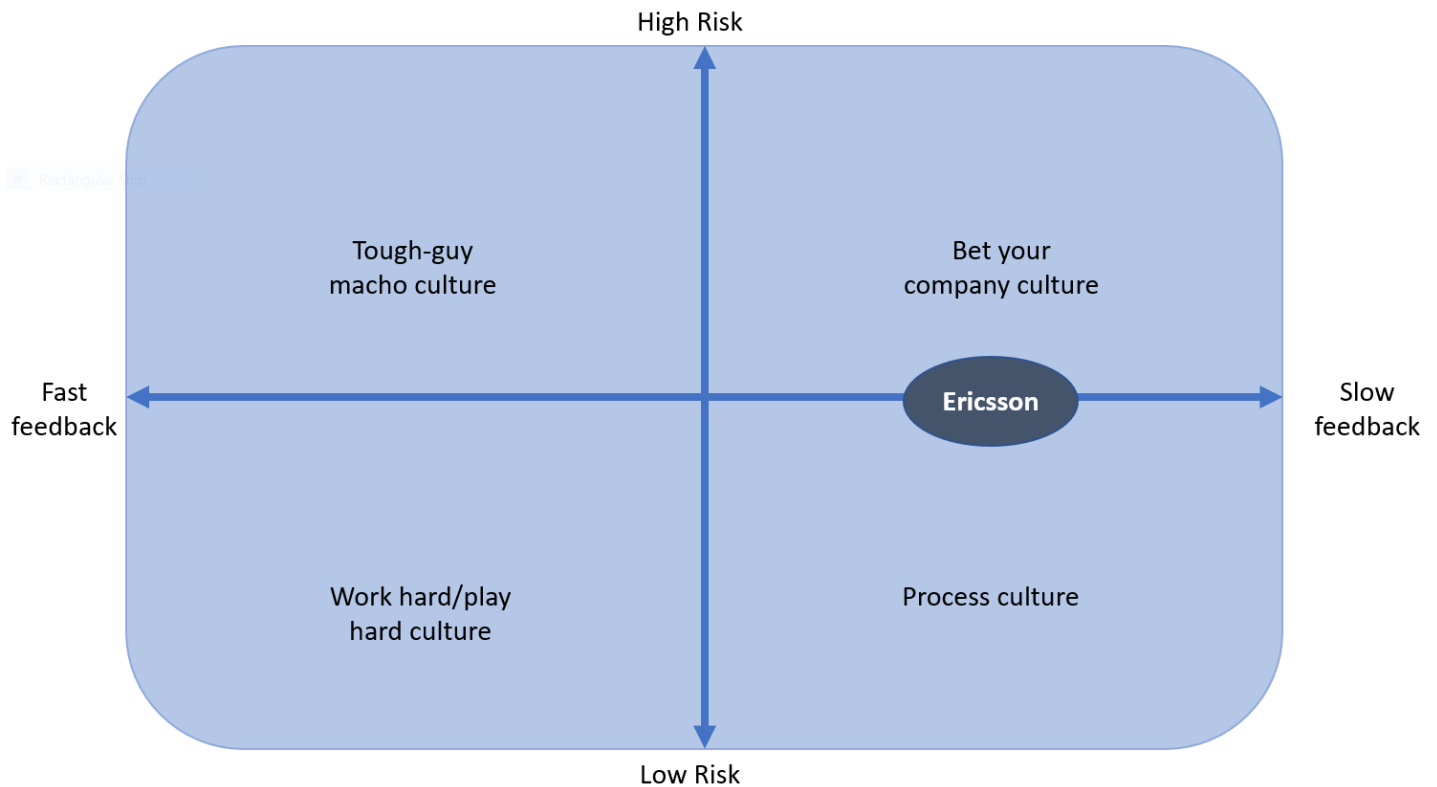


Figure 4 - Risks and Feedback Model

The table explains the model, including my own critics:

Culture Topology	Risk	Feedback	Critics
<i>Tough guy, macho culture</i>	High	Quick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low Team working orientation</li> <li>• Short term value driven</li> <li>• Low employees retention</li> <li>• Non-inclusive</li> <li>• Probably less tendency for high ethics values, integrity and avoiding speculations.</li> <li>• Individuals take risks without proper management principles.</li> <li>• Can foster culture of blaming, burn out and hire &amp; fire.</li> <li>• It could be effective for short term innovation and creativity.</li> </ul>
<i>Bet-your-company culture</i>	High	Slow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposite to macho culture.</li> <li>• Can be effective, but changes or adapting to new events is challenging.</li> <li>• The big issue is going on a direction of investing efforts on something that may turn to be not useful as initially intended.</li> <li>• It includes a consensus driven management approach which can be an obstacle to innovation, creativity and change management.</li> </ul>
<i>Work hard/play hard culture</i>	Low	Quick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It provides a reasonable balance between top down and bottom up approaches.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High performances are expected, in a management skill less environment, a high rate of workforce turnover and burn out can occur.</li> <li>• It requires that most of the employees have a good understanding of the company business, as everything is pretty much connected with sales and revenues; therefore, the impacts of employees actions on the business have to be set clear to fit in.</li> <li>• The results are assessed in shorter term than bet-your-company culture and generally the management model is loosely coupled, flat and distributed with a certain level of individual responsibility.</li> <li>• Well-defined frames of what a single person can or can't do.</li> </ul>
<i>Process Culture</i>	Low	Slow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main challenges of this culture are the lack of innovation, change management and creativity.</li> <li>• The same solutions and processes are recurrently applied with low consideration on the outcome.</li> <li>• Feedback are very low or non-existent.</li> <li>• Lean to develop an environment of generally low skilled people.</li> <li>• Bureaucratic, strictly hierarchical and distant management model. Common in Public Administrations and one of the reasons of inefficiency.</li> <li>• Politics generally play a big role.</li> </ul>

One important aspect missing in the *Deal and Kennedy's* model, would be a *Results Driven Culture*, contrasting the *Process Culture*, based on the assumption that processes are important, but results are even more. While working in companies like Amazon or HP, I was able to witness that the most successful projects were those with a mix of Results, Bet-your-company and Work hard/Play hard cultures, loosely coupled with a Process culture.

### 1.2.3 Competing values Framework

Competing Values Framework (CVF) was proposed initially by *Quinn and Rohbaugh (1983)*.

CVF is used to map and interpret cultures in different fields and industries. It positions the company in one of four management models to identify the degree of flexibility, control, external or internal focus. It is an effective tool to understand if the company is customer centric, employee centric, if the management overall style is aggressive, performance oriented, etc.

The following table explains the models presented in CVF and my own critics:

Name	Comments and critics
<b>Human relations model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness dependent on the environment.</li> <li>• Where high performances are expected, it could be ineffective as the balance between results and human relations is not clearly defined by the model.</li> <li>• The lack of external focus has the risk to be detached from customers, market and competition.</li> <li>• Start up, Finance and Internet companies could partially benefit from improving human relations.</li> </ul>
<b>Open systems model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largely used by companies looking for competition</li> <li>• Growth and results oriented vs process and planning.</li> <li>• This is the most Agile model amongst the four</li> <li>• Effective in the market conditions where the company needs to reduce resistance to innovation and change management</li> </ul>
<b>Internal process model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally used by Governments, public institutions and regulated environments.</li> <li>• It does provide an excellent work-life balance for people.</li> <li>• Lack of competitiveness and does not facilitate innovation and creativity.</li> </ul>
<b>Rational systems model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not foster innovation, creativity and change management.</li> <li>• As an example, traditional banks suffer the increasing competition of new banking business models like <u>Revolut</u>, N26, Neon Bank, etc. These new banks gather millions of customers in very short time and definitely they are not following the Rational System model.</li> </ul>

*Figure 5 - Competing Value Critics*

The following graphical representation is based on *Senior and Swailes (2016)*:

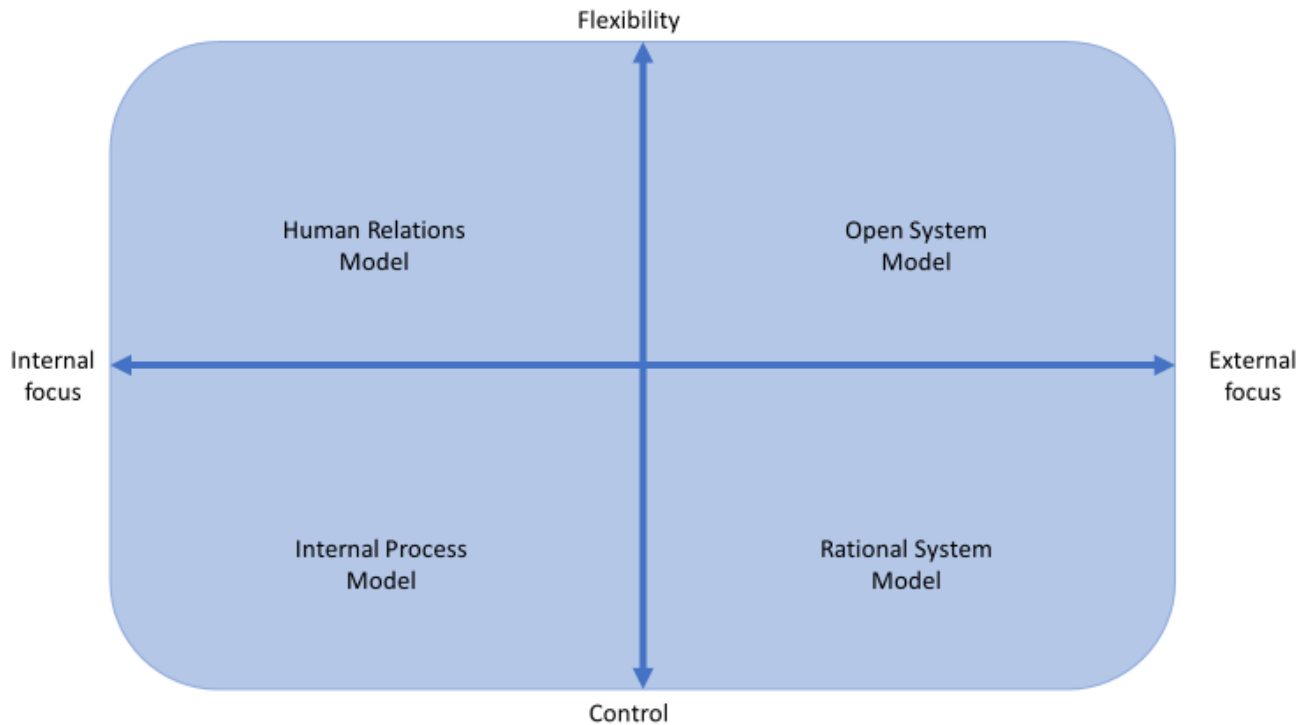


Figure 6 - Competing Value Framework

While used to map cultures, the CVF misses specific points to map the informal culture (from Iceberg metaphor), for instance, the response to change and how people interact. The *Integrated Culture Framework from Stuart (2018)* provides important improvements to the CFV.

#### 1.2.4 Integrated Culture Framework

The “Integrated Culture framework” (ICF) from Stuart (2018), provides a more granular mapping OC by including the following eight styles within the quadrants:

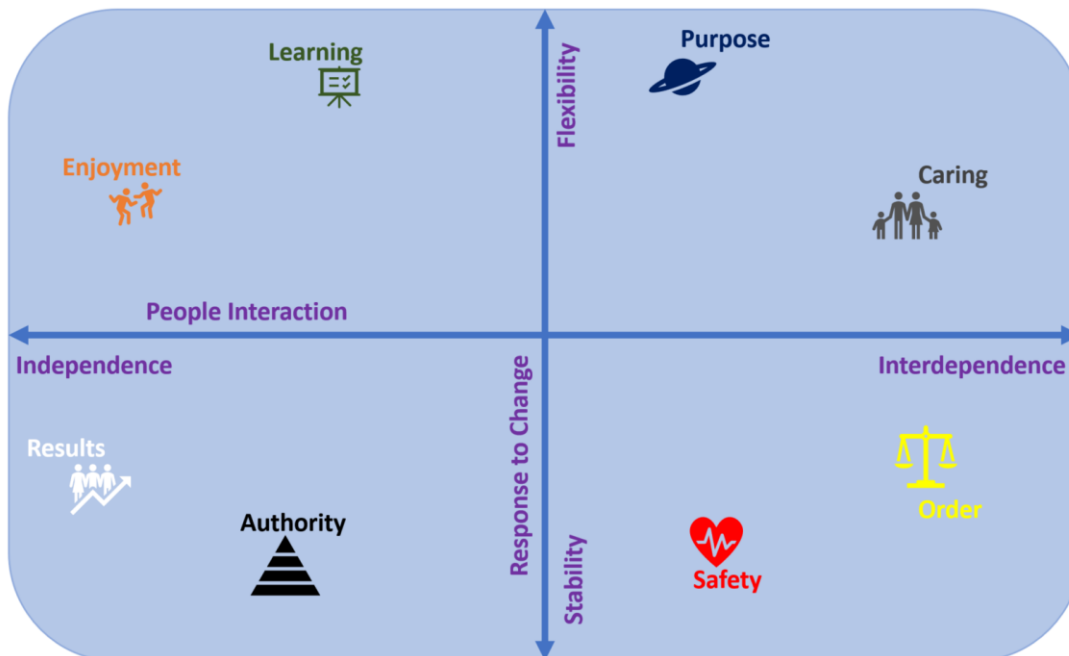


Figure 7 - Integrated Culture Framework

CEO and Executives statements can be mapped with ICF to understand the company and single organizations having a more granular cultural view.

The following table provides my own critics to the ICF culture styles:

Style Name	Critics
<b>Results</b>	Too much results oriented, can generate internal unhealthy competition, prolonged stress situation and reduced creativity and Team working
<b>Authority</b>	Can lead to feedback resistance, reduced Teamwork, conflicts, please management, rather than delivering meaningful content
<b>Safety</b>	Can lead to high bureaucracy, reduced innovation and creativity, high efforts to achieve progress due to safety limitations
<b>Order</b>	Can Limit creativity and innovation, limit agility, increases inflexibility when improving rules according the evolved markets or environments
<b>Caring</b>	Can lead to high consensus, which hinders innovation, slow development of new ideas, very slow decision process.
<b>Purpose</b>	Too much purpose driven, can lead to lower focus of what the company and customers need. The company can become less practical on solving problems and it could generate financial issues as purposes can become idealistic and hard to capitalize
<b>Learning</b>	When exaggerated, can lead to lack of focus, reduced time to deliver tangible results, reduced time supporting the business. Investments in learning cannot always be applied to what the company needs.
<b>Enjoyment</b>	Can lead to lack of discipline, lack of focus, reduced performance and results, no outcome driven.

Figure 8 - Integrated Culture Critics

### 1.3 NATIONAL CULTURES

#### 1.3.1 Path Dependency

Path dependency analyzes how historical past events affect present and future of national cultures. From *Johnson et al. (2008)*, “in path dependency early events and decisions, establish ‘policy paths’ that have lasting effects on subsequent events and decisions”.

It is largely explained by *David (1998, 1999, 2000)*. It is used in many fields like Finance with stochastic models, to identify future behaviors based on past facts and numbers.

#### 1.3.2 Hofstede Geo-based cultures

Geert Hofstede introduced (*Hofstede 2001; Hofstede et al. 2010*) the following six dimensions of culture (source and reworked from *Schein 2016*):



Dimension Name	Description
<b>Individualism-Collectivism (IDV)</b>	<i>The degree in which the society is built around individual rights and duties vs the group being the basic unit of society to which individuals should subordinates themselves</i>
<b>Power Distance (PDI)</b>	<i>The social and psychological status and authority distance between the highest and lower powered people in the society</i>
<b>Masculinity-Femininity Distance (MAS)</b>	<i>The degree to which gender roles are differentiated and linked to work versus home and family</i>
<b>Tolerance for Ambiguity and Uncertainty (UAI)</b>	<i>The degree to which members of the society feel comfortable in uncertain and ambiguous circumstances; the need for clear structures, processes and rules</i>
<b>Short-Run vs Long-Run Time Orientation (LTO)</b>	<i>The degree to which members to society plan for and fantasize about the distant future versus being concerned only about the near future</i>
<b>Indulgence-Restraint (IND)</b>	<i>Self-driven gratification and desire to enjoy life vs society-driven control of gratification with strict social norms</i>

Figure 9 - Hofstede Dimensions Description

Schein (2016) support the model and place specific emphasis on the “Individualism-Collectivism” dimension to identify a national culture.

Hofstede provides an indexing tool to measure how each country performs on each dimension area.

In my view, Hofstede dimensions can fall short, as there are other dimensions and metrics that can help to understand a national culture, like:

- The average level of education.
- The historical higher number of degrees from specific fields and industries.

### 1.3.3 How national culture affects companies

National cultures can have a deep effect on multinational local country offices. This can happen when the company culture has discrepancies with the local culture.

The following tables shows some critical points, according to my experience:

Critical Point	Considerations
Single-culture organization and Teams, defining solutions and strategies spanning across multiple national cultures	Mono cultural organizations can face issues when reusing the same solution to other national cultures. This could happen when a marketing or sales department are built with team members from a single national culture, trying to provide solutions to other national cultures.
Average age gap across different organization	Different people ages play different local cultural values even in the same national culture. Ages gaps can impact company performance. For instance, a very young IT/Engineering and very old Sales departments. A solution could be to keep the average age similar across multiple departments.



Organizations with informal sub-teams based on nationalities	When people reorganize themselves in informal sub-teams based on nationality, the company loses the benefits of diversity.
Sense of urgency based on local culture	Sense of urgency may have an impact based on the national culture for results achievement.

*Figure 10 - National Culture impacts on Multinationals*

These are only few examples, according to my experience, possible solutions are:

- Identify the differences
- Establish metrics and percentage quotas to adopt diversity of any kind and diversification when building Teams and skills on every local culture.
- To train the whole Company on the same integrity, ethics, values and norms.
- Use common productivity tools, metrics and methodologies.

## 1.4 MAPPING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

*“I think the players win the championship, and the organization has something to do with it, don't get me wrong. But don't try to put the organization above the players.” – Michael Jordan.*

### 1.4.1 Theories and models

Culture characteristic and dimensions plays big roles in companies success. *Robbins and Judge (2013)* identify the following culture characteristics, including my own critics:

Characteristic	Critics
<b>Innovation and risk taking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much innovation and risks taking are part of the employees daily life?</li> <li>• Innovation can be part of the operational working culture with minimal risks, while risks frequently needs to be peer reviewed (either with colleagues or managers), as it is not easy to identify and assess the impacts to external factors generated by risk taking actions. Innovation can be a process, while risk taking is generally a decision based on impacts.</li> </ul>
<b>Attention to details</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much attention to details is part of the employees way of work?</li> <li>• Customers and competitors are known to focus on the 1% blind spot of the providers, trying to invalidate the 99% good. Attention to details reduce the risks of producing the blind spot 1% and to not leave margin for any competitive disadvantage leverage.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are processes more important than results or the other way around?</li> <li>• Processes are important, results are more. The inefficiency arises, when the lack of process affects negatively the results. A balanced way could be a result driven culture, with a rebalancing towards processes when results are affected. Results metrics and measurement would be required in this case.</li> </ul>
<b>People orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much employee centric the company is?</li> <li>• Does the management take in consideration people view, perspective and impacts during the decision process?</li> <li>• In environments driven by innovation and creativity, it is critical to be employees centric, however, decisions still need to be taken even without large consensus, as in consensus driven environments it would be harder to implement innovation and changes. Employees wellness must always be a strong value.</li> </ul>
<b>Team orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are decisions taken and actions organized by the Team of by individuals?</li> <li>• Team decisions provide better outcome, but frequently happens Teams are stuck, because of differences, background, etc. Reasonable balance could be a Team driven decision-making process, with individual intervention when progress is affected. It is important to define and agree before on the criterion of when an individual decision should overrule a Team decision.</li> </ul>
<b>Aggression</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much aggressive people are in a company or team?</li> <li>• Is aggressivity constructive and generate healthy competition or is affecting the performance and how people feel?</li> <li>• Some level of aggressivity could be necessary in the market and business environments to move forward and progress consistently. Managers and teams should assess periodically how the they are communicating and acting professionally and benchmark with agreed values and limits. Recurrent Management and Teams open discussion on values and feelings is required.</li> </ul>
<b>Stability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the team priorities: innovation and change, or status quo and reducing changes?</li> <li>• Not necessarily companies products and services suffer instability when having strong growth and innovation. Companies like Facebook, Amazon, Google and many others are stable in many dimensions, still are great innovator and champions of growth. Successful companies that incorporate innovation in everyday activities have also developed practices to produce stable outcomes.</li> </ul>

*Figure 11 - Robbins and Judge culture characteristics and critics*

#### 1.4.1.1 Cultural Systems

A Cultural system is the aggregate of all the components and elements of an organization culture.

From *Johnson et al. (2011)*:

*“Cultural systems aim to standardize norms of behavior within an organization in line with particular objectives. Cultural systems exercise an indirect form of control, because of not requiring direct supervision: it become a matter of willing conformity of self-control by employees”*

However, clearly OC is far from being under total control of Management. Referring to the Iceberg metaphor, in the worst case the 80+% could be dysfunctional.

The concept of sub-systems, therefore sub-cultures, within an entity (i.e. company, government, public institution) was explored back in the 1950's by *Lindblom (1959)*, exploring also how these sub-systems where interdependent between them. *Normann (1977)* explored in a structured way, how companies can have supporting systems that can benefit performances, such us, rewards, leadership styles, etc.

*Waterman and Peters (1982)* provided a framework called “*McKinsey 7S*”. The innovative point of this framework was the definition of the interdependency of sub-systems of hard elements such as strategy, structure and systems with soft elements such as shared values, skills, staff and style, therefore providing an holistic view to improve performances, align multiple organizations and measure effectiveness of changes. This model much related to OC, as place the Shared values (culture definition) at the center of the 7S.

Another cultural system is the TPC framework from *Tichy (1982)*. The system defines three forces that affect organizations, such as *T (Technology)*, *P (Political)*, *C (Cultural)* and these three factors generate pressures and influence decisions. The system lacks analysis of internal factors, as focus mostly on the externals, but provide good insights of how national cultures influence companies as external factor.

*Johnson et al. (2017)* in “*Exploring Strategies*” provides an interesting view of cultural systems and on which environments are used. The following table summarize the systems presented:

System name	Key factors	Comments and critics
<b>Performance Targeting</b>	Systems focused on measuring the performance of achievable targets and goals. Useful for KPI.	When overemphasized, can generate environments where the results are built to make KPIs look good, losing connection and focus with achievements.
<b>Market</b>	Define a system to contract something to buy (input) such as services, good, etc and define the system to sell or to provide (output) in an organization	Includes organizations like Purchase, Sales, cost controlling. When culture is not diversified the failure risk increase.
<b>Agility</b>	<i>Johnson et al. (2017): “The ability of an organization to detect and respond to opportunities and threats fast and easily”</i>	Agility needs to relate to models, technology and processes. This is not clear in this model.
<b>Resilience</b>	<i>Johnson et al. (2017): “The capacity of organizations to recover from environmental shocks fast and easily after the have happened”</i>	<i>Ray Dalio</i> in “ <i>Principles</i> ” provide a very interesting view on resilience, like the facts that embracing a certain level of pain during crisis would benefit OC.

Figure 12 - *Johnson et al. Exploring Strategies* critics

*Johnson et al. (2008)* propose a system called “*Cultural Web*” that is explained in the next chapters.

#### 1.4.1.2 The Cultural Web

Cultural web is a helpful model to map company culture.

The main points are the identification of formal and informal OC organized in six elements:

- Routing and Rituals
- Stories
- Symbols
- Control Systems
- Power Structures
- Organizational structures

The intersection of the elements defines the “Paradigm”, where is possible to identify the culture and dysfunctions.

The following is an example of mapping culture for a large UK based paper distributor, taken from *Senior and Stephen (2016)*:



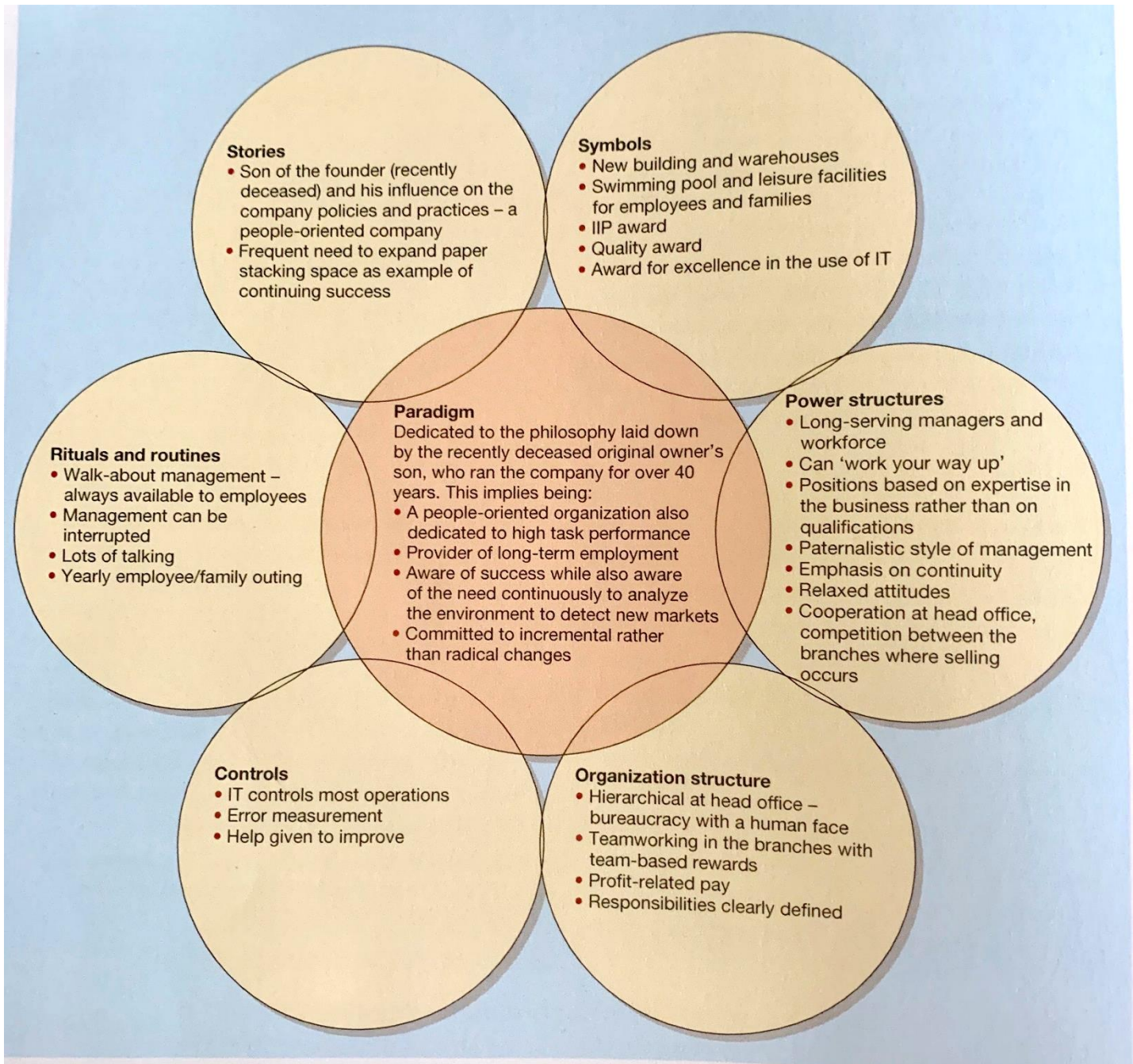


Figure 13 - Example Cultural Web

The model lacks mapping or identification of how people communicate and interact. It is possible to understand important insights by analyzing if the tendency is to communicate face to face, formal/informal communication style, how much technology is used to communicate, how much the productivity tools are used to communicate, etc. Lack of more inputs on the change implementation is missing on Cultural Web. It's not clear the relationship of culture mapping and changes. Cultural Web also assume a sequential implementation of these processes, which can be a challenge in fast pace change and dynamic environments, as the interdependencies needs to be managed during the change process.

### 1.4.1.3 Kaleidoscope Analysis

The analysis is introduced by *Hailey and Balogun (2002)* with the goal to organize and identify the main points needed to assess change readiness and other key factors in the change process. The following figure shows the main factors, reworked and adapted from *Johnson et al. (2017)*:

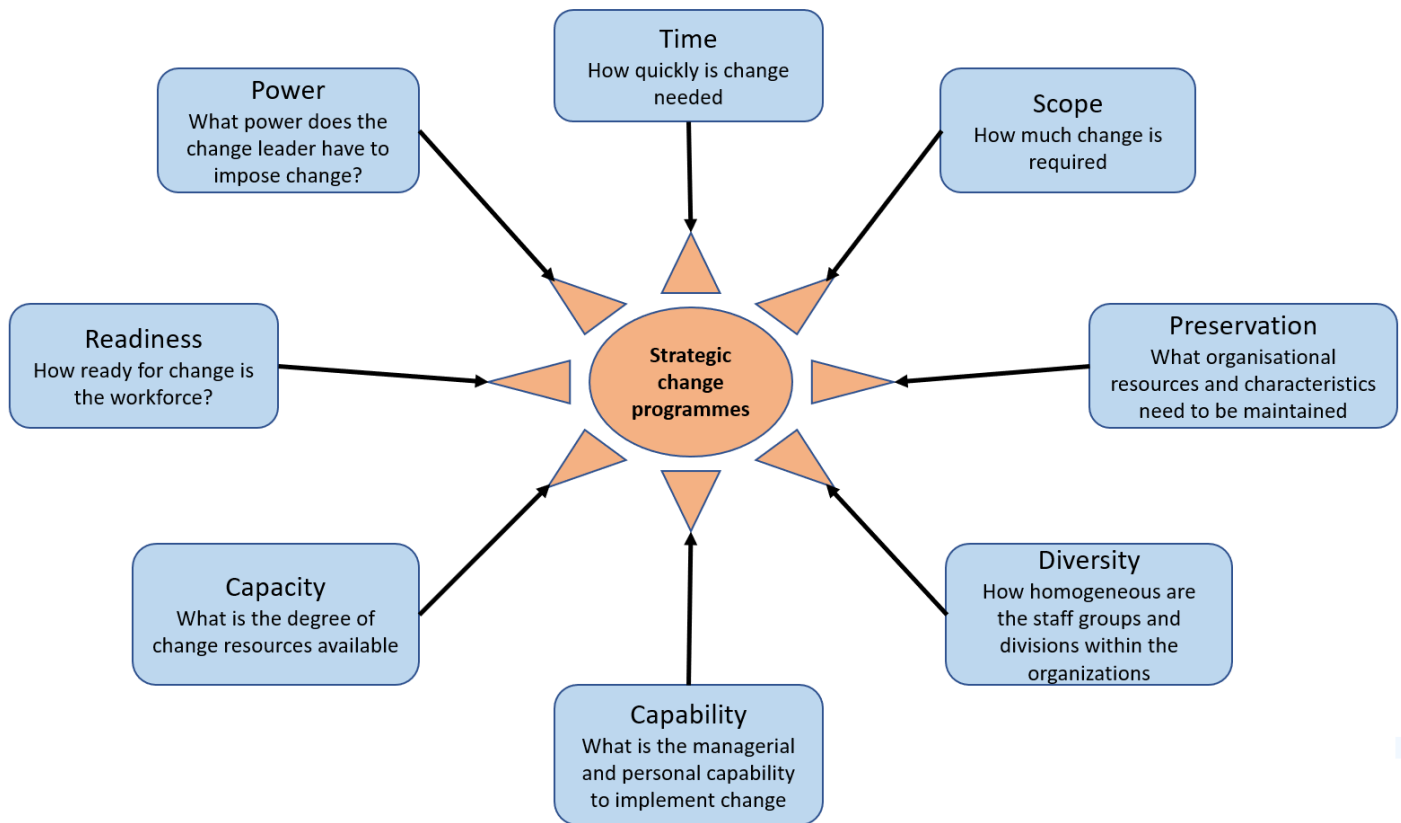


Figure 14 - Kaleidoscope Analysis

Kaleidoscope analysis focus on readiness of employee, which is crucial for successful changes executions. As a weak point, it focusses only on the change scope itself and the possibility to make it happen, rather than evaluating the reason and motivations of stakeholder like in Forcefield analysis. Both Kaleidoscope and Forcefield can be used to have a more complete and accurate assessment of the Organizational changes needed based on challenges identification.

## 2. Creativity and Culture

*"In the successful organization, no detail is too small to escape close attention."* – Lou Holtz

*Amabile et al (1996)* provide the following definition of creativity and innovation:

*"We define creativity as the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain. We define innovation as the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization. In this view, creativity by individuals and teams is a starting point for innovation; the first is a necessary but not condition for the second. Successful innovation depends on other factors as well, and it can stem not only from creative ideas that originate within an organization but also from ideas that originate elsewhere (as in technology transfer)."*

Creativity is the process where one or more people together use ideas to produce a meaningful outcome with the goal of solving an existing problem or improving an existing solution. This is the milestone of innovation.

The key challenge for managers and leaders is how to build cultures where not only individuals are creative, but whole Teams.

## 2.1 PROGRESS DRIVEN CULTURE TO ENABLE CREATIVITY

In the “*The Progress Principles*” Teresa Amabile (2011), provide studies and resources on how building a culture of small wins, praises and celebrations can boost the people creativity at highest levels.

Amabile establish three key influences on inner working life of people that critically affect creativity:

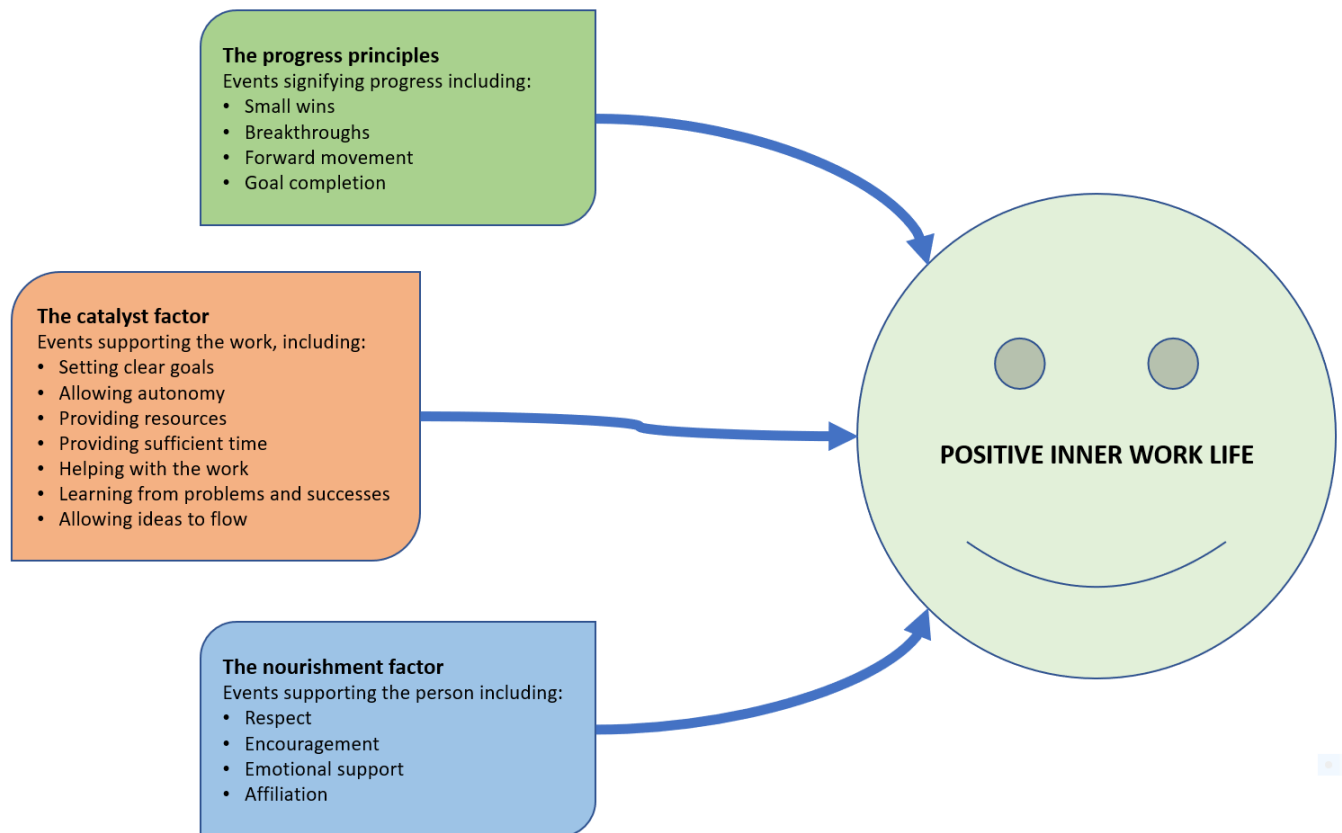


Figure 15 - Progress Principle Inner Work Life

However, the right tools and methodologies needs to be also provided to implement successfully the progress principle. A good match would be Agile methodology and related tools.

## 3. Change Management and Culture

“Appearances can be deceiving” – Ram Charan

The definition of the change agent or change leader goes hand in hands with the definition of change management. The following description is from *Paton and McCalman (2008)*:

1. *To help organization define the problem by asking for a definition of that it is*
2. *To help the organization examine what causes the problem and diagnose how this can be overcome*
3. *To assist in getting the organization to offer alternative solutions*
4. *To provide direction in the implementation of alternative solutions*
5. *To transmit the learning process that allows the client to deal with change on an ongoing basis by itself in the future*

In contemporary times, especially when technology is part of, or Companies core business, the organizational structure tend to be less bureaucratic and flatter. It depends also on the size of the Company and the development stage. *Mullins (2013)*, *Drucker (1999)*, *Rajan and Wulf (2006)*, provide the following goals:

- *Reduce operating costs by removing layers of management*
- *Decentralized decision making*
- *Increase competition*
- *Improved corporate governance*
- *Information Technology*

Companies with strong focus on innovation and creativity frequently adopt models like “Open Organization” from *Whitehurst (2015)*, CEO of RedHat Inc.

The “Open Organization” follow a flatten model to structure Companies, with a bottom-up “enough” approach, where being inclusive with different stakeholder is critical.

### 3.1 HOW CHANGE MANAGEMENT RELATES WITH CULTURE

The following view from *Mikalachki (1999)* and *Lane et al. (2009)* show the relationship between culture, change and leadership, courtesy of *Joerg Diets* presentation on “Organizational Culture”:



## Organizational Change

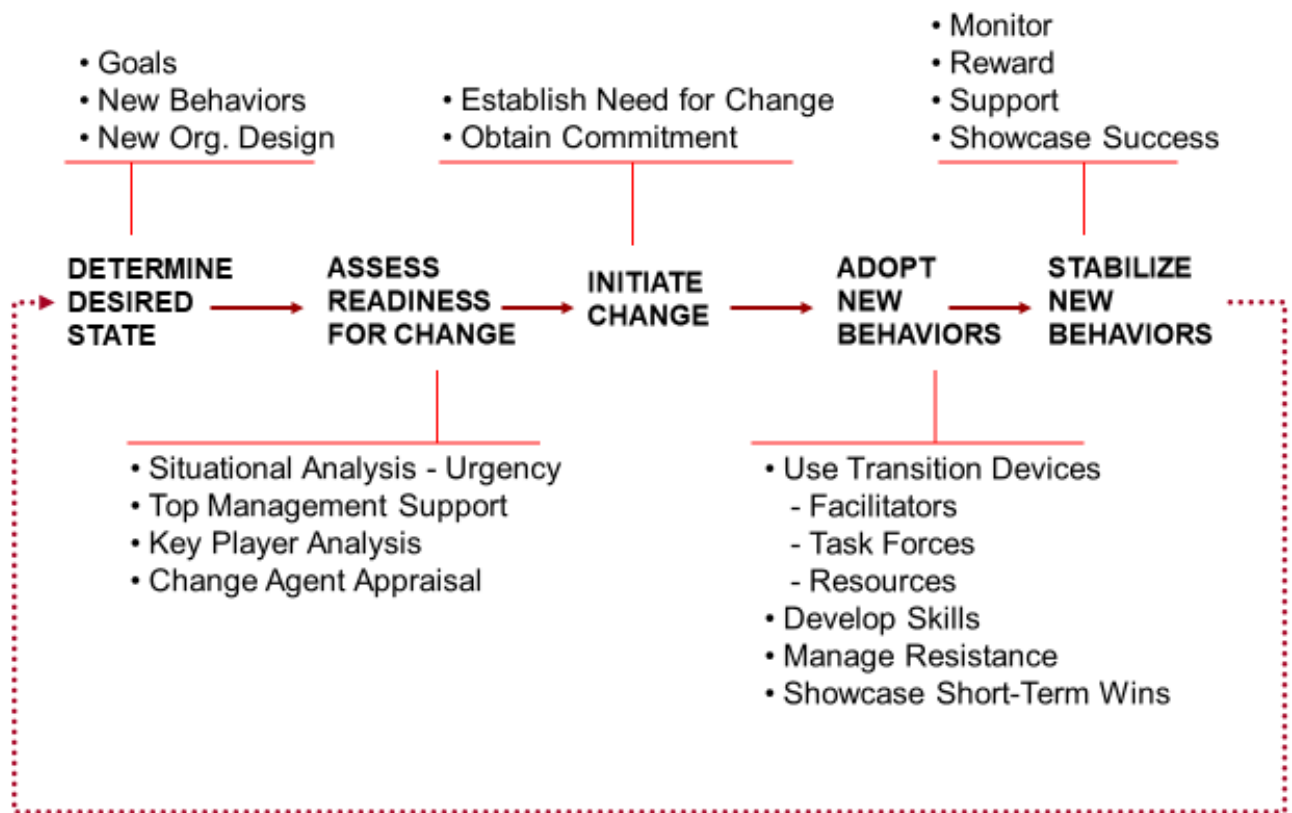


Figure 16 - Change, culture and leadership process

In line with the workflow provide in Figure 8, a model to accelerate changes, is the strategy system from Kotter (2012), meant for modern, fast, changing environments. Kotter new strategy system expands his own original eight steps methods (Kotter, 1996). The new system focus on “accelerators” as main actions, rather than steps in the original model. Accelerators can be used in different orders, is more flexible then sequential steps and focus on building the largest involvement of people as possible to support the change.

### 3.2 ACCELERATE CHANGE

Kotter remarks the need to have strategy and management working tightly together, calling it dual operating system. The following five principles are added to the classic ones, taken from Kotter (2012) “Accelerate!”:

1. “Get buy-in from more than 50% of the organization for the initiative.”
2. “Create a “get-to” environment that generates an army of volunteers for your initiative.”
3. “Involve people’s hearts (not just heads). Their passion brings more power to the initiative.”
4. “Invite, encourage, and promote many, many small acts of leadership.”
5. “Ensure all those involved are in alignment”

The following are the Eight Accelerators for strategy network:

1. “Create a sense of urgency around a single big opportunity.”
2. “Build and maintain a guiding coalition.”

3. *“Formulate a strategic vision and develop change initiatives designed to capitalize on the big opportunity.”*
4. *“Communicate the vision and the strategy to create buy-in and attract a growing volunteer army.”*
5. *“Accelerate movement toward the vision and the opportunity by ensuring that the network removes barriers.”*
6. *“Celebrate visible, significant short-term wins.”*
7. *“Never let up. Keep learning from experience. Don’t declare victory too soon.”*
8. *“Institutionalize strategic changes in the culture.”*

I find Kotter “Dual Operating System” effective from a Leadership perspective. However, this system implies several assumptions and conditions already present in the Company such as:

- What to change is already identified, and the triggers are. There’s nothing in this model regarding triggers.
- The sense of urgency doesn’t work in all environments, especially in “Consensus” driven cultures, the sense of urgency linked to certain emotions, can be itself the source of opposition. There are cultures, companies and Countries, where people simply don’t like to emotions the urgency generate or simply don’t believe it effective.
- The change agent requires to have effective negotiations and communications skills already
- How to measure and communicate success is very important to have change institutionalized in the Company. There’s no guidance on this in the model.

*Schein (2016)* provide an interesting over simplified metric on how the processes of creativity, innovation and change management starts:

*All planned change starts with some recognition of a problem, as recognition that something is not going as expected [...]. A desire for change, for doing something differently, for learning something new, always begins with some kind of pain or dissatisfaction.*

### 3.3 CULTURE AND RESISTENCE TO CHANGE

*“Those who pretend that the same kind of change medicine can be applied no matter what the context are either are naïve or charlatans” (Strebel, 1996b, p.5)*

*Forcefield analysis (Lewin, 1951)* identify the forces that influence a scenario or a change process. It takes sin consideration external and internal forces, individual and organizational resistance. It’s helpful to identify and map power interests with their relative strengths, to better plan negotiations with stakeholders. Forcefield analysis assume that all the stakeholders work as a group which is not always the case. It also assumes a large degree of information, data and collaboration available, which is uncommon in resistance situations. It is not a feedback-oriented model, which can benefit from oppositions.

*Armenakis, Harris and Mossholde (1993)* propose a model to assess the “readiness for change”, by evaluating the urgency of change and readiness of the people in high/low ratings. It can be helpful to shape the communication used to influence and increase readiness, by showing the urgencies. It could be predecessor of Kotter “sense of urgency” accelerator.

*Ford and Ford (2009)* propose a different view on how to use resistance constructively, by taking the view of the resistors as improvement feedback and incorporate it an improved solution.

*Piderit (2000)* provide a psychological perspective of change-resistance, by decoupling the kinds mainly

- Cognitive

- Behavioral
- Affective

This model relates resistance mainly with how people feel about the change and the reasons behind of that feeling.

### 3.3.1 Resistance

*“Anything's possible if you've got enough nerve.” – J. K. Rowling*

From Verganti and Norman (2019) *“Progress requires clashing and fusing — not compromising or postponing — different perspectives.”*

Charlan Nemeth (2019) in her study shows how consensus can underperform versus dissent when delivering innovation and change. I couldn't agree more with her.

Balogun et al. (2016) propose the following reasons for opposition (courtesy of Boak from *“Reactions to Change”*):

- *“Self-interest and politics – personal loss and/or cost*
- *Psychological reasons – fear of the unknown, fear of failure, or a low ability to cope with change*
- *Emotional reasons – e.g. lack of energy and motivation*
- *The approach to the change – such as lack of participation/consultation*
- *Recipient perceptions – to do with lack of understanding about why change is needed and its implications*
- *Cultural bias – may be conflict between proposed changes and existing values and beliefs*
- *Historical organizational factors”*

Elrod and Tippet (2002), represent in the following graph the reactions change curve (courtesy of Boak *“Reactions to Change”*):

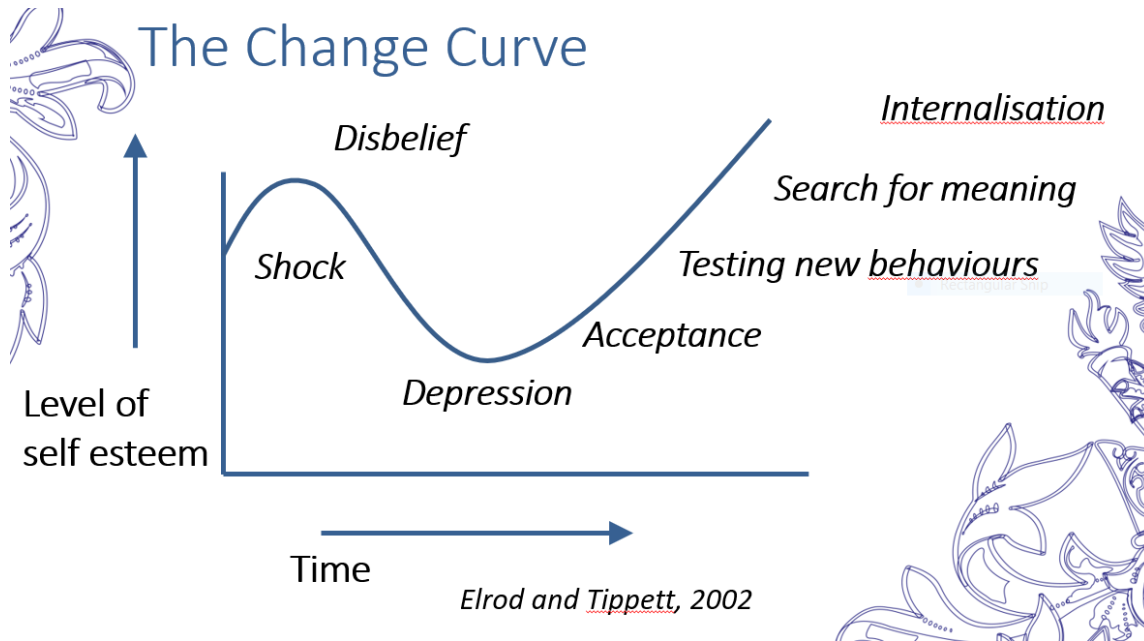


Figure 17 - Change resistance curve - Source: George Boak

Oreg (2003) extend with the following points:

- "Reluctance to lose control
- Cognitive rigidity
- Lack of psychological resilience
- Intolerance to the adjustment period
- Preference for low levels of novelty
- Reluctance to give up old habits"

Unfounded resistance creates important slowdown to evolution during history, an example of it is when the Church condemned to heresy Galileo Galilei to demonstrate the Earth move around the Sun. Leaders should identify and take actions on resistance when become not constructive.

Emotional Intelligence, appraisal inquiry and negotiations altogether can be an effective framework to be prepared when facing change resistance.

## 4. Leadership and Culture

### 4.1 THE LEARNING CULTURE LEADER

Schein (2016) discuss the dimensions a leader needs to follow to build a successful learning culture:

- Proactivity
- Commitment to "Learning to Learn"
- Positive assumptions about human nature
- Belief that the environment can be managed

- Commitment to truth through inquiry and dialogue
- Positive orientation towards the future
- Commitment to full and open task-relevant communication
- Commitment to cultural diversity
- Commitment to Systemic Thinking
- Belief in the value of internal cultural analysis

Based on my experience, the model lacks the following success factors:

- Winning mentality. Always strive to be the number one.
- Built the best possible Teams with advanced hiring processes.
- Quick feedback.
- High Risks taking with defined boundaries.
- Team majority decision driven (70+% agreement). No need of 100% agreement.
- Management and non-management work together as a Team, providing consistent solutions at multiple levels.

Successful environments are more in line with the concept of “*ambidextrous organization*” (O’Reilly and Tushman, 2004) capable of keeping balance between a classic way of doing things and innovations.

#### 4.2 CHEMISTRY, COLLISIONS, CONNECTIONS AND “THE CULTURE CODE”

Coyle (2018), provides studies and cases on how successful culture are built in very different environments. He introduces the concept of *Chemistry* as one of the key factors to build outstanding cultures. From his research, chemistry happens when most of the following points happens in a Team or organization:

- Close physical proximity, often in circles
- Profuse amounts of eye contacts
- Physical touch (handshakes, fist bumps, hugs)
- Lots of short energetic exchanges (no long speeches)
- High level of mixing; everyone talks to everyone
- Few interruptions
- Lots of questions
- Intensive, active listening
- Humor, laughter
- Small, attentive courtesies (thank-yous, opening doors, etc)

When these factors happen, the Team become positively addictive and incredible performances are achieved, while having fun.

Coyle provides examples and studies where challenging as part of the company culture makes great impacts. For instance, one day Larry Page placed a post-it in the canteen whiteboard with three words: “These Ads Suck”. One engineer read it and took the challenge to improve it. It did happen naturally, as part of the daily operations. This shows a strong culture based on constructive challenging in the company, as the engineer got it as an improvement opportunity, rather thinking their employer was harsh or any other possible unconstructive thought, quite common in less successful environments.

Coyle also provide an interesting case study of a restaurant chain in US and how building a culture of connection and sharing vulnerability between employees is the milestone of company success.

In this context I've found very effective to execute a "Before-Action Review" which would be a checklist with the following questions to the Team, before executing actions:

1. *"What are our intended results? (set a benchmark)*
2. *What challenges can we anticipate? (anticipate risks and dependencies)*
3. *What have we or other learned from similar situation? (learn from past mistakes from different backgrounds)*  
*What will make us successful this time? (define a common pattern for success)"*

### 4.3 HOW TO MEASURE AND ASSESS CULTURE IMPROVEMENT

*"Premature optimization is the root of all evil" – Donald Knuth*

A study from *MIT Human Dynamics Lab* lead by *Alex Pentland*, provide 5 factors to measure Team performances from a cultural perspective, from *Coyle (2018)*:

1. *Everyone in the group talks and listens in roughly equal measures, keeping contributions short*
2. *Members maintain high level of eye contact and their conversations and gestures are energetic*
3. *Members communicate directly with one another, not just with the Team Leader*
4. *Members carry on back-channel or side conversations within the Team*
5. *Members periodically break, go exploring outside the Team, and bring information back to share with the others*

A checklist provided to the Team members to ask if the mentioned points happens in the Organization is a proven approach to assess organizational culture improvements over time.

### 4.4 DYSFUNCTIONS: BAD COMPANY, GOOD COMPANY

*"It is far more common for people to allow ego to stand in the way of learning." – Ray Dalio*

One of the sources analyzed to identify dysfunctions is the book *Bad Company, Good Company* from *Williams and Shultz (2019)*. In few chapters, it expands and reuse concepts from *Kotter (2019) Accelerate* book. The following table summarize the aspect of dysfunction in organization with the remediations based on my own experience:

Dysfunction leading to failure	Remediations
A culture of failure	Set benchmark for success metrics and evaluate projects progress on that. The metrics and benchmarks must be clear to everybody as much as possible, so people can connect the actions with the outcomes.
Ineffective Leadership	Mobilize the leadership to identify the need
Poor strategy and processes	Build the Team and build the plan
No value placed on people	Build a culture of safety, consistent rewards, empowerment and trust
Poor people connection	Enhance communication and Team building activities
Bad standards for people evaluation	Set benchmark for success metrics and evaluate people progress on that
Weak decision-making skills	Make sure the people have the right information and data to make decisions. Peer review the decision.
Inability to prioritize	Communicate the prioritization top down for business and strategy, bottom up for operations and technology.
Self-Interest	Building a Team culture where the rewards, performance review are not individual but collective.
Misleading the coworkers, supervisor, customer or vendor	Always peer review the content produces by single persons
Hoarding or withholding information from someone that needs to be informed	Establish a clear process for communicating information, results and issues, following a methodology and using productivity tools.
Report authoritatively on something where the person is ignorant about	Build an implement a process that assess the skills of a profile, before placing him in a leadership role.
Avoid telling bad news	Build a process to communicates progress and issues regardless of the content to be communicated.
Say to have expertise when the person has not	Assess the profile skills as part of the role definition
Oversell a situation to make himself look good	Build process of reporting using methodologies and productivity tools, always peer review the results.
Taking credit for something someone else did	Implement rewards and people growth bases on Team results, not individuals
Destroy, hide or change documentation to cover something up	Define which behaviors and actions are not tolerated and have processes to take immediate actions if the bad habit persists.
Knowingly give incorrect information or data	Always peer review the data produced
Deflecting or avoiding a subject	Follow a methodology and have dedicated sessions to resolve issues between people
Telling half-truth in a deceptive way	Always peer review the communication
Exaggerate facts on purpose	Always peer review the facts

*Figure 18 - Shultz Dysfunctions and remediations*

In my experience, Shultz miss one important dysfunction factor, such as the immobilism, typical of consensus driven environments.



## 5. Use Case Analysis – Ericsson Telecommunication

*“Adding manpower to a late software project makes it later” – Brooks Law*

In this chapter Ericsson is analyzed using the models explained in the paper. The assessment and evaluation are based on my experience, working in Ericsson since 2015.

### 5.1 ERICSSON CULTURE CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Assessment
<b>Innovation and risk taking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employees and managers risk taking is low.</li><li>• Decisions are generally taken rather conservatively.</li><li>• The innovation process is centralized and belongs to the PDU (Engineering).</li><li>• Delivery and Market organizations have limited space for innovation</li></ul>
<b>Attention to details</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The attention to details is high.</li><li>• The quality of product and content is overall competitive.</li></ul>
<b>Outcome orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Balance between processes and results, with slight inclination towards processes.</li></ul>
<b>People orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Very employee centric.</li><li>• Management take in consideration and involve employees in the decision process.</li><li>• Employees wellness is a strong value.</li></ul>
<b>Team orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decisions are taken by Teams, with relevance on the inputs from Single Matter Experts.</li></ul>
<b>Aggression</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Company is not aggressive, not even with competitors.</li><li>• Sometimes employees tend to avoid confrontations or uncomfortable topics.</li></ul>
<b>Stability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Priority is more on stability and less on innovation and change. However, with the current CEO this is improving, as the investment focus is on R&amp;D.</li></ul>

*Figure 19 - Ericsson Culture Characteristics Analysis*



## 5.2 GEO CULTURES DIMENSIONS OF ERICSSON

Dimension Name	Assessment
<i>Individualism-Collectivism</i>	Focus on Collectivism
<i>Power Distance</i>	Very little power distance
<i>Masculinity-Femininity Distance</i>	Great value and strong focus on gender equality
<i>Tolerance for Ambiguity and Uncertainty</i>	Ambiguity and uncertainty are mostly avoided
<i>Short-Run vs Long-Run Time Orientation</i>	Long-run orientation

Figure 20 - Geo Cultures Dimensions of Ericsson

## 5.3 INTEGRATED CULTURE FRAMEWORK

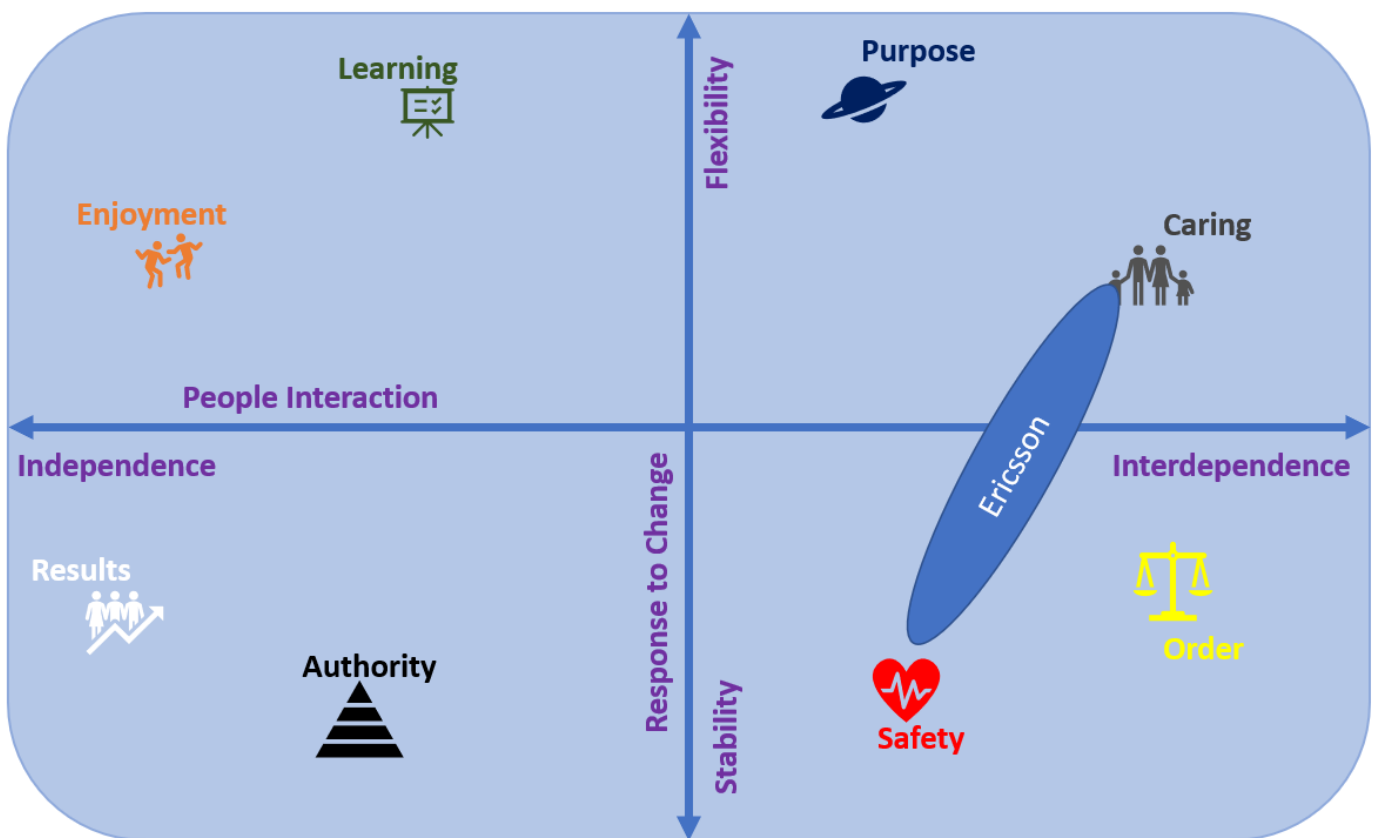


Figure 21 – Integrated Culture Framework - Ericsson

## 5.4 DYSFUNCTIONS ASSESSMENT OF ERICSSON

Dysfunction leading to failure	Assessment
<b>A culture of failure</b>	There no culture of failure, but neither winning nor number one culture.
<b>Ineffective Leadership</b>	Leadership tend to be ineffective, as in many cases the managers do not possess the right skills to understand the circumstances and customer needs.
<b>Poor strategy and processes</b>	The strategy is strong, the processes are present for many situations, but the hiring is very weak and hiring the best people is not a priority.
<b>No value placed on people</b>	High value is placed on people.
<b>Poor people connection</b>	People are provided with the best communication tools and Team building is encouraged.
<b>Bad standards for people evaluation</b>	People evaluation is mostly arbitrarily done by the Line Manager, there are no common standards nor benchmarks.
<b>Weak decision-making skills</b>	Many managers cannot take the right decisions because of lack of several skills.
<b>Inability to prioritize</b>	Prioritization is done in a reasonably good way.
<b>Self-Interest</b>	Generally, employees are not driven by self-interest
<b>Misleading the coworkers, supervisor, customer or vendor</b>	Employees and managers provide information that can be trusted
<b>Hoarding or withholding information from someone that needs to be informed</b>	Employees and managers share information in an effective way. However, the widespread lack of skills amongst managers can generate doubts on the usefulness of the information shared.
<b>Avoid telling bad news</b>	Sometimes bad news isn't communicated transparently
<b>Oversell a situation to make himself look good</b>	It doesn't happen; however, some manager oversells themselves to hide the lack of skills
<b>Deflecting or avoiding a subject</b>	Sometimes happen. Inheritance from Swedish national culture.

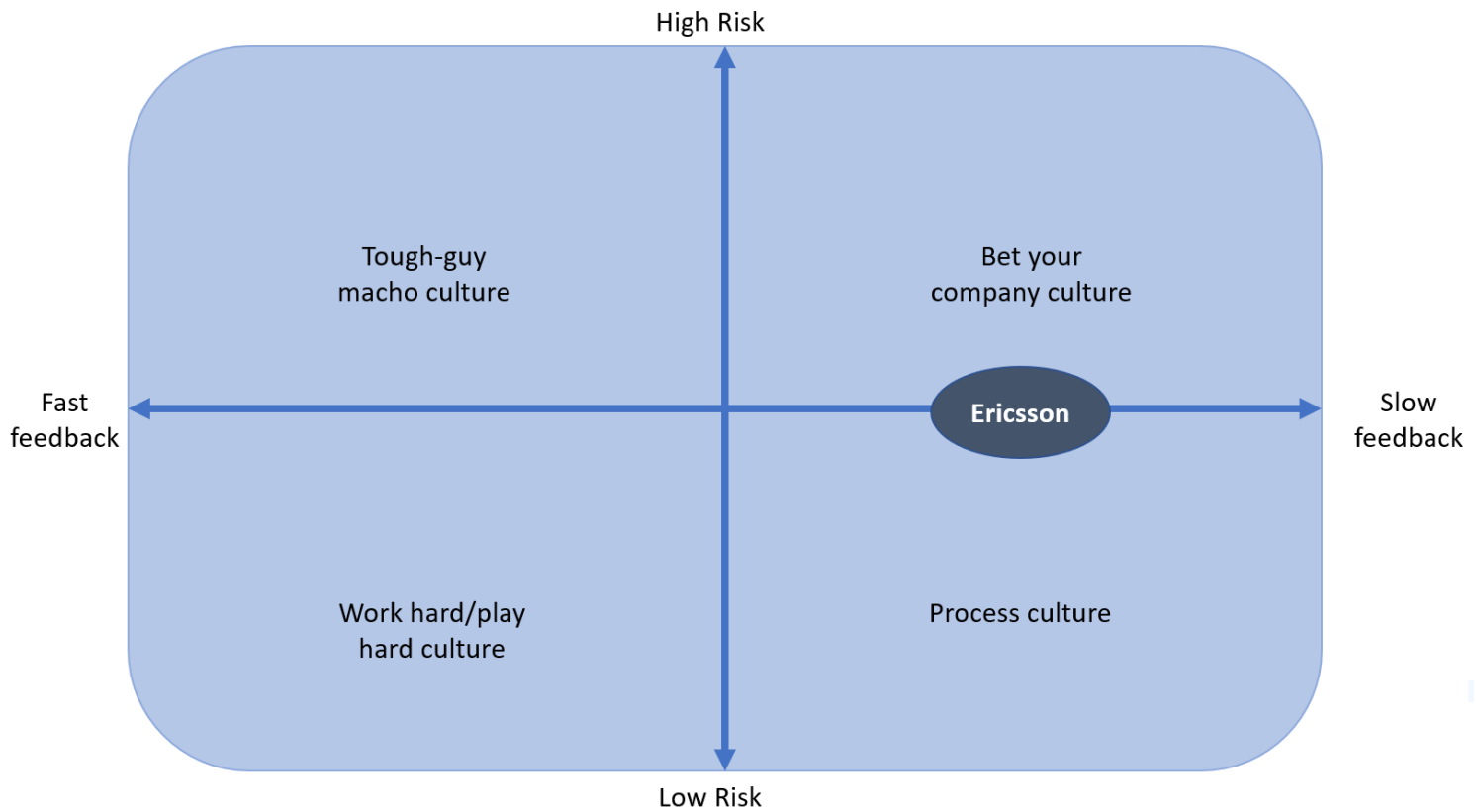
Figure 22 - Disfunctions Analysis of Ericsson

## 5.5 LEARNING CULTURE ASSESSMENT ON ERICSSON

Dimension name	Comments & Critics
<b>Proactivity</b>	Much of the workforce is not proactive.
<b>Commitment to “Learning to Learn”</b>	A considerable amount of the workforce has less skills than other competitors, mostly in customers units and delivery organizations.
<b>Positive assumptions about human nature</b>	There’s a big trust and positive assumption on human nature
<b>Belief that the environment can be managed</b>	The company is managed and under control.
<b>Commitment to truth through inquiry and dialogue</b>	The workforce shows a strong commitment to truth, but challenging is not part of the culture.
<b>Positive orientation towards the future</b>	Workforce is mostly positive towards the future.
<b>Commitment to full and open task-relevant communication</b>	Communications is very good, but the challenging is limited between Customer Areas and Engineering organizations
<b>Commitment to cultural diversity</b>	Ericsson is a champion of diversity and inclusion.
<b>Commitment to Systemic Thinking</b>	Most of the manager does not have adequate systemic thinking skills.
<b>Belief in the value of internal cultural analysis</b>	The internal cultural analysis process is present, but the cultural issues are not actively addressed.

*Figure 23 - Learning Culture assessment of Ericsson*

## 5.6 RISKS AND FEEDBACK ANALYSIS ON ERICSSON



*Figure 24 - Risks and Feedback Analysis - Ericsson*

According to my own experience, the following shows the “Risk and Feedback” models and critics applies to Telecommunication industry:

Industry	Culture Topology	Issues & critics
Telecommunication (Customers)	Mostly a mix of Process and Bet-your-company cultures	Telcos in several cases were State owned national companies at some point of their life cycle. This mean inheriting all the possible issues that public administrations of a national culture could have. Culturally, Telcos are missing the internal R&D values of the Bet-your-company topology. In most of the cases Telcos just manage technical operations and investments and is uncommon finding a Telco having large Teams doing software development, delivering their own solution or considering internal R&D as a competitive advantage. This is most probably the biggest competitive disadvantages versus Internet Companies like Google, Amazon, Facebook, etc whom are entering in the Telecommunication business with exactly the opposite cultural model, focusing on Work hard/play hard culture and Bet-your-company-culture.
Telecommunication (Solution Providers)	A mix of all mentioned cultures	The culture of Telcos solutions providers like Ericsson, Nokia, Huawei, etc, inherits traits of the national culture where they have been headquartered historically. This is a disadvantage when competing with real multicultural, distributed and innovative management strategies like Silicon Valley multinationals. In Telco solution providers, the culture is more focused on innovating exclusively on the core business. This approach differs from companies like Tesla, Samsung, Amazon, General Electric, where the innovation span and spread across multiple industries, areas of technologies and business models. This could be a limiting factor, as the knowledge and experience are only vertical in one single core business field. For instance, the operational experience is weak and can be challenging to produce effective solutions for customers with large operational environments.

*Figure 25 - Cultures Topologies critics on Telco Industry*

## 5.7 CULTURAL WEB ANALYSIS OF ERICSSON

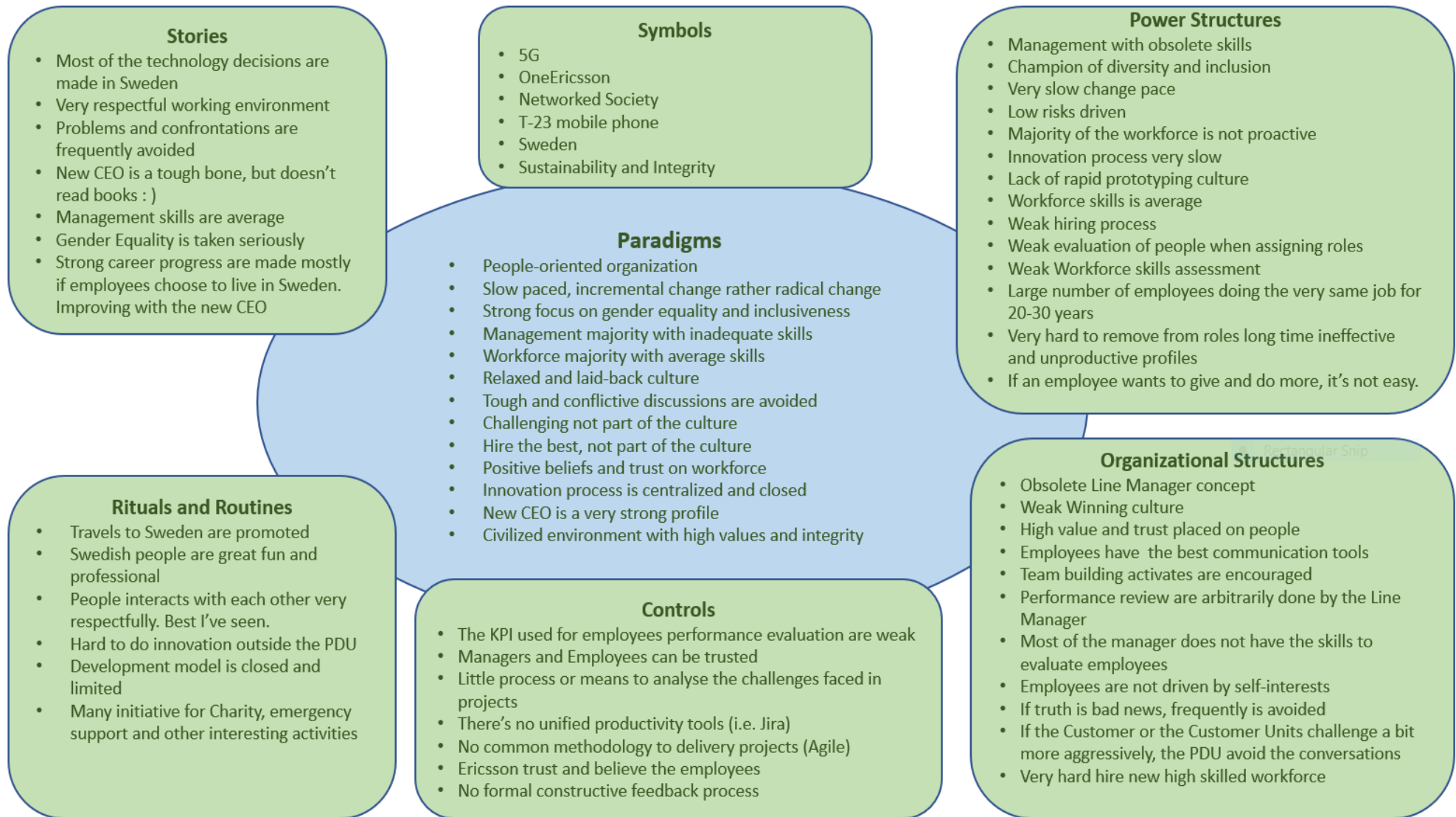


Figure 26 - Cultural Web - Ericsson

## 5.8 ACTION PLAN

Using the Paradigm content from the Cultural Web analysis, it is possible to create a baseline for an action plan to improve Ericsson culture and effectiveness:

- Increase the “work-hard/play-hard culture” to improve external focus and market competitiveness.
- Establish sense of urgency and processes to enable faster innovation life cycles.
- Define processes to map skills of management and establish competences improvement plan for those not meeting the criteria.
- Build processes to hire-the-best with structured and throughout hiring processes.
- Adopt methodologies that facilitate challenging and continuous improvements across multiple organizations.
- Build a decentralized Innovation model where any employee with skills can contribute.
- Establish minimum skills bar for the different profiles (Managers, consultants, architects, etc), assess and build competence improvement plans.
- Simplify the process to hire new talents.
- Define common, understandable and specific criterion for employees performance management.

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