# Modelling Organisational Culture and Change

# in the context of an Empirical Study

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We identify and evaluate three models of Organisational Development and Change. We examine how organisational identities may be formed partly through the adoption of Organisational Development (OD) and change procedures, practices and policies. We consider the academic literature written on this topic which has sought to highlight the importance of culture and change in the creation of organisational identity and in so doing emphasises and indeed celebrates the contribution of the middle and bottom of the hierarchy to the top. Various cultural and change models such as those of Greenfield and Schwandt (1994) and the multi-disciplinary and multi-faceted nature of organisational and individual identity which focuses on the sociology of identity will be developed using the Clark, Chandler and Barry (1984) approach.

The second strand of our abstract identifies the context in which these scholarly models are situated in the broader and practical realities of organisational life, namely the issues of power, control, authority and resistance in the broader debate about organisational identity embedded, as they are, in the social constructions of various personal and organisational cultures and their consequent use in legitimising social control (Labov,1965).

**Literature Review on Organisational Development, Identity and Change:**

The literature review examines the three models put forward in this abstract in order to evaluate the creation of organisational identities and the importance of change and culture. The themes that emanate from the literature on organisational identity, development and change include, among others: norms, values and meaning, power, control, authority and these would be discussed in the course of the abstract in relation to the methodology used. A great deal of the scholarly work is part of generally held perspectives and assumptions which provide important, subjective and qualitative insights into understanding how individuals and organisations construct their identities. The varied personal experiences and social backgrounds generally account for the social construction of the complex nature of organisational identities.

**The Greenfield Model:**

Thomas Barr Greenfield brought to the fore the limits of science and the importance of human subjectivity, people's norms, values and beliefs. Greenfield (1977/93) argued that:

*We have been caught in (a) trap that requires us, in the name of theory to hold a single image up to reality* (such as an organization's identity) *and test whether it is true ...* (pp. 88-89)

What is needed beyond basic facts is knowledge of how people in a social situation construe it, what they see as its significant features, and how they act within it. Such knowledge can only come from the interpretation of particular experiences in specific situations" (Greenfield, 1975/1993, p. 21; also Bates, 1994, p. 5).

**The Schwandt Model for the Explanation of Values and Meaning**

Education scholar Thomas Schwandt (1994) has argued that there have been three different approaches, or methods, of studying the phenomena of values and meaning:

**1**. Scholars who used the experimental approach to research attempted to study meaning in ways that borrow from quantitative research, often seeking causal explanations or striving to separate facts from values (e.g., Wilhel, Dilthey, Max Weber and Alfred Schutz). By the twentieth century, such approaches had largely been abandoned.

**2**. Scholars attempt to synthesise realism and constructivism, focusing on error-elimination strategies. Scholars such as Guba and Lincoln (1994) operating in this approach attempt to conduct research that is free of bias, is able to suggest generalisable findings and is reproducible by other investigators.

**3**. The third approach deals with the full acceptance of the hermeneutical character of existence. Interpretation is not merely a methodology, but a fundamental aspect of any and all research endeavours. As cultural anthropologists Paul Rabinow and William

Sullivan (1987) write: "The interpretive turn is not simply a new methodology, but rather a challenge to the very idea that enquiry into the social world and the value of understanding that results is to be determined by methodology." (p.20).

**Power, Control, Authority and Resistance in the Creation of Organisational Identity:**

In examining power and the social processes of conformity in the 50s and 60s Milgram is at pains to point out that individuals do not always succumb to the pressures of the group and can, at times, stand distinctively alone. Such pressures extend beyond the group to the organisation where identities are formed. The utilisation of values, power and opportunity by organisations in order to produce the 'right' (Höpfl, 1994) employee is encrusted within the traditional male structure of opportunity, power and dominance which continues to promote the idea of 'organisation men' even though there is now a growing number of resistant 'organisation women' (Kanter, 1977).

**The Clark, Chandler and Barry Model:**
**The Sociology of Organisational Identity:**

These scholars emphasise the critical and sociological focus within management studies. They point to a wide literature that allows insight into both 'bottom up' as well as 'top down' social occurrences within organisation. So, they celebrate Labov's (1965) classic account of language and organisational communication. In so doing, they emphasise the power, authority and control structures of organisation.

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