

Chapter 2

Culture as Contested Field

In this chapter I look at the concept of culture and how it has been tied to organisation in what I call *the analytical field*. I also introduce two snippets of my former fieldwork in a physics institute and an Italian village to illustrate the relation between the analytical and the empirical field.

Researchers produce what I term *analytical cuts*. Analytical cuts are specific agential cuts (Barad 2003) that delineate particular interests and discussions of researchers. Two concepts are hotly debated within the analytical field *organisation*, *culture* and the relations between them. What are at stake are the different definitions of these concepts.

I use *organisational culture* as demarcation of an anthropology of learning in cultural habitats. I could have used *national cultures* (with blurry borderlines) or *migrant cultures* (with a changeable culture) or other analytical cuts. Yet, *organisational culture* makes it easy to explain the difference between newcomers and experienced learners in organised activities in organisations, which may be more difficult to explain if the analytical cut was culture in relation to nation or ethnicity. Organisations can be organised materially with meeting spaces in buildings in which practiced places are constructed. Learning in organisations involves learning about the material manifest including the virtual environment (e.g. e-mails appearing on a computer screen) as an inherent part of a practiced place. The difference between newcomers and experienced learners becomes apparent when the newcomers realise what they have to learn about cultural resources that others already know. In organised activity, in, for instance, villages, global companies, workplaces or educational institutions, it is up to the newcoming ethnographer to learn about the lines drawn between the virtual and the physical environment as they learn what engage the ethnographic subjects.

Research on organised cultural lives is a complex matter in a globalised world. To see culture as a fixed entity was questioned in the wake of postmodernism (e.g. Strathern 1995; Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 1997; Appadurai 1995), and these

questions changed the traditional field of ethnography; focus used to be on ontological heterogeneity rather than culture as a *whole* implying ontological homogeneity. The notion of culture seems to move from ‘remote places’ (Ardener 2012) and re-emerge in new analytical cuts such as ‘organisational cultures’, ‘virtual space’ (e.g. Miller and Slater 2000) and ‘zones of awkward engagement’ as in Anna Tsing’s work on global connections and frictions (Tsing 2005). Notions of culture as any real entities have been abandoned in anthropology (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Abu-Lughod 1991; Hannerz 1997). Today, culture is recognised as conceptual constructions made by anthropologists and other researchers. Fields can be constructed without consideration of cultural boundaries because the notion of *cultural boundaries* dissolved when anthropology began to study migrations and social groups *at home*. Culture is simply no longer out there in the *field* because that field is just another of the researcher’s constructions. As Vered Amit notes, the notion of a *field* that exists independent of the fieldwork seems to be an oxymoron; all fields are shaped by:

... the conceptual, professional, financial and relational opportunities and resources accessible to the ethnographer. Seen from this perspective, an idea of fieldwork in which the ethnographer is expected to break from his/her usual involvements in order to immerse him/herself in the ‘field’ of other’s involvement is an oxymoron. (Vered Amit 2000: 6)

Opposed to this perspective of *the field* we find Charlotte Aull Davies’ perspective and to which I adhere. She underlines (inspired by the critical realist Roy Bhaskar) that in empirical research critical realism is a position which requires ‘an ontology that asserts that there is a social world independent of our knowledge of it and an epistemology that argues that it is knowable’ (Davies 1999: 17).¹ To this perspective I add that the social world is also a material world – and, to some extent, lines are drawn between the material and the social world, lines that can be studied as agential cuts. Here the question becomes how we as researchers gain access to learn not just from but *with* other people, since it is not at all easy to learn in other people’s organised practiced places. In this light, the empirical field is a social and material world of practices and cultural learning processes that feed into our analytical cuts and analysis.

Culture is emerging when sedimented self-evident cuts are questioned. Learning is often mentioned as an explanatory concept in relation to culture in anthropology (see Hasse 2012, 2014 for summaries). Though many anthropologists refer to learning in relation to, e.g., cultural change, few have set out to explore the concept in relation to culture or organisation and connect it with their own learning processes in the field. No ‘critical ethnography’ of culture (Marcus and Fischer

¹ Just to avoid misunderstandings: Though Charlotte Aull Davies speaks about ‘Reflexive Ethnography’ (1999), her understanding of reflexivity is very far from the understanding of ‘reflexivity’ given by Barad (where reflexivity is not thinking but, e.g., an image reflected by a mirror).

1999; Lave 2011) can be realised as long as we know so little of the basic process of how we come to learn what we experience as being *cultural*.

Placing learning processes as *the* methodological alignment apparatus between an ontological heterogeneity and epistemological homogeneity opens up for new and dynamic understandings of culture in the field. Then culture can be understood as a real force moving through persons and material artefacts binding them together in organisations – not immediately, but over time. Culture is real – as a process, not an entity. An anthropology of learning underlines the changes of the embodied being in a world of agential cuts. When new experiences change people, the social spaces we create together also change (Hastrup 1995: 290). Such processes of change can be seen as changes in cultural organisations and in personas – understood as ‘per sonare’ (the literal translation is ‘sounding through’): a permeable being-in-the-world through which cultural lines and connections *sound through* as we move. In these processes researchers are not *individuals* but persons through which the forces of culture, no matter how invisible and non-reflected, pass through and leave identifiable traces and marks to be elicited in anthropology.

The social organisation might be without explicitly denounced boundaries and demarcation lines, but it is still an organised materiality, which includes bodies, words and movements in and around artefacts. Most importantly, newcomers are not *immersed* but *can* become *experts* over time – experts on how to move with the local culture. Not *in* the local culture (which is a much too stable formulation) but *with* a culture where we encounter other participants who, like us, are capable of learning collective lines of expectations.

In this context, expertise includes how we use artefacts, like the chairs we sit on and the doors we open. None of these engagements are innocent. Material artefacts shape our organisations as we shape them in our organised way of handling them. Our learning processes are formed by cultural mediation when artefacts and humans move about in organisations spreading out in a globalised world. These processes of mediation are not always harmonious – they may cause frictions like when electrified fibres rub against each other. Ethnographers can pick up on these frictions organised in never-quite-stable dust bunnies and make them available for analysis.

The relation between anthropology, learning and culture is, I argue, best explored in analytical cuts that focus on organisations where cultural frictions are produced and sensed by embodied beings, rather than in large abstract entities like fixed ethnic groups, nation states or other kinds of predetermined cultural islands.

2.1 The Analytical and Empirical Fields

We tend to not ask how researchers differ from the people they set out to study as cultural beings, whether these people are organised in small villages in Indonesia, a boarding school in Australia, in large Western companies like Ciba-Geigy or in realms like small kingdoms ruled by fons (or mfons) in northwestern Cameroon. It

has been one of the self-evident presuppositions of cultural researchers – a black box with no need of explanation since the researcher is not a *real* participant in the everyday life of the people we work with.

Recently, however, social sciences have come up with many new available positions for researchers. Ethnographers are no longer seen as a *we* studying *them* but as collaborative partners in research (Low and Merry 2010; Lassiter 2005; Baba and Hill 2006). Nevertheless, a new black box (with no need of explanation) has emerged: the researcher is now a *real* participant in the everyday life of the people we work with.

No matter what kind of fieldwork we claim to engage in or with, our positions as researchers call for an opening of both of the two black boxes (participant or not) to enable an explicit understanding of what participation in other people's everyday life mean from a learning perspective. When cultural analysis, which builds on an anthropology of learning, is our point of departure, it is relevant to ask how the researcher's cultural learning processes might differ from the cultural learning processes that form the everyday life for the other participants.

To underline this difference between researchers and other participants in practiced places, I distinguish between the analytical field and the empirical field. This distinction is an analytical agential cut that belongs to the analytical field. Both the analytical field and the empirical field are entangled in the practiced places where anthropologists move around. The difference lies in the objects of an organised activity. The empirical field is the practiced place studied by ethnographers walking around learning in a material world together with the local people. The analytical field is an organised activity used to create and criticise the theoretical tools realised in cultural analysis. The difference between the researcher's activities and those of the other participants is that the ethnographer will eventually leave the empirical field to discuss what he or she has learned with fellow researchers in the analytical field. Anthropologists do not stay in the empirical fields they visit – but they do stay in the analytical fields. Analytical cuts made in the analytical field (like the concept of culture) may be of interest to the participants in the empirical field, and they may even use the conceptualisations that are constructed in the analytical field, but they are engaged in their own everyday activities. The analytical field is also an analytical cut. It is not about particular persons, but positions. An Ojibwa Indian may become an anthropologist – and an anthropologist may leave his/her position and take up another as Ojibwa again when the analytical field is of no importance. Thus, to be positioned in the analytical or empirical field is not a fixed position, but defined by the participants shifting objects of interest.

Ethnographic validity lies, in a realist's perspective, in how well we come to understand the people we study with (Maxwell 1992: 281). How we come to understand is, in my argument, connected to learning, and learning is connected to position in the fields, where we learn to become experts.

Certain norms of conduct are often expected in both the empirical and the analytical field. In the analytical field, these norms change from discipline to

discipline. To become an expert, the researcher must learn about these cultural norms in both fields.

In the analytical field of anthropology, it is sometimes accepted that the researcher uses and investigates any number of theoretical perspectives in the attempt to understand the empirical field. In the analytical field of other disciplines, it is exactly the opposite; the researcher is supposed to choose one, and only one, theoretical perspective before entering an empirical field and use that theory for analysis no matter what is encountered. The research apparatus is thus constructed differently according to the norms in the given analytical field. The analytical distinction between an empirical and an analytical field helps me to take liberties with theories (indeed whole theory complexes) when conducting an analysis of the empirical field. Rather than beginning and ending with a chosen theoretical position (such as actor–network theory, cultural–historical activity theory, postphenomenology, cognitive anthropology, feminist or STS theory, Foucault’s theory of discourse or Bourdieu’s theory of practice), the starting point for my methodology of an anthropology of learning is what the researcher may learn in the empirical field. My commitment to and use of cultural–historical activity theory, anthropological theory, STS theory, feminist theory and postphenomenology must be seen in this light. I learn in the analytical field from reading and going to conferences. I use these theories to understand the process that transforms me when learning with the empirical field. My methodological concern is how anthropologists are educated in the empirical field in ways that change our perception of the material world and our engagement with it as culture *sounds through* us and change us as persons.

How the ethnographer’s engaged learning process can be understood theoretically hinges on the development of a coherent theory of the anthropology of learning, which draws on many of the above-mentioned theoretical perspectives. Theories from the analytical field are cultural resources helping me to understand my own learning process in the empirical field. They are cuts of varied perspectives on the social and material empirical field I pass through. Instead of seeing theories as internally coherent analytical perspectives, which are distinctly separated from each other, I use theories to help me build up a cogent theory of cultural learning processes, wherever I find them useful.

It is not an eclectic position when we assume there is an empirical field anchored in a material world unknown to newcomers. Ethnographers may make use of whatever they find reasonable from the analytical field in *explaining other people’s* entangled social and material reality. This reality and our theories change when we learn about practiced places. I make *diffracted readings* – i.e. I read texts from a variety of theoretical perspectives, which in my use do not contradict but supplement each other, highlighting different aspects (and they all belong to fieldwork-oriented social sciences). In my diffracted readings, the texts (e.g. actor–network theory (ANT) or cultural–historical activity theory (CHAT)) affect each other enough to give me new perspectives on the emerging empirical field. Yet, the empirical field carries more weight when it comes to changing my perceptions. This means I allow myself to take liberties with theories, e.g., indicating a systemic view on the empirical field. I find inspiration in much of the insights from systemic

theories (like, e.g., Gregory Bateson's and Yrjö Engeström's learning theories), but as a person I am not organised in systems in the empirical field but in messy, moving yet coherent meshworks. Like Anne Edwards, who in the analytical field have called for theories of 'relational agency' rather than systemic theories, I also object to a use of theories which demand the researcher accepts the entire theoretical package (Edwards 2009).

Within clusters of theories, like CHAT, we find diversity in the analytical cuts that are made. Newcomers as individuals may move between 'activity settings' (Hedegaard 2012) or enter the kind of organisation found in Yrjö Engeström's studies of workplaces, where a group of people have a history of working together towards a common object (1987). Though a theory may be brought to the empirical field by the researcher, it may not be useful from the perspective of social and material realities of that empirical field as it emerges through agential cuts learned in the empirical field. Nevertheless, some stick to a particular analysis because that perspective engages the researcher in the analytical field. As researchers we deeply engage our persons with both the empirical and the analytical fields, and both fields move us as we gain expertise.

2.2 Engaging with the Fields

Participant observation has sine qua non been the road to understand other peoples' engaged practices (e.g. Atkinson and Hammersley 1994). It has been defined in many ways (e.g. discussing if it is a method or not and the relation between participation and observation). From Malinowski (1922) over Spradley (1980) till recent times, the method of participant observation has been both problematised and praised (e.g. de Laine 2000). Researchers may 'rely on literally being an inconspicuous bystander; or they may take the opposite approach and reduce reactivity by participating as fully as possible, trying to become invisible in their role as researcher if not as human participant' (Davies 1999: 7).

In the following I discuss the question of participation as a question of engagement. From this position, engaged observations can be made that may change theoretical positions. However, theories may also guide our perceptions because our engagement lies in the theories of the analytical field as well as in our engagement with the empirical field.

To be engaged in participant observation is to have a cause for observation – but what cause? In a supplement to *Current Anthropology*, Setha M. Low and Sally E. Merry (re)opened the discussion of what engaged anthropology is. They identified six types of engagements: '[F]rom basic commitment to our informants, to sharing and support with the communities with which we work, to teaching and public education, to social critique in academic and public forums, to more commonly understood forms of engagement such as collaboration, advocacy, and activism' (Low and Merry 2010: 214). Thomas Hylland Eriksen has in most

excellent ways written about engaged anthropology (2006) and calls for a more engaged public presence of the anthropologists.

Both of these approaches underline the political aspects of doing ethnography and the necessity to move anthropological insights outside of the analytical field and into public debates. To do engaged anthropology in a globalised world, we need engaged ethnography, which may give us strong arguments in debates about how some people may change the world for others. Though none of my own empirical fieldworks directly challenge the powers of the world mongers, I believe my take on engaged expert ethnography will give anthropologists and other researchers more debt in their methodologies and thus in their engagement with the public as well as with their ethnographic subjects.

In engaged anthropology, as defined by Low and Merry, the focus is on varied approaches which find their ultimate form in advocacy and activism that address public and political issues (Low and Merry 2010). Engagement could, however, also be analysed as a process; nobody is born engaged in activism and politics. Becoming engaged as an ethnographer is not being either restricted to the empirical field (being an activist among activists) or restricted to the analytical field (being a theoretician among theoreticians). We need not define the ethnographer as either an activist or an aloof theory-maker. In studying *with*, as proposed by Ingold, we invest ourselves in a transformation process which not only changes our perception of a geometrical space into practiced place, but also changes our engagement in those practiced places. We become expert learners with other people's cultural resources.

The *advocacy* definitions of an engaged anthropology, proposed by, e.g., Merry and Low, does not define how the ethnographers become engaged in the same problems and concerns as the people and the everyday life they study. They start with engagement as something given, not something to be earned.

Expert ethnographers are ignorant of many aspects of what there is to learn in both the analytical and the empirical field when they embark on participant observation by following the paths taken by their ethnographic subjects. In the empirical field they may be ignorant of how a chair may be materialised with unexpected agential cuts. In the analytical field researchers are continuously reminded by colleagues about other theories they should have known or used. As underlined by Jean Lave, over time we learn many things that make us look back on a past ignorance – yet the apprenticeship goes on forever (Lave 2011).

When I initiated my journey as an anthropologist with fieldwork in Cameroon in the early 1990s, I had some notions with me from the analytical field (e.g. 'cultural capital' Bourdieu 1990), but I had never heard of the work by Basil Bernstein on cultural codes (Bernstein 1971). This agential cut came with learning from colleagues in the analytical field, when they informed me that a lot of my writing seemed to draw on Bernstein's work – although I had never heard about him. Such reminders in the analytical field may be useful. Yet, the education we go through is also firmly anchored in the empirical field which became most apparent to me when I, some years after my visit to Cameroon, as a PhD. student entered a rather unusual kind of fieldwork. I enrolled as a physicist student at the Niels Bohr Institute for Physics in Copenhagen in Denmark determined to study what

contributed to women's uneasiness with physics culture. Of all remote areas (Ardener 2012) studied by anthropologists, this could have been considered one of the least cultural and exotic places an anthropologist could learn about a *remote culture*. It turned out not to be so. At first, however, the space was material and primarily meaningful due to my past experiences.

In an early article written about this fieldwork, I begin my description of the institute like this:

It is a building made of grey plaster with three wings two stories high. Windows are painted red and the doors green. On the facade is written: Niels Bohr Institutet 1920. Through the green door students dash off to their first class in experimental physics after the summer vacation. They all look like ordinary Danish youth – T-shirts with Calvin and Hobbes, a Jedi Rider or the Cure, faded jeans, sneakers and East packs. I already feel slightly out of place. For one thing I am wearing a skirt and a jacket, in my backpack I carry not only books with titles like *Universe* and *Elements of Newtonian Mechanics*, but also a tape-recorder and I am not only a newly arrived physics student but an anthropologist just starting fieldwork on my Ph.D.-project. The aim of the project is try to shed more light on possible differences in male and female students' approach to studying physics. I decided to make participant-observing fieldwork among these anything but exotic initiates to the tribe of physicists by 'following the loop' – a method that was recommended by Frederik Barth with reference to Gregory Bateson (Barth 1994: 352). As a newcomer I intend to follow wherever my position as a just-started physicist will lead me. (Hasse 2000: 5)

This positioned way of engaging with the physicist students gave me a possibility to understand the institution of physics education differently from the official texts posted by the administrators of the physics education. The official description of the Niels Bohr Institute for Physics was nothing like my embodied sensual presence in the empirical field. The institute was officially organised in different areas of study. The homepage of this educational institution said that the institute:

"[O]ffers academic degrees within the fields of astronomy, physics, geophysics, biophysics and Nano-technology. To more than 600 students the institute offers a three-year Bachelor degree followed by a two-year Master's degree and a three-year PhD programme". The disciplines of physics we could study were: "astronomy, physics, geophysics, nanophysics and biophysics [which] are all categorized within the disciplines of physics. Physics is the science of the elementary laws of nature. Physics seeks to explain nature at all levels, from the smallest elements, the quarks, to the greatest phenomena in the Universe. These aspects, from micro level to macro level, form the sciences at the Niels Bohr Institute. Starting from particle and Nano-physics, the institute continues to biophysics, onwards to geophysics and meteorology and arrives at astrophysics. The students at the Niels Bohr Institute gradually focus their field of study as they elevate towards their Masters and PhD degrees." (Niels Bohr Institute homepage retrieved 12.08, 1998)

It seemed that there was a world of difference between the officially organised *system* and the *local* organisation. The meaning of pictures of, e.g., Calvin and Hobbes and Jedi riders did not seem to be symbolic, but rather tied to local meaning-making processes, which connected different groups of students. My presence in the empirical field had made me a material-meaning learning ethnographer, rather than the symbol-interpreting ethnographer (e.g. Geertz 1973, 1984) I had learned about in my anthropological studies.

My description, however, reveals no insights into the colourful and complex learning process, which lay before me in this practiced place and which gradually changed the geometrical space to a force field of frictions in which Jedi riders and Star Wars could engage me in unexpected ways.

I went to classes in physics, mathematics and astronomy, to lectures, to student parties and plays. Gradually the position I had taken as a first-year student in the empirical field began to have an effect on me. Instead of taking notes of how my fellow students behaved, the very fact that I, to some extent, actually did what they did, and they watched and reacted to me doing it, began to have consequences for my actions and influenced my situated embodied thinking. As they expected me to act and listen as a physics student I began to do so – and from this movable position, it became increasingly difficult to not actually take an interest in and engage in physics culture.

My notes mirrored this interest. At first, I meticulously noted the number of female or male students attending class. I asked questions about how much physics in primary school had mattered for, respectively, male and female students' interest in physics. Yet, in my notes I also began to ask a new kind of questions, like 'do we really not know what gravity is?' or 'does that mean all stars are actually suns?' (see, e.g., Hasse 2008). Though naïve at first, my questions were earnest, and over time they developed into expectations of physics futures – and with time even the Jedi riders found their place in a cultural ecology allowing science fiction but excluding short dresses (see Chap. 8).

My changed reflections became a new key to a methodological understanding of participant observation as observation with participation. Observation is a positioned and not a distanced observation. Learning from the position as a physics student transformed my focus, my attention and the relation between words and material world, and gradually the physical geometrical space changed into a culturally practiced place. As noted by the British anthropologist Edwin Ardener, the social is a space that identifies because of its structures of categorising and classifying. In this social space (closer to Certeau's practiced place), human beings are 'defined by the space and are nevertheless the defining consciousness of the space' (Ardener 1989: 212). In this respect, I was gradually becoming part of the defining consciousness of a new social space.

I nourished in this process, which I eventually termed a *cultural learning process*, theoretically on cultural resources in the analytical field (such as theories from cognitive anthropology, psychology, pragmatic philosophy and the cultural historian school). However, it was my changed perceptions in the empirical field that made me select or deselect theoretical perspectives.

Cultural codes (a phrase from the analytical field) are not the best phrase for what I learned as a student of physics. Cultural codes imply a kind of totally shared and almost rule-based learning. The things I learned in the practiced place named the 'physics institute' could also be learned by other newcomers students as kinds of codes and rules. Sometimes, however, this was not the case. Codes and rules could change. And everyone did not learn exactly the same about the cultural habitat. For instance, I learned that physics students occupied a particular area in

the students' canteen. Even though the chairs were all the same, I, and the other students I hung out with, knew which particular area of the enormous canteen we belonged to. If we wanted to meet up, we could always wait at this particular place in the canteen, which also belonged to the social space of the students who defined the boundaries of physics culture. Physics students who accidentally placed themselves among the math and chemistry students, with whom we also shared the canteen, would be ridiculed, just as I was on the first day at work sitting myself on the *wrong* chair (see Chap. 1). Other physics students, who did not care or were ignorant of this invincible boundary forming them–us agential cuts in the physical and social space, began their line-walking from another position. After a year my group of students had moved to other localities such as the famed *student room* with chess boards and soft chairs.

During my first week as a physicist student I learned about many local cultural resources I could employ in order to *become* a physicist student like the other freshman who had enrolled that year.

Whatever emerges as systems and structural relations from this position 'are specific material (re)configurings of bodies, that is, ongoing re(con)figurings of space-time-matterings' (Barad 2007: 448). A concept like Barad's space-time-mattering was not known to me at the time of my fieldwork – and indeed it did not make a difference for me in the canteen. Yet, space-time-mattering is an analytical cut which underlines that particular spot in the students' canteen only functioned as our cultural meeting place for a while. But for a while it became a good resource for me for making acquaintances and keeping in contact with *fellow* students from my freshman group.

Though I later came to know Barad's work in theoretical discussions with feminists about the new materialist movement in the analytical field, my first encounter with the notion of space–time came from reading *Elements of Newtonian Mechanics* and from discussions of relativity theory. Barad's analytical field emerged to some extent from what was now my empirical field. I can now explain with her notions of agential cuts how I began a learning process of meaningful mattering in this particular culturally practiced place. Yet, at that time of my fieldwork I was ignorant of her work in the analytical field as a resource.

As new students we learned, or had opportunities to learn, about many local cultural resources in this particular organised social and material reality (e.g. Hasse 2002, 2008). I learned that there was no absolute line dividing me, the ethnographer, from the lines followed by my fellow physicist students. Though I was ignorant of many aspects of physics culture (including math), so were some of my fellow students. We were all positioned differently in our search for potential pathways to use the cultural resources found to become further engaged in the empirical field (see Chap. 7). The cumbersome math exercises never really became a cultural resource of engagement for me, and it was almost as difficult for some of my fellow students to use math to gain access into the physics culture as it was for me. We had to find other ways of staying within reach of the dust bunny. And many of us did – at least for a couple of years. Some, however, like Vibe, dropped out of the geometrical space. We wondered about them in the canteen corner. 'Have you

seen Peter lately?’ ‘I think he has dropped out.’ ‘Why?’ It was always difficult to get answers, but as an anthropologist I had the advantage that I could contact the dropouts and ask them why they had left their study. ‘Math was too difficult’ was a recurring yet not quite satisfactory explanation as many, who also found math difficult, stayed (see Hasse 2003 and Chap. 8). Over time I learned to detect frictions that could make people disappear – math or no math.

Though some would think I stayed in the same geometrical space – the physics institute – during the 2 years I followed physicist students in their study, it became in many ways a ‘multisided ethnography’ (Marcus 1995). As I moved around in this practiced place and learned that organisations in this practiced place changed, the geometrical space changed along with it.

And then I left. Researchers can never become participants in the empirical field like other participants. This is what legitimates *research* in anthropology. Our engagement in the analytical field will ensure this. Yet, my involvement in physics still forms my engaged perception of the cultural social and material world I learned in the empirical field.

2.3 Organisational Culture

Before we move on to what it means to learn culture as a defining consciousness in the analytical field, I shall look at one of the production places of culture in order to simplify the discussion: the cultural organisation.² The Niels Bohr Institute was more than a geometrical space of classrooms. It was an organised practiced place stretching far beyond the physical brick walls – yet the organisation had its limits.

The word *organisation* refers etymologically to both ‘organs’ and ‘work’ (Starbuck 2003) and has been used in many different ways in organisational studies. The most important usage for the discussion of cultural learning processes in organisations is that the term *organisation* in organisational studies comes with two meanings: one is the established institution and the other is the free organisation which emerges whenever humans work together to achieve a common goal. This is inherent in the catchy phrase by Barbara Czarniawska that organisations can act as ‘obstacles to organising’ (2013: 3).

This kind of organisation is also inherent in the concept of ‘relational agency’ (Edwards 2010) where professionals may act across institutional borders in order to work together to achieve a common outcome like, for instance, helping vulnerable children. Organisation covers then both institutions with already established traditions (Hedegaard 2012) and an organisation of people with different kind of expertise contributing to the same problem space, although their workplace may

² Though the basic theoretical approach I propose could also be used on conceptualisations like *national culture* or *ethnic groups*, exploring cultural forces in organisations has the advantage of rather restricted production sites even when we include virtual production of cultural resources.

be located in different institutions (like in Anne Edward's work on 'expertise' 2010) and in organisations without a long history of rituals and collective symbols.

This dual understanding of organisation has implications for how we understand one of the most contested concepts in anthropology: culture. The anthropologist Edwin Ardener has noted (1985) that important concepts tend to go through periodic stages of hot debate whenever a disciplinary field of study is on the verge of a strong epistemological break. In his days, the concept of 'rationality' was being debated as the discipline of anthropology shifted from being embedded in the grand narratives of Marxism, structural functionalism and structuralism to becoming more poststructuralist and relativistic. Since then, central anthropological concepts like *culture* and *fieldwork* have undergone similar changes when post-modern deconstruction problematised anthropologists' *writing culture* – a discussion brought to the forefront in the analytical field by George Marcus and James Clifford in the 1980s (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Anthropology has a strong tradition for hot debates. Yet, the problems with the concepts that cause these debates tend to remain unsolved. As problems mount the debates are abandoned, or discussions are muted, and on concept replaced with another (as yet) less contested. When concepts like *field* and *culture* become too problematic and no solutions are in sight, they are abandoned for new ones like *identity*, *narrative*, etc. without getting to the core of the challenges: how to explain cultural variation in constituted collectively shared common meaning-making, while individuals differ in their meaning-making practices. This chapter cannot answer all the problems with the culture concept addressed in the analytical field in the 1980s and 1990s, but it will unfold some of the basic problems with the concept of culture, which I argue may be remedied by connecting it to the concept learning.

My argument is best understood in relation to the small analytical field I call 'organisational culture'. A diffracted reading of how culture as a concept has been contested in studies of *organisational culture* is a simple way of approaching the contested concept of culture in relation to the likewise contested concept of organisation.

The field of analysis has *culture in organisations* as its object of analysis. The field emerged from a much larger and broader field of organisational studies, where management literature is the underlying context (Alvesson and Berg 1992: 19).

In the following I first look at the emergence of this analytical field of organisational culture. Secondly, I look at three equally problematic and contested concepts of culture within this field, which echo discussions in the broader and more general field of anthropology: integration, differentiation and fragmentation perspectives.

Analytical fields have histories. Most analytical fields are characterised by a certain degree of consensus about the so-called founders of the field, i.e. the women and (typically) men who invented the first theories to be repeated or contested by later followers. In anthropology the founding fathers (and they are indeed mostly fathers) are, e.g., Bronislaw Malinowski, Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown, Marcel Mauss, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, Franz Boas, Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict.

Though influenced by anthropology, the founding fathers of the field of organisational culture are rather connected to the founding fathers of organisational studies than the founders of anthropology. In organisational culture the founders are often sociologists like Max Weber, who connected organisation with the 'charismatic leader' and proposed the rationale behind the bureaucratic organisation. Another is F.W. Taylor, who gave name to the concept of Taylorism and discussions of how organisations can be rationalised. Studies tied to the development of Taylorism mainly deal with analysis of organisations as enterprises, and they have the explicit purpose of supporting management and leadership. Only a few, like Elton Mayo, took (at least to some extent) the perspective of the employees' everyday life as his point of departure.

Researchers in the broad field of organisational studies tend to have their analytical origin in business schools and similar institutions. The main purpose of research was to enhance the performance of enterprises, and obstacles to the effectiveness of work were (and still are) their main focus. From this field a subfield developed from approximately the 1980s onwards, which emphasised the analysis of organisations as organisational cultures (Parker 2000: 59). This change happened when the field of organisational studies began to show an interest in the softer side of studying organisational management. Mayo paved the way for an understanding of what was later known as 'human relations' studies, where the meaning of loyalty and other human relations in organisations was stressed. It has since been seen as a paradigm shift that gradually emphasised the meaning of culture understood as 'vision, mission, culture and values' (Sandberg and Targama 2007: 1–2).

The researchers then began to show an interest in what can be seen (in an anthropological sense) as shared visions (Selznick 1957), myths or sagas (Clark 1972), which shape what they called the shared 'corporate culture' (Deal and Kennedy 1982). The interest in management did, however, still constitute the main research focus.

The concept of organisational culture is not used systematically before the 1970s. The organisational researcher Elliott Jaques, from Tavistock Institute in London, who was inspired by psychoanalysis, has been identified as the first to connect the two concepts *organisation* and *culture* in his book on the enterprise Glacier Metal from 1951 (Jaques 2007/1951). This is mentioned by many, e.g. Hofstede (2001: 392) and Mats Alvesson and Per Olof Berg (1992: 12), who have tried to trace the roots of the field. The work by Wilhelm Bion's group also developed out of the Tavistock school, but while Jaques and his group argued for close relations between social and cyclic structures in organisations, Bion and his followers underlined (according to Alvesson and Berg) unconscious *collective* processes in work life and stressed the notion of 'shared fantasies' and 'collective defence mechanisms' (Alvesson and Berg 1992: 12). Bion (1961: 146) has also developed the concept of 'basic assumptions' as that which holds organisations together (which later inspired the organisational researcher Ed Schein's work on culture in organisations).

From the mid-1970s and onwards, educational institutions were included as organisations worth studying in the analytical field. In fact, some refer to

Pettigrew's influential article on a private British boarding school from 1979 'On studying Organizational Cultures' as *the* place where the concept of organisational culture is explicitly defined for the first time (Alvesson and Berg 1992: 15). That definition underlines the stable and collective nature of culture in organisations:

In order for people to function within any given setting, they must have a continuing sense of what that reality is all about in order to be acted upon. Culture is the system of such publicly and collectively accepted meanings operating for a given group at a given time. This system of terms, forms, categories, and images interprets people's own situation to themselves. (Pettigrew 1979: 574)

Culture is thus a systematic organisation of collectively generated and accepted meanings, which functions for groups in specific situations. Psychological aspects of what creates these collectively generated and accepted meanings are not touched upon yet. From this tentative beginning, the analytical field of organisational culture emerged and grew to become the new trend in organisational research.

During the 1980s, culture in organisations almost sent all the main journals on organisational studies into raptures, and they all wanted to publish special issues of this particular topic. Martin Parker, for instance, presents this impressive list of journals with special issues on organisational culture in the 1980s: '*Journal of Management Studies* (1982, 1986), *Organizational Dynamics* (1983), *Administrative Science Quarterly* (1983), *Journal of Management* (1985), *Organization Studies* (1985) and *International Studies of Management and Organization* (1987)' (Parker 2000: 59).

Various different factors may be behind the enormous interest in cultural analysis. For one thing, several researchers in the analytical field of organisational studies (what Alvesson and Berg call the intra-scientific perspective (1992: 21)) have for long pointed out that something is missing in rigid structural and so-called objective analysis, as well as in primarily quantitative studies. We have seen an apparently growing dissatisfaction with the state of traditional *science-based* approaches in the analytical field.

One is what appears to be a growing dissatisfaction with the state of "normal science" in the discipline. Ever more obscure statistical innovations have contributed to the discipline's attractiveness to technically minded government bureaucrats, but these have failed miserably to address issues of serious social and cultural significance. (Wuthnow and Witten 1988: 49)

2.4 Fighting Over Culture Concepts

The development of the small analytical field of organisational culture is an interesting case of how analytical fields evolve, grow and shrink – along with fierce debates taken by researchers as these processes evolve. What is at stake is the boundaries set by the analytical cuts we use when analysing organisational culture. The field of organisational culture emerged from the larger field of organisational studies, because a growing number of researchers began to consider Tayloristic

measurements of time and quantitative studies of production inadequate to capture the complex everyday life and processes of change in organisations. This is an interesting development, even for researchers today, since cultural analysis is often based on qualitative methods, which many researchers in organisational studies still consider less accurate and scientific than quantitative methods. However, in the 1980s, cultural analysis was thus *re-invented*. The quantitative methods of Taylorism were unable to grasp that something which, at that time, was considered more important than legitimising research through quantitative scientific approaches, namely, how to study what cannot be weighed and measured: the basic assumptions, values, symbols, motivation and emotions.

Furthermore, two external factors influenced the development of the analytical field towards a focus on culture. With the growing globalisation it became clear that enterprises in the West could not be studied as separate from the surrounding world since there appeared to be a growing need in business life to understand what happens in a world that is increasingly viewed as a *global village*. Following this trend, Martin Ouchi's Theory Z (1981) deals with enterprises in Japan. His work shocked the analytical field, which was hitherto rather self-contained in Western journals and conferences, because he clearly showed that the Western world competed and still competes with many other non-Western countries with excellent industrial organisations. Ouchi argues that by studying Japanese organisational culture, we can learn from the different nations' cultural ways of organising and developing productive enterprises. Later, with the national studies of Geert Hofstede, the national culture approach to organisational culture develops into a proper comparative design, where organisational cultures in different national contexts are understood on the basis of a common formula (Hofstede 2001).

The other factor to influence the analytical field of organisational studies towards cultural analysis is a search among many researchers of something that holds organisations in place. Organisational culture becomes, in the lingo of the analytical field, the *social glue* which the researchers assume can account for employees' loyalty and effectiveness. At the same time, employees begin to seek a better work life with a fruitful and giving workplace culture. Employees make new demands that indicate they want more out of life in the workplace than just the salary; they want a better organisational culture (Alvesson and Berg 1992: 20). These factors can be argued to trigger the development of the analytical field of organisational culture.

Researchers met in the analytical field to discuss this concept. They discussed at conferences and through their contributions to journals, and in local research discussion groups formed around the concept of organisational culture. Yet, as in any other analytical field, there is never complete consensus about what is to be achieved by using the concept *organisational culture* as a common denominator. Nevertheless, precisely these frictions – the endless discussions about where culture is, what an organisation is and what the relation between the two might be – hold the analytical field together.

These feuds in the analytical field of organisational culture mirror, to some extent, the fierce discussions we know from the larger and more loosely connected

fields of anthropology: STS, feminist studies, etc. Because the field of organisational culture is small, it is possible, even for an outsider, to gain an overview and follow the discussion in the journals. Possibly due to the limited number of participants, or the specific focus on *culture*, the general tone of discussion is often hard and fiery when the researchers challenge each other's theoretical tools of analysis, methods and methodologies.

In research overview articles and books the conception of culture splits the researchers into different camps. On the one hand, there is a division line between functionalists and symbolists, and, on the other hand, there is a division between seeing culture in organisations as *integration* or *differentiation* and the postmodern *fragmentation*. Though using the same term (organisational culture), their analytical cuts differ. The integration perspective comprises both functionalists and symbolist, while the other two, differentiation and fragmentation, are often seen as belonging to the postmodern wave of deconstructing the wholeness created by functionality and symbols.

The functionalists are often described as those who want to use the concept of culture to improve the workplace or create enhanced value for the enterprise. They are in opposition to researchers who are occupied with developing a symbolic understanding of the concept of culture and its relation to organisation. Both perspectives draw heavily on discussions found in the analytical field of anthropology in the 1960s and 1970s.

'The harmonic whole' propagated by Edgar Schein (2004) is often connected with what is known as structural functionalism or functionalism in anthropology. In anthropology this direction is tied to the two anthropologists Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown. The theoretical perspective focuses on culture as wholes, with particular elements (e.g. a ritual) that function to secure social equilibrium and meet psychological and biological needs within the culture as a whole. Here it is taken for granted that something like culture exists as a context for needs and other basic human aspects.

The culture (notice *culture* in singular) comprises, as a whole, basic social values that are sustained and strengthened through shared acts and rituals. Culture is seen as the context for social systems and basic human needs. This anthropological perspective on culture comes close to Schein's, whose theory on organisational culture operates on several levels. At the basic level we find the 'basic assumptions', which are the deepest and most stable fundament of the organisation. This level is followed by two levels of more superficial, but increasingly more visible, aspects of culture: values and artefacts (Schein 2004). Unlike some anthropologists, Schein does not discuss culture in relation to biological needs but assumes that basic assumptions are initiated in organisations by their founders (Schein 1983) where after culture becomes a sort of social glue holding the organisation together.

Schein also disregard mechanisms of inclusions and exclusions and how new members of the organisation, as persons, come to act in accordance with the basic assumptions and how they may dissent and change basic assumptions over time. Though he does touch upon learning, he does not discuss the relation between culture, organisation and learning in any deeper sense.

Opposite this perspective on culture as a whole, we find a perspective on culture as constructed. The group of researchers adhering to this approach draws in many ways on Geertz's interpretive understanding of culture as meaning-making of native symbols. Anthropology is not an experimental science but an interpretive science of decoding symbols, signs and seeking meaning (Geertz 1973: 4–5). In this perspective, culture cannot be reduced to physical or psychological needs known to social systems – nor to basic assumptions created by its founders. Culture is 'a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life' (ibid.: 89). The ethnographer can construct the ethnographic material by interpreting native interpretations, so culture appears and can be read as a publicly accessible text (ibid.: 10).

The symbolic perspective on cultural analysis focuses on the anthropological point of departure that human beings are creative co-constructors of their own reality. In relation to the functionalist perspective, where the overall meaning is given and which always operates with fixed levels of analysis, the symbolic analysis operate with individual elements, which must be put together in interpretations. From these interpretations the researcher's analytical work elicits patterns of meaning in relation to the empirical data material.

The comprehensive discussions of symbols in organisations have opened for an understanding of other ways to define organisational culture than what has been done in the functionalist perspective (Alvesson and Berg 1992). In the symbolic interpretation of organisational culture, in contrast to the functionalist approach, it is assumed that organisational members do not always attribute the same meaning to the same phenomena (Hatch and Schultz 2004).

Considerations of *who shares what in a culture* recur in the debates between the researchers who understand culture to be an integrated whole, differentiated or totally fragmented (where elements of functionalist and symbolic approaches may be present especially in the integrated perspective).

In the following, I will present my point of departure in the overview of the analytical field of organisational culture as presented by Joanna Martin in her book *Cultures in Organizations* (1992) and illustrate her perspectives with an example from my fieldwork in Sardinia in Italy.

2.5 Pro Loco in the Integration Perspective

Martin defines three different perspectives on research in organisational culture:

1. '*The integration perspective* focuses on those manifestations of a culture that have mutually consistent interpretations [...]
2. '*The differentiation perspective* focuses on cultural manifestations that have inconsistent interpretations [...]

3. *'The fragmentation perspective conceptualizes the relationship among cultural manifestations as neither clearly consistent nor clearly inconsistent.'* (Martin 2002: 94, author's italics)

In the integration perspective, a researcher's focus is on what ties the organisation together as a whole. In the differentiation perspective, focus is on the internal differences in the organisation, e.g. the internal contradictions perceived by everyday participants in organisational life. Lastly in the fragmentation perspective, a researcher's focus is on the ambiguities and complexities of the organisational culture.

I will illustrate the three perspectives by referring to a small study I made in Italy of an organisation – in the looser sense of the word (Czarniawska 2013).

First, an example of a cultural analysis of an integrated organisational culture: Martin specifically points to one researcher as a proponent of the integration perspective. This is Schein, who defines culture as:

The culture of a group can now be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way you perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein 2004: 17) [Author's italics]

And Schein also claims that it is basically the founders of organisations who create the organisational culture by creating and embedding the cultural elements like rituals and traditions to be followed as a whole by employees (Schein 1983).

This approach seemingly fits well with the following story. In the 1960s, a bank manager created a local subdivision of a tourist organisation called *Pro Loco* in the village Mamoiada on the island of Sardinia in Italy. In Sardinia, many villages have organised local divisions of *Pro Loco* in order to entice tourists to visit the area. In the village where I lived, from 1990 to 1993, the local organisation pivoted around a particular, rather mysterious, mask parade. The origin of this ritual could be referred back to the times of the arrival of the Saracens in the island of Sardinia. Some contested this idea and argued that the ritual stems from ancient Greece. The *Pro Loco* organisation selected twelve men, who, wearing polished black wooden masks and sheepskins ringing cowbells, marched through the village each year on the 17th of February on Sancta Antonio's day. Alongside the parade of masked men, young agile men ran around with lassos and kept the masked men from breaking the line by whipping them back in formation if they tried to escape. *Mamuthones* – the name of the participants in the parade as well as the name of the masks that the men were wearing – was performed during the carnival season and on other festive occasions. The parade also appeared at international folklore festivals.

Following Schein, one could argue that the group supporting the bank manager, who organised the *Mamuthones* parade, share the basic assumption (initiated and made explicit by the founder of the group, i.e. the bank manager) that the village needed a common identity in order to not sink into oblivion and that the local *Pro Loco* organisation had the mission to sustain that identity by performing and

upholding the traditional ritual of Mamuthones. New members were carefully selected and trained to understand how the parade gave the village a shared identity. The group's loyalty and faithfulness towards the common values and basic assumption were strengthened when an election for the local municipality changed the power relations in the village. The new people in power did not support the original Pro Loco group, led by the bank manager, and created a new group similar to the Mamuthones group, which made the original small organisation around Mamuthones and the bank manager fight for their right to define how the parade is done and what it means to the village. Every year the two organisations fiercely discussed who could participate in the parade (the parade is generally referred to as 'sfilata') and how the costumes of Mamuthones should be maintained. The faithful members of the Mamoiada Pro Loco felt strongly for the original Mamuthones organisation and would not dream of leaving Mamuthones to the new competing tourist-oriented organisation of parades, named Gruppo Beccoi.

Even though the Beccoi group had more money, because they were supported financially by the local government after the election, the faithful members of the original Mamuthones group stayed in the original group. The Mamuthones group saw themselves as the keepers of many traditions in Mamoiada built up over the years to maintain a collective spirit in the village. They arranged a shared breakfast in the carnival season and promotion tours for selected members of the Mamuthones group, and each year they conducted a special tour around the village to collect money, wine and cookies from the people in the village.

The participants in the Mamuthones group had created a miniature organisational culture which could easily be understood with an analytical cut based on what Schein calls 'basic assumptions', creating a 'strong culture' (Deal and Kennedy 1982). In a strong culture, basic assumptions are taken for granted by all members, while espoused values (following Schein's argument (2004)) are what the public is shown. Finally, we find the artefacts which are visible to all but can, however, be difficult to interpret. The basic assumption in the Mamuthones group was that the village identity and reputation depended on their keeping up the traditions; thus, the group had a special responsibility to live up to this obligation even when the local government worked against them. The espoused values were the uniform sheepskins, bells and wooden masks, which showed the group's internal collaboration and discipline to the public, and the artefacts were the sheepskins and not least the masks which were all alike: shining, polished and black. For the parade participants the artefacts appeared to be an expression of a common mission to save the village from oblivion. They seemed to agree on this and appeared to be a strong cultural group.

In the integration perspective the research apparatus seeks agential cuts, which make strong culture, shared values and symbols (like Pro Loco's black Mamuthones mask, which also was the logo of the organisation) emerge as phenomena. Martin (2002) mentions, as an example of the integration perspective, Pettigrew's study of boarding school leaders who explicitly try to introduce new cultural values at the schools by reinforcing the changes they wish for with new cultural rituals and symbols (Pettigrew 1979). The leaders create rituals and edify

narratives of the organisation to express acknowledgment of the kind of behaviour they wish their students pursue.

Others like Schein (1983) talk about symbolic consistency, where a uniform *dress code* of, e.g., masks and fur signals something about the company's shared values – just as an open floor plan signals a kind of open business value in contrast to individual, enclosed offices (Ouchi 1981). In the integration perspective, culture brings clarity to the analytical cut; it prevents insecurity when things appear ambiguous and controls the otherwise uncontrollable (Martin 1992: 51). Integration analyses reduce research to the study of a few 'content issues', which are common values, rituals, symbols and basic assumptions (Schein 1983, 2004), and these are described as if they are shared by all participants in the organisation. The shared values will be put on display and played out consistently via a number of cultural manifestations. All participants know what to do and why they do what they do. 'Organisation-wide consensus, consistency and clarity' define the integrated perspective on culture (Martin 1992: 45).

In general, in this analytical field, integration theory refers to 'common values' with no need to explain the foundation of these analytical concepts or what we basically are to understand by 'culture', 'common' and 'values' (Alvesson and Berg 1992: 16).

In relation to my exploration of how cultural learning processes create motion through frictions, the analytical cut based on the integration perspective indicates total integration is impossible. It is always possible to find *some* people in a cultural dust bunny who share common knowledge and even implicit and embodied espoused values, rituals and symbols. But is common knowledge and some shared values an expression of harmony? A culture that seems *strong*, at a superficial level, may achieve its strength through various forms of *frictions* regarding categorisations, meanings, actions, humans and artefacts. Culture is defined as much by its expulsions as by its espousing.

2.6 The Differentiation and Fragmentation Perspectives

Other analytical cuts became available as I spent more time in the village and began to understand the bank manager's group seen in a larger perspective. As mentioned, in the 1980s, a group of young men seceded from the local Pro Loco organisation in Mamoiada to form their own version of the local mask parade called Gruppo Beccoi. One of the young men, the founding member of the new group Gruppo Beccoi, had previously been excluded from the original group of Mamuthones because he did not believe in the bank manager's way of controlling the parade nor the group's demand for rigid routines and dress code during the carnival. While being a member of the Mamuthones group, he had secretly conspired with several supporters, who now followed him in his confrontation with the bank manager and supported the formation of a new group.

Although the Pro Loco-based Mamuthones group as such appeared to represent a, on the surface, strong culture in the early 1980s, it was a misleading picture of the actual conditions experienced by the participants.

Cultural analysts like Van Maanen (1991) and Gideon Kunda (1992) have focused on the downsides of strong cultures and how people react to them. This analytical cut opens for a focus on subcultures where people are suppressed, subdued and have difficulties getting their voices heard. To give an example, although the management in Disneyland highlights what is seen as common and shared values, the employees only pretend to agree with management's *smiling culture*. In the analysis of Van Maanen, pancake ladies, peanut pushers, coke blokes, suds divers and soda jerks only pretend to be smiling, whereas in fact they feel underpaid and overworked (Van Maanen 1991). Researchers need to move around and take new positions in order to become critical of espoused enunciations of strong cultures.

In the village of Mamoiada, it turned out that the Gruppo Beccoi, to some extent, stemmed from a subculture of dissent. Theories such as Schein's cannot explain what happens when frictions move members in and out of cultural dust bunnies, nor how or why a subculture of dissent emerges.

Had a researcher only focused his or her analytical cut on the elements visible from the Pro Loco perspective during the carnival, the result would have been an image of a strong organisational culture. This analysis would not have captured the simmering unrest. An analysis of 'strong culture' (Deal and Kennedy 1982) may be based on a researcher's first superficial learning in the empirical field. When the researcher goes into more depth and gains access to and allows new learning to take place, new analytical cuts emerge as a necessity to include cultural disagreements between members of a group which disturb the image of a uniform style. Thereby, the researcher has a tool to identify subcultures as a differentiation perspective (Martin 1992: 110). The differentiation perspective focuses on how internal differences found between subgroups within the same culture challenge the notion of a singular, harmonious culture characterised by uniformity. In the context of organisational culture, focus is on conflicts between groups and how they may challenge management's assertions of egalitarianism and strong culture. The researcher's attention is not directed at major common events such as common rituals and symbols, but on how employees are reacting against each other and treated differently as well as how subgroups of employees tend to confirm each other's values – perhaps in opposition to those espoused by management.

Subculture is defined by Turner (in connection with studies of industrial subculture) as a 'distinct set of perspectives shared by a group of people whose behaviour differs from that of society at large' (Turner 1971, op.cit.; Alvesson and Berg 1992: 15). Both Van Maanen and Kunda's studies show how the subcultures of employees can be critical towards and challenge the organisation's espoused symbolic representations of a strong common culture. Van Maanen illustrates that though Disneyland's 'smile culture' indeed encourages an espoused value, i.e. *smiles* (smiling broadly for all customers), the superficial behaviour of the smiling, management's perceptions of the shared basic assumptions behind the smiles and

the actual perceptions of employees differ. The employees do not smile because they love the Disney concept but because they want to keep their jobs (Van Maanen 1991). The very idea of basic assumptions and strong 'corporate cultures' are challenged by studies such as these (Parker 2000: 76).

In relation to the theory of cultural learning processes, researchers need to understand that when learning about what goes on in organisations, i.e. when researchers gradually become more experienced and engaged learners sharing a lot of time and practiced place with the members of the organisation, new agential cuts and boundaries are created. Learning new agential cuts creates a need for new analytical cuts.

Martin acknowledges that an integration perspective can capture something significant in the organisation, but if a researcher settles for an integration perspective as the only approach, many organisations will appear too homogeneous and too full of harmony with no room for 'doubt, uncertainty, or collective dissent' (Martin 1992: 45). The differentiation perspective rests, admittedly, also on a harmonic concept of culture; only in this perspective the common culture does not belong to the organisation as such but to the subculture. The limit of analysis has shifted from *organisational culture* to *subculture* with an organisation. Within this new framework, *culture* is maintained as a notion of an unproblematic harmonious community. Subcultures are perceived as uniform; ambiguity is banished to subcultures' interstices and takes place between subcultures (Martin 2002: 94). Neither the integration perspective nor the slightly more nuanced differentiation perspective of subcultures brings us closer to a viable definition of culture in the analytical field which manages to capture complexities.

The two perspectives resemble each other and are vulnerable to the same kind of postmodern criticism known from the analytical field: the functionalist and the interpretive perspectives overlook how fragmented cultures are. In the functionalist perspective, cultural unity is something culture *has* and *maintains* through a balance of individual elements such as shared narratives, symbolic logos and rituals. In the interpretive perspective, culture refers to something the organisation *is* and that is open to different interpretations of common symbols, rituals and stories (Smircich 1983). Common for both analytical cuts is that culture is perceived to be static, be it in the unified culture or in cultural subgroups.

Ultimately, an ethnographer may never know for certain whether the patterns that shape the analysis of a presumably general culture, or subcultures, actually cover the experiences of all employees in the organisation. The same goes for the analysis of any culture referred to as an ethnic group, a national identity, etc. Gideon Kunda finds two subcultures in his work, i.e. engineers and programmers, that counteract each other in the enterprise he calls Tech. Yet, his analysis of subgroups can be deconstructed in a *fragmentation* perspective.

Kunda argues that an organisation's programmers, who create the technological hardware and software, tend to perceive engineers as narrow-minded. And in Kunda's Tech organisation (1992), the hardware engineers were perceived as uneducated and narrow-minded by the software guys. But, did all the software guys really share this perception as Kunda argues? Or would this picture of two

coherent subcultures (software and hardware employees) dissolve and become fragmented if Kunda spent more time and moved more around in the geometrical space of the company? Would new variations and changes emerge? At some point, Kunda might have encountered programmers who found their hardware counterparts sympathetic and friendly. The perceptions of narrow-minded engineers could be related to specific episodes or particular days of irritation or even to particular people with especially bad relations. Learning new agential cuts would require a more refined and complex analysis in which the subcultures could be deconstructed. A fragmented perspective, Martin argues, can dissolve perceptions of a common organisational culture or subcultures.

2.7 Postmodern Deconstruction

In the 1980s new deconstructive winds blew over many analytical fields and challenged former self-evident assumptions of applied analytical concepts. The concept of culture was no exception. These winds, which with a broad term may be called *postmodernism*, changed both the field of organisational culture and anthropology. The movement turned the researchers' centre of attention from the empirical fields to the analytical field. The deconstruction affected cultural analysis in two fundamental ways: (1) deconstruction of the researcher's conceptualisations of the empirical field and (2) deconstruction of the researcher's position in the empirical field.

In the first period of the postmodern perspective, we find an increased attention to how researchers *construct* their fields (Clifford and Marcus 1986) inspired by theories of construction and deconstruction (e.g. Derrida 1976, Lyotard 1984 and Foucault 1972, 1979). Statements of *culture* are as a new norm in this analytical field to be put in inverted commas, and the cultural explanations are now always considered powerful but performative statements, which are simultaneously 'precarious and partial' (Alvesson and Berg 1992: 218–219).

The new norm in the analytical field is that any reference to *culture* must be acknowledged as a partial perspective. It becomes suspect to build a holistic perspective through a culture concept that attempts to bring together all cultural elements – be it rituals or narratives – in one common term: *culture*. Postmodern researchers concentrate on deconstructing paradoxes contained in any past rhetoric and assertion about culture as a whole. In his review of the anthropological cultural history, James Boggs concludes that the concept of culture and anthropology itself has become 'powerfully constitutive forces in today's world. Critiques of culture [...] must be considered in the context of its decentring and disorienting impact on the ideas, institutions, and ideologies of Western modernism' (2004: 193).

The deconstruction of culture in anthropological studies of indigenous peoples took turns with a concept of culture that defined native culture as static, essential entities and isolated islands, which we find in, for instance, the analyses made by Ruth Benedict (1934, 1947) or the works by the group of the founding fathers of

anthropology, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Lévy-Bruhl, Evans-Pritchard, Boas and even Geertz. Their culture concepts do not make sense in a globalised world. Part of the deconstruction movement entailed new constructions of the empirical field, where studies of networks or migrating groups began to replace studies of people in place. Even studies of people on islands looked at creolisation processes rather than the stable cultures of the past (e.g. Hannerz 1997). During the 1990s, it became clear that the harmonious cultures depicted in past ethnographies were constructs and fictions made by anthropologists (e.g. Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 1997; Appadurai 1995). Some anthropologists wanted to discard the concept of culture all together. Others, like Lila Abu-Lughod, voiced sharp criticism of this 'island-like' culture concept and demanded a rethinking of the concept of culture rather than abandoning it (Abu-Lughod 1991). Like so many others, she denounced the idea of culture in the singular and warned that culture theory overemphasises diversity and that anthropologists help maintain this difference by constructing culture in anthropological discourse (Abu-Lughod 1991: 143) and, like anthropologist Ulf Hannerz, dismantled the idea of culture as 'shared' (Hannerz 1997: 544). Instead she argued culture should be understood as distributed and complex – referring to Hannerz's concepts of creolisation and cultural complexity (e.g. 1992). As in the case of the integration perspective, the notion of culture in the singular was criticised for not disclosing complexity and presenting a false homogenisation of society, as well as creating illusions about borders and notions about how all *natives* in the culture share ideas because they are in the same geometrical space.

In the emerging postmodern anthropological perspective, culture was not something organisations have, nor something that can be discovered or something that can be interpreted. It is rather something written as the constructions of researchers and something which new perspectives can always deconstruct (Clifford and Marcus 1986). In this process, the notion of finding something stable which holds groups of people together is gradually excluded from the analytical field of anthropology, along with the question of why we once needed a concept of culture. The new focus is, just as in the field of organisational culture, on *fragmentation*.

The cause of the deep conflicts in the analytical field of anthropology concerning how to understand (or why to discard) culture becomes clearer through a diffracted reading of the conflicts and discussions in the much smaller field of organisational culture. Here the concept of culture is put to the test. Contrary to the field of anthropology, organisational culture has, only to a small degree, been occupied with critical scrutiny of concepts like *culture* and *organisation*. Within this field, organisations must be able to make use of concepts; i.e. companies must maximise their profits and therefore ask for good theories of *cooperate culture*.

When put to the test, functionalist cultural analysis was discarded in the 2000s because it had promised more than the analysis could keep. In the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, the mentioned types of analyses were, in one critical review after the other, considered subjective, inaccurate, biased and unrecognisable to participants in the studied organisations' daily life (Alvesson and Berg 1992: 16; Parker 2000: 9; Martin 1992; Smircich 1983).

Researchers in organisational culture were accused of being unilaterally focused on managerial and management-oriented aspects, and they were discredited because of their instrumental use of culture. Many cultural analyses, previously hailed as handbooks for how to do strong culture, draw strongly on anthropological theory but run into problems when applied to real-life situations. The theories did not work in practice, and the culture promoters could not live up to their promises (Martin 2002: 8). Both researchers and consultants will want to work with a useful culture concept from the analytical field, but they have very different perceptions of what it entails. Culture is often by consultants described in general terms as '[t]he way we do things around here' (Deal and Kennedy 1982: 4). Even when culture is defined as elements like communication, rituals or material artefacts, there is rarely a deeper understanding of the underlying processes that explain why researchers and consultants perceive manifestation as *cultural* manifestations. In the 2000s, several overviews of studies in organisational culture emphasised that the so-called culture wave had levelled out.

The concept of culture is no longer hyped, as it was previously (e.g. Kunda 2006: ix). The concept is still relevant and seemingly indispensable for the analytical field, but it has undoubtedly disappointed as a tool for change. Consultants can still find evidence of Schein's theory of basic assumptions that continues to be discussed and applied in cultural analysis, but the functionalist integral analysis apparently exists side by side in the research with other perspectives (subcultures and fragmentation) that has contested an analysis of culture as a harmonious whole. These frictions have not led to a renewal of analytical terms that can improve cultural theories to actually accommodate all the different perspectives. Rather, they have caused a slowdown and in some cases rejection of the concept of culture, which is then replaced with other concepts around which it is easier to reach consensus in the academic field – as, for example, identity (Parker 2000; Hatch and Schultz 2004).

A researcher with a fragmentation perspective will pursue differences down to the detailed level where some individual persons get confused by the symbolic meaning of artefacts. Focus is on people's lack of understanding of shared rituals and their rejection of differences that were formerly identified between subgroups.

This perspective 'focus[es] on ambiguity, complexity of relationships among manifestations, and a multiplicity of interpretations that do not coalesce into a stable consensus' (Martin 1992: 130). A fragmentations study may, for example, focus on a single theme (such as the espoused value behind individual agency). In this perspective the researcher will be able to find participants who share, and value, or contest or become confused by the symbols espoused in the organisation.

With the fragmentation perspective, researchers come closer to a learning perspective as they are more likely to see cultures as being in constant motion. This approach operates with neither an overall consensus culture nor consensus in subcultures but an organisation constantly under construction and therefore full of ambiguity. In fact, many researchers applying the postmodern approach end up discarding *culture*, *subculture*, *basic assumptions* and *shared symbols and rituals* all together. Instead they deconstruct any sign of what would be considered shared in the two other perspectives.

Concepts of coherence thus gradually lose their eligibility as analytically relevant concepts. Culture, which formerly defined both the field of anthropology and organisational culture, is either discarded or used as an everyday concept because no one can come up with a culture concept that can comprise the integrated, differentiated and fragmented perspective in one.

Instead of addressing the problem of how to find a viable definition of culture, the solution seems to be to get rid of the concept. Researchers in the analytical fields become just as fragmented as the fields they study. The fragmentation perspective leads to cultural relativism and ultimately to the postmodern dissolution of the culture concept. In spite of critique within this field, many continue to conduct functionalist analyses of culture in organisations to this present day. They have found it easier to ignore the postmodern criticism and continue as before.

Anthropologists worked from a more critical understanding of the concept of culture than the researchers using anthropological culture theory in the field of organisational culture. In the anthropological field the self-reflection led to new questions. Where Margaret Mead and Levi-Strauss had asked questions about *animism* in cultures, the questions are now directed towards the very culture concepts Mead and Levi-Strauss used in their analyses.

Nigel Rapport and Joanna Overing formulated it as follows: ‘Where does it reside – in the mind or is it a matter of practice?’ (2000: 93) The answer is none of the places. The concept of culture belongs to the analytical field. It does not refer to a reality, but appears in the texts we write (Clifford and Marcus 1986). When we interpret, we do not simply perform text analysis; text and reality emerges through our analyses (Hastrup 1995). Culture *came home*, so to speak, to the anthropological analytical field. After having been located throughout the world linked to sites and indigenous people (Gupta and Ferguson 1997) and after experiencing a surge of interest from the public (Strathern 1995) and many other related analytical fields, the concept of culture, which had played a defining role in anthropology in many ways (Stocking 1982), was firmly defined as an analytical construct. It was necessary when anthropologists wanted to stress that all people are ‘cultured’ (not just the people in the West), but in the times of globalisation it had become a tool for creating ‘otherness’ (Abu-Lughod 1991). The new consensus in both the field of organisational culture and anthropology gradually made it increasingly impossible to make symbolic analyses like before the postmodern wake, and it also diminished the interest in searching for core values and underlying patterns. The analytical field did not decide, however, that there *were* no basic assumptions, shared meanings or symbols and rituals in organisations (or other anthropological objects of study). All such discussions of former discrepancies were simply left behind in the postmodern branches.

If culture was referred to, it would be as a complicated concept based on the individual researcher’s definition. A ‘writing culture’ approach goes beyond the ambiguous and fragmented culture in organisations to deconstructions of the concepts of ‘culture’ and ‘organisation’ (Alvesson and Berg 1992: 219–220) because it does not acknowledge anything which cannot be fragmented down to the researcher’s own perspective.

One reason for this lack of usefulness of the culture concept is no doubt that only a very limited part of the research has been directed at understanding how a concept of culture can take account of the many disagreements between researchers. This may be solved by a focus on the researchers themselves – a focus that also emerged in the wake of postmodernism.

2.8 Culture as Representation

A new addition to the postmodern branches of the anthropological and the organisational cultural fields in the 1990s and 2000s was a new attention to the researcher's position in the empirical field as well as in the analytical field. Some regarded this to be *introspective*, or *auto-ethnographic*; others went into dialogue with other fields such as science and technology studies or postcolonial and cultural studies to open up for new discussions of how research and theory develop.

In the postmodern perspective, following Geertz's notion of culture as text, it becomes central to look at the anthropologist as interpreter. Anthropologists' data is defined simply as our construction of other people's construction of what they and their friends have going (1973: 9). The basis for Geertz's hermeneutics is that culture is stable and public and can be interpreted as a text, and since culture is public, meaning is public as well. What do ethnographers do? Geertz ask – and provides the answer:

The ethnographer “inscribes” social discourse; he writes it down. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted. (Geertz 1973: 19)

Geertz's hermeneutics does not explain the difference between interpretations made by ethnographers and the other participants' interpretations apart from his claim that we (i.e. ethnographers) interpret 'their' interpretation. This is why postmodernists, once they had discredited the legitimate position of the authorised ethnographer as interpreter, involved the natives' voices as direct statements in anthropological texts; the aim was to heighten the legitimacy of their work as more than simply subjective. What became known as 'the crisis of representation' stressed that in describing others as *cultural*, anthropologists do not just construct cultures with their writings, but through their representations they affect other people's lives (e.g. Clifford and Marcus 1986). Texts are not innocent but creative, poetic and political constructions of others. Anthropologists are responsible for the (re)figurations they make of, e.g., Arapesh people and physics students.

These representations are not easily made. Postmodernism made it apparent that there might be crucial differences between a researcher's interpretations and the other participants' ability to read, describe and analyse cultural meaning in their everyday life. Judging from recent years of hot debate, it is rare for participants in

the empirical field to fully accept and recognise the anthropologist's culture essays. Protests are often the result when they read what the researcher has written (Brettell 1993). Western researchers have been accused of establishing a dominant discourse that constructs *the others* in their own image and present *the other* as weak and oppressed (Said 1978). In other words, we find deep discrepancy between the researchers' interpretations of representations and the interpretations of representations made by *the others*. This has again been associated with the different interests of *the others* in the empirical field. In addition to the overt references to hegemony and power relations that are linked to these discussions, this also comprises an essential discussion of misinterpretations in ethnographic research, which in turn may be connected to the earlier discussion about the relation between word meaning and world in the construction of culture analysis.

In the new ideological landscape of the postmodern analytical field, all references to culture are (since the 1990s) seen as controversial claims about representations. Poetic representations of the indigenous world are seen as political statements produced by a researcher or any everyday life participant who is part of an organisation constructed by historical development (Clifford and Marcus 1986). The author cannot claim any special authority over the natives' own voices (ibid.: 2), but that leaves the question of the authority of the natives' voices. We must realise that after postmodernism, we can no longer take statements of truth for granted, even when they act as natives' statements in cultural analysis. In postmodern critiques, empirical *truths* always appear in inverted commas to underline the fact that truths are situated, fragmented and partial. The purpose of a postmodern analysis is not to contribute to or obtain postulated scientific truths, but to deconstruct unrecognised assumptions and dichotomies, which underpin other scientific studies (Martin 1992: 193).

The elimination of the omniscient narrator gives way to a demand for reflections on authorship. Postmodern analyses amplify their own normativity when participants learn (more or less explicitly) how to write texts based on postmodern theories in the analytical field. 'Postmodern self-reflexivity, whereby an author reflexively deconstructs the weaknesses in his or her own argument, is [...] paradoxically, a way of strengthening the authority of an author' (ibid.: 197).

Another way to circumvent the diminished authority of the anthropological writer was to let the ethnographic subjects speak directly in the text and attempt to remove the signs of the anthropological author. James Clifford attempts, for example, to resolve the dispute about representation by allowing the natives to fit into his texts with 'native voices' (1988). Ethnographic subjects can speak directly to readers through their own letters, photographs and texts, which merely has the researcher as collector and mediator of texts and pictures. The ethnographic subjects' voices may represent one layer and the researcher's own voice another layer of analysis (see, e.g., Lather 1993).

A postmodern perspective demands that the writer of the cultural analysis texts abandon 'the author/ity game' (Martin 1992: 200). But as Martin points out, '[i]t is difficult to imagine how to give up the author/ity game, without reducing the researcher to the role of a secretary or a publisher' (ibid.: 201). Even the role of

secretary arranging *native voices* entails selection mechanisms. Any anthropological text will always build on a research apparatus (or more of them), regardless how much the text deconstructs itself and include selected natives' voices. In this way, *truth* can never be just *a* representation (Said 1978: 272), but always *somebodies'* representation.

Deconstruction, as an analytical strategy in itself, was a typical attempt to recreate authority as a postmodern writer. A particular style was required during the excavations of the text as text and focus was especially on contradictions in the writing. One implicit rule was that writers should strive to avoid any attempt to *close* an analysis (which Martin calls 'closure') precisely because ethnographic subjects could always question and attack any interpretation made by the researcher. The postmodern wake made a righteous demand for accountability in anthropological texts and suggested that the researcher should never lock someone or something in the categories, but always conclude with open ends (Martin calls this approach 'disclosure' (1992: 197)).

Martin stresses her own research position in the analytical field by pointing out how she has created her analysis of the analytical field from contrasting perspectives. The three perspectives in her analysis of the discussions in the analytical field of organisational culture appear in opposition to each other. They emerge in what I later named a process of 'culture contrast' (Hasse and Trentemøller 2009). The fragmentation perspective is dissolving harmony in comparison to the integration perspective, which is holistic, and the differentiation perspective suggests conflict, whereas the integration perspective focuses on harmony. Martin's own position builds on an understanding of the always situated and partial perspectives in cultural analysis, which are based on researcher-constructed categorisations. In Martin's further discussion it is clear that the same organisation may be usefully analysed from all three perspectives. Such an analysis would be able to clarify what creates consensus and how rituals and symbols act as common denominators among the organisation's participants and whether the events and statements are interpreted consistently or differently by the participants. If there are no ambiguities, we can ask whether they have been excluded from the analysis or reserved for what is taking place outside the (sub)cultures or disregarded as crucial in the analysis of individual experiences. The three approaches are, however, even when used together, just 'one among many ways to "carve up" this domain of inquiry' (Martin 1992: 43). There are no single definitions of culture and no agreement of its meaning, says Martin. Yet something is holding cultural dust bunnies together. Humans still live in material worlds, which emerge as self-evident to some but *cultural* to others.

2.9 Summary

I build my theory of cultures as frictioned, organised dust bunnies around a concept of learning. Is it a coincidence that I chose this position in the analytical field? As a researcher in an analytical field I am located among colleagues who work on aspects tied to learning and organisation. My view on culture, learning and anthropological theory is created in a particular analytical field where following the postmodern currents is the norm. This has formed my learning process in the analytical field. Thus I cannot, as some of my colleagues in the analytical field of organisational culture still do, expect culture to be a relevant concept in a self-evident way. I must begin by relating my use of *culture* to the many deconstructions and denouncements of the concept in the analytical field. My linking culture and learning maintains and insists on the concept of culture, but only after I have deconstructed it; we are children of our time as researchers and participants in the analytical fields. ‘A theory comes forward in its particular historical context and in relation to ideas that it succeeds’ (Boggs 2004: 193). As researchers we are positioned in this space-time-mattering of theories in the analytical field.

The postmodern movement created a new normativity in the analytical field which requires anthropologists to explain themselves if they present representations and modernist analyses of the postulated empirical episodes. For some time the new postmodern norms were about avoiding closure. New cultural norms and values are presented, and it is up to the students in the given analytical field (in, e.g., gender studies, anthropology and science and technology studies) to pick up on these new trends and conform to them.

The three analytical approaches presented by Martin (i.e. the integration perspective, differentiation perspective and fragmentations perspective) have all been normatively used in the analytical field. They have also grouped analysts into what might be described as groups of functionalists and symbolists, which have mutually excluded each other’s perspectives.

In her summary, Martin emphasises, however, that the three approaches only *appear* to be in opposition to each other (i.e. the fragmentation perspective is fragmented in comparison to the integration perspective, which is holistic and thus not fragmented). Following the postmodern approach, any analysis is always a partial perspective based on the researcher’s positioned access to a material space and the theoretical already constructed categorisations ethnographers bring with them to the empirical field – and the way they are formed in contrast to other perspectives in the analytical field. The three perspectives have been seen as the basis for power struggles (as in which one perspective is better than another) in the analytical field, rather than an attempt to explain how the three perspectives complement each other. In many ways, theory tends to form a battle arena in the analytical field rather than something to be developed in the meeting with the empirical field.

It is neither the ambition nor hope of Martin that this type of theory of culture should be able to reconcile and strengthen all the three perspectives in one

comprehensive theory. She notes that, even when all three perspectives are included and addressed in one analysis, the researcher only covers what can be classified within the three perspectives (Martin 1992: 193). And as already mentioned, all three perspectives can be criticised by other, more postmodern perspectives for lacking an understanding of the researcher's position.

The question remains why researchers in the analytical field of organisational culture have not even tried to reach an agreement on 'why vehement disagreements among the three social scientific perspectives have characterised this field' (Martin 1992: 43). After all, replacing the concept of culture (as some have tried) with that of identity (or any other analytical concept referring to what people share) only raises new questions similar to those that led to disagreements about the notion of *culture*. What makes people emerge as different or alike in their engagements with the material world? The question is still important whether people stay in place or move about or meet virtually or in a village. The discrepancies as well as the basic questions in the analytical field remain the same.

In order to gain a more comprehensive overview of culture in an organisation in the material learning perspective, a researcher can exchange the three different analytical cuts found in the analytical field and pursue learning connections between materials and meanings. This approach may itself be part of a new trend in the analytical field called 'new materialism' (which follow and question the former postmodern perspectives). In the material learning perspective, basic assumptions, subgroup controversies and individual deviances may all be relevant for the analysis. Yet, what matters is that vibrations of materials *sound through* the moving ethnographer – who may shift perspective by changing position many times in the research process.

This shifts focus from the processes in the analytical field back to the empirical field. Maybe closure is not an option, but in new materialism it has again been acknowledged that researchers should strive for 'the clearest vision' (Davies 1999: 62) when trying to make sense of other people's everyday life. This does not, according to Charlotte Aull Davies, mean that anthropologists should go into 'cover behind' the natives' voices, nor should we accept assertions of mimetic representation.

How do we then identify 'the clearest vision' of culture in a researcher's text or in the texts of natives or organisation members for that matter?

Martin's critique suggests that one of the most important considerations we can take with us from the postmodern era is awareness that researchers must be able to explain how their research is not simply a subjective interpretation. If a researcher's text claims to be an accountable presentation of other people's everyday practiced life, how can the processes of this accountability be explained without reducing the research apparatus to mere fiction writing or a microphone holder? Even if we shift the vocabulary to one of intra-actions and lines, the basic methodological problems of participant observation have not been addressed.

By not trying to answer these questions, the analytical field of both organisational culture and anthropology is left behind. As already mentioned by Jean Lave (2011), it is high time we went back to scrutinise the fieldwork done in

the empirical field before the ‘writing culture’ (Clifford and Marcus 1986), as the fieldwork is after all supposed to form the basis of the written text. This would shift focus from what happens in the analytical field to what happens to the researcher in the empirical field. And that will be the topic of the subsequent chapters.

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Hasse, C.

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