COMMUNICATION YEARBOOK 16

Edited by
Stanley A. Deetz

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CONTENTS

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

The International Communication Association was formed in 1950, bringing together academicians and other professionals whose interests focused on human communication. The Association maintains an active membership of more than 2,400 individuals, of whom some two-thirds are teaching and conducting research in colleges, universities, and schools around the world. Other members are in government, the media, communication technology, business law, medicine, and other professions. The wide professional and geographical distribution of the membership provides the basic strength of the ICA. The Association is a meeting ground for sharing research and useful dialogue about communication interests.

Through its Divisions and Interest Groups, publications, annual conferences, and relations with other Associations around the world, ICA promotes the systematic study of communication theories, processes, and skills.

In addition to *Communication Yearbook*, the Association publishes the *Journal of Communication, Human Communication Research, Communication Theory, A Guide to Publishing in Scholarly Communication Journals, ICA Newsletter,* and the *ICA Membership Directory.*

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INTRODUCTION

In 1987 the *Communication Yearbook* series was redesigned to provide a more coherent, readable, and useful volume. These goals remained central as I worked with reviewers in selecting and shaping the essays for this volume. While the scholarly contribution of each essay to specialized audiences is important, the volume is designed to be useful for those with a general interest in communication studies and for use in graduate and other classes to increase familiarity with the scope and directions of communication studies.

Communication Yearbook 16, like others in the series, is a compromise between the desire for diversity and breadth and the need for choice and focus. Like others, the volume favors North American and, to a lesser extent, European research concerns and methods, reflecting to a large extent the composition of the International Communication Association and the market for the series. Still, I have attempted to represent a somewhat broader set of international theoretical interests than are present in most North American scholarly journals in communication studies. As in *Communication Yearbook 15,* I have tried to assure that theory and method differences connected to social group differences such as gender, class, and ethnicity are treated explicitly in both major essays and the commentaries on them.

This volume is divided into three sections, each containing major essays and commentaries. The major essays were selected in an extended review process involving leading scholars in each of the institutional divisions of the field. Several of the reviewers aided the authors throughout the writing process and finally served as commentators on the essays. I selected the commentators based on their expertise in the subject area of consideration and their capacity to aid the reader in critically engaging the major essay.

OVERVIEW OF THE ESSAYS

The first half of this volume focuses on the study of communication within corporate organizations. This is intended to complement the mass media focus of *Communication Yearbook 15* and the interpersonal interaction focus planned for *Communication Yearbook 17.* Accordingly, Section 1 contains six major essays, ranging from a review of the organizational communication literature of the past decade to considerations of new theoretical directions for organizational studies. Section 2 looks at communication and social change. The first essay in that section considers alternative ways of thinking about the relation of new information and communication technologies to social issues. The second essay considers the growth of the multicultural context and communication processes that foster productive diversity. Finally, Section 3 includes reviews of three current theory debates in interpersonal and small group communication.

New Views of Organizational Communication

The study of communication in organizational contexts has grown rapidly and changed greatly during the past decade. In the roughly 10 years since the first "Alta Conference" and the publication of *Communication and Organizations,* edited by Putnam and Pacanowsky and based on that conference, the impact of critical and cultural studies has been immense. From what might better have been labeled "managerial" or "administrative" communication, focusing on control systems and interpersonal competence, has emerged an exciting theory-based analysis of organizations as significant social institutions. Within organizational settings, concern with communication processes is always intertwined with issues of control, coordination, and decision making. Theories of communication inevitably intersect with theories of each of these other elements.

In the first essay, Mats Alvesson addresses the problem of communication and a theory of control. Most traditional conceptions of managerial control and their attendant conceptions of communicative competence have failed to address larger organizational issues, especially culture. And conversely, most analyses of communication and culture fail to address the issue of control directly. Further, neither attends well to the labor process. Alvesson argues that as traditional forms of control and supervision fade in complex, decentralized, principally service-centered organizations, such omission becomes a serious problem. In his essay he develops and applies a theory of cultural control through looking at organizational discourse in a computer consultancy company.

Joachim Knuf, in the following essay, focuses on the analysis of culture in organizations. He argues that the concept of "ritual" is central to many cultural analyses but remains undertheorized. Consequently, not only has the study of specific rituals been inadequate, but so too have been cultural studies in general. By basing the concept of ritual in an anthropological theory of communication, the iconic qualities of formally coordinated interaction patterns are elucidated and the ways social structure in organizations is performed and enacted is better understood.

Feminist theorists have had much to say about both forms of control and culture in organizations. In the third essay in Section 1, Judi Marshall illustrates the various ways in which organizational cultures are often dominated by male values. The presence of high-context cultures and asymmetrical social power is shown to have specific identifiable consequences for communication by women in work settings. A gendered appreciation of communication provides for significant alternative practices.

A way to approach theorizing about culture and control that avoids the fragmentation that results as different groups vie for voice and authority is to establish a new ontological foundation. Stephen Banks and Patricia Riley believe that Anthony Giddens has successful accomplished just that. In their

essay, they argue, through a review of the basic principles of structuration theory, that a new theoretical paradigm is available that, if used properly, can help us study the transformational nature of communication and the global, multicultural context of modern organizations.

In the focus on culture and control, however, it is easy to overlook the infrastructure changes that have driven organizational changes leading to the attention to culture and control. In the next essay, Donald Cushman and Sarah King describe the changes in the global economy and the developments in information technologies that have greatly altered communication processes in organizations. They propose that "high-speed management" has evolved as a way to achieve sustainable competitive advantage by innovative, flexible, efficient, and rapid response to environmental change. According to Cushman and King, new communication processes would include a linking and negotiation process, a New England town-meeting process, a cross-functional teamwork process, and case studies in world-class benchmarking processes.

The final essay in Section 1 is a massive review of the organizational communication research published in journals during the past 10 years. For this essay, Myria Allen, Micheal Gotcher, and Joy Seibert pull together 899 journal articles from 61 journals. Superior-subordinate relationships and communication skills development are shown to be the most discussed topics during the 10-year period, with studies of culture showing the greatest increase. Across topical areas, theoretical interest in the social construction of organizations and reality has shown significant growth. I know of no more complete listing of articles in organizational communication for this time period than that provided by Allen and her colleagues.

Communication in a Changing World

Rapidly developing communication technologies, globalization, and multiculturalism are headline issues throughout the world. Issues such as these go to the heart of our understanding of communication, and increasingly, communication studies are being asked to provide conceptual guidance and even answers to the questions raised. This section looks at two aspects of these new concerns—conceptions of technological development and the manner of cross-cultural contact.

In the first essay, Peter Shields and Rohan Samarajiva consider alternative frameworks for research on the role of information and communication technologies on the restructuring of existing social formations. They argue that understanding the dynamic of social change associated with information and communication technologies requires (a) grasping the historical interplay between the irreducible "institutional clusters" of capitalism, industrialism, and the state; and (b) examining not only the forces/relations of production but the "forces/relations of distribution," "forces/relations of consumption," and "forces/relations of domination."

Studies of intercultural communication have often been weak owing to their focus on cultural assimilation and the failure to consider the autonomy of nondominant group cultures. In his essay, Fred Casmir grounds such problems in the reliance on communication models based on interests in persuasion, logic, and the exertion of influence that have been dominant in the United States and Europe. In his reexamination of contemporary international and intercultural affairs, Casmir shows the necessity for new models of communication that aid "third-culture building." Systems that mutually develop values enable better responses to human needs and changing environments.

Theory Debate in Interpersonal and Small Group Communication

The final section focuses on three theory debates in interpersonal and group communication. In the first essay, James Honeycutt reviews the work done in uncertainty reduction theory. He argues that a complete theory of uncertainty reduction requires understanding the relations among three components of interaction: preinteraction expectations, the structure of the interaction, and the outcomes of uncertainty reduction. Current work often focuses on only one of these components or considers each in isolation. Honeycutt proposes an integrative perspective based on lifelong cognitive processes, in which new information, changing information needs, and uncertainty reduction stand in a dynamic relation.

In the next essay, Theodore Zorn displays the central influence of the "motivation to communicate" on competent communicative performance. Despite such centrality, Zorn argues, the theory and research considering this construct is in a state of disarray. Through a review of the relevant literatures using a two-dimensional grid, trait versus state and willingness versus anxiety, Zorn suggests that a "state-willingness" approach focusing on communication goals provides the most productive orientation. Goal-based theories are seen as having the potential to explain communicative motivation.

In the final essay, Dennis Gouran, Randy Hirokawa, Kelly Julian, and Geoff Leatham examine the processes of decision making and problem solving in small groups from a "functional" theoretical perspective. In this essay they trace the evolution of the functional perspective, review its current status, and identify conceptual and methodological problems. From such an overview, they suggest that several new lines of inquiry ensure the continuing value of functional theory.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

essays and in improving the essays here. Robert Kubey, Hartmut Mokros, Peter Monge, Ron Rice, Beverly Sypher, and Ellen Wartella, in particular, have provided important reviews and counsel. Fred Jablin also deserves special thanks for his work in putting together the Organizational Communication Preconference on European Perspectives held in Dublin, from which the Alvesson and Marshall essays were drawn. I have appreciated the efforts of the commentators initially to provide me and the authors with helpful comments for improving the major essays and subsequently for their timely and thoughtful written commentaries.

The publication of this volume would not have been possible without the support of the International Communication Association (and that body's funds in a time of fiscal crisis), the editorial staff at Sage Publications, and the Department of Communication at Rutgers University. The editorial assistance of Lynn Bodofsky has also contributed greatly to the volume.

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SECTION 1

NEW VIEWS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION: AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

1   Cultural-Ideological Modes of Management Control: A Theory and a Case Study of a Professional Service Company

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This chapter argues that traditional conceptualizations of organizational and management control should be complemented by an elaborated theory of cultural control. Current efforts addressing the topic of control have operated with a single, overall concept (such as ideology, clan, or culture) that either covers too broad a territory or focuses only on restricted elements of cultural control forms, thus leading to a risk of neglecting important aspects. A fourfold theory of cultural-ideological modes of control is suggested, based on the concepts of (a) collective, (b) performance-related, (c) ideological, and (d) perceptual control. The chapter argues that these control forms are predominant in complex, decentralized situations, but are likely to have some influence in most organizations. A case study of a computer consultancy company illustrates and refines the theoretical argument. The study also contributes to an understanding of the management and organization of adhocracies and loosely coupled companies.

URING the past decade, both socioeconomic changes and theoretical developments have led to an interest in the "nonbureaucratic" aspects and forms of management, organization, and control. Instead of rules, standardization of work procedures, direct supervision, and other means of control targeted at employee behavior, indirect forms of influence targeted at values and norms in the workplace, the development of a common spirit among all personnel irrespective of rank, efforts to knit employees closer to the company, use of specific verbal expressions, leadership behavior, and physical artifacts that communicate specific meanings are emphasized. Despite this interest, little work has been done in relating culture to control in a theoretically informed way. This chapter aims (a) to develop a

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framework for thinking about "cultural-ideological" modes of control in organizations, (b) to illuminate management style and corporate culture in a case study of a computer consultancy firm in which such modes of control are salient, and (c) to relate corporate culture to labor process theory.

The major objective of this chapter is to present a theory of these new forms of cultural-ideological management control in which pervasive communication of the "correct" way to perceive and relate to corporate reality is central. The aim of the theory is to complement predominating understandings of "objectivistic-behavioral" forms of management control that match the bureaucratic form. This organizational form has made behavioral and output control salient, and past studies have given us an adequate understanding of these control types. This focus has, however, prevented us from fully recognizing and studying other modes and targets of control. Our understanding of clans and cultures in terms of control is still rather crude.

The proposed conceptualization is partly based on the development of new organizational forms and types of labor processes—or at least forms and types that have recently emerged on a broader scale—associated with the rise of professional service organizations and other qualified forms of industrial activity (sometimes called knowledge-intensive firms), where the level of complexity and uncertainty makes traditional forms of behavioral and output control insufficient (e.g., Burris, 1989a, 1989b; Hedberg, 1990; Kunda & Barley, 1988; Mills et al., 1983; Starbuck, 1990; Sveiby & Risling, 1986). Control forms in these types of organizations often differ from those in traditional bureaucracies.

A second objective is to illuminate the management of professional service companies with strong adhocratic features. This will be done through an empirical case study of a computer consultancy company that is typical of this organizational type. This kind of organization is strongly decentralized and exhibits a situation in which behavioral and output control is not possible. The professional service industry is a significant part of the service and information economy. Related to its expansion is the popularity of the project organization form (adhocracy), either as the principal way of organizing corporations (Mintzberg, 1983b; Sveiby & Risling, 1986) or as an important organization form within an overall bureaucracy (Kanter, 1983). Few adhocracies have been carefully studied. The theory of management control developed in this chapter informs the interpretation of the case study. The latter illustrates and provides empirical material for qualifying the theory.

Thus the theoretical and empirical purposes of this chapter are closely related and support each other. Using the vocabulary of Glaser and Strauss (1967), we can say that the chapter contributes to formal theory through a reconceptualization of management control and to substantive theory through analysis of organizational forms and managerial practices of a project-based professional service organization.

A third objective involves some modest theoretical synthesizing. The chapter is written primarily within a culture theory tradition, but tries to incorporate

contributions from labor process theory, with the following caveat.[1] With a background in labor process theory and, during recent years, in organizational culture studies, I believe that the former is too "materialistic," while culture studies, at least in the fields of organization and management, often carry a heavily "idealistic" and "consensual" bias. Labor process theory has been criticized for neglect of the subjectivistic dimension and for a deterministic view on local actors and dynamics (Knights & Willmott, 1990; Knights, Willmott, & Collinson, 1985; Storey, 1985). A similar critique might be directed at mainstream organization theory of the structural and contingency type, which has repeatedly been emphasized by organizational culture/symbolism writers (e.g., Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1985; Pondy, Frost, Morgan, & Dandridge, 1983; Smircich, 1983a). Within the field of cultural studies of organizations, the neglect of the labor process and the materialistic aspects of work is widespread and large parts of the literature concentrate on aspects of peripheral importance in relationship to the labor process (Alvesson, 1992a, chap. 6).[2] Theoretical inspiration from organizational culture and labor process theory can then be viewed as a research strategy for achieving a new theory/conceptualization of management control in informing a detailed case study.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, there is a discussion of the concept and forms of control in organizations. The limitations of traditional structural-bureaucratic conceptualizations are cited, and problems with a broad concept of cultural or ideological control are explored. A theory is presented that captures different modes of control of a cultural-ideological type. (I am using the concept of theory in the "weak" sense of a framework that sensitizes us to some important dimensions of the object of study.) This theory is then illustrated and refined through a case study of a computer consultancy company. This study illuminates important aspects of work organization and management by exemplifying a professional service organization with strong features of loose coupling and adhocracy. Suggestions are then offered as to when cultural-ideological forms of management control are especially significant. It is also argued that these control forms are present, to some extent, in a large number of modern organizations.

FORMS OF MANAGEMENT CONTROL

Traditional Concepts of Control

Most studies of social control of work and organization in so-called nonideological organizations, such as business corporations, have traditionally focused on the objective, behavioral aspects of control. Control is seen as a matter of direct influence over work behavior. For example, in a review article, Simpson (1985) identifies five modes of control over work. The first

three are taken from Edwards (1979), who discusses simple versus technical versus bureaucratic modes of control. Simple control is the personal exercise of power of the boss (owner, supervisor) over the worker, untrammeled by rules and similar restrictions/guidelines. Technical control is embedded in the technology of work (e.g., the assembly line). Bureaucratic control relies partly on supervision, but this is reduced to a carrier of rules, policies, formal incentives, and other impersonal devices. Simpson adds to this occupational control, in which a profession defines appropriate/nonappropriate work behavior, and worker self-control, in which the producers themselves have a high degree of discretion.

Burris (1989a, 1989b) suggests that a new organizational type, the technocracy, has developed recently that incorporates earlier forms of organizational control such as technical, bureaucratic, and professional control. Technocratic control is characterized, among other things, by a flattening of bureaucratic hierarchy, a polarization into "expert" and "nonexpert" sectors, and a substitution of expertise for rank position as a primary basis of authority.

Until quite recently, this "objectivistic" view of control was dominant. In his synthesis of research on organizational structure, Mintzberg's (1983b) five coordination mechanisms concern objective, external control forms and hardly anything on the significance of the whole sphere of culture and ideology. Ouchi (1979), for example, notes that "present organization theory . . . concentrates on the bureaucratic form to the exclusion of all else" (p. 840). When ideology is considered, it basically legitimates these forms of "objective" social control (Burris, 1989b) or appears as a major control device in very special organizations, such as the "missionary" one (Mintzberg, 1983a).

Culture and Control

It is clear, however, that the limits of organizational control hardly rest with "objective" means. Managers also often seek to enact a particular form of organizational experience for others (Deetz, 1992; Mumby, 1988; Smircich & Morgan, 1982).

> They may attempt to define interpretations and meanings that can become widely understood and shared by organization members so that actions are guided by a common definition of the situation. Those with power are able to influence the course of organizational development through control over valued resources and through use of symbols by which organization members mediate their experience. (Smircich, 1983b, p. 161)

The neglect of the ideational sphere, including ideologies, worldviews, cognitive frameworks, cultures, value system, feelings, and so on, has recently been a target of criticism, as part of the rapid expansion and current popularity of organizational culture and symbolism theory (e.g., Frost et al.,

1985; Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985; Smircich, 1983a). At least such criticism is latent in writings on the importance of values, taken-for-granted assumptions, meaning patterns, and so on for management and organization. A problem with many of these writings—from the viewpoint of the present chapter—is that they do not give the control concept, with its implications for the significance of power (and possible conflicting interests), the benefit of more consensual and harmonic preconceptions of "shared values, norms and understandings" (Alvesson, 1987). Culture and symbolism theory raise theoretical reasons for new views on control. How people experience and create meaning from the situations, objects, and people they encounter is crucial for their way of functioning. More basic than bureaucratic or administrative person, then, is cultural or symbolic person.

Especially significant in terms of control is culture in complex and uncertain organizational situations that demand a high degree of decentralization. Here bureaucracy, almost by definition, fails. The fact that management cannot control behavior or output does not mean, however, that managers give up intentions of control. As Weick (1987a) suggests:

> Whenever you have what appears to be successful decentralization, if you look more closely, you will discover that it was always preceded by a period of intense centralization where a set of core values were hammered out and socialized into people before the people were turned loose to set their own "independent, autonomous" ways. (p. 124)

The significance of socialization has attracted great interest recently, and it illuminates the role of culture in managing workers with a high degree of "behavioral autonomy." However, it captures only parts of the control issue in highly decentralized contexts. The durability of the effects of a (limited) socialization phase is not endless. It would not take care of all the control problems of management, except perhaps in very stable situations involving people who had experienced a very long and intense socialization process (for example, scientists and physicians). The core values must be hammered out regularly, through various means. This concept will be examined further in a subsequent section.

Connected to this popularity of culture is an increased interest in the related concepts of clan and ideology as forms of control. Ouchi (1979, 1980) has suggested that the clan can serve as an organizational control form in which the level of uncertainty is too great for the classic solutions—the market and the bureaucracy—to function. The clan rests on "social agreement on a broad range of values and beliefs" and "relies for its control upon a deep level of common agreement between members on what constitutes proper behavior, and it requires a high level of commitment on the part of each individual to those socially prescribed behaviors" (Ouchi, 1979, p. 838). This appealing condition might be achieved, Ouchi suggests, through selective recruitment,

socialization, and "ritualized, ceremonial forms of control." Control is here
conceptualized on a rather abstract level. Little is said about the major routes
taken by managers to achieve and maintain the clanlike qualities in an
organization. Some authors talk about cultural control, but also on a fairly
general level (see, e.g., Ray, 1986; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989).

Many writers who focus on ideology come close to what others refer to as
clans or cultures, even though the latter concept often is understood as a broader
and more complex one. Ideology can be defined as an integrated set of values,
ideals, and understandings about a particular part of social reality that justifies
certain commitments and actions (see Beyer, 1981; Geertz, 1973; Weiss &
Miller, 1987). Sometimes ideology is seen as control (Czarniawska-Joerges,
1988), but typically a rather broad and general concept is used that can cover
a wide area of possible forms of more specific control. Ideology is often
portrayed as a single traditional conception of management or control. Beckerus,
Edström, et al. (1988), for example, argue for a view of management based
on ideology (ideas) rather than control through instructions.

A Case for a Middle-Range Theory
on Organization and Control

Most authors who write on cultural-ideological forms of control basically
rely on a single major concept (culture, ideology, clan, or values). This
concept is then complemented by examples of actions, language, social
situations, and so on that illustrate how this form of control is exercised.
However, most proposals involving cultural-ideological mode(s) of control
are based upon an overall concept through which another, traditional control
form (i.e., bureaucratic) is confronted.

It can be argued, however, that a grasp of forms of management control
that are of a "cultural-ideological" type demands a more elaborated and
distinct theory in which variations as well as interrelations between types of
control are recognized. This becomes clearer if we consider the richness and
scope of the culture concept. There exist a large number of views and
definitions of *culture*. D'Andrade (1984), for example, views culture as
"learned systems of meaning, communicated by means of natural language
and other symbol systems, having representational, directive and affective
functions, and capable of creating cultural entities and particular senses of
reality" (p. 116). Jelinek, Smircich, and Hirsch (1983) say that "culture—an-
other word for social reality—is both a product and a process, the shaper of
human interaction and the outcome of it, continually created and recreated
by people's ongoing interactions" (p. 331).

These definitions strongly suggest that culture is a broad, multifaceted, and
complex concept. A number of writers in organizational culture try hard to
reduce it—for example, by equating it with values or norms that are possible
to manage, change at will, and even copy (!) (e.g., Barney, 1986; Kilmann,

Saxton, & Serpa, 1985)—but that enterprise leads to a superficial treatment of a rich concept (Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Calás & Smircich, 1987). Nord's (1985) suggestion to use culture as the sixth of Mintzberg's (1983b) five coordinating mechanisms demands a serious narrowing down of the concept, so that it exists on a par with, for example, direct supervision or standardization of work outputs. This might discourage us from illuminating the variations in how culture affects people.

I treat culture as a grand concept, one that is difficult to operationalize and use in empirical study or detailed analysis of specific organizational phenomena. It indicates a certain perspective (or perhaps rather a group of perspectives) or an overall interest in certain aspects of organizations. I agree with Pettigrew (1979), who sees culture as a parent concept for a family of concepts that can be used in more precise analysis.

Reserving the culture concept for use as a general orientation and as an umbrella concept for more precise concepts calls for complementation with the latter. In the context of organizational analysis, culture theory has provided us with a large number of concepts through which cultural interpretations might be made: symbols, values, taken-for-granted assumptions, artifacts, myths, sagas, rites, rituals, ceremonies, and so on. When it comes to the exercise of management control, no suitable typologies, conceptualizations, or theories that go beyond the general level have emerged so far. A large number of suggestions and ideas on how culture can be managed and changed has been presented. In some cases theoretical ambitions are strong (e.g., Lundberg, 1985; Pfeffer, 1981), but often the purpose is primarily instrumental: to advise managers how to strengthen their control over employees (e.g., Kilmann et al., 1985; Peters, 1978).

Normally the focus is rather in terms of how power is (or can be) exercised in various situations (meetings, introductions of new personnel, anniversaries, storytelling), through various means (language, material symbols, settings, actions), and for various purposes (mobilizing commitment or support, reducing tension, directing attention, developing a shared understanding) (e.g., Frost, 1987; Pfeffer, 1981). There are a number of typologies for different kinds of symbols (Dandridge, Mitroff, & Joyce, 1980; Ortner, 1973), stories (Martin, Feldman, Hatch, & Sitkin, 1983), and rites (Trice & Beyer, 1985), but these aim to make a categorization of a specific group of phenomena possible rather than to illuminate how control (and—much less—resistance to it) is exercised. Pfeffer (1981) proposes four types of symbolic action: language, ceremonies, "symbols," and settings. One problem is that these are overlapping: The three other than "symbols" are also symbols. Important parts of most ceremonies are the language used and the setting. Another problem is that these categories are general and unspecific. They refer only to the medium of control and do not treat the target. Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) argue that senior managers influence work culture in the following ways: codification of values and beliefs, promotion of interaction

and close ties among employees, taking care of newcomers (socialization and the like), and carefully monitoring the extent to which corporate values, norms, and practices are received and put into use by employees. However, there is some overlap. The third way (socialization and so on) is basically made up of the other three. The last point is concerned more with behavior than with culture. Monitoring the "proper" behavior of employees lies outside most modern conceptualizations of culture, which perceive it as an ideational and not as a behavioral concept (e.g., Geertz, 1973; Smircich, 1983a).

Another drawback in the present context is that many writings do not relate culture to work organization or the labor process. Studies of elements of organizational culture are often carried out in distinctly nonmaterial fashions, without paying close attention to the type of production in which the organization is engaged (Alvesson, 1992a, chap. 6).

Even though many writings on organizational culture can be related to the issue of control, a coherent theory on control involving cultural-ideological means has not been formulated. There is a need for a middle-range approach on this matter that goes beyond the macro level of general culture theory and the micro-level use of a single key concept—whether it is culture, ideology, or clan—to cover the whole area. Such a single concept runs the risk of either covering too broad an area or focusing only on a part of this cultural-ideological field, thus desensitizing research from considering variations in this regard. Such a middle-range approach provides theoretical concepts that are "between" the macro and micro levels of how specific, detailed cultural forms such as storytelling and renewal rites affect limited segments of organizational life.

A CULTURAL THEORY ON ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL

The proposed theory is based partly on general assumptions on the nature of humans (as cultural beings) and partly on considerations of critical aspects of organizational functioning in nonbureaucratic settings, that is, in situations where bureaucratic control is present only to a limited extent. In terms of its origin, the literature reviewed above has provided inspiration, as has the empirical study that is reported later in this chapter.

Theoretical Background

Emphasizing the social and cultural character of people, including their needs for community and meaning, and recognizing that a large number of organizations do not organically develop strong identities[3]—especially those that are loosely coupled, with fragmented work processes, and with weak technical and material common cores (Alvesson, 1990)—the following dimensions and contradictions appear as significant:

- organizations as a base for community (gemeinschaft) versus organizations as rational, formal, "asocial" settings based on contracts and economic exchanges
- corporations as sources of work identity versus arenas for nonorganizational (professional, working-class, and so on) identities or nonidentities (identity problems)
- organizations as generators of performance orientation versus organizations perceived as sources of exploitation
- organizations as common orientations (shared ideals, values) versus organizations as multiplicities of loosely coupled, uncoupled, or even contradictory orientations
- organizations (management) as facilitators of synchronizing perceptions of the nature of social reality versus organizations as heterogeneously perceived organizational realities

Normal organizations benefit from success in providing community, strengthening the corporate identities of employees, generating a positive orientation to high performance in the service of the company, and developing shared orientations and perceptions on significant matters. Most organizations "suffer" if employees have strong instrumental attitudes toward the workplace, have nonorganizational work identities (for example, identify with professional values instead of corporate ones), consider hard pressure for performance as exploitation, or develop ideals, values, and perceptions on social reality that are radically different from those of management.

These dimensions are of especially great significance for companies that do not rely on bureaucratic control forms. The behavioral autonomy typical for such organizations means that there is great room for feelings, attitudes, opportunism, "wrong" group identification, and idiosyncratic values and opinions to affect action. The lack of a really strong structural and, often, material integration as well as weak formal control—typical of a nonbureaucratic organization—means that variations on these dimensions have significant effects on results. People's voluntary action in accordance with the wishes of management is closely related to the extent to which management can affect employees' sense of belonging, identity, instrumentality, values, and perceptions.

Another indication of how control targeted at these dimensions can be conceptualized can be gained through consideration of the nature of cultural meaning systems. According to D'Andrade (1984):

Meanings in general, and cultural meaning systems in particular, do at least four different things. Meanings represent the world, create cultural entities, direct one to do certain things, and evoke certain feelings. These four functions of meaning—the representational, the constructive, the directive, and the evocative—are differently elaborated in particular cultural meaning systems but are always present to some degree in any system. (p. 96)

A combination of these aspects of meaning—which capture essential aspects of humans' functioning as cultural beings—and the critical sociocultural aspects of organizational functioning suggested above provides a general background and a rationale for the following conceptualization of management control.

Collective Control

Collectivity is the basis for voluntary social action. People can cooperate on a purely instrumental basis, but in a decentralized context a "collectivity" based on a calculated involvement provides a poor base. Collectivities can be of different kinds: a company, a work group, a profession, workers, and so on. In the worst case, from management's point of view, significant collectives are outside managers' scope. Collectives might also be antithetical to management and engender class conflicts or organization-profession conflicts. Managerial efforts and strategies to strengthen the collective (community) aspects of organization and to integrate the collective with the organization, including management, might be termed *collective control.* Several elements are included here: efforts to encourage gemeinschaft within the borders of the organization, stressing the organization as an important entity for this gemeinschaft, and then drawing upon the social control that emerges. The collective is then "procompany" and "promanagement." Management is seen as facilitating gemeinschaft and being a part of it. This is not necessarily the case if collectives develop beyond the influence of management, whose power they might diminish.

Collective control might be more or less successful. A more modest, and often more realistic, aim might be to influence the social relations and emotional ties within the company to such an extent that group norms hostile to management do not emerge, and management retains it legitimacy. In a decentralized context, merely retaining legitimacy is hardly sufficient for management if it is interested in having far-reaching influence on the staff. A very successfully implemented and maintained collective control might lead to coworkers' exercising pressure on each other to uphold the behavior promoted by management. This is more a consequence of collective control than an expression of this form of control itself. Collective control concerns group identification, feelings, social ties, and a positive atmosphere, not behavior per se.

Performance-Related Control

A crucial aspect of bureaucratic control is that of efforts to check performance. Control points might include behavior (procedures and so on) and outputs. Control of results, followed by rewards/sanctions, is normally accompanied by an instrumental attitude toward work and the organization. Sometimes decreased intrinsic job satisfaction follows (Salancik & Pfeffer,

1978). Strong forms of output control—and extrinsic rewards—do not harmonize well with a company-based gemeinschaft, since the latter demands a certain downplaying of the instrumental aspect of the relationship between employees and organization, and the replacement of a calculated involvement with commitment. What I call *performance-related control* "softens" the instrumental attitude or, when no form of output control is possible, upholds a collective performance orientation, and connects the economic and social parts of the company. An important part of this is to bridge the gap between the demands for efficiency and good social relations. Performance-related control aims at counteracting the contradiction that follows from the fact that employees are there primarily to contribute to profits at the same time they are (supposedly) a part of a strong community. This control form links performance to community. When community is linked with performance as a by-product, an indirect relationship between the results produced and social reward is established. For example, poor results might be loosely linked to less money for fringe benefits, such as corporate parties, but not in a proportional or automatic fashion. A common responsibility for results is encouraged, which may stress the desire to do one's job in a good way and to do for the generous company what it does for the individual. The links among individual, collective, and company reinforce the general notion of a fair day's work, so that fairness as a result of effective performance-related control attains a different meaning from that pertaining to a typical bureaucracy.

Ideological Control

Ideological control can be defined as efforts to persuade people to adopt certain values, norms, and ideas about what is good, important, praiseworthy, and so on in terms of work and organizational life. Ideologies justify certain principles, actions, and feelings, and discourage others (e.g., Alvesson, 1987; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1988). They are more or less elaborated and deeply held, both on behalf of the person who tries to exercise ideological control and on behalf of the audience that has been persuaded. When engaged in ideological control efforts, managers more or less consciously and systematically attempt to make employees adhere to the values and ideals in which they believe—or at least the values and ideals that they believe the company would benefit most from having employees believe in. We can imagine a spectrum of forms of implementation of ideological control. At one extreme, the agent of ideological control is reproducing ideas that he or she takes for granted and does not reflect upon—in this case the controller is also controlled, and it is questionable if this is a case of (conscious) management control. At another extreme, the agent is manipulating—proposing ideals and values that he or she does not believe in except as a means for influencing others. The latter enterprise probably easily creates backlashes, while there is a risk that people see through such manipulations in the long run. In normal

cases, ideological control is based on a combination of the calculations and convictions of key actors.

Perceptual Control

Perceptual control is not targeted at ideals and values—that is, beliefs about what is good and what a good person *should* strive toward—but at beliefs about what exists, how things *are*. Here there is some overlap with the concept of ideological control, but the differences are substantial and, I hope, will be clear from what follows. Perceptual control does *not* mean a structured, value-laden framework for sorting out good from less good, but refers to the influence of social actors on how people experience particular objects and phenomena in specific ways. As Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) explain, individuals' experiences of their situations, the objects around them, and even their own needs are dependent on the social environment. Individuals are receptive as to how to interpret complex and ambiguous stimuli. Salancik and Pfeffer talk about the social roots of information processing. Language and attention-focusing actions are crucial for this process (Pfeffer, 1981).

The social origins of perception do not imply that a person's view of reality might be easily manipulated. The same applies to ideological control. The success of management in the exercise of perceptual and ideological control varies depending on efforts made, skills possessed, and the extent to which managers' definitions of reality appear against a background of legitimacy. The success of collective control partly determines the latter. If management is seen as "outside" the collective, defined phenomenologically through the experiences of the organizational members, the latter—whether it be the profession or the work group—is the most significant social source for norms and information processing. In order to have impact on collective perception, managers must be very clever and must make considerable efforts.

The four types of management control described above—collective, performance related, ideological, and perceptual—are interrelated, yet they refer to distinct forms of the exercise of power in organizations. Collective control can, for example, be exercised without the other control forms. Spirit-enhancing activities and strong social bonds are perfectly possible without the help of ideological or perceptional control. Perceptual control is possible without the aid of common values and ideals or a strong sense of community. At the same time, these four types of management control can reinforce one another, and in many organizational situations—to which I will return—they are used jointly. Successful efforts to standardize values and perceptions throughout an entire organization facilitate, for example, the sense of community. I will return to this and other matters concerning control forms later in the chapter. The case study to which I now turn will provide empirical material for such a discussion.

THE CASE STUDY

The case study concerns a Swedish computer consultancy company (referred to here as CCC) that, at the time of my investigation in 1987, employed 500 people (one-third of whom worked in foreign subsidiaries, which are only marginally included in the study). I shall say more about the company after I describe the methods used in the study.

Method of Study

I contacted CCC's top management and, after two telephone calls and one meeting with a top manager, the company agreed to let me do the study, including interviewing anybody who was able and willing. I also had permission to participate in some meetings and public situations. The company was very cooperative. CCC's management was keen on the idea of someone writing about the firm (even though the mass media often took an interest in CCC). They seemed to believe that publications about the company would automatically generate good public relations.

I formally interviewed 35 people and had brief, informal conversations with another 15. The interview subjects belonged to various categories. I interviewed one founder, the two top managers, seven other managers (presidents of subsidiaries), some administrators and lower-level managers, and about 20 consultants. Among the consultants were two representatives for employees on the board of directors. More than half of the interview subjects had been with the company for many years, some even from the start. Other subjects had been there for only one or two years, and some were newly employed. My sample emphasized representatives of management and consultants with long histories in the company. Apart from that, the sample is representative of the Swedish part of the company, that is, two-thirds of the entire company. (For practical reasons, I did not interview members of CCC's foreign subsidiaries.) With the exception of two individuals, everyone I approached for interviews was positive. (The two who rejected were heavily occupied at the time.) While the consultants, as in other consultancy firms, had to debit their working time to clients, the time the interviews took was viewed as outside working time, so the consultants had to work extra to make up for the time lost. This did not prevent them from cooperating.

The interviews took from one to three hours each. In some cases I took notes; in others I tape-recorded the interviews and transcribed them. My questions and themes varied so that I could obtain as rich information as possible. I analyzed and reanalyzed the material between interviews, and checked important pieces of information with new interview subjects.

Besides interviewing, I also undertook participant observation. I spent a number of days in the company building, participated in a couple of business lunches for managers and some parties, and observed how people interacted

during work. I also participated in a "project philosophy course," a seven-day-long introduction for all newcomers—from secretaries to managers—on the company and how it operates. The course has two purposes: to teach employees about the company and how work should be carried out, and to socialize them into the "corporate culture." In addition, I also examined current and historical company documents of various kinds.

The Company

CCC was founded in 1977 by three men who were then in their early 30s. The market for computer consultancy services was expanding rapidly, and employees were recruited at a fast pace. CCC is a homogeneous company in which 80% of employees are computer consultants, including project managers. The rest are managers, almost all of whom are also computer specialists, and administrative personnel. The average employee age is somewhere below 35.

The company sells consultancy services of various types. The tasks vary from big projects employing up to a dozen project leaders and programmers for three or four years in duration to minor activities involving a single person for some weeks or days. The qualification levels for tasks also vary. At one extreme there are advanced investigations of information strategies for large companies, and at the other the requirement is for an extra resource person in a client's computer department during a peak in the work load. Some projects demand innovations; others are of routine character.

The company is organized in the form of 20 subsidiaries, each employing between 1 and 50 persons. Every firm has its own market niche, based on region, type of service provided, or type of client. Of the 500 total employees, about 60% work for firms located and rather tightly integrated in the company's main building outside Stockholm, where the top management is also situated. One-third of all personnel work in the six foreign subsidiaries, and about 10% are employed in two subsidiary companies in Sweden outside Stockholm.

A key feature of the management principles behind CCC's organizational structure, according to official policy statements as well as interviews with managers and employees, is to emphasize small scale, decentralization, and a flat hierarchy. No subsidiary should employ more than 50 people, in order to maintain a sense of belonging among personnel and to make it possible for the managing director of each subsidiary to know personally and have contact with all subordinates. When a subsidiary grows so that more than 50 are employed, it is divided.

The company has been and was at the time of my study very successful according to all common business criteria: high profits, rapid growth (between 20% and 50% increase in personnel per year), positive attention from the mass media, very good evaluations from clients and the rest of the market in market investigations, and low personnel turnover (below 10%).

At the time of the study in Sweden, there were four other relatively large computer consultancy companies, with 300-1,000 employees each. In addition, there were a large number of smaller computer consultancy firms. CCC is, however, basically competing with the larger organizations. Other competitors are the personnel of CCC's clients' computer departments. The success of computer consultants is dependent on their ability to develop new systems and to conduct projects in a much more skilled way than the computer departments of the clients' organizations.

Specific Problems and Critical Factors in the Organization of Work

CCC is an adhocracy, and almost all work is project based. Normally, one of the company's subsidiaries has sold the project and is responsible for it. Most of the people working on it come from the firm, but often one or several are hired from another of the company's subsidiaries. Management, of course, attempts to acquire projects that are in line with the business concept of CCC (which says that information technology should be related to the strategic situation of the client) and that are considered interesting for the consultants. A major restriction, however, is the degree to which the consultants are occupied—that is, the extent to which their working time is debited to clients. The periods when a consultant is not occupied are costly, a fact that largely governs the logic of the company. Flexibility is important for both management and consultants. A pragmatic attitude toward ideals is called for—sometimes projects that are far from ideal must be accepted. A lot of puzzle-solving activity surrounds the staffing of projects. Sometimes people go in and out of projects in order to match the variations in demand and supply of human resources. Overtime is often required. The members of a particular project sometimes know each other and have worked together before, but other times most do not know each other when a project starts. If a project is located at a client's offices, the consultants work there and only occasionally visit their employing company. In some cases, newly employed persons may start working on projects that continue for years that are located at a client's company, which means that they have better knowledge of the client's organization than of CCC.

This type of labor process and the organizational context of work thus involves some specific risks and difficulties for employees and, indirectly, for management. "As a consultant, you are in a tough situation," one consultant told me. "You are expected to be in control, to know what to do, and to be effective most of the time."[4] Consultants are expensive, and clients have higher expectations of consultant performance than of their own personnel, whose salaries are normally half of consultancy fees. The work situation is often characterized by a high degree of uncertainty, at least during the first stages of a project. Consultants seldom know what to do after a project is

completed, or where or with whom they will work. Sometimes they have to
start working on problems for which their training and skills are inadequate,
and they are expected to learn rapidly what is needed. In the worst case the
following can happen:

> You can be placed on projects where you do not know the machine and those you are
> working with from the client's company do not really want you there because the
> project has been sold on the wrong level in the client company. You feel that the time
> schedule is wrong, the machine is not functioning and you realize that you have taken
> too great a responsibility. Everything can go to pieces. (consultant)

The problematic aspects of the work situation in this type of work and
organization are quite different from those prevalent in most industrial organi-
zations and other "machine bureaucracies." Project work is characterized by
a high degree of instability involving confusion, uncertainty, project group
members' being forced to work closely with new people over more or less
close time intervals, changes of work settings with varying intervals, stress
caused by strict time schedules and deadlines, and so on (see also Mintzberg,
1983b; Reeser, 1969).

This company type is unique in, among other things, the combination of
three types of uncertainties for personnel: task, work team, and work setting.
Often a project concerns a new problem area that consultants have not
experienced before (such as a computer system for air transport booking and
planning), and it may involve coworkers who have not worked together
before as well as a new physical setting and host organization (the client).
This triple uncertainty—which follows from a lack of stability in these three
respects—does not characterize all projects, but is relatively common and
typical for this company type.

Of critical importance from top management's perspective is that most of
the job is carried out autonomously by the consultants. This means that direct
control of the work process by top management cannot be strong. Top
management is dependent on consultants' acting "voluntarily" in the interest
of the corporation. An important aspect here is loyalty to the corporation. The
latter is very sensitive to senior consultants leaving the company, especially
if they take their customers with them. The consultancy services provided are
basically bound to the knowledge of the personnel, and this knowledge is of
course mobile. Skilled consultants are sometimes able to earn much more if
they leave their employment situation and start businesses of their own.

A less dramatic problem concerns consultants' sense of identity in relation
to the corporation. When a consultant sits at the client's workplace and has
more contact with the client's personnel than with CCC's, identity problems
may easily develop. For the computer consultancy company, it is important
to make consultants feel that they are not just "money-makers" for the firm,
but that they are also valuable coworkers and part of the organizational

community. It is crucial for top management to make the consultants feel loyal to their employer and not to the clients:

> If you are away working at the client's place all by yourself, you have a great need to make contact with your manager; to feel that you are not just debiting and pulling in money, but that you are also a person and important as such. (consultant)

A final problem concerns the marketing aspect of employees' close interactions with clients. Almost all personnel are exposed to the consultancy firm-client interface. Not only the final product, but the entire production process is often exposed to the client and affects his or her image of the corporation. This makes the spirit and appearance of personnel not only a matter of internal importance, but also crucial from a marketing point of view. As students of service organizations have repeatedly pointed out, organizational climate is very important in this type of business (e.g., Schneider, 1980). It affects internal as well as external relations.

Management Style

The nature of the work and the market situation for the consultants make traditional management methods such as direct supervision, formal regulations and restrictions, standardization of behavior, and negative sanctions highly inappropriate. In a case such as this, the exercise of managerial control and organizational power will not be based primarily on force and coercion, but on consent and identification with a "common good" or a shared understanding of what is "natural" and "self-evident" (taken for granted), that is, hegemony (see Deetz, 1992; Deetz & Kersten, 1983; Doorewaard, 1988; Frost, 1987; Mumby, 1988). It is important to note the importance of hegemonic power in most work contexts where self-supervision, autonomy, decentralization, and occupational/professional control are involved.

Important goals in CCC—or the means by which achievement of ultimate goals such as high profits and corporate growth will be established—are a good climate, job satisfaction, loyalty to both the subsidiary to which the employee belongs and the whole corporation, and "corporate pride" (experience of corporate uniqueness and a feeling of belonging among the personnel as a whole). Managers talk profusely about "fun and profit," whereby they try to link the ideals of a positive work climate to a high level of performance. On a general level, the management of the company makes tremendous efforts to counteract the tendency toward social disintegration that is inherent in this "mode of production," and to eliminate the risks associated with it, such as consultants becoming more committed to clients than to the employer, leaving the company for a competitor, or starting businesses of their own and taking clients with them. Another risk is that people will work in too autonomous ways,

using methods of their own. This might decrease the basis for achieving synergy effects through cooperation among various parts of the company and also make it hard for project groups to function.

CCC's managers try to achieve—and often succeed at achieving—social integration within the company and to maintain boundaries to the external world through social and "cultural" means, such as social gatherings of all types. Much of the social activity largely directed by management takes place among personnel during or after work hours. Other features of CCC's management style are easy access to the managing director of the subsidiary for the consultants, and a generous attitude regarding the passing on of information. These ingredients of management style are well recognized in the popular as well as the academic literature on modern, high-tech companies (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Kanter, 1983; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). How management influences employees and how managers themselves are influenced can be attributed in large part to the company's specific "corporate culture."

Corporate Culture

I make a distinction between "genuine" cultures—which are founded in history and are broad and deeply rooted—and corporate culture as a managerial strategy for the integration and control of the personnel and managers of a company (see Knights & Willmott, 1987; Ray, 1986; Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989).[5] The corporate culture of CCC is based upon and embedded in the short—and therefore not that powerful—tradition of the company and the influence of its founders. The corporate culture of CCC does not altogether cover the total cultural patterns emerging in the organization, but rather covers those values, norms, and social practices that the company and especially its senior members have tried to implement and maintain as the reproduction of what was institutionalized by the founders. Corporate culture is, thus, a part of a "genuine," "real" culture as well as a managerial strategy: a "managerially biased culture"—fragile and dependent on the systematic efforts of management to "hammer out" what they consider to be the correct values, beliefs, and opinions.[6]

The managers of CCC are rather self-conscious about corporate culture and how to reproduce the ideals, values, and norms attributed to it. They discuss the topic frequently, and also address it in public (for example, in annual reports and interviews with journalists). The company spends a lot of time and energy on its formal socialization program, the "project philosophy course," which is run by top managers. On the whole, the youth of CCC and its very open two-way relationship with the environment and other organizations restrict the extent to which values, ideals, assumptions, and so on of CCC sink in to the "taken-for-granted" level, which some researchers see as the most significant level of organizational culture (Schein, 1985).

Corporate culture, as well as culture in general, can be seen as affecting people in two major ways: through values (ideals, norms, and so on) and through social ties. The reproduction of a culture and its impact on people can take place through specific activities, through the various types of behavior of key actors and other "cultural agents," through language, and through material arrangements (Alvesson, 1992b; Dandridge et al., 1980). According to the managers and employees of CCC, important values and norms are openness, friendship, having fun, informality, personal support, working hard for the company, being prepared to spend some leisure time taking part in activities orchestrated by the company, and so on. An important part of the maintenance of these values is the recruitment of people who share them (see Sathe, 1985; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983).

Great efforts are made to facilitate the link between company results and the consultants, to encourage good social relations, to strengthen the corporate identity, and to provide guidelines for work. The link between overall results and individuals is, for example, reinforced when every second week all personnel of each subsidiary meet and are informed by the managing director about what is going on in the subsidiary and in the company as a whole and what the results are. Information about the company is considered to be of importance to the employees, and the managers try to minimize secrets.

A large number of events are institutionalized in order to strengthen social relations in the company. Every third month, subsidiary employees do something special that is financed by the company, such as hiking in the mountains, sailing, or diving. Large parties also take place every year. A number of groups take part in company-supported activities that meet regularly in the corporate building outside Stockholm, including a choral group, an art club, and a group taking a navigation course. Management tries to encourage employees to consider the company as a family and the workplace as a home. The workplace is laid out in a way that supports this idea. Half of the top floor is designed in such a way that a homelike feeling is created. There is a kitchen, a sauna and swimming pool, television, cozy furniture, a piano bar, and so on. People work in office landscapes. They sit tightly grouped together, with very little area per individual. The "public" spaces, however, are rather large. Major identity-facilitating activities take place when the company celebrates various events. CCC's tenth anniversary in 1987, for example, was celebrated over three days on the Greek island of Rhodes. All 500 employees, the board, and some other people were flown to the island to take part in an unusual program.

The design and interior of the main corporate building also have some identity-reinforcing qualities. In addition to its homelike features, the building is quite original and has received much attention from the mass media in Sweden. The architecture includes a number of other cultural artifacts that express the management "philosophy" of the company. Contrary to the common mode, top management is located on the first floor. The internal

walls and the office of the top managers are made from transparent glass, which symbolizes openness and facilitates interaction. The design also reflects a view of how work should be conducted. Very few straight lines exist. There are no long corridors. The middle of the building is dominated by a triangular open space. Some of the strengths of CCC in project work are also reflected in the architecture: the abilities to communicate and to handle social relations with clients. In order to be understood and have an impact, physical material intended as communication must often be complemented by conversation or explanation indicating the meaning of the design (Berg & Kreiner, 1990). CCC's employees are encouraged to believe in the aspects of the company mentioned above, and in this light the architecture and interiors are relevant and conducive to the company's philosophy and make sense for the employees.

How can corporate culture be related to the labor process? As previously stated, the former affects people primarily outside their everyday work activity. Many of the activities associated with corporate culture might be seen as compensation for what is absent in the labor process. At CCC, in the latter, people are outside the overall company community; they often work as single consultants. Their direct connection with the company is weak. They do not have fixed workplaces. Outside the project team (membership-conferring group), daily interaction with a managing director or colleagues is infrequent. Consultancy projects are loosely coupled to other projects and the entire company. It is important for top management to make consultants feel part of a corporate community and to avoid the development of instrumental attitudes toward the employer. At the same time, of crucial importance to the performance of the company is the extent to which it is possible to debit the consultants' time to customers and to make them work hard.

CCC's management style and its corporate culture result in the employees' being relatively close-knit, both with each other and with the company. A feeling of loyalty is fostered. There are indications of this in statements made by interviewed consultants, such as "One feels more inclined to work a bit harder for this company." In a less favorable light, one consultant observed that when somebody leaves the company, colleagues interpret this in a negative way, as if the person leaving is letting the others down. The work groups, which are sometimes assembled of people who do not know each other in advance, tend to run smoother from the start, and cooperation is improved. People feel that they primarily belong to CCC, and work with this in mind. CCC's corporate culture also functions as a resource for managers, helping them to encourage people to do their jobs even in situations that do not feel pleasant or stimulating. As one consultant noted:

> The managers draw heavily on loyalty. The purpose of culture is to build a sense of belonging, a loyalty with the company. If we didn't have that, people would quit all the time. The reasons of the company are egoistic. But this is not

necessarily negative. It is also fun. But you don't say, "I don't give a damn about this, I won't do it, I'm not going to that place again." You don't do that. Of course, you do the job.

Factors other than corporate culture as an abstract, isolated entity must be acknowledged here. These concern management control efforts, contingency, and demographic factors. The fact that CCC is a young, expanding company in a growing market, with a relatively homogeneous work force—many between 30 and 40 years old—in professional jobs certainly makes the development of this climate and commitment easier. These structural factors do not, however, automatically produce these effects. Many companies in fast-growing markets fail. Only a few really succeed. A homogeneous group—in terms of professionality and age—is not a guarantee of a good atmosphere. It can be said, however, that the preconditions for the development of a corporate culture are very favorable for CCC. This is also strengthened by the fact that external conditions reinforce the effects of the exercise of performance-related, collective, ideological, and perceptual control in the company.

In one sense, corporate culture can be seen as the oil that makes the labor process run smoother. The triple uncertainties, mentioned earlier, that characterize many consultancy projects are counteracted through the acceptance and support of a positive attitude toward the company and its organizational members, a shared set of values, beliefs, ideals, and norms of how to relate to each other and to work that the organization and its "culture" transmit to project members. The reduction of heterogeneity that follows from this makes it somewhat easier for project groups to avoid friction and subsequently develop group norms. The latter can be said to be "prepared" at the organizational level, even though, of course, every group develops a unique way of functioning. Project managers and members can draw upon CCC's "culture." The goodwill of the company and the positive organizational climate reinforce the chances that negative group dynamics, confusion, and problems between CCC and its clients (the host organizations) will be minimized. Having said this, I must add that the impact of the corporate culture is not a panacea. It takes much more than good oil to make machinery function. The effect of the oil (the corporate culture) is marginal, but not insignificant.

Other metaphors can also be used to illustrate the role of the corporate culture. Many authors talk about corporate culture as a glue that holds and organization together. Nord (1985) suggests that this metaphor is too static, and proposes that magnetism is a better one:

Adequate conceptualization of the bonding process that holds complex organizations together must be able to encompass repulsion as well as attraction; it must allow for changes in the parts; and it must treat the patterning among the parts (e.g., coalitions). The magnetic metaphor encourages examination of the dynamics through which the various parts arrange themselves in the field, of how various

parts attract some parts and repel others, of how the magnetic field itself (via induction) may change the structure of the individual components, of the operation of some elements that are nonmagnetic, and of others that are antimagnetic and that may lead to the destruction of the field. (p. 195)

Even though people in organizations vary in terms of how sophisticated their ways of thinking and feeling are in relation to culture—some are a bit skeptical—culture apparently facilitates bonding processes. CCC's corporate workplace, social events, downplaying of formal hierarchy, and principles of project work have magnetic powers. The antimagnetic forces encouraging fragmentation of the corporation—heterogeneous tasks, uncertainty in the job situation, geographically dispersed work, temptations for consultants to establish themselves in their own businesses in a growing market—are, on the whole, weaker (at least they appeared to be so at the time of my study). The most important exception was when a foreign subsidiary left CCC and became an independent company. The antimagnetic operational elements appear to have manifested themselves in the physical and social distance between the foreign subsidiary and CCC's top management, resulting in disagreement on ownership of the subsidiary. The subsidiary's managing director and personnel were not happy about all of the subsidiary's profits being transferred to the corporation, and then in large parts even further to the company group for new acquisitions and expansion. So far, however, this departure is an exception. The attractions of the company and its culture are strong; most employees seem to be satisfied. Management considers itself to be very competent in dealing with personnel and the social side of business and the organization. As CCC's CEO told me, "If there is anything we are good at, it is this. We are damned good at this."

CCC IN THE LIGHT OF CULTURAL-IDEOLOGICAL
MODES OF MANAGEMENT CONTROL

CCC exhibits large similarities with corporations that have "strong" cultures as described by Deal and Kennedy (1982), Kanter (1983), Ouchi (1981), Peters and Waterman (1982), and Van Maanen and Kunda (1989), among others. These authors suggest that culture affects a broad range of behavior. Therefore it might be assumed that corporate culture provides the base for managerial control. In a certain sense it does. The view of corporate culture as an autonomous, stable, unitary force influencing people in a clear-cut way through a number of shared values and norms is, however, somewhat problematic (see Nord's critique of the glue metaphor, referred to above).[7] In particular, it is important to recognize that corporate culture does not function "in itself." In opposition to a "real" culture, which is based on history and tradition that affects people on a deep (unconscious) level and is automati-

cally transmitted from one generation to the next, a corporate culture is "invented" and depends to a large extent on the systematic efforts of management to develop, maintain, and strengthen certain forms of control.[8] The concept of corporate culture is of value as a way of summarizing certain patterns in values, ideals, and norms as well as in practices that reinforce these, but to go beyond this somewhat superficial level and grasp the type of organizational control patterns and processes that produce and uphold them, a more distinct understanding of cultural-ideological control is needed. The fourfold theory suggested earlier is helpful in this regard.

The control modes of collective, performance-related, ideological, and perceptual control contribute to producing and maintaining the corporate culture but also draw upon the culture itself. (Having been socialized into it as well as having been taught to use it instrumentally by older managers, new managers use it to draw upon in their symbolic actions.) The four control forms also provide a more precise and dynamic way of exploring the power-related dimensions of management in its relationship to employees. (Of course, bureaucratic forms of control are also used in CCC. Due to space limitations, I refrain from addressing these here.)

Collective Control in CCC

The concept of collective control refers to, as mentioned before, management's efforts to put its imprint on employees' experience of gemeinschaft in the workplace and the definition of that gemeinschaft. Successful collective control means that management is seen as part of that community, even as a principal source behind it. Such a community might be genuinely collective and developed from below, but in CCC it is, to a large extent, systematically orchestrated by dominant actors. Therefore it can be seen as a form of management control.

Four major elements are in operation at CCC in the development and maintenance of collective control: reduction of (formal) hierarchy, encouragement of social events ("integration rites"; Trice & Beyer, 1985), recruitment in which social criteria are important, and efforts to equate the whole company with this community through emphasizing the identity of the corporation (for example, through the use of corporate architecture).

The first element is indicated by statements about and other forms of symbols related to the antihierarchical nature of the company. The placement of top management on the bottom floor in the corporate building, next to the reception, is an example of this. Another is the pressure on managers to participate actively in all sorts of social events. As one subsidiary manager expressed it:

> There is an opinion, a sort of training in how to be a leader in this company which in principle comes from the old leaders, i.e., the founders. The leader is of great

importance, is a sort of cultural carrier and should be an ideal for the personnel.
As a leader you must participate in all social events. You should preferably be
the funniest of all, you should be noticed all the time and give direction to the
subsidiary and the personnel, in the direction you wish, such as through nice
parties, stories, and things like that.

This quotation also covers the second element of collective control—em-
phasis on social events. Community-enhancing social activities are espe-
cially important at CCC, where the consultants seldom or only in small work
groups meet during work time. In order for this to function, CCC can be said
to "exploit" people's free time in the service of the company (the community).
The management of CCC has created social situations that attract the employ-
ees, so that they voluntarily spend some time together with their fellow
workers in carrying out activities partly orchestrated by CCC.

A third significant factor concerns recruitment. The significance put on the
social aspects of the organization is indicated by the fact that social criteria
carry a great deal of weight in recruiting. Personnel representatives partici-
pate in interviewing candidates for jobs and have, in principle, veto rights.
(It can be said that this partly breaks with management control aspirations.
Or, in other words, management's wishes for collective control lead to a
preparedness to decrease its influence over recruitment issues.)

The fourth element of collective control concerns the effort to create a
community feeling across the entire company. The design of CCC's building
and the efforts to sell it as a second home to the personnel, as noted above,
exemplify this. Another good example is the above-described celebration of
CCC's tenth anniversary. The significance of community at the "right"
level—that is, the company level—is partly connected to the risk that work
groups, even subsidiaries, might depart from the company and start compet-
ing firms. This risk is strong in consultancy—a constant nightmare for top
managers in this kind of business—and provides strong incentives for trying
to integrate the entire company in the gemeinschaft. The community feelings
characterizing CCC wield considerable power. While great efforts are made
to secure social integration not only on the horizontal level, but also along
the vertical one, management too experiences a "collectivity feeling." The
"we feeling" of the entire company is strong. Collective control at CCC
means, on an overall level, that employees themselves have become carriers
and guardians of a certain social identity and of a strong sense of loyalty to
the company. It also means that peers experience a substantial degree of
social pressure to act in accordance with corporate goals.

Performance-Related Control in CCC

Performance-related control takes place in various forms. The subsidiaries
are rather autonomous, but their budgets are closely monitored. Every month

CCC's economic results are presented to top management, to the managing directors of the subsidiaries, and, through the latter, to their personnel. The performance of a subsidiary therefore becomes well known not only to the manager and his or her superior, but also to all the consultants of the subsidiary and to the managers of other subsidiaries. Deviations from the budget affect employees through the presence of a shared feeling of responsibility over business and an identification with a "performance and profit mentality." The close interactions among personnel within a subsidiary and the close and friendly relationships between the managing director and the consultants stimulate a sense of collective responsibility and the experience of shame or pride depending on the outcome. Because a subsidiary employs a maximum of 50 people, there is a clear feeling of connection between an individual's efforts and the subsidiary's results.

There exists a certain relationship between a subsidiary's performance and the economic rewards of the personnel, especially concerning collective fringe benefits. If the subsidiary manages to debit 90% of all the available consultancy time, including time for education, sick leave, and so on, the employees are allowed to work less during summertime. More money is also made available for quarterly "conferences," which are mainly used for recreation and the maintenance of a good climate. But the control here is rather weak. The relationship between performance and fringe benefits is ambiguous. Working time during summer is normally reduced irrespective of whether the 90% limit has been reached or not, and therefore the economic incentives for producing good results are rather weak for individual consultants.

Performance-related control is basically carried out with noneconomic incentives. Positive feedback and approval are crucial. The company plays a good deal on loyalty and a person's wish to succeed. This means that the instrumental nature of management's relationship to employees is downplayed or even hidden.[9] The company appears to be generous to its employees, partly in focusing on social bonds and loyalty, but at the same time it does not tolerate deviations from high profit expectations in the long run. If performance results are unsatisfactory, according to top management and the board's evaluations, managing directors can be replaced.

Performance-related control in CCC invokes norms and feelings. It touches upon employee feelings of work morality, especially on the felt obligations to live up to the expectations of the "generous" company, to do a good job. Two of the managers I interviewed stressed, for example, that important motives for them were to "show what you are able to do" and "perform in a way that shows that one pulls one's weight." This control mode bridges the gap between formal control and the cultural sphere. Feelings of shame and pride are important, and some factors at CCC make these more salient for employees and managers than at many other workplaces: the organizational form, with its many small subsidiaries; the relatively rapid feedback on company performance, owing to the type of activity in which one is engaged

(consultancy work); and effective formal and informal communication lines that include the economic results of the whole company and its various parts. In a discussion based on psychodynamic thought, and as a consequence differing in part from what is proposed here, Schwartz (1987) suggests that shame and guilt can be strong driving forces for behavior in organizations. From another angle, my conclusion supports this idea, even though I stress sociocultural sources rather than unconscious fantasies. Companies that produce calculated-instrumental compliance reduce these feelings. In CCC they are reinforced.

Ideological Control in CCC

This aspect leads us to the issue of ideological control. The term *ideology* is used in various ways in the literature (see, e.g., Alvesson, 1987; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1988; Weiss & Miller, 1987), but here it has a restricted meaning: a set of ideals and values that provide a sense of the type of direction feelings, norms, and actions should take according to the ideals and values espoused by top management and accepted by substantial groups in the company. Ideology is seen here as a core part of what is considered to be "corporate culture."

A number of virtues are often mentioned within CCC that are supported by management behavior and specific events and activities that express the "corporate culture." Examples, as stated above, include openness, close social relations, having fun at work, and expressing positive attitudes. These values are overtly expressed during the systematic socialization event, the project philosophy course, in which the course leaders (top managers) encourage people to "be positive" when they talk about how personal life and work life affect each other and the importance of being open about the former (at the course I attended, one course leader asked the other how he felt after his divorce and about how he functioned at work as a result). It is my impression that managers are quite open in this company, but it is to some extent a matter of selective, planned openness, such as in the example just mentioned. On their behalf, openness seems to be a mixture of truly held values and "soft" calculations. The "rational" element involved is probably to a minor extent shared by junior members, creating at least a slight imbalance between the junior and senior members in how to understand and deal with this value.

Of central importance in CCC—at least for the owners and management—are the values of rapid growth and high profits. The company has high goals in this respect. In official documents every year, subsidiary and top managers stress growth goals. (At the time of my study these were roughly 20-25% on average. The profit rate goal was 15%.) In the company, the priority of these profit and growth objectives is viewed as so self-evident and "natural" that the objectives are hardly made explicit as "values," at least not to the same extent as the values associated with the functioning of the organization. Here, hegemony rules.

An interesting example of how this overall ideology is communicated to employees is the annual shareholders' meeting. After this meeting there is a party for the consultants, the shareholders, and some invited guests. Most of the consultants participate in the meeting, which is in general a boring event, but the management and chairman of CCC add some more interesting elements, such as hiring a business journalist to do interviews with the chairman and the CEO. By getting the employees to attend this session, where of course the growth, profits, and future of the business are on the agenda, management can present the capitalist ideology to them not as "naked exploitation," but in a form embedded in a pleasant social context. The close connection between the shareholders' meeting and the party afterward also provides a clear indication of the relation between joyful events and corporate performance—that is, between "fun and profits"—as seen by management and owners. Of course, the meeting increases the chances that economic control will be carried out in an efficient way. It maintains the hegemony of capitalist ideals.

An interesting aspect of the corporate ideology of CCC is the ideal of being positive. This ideal improves the work climate and reduces the chances of negative and critical thinking's becoming widespread. It also discourages communication of problematic experiences in the workplace and thus prevents awareness of collectively experienced problems. Collective action triggered by problems is, of course, less likely under these circumstances than in a situation where negative information and complaints are expressed more freely. Openness in CCC is about positive and personal matters and about problems in consultancy projects, not about negative corporate ones. This ideal is expressed by the norm that when an individual raises critical or negative issues, he or she should be prepared to come forward with constructive suggestions.

Perceptual Control in CCC

Perceptual control, as suggested earlier, consists of systematic efforts to affect how organizational members view organizational reality. This means that management consciously provides clues for perception. Perceptual control can be viewed as the extent to which management functions as a crucial source of social information processes (see Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

As mentioned earlier, the social origin of perception should not be taken to imply that a person's view of reality might be easily manipulated. In the case of CCC, however, management appears to be successful in this respect. The espoused values, the social situations arranged to create feelings of togetherness, and the leadership style of the managers lead to rather close contact between managers and employees (collective control) and consequently to good possibilities for the former to persuade the latter. Perceptual control is also facilitated by managers with impressive credentials or highly developed skills in communication and impression management. The complex

and ambiguous organizational reality of CCC—on the behalf of the employ-ees, who have a restricted overview of what is going on in the company—also opens up the possibility of perceptual control (see Alvesson, 1990). As opposed to industrial work, for example, where the material dimensions of the workplace are crucial, the nontangible aspects of work are important to the employee at CCC—its organizational links in terms of ideals, social relations, a sense of corporate identity, and so on.

Examples of how management tries to affect the perceptions of employees are provided by the following statements about perceived reality at CCC: The company is very unbureaucratic, people are treated as individuals in the company, and the organization is very flat. These statements are expressed in official policy documents and in the project philosophy course, and were evident in my interviews with both managers and consultants. All of these statements might be a matter of argument, in terms of both their truth and their relevance. Nobody would accuse the company of being bureaucratic, but the nature of a relatively young, expanding corporation in this type of business is to be unbureaucratic. (It is worth mentioning that in Sweden, the concept of bureaucracy has bad connotations.) Nevertheless, by systemati-cally stressing the unbureaucratic character of CCC, management succeeds in making the employees well aware of some features of the company that they otherwise would not have considered, at least not to any great extent. Something similar can be said about the scope of individuality in the company and its organizational hierarchy. In some respects the organizational hierar-chy is flat, consisting of informal relations between relatively few official levels, but in other regards elements are discernible that are not in full harmony with this interpretation—there are a number of "half-official" hier-archical levels as well as social differentiation in the company, including reduced contact between top management and ordinary consultants as a result of increased size (Alvesson, 1992b, chap. 6).

To a large extent, top management in CCC manages to affect people's perceptions of the company so that ambiguous aspects are often perceived in favorable ways. In the socialization program for new personnel, a number of clues for viewing the company are introduced, and "real" conditions do not clearly deviate from the clues to the extent that the former are rejected and cynicism develops. A prerequisite here, I believe, is that "objective reality" should not deviate too much from the suggested clues for how it should be interpreted. This objective reality—social practices, behavior patterns, struc-tural arrangements, physical conditions, priorities in resource allocation—is, of course, closely connected to the cultural level—the meanings attributed to these practices and material conditions (see Fombrun, 1986). The latter, especially the perceptual schemes in the company, affect action and structure and govern the interpretation of these. However, objective reality is also affected by external conditions and by other forms of action and organiza-tional dynamics than those particularly directed at the perceptual level.

Perceptual schemes might fail to help create meaning because there are discrepancies between expectations—based on clues and the like—and the actual perceptions of social practices. Another, more relativistic, way of formulating this would be to say that the suggestions for how to see things proposed by management do not coincide with what the employee perceives—encouraged and actual perceptions differ—which leads to skepticism concerning the former. Providing that objective reality—as employees perceive it—does not depart from the ideals too much, the trick for management is to draw attention to the favorable aspects of an ambiguous reality and draw attention away from its least favorable aspects.

Additional Comments on Management Control Forms in CCC

Problematic for management and advantageous from the employees' perspective is that the cultural-ideological forms of control must conform to the lived experience of the employees. An ideology, a clue for perception, a sense of community, or a sense of responsibility for performance that goes beyond one's own narrow work role cannot be imposed on a worker. People can be manipulated, of course, and this is probably an important aspect of management, but there are also restrictions regarding the extent to which they can be manipulated in the long run. This strong dependency on the consent of employees means that a management that relies on these modes of control as chief mechanisms for organizational control must be serious about them. This means, among other things, that one must pay the price for not optimizing on a number of other dimensions. In the case of CCC, it is clear that the company is selective about recruitment matters. Managers must be liked by their subordinates. Consultants must fit in socially. This means that the possession of excellent professional skills in many cases is not sufficient for an individual to be hired. It also means that some traditional control forms, such as budgets, even in those cases where they are appropriate, can be utilized only with care. Rewarding good performance and punishing bad is, according to Flamholtz (1983), for example, a prerequisite of a normal budget control system—control has implications regarding forms of action, not only registration of results. As mentioned before, effective performance-related control requires a restricted use of rewards and punishments.

The fact that CCC relies heavily on cultural-ideological control mechanisms and is ambitious in using them has not prevented the appearance of contradictions surrounding the control forms. This is, over time and on the whole, unavoidable. Employees' lived experience sometimes backfires against the different control forms. One example was the departure of an entire foreign subsidiary when collective control apparently was not successful enough. One illustration of objection to performance-related control is the following experience of one consultant after the founders—who earlier had

close relations with and a strong impact on employees—left the company around 1985 and used their large profits for further enterprises. "What do we get from this? What is the profit for us? These thoughts were never here during the first years. But after that it started to take form. What in hell do you get from working to death? To work in hell?" Ideological and perceptual control modes also sometimes fail when people experience contradictions between ideal and practice, between how management describes things and how personnel perceive them (Alvesson, 1992b, chap. 13).

It seems that in organizational life, it is not only the various forms of management control that operate, but also certain antimagnetic forces. The magnetism of the former is, however, as previously stated, very strong in CCC. It is not unlikely that the balance between magnetism—including control—and antimagnetism—including misfired control—will change in the long run. The exact nature of this is hard to predict. On the one hand, decrease in market growth and tougher economic conditions are likely to lead to disharmony and conflict and to make the continued use of these modes of management control difficult. On the other hand, a longer corporate history might lead to a strengthening of certain tendencies that could lead to the development of a local culture that is deeper and more enduring then the somewhat artificial "corporate culture." Such a development would reinforce stability and make the use of these control forms easier.

DISCUSSION

Is CCC Unique?

CCC is certainly in many ways an atypical organization. The jobs are quali-fied—more than 80% of those employed are professionals (even though com-puter consultants hardly belong to the same professional level as lawyers, physicians, or psychologists). The company is in a rapidly expanding business. It is young and successful, and the average age of its personnel is below 35.

In addition to this, some specific features of Swedish society make the application of these control forms slightly easier, even though CCC is rather atypical. Swedish society is relatively egalitarian, scoring low on hierarchical relations and authoritarianism (Hofstede, 1980). The uniqueness of CCC's contextual situation should not, however, be overstressed. Swedish societal culture in no way guarantees community at the workplace level. I doubt that an ordinary Swedish workplace includes any more gemeinschaft than is found in most other countries.

In common with all organizations, CCC contains elements that are unique and elements that it shares with a broad spectrum of organizations. That the exact nature and examples of the four control forms treated here are more or less unique to CCC does not mean that these control forms are not in operation

in a large number of other organizations. Elements of these can be found in, for example, the writings of Czarniawska-Joerges (1988), Deal and Kennedy (1982), Pfeffer (1981), Rosen (1985, 1988), and Van Maanen and Kunda (1989). In the absence of studies informed by a broader conceptualization of cultural-ideological control, such as the present one, existing studies, on the whole, illuminate only limited aspects of culture (such as a party or the role of a particular metaphor in a company) and utilize a general, abstract, and clumsy concept of a cultural system (or a clan) that does not address the specific control forms in operation. Existing literature provides no good basis for investigating the generality of the control theory suggested here.

Some observations suggest that some of the apparently unique features of CCC have limited impact on the management control mechanisms upon which they rely. The fact that the company is young and operating in an expanding market is not crucial for these control modes, since these attributes do not appear to have decreased in significance over the life of the company and its maturation during the middle of the 1980s. In a certain sense, the systematic intentions behind these control forms became stronger after the first six to eight years of the company and after the founders left. Earlier, the social bonds within the company emerged more spontaneously through the highly dynamic situation of the company and the impact of the founders' personal leadership. In CCC management control has replaced leadership as the chief way of managing the organization (the former is organization based, while leadership is person based). This follows with maturation. The significance and impact of the four cultural-ideological control forms cannot be explained by referring to the early life stage of the company. This phase of development has implications for the exact nature of the control forms, and these must be adapted to the particular life stage of the company. An early life stage may also reinforce the effects of the control forms. But recognizing that there is a link between the developmental phase and the precise character of control forms is different from suggesting that the control forms are used in the company only or primarily because of its young age. This is highly unlikely.

Factors That "Trigger"
Cultural-ideological Modes of Management Control

A number of features of the company do, however, contribute to an explanation of the significance of the four modes of control. One can talk about factors and dimensions in organizations that make these control forms suitable or necessary. Identification of these dimensions makes it possible to generalize from the case study to organizations, in particular with regard to this fourfold theory of control.

One such factor concerns the *decentralization of the work process*. The difficulties in controlling work through rules, direct supervision, or even

output control make the broad set of cultural-ideological control mechanisms necessary for management in order to minimize the risk that the consultants will use their autonomy "wrongly" (see Weick, 1987a). Communication of the "right" values, understandings, views of reality, commitment, and feelings of responsibility are too crucial in this context to be neglected by management. Related to this and to some extent overlapping, but still far from being covered by the decentralization aspect, are the following dimensions.

Fragmented labor processes and loosely coupled organizational structures tend to decrease the level of social integration. (Of course, the functional demands for integration are low in this situation, but social need satisfaction, corporate identity, and the ability to cooperate when needed all call for social integration of the company.) While material and sociostructural conditions do not facilitate integration, the cultural-ideological level remains a possible vehicle for integration. Here it seems significant to knit people from different labor processes together (collective control), to encourage them to strive toward good performance beyond the suboptimization inherent in their individual work roles (performance-related control), and to stimulate the development of shared values and perceptions (ideological and perceptual control).

The adhocratic character of the organization in which so much is changing all the time—projects, composition of work groups, and so on—also trigger, given competent management, uncertainty-counteracting mechanisms in the company. To provide employees with well-selected aids for constructing meaning out of ambiguous and complex situations—ideological and perceptual control—might then appear appropriate for managers.

To this we can add *a lack of overview over the organization* that results from geographical dispersion of projects and fragmented labor processes, but that can also arise from other factors, such as large company size, rapid changes, or restricted flow of information. Such a lack of overview from the average employee's standpoint provides managers an opportunity to have relatively far-reaching influence on how employees perceive significant aspects of the company (Alvesson, 1990). The preconditions for perceptual control, then, are better than in a company that is more physically concentrated and with more stable and homogeneous output.

Another significant aspect concerns *personality-intensive work,* which is inherent in professional service production (Grönroos, 1984; Normann, 1983). In professional service work, as in services in general, social interaction between producer and client is crucial. Not only technical skills, but pleasant behavior, a good atmosphere, and the like are also important. It is important that people are "turned on." Behavioral and output control can hardly affect subtleties in how employees behave toward clients, but a service organization might affect the latter by providing a good organizational climate (Normann, 1983; Schneider, 1980) and by persuading employees to adopt service-minded values and norms. Ideological control as well as performance-related control is important here.

Still another factor relates to *the power of employees,* which in its turn is contingent upon how critical they are as resources (i.e., difficult to replace and the like; Hickson, Hinings, Less, Schneck, & Pennings, 1971; Pfeffer, 1981). The more critical they are, the more unsuitable the coercive means of control. Instead, management must rely upon consensual means of control. Knowledge-intensive companies run serious risks of "personnel flight." It is relatively easy to open a small consultancy firm and move clients over to it. Loyalty and community are major weapons used to counteract this risk (Alvesson, 1992b; Hedberg, 1990). All four management modes of control discussed in this chapter can be used as means for achieving this, in particular, performance-related and collective control. A related issue concerns the absence of a distinctive authority structure in, for example, professional organizations. Here, collegiate orientations and power dispersion are common, which makes it difficult for top management to act autocratically (Hinings, Brown, & Greenwood, 1991). More voluntary ways of exercising influence might then become more significant.

Labor market conditions are also significant in the development of forms of management control (Edwards, 1979). This overlaps the former aspect. In general, there is a tendency that the better the labor market, the heavier the reliance on voluntary means of control. Coercive control functions better when employees are dependent on the employer.

My last point concerns *the hierarchical dimension.* It can be argued that organizations are often vertically differentiated when it comes to management/organizational principles (Alvesson, 1982). In general, the significance attributed to high-level organizational participants suggests that the space for them to think, feel, and act is in many ways more restricted than it is for other actors (see Galbraith, 1985). The interest of the those at the top level to affect the perceptions, values, ideals, collectivity (team feeling), and feeling of responsibility for the company in its totality above what an individual is directly being rewarded/sanctioned for is stronger than among those on lower organizational levels. In CCC a lot of effort was made to create a strong sense of community and friendship among the group of subsidiary managers and top managers. If, instead of an organizational hierarchical dimension, we talk about an occupational one—running from unskilled workers at the bottom to scientists at the top—it can be argued that organizations that have a large proportion of people located high on such a scale are, on the whole, characterized by a strong reliance on cultural-ideological means of control. As a company with a very high proportion of professionals, CCC ranks high on such a scale.

The eight dimensions discussed above provide hypotheses predicting when the four cultural-ideological control modes are predominant. The greater the strength and proliferation of these factors within an organization, the heavier the control by management in using these mechanisms or a mix of these. Each of the eight dimensions "calls for" control of a cultural-ideological type,

involving, in principle, the four mechanisms discussed here, even though in many cases one or two might be particularly suitable, as indicated above. These eight dimensions, of course, often vary greatly within a single company, for it is common that different parts of a company have different characteristics. In addition, different types of labor markets—primary, secondary—might provide different environments for a company. Different types and mixtures of management control might characterize different parts of a company. The homogeneous and unitary character of CCC in terms of personnel means that no empirical material for illustrating this possibility has been provided here.

It can be added that most, if not all, organizations are to some extent characterized by these control forms. Although they might be clearly subordinated to output or behavioral control, they still have a certain impact. After all, the formal properties of even the most bureaucratic organization do not tell the entire story of how control is exercised. Work content, pay, supervision, and technical/bureaucratic control do not fully determine behavior. Meanings, understandings, values, work morality, social needs, and community feelings are important for collective and individual functioning. Skilled managers likely try to have some influence on such matters. Management normally relies upon many forms of control (Storey, 1985). The entire cultural-ideological sphere is too significant to be neglected by research on the control intentions of management, even though the level of ambition in many cases is lower than in CCC and the means used are different.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The major purposes of this chapter have been twofold: to develop, illustrate, and refine a framework for cultural-ideological management control types, and to analyze the organization of a professional service corporation with strong features of adhocracy and loose coupling. This empirical objective has the advantage that it makes the nonbureaucratic modes of control more salient. Besides contributing to an understanding of this type of increasingly important organization, the case study has been used as a vehicle for the illumination of cultural-ideological modes of control. These are central in this corporate form, but they probably appear in less visible shape in a large number of other types of organizations. As the number of organic organizations increases, more salient efforts to address cultural themes as targets of control can be expected (Weick, 1987b). Further research is needed to explore this.

A fourfold conceptualization of cultural or culturelike modes of control has been suggested based on consideration of the nature of culture and on some dimensions of organizations that draw attention to culture as an object for control. These four forms are performance-related, collective, ideological, and perceptual control. Managerial control is thus directed toward each of

the following targets of influence: (a) sense of community, grouped around the collectivity that regularly interacts on an informal basis and that shares similar pleasant and expressive experiences, thus creating a horizontal pressure for behavior; (b) morality and feelings surrounding individual and collective performance and economic results; (c) ideals and values espoused and identified with a concern for what is good and worth striving for; and (d) clues guiding the perception of ambiguous reality. These forms are at the same time related and distinct. Effective cultural-ideological management control often touches upon all four, to a certain extent, but at the same time they can exist in pure form. In the case study, I have illustrated this conceptualization with a large number of examples and have indicated its empirical relevance.

In contrast to traditional views on control, the cultural-ideological ones do not focus on behavior in the work process or the results of it (output). While instructions, supervision, rules, standardization of work behavior, mutual adjustment, self-supervision, and the measurement of output all direct attention to what takes place in the labor process or its results, performance-related, collective, ideological, and perceptual control have impact to a large extent *before* work is done and around the labor process. There is, at least in some companies, a tendency to displace the design of work organization with a design of culture and people (Willmott, 1991).

The analysis of these control forms in relationship to the case study suggests that certain organizational characteristics tend to make these cultural-ideological control modes particularly important for managerial action and organizational functioning. A high degree of behavioral autonomy, fragmented work processes, uncertainty and lack of overview for the personnel, corporate results that are highly sensitive to the commitment of personnel, a tight labor market for significant personnel groups, and a high qualification level for employees all contribute to a management style and an organizational structure that take the cultural-ideological aspects seriously. The more these features characterize the labor process, the more it is likely that a mixture of cultural-ideological control forms will be salient in the totality of efforts and arrangements of management to safeguard the compliance of its employees.

These types of control are crucial elements in management's efforts to produce compliant forms of identities and subjectivities among employees. The control typology highlights central elements in "the complexity of various discursive practices that define what it means to be an organization member" (Deetz & Mumby, 1990, p. 39). If successfully employed and met with little or no resistance, such control might allow for a far-reaching privileging of managerial interests over others when it comes to not only the "objective side" of workplaces, but also the intersubjective one, that is, shared morality, feelings, values, and definition of corporate reality. The risk of drastically undermined human autonomy is obvious (Willmott, 1991), even though it can be argued that people often develop some resistance to efforts to make them fully internalize a corporate culture (see Kunda, 1991). Like

other control forms, the four treated here will probably fluctuate in terms of influence, be precarious, and have only partial success. A minimal degree of plurality when it comes to the forming of communities, opinions about correct work morality, the right values, and how to perceive corporate reality is likely to exist in the normal case, even though during particular circumstances agents other than top management may have marginal influence.

NOTES

1. Labor process theory is characterized by, among other things, a focus on the material aspects of the work situation and of organizations, that is, what the direct producers are doing and where the transformation of nature into goods (production of services) takes place. It is assumed that control over this labor process is not politically neutral but might be a matter of contest. Conflicting interests between employees and owners/top management affect organizational control. (For overviews, see Edwards, 1979; Knights & Willmott, 1990; Knights, Willmott, & Collinson, 1985; Thompson, 1983.)

2. Interestingly, a book based on a conference on "organizational culture and meaning of life in the workplace" (Frost et al., 1985) manages to say almost nothing on the labor process. There is a tendency in the organizational culture literature to treat workplace culture as independent of the labor process.

3. *Corporate identity* here refers to the perception of personnel that the company stands for something specific and consistent, that it embodies a collective competence, and that it embraces a particular meaning with respect to work.

4. All quotations of interview subjects are translations from Swedish.

5. The term *corporate culture* is normally used to refer to company-specific cultural features of relevance from a business/management point of view. It is an expression typically used by popular and prescriptive authors (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Kilmann et al., 1985). More academically advanced authors normally favor the concept of *organizational culture*, which is understood less often as signifying a robust empirical phenomenon than as an interest in cultural phenomena in organizations (e.g., Gregory, 1983; Smircich, 1983a). Louis's (1981) formulation—organization as a culture-bearing milieu—indicates this view. It is important to recognize the distinction between broader cultural patterns in organizations and the more narrow phenomena focused on by management researchers studying (corporate) "culture," especially given that a normative, pragmatic conceptualization of culture to an increasing degree characterizes academic studies (Barley, Meyer, & Gash, 1988).

6. It might be argued that all cultures are managerially biased, while dominating groups put their imprints on the history of a company and thereby on its values, stories, myths, and the like. According to authors such as Schein (1985), founders and top managers are crucial to the formation of cultures. Another opinion stresses other sources behind cultural patterns, such as the group and professional cultures of various employees (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984). My formulation *managerially biased culture* refers only partly to these opposing views on the continuum. What I am especially emphasizing is the corporate culture's dependency upon the control efforts of management and senior actors. It is this elite that puts its imprint on patterns in CCC, rather than the entire organizational collective.

7. A closer look at one of the companies appearing in best-selling books on corporate culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Ouchi, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982) indicates, according to Martin (1987) and Martin and Meyerson (1988), that the real situation is much more ambiguous and confused than portrayed by the authors. This should warn us against interpreting corporate culture as an all-embracing source of influence and control in itself.

8. Some organizations, owing to long histories, stable memberships, strong borders to external society, and idiosyncratic features, might develop unique organization-based cultures that reproduce themselves (Alvesson & Sandkull, 1988; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983), but in most cases where cultural elements typical of a particular organization exercise influence over people, more or less strong and systematic intentions from actors are involved.

9. As noted by Perrow (1986), organizational conditions might influence personnel in either an "egoistic" or an "altruistic" direction. In CCC, the corporate culture, the social relations between managers and other employees, the (earlier) role of the founders, the reward system, and other factors tend to strengthen an "altruistic" orientation within the company. Economic control is designed and implemented in a way that does not disrupt this orientation.

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Cultural-Ideological Modes of Control: An Examination of Concept Formation

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THE subtextual message that I find most readily in Alvesson's chapter is as follows: We need to build more rigorous, powerful theory about organizational culture as related to managerial control. I suspect that most students of organizational communication will share with me great sympathy with this call. Alvesson reviews the plethora of alternate, underrationalized, and underused conceptual schemes for the study of culture and cultural phenomena. He judges them using a number of fairly demanding criteria, and finds that a somewhat different conceptual apparatus needs to be developed. He develops such an apparatus, consisting of four "cultural-ideological modes" of managerial control:

- collective (creation of a sense of strong ties to a collective)
- performance related (meaning both the financial surveillance system and the specific way this is socially interpreted in the organization)
- ideological (ideals, norms, and values that provide a sense of direction and a basis for praise and blame)
- perceptual (processes that affect employee views of organizational reality, especially their construal of objects and situations)

He then tries to take some additional steps toward sound elaborated theory by listing a number of factors that "trigger" or make cultural-ideological modes of control especially important.

Alvesson seems to have developed his scheme as a result of multiple influences: the literature on culture and control in organizations, debates

about the nature of organizations, consideration of his case study, and espe-
cially an identification by D'Andrade (1984) of four functions of cultural
meaning systems—construction (of cultural entities), direction (of actions),
evocation (of feelings), and representation.

The problem with striving for rigor is that it brings with it ever higher
standards for success. As a little work with university undergraduates readily
reveals, it takes relatively little intellectual precision to notice that organiza-
tions have distinct symbol systems, values, stories, and rituals. The steps up
to higher levels of conceptual adequacy are much more difficult, since we
confront problems such as Weick's (1979) trilemma of generality, simplicity,
and accuracy. Attempting to get all three from a theory at the same time is
very difficult. While I applaud Alvesson's argument for standards and his
attempt to advance toward them, I think he has, by his own criteria, a number
of steps left to take. However, I will not be so bold as to suggest those steps
myself (except in a few cases). Rather, I want to suggest some additions to
Alvesson's criteria. I think more reflexivity and specificity in his choice of
theoretical task and objectives would aid him in the efficiency of his own
progress. In addition, I think the literature in organizational theory and
communication has made part of the progress he seeks, so that his goal should
shift to lead him to advance still further.

So I begin this response with a description of Alvesson's task as conveyed
by the standards for theory that he introduces. I will then analyze how well
his own scheme of modes of management control meets these standards.
Finally, I will suggest some changes in the standards themselves, based on a
reading of the current status of critical organizational communication theory.

ALVESSON'S CRITERIA AND THEORETICAL TASK

In reviewing the current state of scholarship on organizational culture and
its application by management for control purposes, Alvesson articulates a
number of criteria for the kind of scheme he has in mind. Two of them are
relatively formal and usual criteria: A scheme should be

(1) exclusive (that is, the categories should not overlap; p. 9); and
(2) appropriately broad (that is, the categories should not cover "too broad a territory"
    so as to include elements that do not involve cultural control, but also should not
    narrowly focus on "restricted elements of cultural control forms"; abstract, p. 3).

I read this as analogous to, but more theoretically oriented than, the usual
criterion of "exhaustiveness."

However, Alvesson also uses a number of special, theoretically linked
criteria to evaluate past analyses of culture. For example, a scheme for the
study of cultural control should

(3) focus on how culture affects people, on the *process* by which *control* is exercised.

Alvesson criticizes categorizations of symbols and the like because they do not "illuminate how control (and—much less—resistance to it) is exercised" (p. 9). This refusal to register mere differences in cultures, in favor of a theoretically important clear dimension (or set of dimensions) of variation, is a strength of Alvesson's self-set task.

According to Alvesson, a scheme should also

(4) be elaborated enough to register and illuminate variations among organizations (and subunits, presumably) in the pattern of control processes at work, and also their interrelations (p. 8).

This would allow the researcher to find and describe differences in processes even if the same medium of control was in play. Promanagement stories, for instance, might work in different ways in different contexts and combinations.

Finally, a scheme for the study of cultural control should

(5) not neglect the "material dimension" of the organization, especially labor processes (p. 5).

Although the term *material* is very ambiguous these days, Alvesson seems intent on treating theoretically the mediation of "cultural" phenomena—symbols, stories, rituals—by practical work activities as well as such systemic phenomena as profit making and production. My own impression of the culture literature is that it often neglects the factor of evident purposiveness in much organizational activity; paradoxically, this interpretive approach simply denies and represses a central interpretive premise of its subjects. As a result, I think this standard is wisely chosen.

Before moving to consider Alvesson's scheme as a response to these standards, I would like to make one point about the standards themselves. Alvesson does not list these standards as though derived from a clear source or reasoning process; instead, they seem to be adduced from his reading of the weaknesses of the culture literature. Systematic theory construction might well work on these to generate a more clearly parallel and exhaustive list.

INTERNAL CRITIQUE OF
ALVESSON'S SCHEME OF CONTROL MODES

Does Alvesson's own scheme meet his criteria? In some significant cases, I found reason to doubt that he had successfully fashioned his categories to avoid the problems he seeks to avoid.

Exclusivity

I am troubled by a number of apparent overlaps in Alvesson's scheme. Probably the most troublesome of Alvesson's modes is the first, "collective control," which he defines as "managerial efforts and strategies to strengthen the collective (community) aspects of organization and to integrate the collective with the organization," including "efforts to encourage gemein-schaft within the borders of the organization, stressing the organization as an important entity for this gemeinschaft" so that it is "procompany" and "promanagement" (p. 12). Such a category seems to have unavoidable components of ideological ("efforts to persuade people to adopt certain values, norms, and ideas about what is good, important, praiseworthy, and so on"; p. 13) and perceptual control ("targeted at . . . beliefs about what exists, how things *are*" and involving control of perception of, for instance, the organization as "very flat" and "very unbureaucratic"; pp. 14, 30). Strengthening gemeinschaft overwhelmingly means strengthening values and perceptions related to gemeinschaft.

The second category, of performance-based control, also seems to overlap others. It by definition involves the more traditional, even financial, control systems, but focuses on their enactment and interpretation; in Alvesson's example, such control " 'softens' the instrumental attitude or, when no form of output control is possible, upholds a collective performance orientation" (p. 13). Even in this statement an overlap with collective control is apparent; but performance-based control also clearly targets ideological or value orientations (e.g., "the desire to do one's job in a good way"; p. 13) and perceptual or social-reality judgments (e.g., "A common responsibility for results is encouraged"; p. 13).

Both of the first two categories seem especially liable to overlap because they seem relatively narrow and derivative when compared with the last two categories, ideological and perceptual control. But even the distinction between these two is troubling, resting as it does on the fact/value distinction so notorious from the viewpoint of a critical theorist. How is the promotion of ideological *virtues* such as "openness, close social relations, having fun at work" to be separated from the advocacy of *perceptions* that the company is "very unbureaucratic, people are treated as individuals in the company, and the organization is very flat" (p. 30)?

I fear that the fate of overlapping categories threatens anyone who, like Alvesson, tries very reasonably to ensure relevance by deriving categories using general considerations drawn from literature and experience. The specific source of the categories, D'Andrade's four functions of cultural meanings, seems even to ensure overlap, since, as D'Andrade says, all four functions are present to some degree in any system of meanings (and so in each of the modes).

Appropriate Breadth

The troubling word here is *appropriate.* I think Alvesson's intent is to cover the range of *things managers do* to control employees by acting on a plane called "cultural-ideological." For instance, in framing his analysis he emphasizes that "managers often seek to enact a particular form of organizational experience for others" (p. 6). While such a choice rests on complex textures of focus and theoretical style, I wish at least to point out some disturbing parameters of Alvesson's analysis. First, his focus on purposeful managerial activity reenacts some of the most criticized features of human relations theory (see Kanter, 1977). While managers may sometimes rationally and purposively aim to affect culture, at other times they are caught up in it, or act in ways that have unintended or even undesired cultural-ideological consequences. For instance, actions taken purely with the instrumental aim of running things efficiently may lead to the *perception* that the organization is efficient or, less directly, to profits that can support companywide trips to Rhodes. Taking the manager to be the subject even of organizational, cultural-ideological history flies in the face of the arguments of postmodernists and even Habermas.

Second, Alvesson presents managerial cultural control as basically persuasive selling of the managerial perspective, "in which pervasive communication of the 'correct' way to perceive and relate to corporate reality is central" (p. 4). He therefore seems to neglect cultural-ideological strategies that are not aimed at consensus on managerial views. For instance, managers might aim to establish cultural hegemony, where conflict is cast in a vocabulary of issues and warrants acceptable to (though not shared by) management. Good examples of this sort of managerial action are given by Armstrong, Goodman, and Hyman (1981). Or managers may seek to cope with and maintain a culture of employee self-control—the "games" analyzed by Burawoy (1979), the occupational norms noted by Van Maanen and Barley (1984). Managerial reality need not be the only goal of strategic managerial cultural-ideological action.

I will take up these themes again later in this commentary. They are introduced now only to raise the question: What are the best bounds for the concept "cultural-ideological control"? Alvesson mentions that he wishes the concept to complement traditional concepts of organizational control, but he seems not to note that control analysis today focuses most often on *institutions* rather than on strategic action. An analysis of the evolving institutions of cultural-ideological control would be interesting, but would have a shape quite different from that of Alvesson's scheme.

Focus on Processes of Exercise of Control

Above, I have cast a little doubt on the appropriateness of a focus on the *exercise* of control. But does Alvesson adhere to the standard? I would say partly, but partly not.

This becomes most obvious when we focus on the content of his specific categories, such as "collective control." In CCC, Alvesson finds "four major elements . . . of collective control: reduction of (formal) hierarchy, encouragement of social events . . . , recruitment in which social criteria are important, and efforts to equate the whole company with [the collective] community . . . (for example, through the use of corporate architecture)" (p. 25). Four more different processes could hardly be imagined—organizational design, party throwing, interviewing, and remodeling. The category of collective control is homogeneous, not in the processes it includes, but in the (pretty abstract) mediated outcome it emphasizes. I think Alvesson is right that a general, theoretical, process-focused scheme of ways cultural control comes about is lacking, but I fear that his scheme may lead our attention away from true process phenomena.

Sufficient Elaboration to Register Variations

Here we get into the complex and unsettled problem of comparative, interpretive analysis (see McPhee, 1990). If we could apply his scheme comparatively in a nonmechanical way (count trips to Rhodes?), the proof of its sufficiency would be in its enlightening application. Alvesson's analysis of CCC is a little troubling as a sign of analytic power because it seems to lump processes into disparate broad categories, without forcing (for example) the analysis of mutual reinforcement of categories, or the coherent description of a (changing?) gestalt of cultural control at CCC. The scheme's nonprocess focus might also lead to its inability to register some important variations.

Inclusion of "Material," Especially Labor, Processes

Alvesson certainly does attend to work and labor conditions, more than the typical author of articles on cultural control, if not the typical ethnographer. He notes such matters as labor market and related service market patterns, work setting and sources of uncertainty at work, and, especially in the performance-related control section, the influence of work oversight and compensation policy. In his discussion of perceptual control, he includes variables describing organizational structure.

However, he does not focus on a few other issues relevant to the "material" dimension. One is the distinction between material and "cultural" reality—How do we tell them apart, and then what is their relationship generally conceived to be, so as to reveal its complexity? For instance, consider profit sharing or profit allocation: To what extent are employees *materially interested* in the short-term degree of success of the company? And then, how do we distinguish their interest position from that of managers? Alvesson, like many scholars operating from a (partly) critical orientation, assumes the distinction between management and employee interests as a backdrop for the need to control, but he does not really analyze the specifically mixed

motives of typical (or atypical) employees. When benefit sharing is mentioned, it is seen as persuasive activity rather than as interest-altering activity (e.g., in the discussion of performance-related control). The same sort of bias exists, for example, in the analysis of organizational structure. The corporate description of a "flat organization" is treated purely as influence of employee perceptions; yet here surely management has the opportunity to construct social reality itself. Is "flatness" a material state of affairs that management (probably with overall cooperation) is socially maintaining, or is it a (partial, perhaps) illusion maintained by managerial cultural-ideological work? The difference is important to any theorist avowing a material as well as a cultural dimension of existence, yet Alvesson's account, while seeming to favor the "illusion" interpretation (p. 30), does not register the full complexity of this issue.

A related topic is the cultural dimension of employee work. Alvesson does mention that a positive culture is beneficial in dealing with clients, but he does not really analyze the work that the employees do as "using" culture. For instance, do consultants regularly engage in sales activity, maintaining and initiating new projects with clients? If so, is the cultural message a "selling point" that consultants use, and thus a tool that management provides and draws their attention to, as well as persuasion of the employees themselves?

A line of communication theory and research that is especially relevant here is the work on organizational identification by Tompkins and his colleagues (see, e.g., Bullis & Tompkins, 1989; Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Identification is one goal at which cultural-ideological control might aim, and identification research has found both material and cultural factors that lead to identification with the organization. Especially relevant, however, is one facet of the concept of "identification," linked to the work of Herbert Simon. Identification involves using *decision premises* supplied by the organization to make (material) work decisions. So cultural control processes could be examined as supplying, motivating employees to use, and leading employees to take as part of their identities particular premises (such as "being positive") that fit into the work processes of the company.

Two sorts of implications may be found in the discussion so far. First, Alvesson's typology of control modes needs to be reformulated, especially to reflect clearer distinctions and perhaps to focus more at the level of process. Second, some of the comments above raise a larger question: *How* should such a scheme, or even the concept of "cultural-ideological management control" itself, be formulated and situated within a more general tradition of theory?

EXTERNAL CRITIQUE OF
THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL CONTROL MODE

In this section I will focus on two somewhat different problems with Alvesson's typology of cultural control modes. The more general problem is

disconnectedness from currents of development in the critical literature of
organizational communication. Alvesson's question of what distinct modes
of control exist for organizations is almost continuous with that asked by
Braverman (1974) about control through the design of work processes. Also,
it does not seem to register the reactive emphases on more general questions
about ideology and power, and especially on the question of subjectivity and
resistance, both especially spurred by the work of French social theorists
Althusser and Foucault.

The more specific problem is one of direction: It is unclear what goal or
explanatory impact Alvesson's scheme is designed to achieve. The scheme
was, I believe, elaborated at least partly in response to relatively clear content
differences that he found in certain organizational episodes that had obvious
cultural relevance—a less subtle scholar might have called them collectivity
episodes, financial-performance episodes, or the like. The key here is that the
focus was on clear content differences within the domain of control phenom-
ena, and not on "differences that make a difference" within the general
domain of critical theory. I think Alvesson's concept-formation effort would
be aided by a theory construction principle drawn from realist philosophy of
science (e.g., Harre, 1970): Differences among levels of a variable have
relevance only as they bear an explanatory relation to differences in another
variable. A scheme of differences should be constructed with an eye to the
need for explanatory power and consistency in other conceptual dimensions.

The first problem, then, is this: What other conceptual domains are especially
important to explain? Here we can use the domains of literature I have mentioned
above and will describe a little more fully below, illustrating them with some
literature selected almost at random. In each case the goal would be to find,
conceptually and empirically, differences in the new domain that would point
the way back to an exclusive, and eventually exhaustive, scheme of control mode
differences. Incidentally, the aforementioned strategy, I would say, is by no
means exclusive empirical-analytic property: Habermas, among others, seems
to have used it in building his successive theoretical systems.

Domain 1: Microstructures of Interaction

A large and growing domain of work, especially, but not only, in the
conversational analysis of work interaction has focused on certain interaction
patterns as having special application to the task of control. The ones that
come to my mind most readily are the patterns of legal reference and
reification identified by Maynard and Wilson (1980), the patterns of class-
room interaction studied by Mehan (1979), and the patterns of consultative
interchange identified by Johnson and Kaplan (1980).

The problem is that the assimilation of this literature by organizational
communication theory is only beginning: organizational pragmatics amounts
to a list of patterns and functions. One option for identifying cultural-

ideological control modes is to look for episodic content or theme differences with clear interaction-pattern links. For instance, certain collectivity-building events might be initiated/decided in characteristic ways—good news is reported, one *manager* suggests, "Let's throw a party," and a small group isolates itself to plan the event. Such a pattern might (a) clearly demarcate a mode of control, and (b) illustrate a clear distribution of interactional power—to initiate, to plan, to be present during such reports—in its linkage to the wider social structure. "Control mode" would be a concept relating specific script types to other phenomena—settings, the frequency of good news, the outcomes of the scripts, and the consequent parties. A theory-building strategy such as this is illustrated by Maynard's (1984) systematic work on the relatively narrow and formal domain of plea bargaining.

Domain 2: Patterns of Managerial Agency/Subjectivity

I mean to refer here to the literature centered on the work of Foucault, but also to a more specific set of questions. Organizational analysis has come to recognize the constitution of subjectivity in social orders. Individuals are involved in power relations through their participation in practices, in interaction, and in orders of knowledge. Such participation initially influences the type of acting, perceiving, and knowing subjects they can be; managers' levels of authority and resource control are secondary to the fields of mechanisms and possibilities that render managers able to operate as agents.

Such fields might be confined to particular organizations, but theorists have grown increasingly aware of the extent to which managerial action must be explained by supraorganizational patterns at various levels of analysis, such as the colonization of the life world by systemic media (Habermas, 1987), disciplinary power as a general form (Foucault, 1979), managerialism (Deetz, 1992), the fashionable practice of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), or the managerial image implicit in occupational practice (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984). One scandal of current organizational culture research is its insensitivity to the problem of distinguishing among functional or disseminated industrial patterns, national cultures and patterns of organization, regional patterns, occupational patterns, novel fashions, and truly distinctive organizational cultural features. Managerial subjectivity differs when the manager is innovating as opposed to conforming to a national, industrial, or local hallowed pattern of cultural behavior.

Alvesson could actively seek to distinguish modes of cultural-ideological control that would be related to differences in managerial subjectivity—to whether the manager is creating, adopting an innovation, conforming to a practiced pattern or a theme dictated by superiors, or reacting to initiative by a peer or subordinate. For instance, a manager might spread the theme "Be positive" because he or she thinks it is reasonable under the circumstances, or has read about doing that in *Business Week,* or has been ordered to do so.

In the last case, the message "Be positive" might fit into a formal, pro-
grammed mode of cultural control rather than a spontaneous mode. Such
modes might not have uniform content, but might exhibit interesting uniform
process regularities or functional requisites. Subjectivity differences could
be investigated by tracing the diffusion of cultural behavior through indus-
tries and regions, by asking managers how they decided to take cultural
actions, and so on. Presumably, the manager's role performance would often
vary due to the subjectivity factor. And concept formation oriented by this
concern would be more likely to treat the subjectivity of *managers* as a
question to be theorized explicitly and explored empirically—a line of devel-
opment rare even in today's literature.

Domain 3: Patterns of Employee Subjectivity/Activity

A third current in the literature relevant to cultural control involves the
status of those who are subject to control—especially employees. Traditional
theories of control, whether organizational, ideological, or disciplinary, sit-
uate such people as receptive and passively liable to control processes. But
a wide variety of researchers find variety in the stances taken by agents such
as employees. To be sure, they may be subjugated. But they may also take
stances of resistance, active opposition, or, interestingly, activity that in-
volves the reproduction of control. And in point of fact, employee action at
work typically involves a variety of these stances, strategically chosen and
used. A few pieces of ground-breaking research that explore this variety of
stances include those of Burawoy (1979), Willis (1977), and Armstrong et al.
(1981). In communication, Huspek (e.g., 1989) has been especially con-
cerned with the investigation of resistance; the study of organizational iden-
tification, discussed above, naturally centers its attention here.

My impression is that CCC is rather unusual as an organization in which
to study control, since employees have high market power and are homoge-
neous in background with management. Control thus means "winning over"
employees who are not likely to take oppositional positions against such
efforts; so this third domain of differences is unlikely to give much direction
for reconceptualizing modes of control. But even here, there may be differ-
ences between treatment of new employees and control of employees with
client contacts and good ideas about their market value. And a more general
typology of cultural-ideological control modes might come from explicit
attention to employee groups involved in conflict with management, or
interaction about issues involving vertical conflict within CCC.

These three "domains" of literature overlap, and sometimes all three
themes are developed by a single researcher. But they are also the areas of
sustained current theoretical advance. To maximize the power and relevance
of his typology, Alvesson will need to invest it with more affinity with such
developments than it now possesses. Of course, Alvesson may already have

in mind a larger theoretical structure into which his current typology fits well. However, his scheme will almost certainly be improved by his tightening it internally and reorienting it to register differences especially relevant to other conceptual domains.

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