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Servants' Heart or Expedient Hands

A Multiple Case Study of the Relationship Between an
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Preliminary Thesis Report

- Servants' Heart or Expedient Hands -

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Introduction

“Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first”

- Simon O. Sinek (Business, 2016)

Humans are hardwired to believe that the world is more predictable than it actually is (Poundstone, 2014). In reality, it is unlikely that organizations are able to anticipate and plan for all possible scenarios employees confront when at work (Kaplan & Mikes, 2012). This becomes especially evident for organizations in service industries, due to the situation dependency human interaction implies, and the high degree of judgement required when assessing appropriate actions. The concern therefore turns to how organizations can ensure the best possible outcome for their customers or clients in such a setting. Arguably, service work requires a higher level of autonomy, enabling people to improvise, and display discretionary thinking and proactive behavior. Many authors argue that organizational culture can be an important force in shaping behavior (e.g. Bate, 1984; Schein, 1990; Hennestad, 2015). It does so by influencing expectations and norms at work, and offering a commitment to something larger than self (Milton, Verran, Murdaugh, & Gerber, 1992). In addition, the dynamic and ongoing process of social negotiation taking place in practice, which is a natural part of the daily work, is shaped by, but also shapes, culture. What this research seeks to understand is the relationship between culture and practice in service work that faces competing demands of efficiency and client centricity. The study will revolve around the investigation of how an enabling culture, which allows for tailoring and improvisation, can ensure excellence in practice. If this is the case, the challenge of not being able to predict the unpredictable may be mitigated. This will be done through empirical analysis of Southwest Airlines, Side by Side¹ (a nursing home), and Hand in Hand² (a care facility for people with substance abuse). The research will be of a qualitative nature with an abductive approach, and data collection will involve interviews and observation.

¹ "Side by Side" is a fictitious name used to ensure the anonymity of the informants

² "Hand in Hand" is a fictitious name used to ensure the anonymity of the informants

Theoretical Background

Culture

Culture is a complex and ambiguous term. Hence, not only is empirical observation required to study the concept, but more importantly, it must be clear how the concept is understood.

Roots of the Concept of Culture

The general concept of culture can be understood by going back to the father of social anthropology, Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917). Such early anthropology viewed culture as a homogenous, causal, and stable system of shared meanings. This notion was gradually abandoned in the 1960s, in favor of one which stressed heterogeneity and open endedness (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Kuper & Douglas, 1999; Rosaldo, 1989). Accordingly, culture was understood as something far more dynamic, consisting of divergent, fluid, and shifting perspectives in a continuous process of meaning making (Turner, 1967; Rabinow, 1977; Ortner, 1984; Swidler, 1986). In 1973, anthropologist Clifford Geertz argued that culture should be understood as the fabric of meaning through which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action. The author further highlighted the notion of culture as an ordered system of meaning and symbols in which social interaction takes place. This view of culture gained great popularity in the postmodern movement of the 1980's (Heijes, 2011), when the relatively mature discipline of organizational behavior first began to talk broadly about organizational culture (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). The interest in the concept has not yet stagnated. In recent times, a growing body of theory and research attempt to define, redefine, and apply a cultural perspective to the description of organizational phenomena (Kunda, 2009, p. 8).

A Practice Theory Approach to Culture

Organization studies are, to an increasing extent, influenced by a practice based approach (e.g. Schatzki & Knorr Cetina, 2001; Gherardi, 2006; Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011). Central to such a practice lens is the notion that social life is an ongoing production, and thus emerge through people's recurrent actions (Nicolini, Gherardi, & Yanow, 2003, p. 45-46). Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) argues that the

view of the organization as a zone of socially defined practice is characterized by continuously constructing objects, including the basic material handled by the organization (e.g. goods, services), the outside environment, and forms of authority. The authors also emphasize how this equally includes the theories concerning the nature and control, as well as the operational mechanisms put in place to manage and control such objects. Smith (2000) agrees with this argument, and adds how operational practices (i.e. daily activities) will reflect accepted theories and practices concerning the nature, behavior, and control of these objects. In such, as highlighted by Feldman and Orlikowski (2011), a focus on the empirics of practice enables the understanding of organizational phenomena as dynamic and accomplished in ongoing, everyday activities. The interest in a practice lens within organization studies is argued to be an important development in the range of ideas and approaches that scholars use to study organizational phenomena (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). Therefore, the adoption of such a perspective is regarded as appropriate for the present research, and its aim of understanding organizational culture. This makes the threefold approach in studying practice, as suggested by Orlikowski, Golsorkhi, Rouleau, and Seidl (2010), influential. Based on their approach, the present study involves a simultaneous focus on how people act in the organizational context, the understanding of relations between the actions people take and the structures of organizational life, as well as the constitutive role of practices in producing organizational reality (Orlikowski et al., 2010).

Continuously Constituting Organizational Culture

In conducting behavior, people have to act and orient in response to surroundings. Hennestad (2015, p. 70) argues for how culture can be understood as the force which guides people in understanding these circumstances. This is in line with the argument made by Schein (1990), and his notion on the existence of three levels of culture, of which one is basic assumptions. He refers to how these taken for granted norms in the organization somewhat unconsciously determine perceptions, feelings, and thought processes. In such, organizational culture shape human behavior and impact what people actually do (Hennestad, 2015, p. 103). This does not refer to performing certain, predefined, desired activities (i.e. instrumental view), but to pursue actions in

a way that is coherent with the organization's perception of what is appropriate. This understanding may, in turn, be a dynamic and ongoing process of social negotiation. This was highlighted by Brannen and Salk (2000), who based on this comprehension cited the importance of studying both the extra- and intra organizational sources of influence on culture. Dynamism and social negotiation is further discussed in the leadership literature. This line of research agrees on the notion that it is necessary for people to have a continuing sense of reality to function in any given setting, and that the system ensuring collective meaning is culture (Pettigrew, 1979). Shared meaning aids in coordinating people's actions, such that they make sense to people with whom they interact (Hennestad, 2015, p. 70). A requirement for the existence of a culture is the involvement of more than one person (Schein, 1990). Hence, it is the socially shared, not the personally idiosyncratic meanings that are of interest (Alvesson, 2012, p. 4). In such, Wenger's (1998, p. 53-54) emphasis on that meaning exists in the dynamic relation of living in the world, as the product of negotiation, seems well founded. How culture is socially shared is explicitly mentioned by Schein (1990) in his definition of organizational culture as;

(a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 111)

Although the definition may be perceived as instrumental in relation to the formal goals of an organization, and to the management objectives or tasks associated with these goals (Alvesson, 2012, p. 52-53), it is heavily used and comprises several of the aspects discussed so far. It highlights how culture is developed in a certain context, by a certain group of people. Thereby, it stresses the difficulty in attaining one homogenous culture within a larger organization. Hence, the notion of subcultures likely to be found within a macro culture is revealed (Alvesson, 2012, p. 135-136). In addition, the problem solving and adaptive notion in Schein's (1990) definition incorporates a dynamic perspective. As both the organizational members and setting are in a constant flux, and these are forces shaping the organizational culture, a static view is somewhat relinquished. Thereby, it legitimizes that the processes of

continuously constituting culture is based on qualities of vitality, openness, and responsibility. In such, one can argue that overemphasis on the static elements of culture, even if tradition, framework, rules, and fairly stable meanings are part of the picture, should be avoided. Alvesson (2012, p. 4), agrees on this notion by claiming that culture is not best understood as a cohesive and causal force, but as something people do. In such, the interpretation of culture as emergent, dynamic, situationally adaptive, and co-created in dialogue, as emphasized by Heijes (2011), may be more beneficial. By applying this perspective, the potential for a dual influence of context on organizational culture is noted. Accordingly, culture can be viewed as partly shaped by the extra organizational context, and partly as driven from within, through the members of the system and their actions (Hennestad, 2015, p. 81), and as a result of tensions between cultural and structural arrangements (Hennestad, 2015, p. 158). The relationship between culture and structure should not be underestimated, a matter which is discussed by Bate (1984). He argues that the common distinction between culture as something soft, intangible, and perhaps even subjective, and the organizational structure as hard and objective, may be deceiving. The author argues that by making this separation, one may fail to acknowledge how culture provides meaning to members, and by doing so, defines one's own rules, the roles of others, the nature of authority, leadership, democracy, and many other aspects. This may justify the argument for how culture, and not only practice, may influence organizational praxis. Despite diverse views of what culture is and its impact on human beings, there seems to be a general agreement, as concluded by Kunda (2009), that culture is a

learned body of tradition that governs what one needs to know, think, and feel in order to meet the standards of membership. It provides the shared rules governing cognitive and affective aspects of membership in an organization, and the means whereby they are shaped and expressed. (p. 8)

Service Culture

When understanding organizational culture it is important to recognize that one culture may involve different aspects, and the literature highlights one of those as a service oriented. According to Grönroos (2007) service culture is defined as “a culture where an appreciation for good service exists, and where giving good service

to internal as well as ultimate, external customers is considered by everyone a natural way of life and one of the most important values” (p.418). Based on this definition service culture relates to manner, values, and behavior of both the organization and its employees (Grönroos, 2007). Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler (2009) argue that this definition has three implications. First, service culture exists when there is an appreciation for good service. Second, good service is given to both internal and external customers. Indeed, not only do organizations need to care for their external customers but also their employees, who play a crucial role in service delivery. Due to the employees significant influence on the service provided, they are seen as the greatest asset of the firm, and all relationships within the organization are emphasized (Lewis & Entwistle, 1990). Finally, within a service culture, good service is a way of life and provided naturally, as it is a crucial norm of the organization (Zeithaml, et al., 2009; Deming & Edwards, 1982; Lewis & Entwistle, 1990). An organization with a focus on service, tends to define in its values that their customers or clients are a priority for the company. There is also a clear consistency and alignment among the values of client-centricity, the norms that express these values (i.e. culture), and specific attitudes and behaviors that are based on these values and that build core capabilities (O’Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000, p. 232-239). To ensure a focus on service, and that decisions are made with the clients’ opportunities for advantage in mind, measures of quality and efficiency are often associated with customer satisfaction (Deshpandé, Farley, & Webster, 1993; Hennestad, 1999; Shah, Rust, Parasuraman, Staelin, & Day, 2006). When identifying the wants and needs of clients the focus is on the individual behind and on their unique experience (Davenport, Harris, & Kohli, 2001). By making employees take the customer's perspective, they are able to see themselves the way their customers see them. This has not only a revealing impact, but also a directive, as it shows what has to be done on a concrete level (Hennestad, 1999).

Services marketing theorists have proposed that service culture functions as an organizational resource that is difficult to imitate (Homburg, Fassnacht & Guenther, 2003). A same reasoning is given by the resource based view theory of the firm, which regards a service culture as a crucial firm resource that is valuable and

inimitable by competitors, thus likely to lead to positive outcomes (Barney, 2001; Barney, Wright & Ketchen, 2001; Yang, 2008). Social exchange theory (Blau, 1968) provides further insights into how service culture may influence client based service quality evaluation. A supportive service culture encourages service employees to go extra mile to serve the clients' needs, which in turn affect clients' perception of service quality (Sierra & McQuitty, 2005). In such, some argue that the most profitable firms have a service oriented organizational culture. Ooncharoen and Ussahawanitchakit (2008) and Gebauer, Edvardsson, and Bjurko (2010) go as far as to state how a service culture is a prerequisite for organizational excellence and business performance.

Chatman and Cha (2003) claim that employees in a service culture are, to a larger extent than in other organizations, freed from regulations and procedures. This is in order to ensure a sense of ownership. Moreover, O'Reilly and Chatman (1996) argue that a culture that empowers people to think and act on their own beliefs increases their commitment and involvement (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996). The importance of preserving employees own identity has further been emphasized by Southwest Airlines' cofounder and former CEO Herb Kelleher, who states that employees are able to be themselves in a service oriented culture (Kelleher, 1997). As a consequence, less emphasis is given to standardization, and instead the focus is on developing employees' positive attitudes toward giving service to their clients (Grönroos, 2007). In order to sustain excellence in service performance, learning and continuous improvement (Shah et al., 2006; Pfeffer, 1994), and training and development programmes (Watson & D'Annunzio-Green, 1996; Harrington & Akehurst, 1996; Haynes & Fryer, 2000) have been stressed as important. The focus is on training interpersonal skills and teamwork, and communication practices (Bowen & Schneider, 1995; Harrington & Akehurst, 1996; Redman & Mathews, 1998). Such learning is often motivated through using the power of positive examples and success stories (Day, 1999 in Shah et al., 2006).

Culture of Care

Another aspect of organizational culture recognized in previous research is a culture of care. Gherardi and Rodeschini (2015) state that caring "is a situated practice,

indicate a collective emergent capacity of taking care of and taking care for, a knowing accomplished as ongoing, adaptive, open-ended responses to care needs” (p. 281). A study by Deshpandé and Raina (2011) revealed the importance of an emphasis on care in an organization. In their study of a terrorist attack in 2008, some of the kitchen workers at a hotel risked their lives to save the customers. In such a situation, too standardized processes may inhibit people from acting in a spontaneous and autonomous manner. Arguably, a culture that emphasizes care for its clients may therefore be more appropriate (Deshpandé & Raina, 2011). Care is an organizational competence, not an innate human capacity that is situated when professionals enact and do their everyday tasks. Gherardi & Rodeschini (2015) argues that good care ideally should be incorporated into organizational practice, shared by all employees.

Since care includes emotional work, Hochschild (1983, in Bolton & Boyd, 2003) argues that emotion management skills are important. Employees as human beings will arguably be expressing their emotions at work, and emotions within an organization cannot be simplified and put into one category, as they are dependent on context and individual motivation. Lopez (2006) reveals, through his research in a nursing home, how different approaches to managing emotions may impact the type of care given. When it was clearly stated how to act and feel, the care reflected this, and a culture of care was not achieved. On the other hand, when the employees were more free to express their own feelings, this improved the care given to residents and resulted in a culture of care. This indicates that by fostering an organizational culture of care, where employees express their natural feelings, it can ensure excellence in practice. Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argue that the way feelings are expressed in an organization influence the experience of emotions, the attractiveness of the interpersonal climate, and the quality of the service provided. Because of their influence there may arguably be a need to manage feelings in organizations. In the literature several ways of controlling emotions are discussed, two of those are respectively emotional labor and organized emotional care.

Emotional Labor vs. Organized Emotional Care

The dominant form of organized emotion management is emotional labor, which is a form of social engineering where rules for feelings are prescribed (Lopez, 2006). It allows the employer to exercise a degree of control over emotional activities at work, making employees align their inner emotions with the outward display, and the organizational request (Hochschild, 1983, p. 147-157). In the performance of service work, emotional labor may arguably be of importance, as one wants to give a particular state of mind to the client (Leidner, 1999). Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argue that emotional labor may facilitate both task effectiveness and self-expression, however, it may also cause emotional dissonance. In care work, the nature of the job is intensive with little time for reflection. Hence, regulation of feelings is important to avoid imbalance. The research by Amble (2012) highlighted this, and emphasized the importance of debriefing as a mechanism for mitigating emotional dissonance. In her research, a situation-log was implemented to raise awareness of actions through self-reflection and learning. This ensured that the employer got a degree of control over the emotional activities of employees, and can be categorized as an emotional labor tool. Moreover, Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) argues that employees perform emotional labor either through surface acting, deep acting, or the expression of genuine emotions. However, the research of emotional labor has been criticized for overestimating the control an organization has over its employees' feelings (Bolton and Boyd 2003; Lopez, 2006). Therefore, in contrast to emotional labor, organized emotional care has been identified as a type of organizational emotion management. Organized emotional care consists of attempts to develop a caring relationship between service providers and recipients, without prescribed feeling states or display rules. This is done by developing procedures and organizational rules to foster relationship development (Lopez, 2006). Being allowed to care freely for patients is argued to be rewarding for both employees and clients in a job that provides services (Bulan, Erikson, & Wharton, 1997; Lopez, 2006).

A Culture of Companionate Love

When considering how much time an individual actually spends at work it is reasonable to expect that the emotion of love will be expressed. This may result in an

organizational culture of companionate love, which is identified by a love that is displayed through the meaning of expressions and the feelings of love in the organization. Moreover, a culture of companionate love is the reflection of the actual expressions or suppressions of feelings in a social unit. A culture of companionate love can influence employees and their work through two mechanisms, respectively the feeling mechanism and the normative enactments. The feeling mechanism state that the employees can catch the emotions from other coworkers, and that they are genuinely trying to feel the emotions that they are required to display at work. The normative mechanism focus on the expression of companionate love to conform to group expectations. This can result in employees not previously inclined towards expressing love to do so, in order to conform to group expectations (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014).

Organizational Culture and Performance

The literature on organizational culture highlights how culture can be either an impediment or a facilitator of performance (Shah et al., 2006). The positive relationship between organizational culture and performance has by many been rooted in its ability to generate sustained competitive advantage (i.e. Barney 1986, 1991). In this reasoning, the key is that the culture has to be strategically relevant (Chatman & Cha, 2003). Early researchers who link culture to organizational performance were certain in their claims of an existing relationship. An illustration of this is the works of the so called 'excellence writers' (e.g. Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Pascale & Athos, 1981; Peter & Waterman, 1982), and their claim for how several attributes characterizes excellent organizations. Although a popular argument, the major principles have been subject to extensive criticism (e.g. Ogbonna. 1992; Willmott. 1993). For example, Gordon and DiTomaso (1992) and Denison (1990) agree that there may be a link between certain organizational culture characteristics and performance, but each add a number of assumptions. In particular, it is noted that culture will remain linked with superior performance only if the culture is able to adapt to changes in environmental conditions (Alvesson, 2012, p. 62). Such a reasoning draws upon contingency thinking. According to this perspective, some situations call for certain cultures in order to contribute to performance. In such, the

optimal culture is dependent upon the internal and external situation (Morgan, 1986). The relationship between culture and performance have also been claimed to be reverse. This view argues for how success brings about a common set of orientations, beliefs, and values. In such, these cultures are not only a byproduct of performance, but they may also reproduce a successful organization, and thus lead to performance (Alvesson, 2012, p. 61).

Towards a Working Definition of Culture

The review of literature on organizational culture, reveals a lack of consensus. Hence, a clarification of the interpretation adopted in this study is deemed necessary. By applying the view of culture as ideas connected to values within a certain group, the present research view culture as a mindset creating mechanism. Culture is understood as a determinant of the norms within the organization, and thereby impacts behavior. In addition, this study adopts a perspective of culture as dynamic, developed in handling people, and it will change in response to flux in the organizational environment and membership. Accordingly, the following understanding is applied;

Organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions (i.e. Schein, 1990, p.111), a learned body of tradition, that governs what one needs to know, think, and feel in order to meet the standards of membership (i.e. Kunda, 2009, p. 8). It is developed by, and embodied in, organizational members (i.e. Hennestad, 2015, p. 81), constructed objects, and theories concerning the nature and control of, and the operational mechanisms put in place to manage and control, such objects (i.e. Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). In such, it is in a more or less rapid continuous state of change (i.e. Heijes, 2011).

Research Question

Previous research highlights the complexity of the concept of culture, suggest diverse aspects of culture within the broader concept, and offer argumentation for a connection between culture and performance. By adopting a practice lens, and thereby emphasizing how culture is embedded in, and developed through, social interaction in a dynamic and ongoing process, this study acknowledges how culture may influence daily activities. Human interaction is in the nature of service work,

requiring judgment to be used in potentially ambiguous situations. In response to the need for discretionary thinking, more research on how such behavior can be facilitated within an organization is seen as necessary. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to investigate the following question;

As service work is situation dependent, requiring tailoring, improvisation and judgment under competing demands for efficiency and client centricity, how can the relationship between an enabling culture and excellence in practice best be understood?

Methodology

This section will give a reasoning for the choice of method, and describe the data sources used to examine the present research question of how an enabling organizational culture may ensure excellence in practice.

Research design

The present study seeks to explore the relationship between culture and service practice at two units of Ray of Sunshine³ (ROS); one nursing home and one care facility for people with substance abuse, and compare them with Southwest Airlines (SWA). The aim of the present study is not to generalize the findings, but generate nuanced knowledge. Therefore, a qualitative research strategy with an abductive approach will be applied (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 11-27). This approach was used by Pratt (2009) and he argues that qualitative research enables an understanding of the world “from the perspective of those studied” (p. 856), which is one of the main strengths of this kind of research strategy. Further, the present study seeks to examine the research question through a flexible and evolving approach, resulting in an exploratory research design (Malhotra & Birks, 2007, p. 63-65). Similarly, Gherardi and Rodeschini (2015) applied an exploratory approach when studying nursing homes in Italy. The aim is that comparison of the three cases, and analysis of contradicting findings, will reveal concepts relevant to the understanding of the possibility for an enabling culture to ensure excellence in practice. Such intensive

³ “Ray of Sunshine” is a fictitious name used to ensure the anonymity of the informants

examination of each case, in addition to qualitative comparison, results in a multiple case study research design (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.65). This research design was applied by Lopez (2006) when studying three cases of nursing home facilities and conceptualizing nursing care work, and comparing the cases. As the setting and aim of the study by Lopez (2006) are similar to those in the present study, this design is regarded as appropriate.

Research Setting

To identify relevant cases for the present study, the focus has been on the need to both have adequate similarities to enable purposeful comparison, and a sufficient focus on organizational culture. Accordingly, SWA and two care facilities belonging to ROS, a diaconal foundation in Norway, have been selected. Analysis of the former will be based on secondary data, and the latter on primary data.

The success story of SWA is widely reported and often admired. The firm is well known for being profitable every year for the last 43 years, and famous for its distinct and prosperous organizational culture. The case of SWA will be analyzed by reviewing existing studies on the company conducted by other researchers (e.g. O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000; Collins, 2001; Gittel, 2004; Lauer, 2010; Collins & Hansen, 2011). A wide range of literature is available, and the richness of data is therefore regarded as appropriate, enabling purposeful secondary analysis. Data will be categorized according to themes and emphasis it has been given. The aim is to discover which aspects of the organizational culture that has been the major determinants in ensuring excellence in practice.

The case of ROS is much less well documented, especially with regards to organizational culture. ROS have a long history, and presence in many different areas in Norwegian communities. Earlier studies highlight a distinct identity and sense of belonging among the employees, but several subcultures have also been identified. The two units which will be investigated at ROS are Side by Side (SBS) and Hand in Hand (HIH). SBS is a small, privately owned nursing home. The facility take care of 48 residents, and run a senior day center. HIH is a care and rehabilitation institution for people who need support due to long lasting substance abuse. These research

settings are regarded as appropriate to answer the present research question as the services offered at such facilities include satisfying a wide range of needs, but also the requirement to handle deviating situations (i.e. McDaniel & Stumpf, 1993; Gherardi & Rodeschini, 2015). In such, the context is likely to illustrate aspects relevant for determining how an enabling organizational culture may ensure excellence in practice.

These organizations are regarded as comparable since they offer some kind of service; SWA have a conventional client orientation, while SBS and HIH have a caregiver-caretaker model. Hence, human interaction is a huge part of the daily life of employees in all three organizations.

Data Collection

To ensure a thorough understanding of how organizational culture influence operating principles, collection of primary data will involve both interviews and observation. The weight given to each method is yet to be determined, and the decision will be made in conjunction with our contacts at each location. An iterative and interactive approach will be taken in order to ensure that appropriate and sufficient data is gathered. Our research, in terms of how interviews and analysis is conducted, will be informed by narrative methods of inquiry (e.g. Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Accordingly, interviewees' will be asked to exemplify through storytelling, as this is considered a natural way of communicating (Gee, 1985; Flyvbjerg 2006). This is consistent with Pratt's (2009) claim that one good way to conduct qualitative research is through narratives. The interviewee will be asked to recall events that are considered memorable with the aim to uncover underlying beliefs, feelings, and attitudes on the topic. The interviews will be of a semi structured nature, and will be supported by an interview guide (See appendix), where previous research on SWA has been an inspiration for the themes and questions included. To aid data analysis, notes will be taken during the interviews. Also, the dialogue will be recorded, and thereafter transcribed. Observations will be used to enable further analysis of behavior of the employees at SBS and HIH, and the meaning they attribute to their environment and behavior. As previously mentioned, Lopez (2006) conducted a similar study and he actively used observations to gather

data. The reasoning behind the choice of this data collection method was that “very little of the interplay between organizational structures, everyday routines, and interactions in direct care areas of the nursing home is recorded in official records” (p. 139). The author further argues for how social expectations influence people's descriptions of their own behavior. Therefore, interviews will not show the whole reality, and complementing with observation is therefore regarded as necessary. Initial dialogue has revealed that debriefings and staff meetings may be relevant settings, however, others may also be suitable. An appropriate context is expected to be one which involve interactions and discussions between organizational members.

Sampling

The sampling approach in the present study will consist of convenience and purposive sampling. These approaches are widely used and consistent with both Desphande and Farley's (2004) study of organizational culture, and Glasø and Einarsen's (2008) research on emotional labor. Participants who have been part of deviating situations are preferable in order to reveal how they are influenced by the organizational culture. Gittel (2008) used a similar sampling approach in her study of care providers' response to pressure from managed care, where the manager identified participants that were eligible for the study. During the interviews, interviewees' will be asked to recall other organizational members who took part in the situation, and these individuals will be approached. By doing so, rich data is expected to be acquired, constituting diverse views of what happened, and in such get a complete understanding of what occurred. The risk for a biased sample following this approach is regarded as low. ROS have in initial conversations raised concerns about how previous researchers may have been seduced by the organization, wanting to confirm (often positive) perspectives. Hence, it is reasonable to expect that they seek to facilitate research which have a more critical approach, and in such, they have no motive to obscure data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis will be guided by the central approach of grounded theory (i.e. Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Charmaz, 2006), where systematic coding and comparison is used in

order to move from empirical observations to theoretical categories. Accordingly, coding and analysis will commence as soon as the first interview or observation has been conducted (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 72). As this research involves the study of feelings and attitudes, weight will be given to both the actual content of the data, but also to phrasing, body language, and the overall mood of the individual(s) being interviewed or observed (Hickson, 2013). The process will be dialogic, and employees at SBS and HIH will be involved in analyzing data through discussion of interim findings. Amble (2012) argues that collective investigation enables joint learning and the incorporation of diverse perspectives. In her study of elderly care in Norway, a model for collective reflection and knowledge enhancement was developed based on an interactive research process. Including participants in analysis is therefore regarded as appropriate.

Plan for Thesis Progression

The research setting was entered the first week of January, through a meeting at the headquarters of ROS. Initial meetings in week 1 and 2 have the aim of establishing rapport with people that are to be interviewed and/or observed. Pilot interviews will commence at SBS in week 3-4. This will enable a revision of the interview guide. Data collection at SBS will commence in week 4-5. The plan is to enter the second research setting, HIH, in mid-February. Throughout the process our supervisor, Arne Carlsen, will be approached for advice and guidance. Also, PhD candidate Jo Sundet, who is a part of the research project at ROS, will be a sparring partner. As data collection commence early, and limited time has been granted at our research locations, the plan is to hand in the thesis 1st of June, 2017. This deadline further ensures time available for potential unforeseen events that may occur in the process.

	January	February	March	April	May	June
Preliminary Thesis Report	X					
Further literature search	X	X				
Method Review	X					
Data Collection	X	X	X			
Review and Revise Interview guide		X				
Transcribe Interviews		X	X	X		
Analyze Data		X	X	X		
Write Thesis			X	X	X	
Hand-In Thesis						X

Preliminary Findings

Emerging Categories from Analysis of Southwest Airlines

Preliminary analysis of SWA highlights diverse themes which distinguish the organizational culture of the company.

First, the concept of *putting people first*, the belief that the employees are the greatest strength of the company, is strong at SWA (Southwest Airlines, 2015i). The employees are viewed as the number one customer of the company (Goldberg, 2000, 1, in Smith, 2004). This priority is operationalized by making employee appreciation, commitment, and respect the main tasks for managers (Klein, 2012).

Second, at SWA, there is a principle of *hiring for attitude, and train for skill*. This is based on the belief that certain personal characteristics, such as a genuine willingness to serve, and a humorous and easygoing personality cannot be taught, while a person's skillset can be developed (Southwest Airlines, 2015ii).

Third, *learning and knowledge sharing* is as an important aspect when it comes to developing employees at SWA, but also with regards to developing, maintaining, and teaching employees about the company culture. Education is ensured through diverse courses at the University of People. Unique with the company is their emphasis on benefiting from stories. One example is the so called rocking chair sessions, where Originals (a title given to the first employees of SWA from 1971 that still work in the company) come into headquarters and talk about bygone days (Lauer, 2010, p. 40-41).

Finally, *autonomy and empowerment* is regarded as important in order for the employees at SWA to deliver personalized customer service. Employees are therefore encouraged to try out new ideas, and they are empowered to implement solutions to problems on the spot, instead of waiting for top management approval (Bunz & Maes, 1998).

These four themes will set the general layout for the initial interview guide used at SBS and HIH (See appendix).

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Appendix

Interview Guide

Theme	Purpose	Question:	Probes:
<p>Phase 1: Initiation and Warm-up</p>	<p>Inform interviewee about the research and build rapport</p>	<p>1. Introduction of us, Purpose of study, Informed consent / Confidentiality, Permission to record 2. Please, could you briefly give an overview of your relationship to Bekkeklagshjemmet/Enga - years involved and primary responsibilities held? 3. Some small talk to develop rapport, looking for common ground</p>	<p>2. Name, gender, position, time in position, what is your role, what does your work day look like? 1. Can you share an event when you felt that your manager listened to you? 2. How was this event initiated? Was it during working hours or spare time? What was your contribution? 3. Why was this excellent?</p>
<p>Theme 1: Put People First</p>	<p>Explore if it is a people-centered organization.</p>	<p>1. Please, can you share with us what happens if you have something you want to discuss with your manager? 2. Please, can you share with us an event where you as a group had a fantastic time together? 3. Please, can you share a situation when the relationship between employees and management was excellent?</p>	<p>1. Diverse team?</p>
<p>Theme 2: Hire for Attitude, Train for Skill</p>	<p>Explore attitude and personality of interviewee and other employees.</p>	<p>1. Please, can you explain why you wanted to work at Bekkeklagshjemmet/Enga? 2. Please, can you describe your co-workers and your relationship? 3. Please, can you share which characteristics of your co-workers you cherish?</p>	<p>1. Can you say a little about what the feelings were like to be working with/and between your colleagues at that time? 3. Was there any debriefing? Was the debriefing useful?</p>
<p>Theme 3: Learning and Knowledge sharing</p>	<p>Explore interactions and how they learn from each other and collectively.</p>	<p>1. Please, can you share with us an event where you as a team achieved an outstanding result by drawing on diverse knowledge? 2. Please, can you share with us an event where a co-worker taught you something useful? 3. Please, can you share an event where you and your team faced a situation you had no experience with how to handle?</p>	<p>1. Based on what you have shared and we have talked about so far, have we understood you correctly when you said...? 2. Would you like to add anything else that you think is important? 3. Who else would you strongly recommend that we interview? 4. Repeat the context of use. 5. Thank the interviewee, and as whether it is possible for a brief follow-up, or revisit.</p>
<p>Theme 4: Autonomy and Empowerment</p>	<p>Explore degree of enabling context: room for judgement in decision-making?</p>	<p>1. Please, can you share a situation where you made a decision without consulting with management? 2. Please, can you tell us about another episode, or expand on the one you told earlier when something unexpected occurred? What happened? How did you solve this? How did you involve your co-workers? 3. Please, can you share your feeling of flexibility at work?</p>	<p>2. Are there any questions we did not ask, but should have?</p>
<p>Phase 3: Closure and Sharing</p>	<p>Shared interpretations</p>	<p>1. Based on what you have shared and we have talked about so far, have we understood you correctly when you said...? 2. Would you like to add anything else that you think is important? 3. Who else would you strongly recommend that we interview? 4. Repeat the context of use. 5. Thank the interviewee, and as whether it is possible for a brief follow-up, or revisit.</p>	