



Fachhochschule
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It's not About Management, It's About Culture!

Some Thoughts On The Manageability of Organic
Professional Cultures

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Organisational Culture

- A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

(Edgar Schein: Organizational Culture and Leadership, 1993)

The function of culture

- Integrate individuals into the organisation or group
- Adapting to the external environment

The evolution of culture

- Groups (and organisations) learn collectively what is useful and what is not in order to meet these challenges

Elements of organisational culture

- Stated and unstated values
- Overt and implicit expectations for member behavior
- Customs and rituals
- Stories and myths about the history of the group
- Shop talk - typical language used in and about the group

Elements of organisational culture

- **Climate** - the feelings evoked by the way members interact with each other, with outsiders, and with their environment
- **Metaphors** and **symbols** - may be unconscious but can be found embodied in other cultural elements.

Source: Gareth Morgan. 1997. Images of Organization. Thousand Oaks, CA



The challenge for leaders

- „The bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them.“

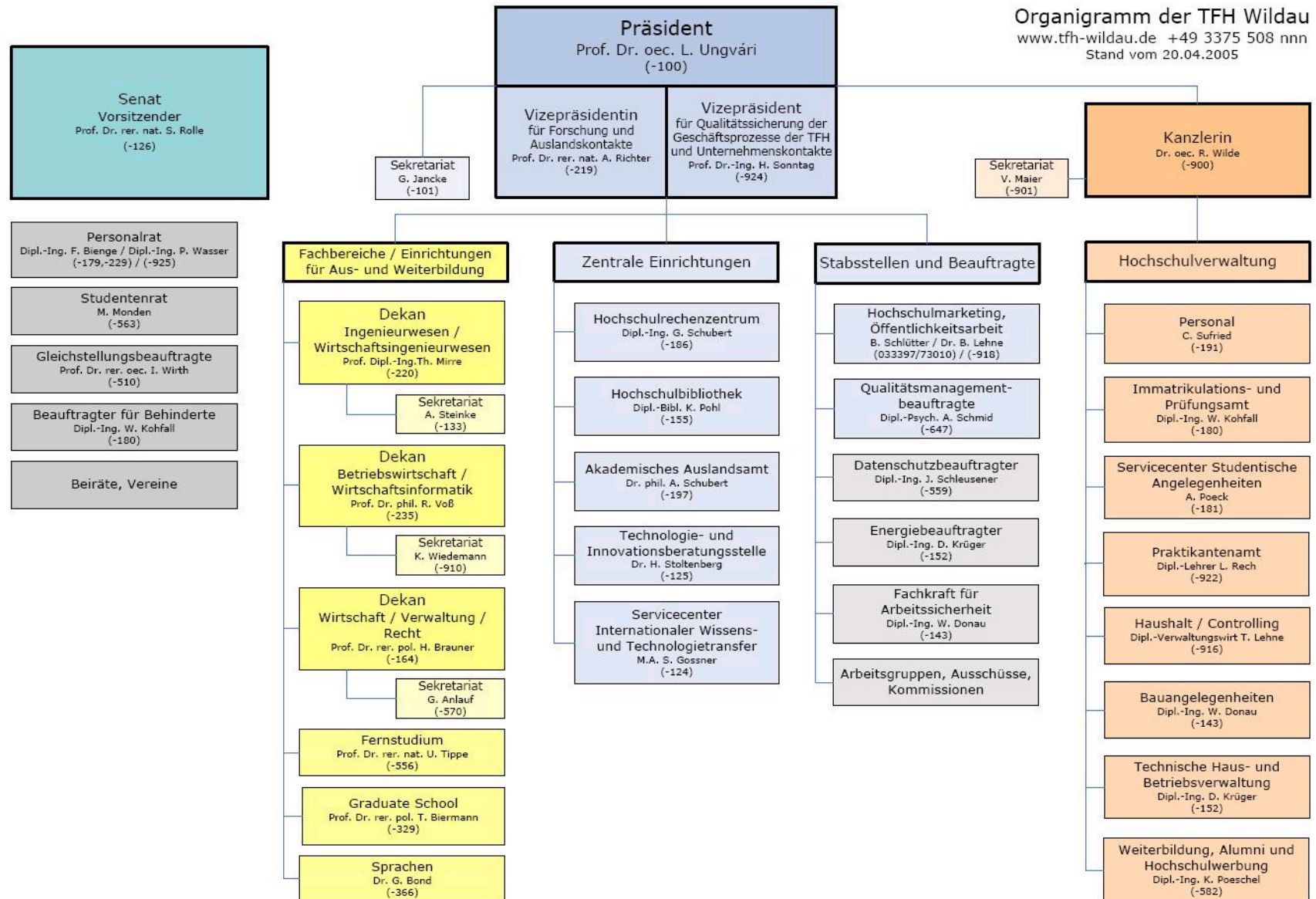
(E. Schein 1993, p. 375)

Double loop learning

- In contrast with „single-loop“ learning, or the process of solving problems based on an existing set of assumptions, double-loop learning also involves becoming aware of a group's underlying assumption set and continually inquiring whether it is still useful for the task at hand.

What metaphor would be
most appropriate to
describe my organisational
unit or team?

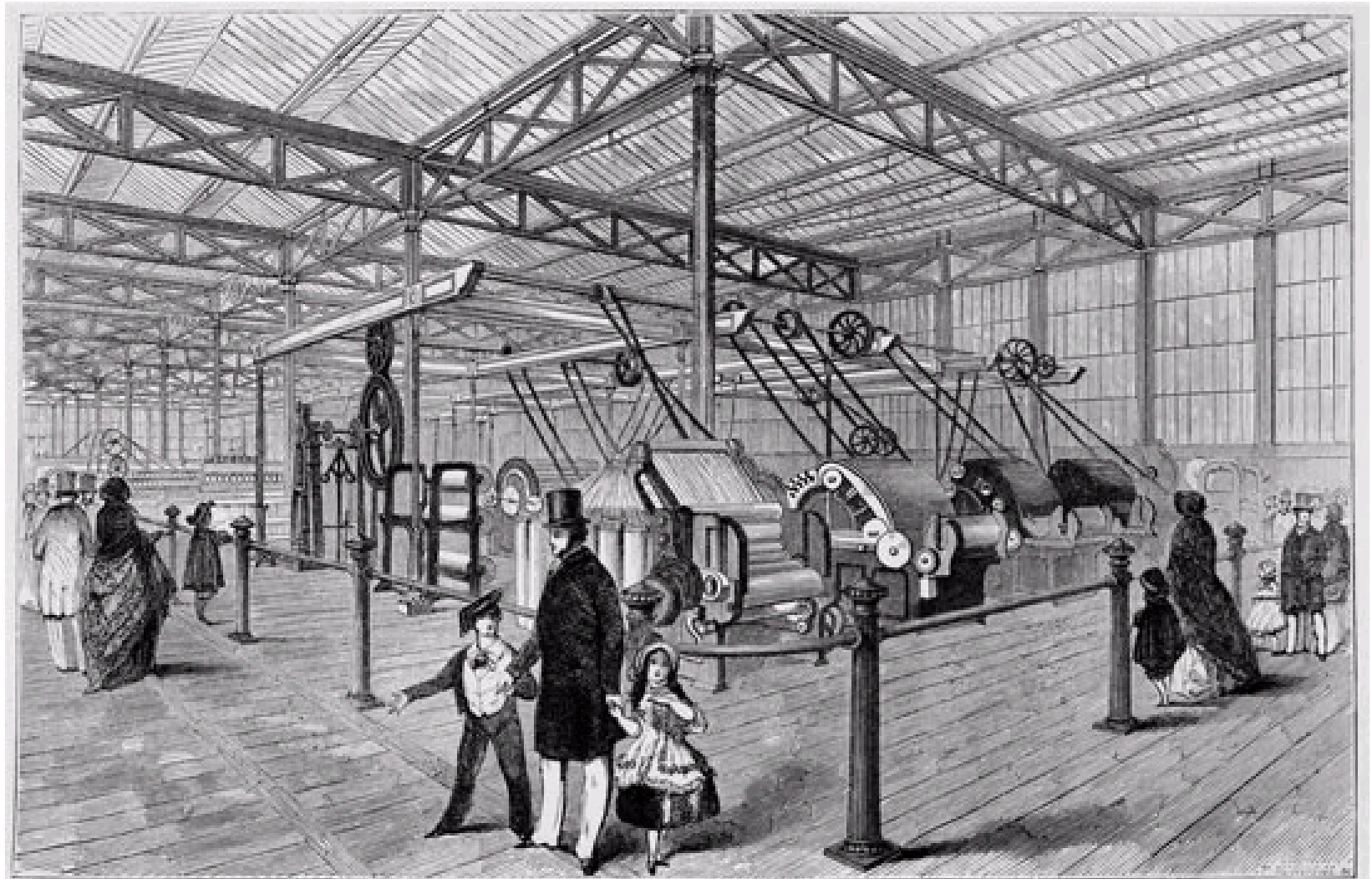
Rational structure?



Bureaucracy?



Machine?



129. PERSPECTIVE VIEW, LOOKING EAST, OF MESSRS. HIBBERT AND PLATT'S COTTON MACHINES, AND MESSRS. BICK AND SON'S HIGH-PRESSURE STEAM-ENGINE AND DRIVING GEAR. THE MACHINE IN FRONT IS THE LAP MACHINE, AND BEYOND IT ARE THE CARDING MACHINES.

Family?



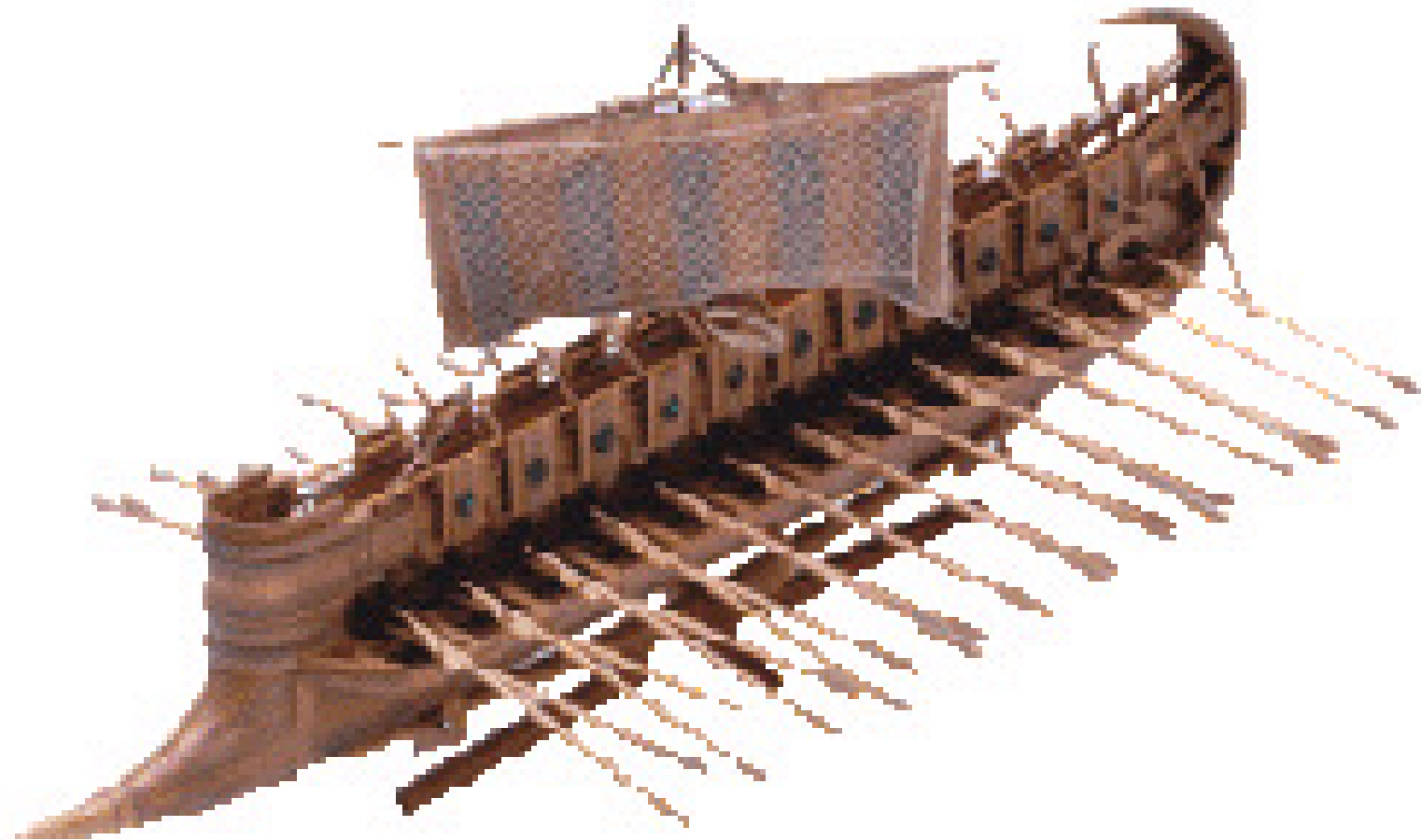
Pyramid?



Football team?



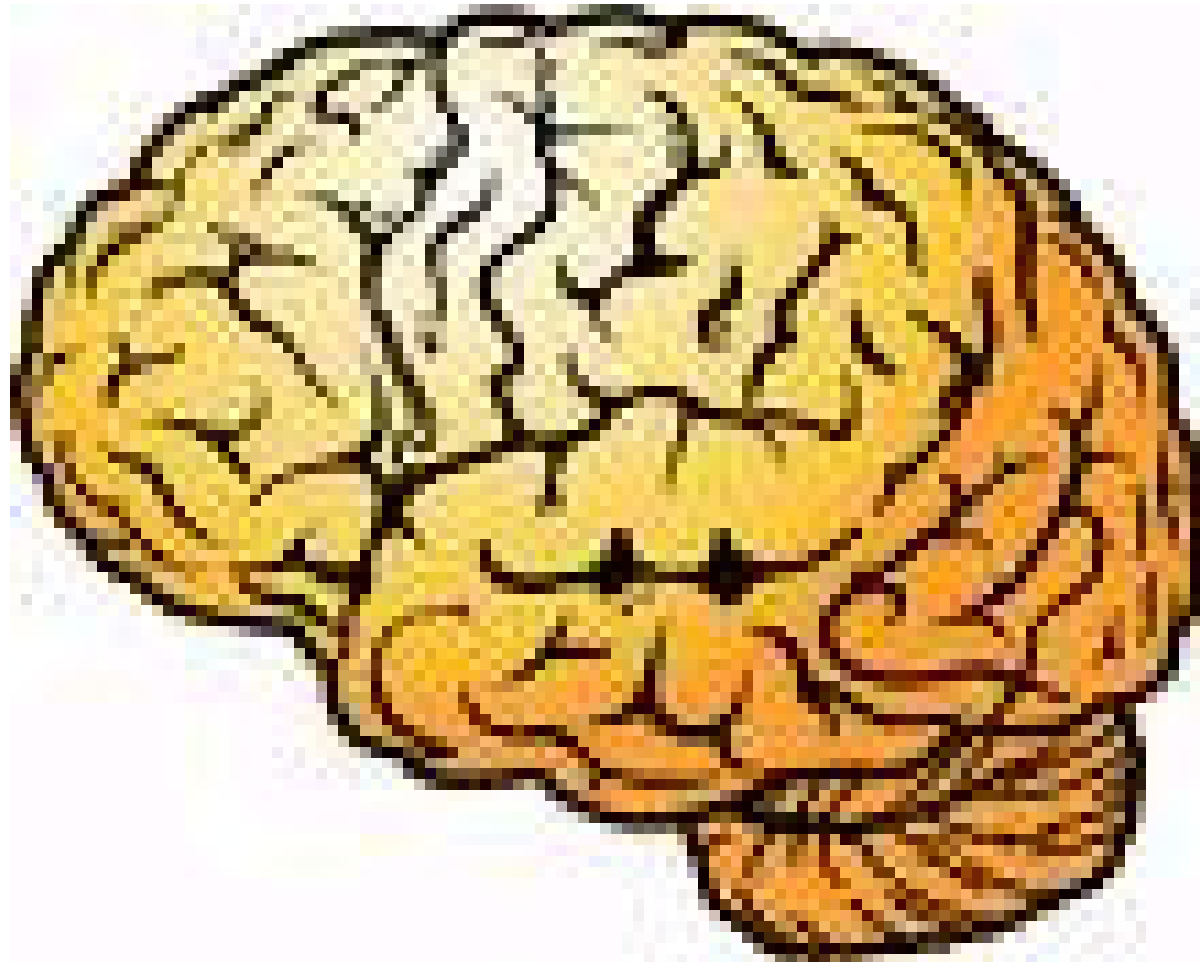
Galley?



Theatre?



Brain?



Expedition?



Platoon?



© Courtesy of A.M.P.A.S.

The 1986 Academy Award®-winning film "Platoon" received eight Oscar® nominations and won four including Best Picture of the year.

Starfish?



Tribe?



5 dominant paradigms

- political
- bureaucratic
- cop culture („crime fighter“)
- case worker
- management

Some hypotheses

- An organisation is not a machine that can be programmed or reprogrammed at will

Some hypotheses

- In order to avoid mistakes, we have to gain a much better understanding of how members of the organisation perceive things and why that is

Some hypotheses

- There is a front stage and a back stage, and very often the two look rather different

Some hypotheses

- Political influence is often a nuisance, but in a free society, police forces need to be
 - bureaucracies
 - subject to political control

Some hypotheses

- Free societies require police forces that are stable, predictable, and accountable bureaucracies
- ➔ Those restrictions define the limits to the scope and dynamic of change in the police

Some hypotheses

- It is extremely important that the reasons for change can be expressed in terms of a security or a police problem.
- ➔ The rank and file will resent change as long as they can't see any positive results in their work.

Recommendations for Leaders

- **Be honest right from the start!**
Name the positive as well as possible negative results. Your officers can handle the truth.

Recommendations for Leaders

- **Commit yourself!**

Either you really want it and you are willing to stick to it, or you better leave it. Your officers have a keen sense of how willing you are to take the ball and run with it. If you are not committed, you can't expect them to be.

Recommendations for Leaders

- **Have a clear understanding of the security problem the new concept is supposed to solve!**

Officers will not support you if they feel that something is changed just for the sake of change. Define the problem that needs to be solved as clearly as possible!

Recommendations for Leaders

- **Respect organisational culture!**

Organisational culture serves a purpose.

Don't expect your staff to part from certain aspects of it lightheartedly. If a new concept runs counter to basic organisational values, it will not be accepted.

Recommendations for Leaders

- **Accept the fact that your staff are more powerful than you are!**

Your officers can do their job without you, but you can't do your job without your officers. It is an illusion to think that good work comes out of coercion.