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The Value Match

a qualitative study of two Swedish organisations'
cultural strength

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Abstract

This study focuses on organisations' cultural strengths. It aims to provide insight into factors that matter for an organisation's cultural strength, which is investigated by looking at two Swedish organisations. In addition, forces and events behind a certain cultural state are identified.

The study is qualitative and interviews have served as main source for the empirical chapter. The organisations are in different sectors and we will refer to them as Pluto and Jupiter, respectively. The strengths of the cultures are estimated by the use of Philipson's (2004) framework that is based on the match between employee values and corporate values. The respective strengths are also analysed through the use of characteristics connected to factors such as values, leadership, history, goals and cooperation.

The results show that Pluto can be seen as culturally stronger than Jupiter. At Pluto, employee values and corporate values match well. Pluto has managed to keep their values consistent for a long period of time and employee values are in line with the corporate values. Employees are fostered into the culture of the organisation from the moment they start working at Pluto. All this together indicates a strong organisational culture at Pluto.

At Jupiter, corporate values are partly contradictory and not as clear, which makes employees interpret the values different from each other and is an indication of a weaker culture. The employee values are somewhat scattered and the energy within the organisation is not used optimally, as employees have different driving forces and ways of acting.

Examples of factors where the organisations differ from each other, are the presence of the values in everyday work, consistency in values, reinforcement of values and validation of values. Historical explanations are identified for the cultural state that the organisations are in. Jupiter's culture is marked by the significant market advantage they have had from the start. It evolved from this position to become very complex and diverse. Meanwhile, Pluto's culture is shaped by a CEO they had in the 70's that laid the foundation for what Pluto is today.

Key words

Employee values, Cooperative thinking, Corporate values, Cultural identity, Goal alignment, Organisational culture, Value based leadership, Value statement, Values

Definitions

Cooperative thinking – willingness to cooperate over professional borders and share information

Corporate values – values that are embedded in the organisation's preconditions

Cultural identity – a culture that everybody in the organisation could feel an association with

Employee values – values that guide how employees behave and act

Organisational culture – corporate and organisational culture is here used as synonyms. The terms we will use are organisational culture, or just culture

Subculture – a culture that has emerged among a group of people within a superordinate culture

Value based leadership – a leadership based on values rather than just goals and processes

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Problem discussion	2
1.3	Purpose and research questions	3
1.4	Limitations	3
1.5	Disposition	3
2	Theoretical framework	4
2.1	Definition of culture	4
2.2	The role of values	5
2.3	Shaping a culture	7
2.4	Successful characteristics	9
2.4.1	Value based leadership and cultural identity	10
2.4.2	Cooperative thinking	11
2.5	In the context of history	11
2.6	Summary	13
3	Method	14
3.1	Research approach	14
3.2	Collecting data	15
3.2.1	Primary data	15
3.2.2	Secondary data	16
3.3	Selecting samples	17
3.4	Criticism of method	17
4	Empirical data	19
4.1	Business description	19
4.1.1	Pluto	19
4.1.2	Jupiter	20
4.2	Records from Pluto	20
4.2.1	Relationships	21
4.2.2	“The bible”	21
4.2.3	Mr A	22
4.2.4	The foundation, evaluation and education	23
4.3	Records from Jupiter	24
4.3.1	The self-image	24
4.3.2	The informal networks	25
4.3.3	Who knows about the customer?	26
4.3.4	Conflicting forces	27
5	Analysis	30
5.1	Pluto	30
5.1.1	Corporate values	30
5.1.2	Employee values	33
5.1.3	Estimation of the culture	34
5.2	Jupiter	36
5.2.1	Corporate values	36
5.2.2	Employee values	38
5.2.3	Estimation of the culture	39
5.3	A cultural comparison of Pluto and Jupiter	41
5.3.1	Value based leadership	43

5.3.2	Value statements and cultural identity	45
5.3.3	Cooperative thinking.....	46
5.3.4	Goal alignment	47
5.4	Historical factors creating this state.....	47
6	Conclusions.....	51
6.1	What is the relationship between corporate values and employee values in our studied organisations?	51
6.2	What differences can be identified?.....	51
6.3	What historical factors can lead to that one organisation's culture developing to become stronger than another?	53
6.4	Suggestions for future research	54
7	Bibliography.....	56
7.1	Books	56
7.2	Scientific articles	57
7.3	Internet.....	57
7.4	Personal communication.....	58

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

“In the 90’s you had something called telephones. These telephones were connected by long lines on poles and sometimes there was an error somewhere and an employee was then sent out to fix them. Often the real reason for the reported error was that the person wanted to buy some eggs and potatoes from the fixer, he had a truck full of that stuff. You see, he was also a farmer and used the employment mostly to sell his crops.” - Anonymous

This little anecdote shows that culture matters. The farmer allowed himself to make use of his employment as a fixer in order to sell his crops. His commitment to his employer seems to not have been very strong. We argue, that this was connected to the culture within the organisation he worked.

The focus in this thesis is on the strength of culture within organisations. We will look into two organisations’ cultures and through the use of Philipson’s (2004) framework estimate how the respective organisations’ so-called employee values match their corporate values. Philipson (2004) uses the strength of this match to determine whether an organisation’s culture can be referred to as strong or weak.

We will also use other theories to identify some characteristics connected to cultural strengths. In addition, we will look at differences between the two organisations in the setting of cultural strength and which historical factors that may have contributed to the present cultural state of the organisations.

Most large companies, especially listed ones, have at least a paragraph about their culture, their values or their philosophy on their homepage and in their annual report. A few decades ago, salary and benefits were in focus when choosing employer, but today young employees often care even more about the values of the organisation, as a reasonable salary is seen as a given (Wihlborg, 2014). Among the most important things when people today choose their workplace are status, possibilities for personal development and an open corporate culture (Vene, 2011). That younger employees seem to value other factors than salary and benefits is only one of many examples indicating that culture matters for today’s organisations.

From the perspective of the employees, an organisation’s values are seen to contribute in creating meaning for them (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). From the perspective of the organisation, a strong culture and common values can lead to better performance (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Philipson, 2004; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Schein (2010) argues that the same way an individual has a personality, which frames his or her behaviour, a group of people can have a culture with common norms that frames how members of the group behave. This suggests that for a group of people to have a culture, they need to have something in common or strive towards a common goal.

Culture consists of many elements, such as norms, values, behaviour (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Philipson, 2004; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 2010; Martins & Terblanche, 2003) as well as rituals and heroes (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Hofstede, 1997). However, many of these elements are abstract to study, which can make it hard to get a good overview of an organisation's culture. Therefore, we will use one framework as the base to determine strength, and a few other theories to determine characteristics of cultures and historical factors that may cause organisations to develop differently.

1.2 Problem discussion

Culture is something which is increasingly becoming a more frequently discussed topic when talking about organisations. Recently, a growing number of organisations have chosen to create a role dedicated to work with the organisational culture. Google hired a Chief Culture Officer in 2006 (DuBois, 2012) and within a few years Klarna¹ was the first Swedish company to follow in their footsteps (Fjällborg, 2012). This shows a way that organisations can choose to invest in their culture and work proactively with it.

Culture is something that cannot be controlled from above, but the direction and the way in which it is handled can be influenced and thereby not “just happen” (DuBois, 2012). To make sure that culture does not “just happen”, Philipson (2004) suggests that corporate values must be manifested and clear. Focusing on and reinforcing the values must be part of the organisation's agenda. He connects corporate values to what he has chosen to call employee values, and the connection between these determine whether an organisation can be seen as having a strong or weak culture (Philipson, 2004).

We see organisational culture as something that organisations need to invest in and focus on. By being aware of characteristics (such as specific kinds of leadership) that may lead to strong or weak cultures, leaders and their organisations can work proactively with fostering a strong culture. By recognising factors (such as ranking of values) that make one culture develop to become stronger than another, leaders and managers can see signs at an early stage and make sure their organisation evolves in a healthy direction. Knowledge of events (such as crises in history or market conditional changes) also contributes to this.

Looking at characteristics of strong and weak cultures can also contribute to an understanding of why culture matters at all. Using the existing energy within an organisation to help it move towards a common goal is something that Philipson (2004) emphasises to make sure that the energy is well utilised. Kotter & Heskett (1992) argue that organisations with strong cultures tend to have goal alignment. This suggests that a strong culture is desirable as it makes the employees use their energy in the same direction. Finding some of these characteristics shows the importance of having a strong culture and gives this culture meaning.

¹ Klarna was founded in 2005, and is a fast-growing e-commerce company that offers payment solutions. They started their activity in Sweden and have thereafter grown to include several countries abroad. (Klarna, 2014)

1.3 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to increase our understanding of factors and characteristics that can explain an organisation's cultural strength, as well as historical forces and events that may cause a certain cultural state.

In order to achieve the purpose, the following research questions are formulated;

- What is the relationship between corporate values and employee values in our studied organisations?
 - What differences can be identified?
- What historical factors can lead to that one organisation's culture developing to become stronger than another?

1.4 Limitations

The concept of organisational culture can be found all over the world and in all organisations. This study will be limited to organisations' operations in Sweden. The organisations of this study do have operations abroad, but we only look at the culture in a Swedish context. We also chose to look at companies that can be considered as big organisations. The historical factors have made us exclude young organisations and both our studied corporations have a long history. The way our study is designed, we found it suitable to use a limited number of theories putting an in-depth focus on each, rather than examining several theories only superficially, as this would add more substance to the results.

1.5 Disposition

In present chapter, the problem statement and purpose is to be found, which together result in the research question. In the second chapter, the theoretical framework used for the study is presented. Relevant literature and necessary background is expressed. The third chapter aims to describe and motivate the methods that have been used. In the fourth chapter, our empirical data and findings are reported. The fifth chapter consists of the study's analysis where the theoretical framework is linked to the empirical data. In the sixth chapter our conclusions and possible areas of future studies are explained.

2 Theoretical framework

In present chapter, relevant frameworks and theories connected to the purpose and research questions are presented.

2.1 Definition of culture

To be able to understand whether an organisation's culture can be seen as strong or weak, it is important to first have knowledge about what culture actually can be. Alvesson & Sveningsson (2008) refer to culture as something that explains mental phenomena, such as that a group of people sharing culture interpret things the same way and in contrast to how people outside that culture interpret the same things. Thus, common beliefs and values as well as norms and behaviour matter for culture and guide the way in which members of a culture act (Philipson, 2004).

Culture exists on many levels and an individual can belong to many different cultures depending on his or her nationality, religion, sex, class, background, workplace, and other factors (Hofstede, 1997). Even a small group of friends or a family can be seen as having its own culture (ibid) and this culture in terms of group characteristics remains and lives on as new members join the group, and thus continues through generations (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). According to Schein (2010), this continuous process is based on the fact that something that has worked out in a good way earlier is likely to be done in the same way the next time. Thus, this way of doing things spreads as new members join the group and eventually develops into assumptions. An organisation is a social coalition like any other group of people and thus organisations' cultures share the characteristics described above of culture in general, but in the particular context of organisations.

Consistent with what is described above, Bate (1984) states that culture is something implicit, shared and transmitted. He sees the assumptions and beliefs of organisational members as implicit to their minds and thus not directly visible for other people. Also Schein (2010) focuses on the degree of visibility when describing components of culture, where assumptions are the least visible. Organisational members take these assumptions, or basic values, for granted (ibid).

To describe Schein's (2010) classification in more detail, he divides culture into three levels which will help us in identifying characteristics of the organisations' cultures. The levels are set based on to which degree it is visible for someone outside the culture to identify the characteristics. The first level of culture, artefacts, regards what is visible and notable. To an observer, it might be easy to see actions and things, but not to decode their meaning. Artefacts can for instance be behaviour, interior design of an office or how guests are greeted. (Schein, 2010)

The second level, espoused beliefs and values, refers to norms and assumptions that are not as visible and obvious. If group members, after influence from a strong individual, agree upon what is a successful course of action, that action will gradually evolve to become shared values and beliefs within the group. The shared values evolve from the validation which the organisational members give the action taken, through their perceived notion of its success. This can be done directly when something obviously has worked out well. It can also happen when it is harder to see a connection between the action taken and success, which takes place through social

validation. Social validation is when the organisational members reinforce each other's beliefs and values and they become shared in this way. (Schein, 2010)

The third level, basic underlying assumptions, are those which are common and taken for granted within the group of people sharing the culture. The assumptions become a reality, which is why the course of action is unquestioned and totally predictable at this level, as it is unconsciously taken for granted and not debated. (Schein, 2010)

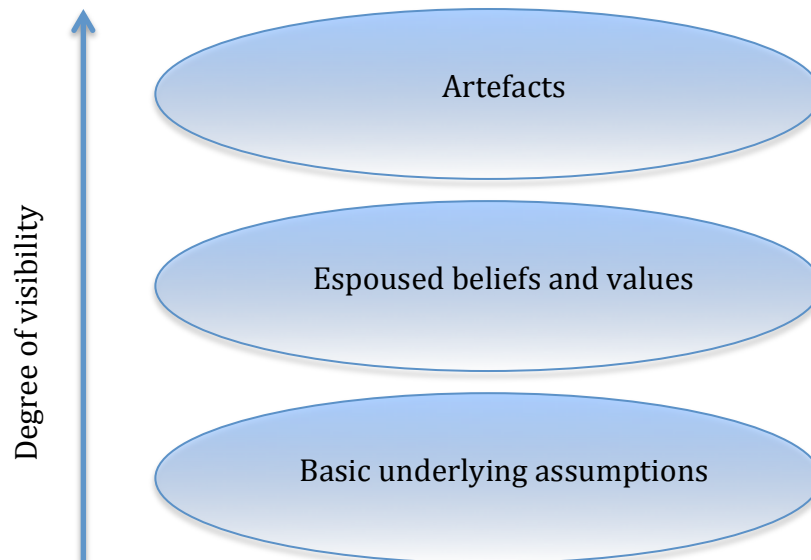


Figure 1. Schein's three levels of culture (Schein, 2010)

Similar to the way Schein (2010) divides culture into three levels based on visibility, Kotter & Heskett (1992) divide culture into two levels but add the dimension of resistance to change, to degree of visibility. Yet, even if Schein (2010) does not state the degree of resistance to change as something that grows with higher levels in his classification, it would be reasonable to conclude that there is an underlying link even in his case. Since basic underlying assumptions are not as questioned as espoused beliefs and values, it follows that the assumptions are deeper and more immutable. In Kotter & Heskett's (1992) levels, the most visible level, group behaviour norms, is here concerned with patterns of behaviour and ways of acting that are encouraged within the particular organisation. The less visible level, shared values, is deeper, harder to change and involves common values that survive even if there are members of the group that come and others that leave.

2.2 The role of values

Values are something recurrent when dealing with organisational culture, which is why it is of importance to know perspectives of values in order to reach insight into which factors can explain an organisation's culture. Values are central for Philipson (2004), who distinguishes what he has chosen to name employee values and corporate values as a way of estimating whether an organisation's culture is strong or weak.

Employee values are values which guide how employees behave and act, which are often elusive and based on organisational members' own values (Philipson, 2004). Corporate values, on the other hand, are values that have to do with the organisation's

operational conditions and are part of the organisation's tradition (ibid). The essence of corporate values is what the organisation aims to achieve and how they should achieve it (ibid). The corporate values are those that are not subjected to the values of the organisation's employees and can be either consistent or in contrast to each other (ibid). For instance, two corporate values that can be seen as contradictory are minimised costs combined with top quality.

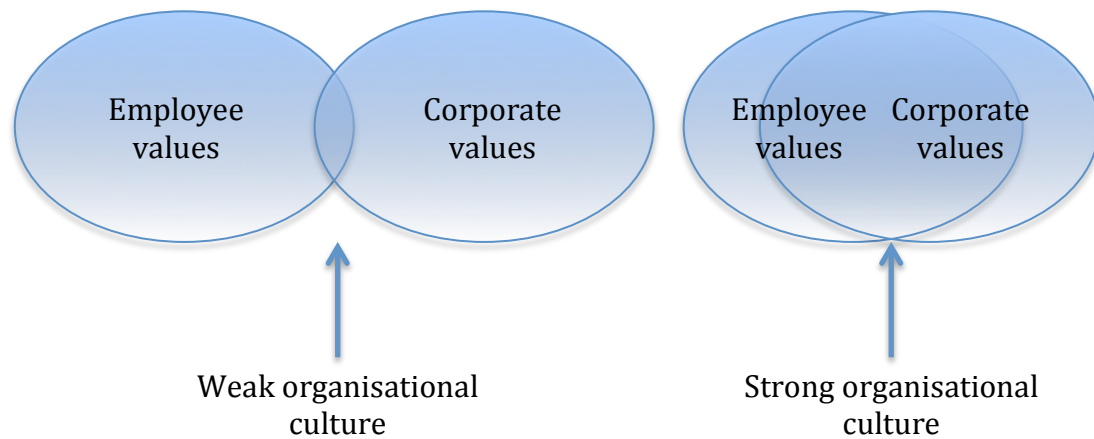


Figure 2. Employee values and corporate values (Philipson, 2004, p.67-68)

In the following paragraphs, employee values and corporate values will be discussed deeper and ultimately end up in a framework to estimate whether a culture is strong or weak, which we will use when answering our research questions. Although again distinguishing between employee values and corporate values, these are not exactly the same kind of values that for instance Schein (2010) or Kotter & Heskett (1992) define, as described above. Rather, the corporate values are formed within an organisation as the basis and guiding principles that are clear, ranked and designated. Thus, corporate values represent a guiding map for employees so that they know what is valued.

Many connect values on the one hand, and behaviour or norms on the other hand. Schein (1984) argues that values help us understand the reason for ways of behaving and according to Deal & Kennedy (1982) values are of the utmost importance for influencing behaviour. Clearly stated values help guide organisational members in decision-making and in doing so also strengthens those values (ibid). This is similar to Kotter & Heskett (1992), who do not assume that values guide behaviour or that behaviour guide values. Instead, they mean that behaviour and values are interconnected in such a way that behaviour is shaped by values, as well as the other way around. Meanwhile, Philipson's (2004) view is that when it is clear for employees within an organisation what is valuable, those values can lead to norms and behaviours being developed by employees. Chatman & Cha (2003) have a similar view. They say values show what is of importance, and if the values are strong, contribute to shape behaviour and norms that will help employees in decision-making.

Philipson (2004) sees the corporate values that are embedded in the organisation's preconditions, as the foundation when developing norms. His assumption is thus that employees to some extent begin from the corporate values in their daily work, if corporate values are clear and common. Forming the corporate values and letting

employees everywhere in the organisation develop those into norms and ways of doing things, creates a culture that is built by employees together, no matter where in the hierarchy their position is. What is important is that everyone should be part of the culture and in creating it, as it needs to be built top-down as well as bottom-up. When employees are allowed to actively engage in cultural questions like this, the energy within the organisation is more likely to be unified, and loyalty increase. (Philipson, 2004)

2.3 Shaping a culture

Like Philipson (2004), Kotter & Heskett (1992) claim that the culture should be created top-down as well as bottom-up but emphasise that a strong culture usually has something to do with the founder of the organisation. Schein (2010) argues that the founder's role in the organisation is the most important factor in shaping a culture. When forming and starting up a corporation, the founder chooses fundamental things such as the orientation, location as well as the employees, which will shape the organisation. The founder's ideas might fail or succeed, but when they succeed, the organisation quickly gets powerful and the assumptions creating the success tend to last (ibid).

Whether the organisation is aware of it or not, there is still going to be a culture prevailing and whether it is conscious or not, actors within the organisation will affect it (Ogbonna, 1992). In the absence of solutions from the founder other members will take that place and emerge as leaders (Schein, 2010). According to Philipson (2004), the founder may well have been the person that back in the organisation's history formulated the basic values of the organisation. Also leaders have an important role in this sense. By highlighting values, leaders can create motivation among the employees, not the least in order to reach a sense of pride toward the organisation to which the employee belong (ibid). The values glue people together and make their time within the organisation valuable and meaningful (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Alvesson, 2002). This is concerned with adding something other than economic aspects to the employees, which will motivate them as they see what their work actually contributes with, in a larger context. Also these kinds of factors can thus contribute to explaining organisations' cultural strengths and differences when comparing organisations to each other.

Clear and comprehensible values will help people within an organisation to make tough decisions (Philipson, 2004). Employees' ambitions and energy need to be coordinated so as not to risk that all this energy is being wasted through fighting against each other. If the values are prioritised and ranked, tough decisions can always be justified and are more likely to be accepted and understood broadly in the organisation (ibid). Alvesson & Sveningsson (2008) also mention the importance of ranking values in order to make employees understand what is more important than something else. When values are ranked and clear, they are more likely to facilitate daily operation and give employees greater freedom as it enables employees' decision-making when facing a situation where one value must be followed at the expense of another (Philipson, 2004). Instead of the ranking of values as Philipson (2004) suggests, Deal & Kennedy (1982) see it as that the values communicate what is most important in a decision-making situation. However, this requires that the values are not contradictory at any time.

The connection between the terms employee values and corporate values that have been described above, is that they are the basis in Philipson's (2004) framework to classify whether an organisation can be seen to have a strong or weak culture. It is also used as the basis when answering the first of our research questions. If the employee values are consistent among employees, the culture as such is consonant. The employee values are what form the culture. However, the employee values need to be interacted and in line with clear corporate values in order to reach a strong culture and this must be done in such a way that the employees feel their values are connected to the corporate values. If an organisation for instance has weak corporate values, the employee values have space to dominate and will determine the culture. The employees might then not have the organisation's best in mind, in the way that the organisation would have wished for. As a consequence, the energy within the organisation might lead the organisation in another direction than desirable. The culture of the organisation will not be strong until employee values and corporate values interact and are in consistent harmony with each other. When the values are in balance, values of employees will be in line with what the organisation wants to achieve. (Philipson, 2004)

In Philipson's (2004) argumentation, he focuses on aspects that may lead to a strong organisational culture by the use of healthy corporate values and employee values. However, he does not give many concrete explanations as to what may lie behind and guide an organisation towards a weak organisational culture. Schein (1984), on the other hand, identifies two important factors that affect it. The first factor is whether the membership within the group is homogenous and stable. If members are frequently replaced, that group is likely to have a weak culture. The second factor regards the relationship within the group. A group that has been together for a long period of time and solved problems together is more likely to have a strong culture than a newly formed group.

Chatman & Cha (2003) look at the strength of culture differently, by using the degree of agreement of common values as well as intensity of those values to classify the culture. High level of agreement and intensity, lead to a strong culture. For instance, an organisation where the degree of agreement is high but the degree of intensity is low, has employees that agree on the values but do not care enough to do something extra. The culture in such organisation will not be as strong as in the previous. (Chatman & Cha, 2003)

To add another dimension to organisational culture and corporate values, Philipson (2004) differs between manifested values and latent values. The former are written down and clarified while the latter are not. Philipson (2004) argues, that if the values are not manifested, employees will interpret them differently and the possibility to use the corporate values as guiding will be lost. In addition, if leaders act by means other than the manifested values, or conversations about the values never take place, the values will still risk being unclear for employees and open up for misinterpretations. (ibid)

To reach the state where corporate values and employee values are in balance, openness and a climate where it is allowed to have opinions is a necessity. A basic, common understanding between employees, departments or offices will contribute to a strong organisational culture. Since people's individual values differ this might be

difficult, and a result of this can be the emergence of subcultures within the organisation. (Philipson, 2004)

According to Alvesson & Sveningsson (2008), research on organisational culture often depicts values as a homogenous phenomenon, when in fact they differ between subgroups and are even a factor that explains the existence of subgroups. The differences in individual values or beliefs may for instance depend on factors such as age (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Philipson, 2004), occupation (Schein, 2010; Philipson, 2004), sex, period of employment (Philipson, 2004), academic background, department (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008) or even different hierarchical levels (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008; Schein, 2010). It is not uncommon for these subcultures to tend to emerge among females in an organisation whose culture historically has been dominated by males (Morgan, 1997).

Schein (2010) describes that subcultures partly develop their own beliefs, based on what they have in common, and partly share the organisation's culture. Deal & Kennedy (1982) identify a big downside to the existence of subcultures, which is that when employees from different subgroups meet, they do not understand each other. Within all organisations, people do their work differently and departments or divisions often differ and develop subcultures (ibid). Contradictions between subcultures can be positive and not result in any harm, but they can also result in problems and thus be expected to influence the culture of an organisation as a whole (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Examples of problems that could occur are if one subculture tries to subdue another, if the cultures develop in different directions, if the values of one subculture take over, or if the subcultures become exclusive clubs (ibid).

Mergers and acquisitions of two organisations are events which mean a high risk of subcultures, as it automatically result in a clash between two cultures, as every culture differ from another (Schein, 2010). When a merger or acquisition has taken place, a common explanation if there is any trouble is cultural differences (ibid). The cultures can evolve all by themselves and become two subcultures in the new organisation (ibid), which Buono & Bowditch (1989) call cultural pluralism. Another scenario is that one can become the more dominant culture (Schein, 2010), and a third that the new culture can be a mixture of the two previous cultures (ibid), which Buono & Bowditch (1989) refer to as cultural blending.

2.4 Successful characteristics

Here we will present some characteristics connected to high performing cultures. These characteristics will serve as part of the framework when identifying potential differences between the organisations.

Philipson (2004) argues for a connection between a clear organisational culture and business success. Deal & Kennedy (1982) also state that the culture within an organisation has a big impact on an organisation's success or failure as it influences practically everything that happens within an organisation. However, a problem when showing this correlation is the fact that the effect of other factors cannot be ignored (Philipson, 2004). Kotter & Heskett (1992) attribute strong or weak culture to something that has a significant long-term impact on how organisations perform. Both Philipson (2004) and Kotter & Heskett (1992) find specific factors in different cultures that make organisations successful or unsuccessful. They also find factors

that are symptoms of strong and weak organisational culture and their findings are very similar. Even though the focus of this study is not on performance, their studies provide good examples of characteristics of strong and weak cultures in general. Thus, we will use a few snapshots from their frameworks when looking at the organisations of this study.

How corporations perform financially in comparison to how strong or weak their organisational cultures are, is the focus of Kotter & Heskett (1992). The empirical data collected in their study was used to determine cultural strength (ibid). Thereafter, they looked into what kind of organisational cultures enhance long-term financial performance, and identified some common characteristics for those (ibid). Philipson (2004) also focuses on performance, but in his research he talks about financial success as being secondary. His main focus is that of employee values and corporate values, that with a good match result in a strong culture. However, he has also connected companies with strong cultures to superior financial performance (ibid).

The most important outcome of the authors' research is that they have identified different factors connected to good performance and strong culture. These factors can be helpful when identifying the investigated organisations' cultural strength relative to each other. Philipson's (2004) research focuses on what kind of characteristics successful healthcare units have. This may not be an industry with a lot of focus on financial performance, but the units do need to be efficient to be able to care for patients. The fact that Philipson (2004) has researched this industry specifically is not seen as a significant problem when comparing it to our organisations or Kotter & Heskett's (1992) research. This is because Philipson (2004) attributes the specific characteristics of strong cultures in successful healthcare units, to an increased long-term performance for corporations in general.

2.4.1 Value based leadership and cultural identity

Philipson (2004) found that the healthcare units with high performance showed characteristics of what he calls value based leadership. Value based leadership means that the leaders help the organisational members to clearly see what values the organisation has and how they should behave in certain situations with regard to those values. Philipson (2004) found that value based leadership rather than a charismatic form of leadership was a characteristic in high performing units. We have chosen to look at these particular characteristics since it has to do with values and how successful units seem to lead by the use of values.

Meanwhile, Kotter & Heskett (1992) state that in a strong culture most of the managers share a set of relatively consistent values and methods of doing business. The most significant similarity between these two theories seems to be the value aspect that also is a reason for why it is mentioned.

Another factor of strong cultures is that the leaders tried to create a cultural identity (Philipson, 2004), which means that they tried to create a culture that everybody in the organisation could feel a connection with. The will to create a cultural identity can be seen as a way of forming a culture that is strong in its match between the employees and corporate values, which is why we see it as an important characteristic. Kotter & Heskett (1992) found that firms strongly encouraged the managers to follow the value statement of the company. Value statement means the

shared values of the firm that has been announced in some manner. This can be seen as connected to corporate values as this is what the managers are being encouraged to spread. Also, it can be connected to employee values since encouraging the employees to do something is a way of trying to influence their behaviour and thus their employee values.

Also significant for Philipson (2004) and Kotter & Heskett (1992) is the recruitment factor, which can give an indication of whether an organisation is in a strong cultural state. Corporate values are something important to keep in mind when hiring new employees, as values of the organisation need to match values of the employees (Philipson, 2004). Thus, corporate values play a role in attracting the right kind of employees, who see those values as reasonable and favourable. Although diversity might be crucial as a source of energy, common values need to be at the base of the organisation; otherwise the diversity might also result in conflicts and loss of energy (ibid). Kotter & Heskett (1992) see the strength of the culture as something that quickly shapes new employees. The approaches seem different in that the former sees the recruitment as a factor explaining success, while the latter seems to focus on the already strong culture shaping the new employees into the mould of the company. In both cases new employees are quickly absorbed into the culture of the company, whether it is by finding a good employee-organisation fit or the fact that the corporation had a strong culture prompting the newly arrived to quickly understand and accept it. Philipson (2004) describes a recipe for success and Kotter & Heskett (1992) describe a positive symptom of a strong culture.

2.4.2 Cooperative thinking

Philipson (2004) found that high performing healthcare units often had a significant cooperative way of thinking and this characteristic can help explain the degree to which the employees think of the organisation as a single entity. The employees in the healthcare units often thought in terms of the whole organisation regardless of their hierarchical position. The employees had a willingness to share ideas and information and they were willing to cooperate across professional borders.

Kotter & Heskett (1992) do not bring up the concept of cooperation to the same extent but acknowledge that in strong cultures, employees tend to march to the same drummer or having goal alignment, and then goes on to say that this is no small achievement in a world full of specialists and diversity. This can be interpreted to suggest that even though people are not in the same profession and individually different, they still work for the same company which is important for them.

After describing the characteristics of high performing cultures which we will use to identify differences between the two organisations, we will now present a historical narrative that will point to factors which can help us explain different cultural strengths in a historical context. This is not done in the context of cultures that perform well but in a context of low performing cultures.

2.5 In the context of history

Kotter & Heskett (1992) describe the nature of low performing cultures more in a context of history. They describe a scenario for how corporations usually evolve over time. A narrative perspective as Kotter & Heskett's (1992) is useful when identifying potential historical differences that may explain cultural strengths which will help us

answer our last research question. The authors tell a story of corporations with low performing cultures, which is very comprehensible, and this is why we have chosen this framework. One factor that is not included in Kotter & Heskett's (1992) narrative and is going to be analysed in the historical context is mergers & acquisitions, which is described above. The corporations with low performing cultures have a history that begins with some kind of advantage compared to other firms. This can according to Kotter & Heskett (1992) be things such as visionary leadership and/or luck in choosing a business strategy that was successful. These companies often get off to a tremendous start and grow bigger and bigger, securing a very strong market position.

Some of the examples Kotter & Heskett (1992) use are control of important patents, unique economies of scale, protection by regulations limiting competition and strong brand loyalty. All of these factors ultimately lead the companies to enjoy relatively weak competition. This can be put in contrast to the corporations with stronger cultures that had much more competition from the start. The fact that the companies did not have much competition made them grow fast and become very complex organisations. They became hard to control and people with good organisational skills were promoted and hired. (Kotter & Heskett, 1992)

Kotter (1990) distinguishes between management and leadership. He has pointed to three processes in management as well as in leadership. Planning & budgeting, organising & staffing, and controlling & problem solving are a part of management. Establishing direction, aligning people, and motivation & inspiration are part of leadership. The companies with low-performance cultures in Kotter & Heskett's (1992) research tended to hire managers and not leaders due to the complexity of the organisations. The corporations that emerged from this scenario are described with three general components. The first component has to do with arrogance among managers. Nobody was ever encouraged to look outside the company for better ways of doing business; the managers thought that they had all the answers. The second component was that the managers tended not to focus on all the managerial constituents; customers, stockholders and employees. The managerial constituents have also been identified by Kotter & Heskett (1992) as the most important factors for managers to focus on in a culture to achieve good financial performance. The third component was the managers' hostility toward change drivers such as leadership, which is leadership the way Kotter (1990) describes it.

When it comes to historical reasons for high performing cultures in the context of history, Kotter & Heskett (1992) are not as specific as with the low performing cultures. But they do bring up some examples of companies with high performing cultures and explain some of the companies' cultural traits with a description of how they started out. They point towards Deal & Kennedy's (1982) description of Tandem computers. This company was founded on very strong management beliefs although they did not have many formal rules. They describe the company as moving efficiently in the same direction, which was accomplished by the managers continuously communicating the company "philosophy" and "essence". This made the employees feel that they were included in an exclusive club. This in turn translated into long hours and productive work (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

Another company that is brought up by Kotter & Heskett (1992) is IBM. At IBM there was consensus about how to conduct business. Their philosophy was to respect

the dignity and rights of each person in the firm, to give the best customer service in the world and to pursue all tasks with the objective of accomplishing them in a superior way. This paints a picture of two successful companies at the time, what their values or beliefs were and how they reinforced those beliefs. We can also mention Schein's (2010) theory about cultural levels, which was described earlier in this chapter as a way of explaining why successful cultures tend to last. Especially Schein's second level: espoused beliefs and value are important for this purpose.

2.6 Summary

The main theories used are Philipson's (2004) framework about how to determine cultural strengths as well as Kotter & Heskett's (1992) narrative that explain historical factors which may lead to a stronger or weaker culture, are of importance. In addition, other researchers such as Deal & Kennedy (1982), Schein (1985; 2010) and Alvesson & Sveningsson (2008), add perspectives of causes contributing to certain cultural states. In the following chapter, the method used to increase our understanding will be presented.

3 Method

In this chapter, the methodological approach is to be found. Relevant techniques are presented as well as discussed. The research design of the study is described, choices and courses of actions for data collection and way of approaching the topic, is motivated. The chapter ends with a critical discussion about the consequences of chosen methods.

3.1 Research approach

Different philosophies underlie different authors' research, which in turn have implications on how the research is conducted. Two distinguished philosophies are positivism and interpretivism, where the positivist strives to conducting the analysis objectively and has an objective view of the social world, which is seen as a given. Meanwhile, the interpretivist believes that objectivism is impossible since he is part of what is actually studied, the social world is constructed and what it means to people is subjective. The positivistic philosophy is often combined with quantitative studies and the interpretivistic philosophy often with qualitative studies. However, this is not always the case. Quantitative studies make use of statistics and numbers, resulting in quantifiable factors, while qualitative studies usually are more in-depth and explanatory in order to create understanding of the topic. (Blumberg, 2011)

We did not think it was possible to answer our research questions by use of a quantitative approach such as sending out a survey to a very large sample of individuals. The respondents would then first have to understand the terms, concepts and frameworks that we used to for instance determine what the relationship between corporate and employee values are. In that case, the survey would have had to be so extensive that we likely would have difficulty in finding respondents willing to cooperate. We consider the language used when discussing values and culture in general as being very open to interpretation. The fact that we looked at two organisations, compared them to each other and then interpreted their cultures, made a qualitative approach favourable. If we had made the respondents objectively answer how they thought the companies valued something then a quantitative approach would have been possible.

The combination of the fact that we wanted to study subjective perceptions that employees have about culture in their organisations and the underlying explanations for those perceptions, contributed further to the choice of a qualitative study as being the most suitable approach. Our research philosophy is interpretivism since, the way we see it, we cannot be objective and detached from the study. We would never succeed in not influencing the research to some extent because we are subjective. If we might find something interesting we may unconsciously try to push that specific subject. It is difficult to be objective in a qualitative study where interviews are the information source. We did not want to affect the subjects but it is hard not to.

The approach used was abductive, which can be seen as a combination of deductive and inductive approach (Patel & Davidsson, 2011). The deductive approach is based on existing theories that are tested in reality and the inductive approach is based on exploration in such a way that the empirical data can facilitate the forming of a theory. The abductive approach, on the other hand, is when the deductive and inductive approaches are combined. A theory is formed, based on a case. This theory

is thereafter tested in new cases, and developed along the way. The challenge with this approach is to keep sensitivity and objectivism along the way and there is a risk of losing generalisability for a larger area than the specific area of study. (Patel & Davidsson, 2011)

The study was made as an explanatory study, which by Blumberg (2011) aims to explain causes and forces. This can in our study be parallelised to factors leading to the strength of an organisation's culture and what forces, events or characteristics that cause an organisation to end up in a certain cultural state.

3.2 Collecting data

3.2.1 Primary data

A communication approach was chosen (Blumberg, 2011), emphasising interaction in order to minimise the risk of misinterpretations and enable collection of abstract information and information about past events. The communication approach chosen was personal interviews as it was identified as the most efficient approach that would make it possible for us to find out the information needed.

Blumberg (2011) distinguishes between structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, where the latter two are referred to as qualitative interviews. In a structured interview, most questions asked are closed and asked in an identical way to all interviewees, in a fixed order. In a semi-structured interview, data is collected by asking the interviewees the same open, often specific questions, which enable them to explain their perspectives and perceptions. An unstructured interview is more of an informal conversation where the researcher and interviewee talk about a given topic.

Structured interviews would in our case not be suitable since we aimed to find out perceptions, and closed questions would not give room for as much data and comprehensive answers as we needed. We decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, as we saw that as the best way to get a deep understanding of the interviewees' views regarding specific questions. That way, the interviews all followed the same main structure and were focused, but with room for openness and follow-up questions depending on the answers (Gillham, 2008). According to Gillham (2008), the semi-structured interview makes room for identifying similarities as well as reducing the risk of missing something of importance, which we considered essential.

The interviews took place between April 11th and May 7th and each interview took between one and two hours. Out of the six interviews, three were made by phone, one by Skype and two in face-to-face meetings. The face-to-face meetings took place on the interviewees' workplace and at a cafe. All interviews were recorded, after asking for permission from the interviewees. To record the interview is described by Blumberg (2011) as favourable due to the fact that it enables the researcher to follow the dialogue instead of being busy taking notes, as well as allowing him to listen at the interviews afterward.

In our case, the fact that we recorded the interviews facilitated to make sure that no important information was forgotten or lost and it enabled us to focus completely on the conversation then and there. The fact that we did not take notes during the

interviews also helped us being more professional during the interviews which resulted in more smoothly flowing interviews and more thoughtful follow-up questions. All interviews were transcribed. The number of pages in total was 81. By transcribing, we got a better overview over what had been said, as well as different perceptions, nuances, hesitations and emphasises that were relevant to the research were visualised. We listened to the interviews and read through the transcribed interviews carefully and repeatedly, both individually and together. By doing so, we aimed to not miss any important fields, patterns and synergies. We color-coded the transcribed material, in order to divide what was said into overarching topics and to make it easier for us to sort out relevant information.

Continuously, we analysed our data during the process, as Patel & Davidson (1991) advocate as an advantage by using a qualitative method. By reflecting over the interviews right after they took place, we secured some of the most important of our thoughts and started the analysis right a way.

Table 1. Respondent description

Name	Organisation	Working experience	Current position	Interview situation	Date of interview
Lena	Pluto	29 years	Business Advisor	Phone	April 25
Maria	Pluto	6 years	Deputy Office Manager	Skype	April 29
Olof	Pluto	32 years	Office Support Manager	Phone	April 23
Anders	Jupiter	20 years	Change Manager	Face to face	April 11
Gustaf	Jupiter	8 years	IT and Customer analyst	Face to face	April 29
Lisa	Jupiter	1 year	Business Analyst	Phone	May 7

3.2.2 Secondary data

When it comes to secondary data, we have used many different sources. For information about our theoretical framework, scientific articles as well as books written by prominent researchers were used. In the empirical chapter, the studied organisations' annual reports as well as their home pages were used in the collection of data. According to Blumberg (2011) internal sources can often be an important source of information to researchers. However, as we unfortunately did not succeed in gaining access to internal sources, we needed to rely on the external sources which we could gain access to. The fact that both studied organisations are publicly listed, helped us to still get access to much information because they are quite transparent in their communications with their shareholders through their annual reports and home pages.

3.3 Selecting samples

When identifying cases to study, one approach can be to choose study objects that are similar to each other, and another is rather the opposite; to select cases that differ (Blumberg, 2011). Our course of action when choosing cases to study was that the study objects should not be direct competitors to each other. The study objects were selected from a list of the 100 largest employers in the Gothenburg-area of 2011. This, since we wanted to study organisations that have an important role in Gothenburg, even if their headquarters or main operations are not necessary located within the region. From the list, we identified two organisations that had about the same number of employees in Sweden, without considering their size abroad.

We wanted to interview multiple people within each organisation in order to be able to understand as much as possible about the organisations and to take on multiple individuals' perceptions. The role the interviewees had within their respective organisation was not considered crucial. We chose to interview employees with experience from different departments and offices, either as a permanent member, or as someone that interacts a lot with employees in different departments. This as we saw that it might broaden their knowledge and insight into the organisation in general, as well as the culture in particular. Of the three respondents at Pluto, two were female and one male, while at Jupiter, one was female and two were male. This to reflect the fact that women are slightly overrepresented at Pluto and that men are slightly overrepresented at Jupiter.

Pluto and Jupiter differ from each other in many ways. They operate in totally different industries and their work is organised in completely different ways. Still, we found many aspects where the organisations are similar to each other. They have about the same number of employees within Sweden and both organisations have a long history with roots dating back to the 19th century. The characteristics of both Pluto's and Jupiter's products are quite standardised. Thus, their respective offerings do not differ much from their competitors'. Also, the interviewees of our study communicated an image of their respective organisations as something stable and safe. That is, both Pluto and Jupiter have, according to the interviewees, a similar rumour in the society and among customers, being seen as trustworthy and stable.

3.4 Criticism of method

A problem for us was gaining access to the organisations the way we wanted to. It would have been favourable to supplement with internal sources to our empirical chapter. At Pluto, they have what they refer to as a "bible" for the employees. It would add depth to our study if we had been able to get access to this, which disseminates information internally. At Jupiter, the interviewees refer to "code of conduct" and documents that all employees have signed, which also would have added value. Meanwhile, the topic of culture and philosophy is usually properly mentioned in home pages as well as annual reports for publicly listed organisations. Thus, we were still able to create a picture of what these organisations see as crucial within the area of corporate culture.

Within the limitations of this study we were not able to spend time in the organisations. We think first-hand-observations would have added depth to this study. Deep-level values such as assumptions have been difficult for us to identify because of this, combined with the limited period of time.

Another weakness in our study was the fact that the study had to be conducted without exposing which organisations we researched. This made us have to adjust the descriptions about Pluto and Jupiter partially, wherefore some statistical information is made up and so are the sources. However, if the organisations as well as the interviewees would not have been promised anonymity, the interviewees would probably not have talked as freely and transparent as the anonymity allowed them to.

As mentioned earlier, the two organisations differ from each other. Pluto has about 500 offices where the work done is pretty much the same between offices. Jupiter, on the other hand, is divided into different departments with different focus and tasks. This fact is something that we think has affected our results partly. Reasonably, employees within an organisation where everyone has similar professions and similar tasks, are likely to think more alike and thus have more similar employee values than an organisation where this is not the case.

Out of the six interviews, three took place via phone, one by Skype and two in face-to-face meetings. We see a risk in that it is easier to make the interviewees comfortable in the interviews that took place via Skype and face-to-face, compared to the interviews that took place via phone. Talking with strangers can be expected to be easier when seeing the other people, than when just hearing them. However, we received comprehensive answers and we perceive the level of cooperation to be similar in all interviews.

Another thing that has not been taken into account is the factor of causality, which describes the difficulty in knowing what came first; success because of a strong culture or strong culture because of success. We have chosen to adhere to the first one of these and have not taken causality into account.

4 Empirical data

In this chapter, the empirical data is presented. The organisations and a summary of their histories are described. Main focus of this chapter is on presenting relevant findings from the interviews to show what the interviewees communicated regarding their respective organisations.

4.1 Business description

4.1.1 Pluto

Pluto is a Swedish organisation with roots back in the 19th century. In Sweden, Pluto has about 500 offices. Their customers are private customers as well as corporate clients. In comparisons and surveys, Pluto usually scores high when it comes to customer satisfaction. Although acquisitions have been occurring, Pluto mainly grows organically. (Pluto, Annual Report, 2014)

In the 70's Pluto underwent a significant strategic change which still remains a pillar in Pluto's business strategy. This was a result of a crisis in the 60's after which a new CEO was appointed (who we will refer to as Mr A) that had the idea to make Pluto become a more decentralised organisation. The offices around the country got a much more independent role and could affect their daily operational decisions to a much higher degree. Pluto was also divided into bigger divisions that had their own boards and high degree of independence. Supporting the new regional divisions was specialists that could help the offices within the divisions to handle bigger customers with more sophisticated needs. Focus also shifted from budgeting to goals of profitability. The need to keep within a budget could, according to Mr A, be harmful. Budgeting was therefore abolished. This way of working is still prevailing and has resulted in cost-consciousness among employees. (Pluto, History, 2014)

The main goal was to be more profitable than their competitors in terms of key ratios rather than absolute numbers, which was accomplished in a short time. From the 70's Pluto has been more profitable than its main competitors most years. Mr A's way of thinking was that to be able to compete in the same market with the same products as its competitors, the employees had to perform better than their peers. A system of placing stock in a fund was created so that the employees are awarded when they perform better than their competitors. Since the fund is not paid out until retirement, it became a long-term investor that holds a lot of voting power in Pluto today. Following a recession in the Swedish economy, many competitors took heavy losses in the corporate market. Pluto was one of a few that managed the crisis well. (Pluto, History, 2014)

This is something that two of our interviewees, who were around at this time, remember being proud of. Pluto took advantage of the situation to move forward its market positions. Right now, Pluto faces a massive expansion abroad and the daunting task of enforcing its own specific culture. The decentralisation, retirement fund and focus on profitability remain central in Pluto's business strategy. (Pluto, Annual Report, 2014)

In Pluto's formulated organisational culture and philosophy of today, their decentralised organisation is key, combined with their customer focus. This is said to

give each office a high degree of sovereignty. They have a long-term approach in their business strategy and profitability is more important than volume. In addition, Pluto applies a beneficial pension solution where money is deposited for all employees each year, based on Pluto's result. Pluto is an organisation that aims for employees to stay within the organisation for a long period of time. (Pluto, Cultural Philosophy, 2014)

4.1.2 Jupiter

Like Pluto, our other study subject, called Jupiter, has roots in the 19th century. Like many Scandinavian countries, Sweden had a near monopoly-based system in Jupiter's industry. During the 80's, the market for Jupiter began to be liberalised and more and more companies entered the market. However, Jupiter continued to have a centralised ownership structure and strong market position. During the mid 90's, Internet usage started to take off and Jupiter's corporate predecessor began to provide services linked to this new phenomenon. Jupiter has made some attempts to merge with competitors abroad on similar markets as Sweden. Some mergers has gone through and others not. (Jupiter, Historia, 2014)

Jupiter operates in many countries and their customers are private individuals as well as businesses (Jupiter, Årsredovisning, 2014). In recent years, Jupiter has had a number of good results (ibid) but a slow and noticeable market share decline in the Swedish market in most of their business areas (IB, 2014). Recently, the current CEO announced that henceforth they will need to do something about their systems, as the organisation suffers from the complexity of their processes (Jupiter, Årsredovisning, 2014).

In Jupiter's formulated organisational culture and philosophy, customer focus is one of the main areas. Value should be created for their customers and progress should be made within their business field, for instance by knowledge sharing and cooperation. The diversity of the business and to secure respect is also crucial. In addition, there should be a corporate climate where commitment and competence is encouraged. Innovation and their future-orientation is something recurrent in their texts and descriptions. (Jupiter, Kultur, 2014)

4.2 Records from Pluto

At Pluto, all respondents communicate the image of an organisation with a strong culture. Immediately when asked about the current culture, they proudly and consistently present what Pluto sees as important and fundamental in their business. Maria describes how it is something that is almost unchanging and that you as an employee do not have much to say about it.

“Pluto has a very strong organisational culture. It's in the walls. It is the culture that exists that you cannot overrule. That you get into and that is only for you to accept if you want to work in the company.” – Maria

“It [organisational culture] is something that is our company very dear to heart because we have a very strong organisational culture at Pluto.” – Olof

4.2.1 Relationships

When discussing differences and relationships between offices and departments, Pluto seems to have an atmosphere of competition as well as cooperation. This is something that the interviewees have different views of. Olof describes a competitive element between the offices, as the offices within a region are compared to each other when it comes to profitability and other key ratios. Lena tells about a system where Pluto's accountants rate the different offices in terms of key ratios and where the office receives a score from 5-1, which can reinforce competition.

Olof explains that customer relations always needs to be of the highest priority, which is why the element of competition must never take over from the cooperation needed for the client's best. According to Maria, a change has taken place in the area of competition and cooperation. When she first started, there was much more competition between the offices, backstabbing and talk about at which office it was more fancy to work. Today, she experiences a much more cooperating environment where the offices help each other. For instance, if there is absence in one office, another office sends over an employee to facilitate work, and the opening hours are synchronised so that the offices alternate their evening opening. Maria also describes how the office managers meet regularly to share experiences.

The interviewees have been working at more than 15 offices combined and have experienced that there can be differences in how things are done at different offices. Maria says that Pluto encourages employees to change workplace at times to try small and big offices, different positions and job assignments within Pluto. Olof has been at a lot of different offices and describes them as differing quite a lot. He says that there is a lot of freedom under responsibility, which is what makes it fun to work at Pluto. Lena describes that you always recognise the atmosphere of Pluto despite being in different offices. Each region as well as each office is allowed to put its own twist on it, within certain limits. She explains that this is linked to the decentralisation.

4.2.2 "The bible"

All interviewees agree that customer service is one of the main focuses of Pluto. They all at some time discuss the awards that have been given to Pluto for customer satisfaction. Lena talks about putting the customer first, Olof about an extreme focus on customers and Maria says that this is hammered in when you start at the company. They also agree on where this information is presented. Pluto has an internal text that comes out as a new version every time a new CEO has taken the helm of Pluto. This will be referred to in this text as "the bible" since that is how two of the interviewees describes it. Lena explains that the bible is something that tells the employees what their focus should be and how they should act where the main focus is putting the customer first. According to Olof, the bible has not changed significantly during the years he has been at Pluto. The content has changed in some aspects since the markets and environment in which Pluto operates changes all the time, but the core information is largely the same. Small revisions are being made, but never large ones. Maria at first found the focus on the bible and the fact that they told employees to keep it under the pillow a bit silly. But over time, as she has understood its background, she understands why it is so important.

When talking about the contents of the bible, the interviewees all mention some major factors. One of those is the decentralisation strategy, which means that offices around

the country can make a lot of decisions on their own. They do have some strict laws and regulatory framework as well as company rules to abide by, but largely they can set their own prices and deal with customers as they see fit. Olof says that a value in this is that you get a better picture of your own customers and especially your own market. He describes how employees working at an office know much about the businesses in that particular area. He sees no logic in doing business with corporations and private citizens where you are not situated, like their competitors sometimes do.

Fast decision-making is also a major factor that has been emphasised by the company, according to the interviewees. Olof also describes that there are very few decision levels within the company as a whole. Three decision levels are mentioned; the office manager, the regional manager and the CEO. According to the interviewees, this makes it possible to take decisions already when you sit down with your customers. The customers get a fast answer to their requests and management trusts the employees' ability to make decisions. Fast decision-making is possible because of the sovereignty of the offices around the country, which can be attributed to the decentralisation strategy. This is highlighted by Olof, who mentions that Mr A back in the 70's thought that to make good and fast decisions, Pluto needed to have a very flat organisational structure. Maria mentions that you may even give credit to someone that does not have a good credit history and still be pretty sure about the risk of Pluto's investment. This is because you are so close to the customer and perhaps you know their parents and what their financial situation is. Maria describes this as very helpful, because you do not have to go through as rigorous credit investigations as competitors that are more rigid in their credit evaluation process. Even if it is a decision that needs to be taken by the office manager, Maria says that there is always room for dialogue and they often come to a decision together. Thus, she feels that she is always allowed to express her opinion even when the decision is her office manager's to take.

The interviewees often mention good customer service and describe how Pluto's strategy can help make this happen. They say decentralisation leads to sovereignty for the offices, which in turn enables fast decision-making and consequently makes Pluto provide good customer service. Maria describes the difference between the customer relationship at Pluto and other organisations by an example. According to Maria, a credit application sent from her office also ends up in her office ultimately. This makes the frames less static and opens up for dialogue to a higher extent than in many other similar companies where the decision of approval or decline is taken at a central division.

“At many other companies, if you send in a credit application, that application does not end up in the office [where from you sent the application], but in Stockholm or somewhere else. They look at the numbers and then it is approved or declined. Here it is more of a discussion.” – Maria

4.2.3 Mr A

As an effect of that Mr A implemented the current corporate values of decentralisation, customer-orientation, profitability and cost-consciousness, he is mentioned in two of the interviews as an important leader for the organisation. Olof is the most accurate in his description of Mr A's views and accomplishments. He

outlines almost exactly what Mr A did at Pluto and why he thought it was important. Olof describes how the organisation has been looking pretty much the same since Mr A changed it in the 70's. Lena also has good insight into Mr A and describes him as someone that had a crucial role for the organisation.

“He remade the whole organisation, Pluto was a completely different organisation before him.” – Lena

*“We have lived in almost the exact same organisation since Mr A arrived at Pluto in the 70's, we have not changed that organisation.”
– Olof*

Maria does not mention Mr A but is just as informed as Olof and Lena about what Mr A's legacy is, although she does not directly attribute it to him. Instead she mentions the current CEO as important for Pluto and says that employees seem very impressed by him and that he is someone they look up to.

4.2.4 The foundation, evaluation and education

The interviewees mention Pluto's "pension foundation" as a motivating factor. This is a foundation that receives funds from Pluto when their profitability exceeds other comparable competitors'. Maria says that it makes the employees feel a personal responsibility to be better than Pluto's competitors. Olof explains that everybody gets the same amount from the foundation regardless of position in Pluto. Lena adds that Pluto's employees might not be the best paid in the industry, but they feel they have a good pension fund and this gives them an incentive for good performance. Olof says that part of Pluto's idea is to a high extent employ newly educated people that do a good job and stay until retirement. However, Maria describes a backside to this. She has seen examples of old ladies with few years left to retirement that stay within the organisation mainly because of the pension fund.

Something that is addressed by Lena and Olof in the context of personal responsibility is the "evaluator" which is an evaluation process that connects Pluto's activities and the employees' professional progress as an on-going process. This is described as an evaluation that is done every year together with the employees' closest superiors. Here employees get feedback on their work performance and talk with their superiors about needs to evolve in certain areas. This is done in the context of Pluto's overall business, but with the offices as a base. The offices make a plan based on the needs of the customers and the market, then individual employee talks and planning follows. This plan is then monitored continuously over the course of the year. The follow up usually happens three times during the first 7-8 months of the year, to go through what have been good and bad about the individual's performance.

As described earlier, the interviewees provide a picture of how the bible is cemented into the minds of employees. The interviewees describe that one way Pluto keeps the bible alive is by bringing it up at internal courses, especially in introductions. Maria sees Pluto's encouraging the employees to take these courses. Olof mentions that the employees can enrol in courses that prepare them for managerial positions in the future. A lot of education is built into the systems nowadays, according to Lena, but to get away is often a good thing as it gives you input from others. Maria says that employees are supposed to spread the knowledge they have learned to the rest of the

office when they come back. They are also expected to take greater responsibility for the areas within which they have gained knowledge.

One thing noticeable in our interviews is that certain terms are used to describe Pluto's "aura" or what the interviewees think that Pluto is perceived as by the outside world. They do not have a particularly spiteful tone when speaking about Pluto in these terms, but more one of subtle amusement. Some of the terms used are "the tight company", "the cult", "the boring company", and "the careful and stable company". In line with the tight company, Maria says that she thinks that it even is said in the bible that it is a good idea to also use the backside of a paper before throwing it away.

"Pluto is a boring, stable company. They are never first with anything, but when things fall apart, then people want to move to us."
– Maria

"We are very cost aware. We joke about being the tight company."
Lena

4.3 Records from Jupiter

Anders thinks employees are slightly embarrassed over some stories from Jupiter's history. Despite this, all the interviewees communicate a sense of pride over their organisation. The tradition and the role in the society that Jupiter has played, and still does, is something that contributes to this. Lisa says that it is motivating to be aware of how big parts of Sweden are affected when Jupiter does something.

4.3.1 The self-image

At Jupiter, Anders distinguishes the organisation's self-image from the culture. He explains how what the organisation wants to be is one thing, and how it actually works is another. At employee level, people are skilled and loyal, but the way the organisation interacts in processes and systems result in that a good idea may never be anything more than a good idea, since the organisation's system is too slow. However, Gustaf says that employees in general are driven by genuinely wanting to do a good job. Lisa also confirms that Jupiter has an environment where employees are very competent, professional and do a good job and she expresses an understanding for why many choose to stay at Jupiter for many years. However, Anders describes that the company is in a bit of a personnel reorganisation phase as he puts it, and that they need better educated employees to analyse the reason for doing certain things.

Lisa describes a big organisation with muscles, which give the organisation a huge potential. However, those muscles may also be troublesome, with many hierarchical levels involved when making decisions. Gustaf connects the rather slow process of decision-making and change, with the fact that Jupiter has an old, very sensitive and cumbersome IT park that is hard to change. This is something that, according to Anders, can lead to a lot of internal frustration, as employees and departments may agree on what would be the best thing to do, but still, it turns out that it is just not doable.

The fact that the organisation provides something that is important for society, is something that all respondents come back to and partly use as an explanation to the

slow processes. To fail or have the systems down is never an option. They must be stable. Both Gustaf and Lisa confirm the view of an organisation that is seen as stable and reliable. All three interviewees use the word safe when describing what Jupiter stands for. Anders also adds the dimension that the organisation lately has loaded their trademark with innovation and tried to spread that vision internally. This innovation, according to Gustaf, is difficult to achieve due to what was just described above. There are so many employees with good ideas that could be implemented, but something that might look as a minor adjustment to implement, is in fact something that may take months, as there are so many interdependencies built into the system. Lisa also sees difficulties in living up to the value of innovation. Rather, she sees it as something that has been formulated more as the organisation's wish. She thinks there has been a self-image of that innovation is not what the organisation does best.

According to Gustaf, a "code of conduct" is formulated which among other things addresses the value of respect. He sees the intention as positive, and argues that it is better to have one that not to, but at the same time it feels a bit like obvious things and common sense. Lisa talks about how the written down corporate values turn up in every evaluation of performance with her manager twice a year, so they are indeed visible.

4.3.2 The informal networks

Another value according to the organisational philosophy is the importance of creating value. In the interviews, it is mentioned that knowledge sharing, which is an important part of creating value, is a part of the everyday work. For instance, through what Anders refers to as informal networks. He stresses the importance of feeding his networks, to keep them up. These networks are visualised by Anders almost like a world parallel to the formal organisation. He describes how he by getting to know people, including them in his network and maintaining and servicing it, creates an association where making services and services in return is natural. Within his network he will gain a highway to quick answers and finding the right person quickly, when a new kind of question comes up. Knowledge sharing is thus to a big extent taking place through the informal networks.

However, he also mentions a backside of the networks that affects new employees. When Anders is going to present a proposal for the management group, he prepares himself by using his informal network. He invites a couple of people that he knows in the management group for lunches, and anchors his idea with them, one by one. He mediates a humble proposal and asks for their opinions. Then, when presenting in front of the whole management group, he knows that a couple of them will have difficulties to say no and his proposal is more likely to be approved. A new employee would perhaps just have presented and more likely gotten a no. He states that those who have worked longer never go to the management group without anchoring their ideas with any of the members first. Thus, Anders sees the organisation's structure sometimes as limiting, but this limitation partially dissolves thanks to the network. Within the network, he receives a lot of information before he would have received it the official way. Gustaf confirms that he receives about 50% of the information in an informal way and 50% formal. Gustaf and Lisa do not go deep into informal networking. However, Gustaf refers to "the-go-to-guy" and how you by knowing who has knowledge in particular areas, can have an advantage.

Gustaf describes another way of value creation and knowledge sharing that takes place. Each week, his department has a meeting where they submit and discuss suggestions for improvements that they have identified. It can be trivial things that easily can be adjusted, or improvements of bigger nature that some employee feel would facilitate and make them more effective. He expresses that he perceives himself to have relatively much to say about processes in his own department, but to match them with other departments is difficult and complicated.

4.3.3 Who knows about the customer?

Customer focus is another recurring term in the organisation's philosophy. Gustaf says, that people higher up in the hierarchy naturally are further away from the customer, which might be a problem as they eventually totally lose contact with customers. He sees it as, the closer to the customer you are, the better understanding you have of the customer, in general. That is why he prefers to ask employees at customer support when he has questions about customer requests. The distance to customers lead to a risk of developing products based on false assumptions, prejudices and stereotypes about that specific target group. He explains that everyone theoretically agrees to let customer requirements guide their work. However, in practice, there will be opposition. According to Gustaf, many do not go downward in the hierarchy when having particular questions about customers' requirements, but rather upwards. Anders refers to this phenomenon as something unhealthy for the organisation and says that by asking your manager, you actually turn your back against the customer. He says that this will not work in the long run as it is the customer that in reality feeds all of you.

“We need to become better at giving the customers what the customers want and not what we think that they want, because we are often wrong.” – Gustaf

This way of anchoring things upwards in the hierarchy is referred to by Gustaf also in another context. He says there was a rumour about a previous CEO, describing him as a leader that almost showed dictatorial symptoms, which fostered a very hierarchical organisation. If you wanted to stay within the organisation, you should not go against him. Gustaf himself saw the CEO as rather cool in his leadership. Still, he reflects over this rumour as something that, if true, probably has contributed to an organisation where employees want to establish and verify each decision higher up in the hierarchy.

An interesting transformation has taken place within the organisation, according to Lisa. The organisational culture changed remarkably after a CEO-shift. She describes it like the feeling of when someone opens up a window, and the transformation took place just from one week to the next. Lisa describes how the culture under the former CEO was defensive. There was a culture of blaming others and protect territories, that was unpleasant. But after the new CEO took over, who did not blame others but rather showed interest in a new way, also the middle managers changed fundamentally in their approaches. According to Lisa, the transformation was incredibly significant, as managers shook off the paranoia, became open and posed completely different types of questions.

Anders talks about a particular incident that took place a while ago. His department was under pressure and heavily criticised internally for their work. They felt that they were not seen and felt betrayed by top management. It ended up in that the employees termed the situation and stated transparently that they were distressed, and asked for help. At that point, top management listened, the HRM manager was engaged, employees were interviewed about the situation and finally he and his colleagues felt that someone listened to them and saw them. Since then, the employees reports into an own health care web page, on a weekly basis, how they feel, whether they sleep well, if they feel valued and such things. This, according to Anders, made his department feel that someone saw them, listened to them and that they were supported and confirmed. A high manager even took the blame for the situation, which Anders also felt contributed. Anders's department felt acknowledged and respected, which was crucial for the solution.

4.3.4 Conflicting forces

Anders describes how internal driving forces sometimes counteract each other. The basis to that it works anyway is that employees usually like each other and respect each other's points of view.

“What makes it work, it's that we get along. (...) Thus, we can agree that we disagree.” – Anders

As a source for counteraction, Gustaf takes up individual goals, which sometimes results in competition instead of cooperation. He sees a risk in using individual goals, as this might end up in that one person's achievement of goals is another person's fail in reaching his, as the goals stand in contrast to each other. He exemplifies this by a person selling products and has as a goal to sell as many as possible. Meanwhile, the service personnel repairing products might have as a goal to decrease the number of items that comes in to be repaired. Thus, the service personnel's goal will be likely to be met if the organisation will sell less products, as the need for reparation will decrease.

“Calle works with selling products. The more products they sell, the better. While I work with repairing products, and the fewer items we receive to repair, the better, perhaps. Suppose that this is the case. Then of course my goals make me want us to sell fewer products. Thus, the fewer items we sell, the less comes in for reparation and I will easier reach my goals.” – Gustaf

Another opposing force that is mentioned in all interviews at Jupiter is how the workforce does not walk together in the same direction. Anders describes how top management agrees with the lower hierarchical levels about common values for the organisation and what is seen as a reasonable way to go. Middle management, on the contrary, sometimes seems to work in another direction than the rest, according to Anders. He describes how middle management have built their own empires with a considerable number of subordinates, and a network between each other, which they want to defend at any price. Lisa has a similar view to Anders, those she refers to as “mini-Popes” defend their square of interest.

The mandate to take decisions, according to Gustaf, is high up in the hierarchy and not at an operational level. Thus, when people on lower hierarchical levels have good ideas, they do not have the mandate to take decisions. Linked to middle management, Lisa talks about the fact that three reorganisations have taken place during the last year, but still, middle management consist of exactly the same persons as before. She sees a risk in that the fact that the middle managers continue with identical composition as that will probably not lead to any change. Anders talks about the managers as having an administrative focus, but thinks that this will change in the future and become more of a coaching position.

“The counterforce sits in middle management. (...) They are building their small empires in the large company. And defend it tooth and nail.” – Anders

“The existing managers are those who become managers” – Lisa

Gustaf provides a picture of an organisation where there sometimes are big differences between departments. This is partly linked to factors like age, background and how the orientation of the work as such attracts different kind of people, according to him. Some, less advanced jobs are more of “trampoline jobs” where the employees work for a short while to thereafter continue somewhere else. Other jobs are by nature more long term oriented, which Gustaf believes is something that contributes to this difference. Anders also gets back to how people within the organisation, especially between different oriented departments, work differently, which can be problematic when they need to cooperate. For instance, salesmen, system administrators, system developers and customer support employees, have different intrinsic driving forces.

After the financial crisis 2007-2008, Jupiter had to let many employees go. According to Gustaf, the fact that the organisation downsized and laid off has scarred the culture and affected the atmosphere highly. He explains how skilled employees choose to leave and the loyalty to Jupiter decreased. Anders says they are constantly overstaffed and trying to let people go on a voluntary basis. That is, by for instance offering two annual salaries and just as the very last solution, dismiss people. Gustaf interprets it like that Jupiter for instance changes the title of a job and makes minor changes in the job description, to be able to say to an unwanted employee that their specific job is not needed anymore.

In the beginning of the 00's there was a merger between two companies, one from Sweden and one from another country that created what Jupiter is today. Anders describes this merger as positive and having positive effects due to the synergies created. The companies did not have to develop certain products separately from one another. Anders describes the Swedish organisation as the dominant cultural force because it was much bigger than its counterpart. The immediate effect of the merger was that the new organisational language became English. Anders describes how they did not quite understand each other, there were misunderstandings and an overall awkwardness because of that the school English often used was not enough to express nuances and meanings between the parties. He also thinks that the other party thought that the Swedes were a little bit slow and analytical for their taste.

“They had faster decision-making than we did, and I think that irritated them a bit, we were too slow.” - Anders

Right now he interprets the merger and its cultural impact on Jupiter as not that big of a deal. He says that the two companies have evolved separately and that they do not affect each other that much.

5 Analysis

In this chapter, the research questions are answered by the use of the findings presented in previous chapter, combined with relevant theories. First, the organisations are analysed one by one by the use of Philipson's (2004) framework for classifying cultures. Thereafter, a comparison that identifies characteristic differences of the respective organisations is presented. Lastly, the organisations are analysed from the perspective of historical factors explaining present state.

5.1 Pluto

5.1.1 Corporate values

5.1.1.1 Manifested corporate values

According to Philipson (2004), corporate values need to be anchored within the organisation and gain from being clear and manifested. At Pluto, we can identify very clear corporate values that have prevailed in the organisation for many years. The way in which the interviewees immediately mention Pluto's decentralisation and customer orientation, suggests that those corporate values are deeply manifested and appreciated. These terms are also frequently occurring during all interviews, which indicates that the values are successfully anchored. We see that since these are common in all interviews and obvious for the respondents, the values of decentralisation and customer orientation fit well in Schein's (2010) second level of culture, which is espoused beliefs and values.

The important source for spreading Pluto's corporate values internally, is through their bible. Handing out the bible to all employees makes it present and mentioned now and then. By making it that visible, they strengthen the importance and simplifies the consistency of its interpretation. Philipson (2004) states that the corporate values need to be interpreted in the same way by all employees. Pluto seems to have found a way to facilitate this process. The fact that the bible often is addressed at internal educations and courses, and that new employees follow an introduction program where cultural questions are very much in focus, is likely to strengthen the values further. This way, we see that newly employed get a deep knowledge early on about what is important according to Pluto and how things are done. That, in turn, simplifies for employees to interpret the manifested corporate values and the likelihood that this interpretation is unanimous over the organisation as a whole increases. The fact that conversations about corporate values actually take place on a regular basis is in line with Philipson's (2004) discussion about making the values clear and to not leave room for misunderstandings.

The content of the bible is explained to focus on how to act, where the main point is the customer focus. The fact that the bible has looked pretty much the same during a long time with only minor changes over the years, is something that is likely to contribute to that the manifested corporate values are so consistently understood. Thus, the risk for misunderstandings decreases further and the possibility to use the corporate values as guiding, as Philipson (2004) describes it, will remain.

The manifested corporate value of decentralisation is something that all interviewees focus a lot on. This value can highly be seen as compatible with the value of customer

focus. To have values that are compatible with each other is of importance to create strong corporate values that can ease guidance for the employees, according to Philipson (2004). The decentralisation presses the decision-making downwards in the organisation and all employees express that they feel they have a big influence and space to take their own decisions. There are as few as three decision levels within the organisation, which are strict due to laws and regulations. However, Maria still feels that she has space to discuss with her office manager if he at first says no to something. This is something that further confirms that the decision-making is on a low level in the hierarchy, close to the customer.

The fast decision-making each employee is empowered to, is exemplified in our interviews. The interviewees describe how they to a high extent are allowed take decisions in their customer meetings right away. According to Alvesson & Sveningsson (2008) as well as Philipson (2004) it is of importance to rank values in order to facilitate decision-making for employees. At Pluto, the values are not clearly ranked, but the employees do know that customer focus is one of the values with highest priority. To have the value of customer focus in mind, and knowing that fast decision-making is encouraged, may give employees confidence to act on their own. In turn, the space the employees have to act on their own, contributes to that customers are likely to interpret a high level of customer focus.

Our interviewees also mention the connection they see between customer focus and decentralisation, which indicates that they have insight into which values are important, to some extent. The way they see it, the decentralised strategy enables them to be more customer oriented. With only three decision levels, the employees gain a big influence. The fact that credit applications are sent to each office and not to a central division enables them to have more of a dialogue where other variables are considered. That credit is sometimes approved to customers with a credit history that is not perfect, is another example of how Pluto shows flexibility and sees the totality of a customer.

Another aspect related to customer orientation, is that customers belong to the office that is geographically closest to them. The fact that Pluto decides to work strictly in geographical areas also facilitates for the employees to live up to a higher level of customer service, as they are those that know their particular market best. By this way of working, the corporate values of decentralisation and customer orientation are confirmed and obviously lived up to. The way we see it managers and employees in general act in line with these manifested corporate values, which is something crucial for the corporate values to be seen as strong, according to Philipson (2004). A proof of their customer orientated work are the awards Pluto has won for their high customer satisfaction, which is mentioned in all interviews as something they are proud of.

Another manifested corporate value that is highly present within the organisation is the value of being cost conscious. We see a possible connection between the pension fund and the corporate value of low costs. The pension fund is indirectly connected to the cost level of Pluto, as the annual deposit is based on their profitability relative to their competitors. The profitability is obviously closely connected to the cost level, and here every single employee gets their own incentive for keeping costs down. Again, here is an example of corporate values that are consistent to each other and

even strengthens each other. Each employee knows that keeping costs down will contribute to his pension fund. Here Pluto has succeeded to link values together and find incentives for employees to follow them and make them a part of the everyday life. To encourage employees to even use the backside of papers, by mentioning that as a suggestion in the bible to save costs, is something that might be seen as ridiculous. However, it is an excellent example of that cost-consciousness is highly valued, for real.

The fact that Pluto prefers employees who come straight from their education and stay their whole lives may be linked to the pension fund. The pension fund is likely a motivator and something that makes employees think twice before leaving the organisation. A possible downside of the pension fund and the way in which the organisation fosters employees to become part of Pluto, might be that employees actually stay within Pluto for the wrong reasons.

5.1.1.2 Latent corporate values

Latent corporate values are according to Philipson (2004) hidden but still present, embedded in the organisation's preconditions. At Pluto, a latent corporate value that we have identified, is the anchoring and spreading of the manifested corporate values. By that, we mean that the corporate value to spread manifested values is not something visible. However, it is something that is present in such a way that it is expected that employees in different levels of the organisation discuss them. For instance, the latent corporate value of spreading information about decentralisation and customer-focus is present on a daily basis, even if not written down. In this example, it is the decentralisation and customer-focus that is formulated for the employees, not the importance of spreading them. Still, the spreading of them is something embedded and present on a regularly basis.

A way that this expresses itself is through the many internal educations and courses. Using some minutes of a course to talk about the bible or discuss decentralisation, contributes to manifest those values. Education and internal courses are described as a basis for knowledge sharing and a way to get insight into how other offices work. The fact that an employee when returning from a course is given greater responsibility within that specific area that the course concerned, creates an immediate space to practice it, which can be expected to contribute to a feeling of meaning among the employees. They have use of their new knowledge relatively soon and might feel that they are invested in. Deal & Kennedy (1982) mention the importance of creating meaning among employees, which this can be seen as an example of.

Another latent corporate value identified is that of trust, which correlates to a high extent with a couple of the manifested corporate values. To enable the manifested corporate value of fast decision-making and customer orientation, the organisation needs to trust in their employees. It is only when the employees feel they are trusted to take decisions that they will start to do that. However, without this latent corporate value of trust, we think the organisation would not work within its current structure. Within the set frames, our interviewees communicate how they feel they have space to act on their own and are trusted.

Overall, our interviewees provide us with such common, strong picture of the manifested values that latent values are hard to identify. The fact that the manifested

corporate values are very anchored and widely known, may contribute to that the latent corporate values do not seem to be very present. Thus, the need and space for latent corporate values to emerge is limited.

5.1.2 Employee values

Something that we have identified at Pluto as employee values, which are values that guide employees' behaviour (Philipson, 2004) are those of competition and cooperation. Here the interviewees communicate scattered views. The first is that it is natural with competition between offices and that they compare themselves to each other and compete informally. However, not to the extent that it affects the cooperation needed for the customers' best but in a way that it partly runs the offices. The other view is that a change has taken place from competitiveness and talk about which office is more fancy, to a climate where the offices actually help each other and cooperate on a regular basis. We see the description of how people earlier talked about which office was the fanciest one as a symptom of subcultures trying to subdue one another, as Deal & Kennedy (1982) describe it. From this, we can see that employees in different offices act differently regarding competition and cooperation. Philipson (2004) describes how subcultures can emerge when individuals' values differ. Here we see a sign of that subcultures have emerged at Pluto. All do agree that the customers' best are in focus, but the interviewees' way of describing to which extent collaboration takes place, differ. We see the differences in how the offices cooperate and compete as evidence for that subcultures exist, but that they exist without creating any particular harm to the organisation, which Deal & Kennedy (1982) argue can be the case.

Another employee value is that of how all interviewees with subtle amusement uses terms as "the tight company", "the cult" and "the boring company" to describe their organisation. We link the tight company to their cost-consciousness. The cult may refer to an organisation where you stay for your whole life, and where the culture is hammered into you when you first start by use of the bible. The boring company might be connected to that the interviewees have a view of the organisation as stable and safe, which can be interpreted very close to boring. All this is said with a sense of self-distance and self-irony. The facts that it seems to be allowed to make jokes about it and that all interviewees also do it, with tongue in cheek, make us identify it as an employee value.

An additional employee value at Pluto is to preserve a close relation to customers. For instance, Maria describes how they may call their customers to give them a chance to explain, if a credit application do not look very good. This way of acting proactively, indicates that employees do care and want to meet their customers' requests as much as possible. To develop a close relation to customers is something that we interpret as a part of each employee's way of behaving.

At Pluto, we have had difficulties in distinguishing employee values from corporate values. We interpret that as a signal of that employee values and corporate values are closely connected within the organisation. What is emphasised in all interviews when we ask about how people do and behave is very much in line with the manifested corporate values.

5.1.3 Estimation of the culture

Most manifested corporate values at Pluto have their roots in the 70's and were implemented by Mr A. The success of Pluto and the fact that Pluto has worked in a similar way for many decades is likely to give the organisation self-confidence. Schein (2010) emphasises the founder's role in shaping a culture and that when the founder's idea succeed, that idea tend to last. However, we see in the case of Pluto, that Mr A has taken that role. His ideas in the 70's succeeded. Since then, the organisation has worked within the framework set by him. This can be seen as an example of Schein's (2010) second level of culture; Mr A influenced his organisation in the 70's, and the chosen course of action helped them to be successful, which lead to that his ideas developed to become espoused beliefs and values for the organisation.

Pluto's ways of working seems relatively unquestioned by its employees, which indicates that Mr A's ideas today touches Schein's (2010) third level of basic underlying assumptions. However, we have not spent enough time in the organisation to state it as non-debatable and unconsciously taken for granted. In Kotter & Heskett's (1992) classification of levels, they argue that the less visible level, shared values, is difficult to change and the values survive also when group members change. We would say that the ideas Mr A implemented in the 70's have developed to become shared values that today would be difficult to change as every employee have been educated in this way of thinking and behave. This means that in Kotter & Heskett's (1992) classification of levels, Mr A's ideas can be found in the deepest cultural level.

At Pluto, they make sure to at an early state manifest their corporate values to new employees and tries to employ newly educated people to a high extent. We would say, newly educated people are likely to be more adaptive than more senior people would be, which can be expected to facilitate their introduction to the culture of Pluto. Newly educated people are likely to be relative younger and more formable than those that come from another organisation. The way Pluto manifests their corporate values in an early level is something that shows all employees how important those values are. New employees get help to interpret the corporate values, which make the unified corporate values easier to retain.

One of the most emphasised corporate values is that of customer focus. This is confirmed in the employee values and we thus see a strong connection between corporate values and employee values in this manner. In the interviews, we get many examples of how employees work proactively with suggestions to their customers. That way they get a bigger part of the picture, customers are probably satisfied by the fact that they are requested, and Pluto may thus be able to approve more customers. Consequently, this way of acting by employees are just in line with the corporate values.

The fact that many corporate values interact with each other strengthens the power of the corporate values. Decentralisation and customer focus as well as the cost consciousness and pension fund, are factors that work well together and to some extent even enhances each other. Employees' energy will go in the same direction as their values correlate with the corporate values (Philipson, 2004). In an organisation where corporate values are so clearly stated as in Pluto, we think that the employees whose individual values do not correlate with the corporate values, will probably not

choose to stay within Pluto. The view we get from the interviews is very clear over that employees act in line with the corporate values, which indicate that they are well balanced. To have a balance between employee values and corporate values, as well as a climate where employees have space to express their opinions is according to Philipson (2004) important to reach a strong culture. The fact that employees feel they have much to say and have space for dialogue with their office managers is something that further shows that Pluto has a strong organisational culture.

According to Philipson (2004), the corporate values are much about a basic, common understanding among the employees. We think that the offices do differ to some extent and that subcultures do exist but that they have managed to have a balance between the subcultures and the organisational culture so that the subcultures never take over. The competition and cooperation that are described differently in our interviews are examples of factors that play different roles in different offices. However, in the core of the culture, the corporate values are still the same. Schein (2010) says that subcultures partly share the organisation's culture and partly have developed their own. We see this as a good description of how offices at Pluto are linked to the organisational culture through the most fundamental values, and still have space to put their own touch on the culture in their own office.

Philipson (2004) describes how energy within an organisation needs to be coordinated so that it is used optimally, and not risk that energies work against each other. At Pluto, we see they have managed to collect the energy and use it healthy. Even if some offices for instance have a more competitive culture than other offices this does not mean that they work in contradiction to the overall corporate values. Fundamentally, we see a unified image over how the corporate values are lived after and survive.

The fact that employee values are very difficult to identify, we have concluded, is a consequence of that they are so close to the corporate values. Pluto has managed to make their corporate values manifested, not the least by the use of their bible. When values are clearly stated, they will guide employees in their work, which in turn strengthens the values further (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Kotter & Heskett, 1992). We see that Pluto has managed to create an environment where exactly this is taking place. Employees know the corporate values very well, which helps them in their daily work, which in turn anchors the values further and make them even stronger. The fact that the values have remained pretty much the same for a long period of time is something that probably has facilitated this. In addition, the corporate values as such are not very difficult to understand, which decreases the risk to misinterpret them.

The corporate values are also in line with what is likely to be in the employees' interest. By the decentralisation, the organisation pressures the decision-making downward in the hierarchy, and employees overall feel that they have a lot of influence. As we see it and as mentioned as a latent corporate value above, a lot of trust is involved in this. A proof of that the organisation trust in their employees is that employees feel space to take own decisions when being in a customer meeting. Another example is when an employee comes back from a course and is encouraged to take responsibility within the newly learned area. This indicates that the organisation sees an advantage in investing in the employees.

To sum up, we see the organisational culture at Pluto as very strong. They have managed to create a balance between corporate values and employee values and the employees' energy seem to be used in the same direction. A negative effect within the culture may be the fact that the pension fund might make employees stay within the organisation for a longer period of time than would be optimum for the organisation. As the pension fund is beneficial, that may make people think more than once before changing to another employer and thus choose to stay even if their motivation have decreased. However, we do not see this as such a big problem, since the pension fund also work as a strong incentive for the employees in their everyday work.

In addition, the fact that employees tend to and are encouraged to stay for a long period of time, indicate that the membership within the organisation is relatively stable, which is one of the factors mentioned by Schein (1984) that contributes to a strong culture. Overall, the interviews point to what we would classify as a strong culture and also the interviewees themselves state that they see the organisational culture as strong.

5.2 Jupiter

5.2.1 Corporate values

5.2.1.1 *Manifested corporate values*

At Jupiter, manifested corporate values seem to be not as deep anchored as at Pluto. Although all interviewees are aware of the values to be customer-oriented and innovative, this is described as something that is more of a vision for the organisation, than actually the present state. The manifested corporate values are thus known, but the employees do not always feel that the organisation's frames allow them to realise those values. For instance, the customer orientation is something crucial for the organisation's survival so partly, they are living up to it. However, Gustaf explains how people theoretically always will agree to the importance of being customer focused, but in practice there will be opposition.

According to Philipson (2004) there is a risk of that the manifested corporate values are unclear in their meaning and easily misunderstood, if managers do not set a good example. This might be the case at Jupiter. As employees do not feel that the managers live up to the customer orientation, there is a risk of unclearness and uncertainty among employees about what is important. A symptom of this uncertainty could be that employees historically have felt a need to anchor everything upwards in the hierarchy.

The corporate value that concerns innovation is problematic by similar reasons. It is something that employees think is a good idea, but in reality it is not always doable, as the systems are in the way. The environment our interviewees describe, with many interdependencies built in to the systems, make the possibilities to be innovative limited. We see the obstacles perceived by people that have a lot of good ideas that often are not possible to realise as a manifested corporate value, which might even have a negative effect. If employees feel that the promoted corporate values are not feasible, this might lead to frustration and destructiveness. As mentioned in previous chapter, the CEO has confirmed this problem and it is presumably something that will change in the future.

Philipson (2004) does not mention this kind of situation when discussing corporate values. However, he discusses how it can be problematic if there are no conversations about values that can anchor them and make sure that employees interpret them similarly. The values come up in performance appraisals; still, we see a risk in that the values not are something that recurs on the agenda internally. If they were, they would probably be more widely discussed and interpretations of them would more likely be alike. What is important at Jupiter, is to spread what the actual meaning of the words are, and first of all make sure that managers lead by example. Thereafter, all employees are more likely to follow, as the interpretation of the corporate values' meaning will be less unclear.

One of the other manifested corporate values is the importance of being respectful to one another. The interviewees communicate a view of this word as common sense. Other manifested corporate values are to create value and get things done, which we see as something that is not very easy to measure and define. However, we do see knowledge sharing, which we got a few example of in the interviews, as a way of adding value. The informal networks are one way in which knowledge is shared, and as much as 50% of information is spread informally. This will be discussed further when we discuss Jupiter's employee values. When it comes to making things happen, we refer to what already has been said. The old IT park and the interdependencies in the systems are in the way of this corporate value.

Commitment and competence are manifested corporate values that we can see are clearly present in the interviews. The interviewees communicate how employees at Jupiter are generally very skilled, competent and professional. The organisation seems to have succeeded in this regard. The competence might indicate that Jupiter is good at hiring the right kind of skilled employees, but it can also be a sign of that employees are good at sharing knowledge and educate each other internally.

Commitment is something that might be a difficult corporate value to anchor internally. As the organisation has succeeded on this value, it is likely to be linked to their ability to hire the right people. The downsizing that has taken place is described as having lead to that competent employees have chosen to leave. A drawback from the downsizing and letting employees go, might except from the loss in competence be that commitment decreases. Here the organisation shows signs of the opposite as the majority of the employees genuinely want to do a good job.

5.2.1.2 Latent corporate values

At Jupiter a latent corporate value is the role the organisation plays and historically has played in society. This is not something that is present on a daily basis and not discussed in a formal manner. However, all our interviewees are very aware of it and do not hesitate to proudly tell us about. The interviewees are proud of being a part of an organisation that still today play an important role in society. This legacy might contribute to a self-image the organisation has about itself as almost an institution.

This picture is likely to contribute to motivation among employees as it makes them feel involved in adding value in a larger context. This is in line with what Philipson (2004) refers to as important for creating motivation and proudness among the employees. Also Deal & Kennedy (1982) mention the importance for employees to be part of something that is seen as valuable and meaningful. Philipson (2004) states that

this should be done by highlighting values but in our interviews, we see that the historical role and tradition of the organisation is not something that the leaders spread significantly. The other side of the history of Jupiter and something that might underlie the fact that the history is not mentioned much is that we get the feeling that part of the tradition of Jupiter is by employees seen as something uncool.

Another latent corporate value is related to an organisation that in a way has built in itself in an IT park with many interdependencies. We see it as standing in the way for Jupiter, as it has effects on the preconditions of the organisation. One small change in a system creates and escalates to become a major project, which result in that ideas and improvements sometimes are impossible to implement. The big muscles in the organisation lead to potential and possibilities, but also makes the organisation slow. Many hierarchical levels are involved in decision-making. This might be something that persists as an effect of the culture that was created by a previous CEO, where not many dared to take decisions on their own because they were afraid to do something wrong. We see this as an example of a latent corporate value that persists in the organisation.

5.2.2 Employee values

Employee values guide how employees act (Philipson, 2004) and at Jupiter networking and knowing the right people are of high importance. This takes time to develop, and employees that have worked for a long time have an advantage over newly employed that have not had the chance to get to know people to same extent. Anders's description about how many employees anchor decisions with top managers within their network, before presenting a proposal or idea, is an example of how employees can go about to get things done. The formal organisation, structure and politics is seen as a barrier, and to make sure to make things happen, employees go other ways to anchor their ideas. This way of acting fits into Schein's (2010) second cultural level, as it has become the norm for many employees. However, we would not refer to this way of doing things as espoused, rather as something that has developed to partly become the norm, as employees have seen it as a successful way of acting.

Described by all interviewees is the will they see among employees to do a good job, and they describe their colleagues as skilled and competent. People in general are working hard, are committed and do a good job. However, this is also correlated with a risk for a lot of frustration, as the system might be an obstacle.

Many employees go upward in the hierarchy instead of downwards when having particular questions about customer requirements and products are developed based on prejudices and stereotypic thinking about a target group. We see this as an employee value since many employees obviously act like that. However, we also agree with Gustaf that customer support who talk with customers every day are more likely to know more about customer requirements than managers.

At Jupiter, we see an environment where knowledge is spread within the organisation. This is something that the employees do on a daily basis and we interpret it as something that is done pretty much on its own. The informal networks make sure that things are being done, as well as working a source for knowledge and information. By knowing who sits on the knowledge, it is natural for employees to turn to that person

when having questions and we interpret it, as those go-to-guys also are positive in sharing their knowledge. Schein (2010) describes how informal leaders and their solutions take space when there is absence of solutions from the founder or formal leaders. These go-to-guys can in a way be seen as informal leaders, sitting on a lot of information and solutions.

Something that partly can be seen as an employee value, at least among the middle managers, is the way they act to protect their empires. Even though this value is not something that all employees stand behind, we cannot ignore the fact that many middle managers do seem to have this as an employee value. We think this has big impact on the culture in the organisation as a whole.

Another factor where we see differences in employees' behaviour is concerned with driving forces and how people with different professions have different driving forces that guide how they act, which can result in friction when they need to cooperate. There are big differences between departments, for instance depending on how long-term oriented a work is seen as. Also, the many different professions have different ways of thinking and doing things.

The use of individual goals is another thing that may not contribute to cooperation, but rather competition. Although employees do not decide to use individual goals, their way of acting is affected by the fact that the organisation uses it. It may result in that employees act in line with what is best for them personally, rather than in line with what is best for the organisation as a whole. Therefore, employee values seem to differ between employees to some extent, as their way of acting differ. When individual values differ, subcultures are likely to emerge, according to Philipson (2004). We would say that subcultures exist at Jupiter, which what just was mentioned indicate, in combination with the energy that is used in different directions.

5.2.3 Estimation of the culture

According to Philipson (2004) there must be a correlation between employee values and corporate values to create a strong culture. Corporate values must also be consistent to each other to decrease the risk for misunderstandings and to keep their guiding power (Philipson, 2004). At Jupiter, we see that the organisation's many built in system interdependencies that may make managers reluctant to change, as partly contradicting the manifested corporate value of innovation. This example shows how corporate values can be impossible to live up to due to other internal reasons. The manifested corporate value of innovation loses power as the old systems with interdependencies, stands in contrast to it.

The managers that protect their empires are likely to be resistant to many such changes that innovation bring. However, as our interviewees also confirm how a shift has taken place after the new CEO started with a remarkably changed behaviour from middle managers as an effect, the organisation might very well be on the right track to solve this problem.

The story Anders tells about when his department were criticised internally, but how it ended happy as top management were engaged and put in resources, is another example of that a change has taken place. Top management showed respect for the

employees. By acknowledge them, confirm the problem and take blame for the situation, the employees likely felt respected and heard.

The fact that some employees “turn their back” against customers by asking upwards in the hierarchy and some downwards when wondering about customer requirements, make us see this employee value as a bit scattered. However, we would say that what make sense is that those that are closest to the customer, know more about what customer wants than what people further up in the hierarchy do. We do not see the corporate value of customer orientation as correlating with this employee value. The customer orientation do is described as a vision of our interviewees rather than as the present state. However, the way that employees ask their managers rather than the customers is not in line with customer orientation. The way products are developed based on stereotyping and prejudices is another example of how employees act in a way that is not consistent with the corporate value of customer orientation. We see a possible connection between the previous CEO and the way employees today ask upwards in the hierarchy. The previous CEO seems to have scared people from taking own decision and instead made sure that employees anchored them upwards in the hierarchy. This is something that may persist partly, which the way employees rather ask their managers than the customers what customers want is an example of.

Knowledge sharing is connected to the corporate values but we also see it as an employee value. Knowledge is valued highly by employees and to share it, seems to be a natural part of the employees’ workday. This is an example of a fit between a corporate value and an employee value. The knowledge sharing, we see as closely connected to the will of doing good things for the organisation. People are competent and do, in general, a very good job, which also is in line with the corporate value of being competent and committed. The employee values of commitment and competence are a good match to the corporate values stressing exactly the same. However, the value of making things happen is harder to match. The will and ambition among the employees, is not backed up enough by the organisation, which is why we see a lot of potential that is not taken care of. The middle managers protecting their empires and the old IT park with all interdependencies, are once again in the way for enabling the corporate value of innovation and making things happen. This could have been matched with the employee value of doing a good job, and to be committed and competent. Instead, we see how the energy is not united and used in the same direction, which Philipson (2004) sees as important for an organisation to utilise. Another example of energy that is not used in the same direction is linked to that employees with different professions working in different departments act differently, which in turn make subcultures emerge.

The informal networks and the way in which experienced employees use them as a way to anchor proposals among top managers before presenting the idea in front of the whole group, is also interesting. We see this as an example of that employees are innovative and want to make things happen, as they even go informal ways to have their ideas approved. They go outside the formal structure of the organisation in order to be able to cement their ideas. Again, we see how the energy within the organisation is not used in the same direction. It is also an example of when the corporate values are not strong enough, which make the employee values have space to influence the culture more than what would be optimal (Philipson, 2004). The corporate values of innovation and to make things happen look like a perfect fit to the employee values of

doing a good job and be committed. However, the middle managers and the interdependencies in the systems, as well as the many hierarchical levels for decision-making, make this process heavy for employees.

At Jupiter, we see huge potential. Many employees are very committed and competent, but a lot of frustration circulates and a lot of energy is wasted. We think that Jupiter would gain from working more actively with spreading their corporate values. That the values come up once a year at performance appraisals is positive. However, the corporate values are likely to be interpreted more clearly and in the same way, if they would be communicated and up for discussion to a higher extent internally.

Philipson (2004) stresses the importance of decreasing the risk for different interpretations by using communication to spread values. We think that a dialogue and making the corporate values more visible and clear would benefit Jupiter. In addition, by ranking the values, employees would understand what is of the utmost importance (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008), which would help them in situations of contradictory values.

If values influence behaviour, and behaviour influences values (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Kotter & Heskett, 1992) the partly scattered ways of behaviour that we see at Jupiter, might also be a part of the explanation for the contradictory values. Philipson (2004) suggests that values lead to norms and behaviour. However, we have found that the way people behave at Jupiter, partly work against the values. To repeat an example, the way middle managers behave; focusing on protecting their empires, hinders the value of making things happen. Thus, the behaviour can be a source that affect the values negatively and in turn contributes to a culture not as strong as it could have been.

The organisational culture at Jupiter is not what we would define as very weak. However, the match between corporate values and employee values could have been better. There are many aspects where corporate values and employee values match satisfactory. The underlying ambition of the organisation looks to be similar to the ambition employees have for their workplace, which is probably an important explanation for why people stay within Jupiter and why it still works.

For instance, the corporate values of customer orientation, innovation, commitment and competence look like a perfect match to the employee values that say pretty much exactly the same. The barrier here is the embedded counterforces of old IT park, interdependencies in the systems, and middle managers that keep being middle managers and protect their empires. The fact that the CEO recently has stated this problem and showed ambition to do something about the complex processes is what we see as a step in the right direction. With the problem with the systems out of the way, Jupiter's organisational culture is likely to be stronger with a better match between employee values and corporate values as result.

5.3 A cultural comparison of Pluto and Jupiter

After studying the organisational cultures of Pluto and Jupiter, mainly by the use of Philipson's (2004) way of classifying a culture as strong or weak, we have identified some characteristics where the organisations differ.

First, at Pluto, the corporate values have lasted during several of decades. The organisation makes sure to manifest and anchor them by the use of the bible, the introduction program where culture is discussed, and a presence of the corporate values in general. At Jupiter, on the other hand, we see that the corporate values are not very present in the everyday work life. This result in that employees do not get the same help as at Pluto, to interpret the corporate values correctly, which makes them unclear and subject for misinterpretations, according to Philipson (2004).

Second, both organisations have a long history with roots in the 19th century. The legacy and history is something that is mentioned solely by proudness at Pluto. The proudness of Jupiter is concerned with the role the organisation plays and has played for society, but the historical aspect is not very present.

Third, Pluto has corporate values that interact with each other and even strengthens each other. The corporate values at Jupiter are partly contradictory, which makes them harder to read and more likely misunderstood.

Fourth, at Pluto, we see signals indicating that there to some extent exist subcultures, which make offices differ from each other partly. At Jupiter, we have also found subcultures. Here, they seem to be connected to different departments and the different ways of doing things lead to friction and prevents cooperation to some extent. The middle managers have their way of doing things, which also enhances the existence of subcultures. In Pluto, the subcultures are more something we see as subordinate to the benefit of the corporate values as a whole. That is, the subculture in Pluto, never stand in contrast or in the way for the fundamental corporate values of the organisation.

Fifth, the employee values and corporate values match good at Pluto and are in balance to create a healthy strong culture. At Jupiter, the employee values and corporate values are not as synced, when comparing them. They do are on track, but they would need to work with their contradictory values to strengthen the culture to the next level.

Sixth, both Philipson (2004) and Kotter & Heskett (1992) emphasise that cultures should be build top-down as well as bottom-up. At Pluto, we would say that the culture is built mainly top-down as it is, as Maria describes it, hammered in straight from start. At Jupiter, on the other hand, the culture consists of subcultures to a higher extent. As the corporate values are not perfectly consistent and clear, we think that employees to a higher extent have room to make their mark on the culture. Thus, at Jupiter, the culture is built top-down as well as bottom-up. Philipson (2004) says that letting everyone take part in creating the culture, will unify the energy and increase loyalty. That is not in line with our findings, but rather that an idea was seen as the best by everyone at Pluto, and therefore it is possible to create the culture mainly top-down and still have the energy unified. At Jupiter, the energy is not as unified and the culture not as strong as at Pluto, but instead the current culture comes from bottom-up as well as top-down.

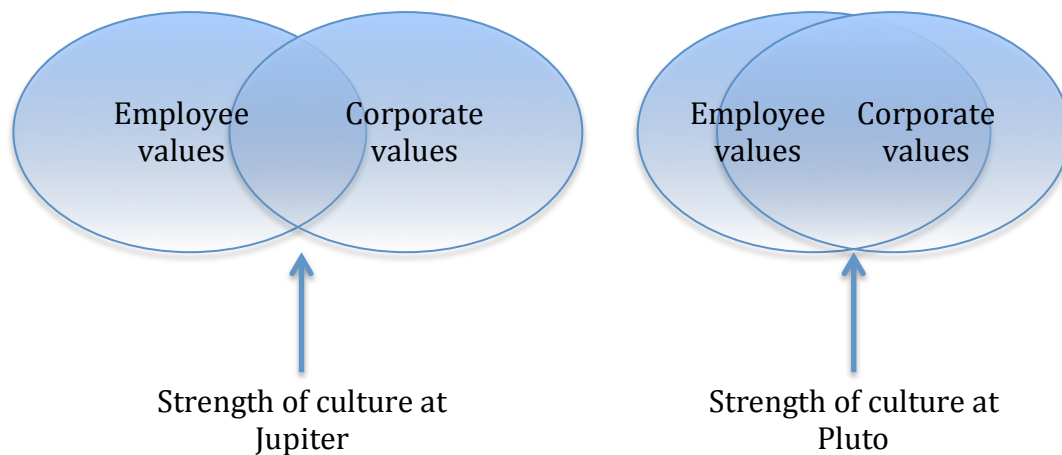


Figure 3. Employee values and corporate values, processed (Philipson, 2004)

To get a better and deeper understanding of how these organisations look in the context of cultural strengths, we have decided to analyse them by putting them parallel to some of the characteristics found in high performing cultures in Kotter & Heskett's (1992) theory and Philipson's (2004) theory.

5.3.1 Value based leadership

We can see several characteristics in the organisations that can be connected to their respective cultural strengths; one is value based leadership. Philipson (2004) explains that well functioning health care units was often led by leaders that emphasised values rather than goals and that did not have a charismatic leadership style. We have not found that any of the organisations talk about values based on leadership specifically, instead it seems that the organisations themselves support corporate values when they exist, particularly at Pluto.

None of the interviewees from either of the organisations see any charismatic leadership in their organisations. Leaders in Jupiter's case is seen partly as a hindrance due to the fact that they often have administrative characteristics and do not motivate the employees enough. We see no clear indication that the managers at Jupiter try to lead by values. In the case of Pluto, we interpret the lack of value based leadership as connected to the fact that manifested values are so well formulated. In addition, structures for reinforcing the values are so imbedded in education, evaluation, annual reports and by the sovereignty of the offices that the leaders do not have to spread much of the values themselves.

Pluto's value based leadership exists in big part because of tradition. An example of this is that the bible gets renewed when a new CEO gets appointed. We do not think that the bible is changed because the new CEO wants it to change and has some big ideas of his own, but rather because it is supposed to be changed when Pluto gets a new CEO. This is supported by the fact that Olof describes the bible as something unchanging even after that it is renewed when a new CEO comes along.

Kotter & Heskett's (1992) view of managers in strong cultures is that they often have consistent values and methods of doing business. What we know is that at Pluto the decentralisation makes the office managers able to make a lot of the decisions on their own without above supervision. However, Lena describes how each and every office has their own "twist" on how to do things within certain limits. We interpret this as an inability for the managers to step too far aside in any direction. Also, since the measurements by which the offices are rated are key ratios and that they have no budgets, there should be a less gravitation towards risk. As a manager there is no room for big costs or any money over in the budget for risky projects. The nature of the products that Pluto offers, also limits inconsistencies in the methods of doing business because they are subject to state oversight in laws and regulation. When it comes to values, these are just as we have described in the context of value based leadership. That is, very strong within the organisation and thus in the managers. Our interviewees all have had managerial positions and they all agree on the values of the company and we see them as correlating with their own values. Nobody really questions the manifested values at Pluto and they often mention the benefits of them.

It is easier to get a picture of consistency at Pluto than at Jupiter. Jupiter is much more complex and diverse in its structure, so making an analysis about consistency in methods is hard within the frames of this study. We can however look at values to some extent and make an observation about managers' value consistency. Top management and the lower hierarchical level employees often agree about what is important and reasonable. However, middle managers sometimes seem to work in another direction than the rest of the organisation. How much of this deviance that is because of the middle managers having insight into the reality of things, such as system interdependencies, and how much is because of them being "mini-Popes" is the question to ask. The managers might have a good idea of the corporate values and agree with them, but to a larger extent they may see the reality of what the organisation have to deal with, which can make it hard for them to prioritise values. They might also partly work against the rest of the organisation and against change since they are building small empires of influence, which they according to Anders do and defend ferociously.

Put in the context of value based leadership and consistency in values and methods of doing business, the role of managers can be summarised by saying that Pluto seems to have leaders which do not need to be value based leaders due to the strong manifested values of Pluto. They seem to follow and agree with the manifested values so much that it creates consistencies in values and methods of doing business.

Jupiter is much harder to read, our analysis is that the interviewees do not see the middle managers as having the same values as themselves. They do not present the managers as spreading any particular values. However, this does not mean that they do not, as a group. We have just not found any evidence supporting this. When it comes to consistency in methods of doing business we also do not know. The complexity of Jupiter makes it difficult to generalise to the same extent as in the case of Pluto. The interviewees simply do not have as clear of a picture of the organisation as the Pluto interviewees have of their company.

5.3.2 Value statements and cultural identity

In the high performing cultures in Philipson's (2004) theory the leaders of the health care units tried to create a cultural identity based on values that the employees could associate with. This does not seem to be the case in any of our organisations. By this we mean that the organisations do not seem to have founded their manifested cultural traits on what the employees feel they can associate with, but rather it is connected to what is good for the customers. Pluto has a corporate value that is founded in the need for good customer service, and Jupiter's manifested corporate values seem to be customer oriented as well. Whether the employees felt an association with it or not does not appear to have been the main concern of Mr A, the founder of the manifested values at Pluto. For instance, he had a very clear picture of why he thought that the corporate structure should be flat and decentralised. Olof discusses this as a vision of Mr A and not an agreement between the leader and the employees. Jupiter's manifested corporate values are not very cemented within the organisation so to say that it is an agreement or that the culture has been formed with corporate-employee association in mind we see as very far fetched.

Instead, what we find is what Kotter & Heskett (1992) see in high performing cultures as an encouraging of managers to follow the value statement of the companies. This is done to different degrees in Pluto and Jupiter. When speaking to Gustaf he seems to have a good grasp of what he thinks should be done to make the organisation more efficient. He mentions that the decision-making should be grounded in what the lower level employees see as important for the customer. But, this rhymes badly with the description given about the managers as "mini-Popes" or empire builders. They try to hold on to the influence they have built during their years at Jupiter. We believe that these "mini-Popes" and their proclivity towards consolidation of influence and power, is in direct opposition to many of the corporate values of the organisation. Because Jupiter wants to provide a superior customer experience they have to adapt quickly to the market. If the middle managers work in another direction than the rest of the employees they serve as a hindrance towards this goal. Therefore, we argue that they do not follow the value statement of the company or at least the part that is concerned with customer orientation and getting things done.

Lisa mentions that the Jupiter's manifested or written values comes up when an evaluation of her work is done with her manager, so partly it must be spread by the managers, but we see no other empirical evidence for this. The description of the empire builders give us ground to say that Pluto has more encouragement than Jupiter has when it comes to the managers following the value statements, or at least they follow the encouragement better at Pluto. This is supported by that the interviewees at Pluto are so accurate in their description of the value statement of the company. The managers of Pluto follow up the progress of the employees about 3 times in the first 8 months of the year to see if they hold on to what has been planned in the "evaluator". This can be compared to a twice a year evaluation meeting at Jupiter.

Another factor present in the high performing cultures of Philipson (2004) is the recruitment factor. Philipson (2004) describes the health care units' cultures as recruiting with values and culture in mind. This can be seen at Jupiter but not as clearly at Pluto, or at least there are different attitudes towards this. Jupiter has what Anders describes as too few well educated employees that understand the reason for why things are done and that Jupiter needs to have this in mind when hiring new

employees. This can be seen to be in line with Jupiter's new striving towards innovation and a faster reaction to the needs of the market. We interpret Anders's comments on the personnel reorganisation as meaning that the new employees can be part of a solution for reaching these goals. If Jupiter hires new well-educated employees to contribute to the understanding of the practices at the company we do not know, but it seems like it is in the mind of the company.

At Pluto, Maria describes the situation as being more in line with Kotter & Heskett's (1992) findings. They see a connection between high performing cultures and how new employees take in the culture very fast. She sees the culture as something you just have to accept at Pluto without questions, and the bible as something that you are supposed to have under your pillow when you go to sleep, as she describe it. The bible is brought up in introduction courses as well. She describes this as a little bit silly at first but that you get the point when you understand its background and that it is only for you to accept the culture if you want to work at Pluto.

5.3.3 Cooperative thinking

Cooperative thinking is a characteristic that Philipson (2004) has found present in high performing cultures. The employees often thought in terms of the whole organisation regardless of what position they held and they had a willingness to share information and cooperate over professional boarders. At Pluto there is a relatively homogenous workforce. It does not seem to be a lot of professional boarders at Pluto since the bulk of the employees work at Pluto offices around Sweden. All of our interviewees have an economic degree of some kind and have held several different positions within Pluto with that degree. The interviewees almost always refer to Pluto as a unity, even though it is so decentralised and the offices can make most of their own decisions.

Although there has been some competition and backstabbing at Pluto, as Maria puts is, the overall picture the interviewees paint is one of cooperation, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Maria also describes how the office managers within a certain area meet to exchange experiences. It looks like Pluto has a certain amount of cooperative thinking, with information exchanges and employee transfers between offices in case of sickness. We have not found to what degree this exchange happens between professional boarders; however, there are also not many different professions within the offices.

At Jupiter there seems to exist a willingness to share information, but this often happens outside of the formal structure of the organisation. Informal networks are seen as very important at Jupiter, they are described as almost a parallel world. Gustaf describes meetings where they submit and discuss suggestions for improvements within his own department, but that it can be hard to match these suggestions to other departments. We see cooperative thinking at Jupiter as being informal and not done by the company but rather the employees themselves. Information also seems to be spread somewhat successfully inside the departments it is more complicated to go across professional boarders, to other departments with information. Lisa describes a somewhat defensive mood between the departments.

5.3.4 Goal alignment

Kotter & Heskett (1992) bring up what they call goal alignment, which they exemplify by that “employees in strong cultures tend to march to the same drummer”. This means that the employees have the big picture of what is supposed to be achieved for the whole company. Both Gustaf and Anders mention that at Jupiter, the goal seems to be that they should be focused on the customers. It is also present in the manifested corporate values of the company (Jupiter, Kultur 2014). However, when talking to the interviewees they describe a situation where decisions are being taken high up in the hierarchy and that those people are not in the position to know what the customers need and want. So even though the goal of the employees and managers might be the same, people make the decisions on very thin grounds far away from the customer.

Gustaf explains that there is a focus on individual goals at Jupiter, which has resulted in more competition than cooperation. He sees the individual goals as often standing in the way of the collective goals. We see the individual goals as something that probably make some people more productive, as it is likely to contribute to their motivation because they become visible in the organisation. At the same time, it may work as something that inhibits people from aligning towards one common goal. The individual goals may lead the employees and departments towards tunnel vision. The corporate values at Jupiter seem to have a clear focus on the customer. Still, the organisational culture which is the alignment between the corporate and employee values (Philipson, 2004) does not seem to allow the employees to fully cooperate and strive toward a common goal.

Pluto has some very visible goals as we see it. First, they are supposed to be more profitable than their competitors. This is supported by the focus on key ratios rather than by keeping to a budget. Second, they are supposed to have very good customer service. This is supported by the decentralisation of the offices that make them able to take fast decisions and be close to the customers. Every one of the interviewees identifies these goals and the means that make them possible to achieve at Pluto. We see the employees as having a very firm grasp of what the goals are. They can even describe some of the non-goals of Pluto, such as profitability in absolute numbers.

5.4 Historical factors creating this state

What we can see from the above of the two organisations regarding its relative strengths in organisational culture is that it looks like Pluto has a stronger organisational culture than Jupiter. Here we are going to explain the cultural state of these organisations and their relative strengths by looking backwards into history. We will do this by using narratives and theories of Philipson (2004), Kotter & Heskett (1992), Deal & Kennedy (1982) and Schein (2010) about the type of companies that have high performing cultures as well as low performing cultures.

What can easily be connected empirically between Jupiter and Kotter & Heskett’s (1992) historical narrative about companies with low performing cultures is the fact that they at first had a significant market advantage. Jupiter had an extremely strong position in the Swedish market for a very long time (Jupiter, Historia, 2014), which is in line with Kotter & Heskett’s (1992) picture of how low performing cultures emerges. Jupiter has no financial problems and has in fact produced several good results over the last years (Jupiter, Årsredovisning, 2014). However, they have

experienced a steady decline in market share in the Swedish market recently (IB, 2014; Jupiter, Årsredovisning, 2014), which can be seen as an indication of them having trouble performing in their home market.

Kotter & Heskett (1992) talk of the companies in their study as having some kind of significant advantage from the beginning, which correlates well with Jupiter's history. Jupiter has been an enormous organisation with very little competition for a long time. Kotter & Heskett (1992) connect this lack of competition to a strong growth situation, which has led to an increase in size and therefore organisational complexity. Right now Jupiter suffers from what the CEO calls complexity regarding processes (Jupiter, Årsredovisning, 2014). This can be seen as a symptom of its size.

The CEO at Jupiter talks about strengthening the organisation's competitiveness in its home markets (Jupiter, Årsredovisning, 2014) and Anders acknowledges that they have too many employees. Gustaf says that a reorganisation has led to that a lot of people have been laid off since 2007-2008, which has scarred the organisation and affected the culture. We think he might be correct since it makes sense that the culture takes a beating when a big portion of the employees suspects that they might not be wanted at the company. Anders reinforces the notion of the need for a personnel reorganisation by stating that the company needs better educated employees.

The companies in Kotter & Heskett's (1992) study had to hire more and more managers with good organisational skills in order to cope with the challenges of steering the big corporations. Hiring managers with these skills led to a change in the companies' management style. Kotter (1990) argues that this type of manager does not possess the qualities of aligning employees, motivating them and establishing direction. These kind of shortcomings can also be found at Jupiter to some extent and therefore, we see a connection between the narrative of Kotter & Heskett (1992) and Jupiter.

One of the three general components that Kotter & Heskett (1992) saw was that the companies that emerged from this scenario had managers' hostility toward change drivers. This component can be connected to the middle managers behaviour of consolidating power and influence at Jupiter. We see this as a possibility since one of the change drivers is leadership, and they behave more as managers. We see the need for organisational skills at Jupiter as a natural result of its size, and the size as a natural effect of the initial competitive advantage they enjoyed. The other two general components are arrogance in managers and disregard for managerial constituents, both of which we think we have too little knowledge of at Pluto and Jupiter to make an informed analysis.

The organisationally skilled managers at Kotter & Heskett's (1992) companies eventually became part of top management and by then, the sense of why the company was successful from the beginning was gone. Lisa and Anders describe a situation at Jupiter where the middle managers are pretty much the same people that they have always been. Therefore, we see a risk in that managers might not realise if the organisation need to change. This is not totally in line with Kotter & Heskett (1992) as in their scenario the managers have forgotten what was so great about the companies. In the case of Jupiter, the problem is not that they have forgotten what was great about the company. Instead, we think it was the market that was so great for

them with the extremely strong position they had. Thus, as the market changes, we see a risk that managers might not allow the organisation to change with it.

Pluto has not had the same competitive advantage as Jupiter from the beginning. They have competed with several organisations for a lot of years. Kotter & Heskett (1992) see companies with high performing cultures as having been subjected for much more competition in the past. Although Pluto is a very old company we see the transformation in the 70's as a new beginning for them. The changes made then seem as strong today as they have ever been.

Just like in the case of Deal & Kennedy's (1982) description of Tandem computers, Pluto started with a set of new and very strong management values when Mr A came to the organisation. Pluto reinforced those corporate values continuously by communicating them very efficiently with use of the bible. The company went from a crisis to being one of the most profitable Swedish companies in its sector in a very short time. Tandem is described as a company moving in one direction (Deal & Kennedy, 1982), which we can also see when looking at Pluto. Everybody we interview consistently describe corporate values almost precisely as they are manifested or written down. They know what direction to follow because of the clarity in the corporate values.

Olof, who has been at Pluto for over 30 years, describes the bible as almost exactly the same now as when he started. The values have worked since the market in which the organisation operates has not changed significantly and the values themselves are of a very general nature. Deal & Kennedy (1982) argue that Tandem's managers' focus on spreading company philosophy made the employees feel that they belonged to an exclusive club. When looking at Pluto in the light of being an exclusive club, the fact that they joke about being the tight company or the cult makes us believe that they also have a sense of exclusivity. At least a sense of that they stand out from other organisations. Kotter & Heskett (1992) bring up the example of IBM as a high performing culture in a historical context. Their main point when addressing the company seem to be that they have had clear values since the 30's, which has created consistency in how to do business. This long tradition of clear values can certainly be applicable when describing Pluto as well.

Kotter & Heskett's (1992) narrative is not the only way to describe why Pluto seems to have been so successful in implementing and cementing their corporate values among their employees. The historical perspective combined with Schein's (2010) three levels of culture can also help to explain the success, especially the second level; espoused beliefs and values. Pluto went through a crisis in the late 60's and Mr A was brought in to lead Pluto through it (Pluto, History, 2014). Schein (2010) identifies prevailing individuals as being able to influence the "group", in our case the organisation. We see Mr A as one of those prevailing individuals. Mr A had a certain approach to the problem (decentralisation, customer orientation, profitability), which we have addressed a number of times earlier. At first, the organisation's members only see this approach as what the leaders wants, according to Schein (2010). That is, they do not have any real sense of the validation of the leaders' approach until it has been implemented and the outcome has been observed. In the case of Pluto, this outcome was observed when Pluto went from being less profitable than their competitors to being more profitable in just a few years. According to Schein (2010),

this validation transforms the approach into something that gradually becomes shared values, if the employees notice it.

We do not really know what went on in the early 70's at the time Pluto became more profitable, but we do have some insight into the Swedish financial crisis in the early 90's. Reading about it and being told by two of the interviewees that were around at the time, paint a picture of Pluto as being one of the companies that managed the crisis best. We see this fact as something that further has cemented the values of Pluto among the employees. Both Lena and Olof describe a sense of proudness because of the fact that Pluto managed so well. We believe that the crisis and the fact Pluto coped with it so successfully, also contributed to the corporate values and employee values being so connected. The crisis may be hard for the employees to validate as solved by Mr A's corporate values directly, but a possibility is that the validation to a large extent have happened by social validation. This is Schein's (2010) way of saying that values and beliefs are confirmed by a shared social experience. These trials were a shared experience for the employees and they, as well as Pluto, emerged stronger than ever from them.

Another significant historical factor that could have had a big impact on the respective organisations' cultural state is the factor of mergers and acquisitions. Pluto has mainly grown organically and has not made any major acquisitions. We do not know exactly what would have happened if they had gone through an acquisition or merger, but we think the fact that they have not, has probably made it easier for them to hold on to their existing cultural values. Jupiter however, merged with a company from another country in the early 00's. Anders went through this merger and describes it as a bit problematic in the beginning because they needed to hold meetings in English. He also thinks that the other company's employees thought that the swedes were a little bit slow in their decision-making. However, it seems that the two companies have evolved in separate ways, and what Bueno & Bowditch (1989) call cultural pluralism has occurred. Anders does not see the merger as having had a big impact for the company in Sweden.

6 Conclusions

In this chapter, the results of the study is summarised by presenting the answers found to each research question. In the end, suggestions for future studies are to be found.

6.1 What is the relationship between corporate values and employee values in our studied organisations?

In the studied organisations, we see that Pluto has a relatively stronger connection between their employee values and corporate values, than Jupiter.

Pluto has succeeded to make their corporate values manifested to a high extent and the corporate values are very close to their employee values. Also, the corporate values are consistent to each other and complement each other. In combination with that Pluto focuses a lot on spreading their values, we see that they have managed to reach a state where employee values and corporate values are in balance, which according to Philipson (2004) is of importance to create a strong, healthy culture. We even have difficulties in identifying employee values, as the interviewees talk about the organisation's values as their own, which further strengthen the connection.

At Jupiter, the corporate values are neither as manifested nor as clear as they are at Pluto, which may make room for misinterpretations. We see that Jupiter has big potential in matching their employee values with their corporate values as they are largely in line with each other. What stands in the way for a good match is the fact that some forces at Jupiter are contradictory. For instance, the complex systems with many interdependencies, as well as the middle managers protecting their empires, are in the way for innovation. In the core, we see that the organisation and the employees seem to have similar ambitions, but the counterforces stand in the way for a good match between corporate values and employee values.

6.2 What differences can be identified?

The two organisations of this study have much in common, such as their long standing history and important role in society. After looking at their match between employee values and corporate values, we have identified some differences between the organisations.

Pluto is an organisation where employees are proud of their legacy and tradition. At Jupiter, the history is not as present and mentioned by employees. This may be connected to that the way of working at Pluto has remained unchanged for many decades, as it has worked successfully. Pluto's corporate values have been the same since the 70's, while the values at Jupiter have not. The interviewees at Pluto seem to view their corporate values as a source for their success and the values live on, are manifested and strengthened further. Regarding Jupiter, their values are not as persistent and present in the everyday work. Jupiter does not spread their values regularly, which make room for misinterpretations to a larger extent. The values are woven into everyday operations of Pluto to a much higher degree. More values and ways of working are taken for granted and has developed to become espoused beliefs and values at Pluto, than is the case at Jupiter.

The recruitment of new employees is a characteristic that differs between the organisations. It looks like Jupiter hires new employees with their values in mind but

we do not have any hard evidence for this, only what the interviewees say about trying to get a new type of employee to the organisation. Pluto seems to have the approach that their organisational culture is so strong that they do not have to care much about hiring like-minded employees, as the new employees will take in the values anyway.

There is no strong indication that any of the organisations have so-called value based leadership. However, we see different reasons for this. In the case of Jupiter, the leaders have too much of an administrative role to lead with values. At Pluto, we see the absence of value based leadership linked to the fact that in the organisation as a whole, the corporate values are very clear, which results in that the values are just as present to the employees as to the managers.

When it comes to managers' encouragement to follow the value statements, this is done to different degrees at Pluto and Jupiter. The existent of "mini-Popes" and empire builders at Jupiter suggest that the leaders do not follow the value statement to its full extent. For instance, the idea to consolidate power and influence rhymes badly with the value of getting things done. At Pluto, the fact that managers seem to have such an accurate view of what Pluto's values are suggests that the encouragement of following the value statement are very solid. The managers' planning for the offices and employees is based on values to a large extent, which confirms this further. However, when it comes to Pluto and its values the organisation in itself does much of the work for the managers.

At Pluto, the corporate values and employee values match satisfactorily as they are in line with each other. Meanwhile, at Jupiter the corporate values and employee values are not as consistent to each other, which make the energy within the organisation flow in different directions. The corporate values are not united interpreted and individuals' values differ, which contributes to a more scattered culture. The energy is more united at Pluto. Employees work together, within sat frames, towards a common goal.

We interpret Pluto's managers as being formed into consistency of values and methods, by help from the organisation's values as well as laws and regulation. It is harder to see clearly how Jupiter's managers are consistent in their values and methods. There seem to be a value inconsistency between top and middle management that can be attributed to either structural problems, such as system interdependencies, or the syndrome of "mini-Popes". We have not got a clear picture of consistency in methods at Jupiter, much because the interviewees did not have good insight into this matter.

The corporate values at Pluto interact properly with each other, while at Jupiter the values are partly contradictory. This fact results in that employees at Jupiter are less likely than employees at Pluto to have guidance from the values in their daily work. At Pluto, the values help employees in decision-making more than is the case at Jupiter.

Subcultures exist in both organisations. At Pluto, different offices set their own twist at the culture. However, the corporate values are so anchored that the subculture is subordinated to the organisational culture. At Jupiter, the subcultures have developed

between departments as well as between hierarchical levels. For instance, different professions have different driving forces and ways of doing things, which lead to frictions and conflicting forces.

At Pluto the workforce is relatively homogenous with few professional boarders, which help Pluto in its cooperative thinking. Jupiter also seems to have a willingness to cooperate but it often happens outside the formal structure of the organisation. The formal structure of the organisation seems to be viewed more as an obstacle than something that facilitates the work. In addition, cooperation at Jupiter seems to be harder to accomplish between departments than within departments. There is also a focus on individual goals at Jupiter, which has resulted in more competition than cooperation. We believe this can lead to both individual and departmental tunnel vision. Pluto, on the other hand, has some very visible goals. Everybody knows what the goals are and they are achievable due the fact that the structures and values support each other.

The culture is seen as a given at Pluto and is built top-down. At Jupiter, it is built top-down as well as bottom-up. All employees are to a larger extent involved in the creation of their culture. However, as values are scattered at Jupiter, the culture is not as unified as it is at Pluto, where values are more common.

None of the organisations seem to have any agreement between the employees and management about what the cultural identity should be. Pluto's values are formulated top-down but everybody still seems to accept them, resulting in that agreements are not necessary. Jupiter's manifested corporate values are not very cemented within the organisation which is why we do not think management have made any effort to make agreements with the employees about cultural identity. Both organisations seem to have formulated their values more with the customers in mind than from a management-employee agreement perspective.

Overall when comparing the organisations, we see that Pluto has developed a culture that is relative stronger than that of Jupiter. Still, we think that with some adjustments and proactively actions, the culture at Jupiter could be strengthened, as the employees and the organisation have similar views fundamentally.

6.3 What historical factors can lead to that one organisation's culture developing to become stronger than another?

We see Jupiter's fate as something that has to do with their initial market advantage. This is the starting point from where the organisation has evolved and everything that has happened in one way or the other can be connected to this market advantage. Lack of competition led the organisation to become very big and structurally complex. This meant that certain employees where preferable over others, good organisers before leaders with good motivational and goal alignment skills may have been the outcome of this. The situation today supports much of this narrative. The biggest evidence supporting this is the overwhelming consensus from the interviewees about the role middle managers plays in the organisation. We see the need for organisational skills at Jupiter as a natural effect of its size, and the size as a natural effect of the initial competitive advantage they enjoyed. The fact that there are many common denominators with Kotter & Heskett's (1992) narrative about low performing cultures supports the notion of Jupiter as the culturally weaker subject of

the two organisations. What is not included in Kotter & Heskett's (1992) narrative is the fact that Jupiter has gone through a large merger. However, the merger is not described as significant by Anders.

When looking at Pluto, the story looks completely different. Pluto started with a set of new and very strong values in the 70's and they did not have any significant market advantages. Pluto reinforces the corporate values continuously by communicating them efficiently by use of the bible. The organisation went from a crisis to being one of the most profitable Swedish companies in their industry in a very short time. The corporate culture has been reinforced as an effect of that they managed the financial crisis so good in the 90's, and by their high profitability. We feel that in Pluto, they are pretty sure about themselves.

To summarise the answer to this research question, Jupiter has the story of the low performers (Kotter & Heskett, 1992) much because of their initial lack of competition. Pluto has been lucky in that their values have held the test of time and they have the narrative of the winning strong cultures (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

6.4 Suggestions for future research

During our research, we have identified a few areas within the field of organisational culture that is relatively unexplored that we think would be interesting for future studies.

First, an investigation about what it actually means for an organisation to have a strong culture and what effects that will lead to for the organisation as well as employees in a long perspective would be interesting.

Second, the way organisations of today work actively with their culture are another area of interest. We have mentioned the emergence of Culture Chief Officers as well as that young employees of today often look at values before choosing workplace. An area for investigation would be to look at how the actual work regarding the culture can be done in daily work within an organisation.

Third, how new employees are brought into the culture successfully, would be interesting to look closer to. A deeper investigation about how this can be done smoothly would be of interest for most large organisations.

Fourth, as organisational culture is something that potential employees seem to look at more and more, a study from the perspective of organisations' cultural attractiveness would be interesting. We see it as increasingly important to match employees with "the right" organisation and would suggest a matching site where employees and organisations can find each other partly based on their values, just like a dating site match two individuals based on their characteristics. Ways of improving the matching process is what we suggest as a field of study.

Fifth, hiring employees whose role is to work with the organisation's culture means a cost for the organisation. Is the cost worth it? Thus, does the organisation gain from investing in their culture more than if they do not, from a financial perspective? Is

there equilibrium for when the culture is invested in enough, or does the gain increases with the investment?

Sixth, as many organisations communicate and formulate their culture in text, what consequences does it lead to if the communicated culture is not the same as how the culture looks in reality? An organisation's written values may differ from the reality, which mean that an employee may apply for a job based on false conditions.

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7.4 Personal communication

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