Chapter 5

PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL BURNOUT: THE HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE REVEALS SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES

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ABSTRACT

The rationale presented here concerns an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to the phenomenon of burnout.

Up to now, the perspective on this phenomenon focused on the burnout of individuals. Consequently, it has been primarily regarded from a psychological viewpoint. The emphasis has been placed on bolstering the resilience of the affected persons, on encouraging them to scrutinize their motivating factors and pay more attention to their own work-life balance. The reason: the excessive pursuit of external recognition and appreciation robs them of their energy. Instilling this important and valuable awareness prompted numerous affected persons to reset their priorities: they sought a substitute for their previous exceptionally high commitment to their work.

It is now becoming clear, however, that a noncommittal "by the book" attitude is at odds with entrepreneurial objectives such as increasing productivity, innovativeness and competitiveness, as well as the trend towards a knowledge-based society. Thus, employers have to ask themselves whether they view the motivating factors of their employees – be quick, strive for perfection, be strong, work hard, satisfy everyone – as being more beneficial or detrimental. In any case, employees have certainly learned their lesson and are increasingly paying more heed to their employability. This has led to a renewed shifting of the burden, which had occurred as a sort of "privatization of the problems", back to employers.

There, a very comparable phenomenon – both in terms of the initial situation and the course it takes – can be observed, which is aptly referred to as "organizational burnout". Within organizations, the self-neglect of needs (i.e., the need to create value in the form of earnings) is certainly not the problem – to the contrary. And, neglect of the work-life balance and important social contacts make no sense at all in this context.

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Because just as is the case with individual burnout, the problems do not arise *due to* the initially present intrinsic motivation, problems only occur when there is an internal loss of this motivation: external motivation cannot compensate for it.

The decisive question, which has been largely overlooked up to now, is: How does this inhibition of a motivator, which is extremely valuable to everyone, even happen?

INTRODUCTION

My research into the topic burnout was not due to an assignment. I needed clarification on my own account to prevent my getting into a burnout spiral again – in spite of therapeutic treatment.

Attended by a psychologist[1], I tried to embed a new engram to gain control over my motivating drivers and to facilitate an alternate behavior pattern. I described my "excessive" aspiration to perform as a kind of encasement, like a knight's armor, and my goal was to get rid of it.

Since my behavior to perform was encouraged during childhood, it seemed obvious at first that my aspiration would stem from a craving for external appreciation. However, that proofed to be a wrong assumption. Finally I made the astonishing discovery that the origin of my motivation is the self, my inner core. To consider that core as defective is as absurd as trying to get rid of the self. Therefore the question arose: Who or what sets the standard to differentiate "excessive"?

As a geographer, I am specialized on the recognition of regional patterns. Such patterns occur irrespective to the topics of specialists. So I started to do research, using my talent for interdisciplinary pattern recognition.

The findings of congruent interdisciplinary patterns concerning burnout and their influence on the development of burnout are presented in this chapter.

There are two necessary conditions which cause burnout: one internal and one external. The internal condition determines – consciously or more often unconsciously – a predisposition for burnout. The external condition is a barrier, which grows ever higher; the more one tries to overcome it.

THE INTERNAL CONDITION

Taking responsibility for oneself and caring for the own well-being cannot be delegated to others. That is why the internal condition is important.

Psychology: "The Yardstick of Exaggeration, or: Where Is the Limit?"

Up to now a "privatization of burnout problems" was observable – without considering the phenomenon that organizations can get into burnout, too. Since an 'organizational burnout'

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[1] Specialized in Pesso Boyden System Psychomotor.

has striking similarities to an individual burnout[2], the designation 'burnout' for the former is not only justified but obvious.

Through various sources of information such as web pages, papers, and books as well as during discussions, I got the impression that burnout is viewed as unhealthy, mainly because of the following reasons:

People who work too passionately cannot be quite right in their heads.

There are more important things in life besides work.

Not paying attention to one's own work-life balance is irresponsible.

Family and other social contacts are important and not to be neglected.

It shouldn't be possible to disregard one's own needs and limits to such an extent.

If it is getting obvious that employees aren't able to look after themselves, it lies in the duty of the managerial staff to ensure healthy behavior.[3]

Based on these arguments, three questions arose:

1. What is mental health?
2. What are our needs?
3. What and where are the limits?

I found the **first question** answered by the World Health Organization:

"**Mental health** is not just the absence of mental disorder.

> It is defined as a *state of well-being* in which …
> every individual *realizes* his or her own *potential*,
> can *cope with* the normal *stresses* of life,
> can *work productively and fruitfully*,
> and is able to *make a contribution* to her or his community."[4]

In this definition there is not a single hint to be found either to a work-life balance, or to a certain amount of regeneration (instead of working too much), or to enough undisturbed recreation (instead of being constantly within reach). By the way: The term work-life balance indicates absurdly that work and life are two different things, as if there is no life during work but a kind of "zombie" existence.

To the contrary: In the definition of the WHO the reference to work is obvious as there are *two* causes for *missing* a state of well-being:

a) Restrictions in realizing the own potential, working productively and fruitfully and making a contribution.
b) Lacking the ability to cope with stress.

Up to now, *point b)* is seen as the main reason to cause burnout.

Point a) is about motivation. In my case, motivation had a more crucial impact:

Realizing my own potential, working productively and fruitfully, and making a contribution are exactly my motivation and the reason I love to work. Additionally, it matches the requirements of employers that their employees contribute to the performance of the

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[2] Greve, 2012, pages 17-22.

[3] In 2014 the German Occupational Safety and Health Act was modified: The monitoring of psychological risks now is binding.

[4] WHO, 2007, emphasis mine.

company in the best possible way. This, however, is the main motive for employment according to application guides[5].

Motivation, in my understanding, is the motive causing an action with the aim of realizing an intended purpose.

There are two possible origins of a motivation: an internal and an external locus[6]. Activities due to an internal cause are intrinsically motivated. Activities in reaction to external incentives are extrinsically motivated.

Since extrinsic motivation is a reaction to incentives *coming from* an *external source* its purpose is to satisfy the ego. In contrast to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation is *coming from* an *internal source* and therefore the purpose has inevitably an outward projection. For a motivation that is coming from an inner source, namely the *self*, with the purpose of creating an outward *effect* 'self-efficacy' is the perfect term.

How substantial the motive of self-efficacy is in choosing a profession is reflected by social professions. The extrinsic incentive for such career decisions, i.e., the salary is commonly low. Teaching, medical care and nursing professions are indeed those professions where burnout occurs most often.

Intrinsic motivation is widely considered as the initial condition for a burnout – but not only for individuals:

The existence of organizations depends on realizing a purpose in answer to an *external* requirement. Becoming an entrepreneur is the result of both, being able to tell a requirement in the market as a purpose, and realizing an undertaking capable in altering that market condition positively. In reaction to such market requirements that are met and such demands that are satisfied, rewards follow respectively.

In the process of an organizational burnout, companies are losing their *self*-conception of creating a worthwhile change or improvement for the external market and in losing their *efficacy* in meeting external demands, they are doomed. Contrary to the burnout of individuals, the burnout of organizations is lethal: only organizations need a purpose in order to exist.

Regarding *point b)* and the abilities to *cope with stress*:

The 'Hardiness Inventory', a test developed by Suzanne Kobasa[7], is relating three personality characteristics to the ability to cope with stress: The belief that one can exert *control* over a situation and is not a helpless victim of circumstances. People with a strong sense of *commitment*, who enjoy making a worthwhile contribution through their work, cope with stress more easily, too; as well as those who view *challenges* as chances offered to prove and increase skills. They are profiting through feelings of confidence and mastery[8].

The linkage between intrinsic motivation and the ability to cope with stress is obvious:

To realize one's own potential through challenges increases the ability to cope with stress. The belief that one can exert control is sustained through the experience of self-efficacy. Highly committed people are intrinsically motivated.

This leads to the **second question**: Are there any personal **needs** or requirements that are not in alignment with intrinsically motivated behavior?

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[5] Yate, 2005, page 9.
[6] Weibel, Rost, and Osterloh, 2007, page 8.
[7] Quoted in Janda, 1999, pages 60-65.
[8] Janda, 1999, page 65.

There are different opinions what needs have priority when and to whom. From an extrinsically motivated point of view, there is a need for external appreciation or recognition. The *external* strategy to satisfy the needs for esteem is but one of two possibilities, as Abraham Maslow describes in *The Theory of Human Motivation*. It leads into an impasse, as asserted factually, yet impressively, by Tim Kasser 2002 in *The High Price of Materialism*. The *internal* strategy to satisfy the needs for esteem is autonomous and not depending on reputation, prestige, recognition, attention, importance, or appreciation through others[9]. People following the internal strategy are apt to feel their worth, strength, and capability through experiences of being useful and necessary in the world[10].

Being able to realize one's potential requires another step beforehand and that is to fathom the potential by searching for talents, capabilities, or even a calling. Once found there is an urge to practice these talents or realize the calling. That kind of insight into one's own potential leads, in turn, onto a level of further development. Maslow describes the need for self-actualization "as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming"[11].

My own experience confirms Maslow's hierarchy of needs. However, in Kasser's analysis and supplementation of a collection of psychological and social studies I found a more objective basis in answer to the second question, since the collection refers to worldwide sources of data:

Deducing from this material "well-being and quality of life increase when four sets of needs are satisfied and decrease when they are not"[12]:

- Autonomy and authenticity
- Safety, security, and sustenance
- Competence, efficacy, and self-esteem
- Connectedness[13]

In these sets of needs, there is none that I disregarded:

Authenticity is the need to express the self. To be able to do that, a certain amount of autonomy is important. Authenticity and autonomy are necessary conditions to realize one's own potential and, according to the WHO definition, this, in turn, leads to a state of mental health.

I had the autonomy to act authentically and that was the reason why I loved my jobs. During that time the realization of my potential was not due to a conscious choice, but an unconscious one, as I learned while in therapy.

Safety is about sustenance and physical well-being, as well as psychological well-being. Threats to the feelings of safety and well-being are stressful experiences[14]. Being able to cope with the normal stresses of life, leads to a state of mental health.

However, there are limits: My own well-being was indeed important to me and the cause to resign from two jobs. Although stress always has an external source, stress is also a

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[9] Maslow, 1943, page 382.
[10] Maslow, 1943, page 382.
[11] Maslow, 1943, page 382.
[12] Kasser, 2002, page 25.
[13] Kasser, 2002, page 24.
[14] Bauer, 2002, page 15.

question of individual judgment. I will get back to this point from a medical perspective later on.

Taken together, *competence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem* stand for the realization of creative power through commitment and engagement. Engagement is different from just loving to work over-time. Both, the quality of work and the realized purpose through work, are important. A purpose is realized through work whenever the work that is done leads to an intended effect. However, working effectively is not yet everything: Creative power is also connected with the intention to produce as much of this effect as possible and that means working as efficiently as possible. Peak experiences of self-efficacy are known as 'flows'. Since burnout cases increase in our working world, instead of mentally healthy states of well-being, the question arises whether the quality of work has deficiencies in being productive and beneficial.

Personally, I fail to see the flaw in perfectionism: Why is it wrong that I can identify myself with what I'm doing? If I won't do things in a way that I consider important, significant, and useful then why do it at all? How is it that my self-efficacy might be seen as an excessive aspiration to perform?

Finally, the greatest shortcomings I experienced were through the need for *connectedness*. A German idiom to express great gratitude "ich fuehle mich zutiefst verbunden" actually refers to increased feelings of connectedness. It makes sense since sharing between family-members, life partners, or friends cause affection and solidarity and this, in turn, leads to feelings of connectedness. It also explains the importance of pleasant social contacts.

Does not the same apply to business relationships? The more balanced a sharing between business partners is, i.e., the lesser the disparity between them is, the lesser one of the parties feels cheated and the more stable is the relationship.

In my case such a connectedness was obvious in the external relationships with customers. From those I received unmistakable signals of appreciation for my work. However, the more the external connectedness increased, it decreased internally. I was criticized more and more vehemently for not doing things properly. "Not doing things properly" absurdly included that I was supposed to make *more* mistakes.

It now is very easy to summarize the needs that I disregarded, as there are none.

The match between mental health and needs is very obvious:

Mental health/state of well-being:	Needs:
Realize own potential	Autonomy and authenticity
Cope with stress	Safety, security, and sustenance
Work productively and fruitfully	Competence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem
Make a contribution	Connectedness

The above links make sense and even coincide with our development seen from a sociological viewpoint which will be the next topic. Before I discuss that, there remains a last and **third question** to be answered:

What and where are the **limits** that are not to be overstepped?

In the context of burnout the term 'limit' very likely refers mainly to *physical* limits of energy reserves. I will get back to that aspect with the medical point of view further down.

In a *psychological* context I was very aware of my limits at all times. Therefore I did not overstep them in as much as risking psychosomatic reactions of my body. Nevertheless, there was a motive that made me go to the limits of my capacities and push them very hard. The motive is:

Self-efficacy causes happiness!

According to the work of Peterson, Park, and Seligman, such a kind of *'engagement'* that is leading to 'flows' has the highest influence on happiness and life satisfaction, measured by a correlation coefficient of 0.30[15].

A limitation in experiencing flows is certainly not desirable for personal reasons.

However, engagement is also consistent with economic objectives: From an economical point of view the productivity of capital is crucial and not what it costs[16]. Of all things that could happen to a company, is there anything better than relying on human capital that is highly productive and very willingly so, because flows are causing happiness?

'Meaning' has a similarly large impact on happiness and life satisfaction with a coefficient of 0.26. 'Meaning' refers to the sense that the benefit of the created effect ensures appropriate connectedness[17].

Again this is consistent with economic interests: Any connectivity in customer, employee, or business partner relationships, which is accomplished of one's own accord, is close and stable and therefore can be obtained with a minimum of effort. Limitations to a meaningful connectivity make no sense at all – on a personal and certainly on an economic level: The existence of an enterprise depends solely on its meaningfulness for the market since the market only pays for such goods and services that are valuable enough to spend money on.

Pure pleasure pursuit as a hedonistic influence on happiness and life satisfaction has a significantly lower impact with a correlation coefficient of 0.17[18]. However, *'pleasure'* that arises from *'engagement'* and *'meaning'* is not only the result but at the same time the reason for such behavior.

In my personal opinion, it is impossible to put a limit to that kind of pleasure or respectively to success, in the case of organizations.

Seen psychologically, the "privatization" of individual burnout problems and the work-life balance could be taken as an encouragement to seek happiness, life satisfaction, well-being, and health *outside work*. Why? Viewed rationally there should be neither personal nor economical reasons for such a course.

Therefore, I looked more closely at what happens in the process of burnout and whether there might be a clue. After all, typical stages in the burnout process are resulting empirically from sober observations and collections.

The typical stages of organizations in the process of passing through a burnout spiral[19] have striking similarities with those of people[20]:

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[15] Peterson, Park, and Seligman, 2005, page 33.
[16] Drucker, 2006, pages 58 and 110.
[17] Peterson, Park, and Seligman, 2005, page 33.
[18] Peterson, Park, and Seligman, 2005, page 33.
[19] Greve, 2012, pages, 89-139.
[20] Greve, 2012, pages, 17-22.

Productivity is dimmed by feelings of insecurity.

Interest converts into disinterest.

Resources diminish and conflicts arise.

Meaning is lost to cynicism.

Loss of *control* is ending in dilemmas.

Purpose and *self-efficacy* are lost to a sensation of powerlessness.

Dynamics is fading and replaced by resignation.

Commitment turns into apathy.

The loss of *energy* leads to exhaustion.

This just roughly outlined process indicates clearly a 'crowding-out effect' of intrinsic motivation that cannot be compensated by extrinsic motivation.

All the aspects, highlighted above in italics, are present at the start of the burnout process – and they are associated with intrinsic motivation:

Without an internal sense of purpose and meaning there is no intrinsic motivation.

Dynamics, energy, productivity, and resources are side effects of intrinsic motivation, due to the satisfaction of needs in a very direct way and due to a correspondingly high level of well-being that facilitates efficiency.

Control, commitment, and interest are aspects that are important to a monitoring of self-efficacy. They are needed to keep intrinsic motivation running.

A crowding-out of intrinsic motivation is possible. Such an effect has been proven many times[21]:

The meaning of apathy in the context of burnout coincides indeed with characteristics of self-efficacy at a minimum[22], and in contrast to intrinsic motivation: Namely to see one's own job as an onerous duty, to avoid challenges and to expend as little effort as possible and still keep the own position[23].

An experiment conducted by Kasser shows that feelings of insecurity actually produce materialistic tendencies and are not only causative factors[24]. However, a crowding-out of intrinsic motivation can – in no way – be compensated extrinsically:

Motivation moves from its internal to an external locus when things are done while lacking identification with what one is doing and thus one is losing pleasure in doing it. Acting in obligation to others, out of a sense of duty to others, means doing things oneself wouldn't do out of one's own accord (the once internal locus). This raises expectations that such onerous doing for the sake of others should be appreciated accordingly. However, the probability for external appreciation and recognition is getting lesser, the more the pleasure in doing it is dwindling. Failing external appreciation then leads to weariness in doing anything at all.

The problems that go along with a prevalence of materialistic value orientation and extrinsic motivation[25] are consistent with burnout problems that call for a treatment:

According to Kasser, predominantly materialistic value orientations and extrinsic motivation are leading to a failure in satisfying needs[26]: Well-being is undermined by,

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[21] Weibel, Rost, and Osterloh, 2007, pages 7-8.

[22] Janda, 1999, page 185.

[23] Edelwich & Brodsky quoted in Angele, 2012.

[24] Kasser, 2002, page 41.

[25] Kasser, 2002, pages 29-86.

[26] Kasser, 2002, page 28.

deepened feelings of insecurity[27], by a weakened self-worth and low self-esteem[28], by low-quality and adversarial relationships[29], and by feeling pressured, compelled, controlled, and chained[30].

Assuredly intrinsic motivation – as a necessary initial condition for burnout and as a necessary condition for leading to a mentally healthy state of well-being, and to high quality of life – is not the problem. Therefore burnout cannot be solved privately by a change of personal characteristics – even if there is such *burn*ing that might be judged excessive from an outside point of view. Thus the question arises: to what extent is an external framework involved in the crowding-*out* of intrinsic motivation that leads to *burn-out*?

THE EXTERNAL CONDITION

> "The whole evolution,
> i.e., the internal development and the external culture,
> is a moving of barriers."
> *Wassily Kandinsky*

Sociology: "The Social Context Sets the Standard"

Seen sociologically, a state of well-being does not only depend on the influence of individuals in exercising their own responsibility but is also influenced by the social context to a significant extent.

For that reason, the subjective well-being index (SWB) which is determined regularly through data from the World Values Survey[31] consists of a measurement of both aspects: individual happiness as a personal aspect, and an overall life-satisfaction as an aspect of regional, social, political, and cultural contexts.

The lower the SWB index sinks, the more likely democratization will take place[32]. For example, a declining index preceded such events as the Arab Spring, or the fall of communist systems, indicating that society is getting too restrictive for too many people and does not allow free choice.

The extent to which a society allows free choice and control over one's life depends on the amount of:

- Possible and allowed self-determination and self-direction
- Variety and diversity to choose from
- Social tolerance and benevolence

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[27] Kasser, 2002, page 42.
[28] Kasser, 2002, page 59.
[29] Kasser, 2002, page 72.
[30] Kasser, 2002, page 86.
[31] A survey conducted since 1981 that measures changes in values and believes in 97 societies containing almost 90 percent of the world's population: www.worldvaluessurvey.org.
[32] Inglehart, Foa, Peterson, and Welzel, 2008, page 272.

According to Schwartz's 'circumplex model of values', openness to change (stimulation, self-direction, and some hedonism) and self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence) are important values to intrinsically motivated people and they are contrasting materialistic values of self-enhancement and conservation[33]. Thus the striking shift in values observed in a burnout process can also be explained by a crowding-out of intrinsic motivation[34].

Self-determination, choice, and benevolence are mutually dependent:

Without benevolence, tolerance, and trust, a society is neither offering nor creating choices. Without choice, self-determination is limited or even impossible. Self-determination, in turn, is very important, because it allows the necessary freedom to define:

Who one is and who one wants to be.

Those who take liberties in their self-expression have to reckon with massive sanctions under certain circumstances, namely whenever a society has a different view as to what is perceived as okay. In Germany, for example, nowadays even gay soccer-players have their coming out. This, however, happens just at the end of a career to avoid the risk of a setback. Other societies put a death penalty on 'being homosexual'.

Democracy, social freedom, and personal autonomy are playing important roles as 'action resources', since they offer more latitude in choices and development[35]. If people are allowed to act more independently and if they have enough leeway to make their own decisions, then – as a result – they have more opportunities for self-realization and the value orientation continues further in direction to 'self-expression'[36].

Data obtained through the World Values Survey trace such a value orientation and an ever increasing significance of self-expression over the course of 25 years in almost all cultures[37]. This very clear, ongoing, and – realistically seen – unstoppable trend is led by Scandinavian countries, which are among the happiest countries worldwide.

Therefore my desire, and obviously that of many others as well, '*to become more and more what I am, to become everything that I am capable of becoming*[38]', is the conscious choice of who I am and who I want to be.

Indeed, for individuals, there might be some empirical evidence that burnout leads to a conscious self-determination through asking: "Is this who I want to be?" This might also be done via exclusions as: "This is *not* who I want to be". There is a high chance that questions of that kind lead to a renewed searching for one's vocation or calling and this, in turn, is satisfying the need for self-actualization.

As long as any such self-determination is in accordance with society (or parts of society and within the cultural context of that part), there are no problems. Every culture creates a stock of behavioral repertoires that give guidelines as to which behaviors are considered favorable and which are not. This facilitates and simplifies interactions. When gestures or behavior patterns are associated with meanings, they are quickly and easily identified and interpreted and one knows how to read others.

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[33] Schwartz, 1992: http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/schwartz_inventory.htm and quoted in Kasser, 2002, page 66.

[34] The shifting of the motivation's origin from an internal to an external locus is a shifting from one polarity to another. Example: Between the polarities of black and white there are different shades of gray: more white means less black and vice versa.

[35] Welzel, 2006, page 6.

[36] Welzel, 2006, page 6.

[37] Welzel, 2006, page 5.

[38] Referring to Maslow's definition of self-actualization.

This applies in particular to business relationships, where feelings of security in interrelationships are synonymous to feelings of trust.

However, in the process of an organizational burnout, a loss of cultural identity occurs. For an organization, the loss of cultural identity means losing behavioral guidelines and codes of conduct – internal as well as external: Without social cohesion there is no connectedness; without connectedness there is no unity; without unity there is no alignment; and without alignment there is no pooling of specialized tasks.

Whenever the pooling of specialized tasks is necessary to produce such goods or services that cannot be made by lone individuals, the loss of unity poses a rather large problem: Without unity and cooperation there are separation and a struggling for power. The greater the struggling for power and the more competition, the more the former unity crumbles. Strength and power are lost and with them the focus on satisfying customers. With that kind of loss in creative power, a company is not acting anymore – but only reacting. Reaction is synonymous to always being a step behind and that, in turn, is the greatest fear in business.

Therefore, those individuals who do *not* adapt to a change from intrinsic to extrinsic motivation are doing it right – personally and economically. The problem is that doing it right will get them into as much trouble as doing it wrong. This catch-22 situation is caused by a systems-law of compensating feedback[39] that cannot be avoided:

The harder you push the harder the system pushes back!

Cybernetics: "The Design of the Framework"

The principle of cybernetics and therefore the central mechanism to control systems can be expressed in a very simple formula: Form follows function!

Function is derived from the intention to realize a purpose. In turn, the physical form of the system derives what is needed to realize that function and to bring about the intended result.

This concept is easily explained via a thermostat. The thermostat is a popular example to explain feedback loops as a basic module of systems[40]. However, a system consists not only of a variety of feedback loops that are interacting; a system is – in itself – a feedback loop[41]. Thus, systems can be determined as a standalone unit. However, without external interactions, systems are utterly useless. Therefore the usefulness of a system is dependent upon its ability to make an externally needed contribution. Such a contribution would not be possible without interactions. For interactions and, in general, for the ability to operate as a system in any complex network of systems a basic set of rules is mandatory.

Cybernetics is about those rules.

A thermostat is, in its physical form, a technical implementation in order to realize the purpose of automatically maintaining a constantly comfortable room temperature. It measures the current ambient temperature with a sensor and compares it with the desired temperature setting. In case of a deviation, the thermostat starts a correction procedure. This correction is

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[39] Senge, 1990, page 58.
[40] Meadows, 1999, page 9.
[41] Tröster, 2013, page 159.

done by a response mechanism that regulates the heating until the room temperature matches that of the setting.

A feedback loop includes:

- A goal
- Monitoring and feedback via information
- A response mechanism

If the response mechanism is supposed to work automatically, then rules are needed to allow self-organization. For a thermostat, those rules are very simple: In order to provide a constantly comfortable temperature (the purpose), all actions of the response mechanism must aim at maintaining or reaching the goal (a certain temperature level). Whether the response mechanism is going into action or not, depends on the current room temperature. The ability to detect deviations from the goal is enabled through a monitoring of the room temperature. Therefore, any actions of the thermostat are controlled by the room temperature and at the same time the room temperature is controlled by the thermostat. That is what is meant by a feedback loop.

Usually, the purpose is some kind of "yes-or-no-quality" concerning persons. For example: My answer to the question: "is that room temperature now comfortable?" is either yes – or no. Only in the case of its being *not* comfortable I will change the setting: maybe at first from 66°F/19°C to 70°F/21°C and then some time later back to 68°F/20°C. Such settings serve as fixed goals for the thermostat but they are relative to the purpose of providing such a room temperature that is *always (in all ways) comfortable for me*. Realizing that purpose technically the thermostat provides a range of different settings to choose from.

It is now easy to understand that 'structures' are the means to realize a purpose. The entirety of information, energy, and material flows in a system – and therefore all the occurring 'processes' – are only made possible through structures and are directed by structures[42]. Without purpose as a guiding principle there wouldn't be any processes of information, energy, or materials flowing and accumulating in stocks.

The functioning of systems as feedback loops, their necessary compatibility with each other, and their hierarchical structuring, wherein any system is at the same time a subsystem to another system, are important points to an understanding of systems. All of this is enabled by a set of basic system rules serving an overall coordination and allowing interactions of all systems.

These basic system rules allow:

- Self-organization
- Variety and diversity
- Life

The rules are mutually dependent: Survival, resilience, differentiation, or evolution would not be possible without variety and diversity. No diversity could emerge without distinctness and no development without variety. Variety and diversity are, in turn, augmenting the chances for resilience, and survival through adapting to changes in the environment.

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[42] Referred to as DIN 19226-1 by Trantow, 2012, page 138.

Differentiation, development, resilience, and survival are system-level goals[43] that have top priority and they are enabled by corresponding rules.

The parallel of the above mentioned 'basic system rules' and the 'action resources' from a sociological perspective is obvious:

- Possible and allowed self-determination and self-direction
- Variety and diversity to choose from
- Social tolerance and benevolence (live and let live)

This means that human systems providing no or too few action resources – contrary to system rules – sooner or later get into trouble due to a lack of resilience, development, and differentiation which are affecting their ability to survive.

Such problems are emerging increasingly: Lack of differentiation has a negative effect on competitiveness. Lack of development has a negative effect on the ability to adapt to changes in the market. Lack of resilience has a negative effect on error-friendliness: Companies that cannot take the risk to fail are not capable of innovation.

A thermostat that fails to ensure a constantly comfortable temperature is not considered functional and would be repaired or replaced.

For companies this is not different: They realize a purpose. It is due to an *external* effect in a certain quality that decides how well a company realizes a purpose that is considered valuable by the market. Therefore, whether the company deserves a reward or not, is decided alone on the market side. Nevertheless, the notion prevails that enterprises serve to make profits, i.e., that their purpose are rewards. Such a priority automatically displaces the requirements of the market to a second place or to an even minor role: There is evidence that strong materialistic value orientations are related to a lacking of empathy[44]. Without empathy, there is no genuine concern for the wishes and expectations of other people and therefore of the market. The concept of being rewarded even for unmet requirements is not only cynical but also witless.

A person affected by burnout told of a power struggle at top management level that had dramatic impact. These struggles broke out as the company achieved monopoly by insolvency of a competitor and that sent a signal to those employees who adjust to the role model of the most successful people in the company to copy that behavior. Due to the ensuing friction between employees, the company was intermittently unable to keep promises of delivery. Lucky for them, the unrestricted market power allowed for contracts that excluded any claims for damages. Yet no customer is keen to repeat the experience of being forced to shut down the whole factory for want of supplies. As that example shows, losing sight of the interests of customers is not at all trivial. Who in business can afford, the risks associated with such a dependency and not make it their highest priority to search for alternatives?

Both, the purpose as the main controls of a system, and the motive behind the purpose that is demonstrated by the role model of leadership, are underestimated in their impact on a system's right to exist. Top management behavior is considered successful. Therefore it is imitated, regardless of slogans issued on how to behave in order to successfully realize the purpose of the enterprise.

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[43] Meadows, 1999, page 16.
[44] Namely: Interpersonal coldness, cynicism, distrust, self-centeredness. Kasser, 2002, page 70.

The motive, i.e., the real intention behind the purpose of a system, always reveals itself by what the system is doing. This is unavoidable and makes the true intent so transparent and obvious that discussions about it on the Internet are feared accordingly.

If a company's motive for action shall seriously be directed outward, then it must stem from intrinsic motivation. With an intrinsic motive external rewards are not the cause for action but, to the contrary: Self-efficacy emerges from a more or less "burning" interest (depending on how concerned one is) to cause a change or improvement for a community. Such an interest is caused by feelings of connectedness with that community and by seeing oneself as one of the benefiting and profiting members.

Systems Analysis: "The Operation of Systems"

From the perspective of systems analysis, there are two options for the efficacy of a system set up by humans:

1. The selection of the most effective leverage points.
2. The direction in which the "lever" is operated.

"'Leverage points' […] are places within a complex system […] where a small shift in one thing can produce big changes in everything.[45]" Through these points of power, the efficacy of the system can be influenced.

Leverage points are more or less effective, depending on where the lever is attached: The causal chain starts with intention, the motive why the system should exist. At the end of the causal chain there are usually material stocks, but also non-material stocks that are modified through in- and outflows according to occurring processes.

The intention to be the cause of a change and creating a system to that purpose emanates from a person, of course. It is a creative act in response to the following questions: "Who do I want to be in the face of this situation?" Someone who is outraged about something that is going wrong or lacking? Or someone who is going to do something about it?[46]

An outraged person pushes the responsibility onto others that it is their duty to bring about the necessary change. The prerequisite for any appropriate action to follow is the decision to be an entrepreneur in this matter from now on. No matter how big or small one's contribution is: one will only be the cause of an envisioned change[47], if the order of events runs like this:

Be the cause! -> *Do* something appropriate! -> *Have* a change!

In the reverse order: have -> do -> be, the statement would be something like this: I *have* neither the power, nor the means, nor the ability to *do* what would be necessary in order to *be* successful here. If everybody would think this way, our world would be without entrepreneurs, inventors, and pioneers. Where there is a will, there is a way.

Each joint performance that cannot be done by lone individuals depends on the pooling of different specializations and strengths. The more related and aligned the intentions of those

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[45] Meadows, 1999, page 1.
[46] To 'undertake' something leads to an 'undertaking'.
[47] The way to get there is to *be there*. That separates visions from a fancy.

people involved are, the more focused, goal orientated, and effective will be the combining of their strengths. To think of applications like laser cutting, that is enabled by a laser being focused to a tight spot through spatial coherence, is not an exaggerated image: this is just about light and not about what men might achieve.

The formation of a unit and the pooling of strengths are mutually dependent: The precondition to form a powerful unit is a shared vision respective to the purpose of the system as a whole. An individual contribution to one and the same purpose leads to a pooling of strengths which, in turn, is synonymous with cooperation. Whenever there is cooperation, there is also unity. Not being able to achieve great things through a unity tells a lot about the coherence of intentions.

Like the vision of having a constant temperature that once led to the invention of a thermostat, a vision initiates a feedback loop. It starts a process of experimentation how to realize the purpose in the best possible way. For example: What kind of intention – and corresponding behavior – of a host is causing a hotel guest to really feel appreciated and welcomed, instead of being some kind of a nuisance to the host until the day of payment? Or another example: How should the implementation of a technical device be designed, in order to be user-friendly and to supersede complex instructions?

The more self-organization is allowed, the faster a matching effect is found in creating change and realizing the purpose. The special, distinctive, and inimitable strength of the system as a whole, which can be refined, optimized, adapted, and supported technically, evolves from focusing on that effect.

It is not just due to a certain behavioral policy, but truly due to aligned intentions that gives a system its cultural peculiarity. Through the appropriate selection of team members, there is a sure and unrivaled distinction from other systems, aimed at creating other effects. If rules are very clear regarding an intended effect, then such rules will not restrict, but open up room to maneuver. Rules in that sense are similar to walls: Walls restrict the available space of a room; but without walls, there is no room.

Therefore, the most powerful leverage points apply where an effect is created – and the initial point is in deciding to be the cause of an effect. The least effective leverage lies in the manipulation of stocks. The most problematic points are those that intervene in evolved structures and processes.

Whenever there is an impulse wanting to optimize certain structures and processes, the motive assuredly is *not* to increase the efficacy of the system but just to increase the profits and therefore the rewards for the system as an extrinsic motive. For the efficacy of a system, the complex interaction of structures and processes is crucial. That interaction is designed by the guiding principle of the system and to that principle the system owes its right to exist. Any intervention in this complexity has implications that are *intuitively* being avoided as long as the motive is still *intrinsic* and stemming from the same *internal* locus as *intuition*.

It is not by chance that systems analysts speak of *'counter-intuition'* whenever a "lever" is being pushed in the wrong direction[48] and thus creating unwanted effects that travel within the system for some time and then show up somewhere as a consequence contrary to the one intended. Alas, counter-intuitive behavior is observed in systems time and again even though

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[48] Meadows, 1999, page 1.

such behavior can be structured in typical patterns with equally typical – and therefore indeed predictable – consequences. These structures are referred to as 'systems archetypes'[49].

In the process of an organizational burnout, all kinds of systems archetypes occur in a once very successfully performing enterprise. The separation within the system is started by counter-intuitive behavior patterns. The consequences thereof lead down a typical spiral to a steadily declining efficacy and terminate in the meltdown – and in a quite literal sense: in the parting – of the company.

An organizational burnout does not mean that there is basically no more demand for the goods or services rendered to date, but that their benefits are no longer in a quality as worthwhile as it was initially the case. Unfortunately it is the organization itself that "sends" its former customers to competitors or – in case that there is no alternative due to comparable standards in an entire industry – customers stop asking for what they cannot have.

Likewise, the usefulness of a thermostat is decided alone by its *reliability*, and not whether it is technically able to regulate any temperature at all.

Economics: "The Practical Implementation Is Systemic"

How very important reliability is, especially for business relationships, "confirm an intuition of many experienced managers: that it is vital to hold to critical performance standards 'through thick and thin,' and to do whatever it takes to meet those standards. The standards that are most important are those that matter the most to the customer. They usually include product quality (design and manufacture), delivery service, service reliability and quality, and friendliness and concern of service personnel.[50]"

This intuition is not always easy and convenient to implement and certainly not by using the Pareto principle, also known as 80-20 rule[51]. 'Through thick and thin' doing 'whatever it takes' means in practice that it takes enormous ambition in this matter, under certain circumstances even fanatical commitment and sometimes an excessive aspiration to perform, bordering to self-abandonment. Without perfectionistic claims, vital standards cannot be maintained.

These quite extreme characteristics match those of Level-5 managers[52]. They have qualities that some people view as unnecessary exaggeration or even as a "mental defect". A distinctive, but in view of their success unusual, personal modesty adds to the striking characteristics of Level-5.

These features are derived from an economic study, what *permanently outstanding successful* companies have in common and what sets them apart from comparable companies: namely at first a Level-5 leadership as the highest of five levels of leadership qualities[53].

Level-5 CEOs are highly intrinsically motivated, as is clear from their descriptions. In addition, there is the following significant differentiation to extrinsic motivation: For people

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[49] Senge, 1999, pages 93-114 and pages 378-390.

[50] Senge, 1999, page 123.

[51] The Pareto principle states that 80 percent of the effects come from 20 percent of the causes. The temptation to save time and energy is to simply focus on these 20 percent.

[52] Collins, 2001, pages 12-13.

[53] Collins, 2001, pages 39-40.

without Level-5 qualities, "work will always be first and foremost about what they *get* – fame, fortune, adulation, power, whatever – not what they *build*, create, and contribute.[54]"

That the leadership is intrinsically motivated – as a role model for a system –, is of particular importance for the following reason:

An intuitive access to systems requires no special, learnable skills.

From a total of 1,435 companies that counted among the American top companies in the Fortune 500 list for over 30 years, only eleven very successful businesses remained after a multi-stage selection process. These eleven companies – despite their different industries – exhibit such similar and at the same time markedly different behavior from comparable companies of the same industry, with similar size, products, and other similar initial conditions that Collins was able to deduce seven management principles from that comparison.

Amazingly, these management principles match exactly the hierarchy of the most effective leverage points in systems! This is important information, because Collins shared his findings by describing *what* he found – without reasoning *why* these principles are timeless, universal, and successful[55].

"The probability of finding by chance a group of eleven companies, all of whose members display the primary traits [...] discovered [in the study] while the direct comparisons do not possess those traits [...] is less than 1 in 17 million.[56]"

This means that the systemic ideal actually exists in companies, even if rarely. As an additional avail, the management principles are a guide for practical implementation. On top of that, benchmarks and performance measurements indicate specifically how well those contrasting business approaches pan out: The performance at the stock market of those eleven companies exceeds that of the comparison companies on average by a factor of 6.9 – although the comparison companies are well positioned, too, since they made it into the Fortune 500 list.[57]

Counter-intuition, management errors in the line of systems archetypes, and failure in the face of complexity are not inevitable human predispositions in dealing with systems. Collins' study shows that the intuitive access to systems is actually possible. Corresponding parallels of the management principles and the most effective leverage points are also found in other sources, such as in the works of Peter Drucker[58], of Peter Senge[59], and of Frederic Vester[60].

Likewise, the principle of the feedback loop is traceable in several sources. Collins describes it as "Hedgehog" principle, because it is a simple reflex action and yet a very effective pattern of behavior. In Peter Drucker's work, the feedback loop is referred to as "The Theory of the Business"[61]. In both cases it is about:

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[54] Collins, 2001, page 36.
[55] Collins, 2001, page 5.
[56] Collins, 2001, page 212.
[57] Collins, 2001, page 3.
[58] Drucker, 2006, pages 195-196.
[59] Senge, 1990, page 344.
[60] Vester, 2002, pages 53-61.
[61] Drucker, 2006, page 22.

- A result that the entire company is passionate about[62] and one that enjoys highest esteem by customers alike (the *purpose*).
- The search for maximum possible impact that is suitable as an economic engine and as a code of conduct (the *goal* and object of *monitoring*).
- This best possible contribution being anchored as a cultural peculiarity to deploy a particular strength of the company and use it collectively (the *response mechanism*).

Intrinsic motivation, intuition, and cooperation go hand in hand – as well as extrinsic motivation, counter-intuition, and competition. Entrepreneurial thinking and acting is still rather associated with extrinsic – than correctly with intrinsic – motivation.

Thus two viewpoints of entrepreneurial thinking are pointing in opposite directions. To picture the strength of the contrast: What looks like a highway entrance from one point of view, looks to the other like a solid concrete wall at a dead end – and vice versa.

Yet, the opposing viewpoints – that are inevitably leading to conflicts – are possibly far less responsible for individual burnout problems, than rather the structures which are determined by the guiding principle of the system, because they, in turn, determine the processes that are possible and that are supported.

Just imagine a person swimming in a current. As long as she or he is swimming in the same direction as the current flows, everything is fine. However, even the world's best swimmer trying to swim in a cross current stands no chance and is hopeless.

Systems have a guiding principle to realize a purpose which is their raison d'être. Of course, no behavior can be tolerated in the long run that undermines this guiding principle. I mentioned the compensating feedback loop as a self-regulatory mechanism of systems already in the context of the sociological perspective and as a systems law:

The harder you push the harder the system pushes back!

An entire generation has found an answer to the burnout problem and is now asking: "*Why* should I commit myself?" This, for sure, is no sign of laziness: 'Generation *Y*' checks the purpose of the system first – whether any commitment is safe – instead of delivering themselves into hopeless compensating feedback loops. The members of that generation have learned their lesson: they are taking their own responsibility serious to ensure that their employability is maintained and not damaged. It is easy to observe whether there is an alignment in a system by comparing what is said and what is actually done. In the case that saying and doing are consistent: The willingness and commitment of that well-educated generation is high to make their best possible contribution (and that is excluding laziness as a motive). Otherwise, they look for more suitable jobs and in the meantime they satisfy their needs for autonomy, authenticity, competence, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and connectedness outside of work.

Through asking "Who do I want to be in the face of this situation?" and deciding, either for engagement, if there is meaning, or for a noncommittal "by the book" attitude, 'Generation Y' shows conscious awareness and has found solutions that are in their own personal interest. The first course is pleasurable, healthy and economical. The second course is a necessary adaption to standards of behavior that are set by the system – but which usually indicate an organizational burnout.

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[62] Ensuring that the entire company is passionate is supported by recruiting such employees to whom the purpose is valuable, important, meaningful, worthwhile, or honorable (which allows *self-organization*).

Occupational Medicine: "Linking the Internal and the External Condition"

The perspective from an occupational physician's is joining the circle of the internal and external condition, because from this point of view psychological factors play a role, too.

With the "privatization" of individual burnout problems, the focus lies primarily on developing personal "stress cures" aiming at getting control of stress symptoms or at changing the individual's interpretation of events[63]. Is this really useful, however, when intrinsic motivation – as a necessary starting point for burnout – was already connected with distinct abilities to cope with stress?

Should the stress problem not rather be sought on that side that feels threatened by other's benchmarks of performance and feels insecure due to such competition? Fear is a very dominant emotion that leads to irrational behavior. Contrary to the assertions that economy is emotionless, angst and fear are widespread and tolerated emotions in the world of business and quite accepted as a means of behavioral manipulation.

Senge identifies two driving motives for organizations: negative and positive visions[64]. Negative visions arise from fear and positive from passion. Passion is synonymous to the love of doing. To my settled conviction fear and love constitute the main polarity of emotions, since, for example, hate or jealousy derives from fear.

Motives that originate out of fear are typical for an access to systems that Vester describes as unsystemical[65] and that is linked with linear thinking and counter-intuitive actions (instead of joint-up thinking and intuitive actions).

"Those who built the good-to-great companies weren't motivated by fear. They weren't driven by fear of what they didn't understand. They weren't driven by fear of looking like a chump. They weren't driven by fear of watching others hit it big while they didn't. They weren't driven by fear of being hammered by the competition.[66]"

Nevertheless, fear of competition is understandable: Since the performance of organizations with an intrinsically motivated guiding principle is surpassing the performance of the control group by an average factor of 6.9[67], with a range from 3.4[68] even up to 18.5[69], the performance of employees who contribute to such an outstanding success might as well be high. In any case, employees expressing their creativity and their need for self-efficacy won't withhold their performance.

In addition, intrinsically motivated employees who take responsibility for their actions (as a necessary side-effect of self-efficacy) are less easily manipulated and they question what or who is leading the way.

In the world of business the assumption is widespread that the behavior of homo oeconomicus is still a practical measure of things. From that point of view, however, any different behavior of this extrinsically motivated prototype is as impossible to interpret as any

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[63] The "solution" since 1990 and earlier: Karasek and Theorell, 1990, pages 83-84.
[64] Senge, 1990, page 225.
[65] Vester, 2002, page 101.
[66] Collins, 2001, page 160.
[67] Collins, 2001, page 3.
[68] Collins, 2001, page 7; 2.5 would have been the factor of an equity fund determined by 3M, Boeing, Coca-Cola, General Electric, Hewlett-Packard Intel, Johnson& Johnson, Merck, Motorola, Pepsi, Procter&Gamble, Wal-Mart, and Walt Disney: page 6.
[69] Collins, 2001, page 7.

other mindset that is contrary to one's own. Anyway, behavior that is not easily categorized seems inscrutable and unpredictable.

Whether one sees a threat to one's own position, or whether the certainty is shaken of having a secure job all kinds of attacks to feelings of safety, security, and sustenance are frightening. It is therefore plausible and understandable that stress and fear are leading to reactions, i.e., to actions that are directed against the source that causes stress.

On the other hand, stress seems but a matter of one's own interpretation of events. However, the problem of subjective perception disappears by introducing an objective dependent variable, namely heart attack[70]: Such criteria as agreed upon by epidemiologists show measurable changes indicating an increased risk of myocardial infarction, whenever at least one of the following three factors is changed to one's detriment:

- By restrictions to one's own scope of having control,
- By being confronted with challenges that ask too little or too much,
- By demands that do not offer at least a 50 percent chance to solve them.

Even if one would like to believe that failing employees are not at all in the economic interest of a company, the problem of staffing mistakes, for example, lies in the fact that an employee cannot meet the requirements – even with the best will. Hiring mistakes cannot be avoided. They occur very often. Only their correction is rather rare and often justified by social consideration.

In the event that a misfitting employee should actually not be stressed, which is unlikely, because boreout means stress, too, this may be good from a personal but not from an economical point of view: it diminishes possible performance. In addition, misfits give rise to social tensions, at least due to the gaps in contribution that must be compensated by colleagues. Such activities keep employees from their own work and, thus, from an important opportunity for regeneration.

This opportunity refers to the anabolic response as one of two possible responses of the body to stressors that ensures regeneration and repair. Amazingly, anabolic regeneration takes place either during the deepest sleep or – according to Frankenhäuser, Lundberg and Forsman (1980)[71] – during *self-determined* activities, i.e., activities that are not lacking in self-control.

This explains the work-life balance: If self-determined activities are reserved for leisure-time, then we actually need this scope for freedom very urgently to ensure repair and regeneration. However, even if we do pleasant things we get stressed: i.e., whenever it comes to mastering new and challenging situations[72]. Therefore we have positive, regenerative eustress whenever we evolve of our own accord.

It is the other physiological response to stressors, namely the catabolic response that is consuming energy – and releasing cortisol into the bargain[73].

Cortisol is a means to make stress more easily tolerated. Surely this is good, but not in the long run: Along with the neurotransmitter glutamate, cortisol causes a destruction of nerve cells. This leads to impairment of brain regions and in extreme and prolonged stress situations

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[70] Karasek and Theorell, 1990, page 79.
[71] Confirmed by Karasek and Theorell, 1990, pages 104-110.
[72] Karasek and Theorell, 1990, page 104.
[73] Karasek and Theorell, 1990, page 105.

even to a reduction of brain substance. The part of the brain that is affected particularly is the memory processing hippocampus[74].

In addition, cortisol sets a priority which brings the immune and cancer defense to a standstill[75]. The necessary resources cannot be allocated until they are no longer needed urgently to cope with stress. Chronic use of an emergency mechanism is bad, because stress hinders those processes in the body that keep us healthy.

The catabolic response occurs whenever self-control is lacking for want of self-determination, participation, and / or benevolence.

The last point is particularly sensitive, because connectedness and high quality of interpersonal relationships contribute decisively to one's well-being and to a high quality of life. From the perspective of psychosomatic medicine, Bauer makes the following two statements: "Through the shaping of our interpersonal relationships we ourselves contribute decisively to what is biologically happening in us.[76]" "Whenever the quantity and quality of interpersonal relationships are decreasing, the risks of illness will then increase.[77]"

It is due to various combinations of decision latitude (i.e., control in terms of task authority and skill discretion), demands, *and social support* in meeting challenges that influence the extent of strain, stress, and risks to health and well-being at the workplace. At the same time these combinations influence productivity, performance, and the motivation for active learning[78]:

Low decision latitude in the tasks, lack of challenges, and low job demands represent **passive job** designs:

The meaning for employees: Passive jobs carry a *risk* of further augmenting paternalism and for *'learned helplessness'*.

The meaning for employers: Such jobs stand for the *least possible productivity* and utilization of potential – including even those skills that are present and not only those that might be developed through challenges.

High decision latitude, while meeting little or no challenges, and moderate demands represent **low strain jobs**:

The meaning for employees: Such jobs meet the ideals of the homo oeconomicus. But due to the lack of challenges, the available skill repertoire is stagnating. For intrinsically motivated employees low strain jobs are associated with a *boreout risk*.

The meaning for employers: Instead of making optimal use of the existing potential in human capital and expanding skills, the skill repertoire is left stagnating and the potential remains untapped and lies idle which signify *losses in productivity*.

Low decision latitude, most challenging situations, and high to overwhelming demands represent **high strain jobs**:

The meaning for employees: Being restricted in one's autonomy, instead of getting social support to succeed in difficult tasks, is associated with a *burnout risk*. A burnout affected person brings to the point what that means in practice: "Doing the right thing and being

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[74] Bauer, 2002, page 32.

[75] Bauer, 2002, page 120.

[76] Bauer, 2002, page 11.

[77] Bauer, 2002, page 13.

[78] The following combinations are derived from "Healthy Work", a very meticulous reasoning by Robert Karasek, Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering, and Töres Theorell, physician and Professor for Psychosocial Factors and Health. In the face of increasing psychological problems at workplaces their study from 1990 has unfortunately not yet lost its up-to-datedness.

sanctioned for it." Such experiences unsettle the basic trust in social guidelines for supported and worthwhile or else unsupported and sanctioned behavior. To obtain this basic trust, is part of our paradigms, i.e., our specific ways of valuing and viewing reality. Mechanisms of denial and repression that typically occur in a burnout process sounds like a 'confirmation bias' in the sense of an "inability or refusal to see beyond the current models of thinking"[79]. In that model the world of business is stable, mature, economic, and rational although this certainly applies no more during an organizational burnout.

The meaning for employers: High strain jobs are linked with *heavy losses*, because stress, fear, conflicts, and power struggles never occur isolated but radiate through interpersonal interactions and often escalate in mutual reactions. The more capacity is bound in this way, the less is available for performance and productivity.

High decision latitude, most challenging situations, and appropriate demands represent **active jobs**:

The meaning for employees: The demands of active jobs form a fair balance of required engagement and granted decision latitude and autonomy. Thus, the employees' own capacities are fully available to satisfy the needs for self-efficacy and further development of competence. The allowed self-control permits a high proportion of self-determined and therefore anabolic regenerative activities.

The meaning for employers: Active jobs are optimal, since they are characterized by the *highest possible productivity*, the *highest possible performance*, and the *highest possible motivation for active learning*.

In an increasingly knowledge-based society, the individually and collectively usable knowledge and wealth of experience to which a company has access might turn out as a goldmine. This, however, depends on the readiness and willingness of employees whether they like to share a personal possession, namely their knowledge and experience.

In the working world of today intrinsically motivated willingness is associated with personal risks. 'Generation Y' has learned this lesson within a few years and it will be accordingly easy for that generation to learn the "correct" handling of sharing knowledge and experience from the role-model of top management.

CONCLUSION

My research offers a "holographic view" out of six specialists' perspectives, integrating internal and external conditions, as well as the phenomenon of an organizational burnout in addition to the individual burnout. That view challenges contradictions and inconsistencies related to burnout that are obviously arising from different mindsets. To exemplify the problem:

According to an article about the motivation of German board members, an urge for reputation, prestige, recognition, attention, importance, and appreciation through others is discernible as a new trend and that is even surpassing the urge for money (on the way to "self-actualization" as indicated by an illustration)[80].

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[79] Wikipedia: "Paradigm". http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradigm.
[80] Confusing self-actualization with showmanship.
    http://www.springerprofessional.de/der-trieb-nach-bedeutung/4614780.html.

Mindsets of that kind might explain why 75 empirical studies in more than 120,000 companies and over 100 publications could not change the belief that top-management bonus payments have a more significant impact than 0.64 percent on the performance of enterprises[81].

Psychology:

Burnout problems do not arise due to the initially present intrinsic motivation but due to the inhibition of that motivation. Extrinsic motivation cannot compensate a crowding-out of intrinsic motivation but even enhances that effect and might be better avoided than encouraged for personal *and* for economical reasons.

Sociology:

A progressive value orientation in direction to self-actualization[82] is evident owing to the monitoring by the World Values Survey. A process that occurs unconsciously and that is shared worldwide is, without any doubt, indicating a pattern in the development of humans. Due to the "privatization of burnout problems" the process is now turned into one of conscious choice and that, in turn, will augment it.

Cybernetics:

The viability of systems depends on maintaining the guiding principle to which the system owes its existence and that forms its complexity. Building a unity is mandatory in order to bring strengths into play that are focused to create *external* benefits as the one and only durable purpose of any system worthwhile to reward. Effects to the contrary are demonstrated by an organizational burnout.

Systems analysis:

'Shifting the burden' of responsibility to burnout affected persons had consequences as predictable as those of other systems archetypes: An entire generation has been made acutely aware of the responsibility to maintain their own employability since commitment is associated with personal risks in surroundings that are incompatible with intrinsically motivated behavior due to the systems-law of compensating feedback.

Economics:

Members of outstandingly successful companies share characteristics that lack in comparable companies. The derived management principles are precisely in accord with the most effective leverage points in systems! An intuitive (and not counter-intuitive) access to systems is possible through highly intrinsically motivated CEOs. The outstanding successful performance is due to the efficacy of a purposely established feedback loop.

Occupational medicine:

Since well-being, health, and anabolic regeneration are controlled by job designs – as well as productivity, performance, and the motivation for active learning – the same applies to the detriment: Negative consequences to employees as well as heavy losses to employers should give rise to a very particular attendance of job designs.

"Our traditional hierarchical organizations are not designed to provide for people's higher order needs, self-respect and self-actualization. The ferment in management will continue until organizations begin to address these needs, for all employees." *Bill O'Brien* cited in 1990![83]

Up to now these needs have not been addressed. Will we ever start doing it?

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[81] Rost and Osterloh, 2007, page 1.
[82] Of course that kind of 'self' that refers to the same internal source where intrinsic motivation is coming from.
[83] President of Hanover Insurance, cited in Senge, 1990, page 140.

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