

## Chapter 2

# Transformational change management and change communication

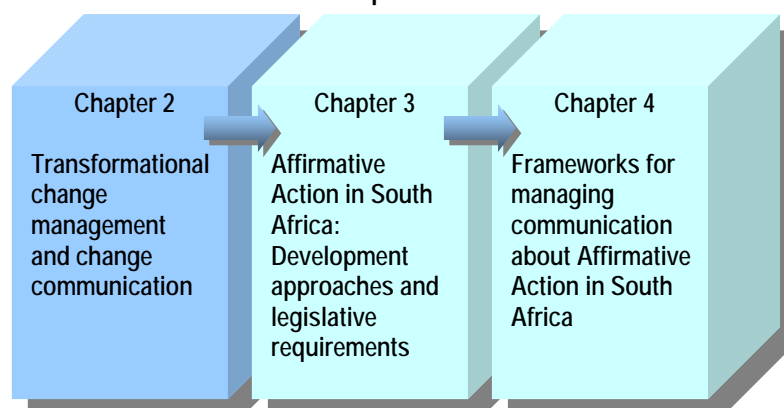
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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the first of three theoretical chapters of the study and focuses on the nature of transformational change as a phenomenon, as well as in the context of the current research question. Transformational change differs from change and transition in terms of the demands on organisational stakeholders and the impact on the core values of an organisation. Postmodern perspectives (specifically chaos theory and complexity science) on organisational transformation and transformational leadership form the most prominent component of this chapter. Key dimensions from these emerging approaches are explored in order to form a conceptual framework to be considered by transformational leaders when dealing with the implementation of the EEA. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:174) confirm the appropriateness of this approach with the statement that transformation is a " ... thinking discipline and not a process that depends on a cookbook approach". Finally the centrality of communication during transformation is highlighted throughout this chapter. Thus possible implications of the chaos perspective vocabulary for the formulation of a corporate transformational and corporate communication strategy are explored. The relationship between this chapter and the other two theoretical chapters is illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 2.1

#### Chapter 2 in relation to other theoretical chapters



## 2.2 DEFINING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

Defining transformational change requires a comparison of core concepts within the realm of change management and consideration of the many dimensions of this phenomenon. The three key concepts are change, transition and transformation. The underlying links between transition and transformation, as well as leadership within organisational transformation are of specific relevance to this study.

### 2.2.1 Change

Eisenbach, Watson and Pillai (1999:80), Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:192) and Puth (2002:110) define **change** as a situational phenomenon that may sometimes be temporary. Change refers to any number of “newness” elements, ranging from an office move to the appointment of a new CEO. Change is external and the end result of an event or intervention. Interim measures pertaining to any organisational aspect could thus also be classified as change.

### 2.2.2 Transition

**Transition**, however, refers to alteration within the psychological realm of individuals who have to adapt to a changed environment, values or related circumstances (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001:39; French & Delahaye, 1996:23; and Grobler in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:192). This process pertains to the “hearts and minds” of employees and precedes the desired new organisational outcome in which their altered inclination toward an idea will be required. Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2002:192) further emphasises the importance of recognising transition as a mental state that allows employees to “let go” of old ways and then embracing a new way.

Since this process occurs on individual level (implicitly also at each individual’s pace), it is arguably the single most unpredictable element in the management of change or transformation. French and Delahaye (cf.1996) argue that individuals experience change (the term is loosely used here) as a series of events, whereas an organisation views it as an event. They also argue that too little attention is given to the role of the individual during change or transformation in the vast body of change management literature.

### 2.2.3 Transformational change

**Transformational change** differs from other change-related concepts in terms of the following dimensions: the philosophical nature of the new vision for the organisation, the required level of involvement (commitment) from internal stakeholders and the prominence of transformation in the business environment (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001:174; De Beer, 2002:ii; Cummings & Worley, 2001:499; Gouillart & Kelly, 1995:6; and Jick & Peiperl, 2003:xvii-xviii).

Transformational goals shape an organisation into something “radically different”, very often from having reflected one end of the continuum to reflecting the opposite side of the same issue: organisational alchemy. (Alchemy is the ancient art and science of changing plain metals into precious metals like gold and was a typical task of wizards.) Jick and Peiperl (2003:218) therefore also refer to transformation as organisational reorientation.

This process is only possible in organisations through transition within its employees and the modification of behaviour based on the internalisation of changes by people (Gouillart & Kelly, 1995:6). Cummings and Worley (2001:498) and Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:192) refer to transformation as requiring paradigmatic modifications at individual and organisational levels: this process involves qualitatively different ways of perceiving, thinking and behaving.

Cummings and Worley (2001:500-501) and Gouillart and Kelly (1995:6) describe organisational transformation as arguably being the sole task of current day business leaders. Transformational change is prevalent which requires that business leaders become transformational leaders. And successful transformational leaders are “communicating leaders” (cf. Puth, 2002).

The view of the aforementioned authors also seems to have special significance within the South African context since organisations face many external forces, which in turn, originate from transformation in the wider socio-political context. These changes affect all spheres of life and are aimed at continuously bringing about a new order based on a set of radically different values than those that characterised the era of Apartheid. Following this logic, Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:193) refers to South Africa as “... a nation in transition”.

The two dimensions of transformational change management that are central to the aforementioned definitions form the focus areas for this chapter, i.e. corporate philosophy and leadership. The last, but overarching focus area is the exploration of new management paradigms to facilitate organisational transformation.

## **2.3 KEY DIMENSIONS OF CORPORATE TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE COMMUNICATION**

According to the literature, five key dimensions differentiate transformation from other change phenomena or have a significant impact on the success of transformational change communication efforts. These five dimensions transcend specific worldviews. They need clarification in order to validate the conceptualisation of the implementation of the EEA as transformational change and possible complicating factors, as described in the next chapter. They are organisational complexity and the complexity of organisational reactions to change, corporate leadership, multiple stakeholders, corporate culture and organisational learning.

### **2.3.1 Organisational complexity and complexity of organisational reactions to change**

Grundy (1998:55-58) and Jick and Peiperl (2003:218) define organisational change as a complex process since each organisation's collective reaction to change (or transformational) efforts is unpredictable. They estimate that the time it takes for change or transformation to be fully accepted is directly dependent on the complexity of the linkages within the organisation.

The complexity of organisations also means that no "magic bullet" hypothesis about communication or implementation formulae can be applied to all divisions or units of organisations: "Each level has to go through its own process of comprehending the change and coming to terms with it" (Jick & Peiperl, 2003:218).

These authors contend that large-scale transformation (reorientation) may take anything from three to seven years in complex organisations. Apart from organisational complexity, two other reasons may explain such a time lapse. Firstly the benefits of the required changes cannot always be observed quickly and secondly change (or transformation) often entails " ... false starts, derailments and the necessity to start over in some places ... " (Jick & Peiperl, 2003:218).

### 2.3.2 Corporate leadership

Carnall (1999:131), Conrad and Poole (2002:121-123) and Cummings and Worley (2001:500-501) agree that transformational change cannot come about without good corporate leadership. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (cf. 2001) and Cummings and Worley (2001:501) contend that this type of change requires more active leadership and an extra-ordinary understanding of communication than all other change contexts. These authors emphasise the role of transformational leadership as having moved away from the conceptualisation of “leader-follower” or a list of inherent personal characteristics such as charisma, as described by Max Weber (quoted in Conrad & Poole, 2002:123). Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:45) further assert that transformational leaders “... must attend to people as much as they attend to content”.

Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:45), as well as Cummings & Worley (2001:501) agree that transformational leaders are mainly responsible for three dimensions of organisational transformation: envisioning, energizing and enabling. The articulation of a new vision and setting an “energising example” are core tasks of the transformational leader. These tasks cannot be fulfilled without communication (cf. Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Carnall, 1999; Conrad & Poole, 2002; Cummings & Worley, 2001; and Puth, 2002). The influence of the chaos theory and complexity science perspective on the conceptualisation of leadership, appear at the end of this chapter.

### 2.3.3 Multiple stakeholders

Cummings and Worley (2001:513) argue that transformational change also affects a multitude of stakeholders. Therefore they suggest that much consideration should be devoted to balancing the interests of various stakeholders. Goodijk (cf. 2003), Post, Preston and Sachs (cf. 2002), Scholes and Clutterback (cf. 1998), Steyn and Puth (cf. 2000) and Wheeler and Sillanpää (cf.1998) also emphasise the importance of the strategic stakeholder approach, while pointing to the implications for the management of communication. The same authors emphasise the importance of viewing employees as strategic assets - a perspective that governs this study.

Specific stakeholders to be considered within the context of implementing the EEA, deserves much attention. The most important fact to consider within this chapter is that the Act itself refers to specific internal stakeholders and the requirement that organisations which implement affirmative action

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measures, are supported by several guideline documents issued by the South African Department of Labour.

#### 2.3.4 Corporate culture

Cummings and Worley (2001:501-502) view corporate culture as the most common terrain of organisational transformation. They also define this phenomenon as the answer to three common questions: "What really matters around here?", "How do we do things around here?" and "What do we do when a problem arises?"

The same authors contend that new corporate strategies often fail since the corporate culture either cannot accommodate the desired change or if corporate culture itself is not addressed to reflect the desired transformed state. These arguments are congruent with various authors' view on the relationship between successful paradigmatic shifts (change and transition) and the transformational state as discussed in section 2.2.

#### 2.3.5 Organisational learning

Cummings and Worley (2001:501) provide a conceptual link between transition of the individual and how organisations get transformed. These authors reason that lasting transformation is the result of continuous learning by all employees regarding the newly desired behaviour through which the new strategy (or strategic direction) can be achieved. Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:32) also refers to organisational learning as the process through which "people transform themselves".

This learning process occurs at all levels of the organisation and does not have a definite end (Cummings & Worley, 2001:501). This is mainly due to the fact that continuous external changes occur while the organisation might still be "learning" about a particular strategy or philosophy internally. Cummings and Worley (2001:501) and Teare (1997:323) are also convinced that organisational learning is a key capacity since it will help organisations to cope with the continuous nature of change.

Appreciating the different dimensions of transformation for the sake of applying them to the context of implementing the EEA, requires consideration of the different schools of thought or worldviews on the

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matter. As was indicated in the previous chapter, literature about changes, transformation and transformational communication support either the mechanistic or organic worldview.

## 2.4 ORGANIC THINKING ABOUT TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE AND COMMUNICATION

As was indicated in the previous chapter and sections, literature differentiates between the mechanistic (also referred to as deterministic) and organic worldviews as the sources of origin for the myriad of theories, models, concepts and opinions about the nature of transformational change. In an attempt to describe the place of emerging organic perspectives on transformational change (including chaos theory and complexity science), an overview of key characteristics from both worldviews is provided.

Although comparisons between the mechanistic and organic worldviews are well-documented in previous research and scholarly publications, a synopsis of these characteristics plays a central role in explaining the study's emphasis on the potential for understanding and addressing transformational change and transformational change communication. This comparison highlights contrasting views on the three key transformational change components within the context of the current research question: the role of the individual, the role of communication and the re-definition of transformational leadership.

The mechanistic worldview originated from the scientific management era when workers and organisations were equated with machines (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:26; Olson and Eoyang, 2001:3). Mechanistic thinking reflects the Newtonian beliefs about physics: the world is stable, predictable, unaffected by observation and driven by clearly defined causes and effects. To understand organisations, the different parts had to be studied in isolation.

A radically different perspective emerged in the form of the organic worldview. The organic worldview relies more on systems thinking in which organisations are viewed as living organisms. Grunig (1992:43-44) characterises the organic worldview according to ten dimensions. These dimensions are presented in relation to central concepts from the chaos perspective, which are highlighted.

- **Dialogue:** Communication establishes understanding among people and systems.
- **Systems thinking:**
  - Every system consists of sub-systems and forms part of a bigger, supra-system.
  - All the parts of the system are interdependent and interrelated.

- The organisation is an open system.
- **Holism:** The whole is bigger than the sum of its parts.
- **Perpetual turbulence in the external environment:** The organisation strives toward dynamic equilibrium.
- **Self-directed leadership:** All people are seen as responsible for controlling their own behaviour.
- **Control:** Management is decentralised and co-ordinated rather than authoritarian.
- **Creativity:** Innovative ideas and flexibility are encouraged.
- **Communication:** Conflict is solved through negotiation, communication and compromise, instead of coercion, manipulation or arguments.

#### 2.4.1 Motivating factors for favouring organic thinking

The mechanistic worldview is not only criticised as being a relic of management science history, but for the flawed assumptions about organisations, the necessity for recognising relationships between the organisation and its internal and external environment, as well as assumptions about any form of change, including transformation (cf. Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Deming in Jick & Peiperl, 2003; French & Delahaye, 1996; Godard & Lenhardt, 1999; Kallio *et al.*, 2002; Murphy, 1996; Olson & Eoyang, 2001; Stickland, 1998; Ströh, 1998; Wheatley, 1994 & 1999).

These authors ascribe the high failure rate of organisational change interventions to these old-fashioned assumptions. Stickland (1998:2-3) also argues that the majority of transformational or change failures stem from the nine reasons for which chaos and complexity thinking may provide alternatives: lack of imagination regarding appropriate solutions; too much repetition of change initiatives; fear; insensitivity to the emotional cycles of transition; lack of ownership; lack of understanding about the influence of change on culture; lack of leadership; lack of organisational learning; and mismatches between communication and subsequent change efforts.

Secondly, Wheatley (1994:41) claims that scientific fields unrelated to management, revealed insights about organisations that could be useful within the arena of change and transformation management. The same author draws upon quantum physics, specifically thermodynamics, for her critique of mechanistic management thinking. This author primarily contends that mechanistic thinking relies on maps that necessitate knowledge of all the possible variables and manipulation of change outcomes.

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She views this type of thinking as unrealistic since the world is essentially ever changing, unpredictable and the boundaries between systems are faint. Therefore she proposes a radically different interpretation of the forces at work in organisations, namely the act of organisation, the nature of information and leadership. According to her such a new appreciation is only possible when we "... take a step back and begin to see ourselves in a new way" (Wheatley, 1994:12).

Wheatley (1994:9) further argues that the majority of change failures stem from the fact that organisations try to follow recipe-like implementation strategies or models that were developed for different circumstances than those in which they are later applied. Her criticism stems from the observation that "... quantum physics explains clearly that there is no objective reality out there waiting to reveal its secrets. Thus everything is always new and different and unique to each of us".

Related to her questioning of change management models and theories, Wheatley (1999:138-139) points out that organisations should also no longer assume that the size and scope of change efforts will guarantee success. According to the same author organisational leaders make a critical mistake to think about these physical dimensions only. This usually occurs by matching the size and speed of any change effort with the organisation's size in the hope that this will counteract any natural organisational reaction such as resistance. In this light, French and Delahaye (1996:22-28) and Puth (2002:124-130) also recognise that fact that the reactions of humans, who are ultimately at the centre of organisations, cannot be brushed aside or used to label individuals/groups either as champions or saboteurs. Wheatley (1999:138-139) pleads for an understanding of these aspects as a natural phenomenon and not an indication of change failure.

Finally, Wheatley (1999:139) proposes that the metaphors used to describe organisations, ought to focus on the "living dynamism" of networks which continuously seek meaningful information, rather than viewing organisational elements as "... billiard balls that bang into one another in order to effect change ... " (or transformation). Such an understanding is only possible when the underlying assumptions of the organic worldview are fully integrated into organisational change (by implication also transformation) efforts (cf. Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Fitzgerald & Van Eijnatten, 2002; Lissack & Roos, 1999; Murphy, 1996; Ströh & Jaatinen, 2001; Ströh, 1998; and Olson & Eoyang, 2001).

The aforementioned authors also describe the emergent perspectives from **chaos** and **complexity** as potentially yielding a much more realistic understanding of organisational change and transformation.

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These emergent perspectives cannot be neatly packaged as a singular theory or model as is required by Western thought (Wheatley, 1999:139), but rather relies on core concepts which serve as a conceptual framework for re-defining the key components involved in organisational change and transformation. But before this new framework (vocabulary) is presented, the plausibility of these new perspectives needs to be critically assessed.

#### 2.4.2 Considerations regarding the usefulness of chaos and complexity perspectives

Literature about chaos and complexity rarely seem to address the issue of how these theories/perspectives/principles are related. For the purpose of this study, the differences between chaos and complexity are not a focal point. The issue is whether the labels of "chaos" and "complexity" can or should be used interchangeably, as well as the manner in which these perspectives can be applied to the current research question.

Lissack and Roos (1999:10) define complexity as a collection of scientific disciplines, all of which refer to finding patterns among collections of behaviours or phenomena. Complexity is thus described as a broader category than chaos. But Murphy (1996:96) argues that chaos theory " ... attempts to understand why systems seem to not function in a linear, predictable ... way ... ". When viewed from afar, structures and patterns emerge. These two perspectives are thus closely related and sometimes used interchangeably.

However, Fitzgerald and Van Eijnatten (2002:402-411) contend that the interchangeable use of the concepts chaos and complexity often lead to confusion. According to these authors, many scholars sidestep this issue with vague descriptions that leave the impression that "chaos and complexity form a mantra". However, they are convinced that chaos theory is firstly an independent theory and secondly used as a lens for organisational analysis/management. These authors contend that compared to chaos theory, complexity " ... has never emerged from its original status as a metapraxis comparable to chaos ... ". This view governs this study.

Furthermore, Stickland (1998:7) is of the opinion that practice benefits from such theories since "... theory is light footed. It can adjust itself to changing circumstances, think out fresh combinations and possibly peer into the future ... ". However, Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:22) warns that failure in practice is often the result of business people's poor understanding of the abstract terminology of a particular

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theory or perspective and their practical potential. This author further questions the value of theories against the background of their ever-shortening lifecycle. Previously, theories or perspectives were meaningful for about a decade. But, according to the same author, theories or perspectives now seem to lose their relevance quickly, with only a few lasting longer than one year.

This study subscribes to the notion of perspectives not being valid *ad infinitum*, therefore only proposing that organisational leaders responsible for the implementation of the EEA, take cognisance of all new perspectives, and interpret these within their unique organisational contexts. This application of ideas from the chaos perspective is also congruent with the meta-theoretical understanding of postmodernism that all concepts are open to interpretation. As such, the concepts from chaos thinking are not posed as the normative/only ideal. The latter was elected as the worldview from which to investigate the research question. However, further debate about the scientific evidence for these perspectives is beyond the scope of this study.

The emphasis of the chaos and complexity perspectives on information, communication, the individual's place and leadership within organisational change, confirm their relevance in addressing the research question and four related sub-questions (as defined in Chapter 1). The possible application of these perspectives in relation to the research question follows the description of key concepts (the new vocabulary for transformational change).

## 2.5 A NEW VOCABULARY FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE AND COMMUNICATION

According to Fitzgerald and Van Eijnatten (2002:406), Ragsdell (2000:104 & 113-117) and Stickland (1998:19-26) practitioners would be able to tap into the richness of chaos thinking if they "... are presented with a rich reservoir of metaphorical terminology". Therefore several concepts and metaphors that are central to the chaos perspective are described.

It is important to note that these phenomena/characteristics occur (new interpretations should be applied) simultaneously, across several dimensions of organisations and may seem paradoxical at times (cf. Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003; Murphy, 1996; Ströh, 1998; and Wheatley, 1994). The common element in all the concepts of the chaos vocabulary is communication.

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### 2.5.1 Organisational metaphors

In recognition of the new way of looking at organisations from an organic worldview, Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:117-118), Hock (cf.1999), Lissack and Roos (cf. 1999) and Olson and Eoyang (2001:7-8) respectively prefer to use the concepts “chaordic systems” and “complex adaptive systems”. Both these descriptive terms touch on the essence of thinking about organisations in a postmodernist manner: both terms recognise the fact that non-linearity and turbulence in the external environment of organisations are the only constants of organisational life.

Sull (2002:91-99) confirms the need for re-evaluating old metaphors by citing a number of cases in which the loss of flexibility in the system became detrimental. According to him, the “new winning formula” of strategies, processes, relationships and values that set a business apart from the rest of the marketplace, is at the very heart of “the dynamic of failure”. If strategic frames help to focus managers’ attention on the issues that really matter, they may also become blinders if managers cannot see beyond them. And this, he contends, is sadly the rule, not the exception.

Processes also have the potential of becoming so routinised that they take on a life of their own once alternative ways of doing things are not even considered. Sull (2002:94) refers to this as the onset of “active inertia”. Relationships with both internal and external stakeholders also have the potential to turn into shackles once changes in the market demand different actions/reactions from an organisation (Sull, 2002:96). He argues that even though relationships and the culture pertaining to these relationships are invaluable, organisations should also realise that it is acceptable to adapt these dimensions if necessary for growth.

The final potential source of stagnation is values. Sull (2002:98-99) argues that values still represent the noble ideals of an organisation, but warns that these could easily become dogmas that no longer make rational sense. Such dogmas become almost insurmountable obstacles. That is, unless outsiders (very often consultants) are allowed to change the organisation around.

The same author concludes with the statement that the four very unique elements that once ensured success, might now cause an organisation’s death: “Success breeds active inertia and active inertia breeds failure” (Sull, 2002:99).

This argument confirms the need for organisational leaders to be fully conscious (Fitzgerald & Van Eijnatten, 2002:403) of radically different perspectives about what lies at the core of their business and whether they view themselves as part of a complex adaptive system. It further highlights Briggs and Peat's (quoted in Ströh, 1998:25) and Gouillart and Kelly's (1995:288) argument about the paradoxical demands on organisations today: coping with adapting to external forces and focusing on the current business.

### 2.5.2 Disequilibrium

Whereas the mechanistic worldview holds that change is disruptive and should be endured for short periods of time until the organisation could return to the "old" or known entity it was before, equilibrium is now viewed as a myth. Change is a constant state or context and so-called equilibrium a moving target (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001:118). This reality influences the organisation's approach to strategic planning to the extent that various outcomes, as a result of one particular shift in the external environment, should be anticipated as opposed to only one.

Adjusting the organisation's interpretation of possible strategic actions (or reactions) is similar to adjusting the far end of a kaleidoscope and seeing unpredictable, changing patterns with every slight adjustment. Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:198) refers to the new notion of strategic thinking as "the management of surprise".

Braggett and Beavis (both quoted in Sullivan, 1999:414) argue that creative or even artistic approaches to planning need to be developed. Scenario and contingency planning are two modes of thinking suggested by Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:198) and Ströh (1998:37) for negotiating these unpredictable circumstances. Thus the very essence of long-term strategic planning is questioned.

### 2.5.3 Non-linearity

Newtonian thinking convinced academics and practitioners that change is a linear process, with a definite beginning and end. This type of thinking also implied that change effects follow in a predictable, linear fashion, much like the domino effect. Outcomes seemed certain. Lewin's three-stage model for change is a prime example of this type of thinking.

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However, according to Murphy (1996:97), organisations face a multitude of internally and externally driven challenges, all of which translate into potential small-scale changes or transformational changes, simultaneously. Predictability is thus a misnomer in terms of both the effects on stakeholders and organisational processes. Whereas certainty (predictable outcomes) was once regarded as the ultimate goal for change management leaders (and followers), uncertainty is the new reality. This collective effect is also known as indeterminacy (sic.) (Fitzgerald & Van Eijnatten, 2002:403). The only predictable outcome is the fact that any slight change may have various (unpredictable) effects on any constituent part of an organisation. The concepts of bifurcation and butterfly-effect represent the new interpretation of the "effect of change" phenomenon.

#### 2.5.4 Bifurcation and butterfly effect

According to Murphy (1996:97) changes in chaotic systems can lead to sudden changes in a system's direction, character or structure. This phenomenon is labelled as bifurcation. The concept bifurcation means "place of forking or branching" (Briggs and Peat quoted in Ströh, 1998:24). Sullivan (1999:414) argues that the direction of bifurcation paths is unpredictable as the result of the autonomy of response of each system. The non-linearity of changes (influences) inside and outside organisations, may be predictable, but the outcomes (direction or impact on an organisation) cannot (Murphy, 1996:97). This author maintains that an outcome (effect) may change over time – from " ... miniscule changes to [something] which bears little resemblance to the beginning".

Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:40) further describes chaotic changes as occurring either as branching (bifurcations), chain reactions or accelerated movements. This author compares these occurrences with watching the blades of an electric fan at full speed: the only visible effect is the blur of all the blades.

Ströh (1998:24) interprets bifurcations as the instances when individuals for instance contribute in any "small way" and help steer an organisation in an unforeseen direction. This description suggests that when a butterfly flaps its wings in any major city in the world (an insignificant occurrence), this may lead to a weather occurrence on the opposite side of the globe (the unanticipated outcome). Cause and effect is thus non-linear. Hence the reference to the butterfly effect.

The necessity for organisations to actively facilitate inputs (of any magnitude) is apparent. This view on inputs also suggests that planned transformational strategies are flawed to the extent that unknown

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dimensions often get ignored or are ultimately interpreted as “mistakes”. Resistance was also traditionally regarded as a “mistake”. The “old” notions of resistance would also apply to the implementation of affirmative action measures within EE strategies.

Against this background, organisations may want to adapt their assumptions about the psychological dimensions (reactions) to transformational efforts, including the pace at which the ideal (desired) effect would cascade downward/upward, or even the strength of a particular outcome. Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:40) suggests that any manager that feels overwhelmed by these observations and the realisation of the omnipresence of change, should take the advice of searching for the “latent and lurking orderliness” within this mesh of change. The concepts of strange attractors and fractals could possibly provide insight.

### 2.5.5 Strange attractors and fractals

An obvious question would be: “What serve as forces that determine the occurrence and direction of bifurcations?” Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:41-42), Murphy (1996:97) and Ströh (1998:25) describe strange attractors as those phenomena that form the deep structure of any chaotic system and which also sets the boundaries for “containing” the erratic bifurcations. Briggs and Peat (quoted in Ströh, 1998:25) again stress the fact that organisations are simultaneously “ ... pulled apart and iterated toward change, transformation and disintegration ... ” and recognising the existence of “magnetic powers” that dictate these moves. Such magnetic powers are labelled as strange attractors.

A fractal, according to Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:40), is any pattern that yields “greater complexity” when enlarged. Fractals arguably illustrate the essence of the chaos perspective best: in terms of form they seem chaotic since they do not correspond to the known geometric shapes, but their structure proves the existence of inherent patterns or order.

The second question to be asked, which is related to the first question, is whether organisations could exert any control over or create strange attractors. A third question is whether or not strange attractors can be strategically activated by an organisation. Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:41-42), Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:200-201), Irvin (quoted in Fitzgerald & Van Eijnatten, 2002:403), Murphy (1996:97) and Ströh (1998:25) suggest that organisational ethics, culture, values and communication are strange attractors and obvious areas which organisations could utilise pro-actively. An

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organisational vision, as an example, would also provide the impetus required for bifurcations to start evolving. The strategic potential of using rumours or the grapevine also becomes apparent against this background.

Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:200-201) and Wheatley (1994:135) both highlight the centrality of information and communication as strange attractors. Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:201) emphasises the very nature of communication as being a strange attractor since communication is the only means to “create meaning”. Wheatley (1994:116-117 & 135) makes two observations about information and meaning. Non-linear thinking in an organisation has the potential to free up ideas that will potentially result in information being released into the chaotic system. Information is not a linear phenomenon in chaotic systems. Following the logic of the argument that individuals will determine the conditions for their personal transformation (of whatever work-related nature), she concurs that the process of “making meaning” from information, occurs individually.

### 2.5.6 Irreversibility

The concepts of bifurcation and irreversibility are closely related. As open systems, organisations evolve forward and once a direction had been chosen, only fragments of the past are retained. According to Murphy (1996:96) the effect of any bifurcation cannot be reversed. When organisations decide in favour of a particular strategic option, the other options become virtually “... cut off from the future” (Sullivan, 1999:412). Sullivan (1999:412) contends that this quality in the change process helps to reduce the amount of complexity members of organisations must endure. Their options are “limited” to those in the future.

### 2.5.7 Scale and holism

Bifurcations are not isolated instances, but are often repeated, which leads to patterns. The interpretation of these patterns depends on the scale an observer uses for this observation. According to Murphy (1996:99) Newtonian logic proposes that generalisations can be made about a single part of the whole.

But the chaos perspective proposes a new sense of holism (the whole is bigger than the sum total of the parts). Bifurcation patterns evolve over time and indicate that an inherent order exists and governs the

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bifurcations. Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:200) describes the principle of holism as critical for organisations that look back at occurrences to interpret their meaning.

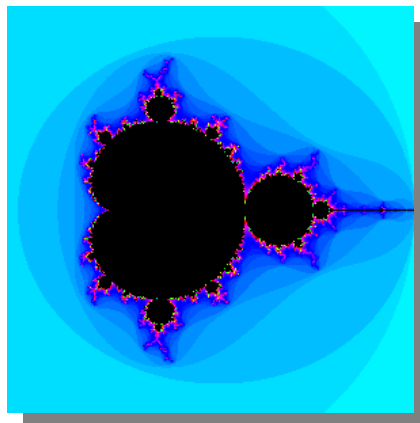
Murphy (1996:98-99) recognises the fact that different scales (miniscule detail or the whole) may be utilised when organisations want to derive meaning from an occurrence. Interpreting only the “smaller or bigger picture” is not inherently wrong, it may just limit the organisation in terms of insight (hindsight).

Wheatley (1999:144) refers to a case that highlights the difference of scale for each individual, as well as the impact of adding all these perspectives to form a whole. The purpose of “... involving the whole in pursuit of itself ...” is to indicate to the organisation where it is, while also helping individuals to see how their behaviour contributes to that whole. In terms of transformation, “... the surprise is then that they take responsibility for changing themselves”.

Figure 2.2 illustrates how a pattern had evolved and can be viewed from afar. The pattern is limited to the boundaries within which the iterations occur. Over time, the “bigger picture” forms a pattern. However, the close-up (myopic) view of any fragment of either the inner or outer dimensions of the pattern would not enable such understanding of the underlying order of the system. The myopic view is illustrated in figure 2.3 (on the next page).

### Figure 2.2

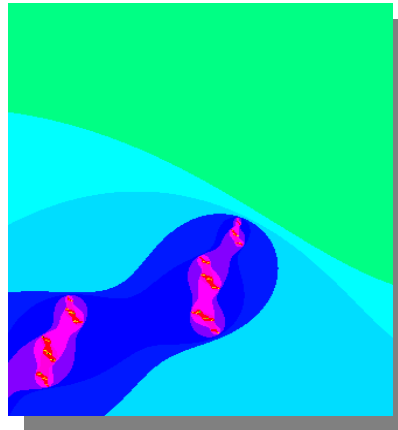
#### The holistic view of a fractal pattern



Source: Joyce (2004)

Figure 2.3

The myopic view of a fractal pattern



Source: Joyce (2004)

When the principle of scale and holism is applied to the context of organisational transformation as a result of an EE strategy, the lesson to be learnt is that the “bigger picture” or whole needs to be the focus when evaluating whether the transformational efforts are successful.

Specific structures or components of communication strategies cannot represent the complete picture. Since transformational change is an infinite process, the scale for evaluating the transformational process would have to be adapted accordingly. The holistic picture will point to wisdom regarding the symptomatic reasons for false starts and re-starts throughout the organisations as opposed to “quick fixes” of singular elements.

As was indicated in Chapter 1, the argument could be formulated that individuals do not change as a response to a supervisory person’s demand or a need for self-improvement. Transformation stems from a deeper awareness of the context within which they operate and insight about how individuals can contribute to a new outcome (Wheatley, 1999:144). This argument is also congruent with the view that people change or transform, not organisations.

The implication for communication is that all stakeholders (in themselves also dynamic) should be enabled to understand the bigger picture, in similar fashion as outlining a vision. Thus the mental picture could serve as energy through which individual commitment may be elicited from employees, senior decision-makers and/or other stakeholders.

### 2.5.8 Self-organising ability of systems and self-renewal

The most important fact about organisations, when viewed from the chaos perspective, is the defiance of the mechanistic dependence on control, structure and procedures. The act of organisation needs to be understood differently in order to fully appreciate possible implications for the management of transformation and communication. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:119-120), Tichy and Devanna (cf. 1986) and Peat (quoted in Sullivan, 1999:414) describe the process of self-organising from the perspective of evolution in systems. The last author views the evolution in systems as an " ... intelligent and co-operative adjustment to an ever-changing context".

Against this background, the self-organising process could be seen as a " ... gentle, creative and exploratory process". The inherent logic of this process is orderly, since creative jumps do not occur before the new phase has been fed back into the existing system. According to the same author, the self-organising process does not end with the creation of the new phase (iteration). Rather, each new phase adds to the holistic understanding of the whole system, as illustrated in figure 2.2 ( on page 41) .

According to Littlejohn (1999:315) the act of communication is central to the organisation (in this instance the self-organising ability) of a system. Employees create an organisation by means of their everyday interactions and activities by means of a double interact process: the first act is a statement or behaviour, an interact encompasses both an act and a response, while a double interact requires at least two acts and responses.

This view could also be linked to Wheatley's (1999) view of information within a chaotic system. "Behaviour cycles are sets of interlocked behaviours that enable the group to come to an understanding about which meanings should be included and which rejected" (Littlejohn, 1999:317). In practical terms, any part of the organisation, the whole or a group of employees, self-organise and decide on the meaning and value of information.

### 2.5.9 Self-transcendence

Self-transcendence and the self-organising ability of systems are closely related (Sullivan, 1999:413; Wheatley, 1994:135). According to these authors, self-transcendence is an " ... evolutionary act of a social consciousness ... " to reach out beyond its known mental and physical boundaries: a process that

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precedes the self-organising process when a system becomes something else. Jantsch (quoted in Sullivan, 1999:413) claims that systems need to break free from self-reference, the act through which organisations need to evaluate themselves, as well as others in the process of evolving into the new organisation.

Wheatley (1999:146) describes the act of self-transcendence as having a direct impact on organisational self-knowledge in three critical areas, namely identity, information and relationships. She pleads for this process in order for organisations to explore ways of becoming (in the sense of acting as self-organising systems) something different. The dimensions listed here, as well as her perspective, are similar to the comments of Sull (cf. 2002) in the description about the need for new organisational metaphors.

### 2.5.10 Interdependence and fragmentation

The single most important contribution of the chaos perspective is arguably the renewed awareness that organisational life depends on the connectivity between all participants/stakeholders. Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:199) describes the self-renewal ability of a chaotic system as significant for understanding that different units of an organisation operate interdependently – a central concept of open systems thinking. In contrast to the Newtonian compartmentalised organisation, in which units were viewed as replaceable or unrelated and with distinct borders, borders are now faint and blurred (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001:118; Flower quoted in Grobler, 2003:199).

Ströh (1998:26-27) describes the disappearance of such borders as paradoxical: organisations may fear that their very autonomy could be at stake when external stakeholders, or any group that could potentially influence the organisation in its quest to achieve its goals, can cause a chaotic ripple effect. This reality may lead to a greater sense of identity and a focus on the core competencies of the organisation. If these two conditions prevail, the organisation would be better equipped to adjust rapidly to the demands from the external environment (Ströh, 1998:27). Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:199) also emphasises the potential role of a corporate communication manager in this borderless environment.

Dialogue, even in an advocacy context, would be central to the new role definition of the corporate communication manager or strategist. Advocacy would arguably stem from differing values and interests

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between the organisation and publics/stakeholders or activists. Therefore, this individual (or department) would have to be able to stand both outside and inside the organisation and influence its value-creation process (cf. Leonard & Ströh, 2000). Thus again highlighting the boundary-spanning role of the corporate communication function.

### 2.5.11 Feedback

The final concept from the new vocabulary is feedback. Du Plooy-Cilliers (2003:39-40) acknowledges that the Newtonian assumption about feedback was almost revered. Only "acceptable" feedback was welcomed for the sake of the stability of the system. On the other hand, chaotic systems invite all types and forms of feedback since a living system only grows as a result of its interactions with the environment (Wheatley, 1994:87).

Ashmos and Duchon (2000:581) suggest that organisations should rather react from a paradigm of complexity absorption and could subsequently establish *ad hoc* structures to direct the information to relevant organisational constituents. Instead of searching for more mechanisms (literally "mechanistic tools") to regain control, the dialogic process between an organisation and its environment should be the focus area: this is its life-giving source.

Feedback is central to transformational change communication and the two-way symmetrical worldview as conceptualised by Grunig (1992:45). Based on the previous two theoretical observations, the potential boundary-spanning role (Spicer, 1997:56 & 215) of the Corporate Communication division is apparent. Dialogue needs to be managed between the organisation and its different stakeholders that are no longer merely dependent on transactional interactions with the organisation. The emphasis on the strategic relationship interactions between external stakeholders and the organisation highlights the change in the influence stakeholders have on organisations (Post *et al.*, 2002:91-94). Against this background, the argument about the disappearance between organisation and traditional stakeholders, gains practical value.

The level of abstraction of the previous concepts in this section would arguably not be useful without further application in relation to the research question. Therefore the focus of the rest of this chapter is on the possible influence of the chaos perspective on the actual implementation of transformational change and a corporate communication strategy.

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## 2.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHAOS PERSPECTIVE ON THREE FOCUS AREAS

Various authors, all of whom have been quoted in the previous sections, have provided interpretations and possible applications for the new vocabulary from the chaos perspective. Considering the wide spectrum of applications, an attempt to replicate these intellectual efforts would be inappropriate within the context of this study.

The current research question and the definition of transformational change necessitate focussing on four key areas for which new possibilities need to be explored. These focus areas are transformational corporate strategy formulation, the individual in transition, transformational leadership and the centrality of communication.

These focus areas are directly linked to the sub-questions related to and research objectives of this study, as formulated in Chapter 1. Firstly, the EEA needs to be implemented at all organisations that are classified as designated employers. This can occur either according to a corporate transformational strategy or haphazardly.

Secondly, the individuals are central to this transformational effort since the theory about individual, group and organisational transformation is supported. Thirdly, transformational leaders are viewed as pivotal to this transformational process. Evidence of this comes from the Code of Good Practice for the EEA (Department of Labour, 1999b) that describes the obligations of senior corporate and other leaders. Finally, communication is viewed as the vehicle (linchpin) for this transformational process. Evidence for the validity of this perspective is also found in the previously mentioned code, and will be described in greater detail in Chapter 4.

### 2.6.1 Transformational strategy formulation and implementation

Three key dimensions appear to be central to the formulation and implementation of a corporate transformation strategy (cf. Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Cummings & Worley, 2001; Gouillart & Kelly, 1995; Jick & Peiperl, 2003; and Pearce & Robinson, 1997) and are relevant to the current research question, namely strategic visioning and planning; commitment from top management; modelling of the new culture with the intention of modifying the organisation on a transformational scale.

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As was mentioned previously, the usefulness of the chaos perspective lies in the new interpretation of the dimensions that have traditionally been associated with organisational transformation.

### 2.6.1.1 Strategic vision and planning

This is a description of the direction and purpose of the organisation, irrespective of worldview. Cummings and Worley (2001:509) and Pearce and Robinson (1997:29-30) plead for clarity of new visions since they will guide the transformational effort. Furthermore, visions are predominantly the intellectual and strategic responsibility of executive leaders. However, Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:45) reason that the core purpose of being an organisation remains the same during times of chaos. The core purpose, vision and values are inseparable. According to them, this trinity is the DNA all members of the organisation can hold onto (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001:45). And, like Gouillart and Kelly (cf. 1995), the same authors argue that employees also need to stay emotionally connected to the organisation during turbulent phases.

If transformation, as is the case with the implementation of the EEA, stems primarily from a change in corporate culture, this statement should be a " ... yardstick for defining the firm's existing culture ... " and for measuring whether the current values will accommodate possible organisational changes (Cummings & Worley, 2001:509). The ideal is to align internal values and structures with the new strategic vision (direction) of the organisation.

Gouillart and Kelly (1995:7) propose that four sub-divisions of the organisation need to be involved in the alignment of the vision: spirit, mind, body and environment, and body within. Following the tradition of organic thinking, these authors contend that organisations are analogous to the human body and that transformation occurs within the spiritual realm. Therefore they differentiate between four stages of transformation, which in turn, are interlinked with the four dimensions of the organisation. The relationship between these dimensions and stages is illustrated in figure 2.4 (on the next page).

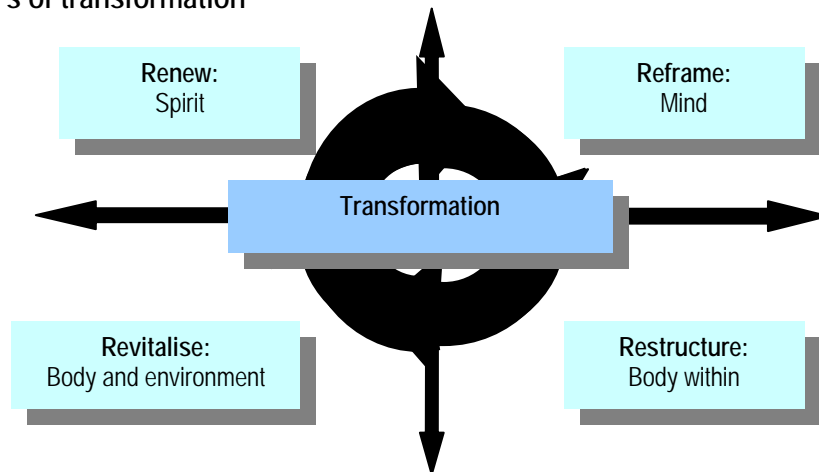
The logic of these authors is similar to the notion of structure having to follow strategy, instead of the mechanistic view that structural changes will implicitly be the only solution to a problem. Chaos theory emphasises the disappearance of organisational borders and hierarchical structures, thus supporting the notion of informal leadership based on suitable expertise and possibly also matrix organisations. Matrix organisations, as described by Pearce and Robinson (1997:344-345) are flexible enough to

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absorb rapid changes, or at the very least to distribute skills according to the changing needs of projects. Brodbeck (2002:26) further suggests that hybrid organisational structures and self-directed teams may serve the same purpose.

Figure 2.4

The four R's of transformation



Source: Gouillart and Kelly (1995:6)

The views expressed in the previous paragraphs echo the views of Wheatley (1994:53-55) who questions organisations' (people's) dependence on "clear" visions. The same author argues that employees seldom deal effectively with ambiguity and have thus come to rely on one specific picture or mental model of the future. She furthermore argues that leaders have and are still often ensuring that structures be put in place to control the outcomes as to fit the future state that was defined by a linear (Newtonian) vision, irrespective of the dynamic nature of the organisation's needs. Finally, this author pleads for the development of individual capacity to deal with ambiguity and a move away from the reliance on structure. Based on Wheatley's argument, it seems appropriate to emphasise that visions should not become blinders too, as described by Sull (cf. 2002) in section 2.5.1.

The paradoxical nature of the chaos perspective is evident with the emerging questions about whether alignment is not inherently based on control by the corporate leadership and whether strategic planning is at all possible within the ever-changing corporate environment. Such an interpretation leads to related questions, including the following four:



- Would the many possibilities that originate from a multitude of bifurcations really lead to a specific direction for the organisation?
- What if different units of an organisation refuse to reach consensus about the collective strategic direction?
- Is “coherence”, as suggested by Lissack and Roos (1999), really an alternative to strictly controlled compliance?

Scenario planning, as was mentioned previously, is viewed as one of the strategies to overcome possible confusion or paralysis. The misnomer that chaotic systems are unrelated to order, deserves to be emphasised again. Du Plooy-Cilliers (cf. 2003), Ströh (1998:19-20) and Wheatley (cf. 1994) stress the fact that the chaos perspective is at first misleading.

Novices may at first only take cognisance of the disorderly state(s) of a system, but they should come to terms with the concepts of scale, holism and fractals (and their interpretations) as described and discussed in the previous section. The underlying, natural order of the universe should be observed and then applied to the appreciation of organisational dynamics. Such insight, according to the chaos perspective, constitutes wisdom.

The aforementioned questions emphasise the need for communication as a vehicle to facilitate agreement. The centrality of communication seems to transcend all barriers between worldviews.

### 2.6.1.2 Commitment from top management

Mechanical and hierarchical thinking relies on the notion that transformation cannot occur without visible commitment from top management. “Constant pressure for the overall change process needs to come from a committed corporate leadership” (Cummings & Worley, 2001:509; Pearce & Robinson, 1997:340-346). Conversely, the chaos perspective suggests that informal leadership could facilitate transformation by means of the occurrence of bifurcations and ultimately a butterfly effect(s).

A question that arises from these opposing views is, whether in following Wheatley's (1999:139-140) suggestion about utilising the natural forces in organisations, the notion of self-directed leadership is not perhaps premature without employees being empowered to fulfil these responsibilities. In similar fashion to the previous sub-section, three questions are also posed about leadership:

- Are employees all capable of being self-directed leaders? (Are all individuals able and willing to take risks when traditional control mechanisms do not exist?)
- Will employees ever grow beyond the entrenched belief that assigned leadership positions must provide strategic leadership?
- Is it realistic to expect informal leaders to have or exert enough symbolic power to really influence the core direction of the organisation, instead of merely changing superficial aspects?

Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:115-129) suggest that the nature of transformational leadership has evolved to the extent that chaos concepts are fully integrated. They also view such leaders as central to modelling the desired new values, but not as the only important organisational role players. Therefore these authors suggest that transformational leadership encompasses both “knowing, doing and being”.

The question of whether practices from the mechanic and organic worldviews should necessarily be viewed as mutually exclusive, also emerges. Firstly, the practice of appointing key role players in leadership positions, as described by Cummings and Worley (2001:500-501), continues fairly regularly. This does not mean that structure is the focus of such an intervention, but could rather indicate that the organisation focuses on the desired results. Secondly, the absorption of this transformational process into different dimensions of the organisation, may be facilitated by means of each organisation’s philosophy toward and capabilities regarding transformation.

### 2.6.1.3 Modelling of the new culture

The transformation of corporate culture is widely viewed as both quite a complicated and a continuous process, which also requires visible leadership commitment. Cummings and Worley (2001:510) contend that cultural change requires an almost missionary zeal to exhibit the desired new values and behaviours. The same critical questions about the nature of corporate leadership also apply to this dimension.

The only possible new questions about the applicability of the chaos theory the modelling of the new corporate culture are whether the traditional approaches to corporate culture management would change or whether corporate culture would facilitate the chaos perspective. Cummings and Worley’s (2001:505-509) description of three approaches to this phenomenon is relevant in this sub-section.

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The behavioural approach emphasises the surface level and pertains to the patterns of behaviour that produce business results. The competing values approach recognises the existence of sets of values that pertain to the internal focus and integration vs. external focus and differentiation; and/or flexibility/discretion vs. stability and control (Cummings & Worley, 2001:506). Finally, the deep assumptions approach focuses on the tacit and shared assumptions that guide behaviour and " ... very often have a powerful impact on organisational effectiveness" (Cummings & Worley, 2001:507).

From this description it seems that the organisational dimensions described in the competing values approach, need to be addressed in order to accommodate the potential insights from the chaos theory perspective. Once again, the feasibility of such changes can be questioned. Sull's (cf. 2002) opinion about values and cultures becoming dogmas, may prove that such changes don't occur organically, but may require expert assistance from external sources, thus leaving it open to interpretation as either intrinsically mechanical or organic.

### 2.6.2 Individual transition

Exploring the nature of individual transition within corporate transformation stems from both the nature of the current research question and four related theoretical views. Firstly, the industrial psychology perspective about the levels of change necessary for the implementation of organisational diversity measures such the EEA, postulates that the individual is at the core of this process (De Beer, cf. 2002). Secondly, transformation is described as a continuous process (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001:171-173). Thirdly, the importance of the individual is emphasised within the chaos perspective on change and transformation, as described by Wheatley (cf.1994 & 1999). Finally, the conceptual link between transition and transformation is emphasised by various authors (as mentioned at the start of this chapter).

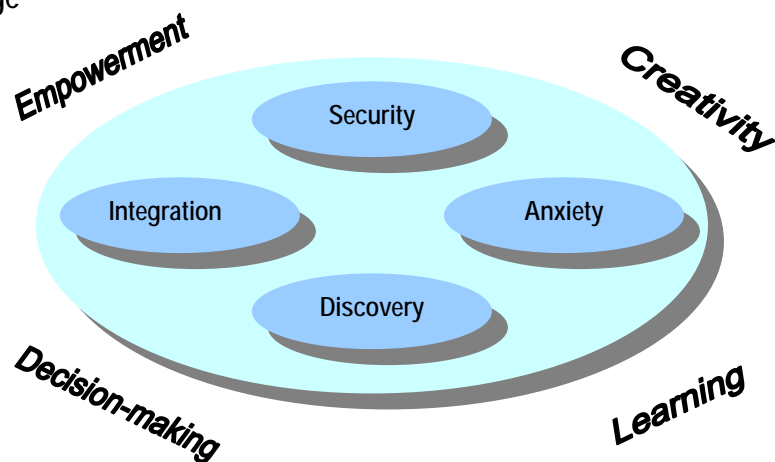
A repetition of these ideas would arguably not add any insight in terms of the research question. Thus French and Delahaye's (cf. 1996) view about the evolution of theories of individual transitions is explored. These authors argue that both the gap closure and gap connection approaches to understanding and facilitating individual transition are flawed when assumptions about the true nature of change (or transformation) are flawed. Both of these approaches relied on the mechanical assumptions that transition is linear, finite, resistance is guaranteed and an externally focussed process (French &

Delahaye, 1996:23-24). Gap closure refers to the notion that a gap exists between an old and a new situation and rests on the objective of transplanting the individual into the new situation.

Gap connection further focuses on the degree of movement required between the old and the new situation in order for the individual to accept the change and rests on the fulfilment of diverse individual needs (French & Delahaye, 1996:23). These authors embrace some of the chaos perspective principles and thus propose that individual transition is cyclical, progressive, contemporaneous and selective. Individual change is not as predictable as was initially believed. These authors formulated a model to explain the intricacies of individual transition that consists of four phases and four propellants, as illustrated in the figure 2.5. The phases are security, anxiety, discovery and integration.

Figure 2.5

Transitional change



Source: French and Delahaye (1996:6)

□ Security

Security is the first phase and refers to the pre-change state. French and Delahaye (1996:24) maintain that the illusion of control over changeable situations lead to this sense of security. Their reference to the illusion of control reflects the chaos perspective notion of continuous change. These authors also view the building blocks of security as the very stumbling blocks of transitions: familiar habits and views of the world need to be challenged in order to regain some flexibility through which continuous scanning and the disappearance of boundaries will emerge (French & Delahaye, 1996:24).

The same authors also warn against too much security since this may lead to boredom and dissatisfaction. Individuals can break free from security once they react to their true interaction with the internal organisational environment. Such creativity encompasses self-awareness, knowledge, intuition and environmental scanning (French & Delahaye, 1996:24).

#### □ Anxiety

Anxiety, as defined by French and Delahaye (1996:24-25), means more than the fact that the individual loses familiar patterns of processing. It also recognises the fact that some individuals may stay in the “cusp of change” much longer than others. During this phase all the emotions, such as fear, disillusion, grief and disorientation, as described by Grobler (in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003:193–194) and Puth (2002:124), surface most prominently. Gap closure interventions could assist the individual in moving beyond this anxiety. French and Delahaye (1996:24) emphasise the importance of communication as a central element of gap closure interventions.

Learning is the modification behaviour required to move beyond anxiety. In this context individual learning will enable someone to develop an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, thus having an impact on career and life goals (French & Delahaye, 1996:25).

#### □ Discovery

Discovery is the third phase of this model and is also multi-faceted. Apart from almost obviously referring to the discovery of new information, skills and behaviours, it is empowering and propelled by high levels of energy (French & Delahaye, 1996:25). Time lapse associated with this phase is linear in the sense that it allows freedom for letting go of old behaviours and embracing new ones. Individual development, by means of gap connection models, helps to ease the individual into new realities.

#### □ Integration

At this point the paradoxical reality of constant change becomes apparent: the more learning takes place, the wider the spectrum of choices an individual would have (French & Delahaye, 1996:25). And this knowledge enables the individual to make choices in accordance with his/her newly discovered objectives. Choices about change thus pull individuals from discovery to integration (French &

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Delahaye, 1996:25). Integration is the stage when all learning is synthesised and individuals seek opportunities for the new behaviour to be evaluated. French and Delahaye (1996:26) reason that self-evaluation and reflection is central to this stage since they allow the individual to “belong” in the new environment.

Finally, these stages come to a momentary end with the completion of the cycle of implementation, evaluation and commitment (French & Delahaye, 1996:26). The same authors conclude that this model is supposed to broaden the understanding of individual transition in order to manage it. In the postmodern tradition, it may provide “multiple pathways” for individual transition, which may ultimately result in organisational transformation.

### **2.6.3 Transformational leadership**

Finding insight regarding the ideal nature of leadership within the context of the current research question, necessitates the exploration of two key aspects, i.e. emergent dimensions of transformational leadership and the formality of leadership status. Once again the possibilities from the chaos perspective are explored in an attempt to gain insight about the potential of transformational leaders within the context of the implementation of the EEA.

As was indicated throughout this chapter, transformational change requires mindset shifts. Individuals are at the centre of the transitional and transformational processes for the simple reason that they need to make those mindset shifts in order for an organisation to reflect the transformed vision, values or emerging state, irrespective of the worldview about transformation management. Various authors who embrace the chaos perspective contend that the nature of leadership has changed, but agree that it is still a key impetus to effect transformation (cf. Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001; Cummings & Worley, 2001; Jick & Peiperl, 2003; Johnson, 1995; Keene, 2000; Moran & Brightman, 2000; Teare, 1997; and Olson & Eoyang, 2001).

Instead of merely listing a number of responsibilities or qualities leaders ought to adhere to in chaotic systems, various authors attempt to integrate these dimensions into broad frameworks. Similarly to Wheatley’s description, Flower (quoted in Ströh, 1998:38) argues that managers (leaders) would have to spend energy in creating the environment in which individuals will pursuit the relevant information (during turbulent times) and develop themselves.

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Keene (cf. 2000) and Moran and Brightman (cf. 2000) emphasise the need for a sense of accountability for the transformational effort, empowerment of others, visionary ability and facilitating the “... release of those within the organisation”. Similarly to Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:183), Godard and Lenhardt (1999:69-72) and Keene (2000:17) agree that transformational leaders within the arena of organisational complexity should keep three guidelines in mind:

- ❑ Leadership does not imply the responsibility of conformity, but is an internal process, an attitude.
- ❑ The emotional ownership and pride make sensitivity regarding the empowerment of others to co-create the organisational reality, an imperative.
- ❑ The ability to solve problems by viewing the world differently lies at the heart of complexity-leadership.

Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:183) further suggest that transformational leadership is primarily based on “conscious process thinking”. Thus transformational leadership encompasses both the dimensions of knowledge, tasks/responsibilities and consciously modelling the desired new mindset(s). This framework refers to seven core competencies of transformational change leaders. These authors’ framework is favoured within the context of this study and is therefore described in relation to broader theoretical views. The seven competencies of this framework are:

- ❑ **Competence 1: Integrating people, process and content needs**

Key dimensions of a transformational corporate strategy, as well as the emotional stake of employees in effecting transformation, are emphasised (Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001:183). These authors evidently also understand the need for flexibility (adaptability) according to emerging organisational conditions and needs.

The organisational vision that gives direction to the transformational effort, is viewed as the pivotal element of re-aligning the organisation. Leaders can be either formally assigned (designated) or situational, depending on the needs of the organisation or transformational change effort.

□ **Competence 2: Conscious process thinking to design the change**

The responsibility of leaders is made explicit: they cannot shy away from their own commitment to the transformational process or their intellectual contribution to the latter. As was indicated previously, transformational change should be viewed as a continuous process, or more accurately an infinite process. This quality inherently requires unwavering commitment from leaders, either formal or informal.

The previous classification of transformational leadership as a “thinking science” further validates the reference to “conscious process thinking” by Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2001:183). Thinking implies that changing needs and organisational conditions need to be considered throughout. Leaders will be able to react swiftly and appropriately in adjusting dimensions of the transformational corporate strategy.

□ **Competence 3: Modelling and promoting the emerging mindset**

The tension between traditional and new conceptualisations of leadership is again evident in this requirement. It could be argued that leaders don't need to carry the responsibility of illustrating their commitment to a particular transformational effort first, but when the symbolic value of their actions is considered, Anderson and Ackerman Anderson's (2001:183) view seems valid.

Given the rather pessimistic view on self-directed leadership, it would further seem that the “being” of the transformational corporate vision or values, would still resort under the sphere of responsibility of leaders. The dimension of “being” further represents the only concrete manner of effecting transformation: if leaders were not committed to the day-by-day experience of the new mindsets, mindsets may arguably remain abstract phenomena. When mindsets are not operationalised, the effects thereof may not be noticeable and be ultimately worthless.

□ **Competence 4: Aligning and integrating all the interdependent systems and processes**

The emphasis on the interdependent nature of all organisational components is pivotal to understanding the place of leadership positions in relation to the rest of the organisation. This view also reflects holistic thinking as opposed to mechanistic thinking. Alignment is necessary in all components of the organisation, as explained by Gouillart and Kelly (cf. 1995) for transformation to take effect. Leaders

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could utilise their strategic or managerial view of the organisation to build linkages (Steyn & Puth, 2000: 65) throughout the organisation in order to ensure alignment and possibly also organisational learning. Organisational learning is the state that could ensure lasting transformational change. Transformational leaders are also obliged to communicate, as well as facilitated communication about the details of a transformational strategy.

□ **Competence 5: Catalysing people's commitment and highest contribution to the change**

This requirement draws upon the conceptualisation of transformation occurring at individual intellectual and emotional levels. This is congruent with De Beer's (cf. 2002) theory about individuals being at the core of transformation. The commitment of employees is also the energy that will move the organisation forward.

The notion of "highest contribution" may be criticised as based on the assumption that employees will automatically be committed to investing emotionally and intellectually in the transformational process. Individuals are viewed as having the ultimate decision-making ability about this matter. And when compared to guidelines for leadership, it seems appropriate to question whether commitment can really be ensured from the organisation's side.

However, it seems that leaders can attempt to create the climate in which individuals could communicate openly about the transformational efforts or to exhibit their contributions to the process in their unique ways. The communication competence of transformational leaders is central to helping employees contribute to (feel part of) the transformational process (cf. Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001).

□ **Competence 6: Creating and sustaining conditions for success for the change**

The value of this required competency seems to lie at the level of connecting the abstract ideas from the chaos perspective with concrete organisational dynamics. Wheatley (1994:116) pleads for leaders to be "equilibrium busters" by means of opening systems to free flow of information and subsequent dialogue (also conflict) about a change or transformational process. Leaders are thus directly responsible for ensuring that their immediate or strategic sphere of influence remain receptive to all kinds of information, thereby being able to react appropriately to changing communication needs of employees.

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This competence, as is the case with all the previous ones, would further imply that leaders are intrinsically responsible for communication: without their involvement in managing or facilitating communication any transformational effort would arguably lose speed and/or focus.

□ **Competence 7: Building organisational capacity for ongoing change and self-renewal**

Since transformational change is infinite, the organisation's ability to keep up with changing demands is critical. As was indicated previously, organisational learning should be central to self-renewal. Employees and communication are equally vital to this process, but leaders would have helped develop employees' ability to cope with and contribute to the organisation's well-being as an entity that continuously learns (cf. Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2001).

Against this background, it seems that leadership is much more based on a heightened sense of awareness of responsibility for accommodating complexity in all its guises. This stands in contrast to the notion of enabling massive forces that should wipe resistance, conflict and diversity from the table. The emphasis of the aforementioned seven competencies on the dialogic process of making meaning, may prove useful within the context of managing transformation related to the implementation of the EEA.

As was mentioned previously, the interdependence of leadership and other individuals are central in chaotic systems. The irony seems to be that employees have been indoctrinated into the hierarchical tradition to the extent individuals cannot become self-directed leaders (cf. Johnson, 1995; Keene, 2000; and Moran & Brightman, 2000). Johnson (cf. 1995) argues that employees refrain from being self-directed leaders because of their conditioning and organisational conditions that minimise their power and influence. This author suggests that some organisations do not yet realise the power of having empowered employees. She also argues that such a relationship is more like a parent-child relationship than the desired adult-adult relationship.

Wheatley (1994:64) cautions that the very notion of strictly hierarchical or formal leadership could limit organisations in terms of the possibilities that are observed and subsequently reacted on. Informal leadership and self-directed leadership (individual or in teams) are proposed as two alternatives to mechanistic thinking (cf. Johnson, 1995; Keene, 2000; and Wheatley, 1994).

Finally, Wheatley (1994:43) offers an interpretation regarding the real responsibilities of leaders within complex or chaotic systems. In short, leaders facilitate – through communication - the release of energy from individuals that will trigger creative processes, which in turn, will contribute to change or transformation (Wheatley, 1994:43) – a view that governs this study:

“As leaders, we play a crucial role in selecting the melody, setting the tempo, establishing the key, inviting the players. But that is all we can do. The music comes from something we cannot direct, from a unified whole created among the players – a relational holism that transcends separateness. In the end, when it works, we sit back, amazed and grateful.”

## 2.7 CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of transformational change had to be described prior to a description of the context of this study, *viz a viz*, the implementation of affirmative action as part of EE. Transformational change is different from other change-related concepts: it is an infinite process that affects the hearts and minds (spiritual essence) of individuals in organisations. Communication is central to the process of effecting transformation. Organic perspectives on the dynamics of change and transformation provide a new vocabulary that needs to be interpreted when applied to corporate transformation strategy formulation and implementation. The chaos perspective also extends to the conceptualisation of transformational leadership.