

### 3 CHAPTER 3

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#### A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE:

#### AN EMERGING THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT (?)

##### A perspective from literature

*Is the construct: A **meaningful workplace** an emerging construct in the literature on Management Theory, Organization Theory, Behavioural Theory and related texts or narratives? The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether the construct A **meaningful workplace** has surfaced in recent literature, thereby indicating that the construct seems to be an emerging construct thus providing a basic framework against which the purpose and objectives of the study can be benchmarked.*

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION AND INTENT

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to determine the extent to which the construct **meaningful workplace** has rooted in the current discussion on Organizational Theory, Management Theory or Organizational Behaviour. The rationale behind this is to determine whether it would be possible to discover and then possibly adopt a basic framework for the construct against which the intended purpose of the study i.e. to conceptually expand the theoretical notion of a **meaningful workplace**, if such a notion exists, or to conceptually develop such a model if the notion thereof has not yet rooted in literature. To achieve the intent of this chapter it was necessary to search for the topic **meaningful workplace** in literature. The most obvious search takes as a point of departure two recent publications which include the construct **meaningful workplace** in their title. The first of these is a publication by Tom Terez (22 Steps to a meaningful workplace) 2000, and a publication by Neal Chalofsky (“Meaningful workplaces: Reframing How and Where we Work”) 2010.

Using these publications as a broad framework, a further search of journal articles, pertaining or related to the construct under discussion is conducted and the discoveries documented. The basic question is whether such a construct as a **meaningful workplace** is under discussion or emerging in current literature. The primary search will be conducted via the Academic Information Service of the University of Pretoria (South Africa) and will predominantly focus on the following search strings: **Meaningful workplace, Meaning at work, Meaningful Work; The Meaning of Work**. This does however not imply that themes related to the primary search strings will be ignored.

### 3.2 PROCESS-FLOW AND ENVISAGED CONCEPTUAL MODEL TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCT: A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE

The following graphic indicates the process flow that will be followed in this chapter.

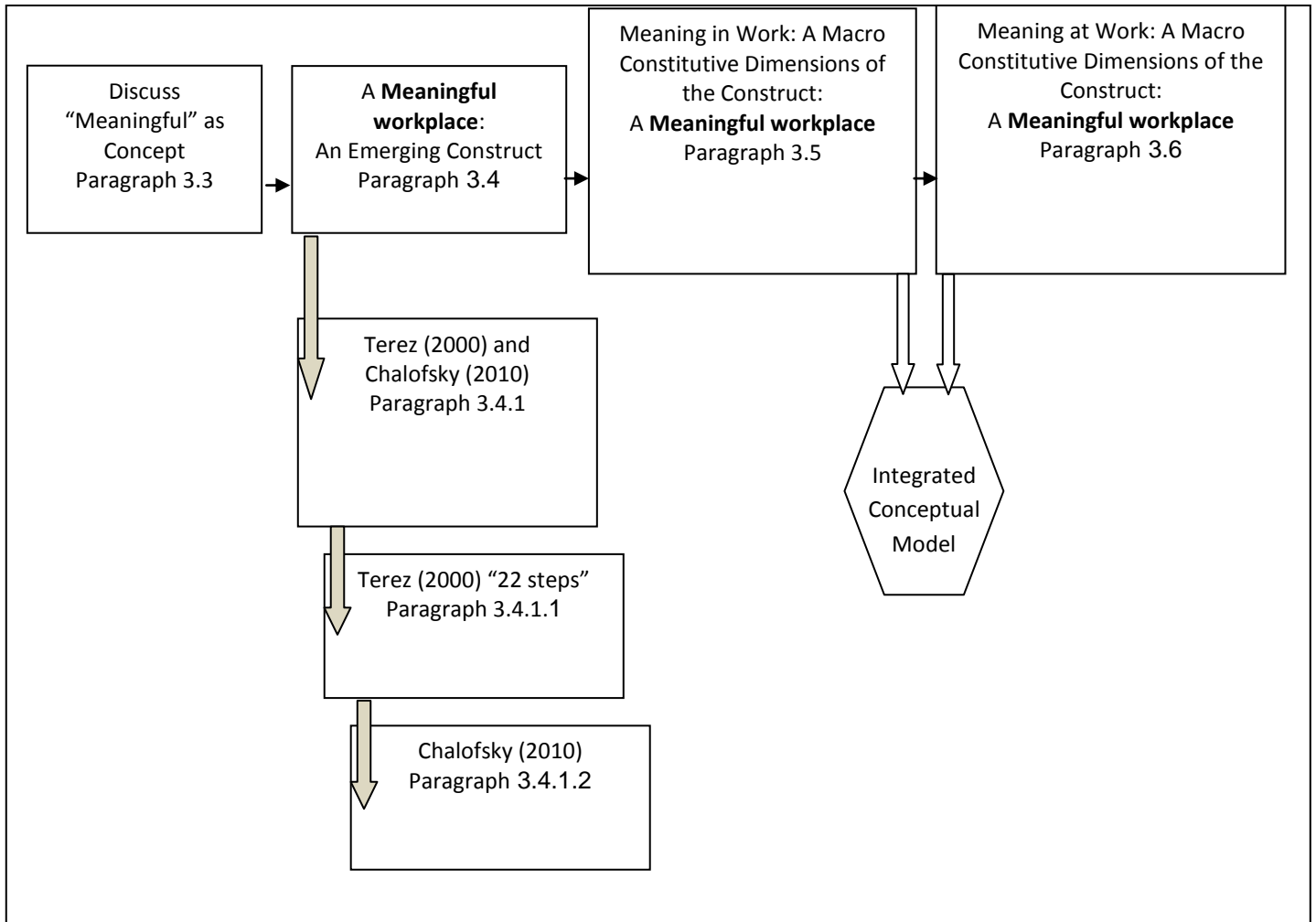


Figure 3.1 Process flow of Chapter 3

### 3.3 MEANINGFUL AS CONCEPT

It is a necessity to turn to the concept **meaning** as the qualifier in the construct **meaningful workplace**. The discussion will however not be detailed and exhaustive. It is positioned here as a value laden adjective that qualifies the concept: Workplace.

According to the Roffey Park Report (2003, p. 3) there is

...a business case for taking questions of meaning seriously, because it indicates a clear link between employees experiencing meaning and an organizations ability to manage change successfully, the ability to retain key people and greater employee engagement and high performance.

Conversely the findings suggest that employee who experience a lack of meaning in the workplace (whilst performing work) tend be more cynical towards the workplace (=organization) and are more resistant to change, more inclined to exit the organization, are less engaged and tend to work less hard. In all it indicates less satisfaction in the working environment and thus a lesser degree of commitment and involvement.

There are, according to Holbecke and Springnett (2003) various possible explanations for the tendency to search for meaning in the workplace. These include:

- People spend more time at work than away from the work place or at other dimensions of their life
- People feel less connected because of a breakdown in trust relationships in the workplace. People tend to revert to the dog-eat-dog temperament to get ahead as quickly as possible
- There seems to be a increasing level of cynicism because of so-called “hollow ethics”, the gravy train mentality relating to pay issues and other malpractices, the lack of accountability and the increasing number of “organizational scandals” relating to mismanagement and misappropriation of funds and a perceived lack of integrity as demonstrated by top leadership - resulting in the severance of the trust relationship between employees and leadership in organizations
- Society seems to be undergoing a moral transformation based on the search for spirituality and the experience of community
- Organizations often lack a coherent social responsibility strategy and plan – society perceives the purpose of organisations to be to the benefit of society instead of bleeding society to achieve gluttonous profits

The search for meaning in life as a universal human endeavour overflows or continues into and in the workplace and as a topic it has attracted the attention of seminal thinkers such as Freud, Marx, Weber, Menninger, Frankl and others.

The twentieth century was characterized by the growth and expansion of work organizations, a tendency that will accelerate within the framework of globalisation. The proliferation will add to the effect of political, social and economic power. However, “despite the impressive structural apparatus that these phenomena represent, they appear to have been responsible for the demise of human purpose through the experience of work” (Bowles 1989, p. 405).

The concept *meaningful* not only contextualises the current construct in terms of experienced value and as a phenomenon that evokes positive feelings, but also indicates an underlying value issue. As an adjective the concept meaningful refers to something of significance or something that adds value or purpose to life in general and specifically, in this study, to work life.

The concept meaning has been ignored in empirical work because of the difficulty in conceptualising and defining it as concept. However, it does occupy a central place in the existential movement. This is especially true of existentialist psychiatry. Zika and Chamberlain (1992) indicate that the concept has however been imbedded in general psychology, but unfortunately ignored in Management literature and specifically Organizational Behaviour because of the difficulty in conceptualization and definition. Meaning or the experience of meaning is according to Frankl (2004) relative yet objective. It is relative in the sense that it differs from person to person and even from context to context for the same person or extremely: from hour to hour for the same person in a constant context. The expression “objective” here must not be confused with a modernistic view in terms of which realities are *out there* and they exist to be discovered as realities in a real world. Objective in the sense that Frankl uses the term rather refers to the trans-subjective nature of meaning which is discovered on a conscious level through the conscious experience of an event, a relationship; an experience, that adds value to our lives. This viewpoint implies a transcending beyond consciousness towards something that is more than the self in the act of discovery of meaning whilst interacting with

his/her environment. In this sense meaningfulness is construed by the individual based on the collective of all the dimensions that collude to influence the choices that people make.

Van Jaarsveld (2004:15) refers to Battista and Almond (1980), who indicate that theories on meaning agree on four essential issues in cases where individuals indicate that some event or interaction or their life is meaningful. These are:

“(a) they are positively committed to some concept of purpose, (b) this concept provides them with some framework or goal from which to view their lives, (c) they perceive their lives as related to or fulfilling this concept, and (d) they experience this fulfilment as a feeling of significance”.

The adjective *meaningful* thus refers to a process; an act of discovery and construction, and defined experience. Strung together the *process* and individual steps that constitute such a process, if such can be discerned, refer to the way in which an individual can transcend his own self and the everyday experiences to *discover* and construe a value laden event and *experience* this event as something that provides satisfaction and adds value to his/her life. Transcendence in this context refers to what Bateman and Porath (2003, p. 125) describe as surpassing limiting factors in an organisational setting, and is evidenced when “...people effect extraordinary change by *exceeding* demands, *eliminating or overcoming* constraints and *creating or seizing* opportunities”. This implies a mental and cognitive structuring process as well as an emotive or affective experience in the pursuit of meaning and the experience thereof in the work environment.

Homo sapiens is the creature who makes sense. She literally produces sense through her experience, contemplation, and imagination and she cannot live in the world without it. The importance of this sense-making in human life is reflected in a crowded conceptual field: ideas, meaning, information, wisdom... (Hannerz, 1992, p. 3).

The linking of meaning to the workplace is described by Holbecke and Springnett (2003, p. 4) in the following manner:

In the workplace meaning appears to link to a sense of community, to having a higher sense of purpose, especially a customer-focussed purpose. It also links to consistency of behaviour and congruence between personal and organizational values. People want to work for ethical organizations and to see their leaders 'walking the talk' on values. People want to feel involved and treated like adults, and to balance work with other aspects of their lives. They want to have the opportunity to discuss spirituality in the workplace with colleagues. They want challenging jobs through which they can experience personal growth.

It furthermore also emerged that when employees experience meaning that they are "in flow" or alternatively, congruent with their work, the workplace, colleagues and themselves, thus performing at their optimum level. The concept of "flow" was "originally developed by Mihaly Csizsentmihalyi" (Ashton, Calitz, and Solms 2009:59). It can be likened to behaviour that demonstrates a single-minded immersion in and the optimal harnessing of emotions in the service of performing a particular task. A person's emotions when "in flow" are contained and channelled as well positive, energized, and aligned with the task at hand. To be caught in the boredom of inactivity or the agitation of anxiety (because of the inactivity) bars a person from flow.

May, Gilson and Harter (2004) built on the work of Kahn (1990), (whose work will be discussed in a different context in a further paragraph) and expanded on the structure of engagement that Kahn developed. In a study conducted by May et al, it was shown that three psychological conditions (psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability) related positively to engagement of employees. (The workplace as engagement space is discussed later in this chapter.) For the purpose of this study the psychological condition of meaningfulness is highlighted. Which factors induce psychological meaningfulness at work? According to May et al three factors induce psychological meaningfulness,

i.e. job enrichment, work role fit, and co-worker relations. Psychological meaningfulness is also the strongest mediator for engagement. The research results seem to corroborate the Job Characteristics Model of Hackman & Oldham (1980) ,which presents a framework to determine how job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) impact on three psychological states i.e. experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of the actual results. This does not exhaust the theory on meaning in any way, but it does provide sufficient information to provide a brief summary or description of the concept meaningful.

### 3.4 MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE: AN EMERGING CONSTRUCT

The intent is to discover a framework based on Terez (2000) and Chalofsky (2010) within which the intended literature search results can be imbedded and then to expand such a framework both in terms of the depth and extent of the construct: **Meaningful workplace**. Utilising the work of Chalofsky and Terez as a framework will enable the discovery of both the implicit and explicit references in literature. In the first instance the measure or extent of overlap between the publications of Terez and Chalofsky will be determined. This endeavour will provide sufficient information to create a framework for the further analysis of the construct in literature.



### 3.4.1 Terez (2000) and Chalofsky (2010)

#### 3.4.1.1 22 Keys to a Meaningful workplace (Terez, 2000)

Terez embarked on a "Meaning At Work Project" to discover what workers meant by seeking meaning in their places of work. For this study, he conducted extensive interviews through 15 focus groups made up of people from all walks of life whose collective work experience spanned more than 3,000 years. What he encountered was "an almost desperate eagerness to talk about meaning in the workplace." (Terez, 1999 in Page, 2000) In addition Terez discovered that meaningful work had 22 different meanings attached to different degrees of importance by different people, translated as the 22 keys to creating a **meaningful workplace**. The purpose of the research project was to discover the ultimate purpose of workplace management: to create the **meaningful workplace**, and defines a **meaningful workplace** as one where the following categories of "meaning keys" prevail:

- Mission keys; related to the creation of a future along the lines of purpose, direction, relevance and validation;
- People keys; related to valuing who does the future within a framework of respect, equality, informality, flexibility, and ownership;
- *Development keys*; related to the growth the business and of the people who make it happen. The development keys are constituted by *challenge, invention, support, and personal development*;
- *Community keys*; affirm the importance of togetherness and collective effort, within a framework of dialogue, relationship building, service, acknowledgement, and oneness;
- *Me keys*; are the keys that value the individual and enable the individual to be "himself". This category is made up of *self-identity, fit, balance and worth*.

The immediate context within which an individual functions is his immediate work environment where work roles and concomitant responsibilities are performed. The

individual is employed for the sake of his/her competence and the potential contribution towards the “bottom line” of the organization. The team within which he/she functions represents the supporting infrastructure that enables the individual to perform work. Terez treats the subject according to an organized structure in terms of which (a) certain key clusters are identified, followed by (b) .the keys that “unlock” the cluster thus creating a **meaningful workplace**. The following Table (3.1) provides an overview of the structure as presented by Tom Terez (2000). In the left hand column the 22 keys are listed in the order of “the most cited”, while the right hand column lists the relevant Key cluster concept with which the keys are associated. The first five are the ones most often cited followed by a second tier of five and then another 12 in alphabetic order of important meaning keys that were less often cited. (Incidentally the work of Terez coincides with the qualities of “servant leadership” as discussed and indicated by Page, 2000).

**Table 3.1: 22 Keys towards A Meaningful workplace**

Meaning Keys	Key Cluster
1) <b>Purpose</b> - The mission of the organization must have a larger purpose--something beyond producing goods or services or even being the best. Employees want to feel instinctively that their work is making a positive difference	“Mission”
2) <b>Ownership</b> - Employees want to view themselves as having a part in shaping how their work is to be done	“People”
3) <b>Fit</b> - Once employees know how they and their work fit into the larger mission of the organization they are more willing to put forth their best efforts	“Me”
4) <b>Oneness</b> - When there is a prevailing sense that "we're all in this together," working relationships become more collaborative	“Community”
5) <b>Relationship building</b> - The workplace should offer ways to build healthy interpersonal relationships that foster loyalty to the institution and its team members in promoting their collective efforts	“Community”
6) <b>Service</b> - Employees enjoy learning from and helping one another. This can be fostered through formal mentoring or training programs or more informal on-the-spot coaching or assisting with a project	“Service”
7) <b>Equality</b> - All people in the organization are considered to be equally important regardless of their position and treated as such	“People”
8) <b>Validation</b> - Employees can see for themselves the impact of their work and be affirmed for it	“Mission”
9) <b>Invention</b> - Risk-taking in the name of innovation is encouraged and failures are the price of learning rather than the reason for dismissal	“Development”
10) <b>Personal development</b> - People are able to reach their full potential through learning	“Development”

Meaning Keys	Key Cluster
and expanded job opportunities	
11) <b>Acknowledgement</b> - Employees are recognized for their efforts and successes through genuine appreciation	“Community”
12) <b>Balance</b> - Employers respect the fact that there's life beyond work when making assignments	“Me”
13) <b>Challenge</b> - The workplace is seen as an opportunity to take on challenges for those who want them	“Development”
14) <b>Dialogue</b> - There is an ongoing, honest, and constructive dialogue involving people at all levels of the organization as well as significant suppliers and customers	“Community”
15) <b>Direction</b> - There is a compelling vision that draws people into a common direction.	“Mission”
16) <b>Flexibility</b> - Good judgement is used in applying rules	“People”
17) <b>Informality</b> - An open-door policy is practised by everyone and protocol is not seen as a stumbling block	“People”
18) <b>Relevance</b> - Red tape does not take people away from engaging in relevant activities.	“Mission”
19) <b>Respect</b> - Employees show respect for one another regardless of their rank or title	“People”
20) <b>Self-identity</b> - Individuality is encouraged and the organization respects the need of people to have their own space in which to work	“Me”
21) <b>Support</b> - Employees are given the resources (information, time, funding, experience, learning opportunities, tools, etc.) they need to succeed in their work	“Development”
22) <b>Worth</b> - Employees are genuinely valued and their interests are taken into account when decisions are made	“Me”

(Source: Terez, 2000)

Table 3.2, although it does provide insight to the modelling of Terez, does not do justice to the content of his reasoning. Content substance in respect of the structure will be discussed when the comparison or interrogation of content is presented between Terez and Chalofsky. To add content at this point in time will eventually result in a repetition.

### 3.4.1.2 Meaningful workplaces (Chalofsky, 2010)

Chalofsky's approach will now be discussed in summarised form.

The interpretation of Chalofsky's work in this study is as follows:

- Chalofsky presents two distinguishable macro perspectives on the construct: **Meaningful workplace**. The first macro dimension is specifically related to the

meaning **of** work and describes meaningful work from the perspective of integrated wholeness. The second macro dimension relates to the experience of meaningfulness **at** work. This specifically articulates the possible interventions in the workplace on a group and organizational level that could facilitate meaningfulness at work.

The following discussion presents an introduction to the concept meaningful work, which will be expanded on in paragraph 3.5 and sub paragraphs. .This viewed as one macro constitutive dimension of the construct: **Meaningful workplace**. Paragraph 3.4.1.3 presents an introduction to the concept meaning **at** work, which is viewed as the second macro constitutive dimension of the **meaningful workplace** construct. This dimension will be expanded on in paragraph 3.6 and sub paragraphs.

### **Meaningful work**

- Chalofsky balances the **meaningful workplace** with the construct meaningful work, thereby indicating that the employee has as much of a responsibility to “reframe” the workplace as has the organization, through a possible variety of interventions, on both structural and dynamic dimensions, to create a **meaningful workplace**. Chalofsky’s book is divided into two sections. The first section addresses and discusses the construct meaningful work while the second section addresses the **meaningful workplaces**.
- The focus is on integrated wholeness of the individual, and is presented by means of the “meaningful work model” (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 20). Chalofsky focuses on the whole individual that enters the workplace to perform work related roles.

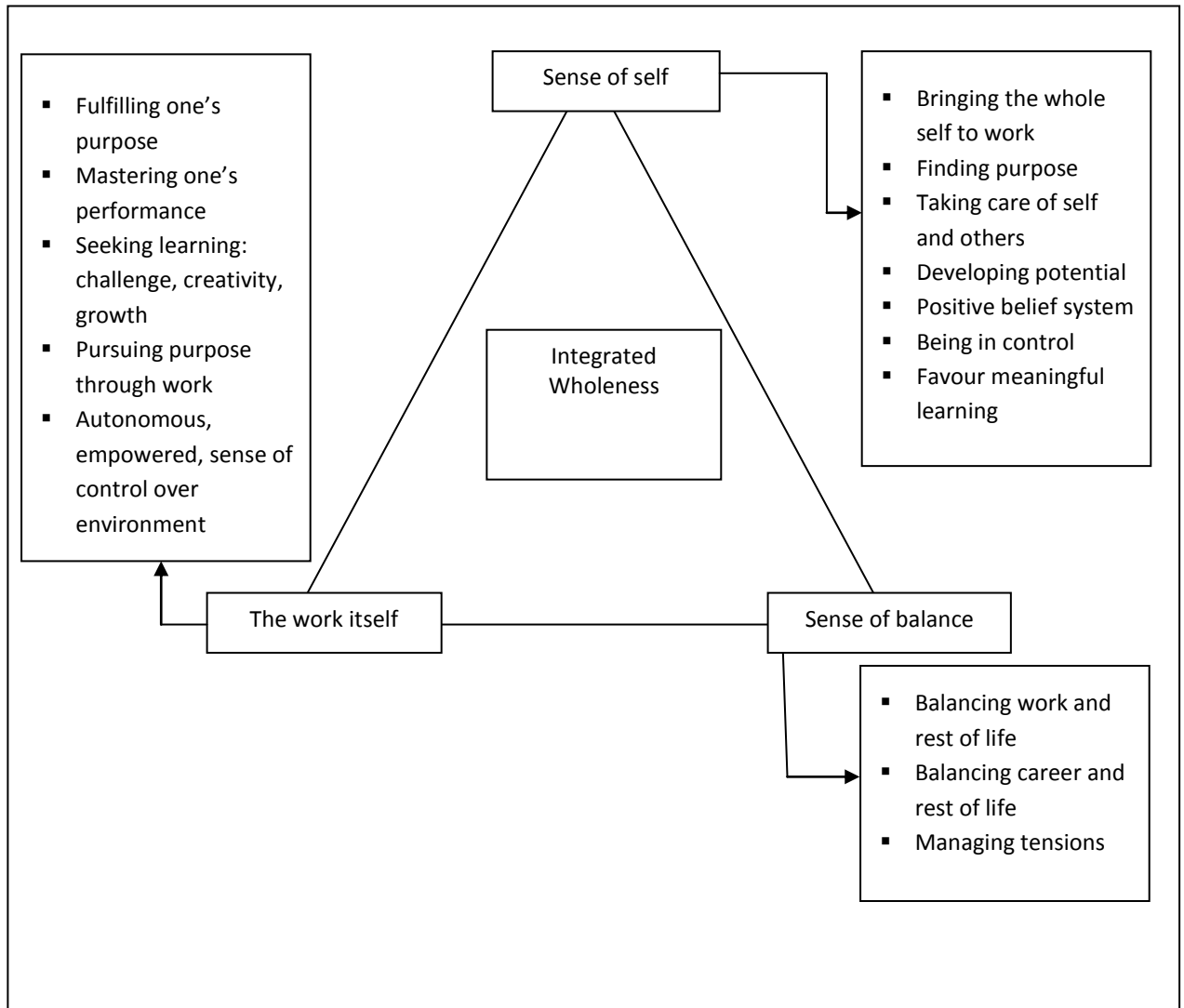


Figure 3.2: A meaningful work model

(Chalofsky 2010, p. 20)

### Meaningful workplace

Chalofsky's findings (201, p. 83) based on his own research provides the following elements that constitute meaning at work or a **meaningful workplace**:

- A values based culture is the one common denominator between organizations that are typified as excellent or the best company to work for. A values based culture implies:-

- A strong alignment between “the organization’s mission and its commitment to the employees, customers, suppliers, and community” (2010, p. 87);
  - The development of employees was one of the values “embedded in the culture, not just an add-on” (2010, p. 87);
  - The commitment to diversity was found to be an integral part of the culture as was the commitment to learning;
  - Values based culture further implies “caring for employees”;
  - Caring about the organization’s mission;
  - “Work, play and community involvement”.
- In follow-up chapters Chalofsky discusses elements that constitute a values based culture and identifies the following dimensions:-
    - Values based leadership;
    - Work-life policies and programs;
    - Social responsibility;
    - Employee engagement and commitment.
  - When discussing the reframing of the workplace, Chalofsky (2010, p. 143) envisages organizational culture as the “primary vehicle for creating an environment of meaningfulness, engagement and commitment”. Workplace community is a principle and practice towards transforming the machine paradigm of organizations, (where meaning is lost) towards a climate and values based culture where people work together towards achieving goals, thus creating meaning at the workplace.

### **3.4.2 Dimensions of overlap between Terez and Chalofsky**

As will be noticed in the following (Table 3.2) Chalofsky’s model is extremely dynamic in the approach based on a humanistic philosophical base. The reasoning is abductive in nature which is indicative of the process of logical inference.

The term abductive refers to the process of arriving at an explanatory hypothesis. The term refers to the process of arriving at an

explanatory hypothesis. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/abductive-reasoning#ixzz1K3TZQr9I>), in the vein of abductive validation. It is the process of validating a given hypothesis through abductive reasoning. This can also be called reasoning through successive approximation. Under this principle, an explanation is valid if it is the best possible explanation of a set of known data. The best possible explanation is often defined in terms of simplicity and elegance (see Occam's razor). Abductive validation is common practice in hypothesis formation in science; moreover, Peirce argues it is a ubiquitous aspect of thought. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/abductive-reasoning#ixzz1K3VnDiyF>).

Essentially, the principle of parsimony which states that if one is provided with a variety of explanations (e.g. a variety of statistical models) one should prefer the simplest. William of Ockham (c. 1285–1349) was an English philosopher who held that a complicated explanation should not be accepted without good reason, and wrote '*Frustra fit per plura, quod fieri potest per pauciora*'. ('It is vain to do with more what can be done with less.') (<http://www.answers.com/topic/occam-s-razor#ixzz1K3Urw22q>. Oxford dictionary).

The process that will be followed here is to interrogate the content to determine the measure of overlap and consent. The 22 “keys” as presented by Terez will be used as the basic framework to which the content as presented by Chalofsky will be matched.

Table 3.2 presents this discussion in the following manner:

- The left hand column contains the keys as presented by Terez, but now referred to as themes, which can also be viewed as constitutive elements towards the establishment or the creation of a **meaningful workplace**.
- The second column contains the contents as abstracted from the model of Terez.

- The third column represents the content for the theme as presented by Chalofsky, or at the very least indicators that refer to the particular theme.

Because of the integrated nature of Chalofsky's treatment of the construct: **Meaningful workplace**, it is not possible to match every individual element of overlap in the Table 3.2. It should therefore be viewed as a high level conceptual comparison. The fact that the right hand column (Chalofsky's rendering of the topic) does not match the left hand column on a topical level does not imply that Chalofsky ignores the particular topic. The difference in treatment of the topic by the selected authors makes it virtually impossible to make a word-for-word match as per the different topics. Chalofsky's treatment covers the different topics but not in the same manner as Terez.

**Table 3.2: The extent of overlap between Terez (2000) and Chalofsky (2010)**

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
Mission-dimension-	<p><b>Purpose.</b> The primary purpose of any organization is to produce goods, or services; to solve problems or address the needs of society (whichever way one chooses to define purpose). In short: the purpose of an organization is defined as its basic function to fulfil a need</p> <p><b>Direction.</b> The direction of an organization is driven by a compelling vision. The goal structure of the organization must establish a framework of day-to-day operations that support the vision in an understandable manner. "Having a vision" represents the flight of imagination into the future state of the organization – a perspective with enough power to draw every employee into the vortex towards the future. This encompasses an imaginative flight on how to achieve the purpose of the organization. Formulating the vision into realistic and tangible terms represents a challenge that is not easily met. It requires the buy-in of</p>	<p><b>Pride.</b> A values based culture cultivates alignment with the mission or purpose of the organization. In the organizations that were interviewed, integrity, pride and empowerment went hand-in-hand as did intrinsic motivation and trust in people that they would do a good job. "Finally, the organizations all describe a culture where everyone works hard and plays hard. Employees find their work to be meaningful, and they believe in the mission of the organization" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 89)</p> <p><b>Direction</b> is implied by the fact that the individual aligns with the [pr]ose and mission of the organization in an endeavour to achieve a state of meaningfulness at work</p>



Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>employees on both levels – on the level of the imaginative as well as on the level of realistic formulation. It is therefore not possible or even realistic attainable to <i>post a vision on the billboard</i> of the company and expect employees to buy in and support it through positive and productive work related behaviour</p> <p><b>Relevance.</b> Employees tend to spend their time on activities that are relevant to the achievement or attainment of purpose. People, it seems stop indulging in activities; even work related activities, when these do not contribute to some form of reward. Based on the mental model of the Human Relations School of Management, it was David McClelland who believed that the need to achieve is a distinct human motive that can be distinguished from other needs. (<a href="http://www.accel-team.com/human_relations/hrels_06_mcclelland.html/">http://www.accel-team.com/human_relations/hrels_06_mcclelland.html/</a>). People do what is relevant to the structure of their own purpose in life and ignore those activities that do not contribute towards “making sense” of their existence. Seen from this perspective “a <b>Meaningful workplace</b>” relates to the fundamental existential questions that people ask and strive towards</p> <p><b>Validation.</b> Validation directly relates to the impact that work has. It is a direct emanation of the question of relevance. Organizations validate their outputs in terms of customer satisfaction and thus create a process for monitoring the value of the work-structure and outputs of a section, the organization and even of the industry as a whole. What does not make sense and that which does not contribute to the overall purpose, does in the final</p>	

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	analysis, not deserve to be done	
People dimension	<p><b>Respect.</b> One of the conditions for meaning and belonging is an environment where people show respect for each other irrespective of hierarchical position or formal rank and title designations. Respect does not imply familiarity but civility and open honesty</p> <p><b>Equality.</b> This construct relates to the principle that all individuals are viewed as equally important. Once again, where this perspective prevails, it does not imply a “toning down” of rank and status, but rather an acknowledgement of rank, title, formal hierarchical position and job designation. Equality does not imply a breaking down of protocol, but actually strengthens it, because are people are equal within the context of their work responsibilities and all responsibilities contribute towards goal achievement. Seen as dynamic structure or activities and processes, work activities support each other, and it is in this sense that all people are equal. If one individual fails in his or her work role then the organization fails. All people are equal, yes but all are not on the same level or in the same protocol level. When formality and fixed procedures become the obstacles to work performance and work related interaction, the basic principle of trust is sacrificed on the altar of formal hierarchy and a demand for formal acknowledgement of rank, title and position</p> <p><b>Informality.</b> A <b>Meaningful workplace</b> does not subscribe to deification of a set of heavily starched traditions that reduce the individual to a formally registered form of address. Informality becomes evident in the way that people “customise” their work</p>	<p>Upon the question: What goes into a values-based culture? (Chalofsky, 2010 p. 93) ,the dimensions are identified:</p> <p><b>Values based leadership</b> (or servant leadership) which is characterized by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening;</li> <li>Empathy;</li> <li>Healing;</li> <li>Awareness;</li> <li>Persuasion;</li> <li>Conceptualization;</li> <li>Foresight;</li> <li>Stewardship;</li> <li>Commitment to the growth of people;</li> <li>Building community.</li> </ul> <p>These characteristics encompass or at the very least imply concepts such as equality, respect, and flexibility.</p>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>place. The family photos and other “artefacts” represent a way in which people present themselves to their colleagues in the immediate working environment. The dialogues that people conduct further strengthen informality, or alternatively, entrench the formal institutions. A first name address format does not imply disrespect, nor does it imply an undermining of the formal position of the addressee. Informality creates an opportunity to muster confidence in addressing work related problems and solutions with superiors</p> <p><b>Flexibility.</b> Flexibility implies and demands good judgement in the application of rules, policies, and work instructions. Flexibility is a condition for innovation and the application of values and principles in lieu of customer service. If policies bind innovation and prohibit the best possible customer service based on innovation – within a principle framework - then the meaning of the construct “customer service” is at jeopardy and the individual will question the meaningfulness of his/her actions</p> <p><b>Ownership.</b> Individuals are the owners of their work and of their work environment. The work-role of person A is not owned by the supervisor or manager, but by the incumbent. If this were not the case, the supervisor would have been appointed for that particular position. If “my” job is high jacked” then it is of no relevance to “me” and therefore it becomes a meaningless expenditure of energy and activity</p>	
Development	<b>Challenge.</b> Getting more done through	Chalofsky treats the development of

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
dimension	<p>innovation represents a challenge whilst getting more done with less creates despair and represents a caricature of the concept development. Development implies change; it implies the unfolding of the creative possibilities in the organization system. Constant change forms the cultivating soil for creativity and innovation in work process structuring so as to enhance the job, the outputs and eventually the added value. (Refer to George &amp; Jones, 2000).</p> <p><b>Invention.</b> Closely associated with the perspective on challenge and creative as a condition for a <b>Meaningful workplace</b>, invention could be viewed as the result of creativity. It is fraught with risk, but without invention and risk taking improvement remains a distant illusion in an organizational environment</p> <p><b>Support.</b> Support in this sense requires that people must have complete access to all the resources they require for successful job and work related performance. Restricting access to information, time, equipment, funding, learning opportunities, etc. restricts the evolvment of a <b>Meaningful workplace</b> and work motivation, commitment and productive behaviour</p> <p><b>Personal development.</b> Learning opportunities is the essential key to production, irrespective of the sense in which the word is used. Any restriction in respect of learning or personal development is a restriction in productivity and increased quality. Such restriction of necessity leads to a restriction in meaning for employees as it deprives them of a sense of achievement. In a <b>Meaningful</b></p>	<p>employees in terms of the following dimensions:</p> <p><b>Learning:</b> <b>Challenge,</b> creativity and continuous growth; <b>Personal Mastery;</b> <b>Control and self-directed learning;</b> <b>Autonomy and empowerment,</b> where autonomy represents the freedom to exercise personal choice, and empowerment the ability to exercise that choice. Although the organization creates an environment that is conducive to empowerment, the individual alone chooses to empower him/herself. eh conditions</p> <p>According to Chalofsky (2010) self directed learning leads to a sense of control, autonomy and empowerment</p>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p><b>workplace</b>, people accept responsibility for their own learning and development, to the extent that it leads to meaning and added value</p>	
Community dimension	<p><b>Dialogue.</b> The so-called “talk-free zone” in organizations where employees do not engage in meaningful work related dialogue, reduces the possibility for work success and work “self-confidence”. Not only is verbal encouragement an important driver towards work related dialogue, but also the structuring of office space and organizational structure should support it. In addition, self managed teams will act as conductor towards real work related dialogue during which problems are analysed in search of the most innovative solutions possible</p> <p><b>Relationship building.</b> Relationship building represents afar cry from the likes of Fayol, Taylor, and others of the scientific management era, who in search of increased productivity searched for better and shortened production processes. To a certain extent, the research (possibly even in modern day research) contains a strain towards depersonalisation of the workplace. There is no longer a concern about time and motion studies, but some people still view workplace relationship as an inefficient distraction from real work (Terez, 2000, p. 169). Relationships result in an intimate knowledge of the work-role of the neighbour in the cubicle next door. It creates the mental structure of the interrelatedness of our different work-roles and the interdependencies as well. The discouragement of relationship building will result in a sterile work environment where individuals work in silos and where integrated process are dismantled towards</p>	<p><b>Creating community</b> in the workplace calls for a profound philosophical shift. “If work is part of the human condition the workplace should mirror a more natural, human way of working” A workplace community will inevitably foster “creativity, innovativeness, divergent thinking excitement, sharing, social responsibility, challenge, learning, and meaning (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 151)</p>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>individualistic goals thus resulting in a loss of quality and an increase in production costs as repetitive practices increase exponentially</p> <p><b>Service.</b> People attach meaning to “helping others” or to providing a service. Service is to a large extent the core product of all organizations irrespective of whether they are defined as service providers or production entities. Service is the underlying bond that links people together whether they are colleagues, customers or the community at large. Opportunities are purposefully created to provide “service”. In the absence of these opportunities, work is reduced to the most superficial “technical” level and results in meaningless activities</p> <p><b>Acknowledgement.</b> In the centre of acknowledgement lies a genuine appreciation for the individual as individual, in the first place, and for the individual as a worker as producer of outputs, in the second place. The best designed solutions or processes cannot produce and deliver of themselves. The intervention of an individual worker, on whichever level is required to interface with technology and the means of production. It seems a spontaneous trait of humans to acknowledge, not only the presence of another individuals, but also the contribution of the other. The one single characteristic of humans is that they value individuality and the “other” as an individual. The absence of this appreciation is possibly indicative of ineffective maturity and possibly even pathology. (Hattingh, 1990)</p>	<p><b>Service.</b> Taking care of the self by taking care of others represents a dimension of the integrated self. However it can also be seen to function in the social responsibility dimension of the values based culture organization. In the latter sense, the social responsibility of an organization is an active attempt at creating an environment that is conducive to business as well as to the development of the community. This creates the opportunity for alignment with societal needs and norms</p> <p><b>Community and oneness.</b> The dimension of oneness rest upon the creation of community in the workplace. Community is then defined as “a body of individuals organized into a group with awareness of some unifying values and purpose” (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 144)</p>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p><b>Oneness.</b> “Were all in this together”. The prevailing thought in organizational life is the experience of being in the situation together – as a unit as a collective entity. This sense of oneness is a graphic result of collaborative relationships. Where destructive competition is in the foreground of relationships, the prevailing climate can be described as “everybody for himself”. The creation of oneness presents a very unique challenge to Organization Design and development practitioners because it appears at the innermost circle of people that work together</p>	
<p>Me dimension– The individual as individual</p>	<p><b>Self-identity.</b> The work environment contributes towards the uniqueness of the individual in the sense that it naturally poses problems that extract the submerged characteristics and traits of the individual. This process accentuates the uniqueness of the individual in relation to other individuals in the workplace. The most effective individual is one that learns from individual diversity instead of coping or dealing with the diversity of others. (Hattingh, 1996, deals with the concept “effective maturity” as the result of effectivity in nine different identifiable areas of personality.) The effective mature person has a strong sense of self-identity and knows who he is and what he wants from life, as opposed to the ineffective or immature person. The work environment stimulates growth. To stifle this process through whatever means boils down to stopping a natural process</p> <p><b>Fit.</b> The effective mature person is contextually effective and has the ability to position him/herself in the different contexts. This represents the ability to position him/herself in the bigger picture of</p>	<p><b>Integrated self.</b> The whole integrated self, mind, body, emotions and spirit come to work. However before this can happen, the individual must first be aware of his/her own values, beliefs and purpose in life, whilst at the same time cultivating the ability. The sense of self also includes having control over personal “work space”</p> <p>(The concept work space will be discussed in a following chapter).</p> <p>The sense of self is associated with questions such as Who am I? Where do I belong? Can I fulfil my purpose in this organization?</p> <p>The sense of self further implies:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Bringing the whole person to the work environment;</b></li> <li><b>Finding purpose in life – how does work fit into this purpose;</b></li> <li><b>Taking care of the self by taking care of others;</b></li> <li><b>Developing own potential;</b></li> <li><b>Positive belief system;</b></li> </ul>

Theme	Terez	Chalofsky
	<p>the group and in the even bigger picture of the organization as an identifiable entity within an industry. This fit encompasses productive behaviour, values and the ethical code of business conduct, career needs and objectives on a cognitive as well as on a psychological level. (Hattingh, 1996)</p> <p><b>Balance.</b> This is the ability to distinguish contexts and the responsibilities within different contexts. It entails for example to distinguish between the responsibilities of the work context and the family context, and would therefore not have feelings of guilt when one context requires a that another takes a “backseat” for the duration of complying with responsibilities</p> <p><b>Worth.</b> People believe that they and the things that they do are important. This is not a value judgment but a factual observation about every human being. The worth that other people attach to an individual contributes to the self-concept of the individual in that particular context. However, it does not deter the individual from experiencing worth based on the things that he/she does. When an activity does not contribute towards the expression of worth that activity will be terminated and replaced with another. The same reasoning applies in the context of work</p>	<p><b>Being in control;</b> <b>Favouring meaningful learning.</b></p> <p><b>Fit</b>, according to Chalofsky (2010, p. 154) is about “who we are, what we want to do and who we want to do it with”. Fit is about the whole person, mentally and spiritually</p> <p>The <b>sense of balance</b> is imbedded in the meaningful work model as presented by Chalofsky and includes:-</p> <p><b>Balancing work and the rest of life</b> <b>Balancing career and the rest of life</b> <b>Managing the tensions</b></p> <p>In addition a different perspective on balance is promoted by Chalofsky, i.e. the balance of time and the balance of energy</p> <p>The work itself is a dimension of the meaningful work model includes the following elements that relate to the experience of worth by the employee: <b>Fulfilling personal purpose;</b> <b>Mastering performance;</b> <b>Seeking learning: - challenge, creativity and continuous growth;</b> <b>Pursuing the opportunity to carry out your purpose through work;</b> <b>Autonomy, empowerment, and a sense of self control over the environment.</b></p>



On a conceptual level the two authors address and discuss the same themes although in different ways. This is indicative of an emerging construct that has not yet fossilised in terms of topics and presentation structures.

### 3.4.3 A Meaningful workplace: The meeting between man and enterprise

The fact that two publications in book format have been published during the first decade of this century must surely be indicative of a need that has been identified by these authors. That both address the title **Meaningful workplace** is significant in itself. The content, although not entirely new or novel does seem to be a further indication of a mounting concern in organizations in a post modern setting. Alienation and its constituent dimensions have been addressed earlier (Chapter 1) and will therefore not be repeated here.

Suffice to say that the shift in the perception and management of “the organization” since the early scholars to date (also see Chapter 1) can be described as a shift of magnitude. Yet there does seem to be an inadequate appreciation and application of philosophical and conceptual thinking regarding the modern organization (Weymes, 2005), specifically with reference to the meeting between man and enterprise.

Since the era of rigid organizational structures, systems and processes, new thinking and more specifically philosophical considerations, changed the face of Management theory from a strict bureaucratic approach to a more human approach. Together with the shift in the geographical production site, a movement that can only be described as mass urbanization also took place. Humans as the “means of production” in terms of their strength and hands became important for the production process and to eventually deliver goods.

During the sixties Douglas McGregor challenged the scientific approach to management with its imbedded wisdom of bureaucracy.

McGregor proposed that workers could be intrinsically motivated by interesting work and entrusted to manage and direct their own behavior. This approach was seen as the “soft” side of management with “real” firms seeking financial returns and efficiencies through specified systems and procedures. Since this was a period of significant economic expansion in the west these “new” and humane approaches to organization design were dismissed. It was not until the early 1980’s, when the western economies were facing severe competition from Asia, did the management literature refocus on the “soft” skills (Weymes, 2005).

The Management theories or rather the conceptual models of Organizational Management that foreshadowed the demise of bureaucracy, include such concepts as Theory X & Y to total quality management, the Baldrige Quality Awards, learning organizations and high performance organizations have all foreshadowed the demise of bureaucracy, the dismantling of interdepartmental boundaries, leadership throughout the organization, a cooperative and harmonious working environment based on a management style vested in shared values and mutual trust. The implication of these approaches is that employees are not to be controlled by rigid performance criteria but their skills and knowledge should be harnessed to allow an organization to achieve its goals (Weymes, 2005).

Yet, in spite of all the changes, the tenets of alienation remain. The organization in a global economy has become an unstable place for workers; powerlessness remains and the loss of meaning continues even under the “new philosophies” of organization and organization theory and management.

The organizational dilemma or challenge be simply stated as the challenge to create an environment where trust, creativity and innovation flourish yet meeting the performance criteria specified by the stakeholders. The challenge is to find a philosophy that unites the two extremities of the dilemma. Marx favoured the

replacement of the capitalist society by a regime vested in humaneness, while the process of bureaucracy favoured rigid rules and regulations (Weymes 2005).

A changing world view has created an uncertain world where uncertain organizations survive, creating uncertain people that have lost their sense of direction and have become strangers to their own worlds.

In such instances it is inevitable that a search for meaning will attract attention, and furthermore that publications such as these will inevitably address the construct of meaning and meaningfulness in life and work. In a study presented to the European Corporate Sustainability Framework (ECSF) and discussed in a paper entitled “The Social Dimension of Organizations: Recent experiences with Great Place to Work Assessment Practices” by Marcel van Marrewijk (2004) the following comments are made:

The general trends...are increasing inclusiveness and connectedness...The mere act of transcending inadequate approaches demonstrates the trend towards inclusiveness, since innovative ways are build on existing foundations and thus include them. Inclusiveness is also manifested in the sequence of concepts of Corporate Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility (van Marrewijk, 2003). These concepts reflect the transition between organizations that where first oriented towards a single scale of reference – most often profits – and then to a multiple scale, including the organizations’ impact on social and environmental aspects (triple bottom line).

In essence the boundaries of the organization and those of the individual within the organization should overlap in accordance with those dimensions both from the individual’s as well as from the organization’s perspective, that collude to conceptually define the **meaningful workplace**, Van Marrewijk (2004) expresses this train of thought by means of a graphic which is reproduced below as Figure 3.3. It is however necessary to also balance an idealistic type of view with the reality of human existence. If a social accord and the overlap of boundaries with an between individuals and employers were possible we would have lived in a perfect world.

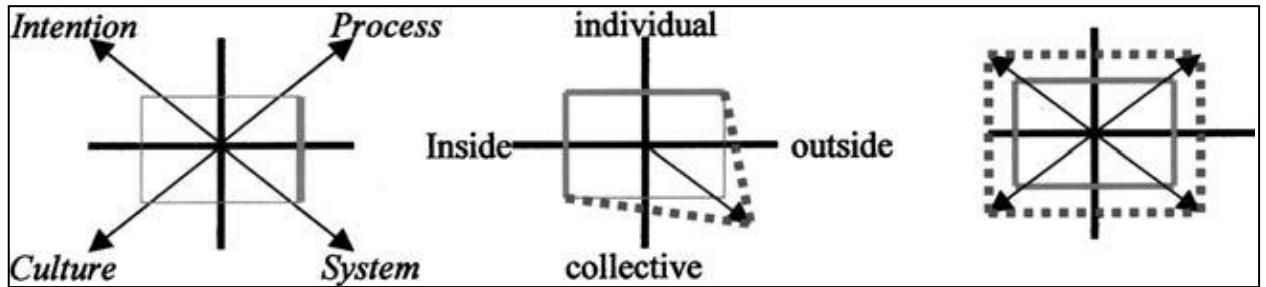


Figure 3.3: The technical and the human worlds meet

(Van Marrewijk 2004)

This approach will in my view become more applicable, visible and more important in the world of organizations, be it in the fields of Organization Theory, Management Science and Organization Behaviour. It is compatible according to van Marrewijk with “Clare W. Graves’ Emerging, Cyclical Levels of Existence Theory (1976), or Spiral Dynamics (1996) as his successors, Cowan and Beck, have labelled it” (Van Marrewijk, 2004).

According to the theory of Cyclical Levels of Existence individuals as well as institutions and societies evolve through natural sequences of developments. Each phase type development transcends and includes the previous phase. Each level contains or encompasses a consistent arrangement of sub systems such as “a worldview, a value system, a belief structure and organizing principles, reflecting the four corners of reality”. These subsystems enable the individual and societies’ institutions to cope with life conditions and being human in a certain time-space capsule. The human condition and the challenges pertaining to this consist of “historical Times, geographical Place, existential Problems and societal Circumstances” (Van Marrewijk, 2004.).

The quest for meaning at work is an existential problem that is an integral part of the human condition and thus needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency lest the whole societal system implodes as a result of a lack of substructures such as meaning, values, moral, ethics and the likes. The construct: **Meaningful workplace** is new and thus emerging in terms of the word string as such; the dimensions that constitute the construct are however not entirely new or novice. What is “new” in terms of the construct: **Meaningful workplace** is the reciprocal dynamism, the

imbedded values and the psychological dynamics. The current researcher is of the opinion that the search for meaning has and will remain part of the dynamic of the human condition. What seems to be different is the way in which this search has now begun to permeate the workplace.

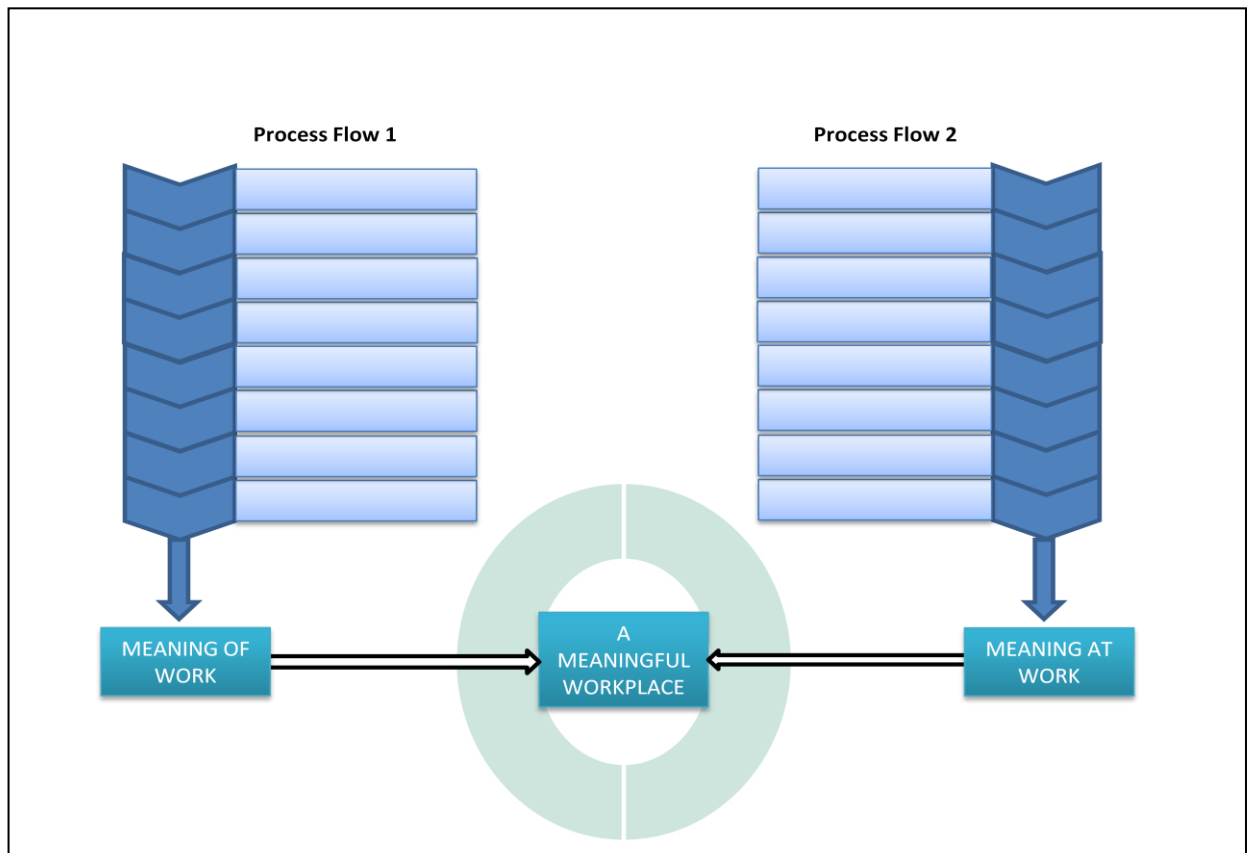
Referring to his own work, Chalofsky (2010, p. xiii) makes the following statement that can be seen as justification for the emergence and possible sustainability of the particular construct:

There are books on the market that relate to meaningful work and workplaces in such subject area as personal change, career development, motivation, trust, work-life balance, best organizations to work for, and so on. But none of them offer a substantive account of what constitutes a **meaningful workplace**, so that individuals can be educated as to what goes into finding or creating fulfilling work and managers and consultants can understand what it takes to create and sustain a **meaningful workplace**.

Following this queue, attention will now be turned towards the emergence of the construct in broader literature. However prior to embarking on the quest to discover the direct or indirect references or allusions to the construct: **Meaningful workplace**, an important guideline for the management of information must be provided. The following graphic presents plausible structure within which the information can be positioned towards a conceptual and integrated model for the **meaningful workplace**.

In this study singular and linear cause-and-effect is not an option. The active and operational premise is that the meeting between the individual's world (the *me*-world) and the world of the organizational world (the *it*-world) creates the conditions for the experience of meaningfulness in a complex of stimuli interactions. The experience of meaningfulness as far as the workplace is concerned is created through the interaction between individual and organization. The structure as presented below fulfils the requirement of providing a systemic and interactive

approach towards managing information that complies with the premise as articulated in the first part of this paragraph.



**Figure 3.4: Proposed structure towards an integrated conceptual model for a Meaningful workplace**

### **3.5 PROCESS FLOW 1:- MEANINGFUL WORK AS A MACRO CONSTITUTIVE DIMENSION OF THE CONSTRUCT: A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE**

The discussion regarding the meaning of work will commence with a short overview of the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant for the sake of providing some evidence that the issue which is of concern herein has a history and that this history is not limited to the management sciences or psychology only. This is followed by an overview of the work that the MOW Project Team (1987) had done to establish a framework for the discussion of the meaning of work, which in turn is followed by an overview of research that was conducted on the specific topic of the MOW in

psychological literature. In the bigger scheme of the field of study tremendous energy has been invested to determine the *meaning of work*.

At the outset it must be stated (in complete concurrence with Nelson and Quick 2000, p. 466) that the “meaning of work differs from person to person, and from culture to culture. In an increasing global workplace it is important to understand and appreciate differences among individuals and between cultures with regard to the meaning of work.”

Does this admittance imply that there are no common trends or threads of shared meaning across work environments and across cultures?

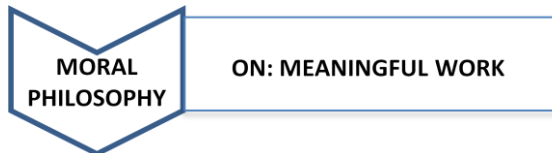
The following paragraphs will explore this question (by implication) and present an answer which, in terms of the chosen approach will provide a framework for an applicable work model that could be described as a **meaningful workplace**.

Prior to embarking on the discussion regarding the meaning of work, it is however necessary to pass a few remarks regarding the concept work. Work is a purposeful activity. The world, in which different generations live, was and is created through the purposeful activity that is called work, based on collaborative efforts to enhance our world. Once the purposeful and collaborative efforts were or are initiated, the momentum carries on after the passing of that generation. A next generation continues with the work to enhance the world in which humans live. Our world is ever evolving through the interaction of a myriad of working activities that are continuously being strung together. Humans transform the world according to their requirements. Yet, the affluence has exerted its cost in terms of “...distant impersonal and detached social relations that characterize many contemporary organizations” (Collinson 1992, p. 2).

“The meaning of work” as such seems to be a construct to which variable constitutive elements can be ascribed and the following paragraphs and sub paragraphs identify the constituent elements. Only after this confluence has taken place, can the construct “meaningful work” be imbedded into a context which can be described as a **meaningful workplace**. This would seem a round-about way to

achieve the main objective of the study, which it is, but is preferred as it is chosen for the systematic basis and body of knowledge upon which can be drawn.

### 3.5.1 Moral philosophy and meaningful work



The MOW is not a new or modern phenomenon which presented itself to management researchers and scholars only in recent years. As early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) presented what Bowie (1998) refers to as a "...Theory of Meaningful Work" (1998, p. 1.). This "theory" must be viewed with the context of Kant's moral philosophy. (Refer also Pratt and Ashworth 2003)

Against the background of the working conditions in Western Europe during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) presented a moral philosophy regarding the humanity of man, based on reason and nature, resulting in a definition of the concept *meaningful work*. Bowie (1998) bases the definition of meaningful work on Kant's "...explicit writings...the focal point are the second formulation of the categorical imperative which says that one should always treat the humanity in a person as an end and never as a means merely" (p. 1083). According to Bowie, a reading of Kant's ethical works would enable one to formulate the following characteristics of meaningful work. A summary of Kant's six postulates are given below and briefly discussed against the background of working and living conditions during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Let us first however turn to the working conditions against which Kant formulated his moral philosophy on the meaning of work. .



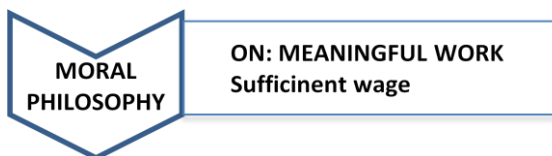
### 3.5.1.1 Meaningful work is work that is freely entered into.



This characteristic is derived from Kant's discussion and characterisation of freedom. Freedom can be defined from two different perspectives *negative freedom and positive freedom*. Negative freedom is the freedom that we have to act in an independent manner and not to be coerced or forced or our choices determined by external or alien forces. This freedom is what distinguishes us from animals. The meaningfulness of all actions is dependent thereon that they be negatively free. The choice of work falls into this category. It must be freely entered into and thus be negatively free.

Negative freedom is however not the only dimension of Kant's notion of freedom. Negative freedom is complemented by positive freedom which can best be described as the freedom or the autonomy of a person has to be a law unto her. Hill (1992 in Bowie 1998:1085.), states that "A person is a law to himself...if he adopts principles for himself and regards himself bound by them and if he was not caused or even motivated to adopt them by any contingent circumstances".

### 3.5.1.2 Meaningful work provides a wage sufficient for physical welfare and the exercise of autonomy and independence.



According to Bowie (1998, pp. 1083-1092) Kant firstly argues that work is necessary for the "self-hood"-development of the individual. Self-hood in this sense is understood as the (1998, p. 1084). "*Without occupation man cannot live happily*" (Kant: *Lectures on ethics, 1775; in Bowie 1998, p. 1084.*) Kant endorses wealth as the mechanism that brings pleasure to man because in that pleasure it contributes to self-respect because it provides independence. Work thus has value (i.e. meaning) in as far as it provides one with an opportunity to make money to provide for one's needs and pleasure and thus

independence.

The contribution of capitalism could be construed as being to provide work that would enhance the self-respect of the individual worker. A system (or remuneration practices) that does not provide for the enhanced self respect for the individual is therefore morally flawed. Kant endorses thrift – “Therefore become thrifty so you do not become destitute”. (*Kant: Metaphysical principles of virtue, Ethical Philosophy, 1797*, as quoted by Bowie (1998, p. 1084).

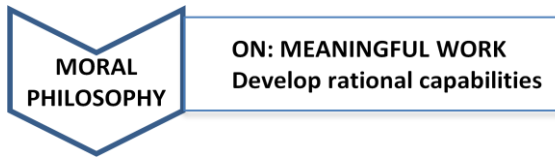
Work must furthermore support the dignity of human beings as moral agents.

And since for Kant autonomy and rationality are necessary for moral agency the work relationship must support the autonomy and rationality of human beings. Work that deadens autonomy or that undermines rationality is immoral (Bowie, 1998, p. 1085).

Thus the foundation of the two basic conditions for meaningful work is laid down. (a) It must comply with the requirement to enhance the independence of the individual and (b) it must support the autonomy and rationality of employees.

To the extent that an organization provides (jobs) work that presents sufficient wealth, they contribute to the independence and thus the self respect of a person (Bowie 1998, p. 1084). Furthermore, to the extent that the humanity of employees is treated as an end not as a *means*, *the organization can be considered to be moral*. Should an organization choose to treat the humanity of employees as an end and not as a means, then the self respect of employees should be honoured as well. To honour employees’ self respect, the employee should have a measure of independence and autonomy as well as the ability to satisfy some of her desires. In an economic system people satisfy their desires and achieve and demonstrate their independence to satisfy these desires by using their wages as buying power. Employees should thus be paid a living wage – a wage that is sufficient to provide a measure of independence and to satisfy a measure of their desires. This characteristic also has implications for management practice.

### 3.5.1.3 Meaningful work enable(s) the worker to develop her rational capacities.



Meaningful work requires the development of the rational capabilities of the human being. Rational capacity is equated with humanity as Bowie states (1998, p. 1086): “Kant equates humanity with our capacity for rational thought.” Rationality however is by no means the only dimension that constitutes humanity. Hill (1992, in Bowie, 1998, p. 1086) argues “...that humanity includes the following capacities:

The capacity and disposition to act on the basis of reason;

The capacity to act on the principles of prudence and efficiency (hypothetical imperatives) so long as these hypothetical imperatives are not constrained by categorical imperatives;

The power to set any end whatsoever which includes the ability to see future consequences, adopt long range goals, resist immediate temptation, and even to commit oneself to ends for which one has no sensuous desire;

The capacity to accept categorical imperatives;

Some ability to understand the world and to reason abstractly.

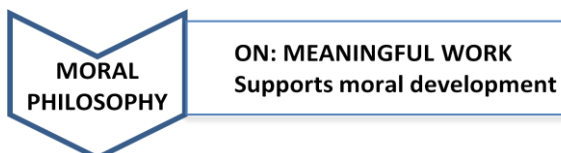
It is a moral requirement therefore to treat people in ways that respect their humanity and the rational capabilities – this is what is meant by treating humanity as an end in itself. The respect for humanity provides the background and impetus for this condition of meaningful work – meaningful work should facilitate the development of the individuals’ rationality.

This is however not the end of the line for the reasoning regarding humanity. Bowie (1998, p. 1086) refers to other contemporary commentators of Kant’s work who eventually base further reasoning of treating humanity as an end on the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. A person is obliged to develop your own

talents and give what is possible to the needy. Being indifferent to a person does not per se imply that you are respecting their humanity. Indifference does not treat the humanity of another person as an end in itself. A person has both the obligation of perfection towards yourself as well as the duty to promote the happiness of others. The promotion of the happiness of others implies a concern for the physical welfare and moral wellbeing of others. Herein lies “additional evidence for the claim that meaningful work requires a living wage that provides independence and happiness...” and thus the “...development of moral powers” (Bowie, 1998, p. 1086).

If one were to accept this type of reasoning regarding the welfare and wellbeing of others and the vindication of that for a sufficient wage so that the individual can comply with his duty of perfection to himself and the duty towards others, then the question regarding the practice of Corporate Social Investment is immediately forced into the field of vision. To what extent should organizations as organizations be involved and how is this vindicated and in which manner should employees be involved in such acts?

#### **3.5.1.4 Meaningful work supports the moral development of employees.**



The issue regarding moral development has been addressed in various contexts above and therefore a separate discussion will not be presented. It is sufficient to follow the trend of reasoning and to assert or reject this characteristic of meaningful work. In this study this postulate is accepted as one of the key characteristics of meaningful work.

### 3.5.1.5 Meaningful work is not paternalistic: It does not interfere with the worker's conception of how she wishes to obtain happiness.



Paternalism stands in direct opposition to and interferes on a direct plane with the freedom of the individual (negative as well as positive freedom). The individual must have the freedom to choose and to act voluntary even in a work setting. This does not imply anarchy and chaos, but it does imply the measure of freedom to co-create and collaboratively establish an efficient work setting.

The avoidance of paternalism in management practice, for instance, is easier said than done. From a Kantian perspective it involves a tension between love and respect. We should be concerned, for instance, with the activities another person follows in order to be happy. This is the love dimension. However one's own views regarding activities that are supposed to make one happy cannot be imposed on another individual. This is the respect dimension.

The mentioned characteristics or postulates regarding meaningful work are valuable and applicable, not only within their own framework and the time of their origin, but also in a more contemporary time frame and modern organizational context. It is furthermore interesting to note that certain principles emanating from the quality movement in the United States (Pfeiffer 1994 in Bowie, 1998, p. 1088) provided certain principles that pertain to the construct meaningful work. "...an obligation to provide meaningful work is not utopian...Pfeiffer...has argued that firms can gain a competitive advantage if they focus on their employees". Pfeiffer identifies sixteen management practices, which are presented in Table 3.3 below. Column one notes the management practices by Pfeiffer (as presented by Bowie) while column 2 refers to the management implications of the moral principles that Kant has laid down. Column 3 indicates the link with the 16 management principles as laid down by Pfeiffer (in Bowie, 1999) In some cases more than one of the Kantian postulates can be matched with the management practices presented by Pfeiffer, whilst in certain cases only one match seems possible, whilst in other instances no match

seems obvious and therefore the management practices do not seem to be aligned with any of the Kantian postulates. Column 4 lists the labels that Chalofsky and/or Terez use thereby indicating the link between the different inputs in respect of meaningful work, which is seen as a macro dimension of the **meaningful workplace**.

In summary it could be said that a philosophical perspective, although based on a chosen perspective, is informative regarding the construct meaningful work. A philosophical perspective however is not the only input that must be noted in the expansion of theory. What is however interesting and well worth noting is the fact that Immanuel Kant, as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century addressed the matter of meaningful work as a method and impetus towards the practical in loco acknowledgement and sustained perspective of the humanity, dignity and the development of the rationality and moral development of workers.

The 5 Kantian postulates, as stand-alone moral philosophical issues, bear sufficient weight as good practice and correspond to the duty of employers towards their employees. The fact that it seems possible to match these postulates with principles that emanate from the quality movement of the 80's and 90's also bear testimony to the fact that philosophy is not merely philosophy (specifically in this case), but that the moral philosophy from which the meaningful work postulates are derived have a practical grounding based in life itself.

**Table 3.3: Alignment: - Kantian principles on meaningful work 16 management practices for a meaningful workplace**

Kant's 5 postulates for meaningful work	Management implications based on Kant's Moral Philosophy	Pfeiffer: 16 management practices (as quoted by Bowie 1998) relevant to creating meaningful work	Corresponding labels for Meaningful Work as used by Chalofsky and Terez
1. Meaningful Work Is work that is freely entered into	Employers must respect the freedom (liberty) of the employee to freely choose her work and have freedom on the job as well. This must however be balanced in the sense that freedom in work or on the job does not imply the	Principle 1: Employment security  Principle 2: Selectivity in recruiting  Principle 5: Employee ownership	▪ Autonomy and empowerment (Chalofsky)

Kant's 5 postulates for meaningful work	Management implications based on Kant's Moral Philosophy	Pfeiffer: 16 management practices (as quoted by Bowie 1998) relevant to creating meaningful work	Corresponding labels for Meaningful Work as used by Chalofsky and Terez
	freedom to negate but the freedom to design the mental process and implement such a process to achieve the desired outcome	Principle 14: A long term perspective	
2. Meaningful Work provides a wage sufficient for physical welfare and the exercise of autonomy and independence	Management practice must provide employees with a living wage and with security to the extent that employees can pursue happiness based on their desires and to exercise their autonomy thus preserving their dignity	Principle 3: High wages Principle 4: Incentive pay Principle 12: Wage compression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Autonomy (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Worth (Terez)</li> </ul>
3. Meaningful work enable(s) the worker to develop her rational capacities	Management practice must strengthen the rational capacities of employees through the recognition of their individual humanity as an end in it self and not as a means towards another, covert end, and not by creating indifference through management processes, policies and procedures	Principle 9: Training and skill development Principle 10: Cross utilization and cross training Principle 13: Promotion from within Principle 15: The measurement of practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fulfilling personal purpose (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Mastering performance (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Self control (Chalofsky and Terez)</li> </ul>
4. Meaningful work supports the moral development of employees	Management practice must demonstrate a concern for the physical and emotional welfare of employees and not implement any practice that will impede their moral development. This further implies the practice of ethical and moral behaviour should permeate the organization/work place from the top down as an indication of a collective moral	Principle 8: Teams and job redesign Principle 11: Symbolic egalitarianism Principle 16: An overarching philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stewardship (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Commitment to the growth of people (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Building community (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Values (Chalofsky and Terez)</li> </ul>



Kant's 5 postulates for meaningful work	Management implications based on Kant's Moral Philosophy	Pfeiffer: 16 management practices (as quoted by Bowie 1998) relevant to creating meaningful work	Corresponding labels for Meaningful Work as used by Chalofsky and Terez
	development drive		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integrated self(Chalofsky)</li> </ul>
5. Meaningful work is not paternalistic in the sense of interfering with the worker's conception of how she wishes to obtain happiness	Management practice must provide sufficient opportunity for employees to pursue their individual conceptions of happiness based on their own desires	Principle 6: Information sharing  Principle 7: Participation and empowerment  Principle 11: Symbolic egalitarianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ownership (Terez)</li> <li>▪ Dialogue (Terez)</li> <li>▪ Creating community and oneness (Terez)and Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ (Relationship building (Terez)</li> </ul>

The so-called management principles as listed by Pfeiffer (in Bowie 1998) as well as the labels that Chalofsky and Terez use to refer to the **meaningful workplace** can, as indicated in Table 3.3, be brought into a certain relationship with the moral philosophy on meaningful work as articulated by Kant. By way of an abductive reasoning process it can be stated that the Kantian postulates conceptually enhance the theory underlying the construct. Differently stated, moral philosophy resonates with the Meaningful Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky and with the discussion by Terez to the extent that the latter two authors overlap in terms of their perspectives on a **meaningful workplace**. It has been stated previously that the construct is constituted by two macro dimensions. These are distinguished as *Meaning of Work* or *Meaningful Work* and *Meaning at Work*. Together they constitute the **meaningful workplace**. The first macro dimension (*Meaningful Work*) is currently under discussion and the first theme in this discussion is the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Moral philosophy is herewith absorbed as an extension and enrichment of the Meaningful Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky, thereby contributing to **meaningful workplace** as an emerging construct.



Figure 3.4 (following page) provides substance to the discussion and should be interpreted as follows (this serves for all similar graphics that follow the same pattern in the rest of this chapter):

The top part of Figure 3.4 (positioned on the top left hand side of the page) summarises the Moral Philosophy of Immanuel Kant on meaningful work, in terms of the dimensions that have been distinguished. The arrows to the right of the identified dimensions indicate the different elements that constitute the particular dimension.

The portion of Figure 3.5 that is positioned on the lower half of the page and to the right presents a summary of the Meaningful Work Model (Chalofsky, 2010) with its constitutive dimensions and the arrows pointing to the elements that constitute the dimensions, in as far as they are relevant to the towards moral philosophy. The double pointed arrow indicates the observation that the two models resonate with each other. This can also be stated differently: The Meaningful Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky uses labels that are related to the moral philosophical postulates, and can thus be viewed as indirectly also representing the word labels and the content that are articulated by the philosophical language that is used. Bringing the two models together actually adds to the understanding of the **meaningful workplace** as construct.

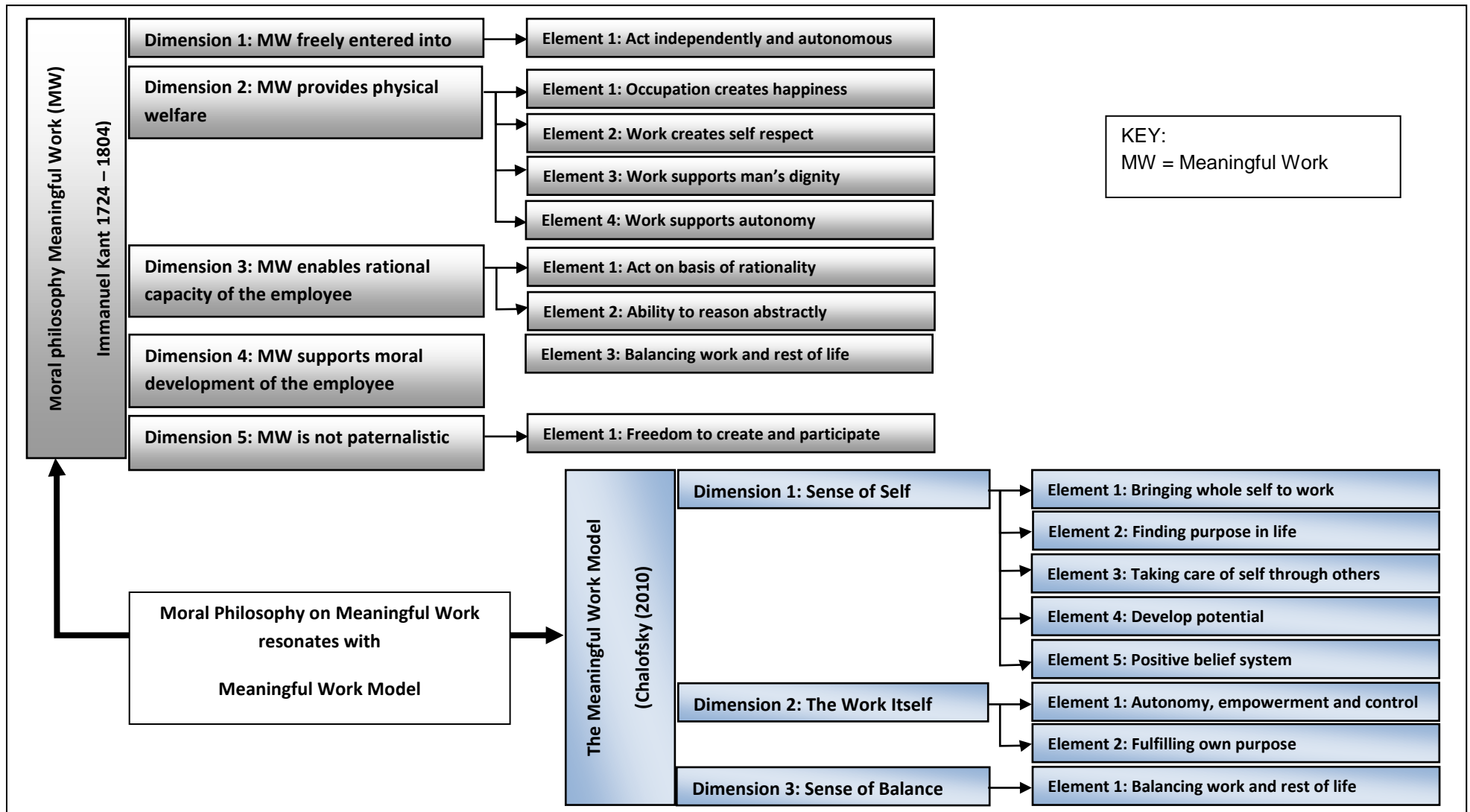
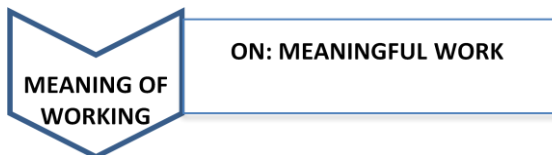


Figure 3.4: Moral philosophy on meaningful work (Kant, 1724-1804) resonating with the meaningful work model of Chalofsky (2010):

Conceptually speaking all of the management principles put forward by Pfeiffer support the broad notion of the Kantian postulates on meaningful work (and vice-versa) in as much as they: provide the mechanism for independence and autonomy; vindicate the case for a good wage; promote the impetus for the development of the rational capabilities of employees; remove (or do not allow for) the factors that would interfere with the moral development of employees; represent a framework for the acknowledgement and respect of the humanity and dignity of the employee. These notions are also read into or out of the proposed model by Chalofsky.

### 3.5.2 The meaning of working



Work occupies a central role in the life of individuals and society. Working and the outcomes that are achieved is considered to be a central aspect of life. It is at the same time an important catalyst for the formation of self-esteem, identification and self-image whilst at the same time being a necessity for fulfilling basic needs. (MOW—International Research Team 1987, in Sharabi and Harpaz 2007). This fact as Sharabi and Harpaz correctly assert, has drawn attention to the relationship between individuals and their work. In general terms research has focussed on the meanings that work has for the individual (MOW—International Research Team 1987; Harpaz 1990).

The MOW International Project team gathered data in 8 countries through professional interviewers and collected this data from a varied field of subjects, which include “(a) professionals (teachers, engineers, all professional, technical and other related workers); (b) administrative and management; (c) clerical and related workers; (d) services (sales workers, wholesale/retail trade, catering and lodging services, and other services); (e) production (construction, equipment operators, tool-makers, machine-tool operators, blacksmiths, spinners, weavers, etc., agriculture, and other production-related workers) (Harpaz 1990).

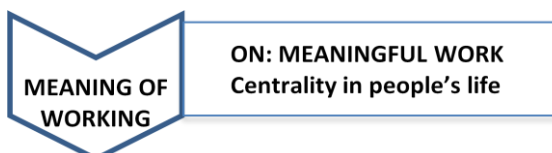
The MOW team in 1987 and others (Sverko, 1999; Ross, Schwartz and Surkiss 1999; Magdof 1982; Morse and Weiss 1955) all contributed to an understanding of the construct. The MOW International research team states that a “Well articulated theory of the meaning of working is not available” (MOW 1987), thus creating a heuristic model “containing variable sets (of variables) and relationships between variables which were considered of primary importance”. (See also Basini and Buckley 1997)

The MOW (1987) project team conceptualized the meaning of work on multiple dimensions i.e.: – Work centrality in people’s lives; Work role identification; Valued working outcomes; Work goals; and Societal norms about working (Basini & Buckley 1997).

Various findings show that people who have higher work centrality become more involved in their work. This manifests itself in greater willingness to work longer hours (MOW—International Research Team 1987; Hirschfeld and Field 2000; Snir and Harpaz 2002), a higher level of performance (Mannheim et al. 1997), job involvement and commitment to the organization (Diefendorff et al. 2002; Hirschfeld and Field 2000), all quoted by Sharabi and Harpaz (2007, p. 96).

Stability or instability regarding an individuals’ investment in work based on work centrality may, on a collective level even have a negative or positive impact on a society’s economic growth (Child, 1981 and Weber, 1958) in Sharabi and Harpaz (2007).

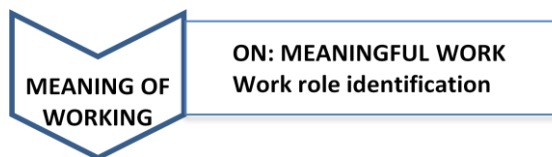
### 3.5.2.1 Centrality in people’s lives



This concept represents the measure based on cognitions and affects the degree of general importance that work has in the life of an individual at any given time. Two separate theoretical components of the work centrality concept have been identified. These are referred to as i) the belief/value

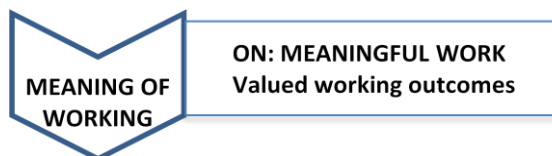
component and ii) the decision orientation component (Basini and Buckley, 1997). The belief/value component of work centrality has to do with the level of identification one has with the work role, and the affective commitment towards work. The decision orientation determines life choice and behaviour decisions associated with these choices in terms of their relative ranking in life.

### 3.5.2.2 Work role identification



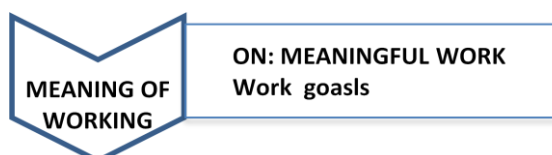
This variable refers to the “extent to which an individual defines and identifies working in terms of various roles such as task role, product or service role, and occupational /professional role” (MOW 1987:57).

### 3.5.2.3 Valued working outcomes



This variable refers to the “importance evaluations which are defined to include what the person knows about each of the outcomes and the preference relationship among outcomes” (MOW 1987 in Basini and Buckley, 1997)

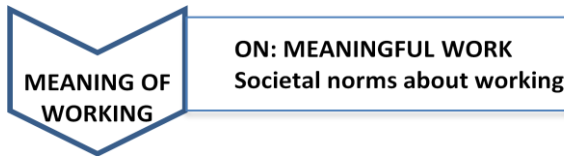
### 3.5.2.4 Work goals.



In tandem with working outcomes, another domain which gives insight into what is important to individuals in their working lives, is the absolute and relative importance of work related goals. The relevant

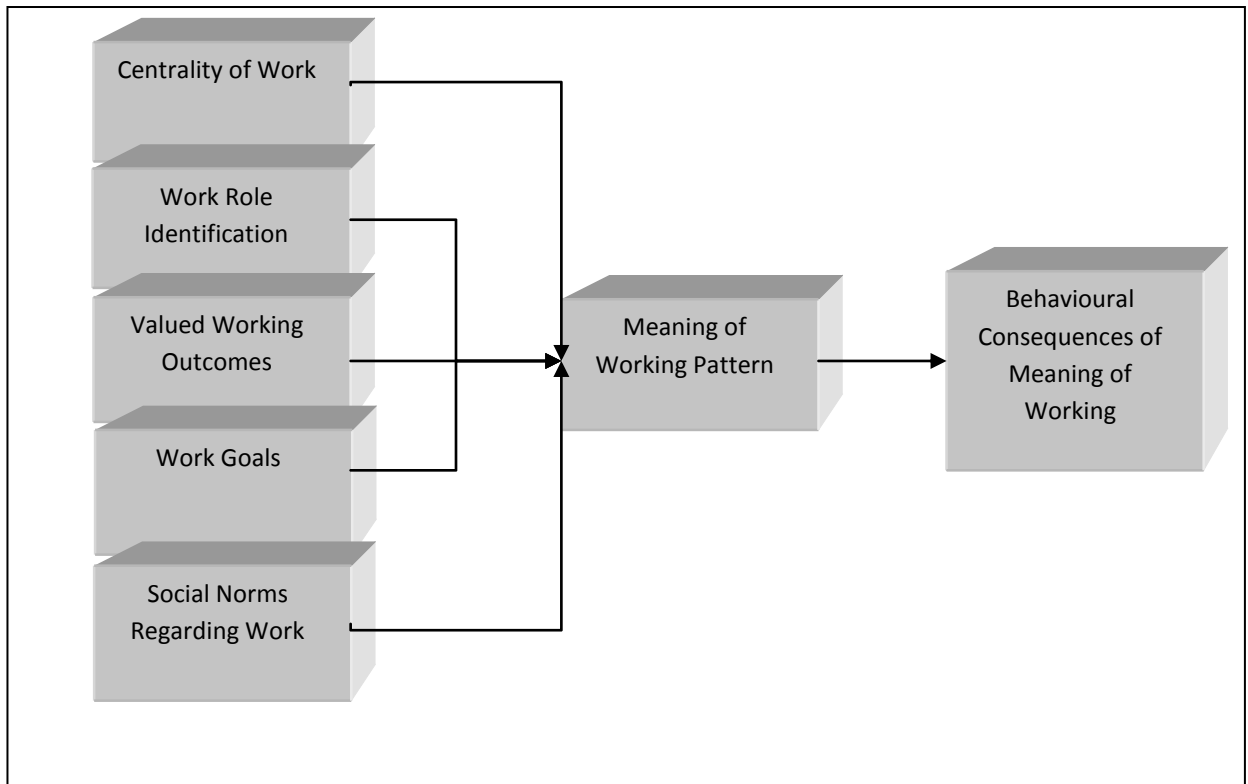
literature on the operationalisation of work goals covers such issues as job satisfaction, work values, and incentive preference (Basini and Buckley, 1997).

### 3.5.2.5 Societal norms about working



In a certain sense working complies with the societal norm of wherein which working is viewed as individual or collective obligation. “A second normative orientation might be considered the compliment of the obligation norm in that it reflects social standards regarding the rights and entitlements of the working individual” (Basini and Buckley, 1997).

The MOW Research Team’s work can be, following Basini and Buckley (1997) represented as in the following graphic. (Figure 3.5)



**Figure 3.5: Meaning of working: heuristic model (Basini and Buckley 1997)**

Seen in the context of the above reflection on the MOW project team, it seems as if work in itself can be construed as a value, (or it at least constitutes a central interest) while the different variables each in their own right, also constitute certain values.

The above categories echo social, extrinsic and intrinsic value types, but are silent when it comes to self-transcendence as a value type. Ross et al (1999, p. 64-69) validated the theoretical position that they proposed, i.e. that a fourth value type, referred to as self-transcendence (as a value type), should be added to the structure and typology of the meaning of work. They conclude that the two groups they had worked with rated self-transcendence values most important whilst openness to changes values were rated second, self enhancement values were rated third important and conservation type values were rated lowest. Work as such was rated as a very important value. Whichever way the research results go, it is abundantly clear that work as an activity is central to the life activities and events that an individual experiences. Work, as a matter of fact, stands out as “value” in its own right because of the different values that are supported by contributing in work activities.

The research by the Meaning of Work Project Team resonates with the Meaningful Work Model by Chalofsky. There are however also dimensions from the MOW Project Team that also resonate with the Meaning at Work discussion by Chalofsky such as for instance the dimension that is labelled “Societal norms”. Societal norms can be aligned with the discussion by Chalofsky on “Social Responsibility as Part of a Values-Based Culture” (2010, Chapter 7, p. 121). The fact that the concepts in broader literature are not as concise as the discussions by Chalofsky and Terez, indicates that the construct: A **meaningful workplace** is inherently present although not articulated in earlier literature and research

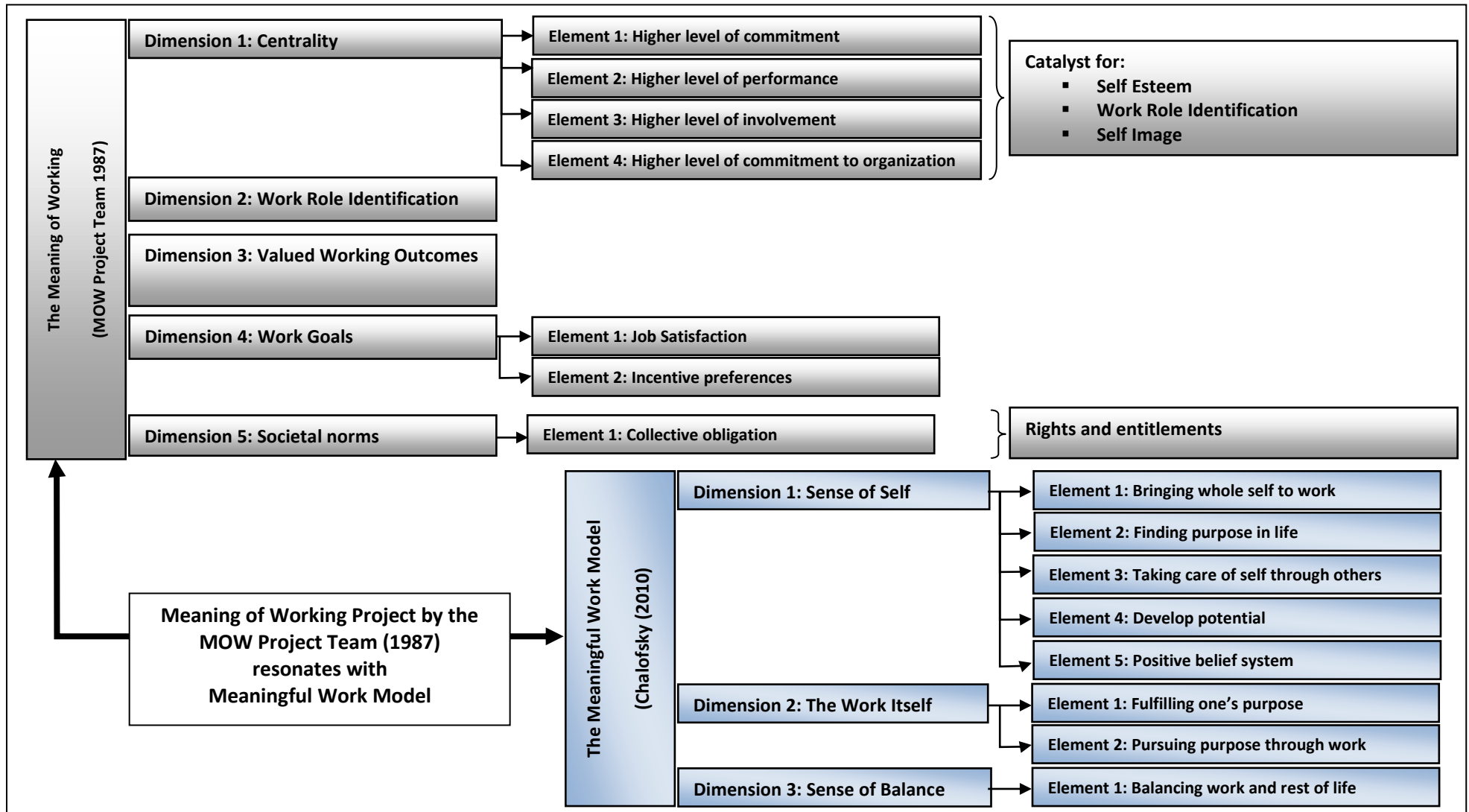
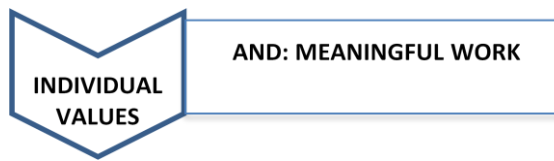


Figure 3.6: Meaning of working (Work as a value)

(Based on the MOW Project Team 1987)



### 3.5.3 Individual values, and the meaning of work (Ross et. Al. 1999)



Basini and Buckley (1996) conducted research in the so called “third sector” (=voluntary sector) compared with the public sector regarding the strength of certain dimensions of work. These dimensions correspond to the dimensions that the MOW project team identified as important dimensions in the discovery of the meaning of work. Compared to responses of individuals in the private sector there are significant differences. The differences are tabulated below and based on Basini and Buckley’s discussion of results.

**Table 3.4: Comparison of MOW dimensions between the public and third sectors in Ireland**

MOW dimensions	The third sector	The public sector
Centrality of work	Much more central	Less so than in the third sector
Work role identification	Much higher personal identification with work role	Less inclined to a high level of work role identification
Valued working outcomes and work goals	<p>Possess a much higher personal identification with the goals of their organizations</p> <p>Salary is important but not at a high level of importance</p> <p>Higher importance on seeing the outcomes of work as useful and serving society</p>	<p>Less inclined to possess a personal and/or high level of identification with the goal of the organization</p> <p>Salary is significantly more important</p> <p>This dimension is much lower in the private sector</p>

**(Basini and Buckley 1997)**

Values have been recognized as one of the most important determinants of individual behaviour, which explains the studies that have been conducted in this regard such as for instance; Morris, 2011; Blood, 1969; Furnham, 1990; Hui, 1992.

Ross and others (1999) endeavoured to determine in which ways individual value priorities relate to attitudes, behaviour and roles and on the other hand how work values and other aspects of work relate to basic individual values. It is an attempt to determine the interconnectedness of work value and personal values.

A basic theory of individual values according to Schwartz ,1994 as quoted in Ross and others (1999, p. 51) can be construed according to the structure as presented in Table 3.5 below. A theory of basic human values...

*”specifies 10 motivationally distinct types of values that are postulated to be recognised by members of most societies and to encompass the different values that guide them”* (Ross et al, 1999, p. 51).

The ten values represent, or are imbedded in a typology and eventually boil down to responses on three universal requirements with which individuals and societies must cope (Ross et al, 1999). The ten values can be defined in terms of a central goal. Table 3.5 contains (based on Ross et al, 1999, p. 51 -52) the ten basic human/individual values with core definitions (columns 1 and 2) and the conceptually corresponding labels as used by Terez and Chalofsky (column 3)

**Table 3.5: Basic human values: Core definitions from Ross et al. (1999).**

**(With corresponding alignment of labels as used by Chalofsky and Terez)**

Basic values	Core definitions	Alignment with Chalofsky and Terez
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (social power, authority and wealth)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of self:- being in control (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ The work itself: Autonomous, empowered, sense of control over environment (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ People keys: Ownership (Terez)</li> </ul>
Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards (successful, capable, ambitious, influential)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The work itself: Mastering one’s performance (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Development keys: Challenge (Terez)</li> </ul>

Basic values	Core definitions	Alignment with Chalofsky and Terez
Hedonism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pleasure and sensual gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life)</li> </ul>	
Stimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (daring, a varied life an exciting life)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The work itself: seeking learning, challenge, creativity, growth (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Development keys Challenge (Terez)</li> </ul>
Self-direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Independent thought and action-choosing, creating exploring(creativity, freedom, independent curios,</li> <li>▪ choosing own goals)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The work itself: Autonomous, empowered, sense of control (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Mission keys; Direction (Terez)</li> </ul>
Universalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (broadminded,</li> <li>▪ wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of self: taking care of self and others (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Mission keys: Flexibility (Terez)</li> <li>▪ Community keys: Oneness (Terez)</li> <li>▪ People keys: Respect (Terez)</li> </ul>
Benevolence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact (helpful, honest forgiving, loyal, responsible)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of self: taking care of self and others (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Mission keys: Flexibility (Terez)</li> <li>▪ Community keys: Oneness (Terez)</li> <li>▪ People keys: Respect (Terez)</li> <li>▪ Community keys: Dialogue (Terez)</li> <li>▪ Community keys: relationship building (Terez)</li> </ul>
Tradition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provides (humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect for tradition, moderate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of self: Positive belief system (Chalofsky)</li> </ul>
Conformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or</li> <li>▪ Norms (politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honouring parents and elders)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of balance: Balancing work and rest of life (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Me keys: Balance (Terez)</li> </ul>

Basic values	Core definitions	Alignment with Chalofsky and Terez
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safety, harmony, stability of society, of relationships, and of self (family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favours)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of self: Taking care of self and others (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Sense of balance: Balancing work and rest of life (Chalofsky)</li> <li>▪ Me keys: balance (Terez)</li> <li>▪ Community keys: Oneness (Terez)</li> </ul>

It could be argued that the corresponding labels from Chalofsky (2010) and Terez (2000) that are aligned with the basic human values as per Ross et al (1999), is arbitrary. However the achievement in this regard is more value adding than the arbitrariness of alignment. The alignment as presented is indicative of a conceptual footprint in respect of a **meaningful workplace**, although relatively young and emerging, in research literature. In this instance the relationship between value and the meaning of work has been pointed out. To recap what has been indicated is the following: There are two macro feeder streams for the construct **meaningful workplace** of which the Meaning of Work or Meaningful Work is being discussed at present. The second feeder stream Meaning at Work and the workplace as space will be discussed further on in the chapter.

Ross et al (1999) state certain values are mutually exclusive while others are mutually inclusive and supportive. The structure exposes the fact that some of these values are mutually inclusive and supportive whilst others seem to be mutually exclusive and contain potential conflict areas. For the sake of not misrepresenting Ross et al, their reasoning will be provided. (“That is, it specifies which values are compatible and mutually supportive, and which are opposed and likely to conflict with one another” Ross et al (1999, p. 51)). Key towards understanding the different value types and the dynamic interaction, is the assumption that there are psychological, practical, and social consequences, and that the pursuance of a certain value type may be in conflict with or supportive of another value type. This suggests, according to Ross et al (1999) that the dynamic relationship between different types of values may represent a universal set of relations between values.

The structure of personal human values in relation to higher order values, according to the research by Ross et al (1999), can be represented as in Figure 3.9. The graphic demonstrates the total value structure in two sets of higher order values on two bipolar dimensions. The higher order values encompass the basic human values in the four quadrants that are formed by the two axes.

On face value it would seem and Ross et al (1999) state categorically that certain values seem to support each other whilst other values seem to oppose and exclude certain other values. Although this might seem to be true on face value, an alternative possibility also presents itself, at least on a conceptual level, depending on the contextualisation of the individual values.

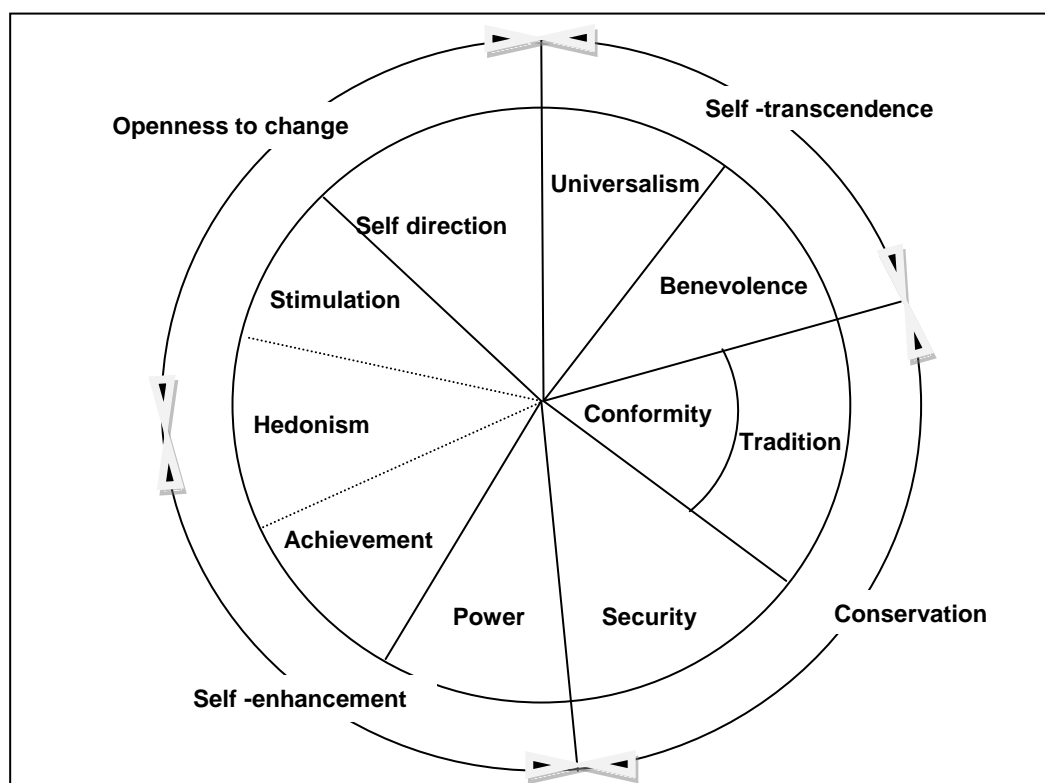
In isolation the counterforce of opposing values seems to be a reality, however, a different context might indicate otherwise. When contextualised differently the different values can be perceived as complementary. Although not necessary inclusive, the basic values at least provide a repertoire of values within a comprehensive value system as construed by the individual. An example of such a possibility in the work environment is the following:

*The basic value of self direction within the quadrant of openness to change might seem to exclude and contradict the basic value conformity that is positioned in the quadrant that is labelled as conservation, thus creating the impression that these two values are opposing to each other. However, positioned in the context of and under the label of, for example “continuity” (of business and organization effectiveness), self direction as a value that is defined as (independent thought and action-choosing, creating exploring creativity, freedom, independent curios, choosing own goals) might complement the basic value of conformity as (restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or conformation to norms such politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honouring parents and elders following organizational values such as honesty, achievement, quality, etc.) .*

In this example the two values (seen by Ross et al as mutually exclusive and thus containing the potential for a possible conflict) can be seen to function complementary. The context in this case is the determining factor. The full

consequence of the perspective of Ross et al (1999) is therefore not accepted for the purpose of this study.

The choice here is to discard the typology of inclusive (supporting) and exclusive (rejecting) values as indicated. The value of the research of Ross et al (1999) as far as this study is concerned, is the identification of the basic human values to the extent that they further contribute to an understanding of the meaning of work or meaningful work as a contributory towards the conceptual enhancement of a the theoretical foundation of the construct: **Meaningful workplace**.



**Figure 3.7: Basic values and work values**

**(Ross et al, 1999, p. 55)**

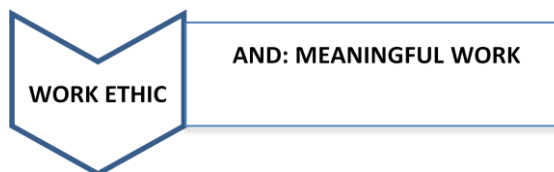
“Like basic values, work values are beliefs pertaining to desirable end-states (e.g. high pay) or behaviour (e.g. working with people)” (Ross et al., 1999, p. 54). Work goals would naturally be ordered according to their impact on outcomes or end-states. Work values are more specific because of the fact that they are defined within context. “Despite a plethora of different labels researchers appear to identify the same two

or three types of work values (1) intrinsic or self actualisation values (2) extrinsic or security or material values (3) social or relational values” and (4) “prestige work values, (Ross et al., 1999, p. 55).

What has this paragraph (and the previous two paragraphs) achieved in relation to the **Meaningful workplace?**

Considering the Meaning of Work Model by Chalofsky, the discussion in the three preceding paragraphs and the reasoning that was presented provides sufficient evidence of a broader interest in meaningful work, although the reference might not be direct. The content as discussed bears testimony to the perception that the “Meaningful Work Model” (Chalofsky, 2010) can be enhanced by adding additional dimensions that resonate with or are alluded to by the Meaningful Work Model.

#### 3.5.4 Max Weber and Protestant (Work) Ethic (PWE)



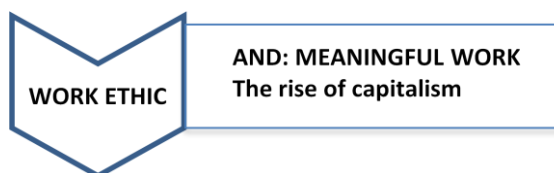
The reason for adding this paragraph is based on the conviction that Protestant (Work) Ethic represents a certain mental model or approach towards work, which in its own right adds value to the Meaning of Work Model. However, this does not imply that other religious-spiritual systems do not add value in terms of the experience of meaningful work. The discussion here is an analogy to the value that religious-spiritual systems can contribute to the experience of meaning while working. It is thus acknowledged that systems such as Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism (and others) could argue that adherents to these also experience meaning while working, based on the particular underlying values. This study does not intend, nor is it the scope hereof to compare the contribution towards the experience of meaning while working, of the different religious-spiritual systems. The concept of spirituality will be discussed as separate and neutral dimension in the course of this study as a contributing factor towards the experience of meaning while performing work. The following discussion focuses more on ethics

in respect of work against the background of the chosen religio-spiritual system. This discussion will merely focus on the values underpinning the PWE in as far as these contribute to the meaning of work.

According to Furnham (1984) the validity and accuracy of Weber's specifications of behaviour patterns, goals, and values, emanating from and dictated by PWE i.e. hard work, ascetism, postponement of gratification, frugality, thrift, etc. have stayed intact, in spite of the conflict and sharp debates regarding the validity and accuracy of the historical, sociological and theological hypotheses, which still remain in doubt.

Despite the criticism of Weber's thesis (concerning the direct linkage) between Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) and the rise of Capitalism, few have challenged the specification of the behaviour pattern, goals and values of those adhering to this ethic. Whereas psychologists have not been very interested in the nature of the historical, political and social arguments concerning the PWE, they have devoted a great deal of research to its measurement and correlates (Furnham, 1984, p. 87).

#### 3.5.4.1 The Work Ethic and the rise of Capitalism



The Protestant ethic, which gave "moral sanction to profit making through hard work, organization, and rational calculation" (Yankelovich, 1981, p. 247), spread throughout Europe and to America through the Protestant sects. In particular, the English Puritans, the French Huguenots, and the Swiss and Dutch Reformed Groupings subscribed to Calvinist theology that was especially conducive to productivity and capital growth (Lipset, 1990). As time passed, attitudes and beliefs which supported hard work became secularized, and were woven into the norms of Western culture (Lipset, 1990; Rodgers, 1978; Rose, 1985; Super, 1982).



The majority of research has been conducted with a focus on the PWE and paid employment. There is however a different angle which Furnham (1984) refers to, i.e. the relationship between PWE and unemployment. In a study conducted by Furnham, asking respondents to rate the importance of various social support programmes, it was found that “PWE believers were exponents of social responsibility” (Furnham, 1984, p. 96) and projected negative perspectives on unemployment and social benefit programmes.

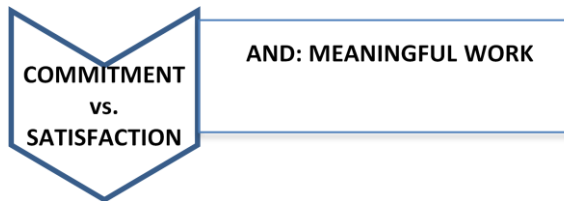
One of the most notable psychological effects of Protestantism is the abolishment of symbolism and ritual from religion, and the substitution of reason and understanding, and also assuming a positive stance or attitude towards life, thereby rejecting the introversion of Catholicism. Secularism, which was fleetingly referred to in passing, had advanced more within Protestantism than in Catholicism. Protestantism has been described as the dress rehearsal of the decline of religion in the modern era (Berger, 1969, p. 159, in Giorgi and Marsh, 1990, p. 515). One should however be careful not to generalise in this respect and strip the PWE from its religious origins. Research (quoted studies see Furnham 1984) indicates that people are generally speaking, not bound to a materialistic nexus when it pertains to work. They still seek more from work than purely economic gains. Therefore it would be gross generalisation to redefine PWE as a purely secular ethic.

Kelvin (1980), in Furnham (1984, p. 99), does not foresee a total collapse or disappearance of PWE. A transformation however seems inevitable. This transformation seems to be introduced by the mass do-it-yourself literature of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The do-it-yourself followers, value economy, work and independence, especially those who market themselves on a smaller scale, as DIY (practitioners) if one were to use such a terminology. These represent values associated with the PWE.

However what must be taken into consideration is the fact that the future of PWE is closely linked and associated as well as wholly integrated in general conservative beliefs and values. PWE will only decline if these general beliefs and values disappear. Closely associated with the PWE is a “wealth ethic”. Wealth is perceived as the basis for independence. Sufficient wealth would enable one to be

independent of others' support. Work (in whichever format) that produces capital growth is the only way to achieve this objective. There are still untapped dimensions pertaining to the PWE, but these will be sidelined for the present.

#### 3.5.4.2 Commitment versus satisfaction



Williams and Sandler (1995) studied the differences between a group of American managers (subscribing to the PWE) in comparison with a selected group of Singaporean managers (subscribing to Confucian Ethic) and state that the managers that adhere to a PWE are more committed to commitment while managers subscribing to a Confucian Ethic were more committed to satisfaction with work.

Satisfaction can be defined as the measure of pleasure that an individual experiences whilst performing a job. This measure of joy or pleasure is not limited to isolated cultures, but encompasses global worker satisfaction with specific satisfaction dimensions, e.g. satisfaction with pay, with working environment and circumstances, supervision (and management practice), advancement and promotional opportunities, co-workers (social dimension of interaction in the workplace). Locke, (1976) and Griffin and Bateman (1986), as quoted by Williams and Sandler (1995) have defined job satisfaction as a “pleasurable and positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or experiences”... Job satisfaction

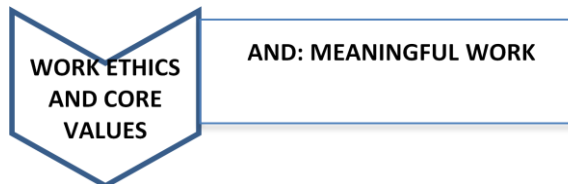
...is a global construct encompassing such facets of satisfaction as satisfaction with work, pay, supervision, benefits and promotion opportunities, working conditions, co-workers and organizational practices.

(The question arises why Asian countries have experienced capital growth as they have: Is it because of the so called Confucian Ethic that values intra- and

interpersonal harmony, hierarchy, family integrity, and kinship affiliation as well as individual responsibility (Hui 1992) is dominant in these countries, or could there be other reasons for this growth?)

Commitment measured by “...a scale developed by Porter and others” (Williams and Sandler 1995), measures an attitudinal posture.” It captures and reflects the “...relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in an organization” (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982, p. 27). The commitment, identification with and involvement in an organizational setting may be the result of the tendency of Protestant Ethics to accentuate individualism. The individual thus bases his/her choice on certain considerations, under girded by a certain set of values, and therefore cannot abandon his/her choice without substantive reasons. They thus feel morally obliged to their personal choice, committed to and responsible for their personal behaviour or actions.

### 3.5.4.3 Core values related to PWE

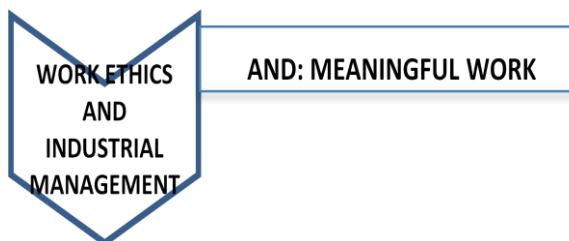


Now turning to a listing or perhaps a structure of PWE indicates the following core values:

- The Protestant Work Ethic believers differentiate between extrinsic and intrinsic needs and values;
- The assessment of the PWE among respondents in different studies furthermore identify the following core values:
  - Hard work as such is viewed as a moral value. This is closely linked with what Weber referred to as the Doctrine of Calling and the Doctrine of Predestination. The external signs of being one of the elect is in the measure of success achieved in work;
  - Work represents the fulfilment of earthly duties and is viewed as a calling;
  - The PWE accentuates individualism as a value that is imbedded in the Protestant theology, although this might be balanced with the collective

- calling of the Church in the world (this seems to be one of the dialectical moments in Protestant theology);
- Protestantism underlines personal responsibility in the intra-personal as well as the interpersonal (social) domains and work provides the framework for individual choice and work execution (i.e. work behaviour as an individual);
  - Rational and practical ascetism without falling into the trap of Catholicism's separation from worldly events. In the sense that is used by Weber, it refers to a practical devotional lifestyle that is open to the world and its realities;
  - It is tradition bound without ignoring the dynamics of change and adaptation in changing circumstances;
- PWE is not determined by nationality, but by cultural factors such as where the traditional and dominant religion is regarded as Protestant.

#### 3.5.4.4 Work Ethic and industrial management



The management of industries became more systematic and structured as increased competition forced factory owners to hold costs down. The model of management which developed, the *traditional model* (scientific management) was characterized by an authoritarian style which did not acknowledge work ethic. To the contrary, Daft and Steers (1986:93) described this model as holding "that the average worker was basically lazy and was motivated almost entirely by money". Workers were assumed to neither desire, nor to be capable of autonomous or self-directed work. As a result, the *scientific management* concept was developed, predicated on specialization and division of jobs into simple tasks. Scientific management claimed to increase worker production which resulted in increased remuneration. It was therefore seen as beneficial to workers, as well as

to the company, since monetary gain was viewed as the primary motivating factor for both.

As use of scientific management became more widespread in the early 1900's, it became apparent that factors other than pay were significant to worker motivation. Some workers were self-starters and didn't respond well to close supervision and others became distrustful of management when pay increases failed to keep pace with improved productivity (Daft and Steers, 1986). Although unacknowledged in management practice, these were indicators of continued viability of the work ethic in employees. By the end of World War II scientific management was considered inadequate and outdated to deal with the needs of industry (Jaggi, 1988). At this point the behaviourist school of thought emerged to provide alternative theories for guiding the management of workers. Contrary to the principles of scientific management, the behaviourists argued that workers were not intrinsically lazy. They were adaptive. If the environment failed to provide a challenge, workers became lazy, but if appropriate opportunities were provided, workers would become creative and motivated.

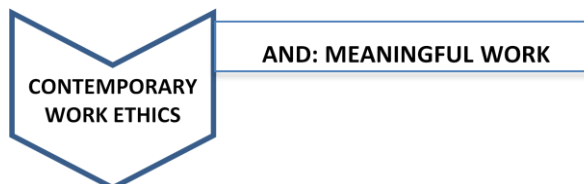
In response to the new theories, managers turned their attention to finding various ways to make jobs more fulfilling for workers. *Human relations* became an important issue and efforts were made to make people feel useful and important at work. Company newspapers, employee awards, and company social events were among the tools used by management to enhance the job environment (Daft and Steers, 1986), but the basic nature of the workplace remained unchanged. The adversarial relationship between employee and employer persisted.

In the late 1950's *job enrichment* theories began to provide the basis for fundamental changes in employer-employee relationships. Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) identified factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and personal growth which, when provided as an intrinsic component of a job, tended to motivate workers to perform better. Factors such as salary, company policies, supervisory style, working conditions, and relations with fellow workers tended to impair worker performance if inadequately provided for, but did not particularly improve worker motivation when present.

In 1960, when the concepts of theory "X" and theory "Y" were introduced by McGregor, the basis for a management style conducive to achieving job enrichment for workers was provided (Jaggi, 1988).

Jaggi (1988, p. 446) defines participatory management as "a cooperative process in which management and workers work together to accomplish a common goal". Unlike authoritarian styles of management, which provided top-down, directive control over workers who were assumed to be unmotivated and in need of guidance, participatory management asserted that worker involvement in decision making provided valuable input and enhanced employee satisfaction and morale. Yankelovich and Immerwahr (1984) describe participatory management as a system which would open the way for the work ethic to be a powerful resource in the workplace. They state, however, that the persistence of the traditional model in American management discouraged workers, even though many wanted to work hard and do good work for its own sake.

#### 3.5.4.5 Influences shaping the contemporary work ethic



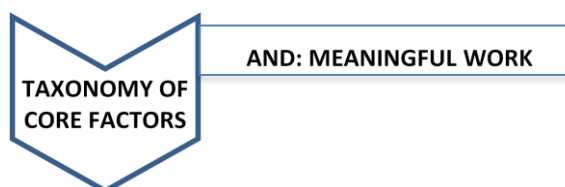
The Protestant Work Ethic is a cultural norm that places a positive moral value on doing a good job and is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value for its own sake (Cherrington, 1980; Quinn, 1983; Yankelovich & Immerwahr, 1984). Like other cultural norms, a person's adherence to or belief in the work ethic is principally influenced by socialization experiences during childhood and adolescence. Through interaction with family, peers, and significant adults, a person "learns to place a value on work behaviour as others approach him in situations demanding increasing responsibility for productivity" (Braude, 1975:, p. 34). Based on praise or blame and affection or anger, a child appraises his or her performance in household chores, or later in part-time jobs, but this appraisal is based on the perspective of others. As a child matures, these

attitudes toward work become internalized, and work performance is less dependent on the reactions of others.

Children are also influenced by the attitudes of others toward work (Braude, 1975). If a parent demonstrates a dislike for a job or a fear of unemployment, children will tend to assimilate these attitudes. Parents who demonstrate a strong work ethic tend to impart a strong work ethic to their children.

Another significant factor shaping the work attitudes of people is the socialization which occurs in the workplace. As a person enters the workplace, the perceptions and reactions of others tend to confirm or contradict the work attitudes shaped in childhood (Braude, 1975). The occupational culture, especially the influence of an "inner fraternity" of colleagues, has a significant impact on the attitudes toward work and the work ethic which form part of each person's belief system.

#### **3.5.4.6 Meaning of work: a taxonomy of core factors in comparison with PWE (adding the perspectives from Chalofsky and Terez)**



The following table presents taxonomy of perceived core factors pertaining to the Meaning of Work. Such taxonomy is developed by the combination of the core elements that have been identified in respect of the Meaning of Work.

**Table 3.6: Taxonomy of different value systems in relation to Chalofsky and Terez**

Work Value Type	Core individual value clusters		Core PWE Values	Management principles	Philosophical(Kantian) principles for meaningful work	Chalofsky and Terez
	Basic values	Core definitions				
<b>Self enhancement</b>	Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (social power, authority and wealth)	Accumulating wealth	Principle 8: Teams and job redesign  Principle 9: Training and skill development  Principle 10: Cross utilization and cross training	Meaningful work contributes to the <i>development of the rational capacity of employees</i>	Sense of self (Chalofsky)  Developing potential (Chalofsky)  Personal development (Terez)  Autonomy (Chalofsky)



	Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards (successful, capable, ambitious, influential)	Hard work Individualism	Principle 3: High wages Principle 4: Incentive pay Principle 5: Employee ownership	Meaningful work provides <i>adequate remuneration</i>  Meaningful work provides <i>for autonomy and independence</i>	Fulfilling one's purpose (Chalofsky)  Master one's performance (Chalofsky)  Validation (Terez)
	Hedonism	Pleasure and sensual gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life)	Fulfilment of earthly duties Vocation			Positive belief (Chalofsky)  Balancing career/work and rest of life (Chalofsky and Terez)  Service (Terez)



<p><b>Self transcendence</b></p>	<p>Universalism</p>	<p>Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (broadminded, wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment)</p>	<p>Individual and social responsibility Responsibility for the environment Social equality Peace</p>	<p>Principle 16: An overarching philosophy Principle 14: A long term perspective</p>		<p>Finding purpose (Chalofsky)</p>
	<p>Benevolence</p>	<p>Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact (helpful, honest forgiving, loyal, responsible)</p>	<p>Social responsibility Intra- and interpersonal harmony in the work place</p>	<p>Principle 11: Symbolic egalitarianism Principle 13: Promotion from within</p>		<p>Equality (Terez) Relationship building (Terez) Dialogue (Terez) Service (Terez) Respect (Terez)</p>

						Take care of self and others (Chalofsky)
<b>Conservation</b>	Tradition	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provides (humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect for tradition, moderate)	Tradition bound without ignoring the dynamics of change	Principle 2: Selectivity in recruiting		Flexibility (Terez)
	Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations	Postponement of satisfaction Thrift Frugality	Principle 12: Wage compression		Oneness (Terez)

		or norms (politeness, obedient, self-discipline, honouring parents and elders)				
	Security	Safety, harmony, stability of society, of relationships, and of self (family security, national security, social order, clean, reciprocation of favours)	Social responsibility	Principle 1: Employment security		
<b>Openness to change</b>	Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life (daring, a varied life an exciting life)	Tradition bound but doesn't reject life as such and is open to life's challenges  Rational and practical	Principle 15: The measurement of practices		Seeking learning, challenge creativity and growth (Chalofsky and Terez)



			ascetism			
	Self-direction	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating exploring(creativity, freedom, independent curios, choosing own goals)	Individualism Rational and practical ascetism	Principle 7: Participation and empowerment Principle 6: Information sharing		Fit (Terez) Bringing whole self to work (Chalofsky)

The following interpretation of Table 3.7 is proposed: Reading across the rows it is possible to associate the work value type with the individual core values and their description. As will be noted the Protestant core values are then associated with the individual values and in turn with the proposed management principles, with Kant's moral - philosophical perspective on meaningful work and lastly with the contributions by Chalofsky and Terez. The problem that presents itself is that there is a great measure of overlap between the different systems, which makes it extremely difficult to categorize the different concepts in water tight compartments and to present these compartments as the only possible measure of overlap or representativeness. Protestant Work Ethic, individual core work values, management principles, philosophical perspective, and the perspectives by Terez and Chalofsky on the **meaningful workplace** overlaps and intersect on many dimensions. For example one PWE identifier can be matched with different core values. The same applies to the management Principles when compared with the PWE values. Very much the same is applicable when the philosophical perspective is added to the picture; and when the contributions by Chalofsky and Terez are added to the equation. This study does not differentiate on statistical grounds between the different concepts and constructs. It is thus very debatable which belongs where and what the priority listing should be. What is however observable is that the work values that contribute to the understanding of meaningful work experiences are not only present in different systems and thought structures, but that these overlap to the extent that the concept meaning of work is redundantly supported from different perspectives.

Certain conclusions can be drawn:

- One obvious conclusion that can be drawn, is that the structure of values pertaining to meaningful work, are open-ended and therefore dependent on the particular paradigm that is applied to determine these. Work values that contribute to meaningful work are subject to influences from the social and economic environment as well as spiritual and religious system perspective. The pervading value of work values is that they are tolerant of differences; the primary focus being to discover what contributes to meaningful work and thus to

a construction of the **meaningful workplace**, firstly on a conceptual level and secondly with the respect to the practice of implementing and sustaining the **meaningful workplace**.

- It is a valid conclusion to state that the PWE, as an ethical system, is an identifiable and valid construct to which individuals subscribe, pending the cultural influence of Protestantism. It is not linked to nationality or ethnicity, neither is it linked to denominational orientation or, in general, to religious fervour. Atheists also subscribe to this value system (Furnham, 1984). This raises the question whether it is still valid to refer to Protestant Work Ethic; should the reference not be to a Work Ethic as such? This question will be left unanswered.
- It could be stated that the PWE is an ethical system that overlaps with other disciplines such as psychology, management and economic sciences, theology, anthropology, and sociology, which each in its own right presents principles and a value system of sorts. This indicates not only an overlap of principles between these different fields of study, and has as a value system, roughly been indicated to correspond with work value types, individual (human) core values, and management principles. All of these values are seated in individuals thus indicating a congruence of values within the individual. This serves as a measure of “wholeness”, thus prompting an argument towards the human as whole and holistically integrated. Fragmentation of the individual in terms of what is expected at work and what is expected outside of work, is nothing else than an attempt to alienate the individual employee from his/her own personal values, with the consequences that such an expectation has.
- PWE has its place in the world of work and as such acts a facilitating force for the individual employee to perform to the best of his/her ability, thereby fulfilling a spiritual based approach towards work.
- Individuals, who subscribe to the PWE, are more committed to the organization, provided management principles that create room for the *application of these values* are adhered to. It can be hypothesised that a conflict of values between the organization and the individual, who subscribes to the PWE, might result in emotional and psychological as well as productivity related alienated from the

- organisation and his/her work, which will lead to a loss of productivity by the individual, and if this widespread among employees, by the organization.
- Education can instil this work ethic thereby contributing to a higher productivity levels. This implies that the education system must provide for the transfer of this type of work ethic, and cultural and social orientation towards work as a meaningful life activity can be transferred in a structured and purposeful manner. The implications related to an educational approach could then lead to the sustaining of capitalism as an economic system as opposed to other economic systems.
  - By means of abductive reasoning it can further be inferred that the maintenance of a PWE by the individual can be identified with meaningful experiences within a work setting and, provided this ethic is sustained, to a **meaningful workplace**.

The Protestant Work Ethic is a cultural norm that places a positive moral value on doing a good job and is based on a belief that work has intrinsic value for its own sake (Cherrington, 1980; Quinn, 1983; Yankelovich & Immerwahr, 1984). Like other cultural norms, a person's adherence to or belief in the work ethic is principally influenced by socialization experiences during childhood and adolescence. Through interaction with family, peers, and significant adults, a person "learns to place a value on (positive) work behaviour as others approach him in situations demanding increasing responsibility for productivity" (Braude, 1975, p. 134). Vocational education, for example, has as a stated goal that it will promote the work ethic (Miller, 1985; Gregson, 1991). Reubens (1974) listed "inculcation of good work attitudes" as one of the highest priorities for high school education. In the absence of early socialization which supports good work attitudes, schools should not be expected to completely transform a young person's work ethic orientation, but enlightening students about what work ethic is, and why it is important to success in the contemporary workplace, should be a component of secondary education

Another significant factor shaping the work attitudes of people is the socialization which occurs in the workplace. As a person enters the workplace, the perceptions and reactions of others tend to confirm or contradict the work attitudes shaped in



childhood (Braude, 1975). The occupational culture, especially the influence of an *inner fraternity* of colleagues, has a significant impact on the attitudes toward work and the work ethic which form part of each person's belief system.

Furnham (1984) concludes that research (during his writing) of more than a decade confirmed the importance of PWE as an individual difference variable related to human motivation and, it should be added, based on the above, an important contributor to the concept of meaningful work. From this vantage point, ethical behaviour that originates from a religio-spiritual inclination or adherence contributes to the extension of the Meaningful Work Model by Chalofsky, as a religio-spiritual work ethic contributes to the integrated wholeness of the individual and informs a positive attitude towards work.

Figure 3.8 graphically indicates the comparison between the previous paragraphs (individual values and the meaning of work and PWE and the meaning of work) and the Meaning of Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky (2010). This comparison is a further indication of the possibilities that exist in literature to enhance the current thinking on the **meaningful workplace**. Only the different dimensions of individual work values and PWE will be listed in Figure 3.8 as Table 3.6 contains a detailed description of the different elements.

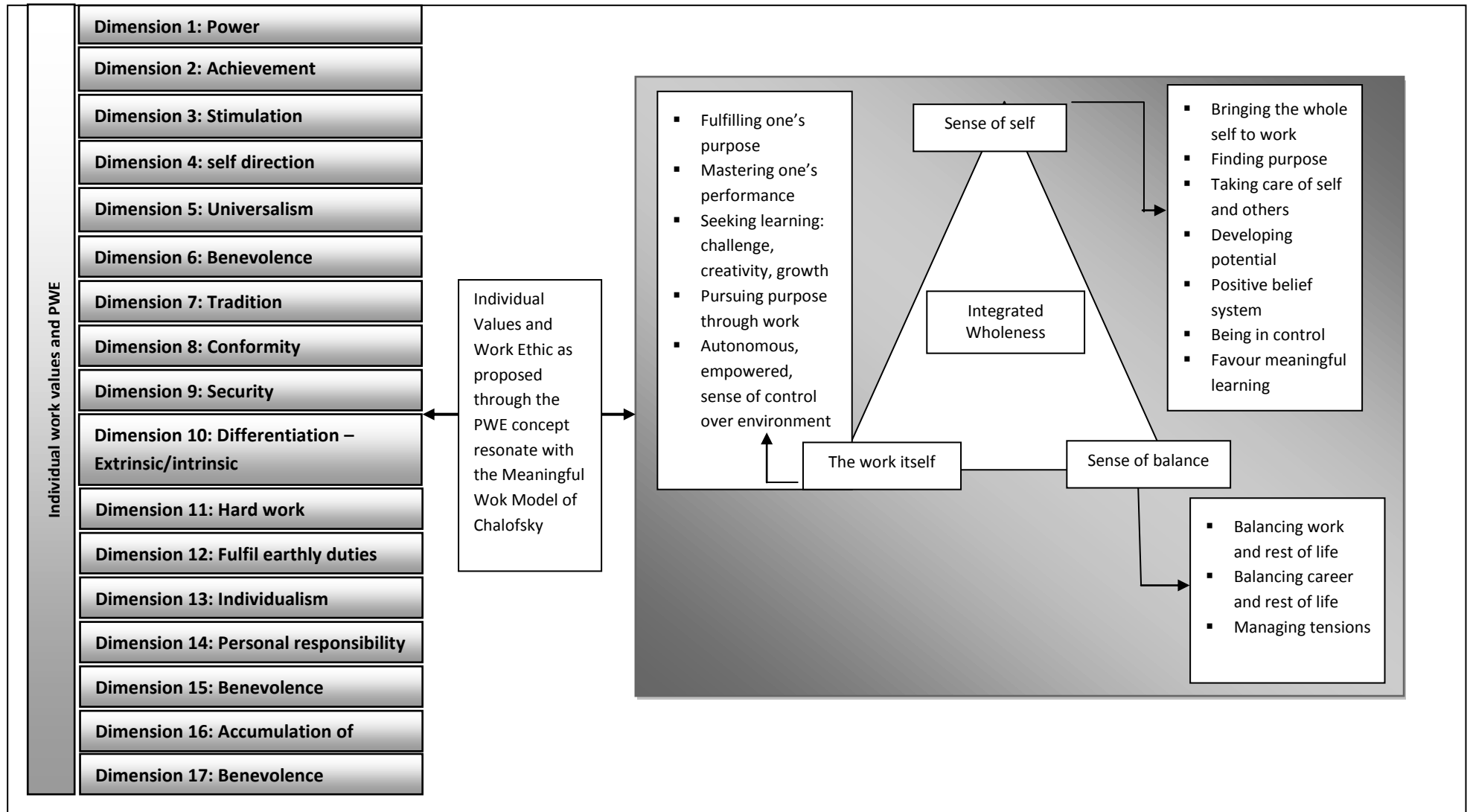
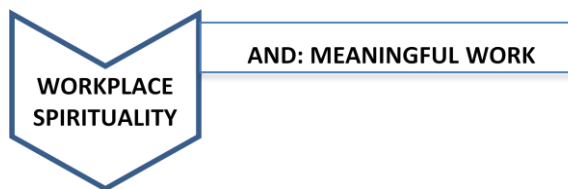


Figure 3.8: Individual values, work ethic (PWE) aligned with the meaningful work model of Chalofsky

It has previously been indicated that the works of Chalofsky and Terez are aligned in terms of content and the general mental model that underpin the two publications. It can safely be stated that there is a general symbiotic relationship between the works of the two authors. For this reason the further discussion will utilise the model of Chalofsky for comparative reasons. Figure 3.8 provides a graphic indication of the resonance between the Meaning of Work Model by Chalofsky (which at this juncture is viewed as inclusive of the 22 keys as proposed by Terez) and the discussion on values and the concept of PWE.

### 3.5.5 Workplace spirituality/spirituality at work



Spiritual beliefs and attitudes are there whether we acknowledge them or not. Even the most secular individual has views on the nature of humanity, on whether the world is essentially safe or hostile, on whether systems are naturally chaotic or ordered, and about how much our own agency or our circumstances determine our future (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 27).

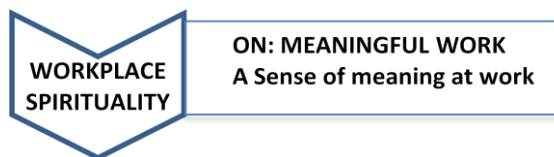
These remarks are made within the framework of the “bringing the whole self to work”. The whole self, in the mind of Chalofsky, is inter alia constituted by what is referred to as spirituality. This stance is supported by Milliman, Czaplewski and Ferguson (2003, p. 426) with the viewpoint that

...while workplace spirituality is considered a highly personal and philosophical construct, nearly all of the academic definitions acknowledge that spirituality involves a sense of wholeness, connectedness at work, and deeper values, (and can be defined as) the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community

Spirituality is discussed by Chalofsky (2010, p. 26) as an element of “bringing the whole self to work” which contributes to what he refers to as “integrated wholeness” which in turn constitutes the Meaning of Work model.

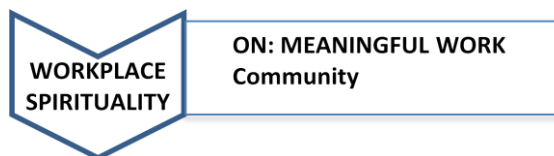
The dimensions of workplace spirituality according to Milliman et al (2003) include the following:

### 3.5.5.1 A sense of meaning at work



According to researchers a fundamental aspect of spirituality at work involves having a sense of meaning and purpose in one’s work, which represents the way that employees interact with their day-to-day work at the individual level. It also involves certain assumptions such as that every individual has his/her own motivational drive and ultimate truth based on the desire to be included in an activity space that makes sense. This assumption implies the desire to be involved in activities that give greater meaning to his/her life and the lives of others (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; Hawley, 1993) in Milliman et al. (2003). Work is meant to be multidimensional in that it should contribute to transcendence of the mundane in search of a deeper and more explicit purpose of life and of self actualization.

### 3.5.5.2 Community

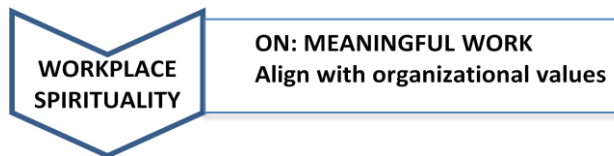


People seem to express a need or desire for connectedness in order to counter the effects of workplace alienation. A sense of community will inevitably arise out of the perception between employees that they share a common destiny in the workplace. The individual, in spite of the conservation of his/her uniqueness as individual, will seek shared destiny in his/her

connectedness with other individuals in the bigger unit. The interaction on a deeper level than the performance-of-work-related activities, articulates this need. Somehow the connectedness of the inner life of individuals with one another satisfies the need for community within the perceived shared reality of alienation of work life in the organization. Neal and Bennett (2000), note

That this level of spirituality involves the mental, emotional, and spiritual (e.g. “esprit de corps”) connections among employees in teams or groups in organizations. The essence of community is that it involves a deeper sense of connection among people, including support, freedom of expression, and genuine caring (In Milliman et al., 2003).

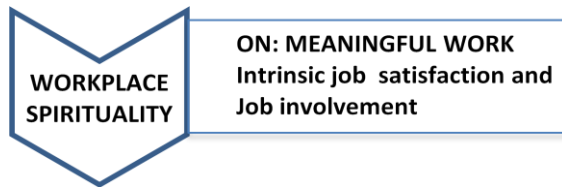
### 3.5.5.3 Alignment with organizational values



A third aspect of spirituality in the workplace is when individuals experience a strong sense of alignment between their personal values and their organization’s mission and purpose. This component of workplace spirituality encompasses the interaction of employees with the larger organizational purpose (Mitroff and Denton, 1999).

Alignment with the organization’s values is related to the premise that an individual’s purpose is larger than one’s self and should make a contribution to others or society. (A position that both Chalofsky and Terez stress) Alignment also means that individuals believe that managers and employees in their organization have appropriate values, have a strong conscience, and are concerned about the welfare of its employees and community (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Similarly, Hawley (1993) observed that “part of living by one’s inner truth involves working in an organization with integrity and a purpose that is beneficial to others beyond simply making a profit.” (Milliman et al., 2003, p. 429)

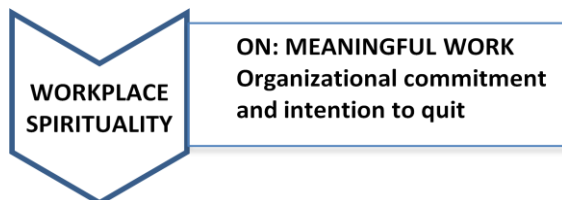
### 3.5.5.4 Intrinsic job satisfaction and job involvement



As a fourth dimension of workplace spirituality, intrinsic job satisfaction refers to the individual's attitude towards elements related to work, for example achievement, responsibility, advancement and growth. (See Herzberg, Mausner, Snyderman, 1959).

Involvement refers to the extent to which an individual identifies with his/her work role and the intensity of active participation in his/her work role. In this sense it translates into the perceived self-esteem of the individual's. Milliman et al. (2003) conclude their literature search into the dimensions of workplace spirituality with a number of hypotheses in respect of workplace spirituality.

### 3.5.5.5 Organization commitment and intention to quit



(The following is based on Milliman et al., 2003, Italics mine.) Commitment implies a sense of bonding with the organization whilst the intention to quit is indicative of a lack of such a bond and resolution of the individual to actively seek other employment.

#### Personal purpose and commitment

- Hypotheses 1a. The greater the *experience of personal purpose* and meaning in one's work, the greater the *organization commitment* of the individual;
- Hypotheses 1b. "The greater *sense of community* at work, the greater the *organization commitment* of the individual;

- Hypotheses 1c. The greater *the alignment* of one's personal values with organizational values, the greater the *organization commitment* of the individual;

#### **Personal purpose and intention to quit**

- Hypotheses 2a. The greater the *experience of personal purpose and meaning* in one's work, the *lesser the intention of the individual to quit* the organization;
- Hypotheses 2b. The greater *sense of community at work*, the *lesser the intention of the individual to quit* the organization;
- Hypotheses 2c. The greater the alignment of one's personal values with organizational values, the *lesser the intention of the individual to quit* the organization;

#### **Personal purpose, community and value alignment and intrinsic job satisfaction**

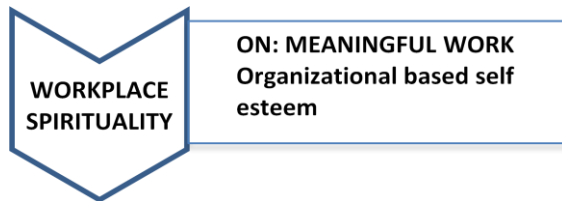
- Hypotheses 3a. The greater the *experience of personal purpose and meaning* in one's work, the *greater the intrinsic work satisfaction* of the individual;
- Hypotheses 3b. The greater *sense of community at work*, the *greater the intrinsic work satisfaction* of the individual;
- Hypotheses 3c. The greater the *alignment of one's personal values* with organizational values, the *greater the intrinsic work satisfaction* of the individual;

#### **Personal purpose, community and value alignment and job involvement**

- Hypotheses 4a. The greater the *experience of personal purpose and meaning* in one's work, the *greater the job involvement* of the individual;
- Hypotheses 4b. The greater sense of community at work, the *greater the job involvement* of the individual;

- Hypotheses 4c. The greater the *alignment of one's personal values* with organizational values, the *greater the job involvement* of the individual;

### 3.5.5.6 Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE)



Milliman et al (2003:432) assert that “OBSE concerns the degree to which individuals believe they satisfy their needs and have a sense of personal adequacy in their organizations. Employees with high OBSE are satisfied with their organizational role and see themselves as important, meaningful, respected, and worthwhile within their organization. OBSE has been found to be positively related to job performance, organizational satisfaction, citizenship behaviour, and organizational commitment.”

- Hypotheses 5a. “The greater the *experience of personal purpose and meaning* in one’s work, the greater the *organization- based self- esteem* of the individual.”
- Hypotheses 5b. “The greater *sense of community at work*, the greater the OBSE of the individual.”
- Hypotheses 5c. “The greater the *alignment of one’s personal values* with organizational values, the greater the OBSE of the individual.” (Italics added)

In conclusion Milliman et al. (2003, p. 440) make the following statement:

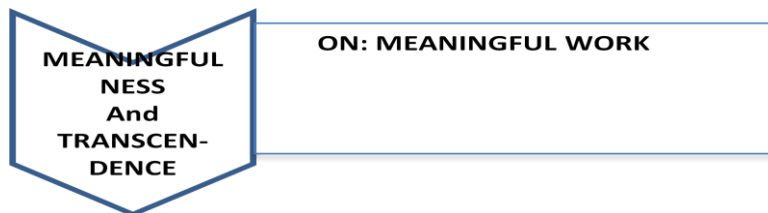
“This study has sought to address some of the limitations in past research on spirituality at work by using a more precise way to measure certain workplace spirituality dimensions, developing formal hypotheses on the relationships of these dimensions to key organizational behaviour goals, and employing a more rigorous empirical method to test the proposed relationships. The analysis



results are supportive of the hypothesized relationships between the spirituality dimensions examined and organization commitment; an individual's intention to quit; intrinsic work satisfaction; job involvement; and OBSE."

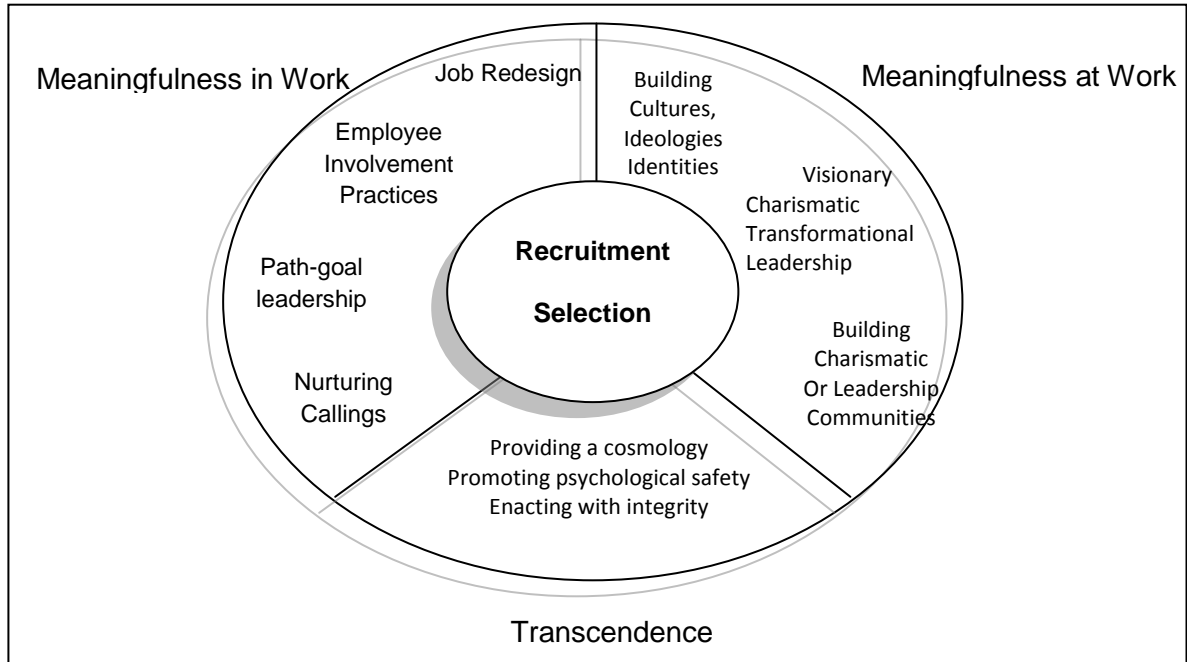
As has been mentioned (Chalofsky, 2010) views spirituality as a dimension of bringing the whole self to work together with the other factors that constitute the sense of self, which in conjunction with the dimension of "the work itself" and a "sense of balance" constitutes the meaningful work model. The previous paragraphs provide sufficient information from existing literature to indicate that the **meaningful workplace** is an emerging construct, specifically in this case regarding the concept Meaningful Work or Meaning of Work that has been identified as a feeder stream toward the construct.

### 3.5.6 Meaningfulness in working and transcendence



In addition to the literature addressing the *meaning of work* concept, there seems to be an emerging literature that actually pursues the concept of fostering meaning in working. Pratt and Ashforth (2003) (a worthy example of such theoretical grounding) for instance, distinguish between factors that foster meaningfulness *in* work and distinguish these from organizational practices that foster meaningfulness *at* work, and, in the third instance, identifies those factors that foster transcendence. An overview of the factors that foster meaningfulness in work and the factors that foster transcendence overlap with the foregoing discussion. Figure 3.9 is a conceptual representation of the framework within which Pratt and Ashforth, discuss meaningfulness or, the fostering of meaningfulness. Their theoretical position is meritorious and worthy of attention in the current context, as it not only creates a certain theoretical grounding that corroborates that which has been said, but also provides a framework for a positive approach in the creation or establishment of a

**meaningful workplace.** It is furthermore also aligned with the thinking of both Chalofsky and Terez in respect of the construct: A **Meaningful workplace.**

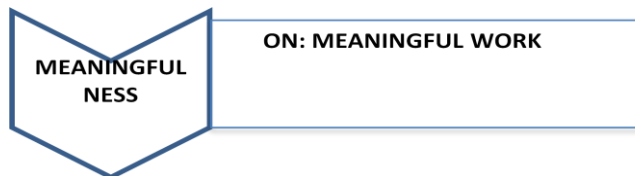


**Figure 3.9: Fostering Meaningfulness  
(Pratt and Ashforth, 2003)**

A brief overview of two of the dimensions (fostering meaningfulness in working and fostering transcendence) will demonstrate the relevance of the model and the theoretical underpinning thereof. Such an overview will self evidently also reveal the close relationship with the mental model of Chalofsky's Meaningful Work Model. The merit of the Pratt and Ashforth model is to be found in the fact that it addresses a psychological dimension which at this juncture in current study fulfils an important function as it not only further enhances the Meaningful work Model of Chalofsky but also creates resonating platform for the discussion that follows later on in respect of the concept meaning at work, that forms the counterpart of the concept meaning in work. These two concepts (meaning of work and meaning at work) will eventually be moulded together into a compatible and consistent extended theory of the **meaningful workplace.** In a sense the Pratt and Ashforth model (2003) also fulfils the role of providing the transition between meaning in work/meaningful work and meaning at work.

### 3.5.7 Fostering meaningfulness in working

“Work is about a daily search for meaning as well as daily bread; for recognition as well as cash; for astonishment rather than torpor; in short for a sort of life, rather than a Monday-to-Friday sort of dying” (Terkel, 1984).



It seems, according to Pratt and Ashforth (2003:320) that “practices that best typify meaningfulness in working are those that nurture callings”. Factors such as job redesign, and employee involvement practices, if they allow for opportunities and provide resources will of necessity foster meaningfulness at work.

Job redesign and employee involvement practices “may foster ‘flow experiences’ that dissolve the barriers between self and work thereby allowing employees to come to the full expression of what is best for them” (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003, p. 321).

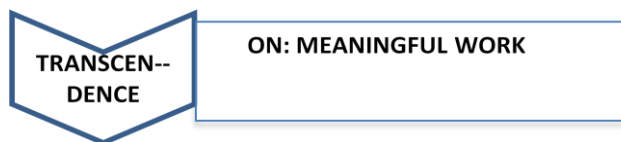
Such practices require a particular mode or type of management/leadership style which is referred to as path-goal-leadership. (Management and leadership style are both included in the same sentence although a distinction is drawn in literature. The reason for this in this study being that the primary focus is not on the differentiation between management and leadership, but to convey the message that style is important and furthermore, that in many instances management and leadership are seen as two sides of the same coin.)

Path-goal-leadership has as its primary focus the dissolution/suspension of performance obstacles, and is thus viewed as a typology of the way in which the links between performance and effort or energy expenditure should/could/must be established.

These practices form the basis for the establishment of a sense of calling and thus meaningfulness in working. An example of the establishment of a sense of calling is when the employee perceives high task significance as a result of job redesign

(Pratt and Ashforth 2003). Work that is viewed as a calling is viewed as socially valuable – an end in itself – involving activities that may be, “but need not be pleasurable” (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003, p. 320). The articulation of the link between work and a valued purpose fosters a sense of calling, according to Pratt and Ashforth (2003). This perspective resembles Hackman and Oldham’s (1980) perspective on task significance. If the value and purpose that work adds can be articulated, a sense of calling can be fostered and nurtured.

### 3.5.8 Fostering transcendence



Transcendence is closely associated with the workplace as spiritual space and will not be discussed further in this chapter. Suffice to say that Pratt and Ashforth discuss transcendence under category headings such as “providing a cosmology”, “promoting psychological safety” and, “enacting with integrity”.

it is safe to state that this short overview as introduction to Pratt and Ashforth’s model (2003) on fostering meaningfulness is not far removed from the emerging literature regarding meaningfulness at work, and more specifically the alignment between Chalofsky and Terez on the **meaningful workplace**.

### 3.5.9 Summary: Extended Meaningful Work Model

This paragraph aims at expanding the Meaning of Work Model as proposed by Chalofsky. The Meaningful Work model as presented, consisting of the three dimensions, i.e. “sense of self, sense of balance” and “the work itself”, represents integrated wholeness which is viewed as the one crucial dimension of a **meaningful workplace**, the other dimension being those dimensions that resort in the workplace itself.

Based on the foregoing discussion regarding spirituality in the workplace, moral philosophy, individual values and the PWE, the research of the Meaning of Work

project team, and fostering meaningfulness in working and transcendence, the Meaning of Work model as proposed by Chalofsky (2010) can be enhanced and extended by adding the dimensions as listed and discussed in the previous paragraphs.

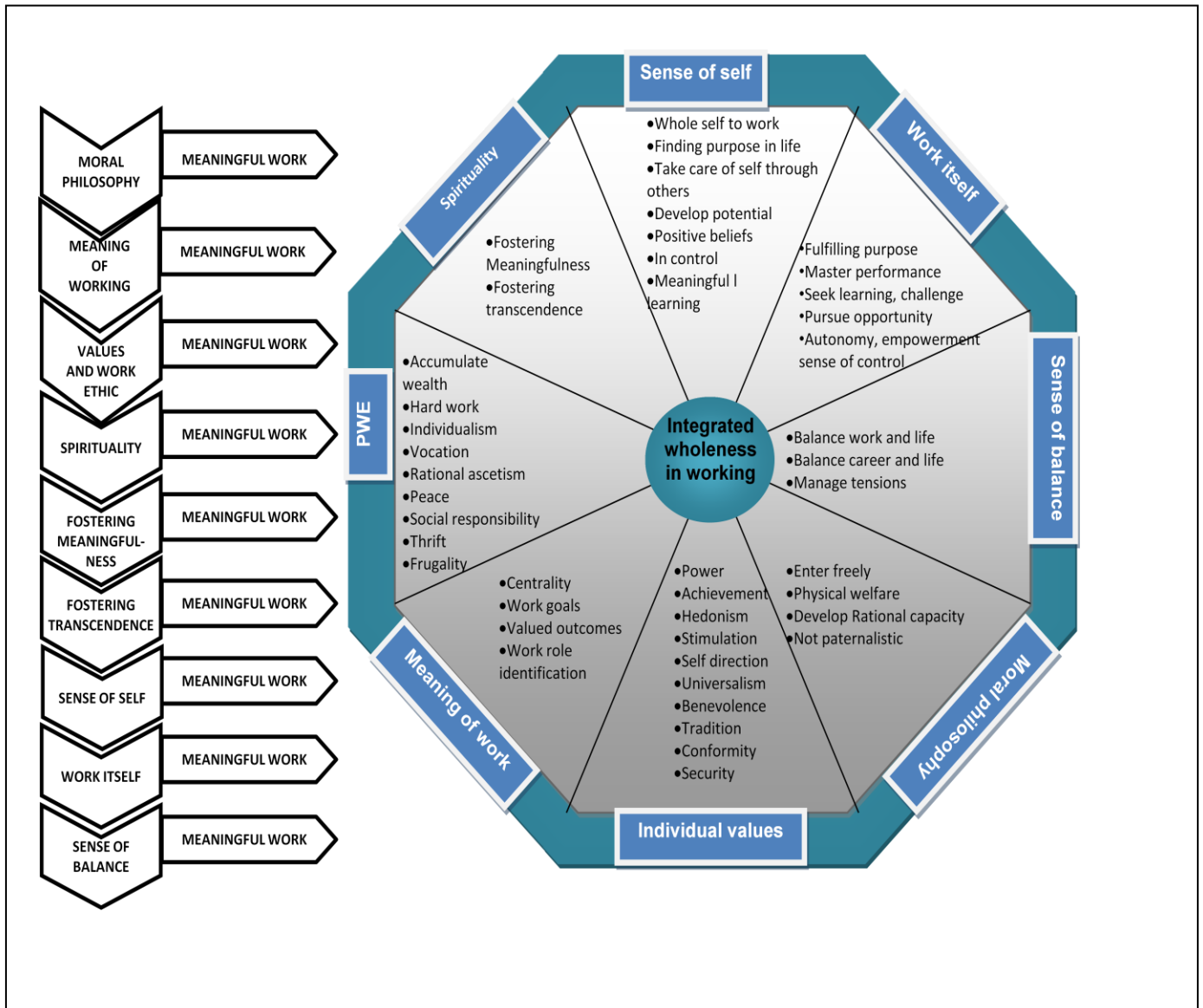


Figure 3.10: An Extended Meaning of Work Model

Figure 3.10 concludes paragraph 3.5 in which the different dimensions of meaningful work/meaning in working/meaning of work was discussed as indication that the **meaningful workplace** is an emerging construct in literature, although it is not necessarily referred to as such. The different dimensions that were discussed resonate with the mental model and work of Chalofsky (2010) according to which meaningful work/meaning in working/meaning of work is a macro constitutive dimension of this particular construct.

A workable distinction in the meaning derived *from* or *at* work is drawn by Haughey (2000) and Thompson (2000) as quoted by Van Jaarsveld (2004, pp. 23, 24). According to Van Jaarsveld, Haughey (2000) distinguishes between the immanent meaning and the transcendent meaning of work. Immanent refers to "...those motivators that are part of immediate experience, personal concerns, and ordinary reality of our world". Immanent meaning is grounded in the secular – and observable – aspects of human existence ranging from the monetary dimensions to a sense of competence, including status, family security, achievements etc. For Thompson on the other hand, transcendent refers to the holy – "the things of God as well as any time that we find our horizons broadening to include interest beyond our own, principles beyond self interest, and powers beyond those of the visible world..." Be this as it may, we now turn to the discussion on the Meaning at Work.

In addition to the Meaningful Work Model that has been presented above, a Meaningfulness at Work Model will be construed in the following paragraphs. The two models (Meaningful Work Model and Meaningfulness at Work Model) will eventually be integrated to construe an integrated model that will eventually be referred to as: The **meaningful workplace** Model.

### **3.6 PROCESS FLOW 2: MEANING AT WORK: A MACRO CONSTITUTIVE DIMENSION OF THE CONSTRUCT: A MEANINGFUL WORKPLACE**

The concept workplace is not only a geographical description but a concept underpinned by a wealth of insight pertaining to the dynamic nature thereof. The

workplace is here presented as dynamic space wherein which individual and organization meets and interact thereby enabling the theoretical construction of the concept under discussion. Once again an eclectic approach will be followed because it is simply not possible to exhaust the discussion in respect of its dynamics. It is imperative to bear in mind that this study cannot and does not intend to create a so-called unified and/or grand theory of the construct as it is deemed impossible. It merely adds to what has emerged as an emerging construct and conceptual framework. The approach in this paragraph is to describe those elements or dimensions that will contribute towards an understanding of the concept *workplace* and in doing so, to contribute to baseline theory that can be expanded on in future.

The construct: **Meaningful workplace** is a value laden expression which on its own evokes differences of interpretation and value-constructs in the minds of readers. Once again the model as proposed by Chalofsky (2010) in “Section Two, **meaningful workplaces**” is followed in broad terms and used as a baseline model, but enhanced or expanded by means of relevant insights from literature. The following paragraphs are a further extension of the question whether the construct: **meaningful workplace** is an emerging construct.

The following discussion should not be viewed or thought of in isolation from the specific context i.e. the environment; that is the time-space continuum within which certain activities are performed, which are normally referred to as work.

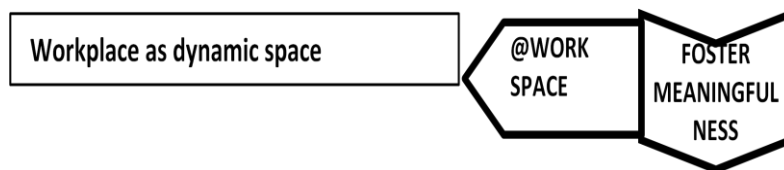
The following paragraphs explore the workplace or the organizational space as the context within which employee are lead to experienced meaningfulness through the organizationally induced dimensions or interventions.

Previously the Pratt and Ashforth model was presented and one of the dimensions discussed. The two remaining dimensions “Meaningfulness at Work”, and “Fostering Transcendence” is here utilised for the discussion of the concept meaning at work as the second macro constitutive dimension of the **meaningful workplace**. (The same figure as was presented as Figure 3.9 is again used, but renumbered as Figure 3.11 to indicate both continuity as well as distinction between the two macro dimensions that constitute a **meaningful workplace**.)



The discussion at this point angles towards what can be done within organizations to foster **Meaningfulness @ Work** thereby, not only populating this particular macro constitutive dimension with content, but also noting the possible actions that can be initiated within organizations to establish a **meaningful workplace**.

### 3.6.1 The workplace as dynamic space



On face value the concept *workplace* can be interpreted as an enclosed geographically identifiable venue, but it does not primarily or necessarily refer to a cartographic situatedness, although this can also be true. The intent here is to refer to the cognitive mapping process of the individual in relation to his/her workplace. The life of any individual comprises a myriad of spatial behaviours (Kitchin and Blades 2002) including the way in which we negotiated our way through our world from infancy to adulthood. Travelling to school; to an institution for tertiary study; travelling to our workplace and negotiating our way (i.e. directing our attention and energy towards goal achievement); long distance travelling for business purposes, etc. does not imply geographical space only. To make decisions we rely not on further external directions but on our spatial understanding of the world. We thus occupy space and this happens in relation to the expenditure of energy to fully occupy our spatial situatedness. The underlying process can be referred to as the cognitive mapping process of the individual. The cognitive mapping process and ability, is deemed to be in the domain of public knowledge of spatial and environmental relationships including the cognitive processes which are associated with the encoding and retrieving of information from which it is comprised (Kitchin and Blades, 2002) and that underpins the process. All workplaces can be geographically determined. However not all workplaces are enclosed spaces where people enter into and remain in the venue for the duration of what they have to complete during the time they have to or choose to spend there.



According to Arefi (1999, p. 179) “A narrative of loss characterizes the literature of place today: specifically, the loss of proper connection between places and the loss of meaning”.

Although this statement is made within the context of urban design it nevertheless underlines an important issue in modern society. Arefi (1999, p. 189) continues by stating that

The contemporary discourse on place has been substantially transformed in the last few decades. This transformation has encompassed both the production and the meaning of place, which have been largely influenced by modernity and globalization. While the impact of modernity on place has led to its ‘commodification’ and ‘devaluation’, globalization (Sack, 1992) has further called its credibility into question (Agnew, 1984, 1987). The debate over the credibility and importance of place had divided scholars into two groups: some have proposed its demise (Toffler, 1970), whereas others hold that place still matters (Massey & Allen, 1984; Shuman, 1998).

“Place” signifies different things to different people and societies. Scale variations encompass places as big as *country* or as small as a specific neighbourhood or private environment such as home or land. The meaning and purpose also signify different things to different people. It can denote emotional or cultural values and manifests in identity with or of a group, nation etc. It can also signify a place of economic endeavour. The notion of *space* has changed its character from ‘coherent, bounded and settled’ and has shifted to one of a diluted, diffused ‘space of flows’ that is unbounded and stretched out, thus a psychologically linked perspective. Castells, in Arefi (1999, p. 80). In this study the interest and focus is in and on the *sense* of place or people’s attachment to or their conception of space, specifically the workspace. It is assumed that space implies some activity that somehow contributes to the creation of meaning or the loss thereof, thus the sense that space creates in the mind of the occupier. The loss of meaning in the modern work space is the result of loss of connectedness between the perceived sense of

space and the experience of sterile and clinical non space cluttered by high tech infrastructure that creates a sterile environment. What are the factors that can reinstate the sense of meaning in the work place of today and engender a sense of meaning and the experience of meaningfulness whilst performing work related tasks in workspace?

The *workplace* as a concept includes many different and very obvious dimensions that have been identified over many decades and which are deemed to be in the domain of public knowledge. These dimensions are briefly discussed below prior to attempting a “working definition”.

A *cognitive map* is simply a very handy expression to refer to the information which a person uses in filling space whether the space being life space, family space, social space, work space, mental space, or personal space, relationship space of different kinds (e.g. as parent, marriage partner, student, religious person, work person, etc.), or work space. Although this study does not primarily focus on the process of cognitive mapping by individuals in the workspace, it does lean toward the cognitive maps that do exist. It does intend to identify theoretical traits that can, when applied, contribute to a positive cognitive map and mapping process based on a certain type of awareness, i.e. to experience the workspace as meaningful. For this reason it is deemed necessary to understand the dynamics of the workspace and to identify the underlying factors that will, if given the opportunities to surface, contribute towards the experience of meaning and thus facilitate productive work-role behaviour. A **meaningful workplace** can, from this perspective be viewed as the cradle for productivity and organisational success. The relationship between environment and behaviour based on the bases of the cognitive mapping process and the resultant cognitive map, resulting from the spatial reasoning process of the individual, cannot be severed. The spatial reasoning process includes not only a cognitive reasoning process but also a psychological awareness process and includes such factors as perception, motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), impression formation, mental image construction, and a value system construction of and within the workplace. It is thus a necessary requirement to understand the workplace as dynamic space, within which the individual or group can form meaningful

impressions and experience meaning in the workplace whilst performing work role functions and activities.

The world of work is changing and so is the elementary approach of breaking work down into small parts, which are then clustered in such a manner as to constitute a job. In the same breath, it must also be said that people don't work for the same reasons that people worked for 20, 10, 15, or even 5 or so years ago.

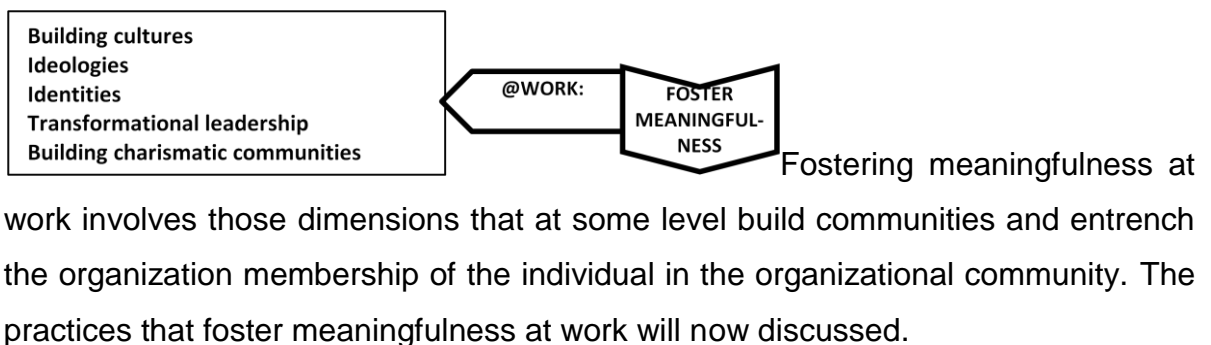
The definition of a **meaningful workplace** requires an understanding of the changing face of the workplace in the year 2000 AD and beyond. It is an environment characterised by certain phenomena that have an influence from management decision making, right down to the individual choices that people make regarding their attitude toward work.

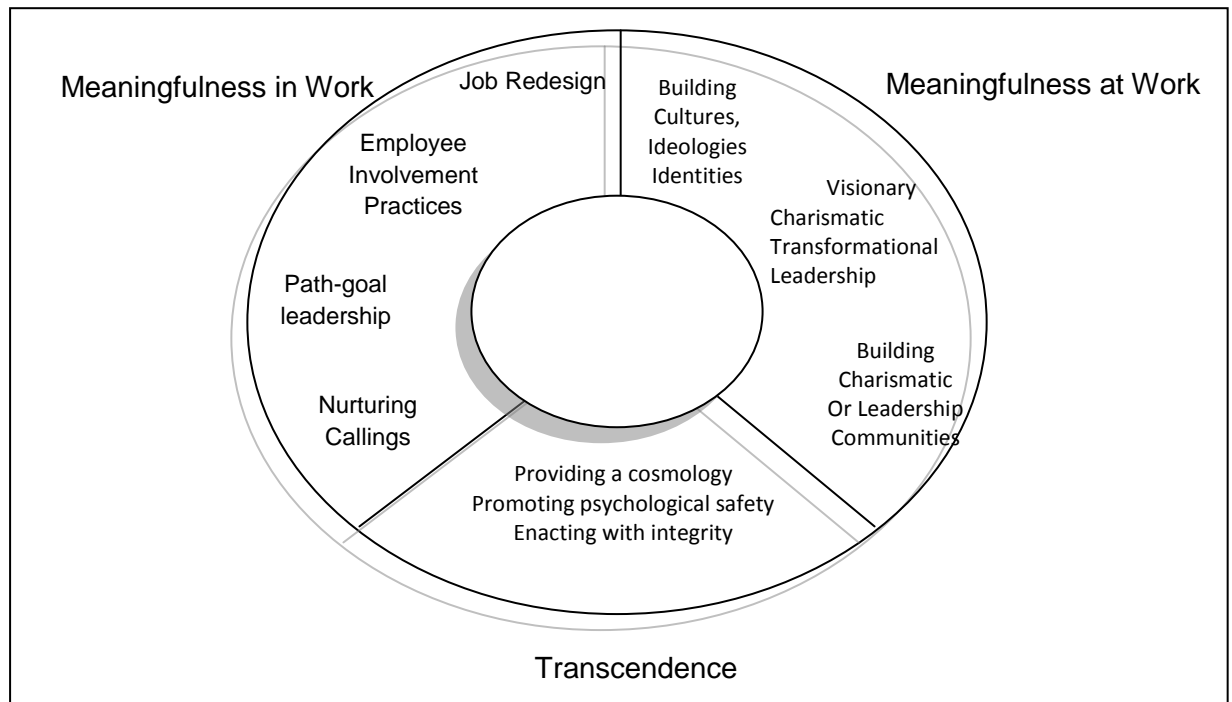
Local networks and the intranet influence managerial decision making; the way in which communication flows from top to bottom and back up again; influence organization structure and serve as the nodal points for the coordination and control activities thereby reducing the needs for "support" divisions such as Human Resource and Finance sections but rather requires a partnership relationship within a community forming environment. Decision making is centralised and operational execution decentralised; structure layers are taken out resulting in flatter organizations with a wider span of control; the balance of power in organizations is changing; access to information is more readily available except in circumstances where employees are purposefully blinded and deafened by information black-out procedures; the virtual team is a reality and employees can in effect work from home, monitored by the same technology that is used to enable virtual reality, etc.

In this process new organizational forms and forums emerge that are more and more reliant on the individual and self discipline that he or she can muster to remain committed and motivated to work in. This does not imply the end of the team or the end of the bigger group, but it does most definitely imply an employee that is more self-reliant and one that can shuttle between individualism and complete integration in a team or bigger group to achieve work related outputs of high quality in time and on budget.

What, in this paradoxical organization constitutes meaningfulness? Two presumed outcomes of the experience of meaningfulness in the workplace can be described as productive and effective work role behaviour. In addition it would also be possible to use concepts such as engagement, involvement, and commitment etc. to describe the effects of a **meaningful workplace** in the work life of an individual. How is this achieved? The following discussion approaches the workplace as a time-space-event continuum filled with diverse dimensions that somehow influence the individual employee. It is noteworthy to remember that this discussion is merely exploratory in nature so as to create an initial working definition of the construct: A **meaningful workplace**.

### 3.6.2 Fostering meaningfulness at work



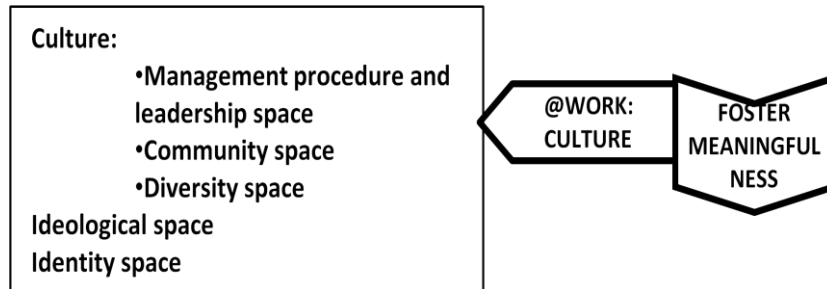


**Figure 3.11: Fostering meaningfulness**  
**(Pratt and Ashforth, 2003)**

Fostering meaningfulness at work and a so called corporate identity are what (Alvesson, 1990) refers to as the ideational dimensions of organizational life. Building cultures, creating visions and corporate ideologies can create a sense of meaning through resonating with member's identities (Shamir, House and Arthur 1993) and transform the way in which members of the organization view their membership within the bigger whole. This to a certain extent is akin to what is being said about "culture and management space", (where it is stated that culture has to do with conformity as defined by those in power). Whether the practices focus on promoting the goals of the organization or whether focuses on changing the relationship among members, both eventually accomplish "...indoctrinating members into a particular set of beliefs..." which "...often changes how members relate to each other and to non-members" (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003, p. 317). Although such a statement might carry truth based on observation, this not the intent here. Culture here is seen as the all encompassing dynamic within an organization that can be described as an environment conducive to experiencing meaningfulness.

The different categories will be discussed below and the content of Chalofsky will be added as additional content and enrichment of the meaning at work.

### 3.6.2.1 Culture building, the creation of ideologies and identities



## Culture

The expression “organisational culture” refers to the shared assumptions based on values and ethical systems relating to behaviour, which are taken for granted, and which influence the perceptions and reactions of employees to different environments within an organisation (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2001). This statement is overly simplistic in its approach and its assumptions. The *culture process or the activity of culturing* is much more complex than indicated here and deserves an expansive treatment on its own. Mcilwee and Robinson (1992) refer to culture as a phenomenon which is concerned with conformity. Values and norms vary from one workplace to another and from one occupation to another. Culture complexity originates, or culture space is created, in the first line of social contact and work behaviour where different specialist or occupational groups share the same workplace.

Underlying them all, however, is the demand for conformity to the culture as defined by those in power. Conformity is deployed through interaction and impression management. That is, it is more important to appear to conform to a culture than to actually do so. “That appearance of course, must be in culturally accepted forms” (Mcilwee and Robinson, 1992, p. 38).

Culture, ideology and corporate identity, are what (Alvesson, 1990) refers to as the ideational dimensions of organizational life. Building cultures, creating visions and corporate ideologies (can) create a sense of meaning through resonating with member's identities (Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993) and transform the way in which members of the organization view their membership within the bigger whole.

Whether the practices focus on promoting the goals of the organization or whether focus on changing the relationship among members, both eventually accomplish "...indoctrinating members into a particular set of beliefs..." which "...often changes how members relate to each other and to non-members" (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003, p. 317).

The ideational events in corporate life (such as creating visions and building ideologies) are structured phenomena that have the purpose of producing effects on the impressions and perceptions of employees (and society). Such events are referred to as pseudo-events, -structures and -actions by Alvesson (1990). These actions or activities define a certain required type of reality which either changes the nature of relationships in the work place, or that promote the goals, vision, values and beliefs of employees in the organizational setting. Vision and collective identities make membership of the organization meaningful.

This is held to be true in general terms, but according to Chalofsky a specifically defined type of culture is a necessity for a **meaningful workplace**. The type of culture that supports a **meaningful workplace** is specified as a "values based culture" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 93). In broad terms this type of culture results in the following: "corporations that put people before profits outperform businesses whose primary goal is to make money". A balanced perspective between people and revenues/profits is what builds a reputation in society; thereby attracting more talented people.

The Families and Work Institute (in Chalofsky, 2010, p. 101) found that quality of workers' jobs and the supportiveness as characteristics of the workplace were more significant as predictors of "job satisfaction, commitment to their employer and retention", thereby indicating that job and workplace are in actual fact far more important than pay and benefits.

It is however prudent to also apply caution and qualification when discussing workplace culture. When culture is subjected to normative norms and management colonizes organizational culture then culture itself is transformed into a mechanism for manipulation.

Culture has turned from being ... a process embedded in context to an objectified tool of management control (Wright, 1994, p. 4). According to Strangleman and Roberts (1999, p. 49), recent managerial literature describes the role of the manager as no longer simply to co-ordinate the work tasks of employees; managers are also required to set the stage and write the script for the value system and culture that is to be acted out by their workforce (Ezzy 2001, p. 633).

Thus culture could become design for the manipulation of subjectivity. Chalofsky follows a different route when referring to culture. Organizations should endeavour to create a values based culture, which is sustained by concomitant dimensions that support such a culture. The dimensions that are deemed to be of importance are discussed below.

### **The workplace as management procedures and leadership space (visionary, charismatic and transformational leadership)**

Reflecting on the impact of leadership on organizational life, Lagace, in conversation with Podolny, Khurana, and Hill, Popper (2005), notes that the link between leadership and meaning-making has been lost in modern organizational science. Contemporary scholars, organizations, and writers alike relate the value of leadership to economic/financial bottom-line results. The tendency originated after WW II based on two possible reasons. The first reason relates to the tendency that values and purpose are no longer important concepts, especially if there is little evidence that they impact performance. A second reason is that social processes involving meaning-making are complicated phenomena and difficult to quantify using the standard techniques of social science research. Beginning in the 1960s,



organizational scholarship - like social science more broadly - turned rather resolutely away from theory toward statistical research and developed an intense preoccupation with narrowly circumscribed empirical studies. When compared to the more easily quantified indicators of economic performance, difficult-to-quantify constructs like meaning-making seem less useful as an analytical construct. Put more crudely, return on investment makes for a more traceable dependent variable than meaning.”

Does this however mean that there is no connection between leadership and meaning-making in the corporate environment? Leaders are required to creating meaning. It is the leader in and of the organization who acts as catalyst and example of behaviour which is followed by employees.

The need for meaning and a sense for order, Podolny et al. (2005) indicate is a universal need. It is a need that is deeply linked to the definition of what it means to be human. Pretending that this need does not exist or trying to suppress it - as scientific management tried to do in the early part of the century - will only make it come back with a vengeance. Sometimes it does so in relatively benign forms, such as small acts of nonconformity. But it can also emerge more brutally and with quite dysfunctional consequences. Without meaning, individuals tend to become rigid and hollow. Society itself seems shallow and lifeless. People go through the motions, and do so amid distrust, cynicism, indifference, and a sense of alienation.

### **Building charismatic or leadership communities**

Individuals have a need to belong. The belonging of society members, which once was based on the social environment such as the family, religious bodies, schools, clubs, etc., has been replaced by the organization and the corporate body. The advent of the corporation and the massive production units have alienated the individual and created a loss of meaning. The social domain of work – where the individual spends the majority of his/her waking hours – has now become the context for relationships, albeit of a different kind. It seems that where organizations

purposefully employ community building practices, meaning is simultaneously created. This creates space for individuals to express more of who they are in the work environment. (This aspect was addressed in Chapter 3 under the heading “The workplace as spiritual-space.”)

The workplace is cluttered with so called hard measures that direct the activities of the individual according to the organisations’ strategies, goals, and objectives. This is achieved through job design and structure, the structuring of job families, remuneration and reward schemes, other benefits as directed by policies and procedures, organizational rules and procedures, etc. In Chapter 1 these measures or procedures were referred to as the so-called *hard-measures* which have their origins in the scientific approach to management and a modernistic approach and which have become the norm in the discussion of Organization Behaviour.

The fundamental question regarding the managerial activities and their impact on employees pertains to the measure of power by managers and the concomitant retention or loss of dignity by workers. Hodson (1996) investigated this particular problem and concluded that “High management power, based on rule by fiat, creates an absence of mutually agreed upon norms that have currency with workers. This type of workplace is associated with low pride and reduced dignity for workers. Such workplaces can be based on direct supervision, assembly-line technology, or bureaucracy. All three of these organizations of work undermine positive task-related and co-worker-related aspects of work. In contrast, craft and participative organizations of work include a negotiated normative basis for work procedures that holds some currency with workers. Solidarity among workers appears to increase in some participative workplaces. This solidarity may not be a reaction to abuse and indignity as it is in anomic workplaces, but may be the early stages of a more proactive worker strategy reminiscent of the solidarity found under craft organizations of production.” (This matter will discussed further later on in this chapter.)

The workplace and the place of the individual is determined and fixed by the implementation of policies, procedures, work instructions, job descriptions or work role descriptions and definitions, remuneration, rewards, benefits, formal structures

and reporting lines and the associated protocols, etc. This represents the domain of the formal management interventions and mostly reflects the transactional dimensions of the workplace experience. The underlying perspectives were discussed in Chapter 1 and will not be repeated here.

As a value driven culture it is asserted that values based leadership serves as a conduit towards a **meaningful workplace**. Chalofsky (2010) refers to and discusses “servant leadership” as the idealised profile to facilitate the conditions that could lead to the **meaningful workplace**. Without going into a detailed discussion of servant leadership it is sufficient to list the characteristics that serve the idealised profile of servant leaders. These include:

- Listening
- Empathy
- Healing
- Awareness
- Persuasion
- Conceptualisation
- Foresight
- Stewardship
- Commitment to the growth of people
- Building community

Chalofsky states two important matters regarding leadership. On the one hand it is stated that “strong leadership does not have within itself the capability to create the fundamental changes our organizations require” (2010, p. 99). This is as a result of the way in which Organizational- Management Theory has framed the role of leaders. On the other hand it is also stated that “leadership can and should be seen as a crucial but equal role to the other technical, administrative, and professional roles in the organization”.

## The workplace as community space

The discussion here focuses on the possibility of creating the conditions for community. Why is the dimension of “community” in the workplace an important dimension that supports the construct: **Meaningful workplace**? Manion and Bartholomew (2004) refer to the need by humans for community in strong terms referring to this need as a “yearning”. Referring to the American context, they assert that the average American has added at least one additional month to their working year. (Whether this is true and whether this assertion can serve as a broad generalization needs to be seen. Here it is not accepted without due cognizance of the different contexts within which such observations is embedded.) What does seem to be a general observation across the globe is that people generally have less discretionary time and have thus become alienated from those institutions that provide community formation in society (note previous discussions in this regard). “Social scientists explain the yearning for community as a reaction to decades of individualism” (Manion et al., 2004, p. 47).

Community is a form of human association that binds people. It is far more than simply a group of people living or working together who share common interests and projects. It is a psychological reality, an act of will that constructs a tie that really binds (Manion and Bartholomew, 2004, p. 47). According to Rousseau in Manion et al (2004, p. 47) “community is a social reality and our motives determine whether it happens or not.”. “Workplace community”, according to Naylor, Willimon and Osterberg (date unknown, p. 42), “is a partnership of free people committed to the care of each other’s minds, body, heart and soul through participatory means”. Community, according to these authors is about cooperation, sharing, commitment, communication, trust, justice, empowerment, adaptability, and tension reduction.

This perspective does not mean that community as a dimension of values based culture is without stumbling blocks. Naylor et al. (date unknown) assert that there are many stumbling blocks in the process of creating workplace community which include factors such as unabashed individuals, narcissism, authoritarianism, excessive inequality, distrust, alienation, competing interests, dependency, and size.

## The elements of community

Workplace community is a multifaceted phenomenon in organizations.

- Community is characterized by an attitude of inclusiveness as opposed to exclusivity. It is an attempt to continuously expand itself and to include new members. This is however not an absolute, simply because there might be reasons to exclude certain individuals.
- “Commitment is a second key aspect of community” (Manion et al., 2004, p. 48). The commitment of individuals binds them to the group and which in itself contains an element of sacrifice in the sense of giving something up. The sacrifice will most probably be related to the dimension of independence as commitment in essence entails participation in the community (Manion et al., 2004).
- Consensus as a way of reaching decisions about actions to be taken is another characteristic or element of community. Consensus is a process that works only in an open and trusting environment, according to Manion et al. (2004).
- Realism is a further element or characteristic of workplace communities. This dimension emanates from the perspective that a community includes members with many different points of view and the freedom to express these. The community therefore is confronted with varying perspectives and thus comes to an appreciation of the whole instead of fragments of a situation or task, or whatever the case may be.
- Contemplation or self-evaluation is another element or characteristic of workplace communities. “Communities continually examine themselves based on their self-awareness and the recognition of their strengths and weaknesses” (Manion et al., 2004, p. 49).
- Safety is an important element of workplace communities. Psychologically members must feel safe in expressing themselves and to be themselves “without apology or explanation” (Manion et al., 2004, p. 49).
- Naylor et al., (date unknown) refer to the following dimensions of workplace communities:

- Shared vision
- Boundaries
- Common values
- Empowerment
- Responsibility sharing
- Growth and development
- Tension reduction
- Education
- Feedback
- Friendship

These dimensions or characteristics not only overlap with the perspectives of Manion et al (2004) but also resonate with the perspective on the “whole integrated self” of Chalofsky (2010).

Community is viewed as one of the essential dimensions towards reframing the workplace into a meaningful place to work in. (See Chalofsky, 2010, p. 143 and following pages).

### **The workplace as diversity space**

In a certain sense of the word all the foregoing and following workplace dimensions could be discussed under the heading of diversity. It is here separated and isolated simply because it is deemed necessary to at least adorn the menu with the heading “diversity”.

Diversity, loosely defined, refers to human qualities that are different from our own and those of groups to which we belong; but that are manifested in other individuals and groups. Dimensions of diversity include but are not limited to: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, parental status, religious beliefs, work experience, job classification, psychological structure (if such

an expression may be used) including personality structure, traits, competencies, skill sets, qualification, and many more dimensions of being human.

One of the key phrases in management language is Managing Diversity. In the South African context this expression has been radically reinterpreted to refer to race and gender issues and as such closely linked to rectifying the “wrongs of the past” and rebalancing the workforce based on Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) targets. This viewpoint ignores the fact that diversity can be defined in terms of 3 dimensions of which the primary dimension refers to “...immutable human differences that are inborn and/or exert ...an ongoing influence on our life”. (Rasmussen, 1964) in De Beer and Radley (2000, p. 5). These differences include age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race and sexual orientation, to name but a few.

The secondary dimensions include immutable characteristics which include but are not limited to “...educational background, geographical location, income, marital statuses, parental role, religious orientation, work experiences...” etc (De Beer and Radley, 2000, p. 6).

The third dimension of diversity refers to and includes sub-conscious and unconscious factors that affect the behaviour of employees in the workplace. This dimension refers to so called workplace within (Hirschhorn, 2000), emotional capital (Thomson, 1998), the psychodynamics of Organizational Behaviour Cilliers and Koortzen (2000).

## **Ideology**

Alveson (1990) refers to one strain of organizational ideology as the “ideology of managerialism” that tends to strengthen the opportunities by managers for extending their impact and effect on employees. According to Alvesson (1990, p. 218) “The commendability of an effective and a far-reaching managerial influence is a core part of the ideology of managerialism but the articulation of the consequences of this influence is very weak” It seems to be

grounded in a world view, a set of beliefs and values, which indicate that the top managers of corporations and other organizations are a highly important group, whose actions are normally supposed to support the social good (whatever that might be).

Trice and Beyer (1985) in Alvesson (1991, p. 219) appear to assume that top management is the legitimate interpreter of the appropriate ideologies and values in an organization and various tricks for manipulating these are suggested.” The problem in this regard is that the ultimate purpose of this type of ideology remains hidden, whether it is might be profits, economic growth, job satisfaction, strengthening of management power *etc.*

A managerialist ideology seems to contradict Habermas' ideal speech and hence emancipation (Alvesson, 1991, p. 219). In such an ideological scheme managerial behaviour is established as ideological control in organizational settings, targeting the emotions, attitudes, the definition and understanding of social reality, people's world views and organizational perspectives.

This however is not what Pratt and Ashforth (2003) intend when discussing or ideologies, culture and identity. Their perspective can possibly be perceived as an ideology of community, which is a total different type of ideology in the workplace (see discussion above). In this regard they concur with Ashforth and Vaidyanath (2002) who relate identity, membership, values, and as the moments that come together to create a “reality” or “truth” that can also be referred to as ideology. This ideology refers to the accepted reality of organization life in a specific organizational context and can therefore differ from organization to organization.

## **Identity**

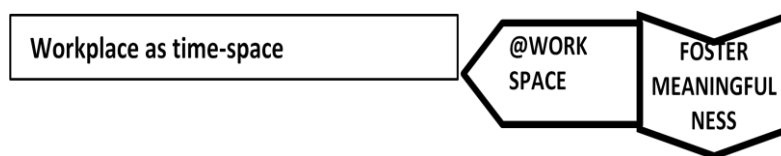
Identity could be defined from various perspectives such as for instance the role that a person fulfils whether at work, in a religious community, or within another social context (Ashforth, 1989; Pratt and Ashforth, 2003). It is also possible to determine identity according to the networks within which an individual is known.



This perspective takes as a departure point the questions that determine where a person belongs, and how a person relates to others including the contribution that a person makes and inevitably use group dynamics and positioning as the context to define identity. In the scheme of Pratt and Ashforth (2003, p. 312) “three fundamental assumptions underlie ‘meaningfulness’ from an identity perspective”. In this scheme meaningfulness at work arises from through the integration of identity with roles and membership. In their scheme of reasoning (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003) the following fundamental questions and their interrelationship guide the fostering of meaningfulness at work: “Roles (What am I doing?), membership (Where do I belong?), identity (Who am I?), and meaningfulness (Why am I here?)” (2003, p. 312). The relationship between the different questions and their context are dynamic, interactive, and very much reciprocal in nature. The conclusion drawn from this perspective is that meaningfulness is an ongoing and always unfolding phenomenon and can thus never be an end state of achievement. The integration of and between the different propositions indicated by the questions above, does not imply “an all or nothing proposition”.

It might seem as if individuals are passive respondents and receivers of organizational practices that are created in the context of work. It should however always be remembered that individuals “help create the meanings that express and confirm their desired sense of self” (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003, p. 314)

### 3.6.2.2 The workplace as time space



The workplace as mental space is at the same time also a time space continuum. To a certain extent time dictates the flow of work related activities. People complete certain activities within a time frame that are either contractually predetermined or self determined without durational boundaries.

The complexities of time in the workplace is aptly described by Trompenaars (1999, p. 679 Quoting Augustine.) “The present has, therefore, three dimensions...the present of past things, the present of present things and present of future things”. The workplace as time space is closely related to the dimensions of diversity and cultural multiplicity. Different cultures perceive time in different ways. Time space management increases in complexity when viewed in relation to cultural diversity in the workplace. This is valid when considering the diverse cultural perspectives on time as a life phenomenon. Employees must have some shared perspectives and even perceptions regarding time in the work place. Time can be viewed as sequential, thus connecting time to “...a series of passing events, or whether it is synchronic, with past present and future interrelated, so that ideas about the future and memories of the past both shape present action” (Trompenaars, 1999, p. 679.) Employees are constantly confronted with the future requirements of organizational life. Top management naturally tend to project the life of the organization into the future and require work roles that will satisfy the future requirements of the organization. There is however an anomaly in this respect. Although employees are guided towards the future the work role still requires functions that will serve the objectives of the organization in the present. The future orientation is often driven by visions, mission statements and change management processes. A synchronous time perspective and activities that fit into “dead time” can enhance the experience of meaning when executed to achieve some goal or objective. This could be termed – synchronous multitasking – an approach that fills dead time between tasks with meaningful activity.

O’Conaill and Frohlich (1995) set out to investigate the use of time space in the workplace by measuring duration and content of interruptions.

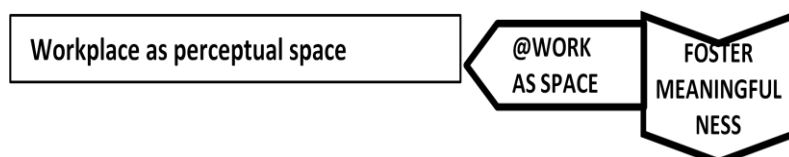
Very little is known about what might be called time space in the workplace; defined as the intervals of time into which people organise their work. Despite the proliferation of both paper and electronic time management systems there are very few scientific studies of *time management behaviour* at work. One reason for this is the very short time window of most workplace and human factors studies. A second reason is that many studies rely on reports of time

allocation which are demonstrably inaccurate compared to actual measures. Interruptions raise questions of both practical and theoretical significance. How many interruptions occur at work? What proportion of time do they consume? How many are resisted rather than taken? Who benefits from the ensuing interactions? How disruptive are interruptions to the prior task being carried out prior to the interruption?

Interruptions are always unplanned and unscheduled and reduce the time employees spend on their primary task in a continuous way. This leads to disruptive behaviour which, especially when working under pressure, creates irritated behaviour. The reason for this in most cases is that the initiator of the interruption gains more than the recipient thereof. Some measure of filtering of interruptions would be desirable and beneficial to determine whether the interruption is warranted and desirable as it disrupts the primary task of the performer. Whichever way the reasoning goes, interruptions are exactly what the word means and can frustrate the attempts of performers to complete tasks within set time frames, thus resulting in having to cope with measures that possibly rate them as underperforming.

The workplace as time-space requires that employees clearly understand their respective work roles; to be motivated and to apply insight to identify the most important tasks and to complete these first; to not waste time and do not prolong “dead time”; to work efficient and effective; all of which can be instilled as values relating to current task role behaviour.

### 3.6.2.3 The workplace as perceptual space



The workplace can be described as a perceptual and social response place. Human perception can loosely be defined or described as the process of awareness and/or understanding of sensory information that is processed cognitively and has a psychological effect

on the human which stimulates action or a reaction. Perception is and the resultant action is the result of the interplay of sensory, cognitive and psychological processes, informed by experience, cultural determinants, education, personality traits etc. upon which we react. Our cognitive processes enable us to interpret and understand our environment. These processes are based on the recognition of objects, which in this case resembles information. Objects and information must be recognised so as to enable the individual or groups of individuals to meaningfully interact with their environment. Perception is however not limited to objects and events but includes the social interaction between individuals and groups in the work environment. Social perception however is a more complex process as it entails the way in which people perceive each other. According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2001, p. 173) social perception advances through a four stage process, which commences with “selective attention/comprehension” (the process of conscious awareness/becoming consciously aware of things or people, focusing on salient stimuli), continuous through stage 2 i.e. “encoding and simplification” (stimuli and/or observed phenomena are understood in terms of existing schemata, which represent the mental images of a particular event, phenomenon, or type of stimulus) and enters stage 3 “storage and retention” (the storage of information in the memory –long and short term – and which can be labelled as event memory, semantic memory and person memory) and eventually closes with “retrieval and response” (the basis for judgments and decision making). Although this model is valuable in terms of understanding perception as stimulus response process, it does however not address the real issue as far as the dynamic of the workplace as perception space is concerned. It is therefore necessary to delve a bit deeper into the dynamics of perception as a stimulus and response process.

Chalofsky refers to the socialising processes that take place either as spontaneous or formally arranged events within the context of work communities and where the focus is on the inclusion of diversity that is brought into the organization by its employees (2010, pp. 89;127). This implies a focus on social behaviour in the workplace.

It is therefore at least necessary; to not only, in general terms, indicate the relationship between perception and behaviour, but more specifically the

relationship between perception and social behaviour in the workplace. As far as the perception-behaviour linkage is concerned Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001) distinguish two historical positions in this regard.

The behaviourist thesis is that the S-R bonds lead to responses that flow directly from perceived stimuli. Stated differently, perception leads directly to action. The responses that flow directly from stimuli, are however not related to imitations of the perceived event as Dijksterhuis et al (2001, p. 2) propose, but are “stamped in responses to stimuli based on one's past reinforcement history”.

A second perspective that also differs from Dijksterhuis and Bargh is the so-called notion of affordances as propagated by Gibson (1979) and McArthur and Baron (1983), in Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001, p. 2). Environmental responses in this scheme “directly suggest the appropriate behavioural response to them: the grilled lobster says ‘eat me’ and the cold glass of beer says ‘drink me’”.

The perception-behavior link argued for within the context of the workplace as perceptual and social response space is based on the perspective of Dijksterhuis and Bargh. They state (2001) that, the human (and basic animal) tendency is to act in the same way as we see others act and contend that:

This phenomenon flows directly from a fact of mental representation and organization--that perceptual and behavioral representations for the same action overlap. Thus the effect is a natural consequence of the automatic activation of the behavioral response by the perception of someone else doing the same thing. (2001, p. 2)

The following discussion is based on Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001).

Socially we perceive what may be referred to as “*observables*, such as gestures, facial expressions, and movements and we hear their voices and the words that they utter, as well as other indicators such as accents or tone of voice. Humans spontaneously generate “trait inferences”, based on observed behaviour within a particular context or environment, such as for instance, honesty, intelligence, well versed, etc. However social perception goes beyond presented information in

speech and behaviour in the immediate context, through the activation or triggering of stereotypes, which can be described as “integrated collections of trait concepts purportedly descriptive of the social group in question”. The mental activation of stereotypes does not have a one-to-one “correspondence with current events being perceived”.

Humans tend to imitate these behaviours that they perceive as Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001) indicate. After viewing a myriad of experiments they conclude:

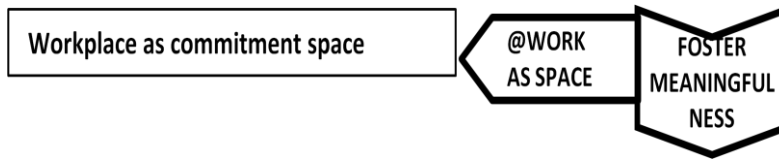
In sum, there is considerable evidence showing that people automatically imitate observed behavior--ranging from facial expression and postures to speech patterns. There is no evidence for the strategic nature of the imitation effects, whereas the support for the automatic and unintentional nature of imitation is evident.

People do not necessarily imitate because they want to imitate. This perspective is indicative of the phenomenon that social perception entails much more than the encoding of observable behaviour. The tendency within humans is to automatically imitate “social behavior in terms of the trait concepts relevant to it (e.g., Bargh, 1994; Gilbert, 1989; Higgins, 1989; Winter & Uleman, 1984; Uleman, Newman, & Moskowitz, 1996), in Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001).

The human tendency according to these researchers is to imitate or match the behavior we perceive and observe in the social environment and this seems to impact on overt social behaviour. In this sense “imitation is safe as a basic, default behavioral tendency”, and is most probably linked to the human need to belong and to be accepted by others (most probably implying the tendency towards community). Imitation creates a measure of cohesion in social relationships especially in organizational settings where the diverse set of cultures, patterns, traits etc, must be cemented into a cohesive unit for the sake of not only the psychological survival of the individual, but for the continuous growth of the organization as well.

To conclude: Automatic imitation is safe and it leads to social acceptance and belonging.

## The workplace as commitment space



Commitment can be described as an attitude of “non compromise” in respect of the achievement of certain goals and objectives; a value that drives individual behaviour towards goal achievement, implying a non-wavering approach in the movement towards a purpose. It is an intra-personal pledge to do what is necessary to achieve what is important. In this way commitment borders on and possibly overlaps with motivation, a concept that is defined as “a process of arousing, directing, and sustaining goal directed behaviour” (Weiss, 2001, p. 93).

Commitment as an attitude of non compromise can be applied to different workplace dimensions. Commitment towards the personal work role represents one dimension, whilst commitment to the organization, supervisor, manager, peers, group members, etc. represents other commitment dimensions or organizational entities. The question is whether employees, who are committed, are better off than those that aren't in the sense that they might be happier, mentally healthier in the work place, and more satisfied with their work place and career? From an organisational or managerial perspective, commitment matters especially in view of the many rapid changes that organisations have to successfully negotiate for survival. Can I trust my employees in such torrid times? Commitment arguably ensures the trust that is required to survive (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Ideally employees should demonstrate behaviour that suggests cognitive as well emotional or affective commitment. Such commitment is deemed to be symptomatic of the experience of meaning in the particular workplace as it entails a match of values and positive behaviour markers and at the same time reflects voluntarism as opposed to forceful work attendance. Meyer and Allen (1997) refer to a further dimension in the commitment discussion i.e. continuance commitment. Continuance commitment ensures a longer sojourn within the organizational environment and relates to citizenship behaviour.



It would however be an incomplete discussion, if the management dimension emanating from Pfeiffer's research were not added in this respect. Employee ownership (Pfeiffer in Bowie, 1998) is referred to as one of the 16 (later reduced to seven) fundamental management principles that Pfeiffer advocates as non negotiable for organizational success. The reasoning behind this imperative is that the people dimension eventually makes the critical difference as far as organizational sustainability, effectiveness and success is concerned. Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks (2001) refer to the phenomenon of psychological ownership as one of the more fundamental psychological experiences of the human condition and state that the feeling of ownership is an integral part of the human condition, based on feelings of ownership toward various objects, both material and immaterial in nature; which have important behavioural, emotional, and psychological consequences. Possessions according to Dittmar (1992, p. 65) "shape our consciousness, our self-awareness, and our perception of the world" (Dittmar, 1992, p. 65). Control over space per se and personalization of space as an assertion of identity are two satisfactions derived from ownership. Possessions also provide the individual with "a place," symbolically captured by the concept of "home" (Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 1967; Steiner, 1978; Weil, 1952, in Pierce et. al., 2001). Drawing on the research and writings by these authors, Pierce et al (2001) suggest that the roots of psychological ownership are to be found in three basic or main motives, "... (1) efficacy and effectance, (2) self-identity, and (3) "having a place".

The question in this regards is whether this theoretical perspective is valid in the context of an organization; and whether the conditions do (or can) exist that mediate psychological ownership?

A key characteristic of the phenomenon of ownership of an object appears to be the control over that object. Organization members are provided with ample opportunity to exercise ownership (in varying degrees) and thus control over job related factors such as for instance job design, job workflow design, etc. as potential targets of psychological ownership (See Hackman & Oldham, 1980). A greater measure of



autonomy will increase the likelihood of emerging feelings of ownership toward the job and in an extended manner also towards the organization.

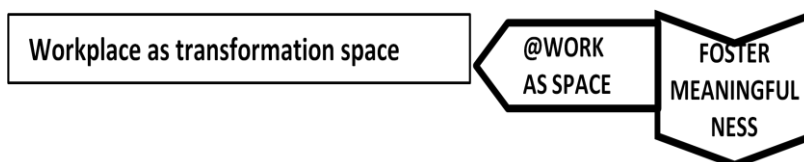
The question that must be answered is whether ownership somehow facilitates commitment? O'driscoll et al (2006) indicate through their research that less structured work environments seem to be more conducive to the development of feelings of psychological ownership for the job and organization than are more highly structured work environments that allow less personal control.

Results from this investigation suggest that psychological ownership (especially feelings of ownership for the organization) mediates the relationship of work environment structure with employee citizenship behaviors and organizational commitment” (2006, p. 388).

The authors conclude:

Total work environment structure exhibited a positive and significant relationship ( $p < .05$ ) with organizational commitment. Thus, with one exception, ...four of the five relationships are statistically significant, suggesting that low levels of work environment structure were positively associated with employee affective commitment and citizenship behavior. Each of the work environment structuring variables (technology, autonomy, and participative decision making) had a significant and positive relationship with employees’ affective commitment to their organization.

### 3.6.2.4 The workplace as transformation space



The purpose of this paragraph is not primarily aimed at identifying the events that take place in the workplace, but to eclectically refer to the implications of events that do take place. A list of events could become a never ending exercise without any meaning. It is

perhaps more fruitful to conceptualise the main events that take place and are rife in Organizational life.

Work role behaviour is not the only event that takes place in the work place. The workplace is a space filled with a multitude of stimuli and events which range from activities to relationships in the formal as well as the informal sense of the word, which all impact on either a transactional or transformational level. Events range from hard factors connected to work or related to work include not only the tasks that are directly associated with work, but also include events such as structural positioning within a smaller context, the remuneration to and benefit events, the performance management event promotional events or the lack thereof, etc., thus the transactional events which seem to be rather stable over time. The opposing spectrum of events includes the psychological and emotional events based on interactions, and includes interaction with superiors and subordinates as well as, peers, which together with change interventions, be referred to as transformational events. The workplace is thus a geographically identifiable time-space event loaded with experiences and events which can be positive or negative. Another dimension must however be added to this understanding. A workplace is also filled with diverse activities which immediately imply that there are sub – workplaces in the workplace. The activities are normally structured in such a way as to contribute towards a single value chain which produces a product or a service irrespective of whether this is for profit or not or whether it is in a corporate environment or in a home-office or study/studio.

The most important event in the workplace at present seems to be the numerous and compounded change events that take place on a regular basis. The events of change and transformation are based on business requirements and driven by the theory and practice of Organizational Development. The workplace and broader context of industry and environment are in constant flux, requiring realignment and transformation interventions. These can impact the individual employee or the group in either negative or positive terms. This however is not the place to divulge in the different perspectives or reasons why some change interventions are successful while others are not. Suffice to state that change impacts the employee and that the impact can either establish a positive or negative perception of the workplace

thereby creating negative or positive experience. One of the effects of this impact, namely stress, must be noted as a potentially disrupting implication of change in the work place. Stress in the workplace is caused by the fundamentals of change (Cartwright and Cooper, 1997, p. 3). Stress in itself represents an event of potentially devastating magnitude in organizational life as a result of employees not being in control and a high work load

### 3.6.2.5 The workplace as problem solving space

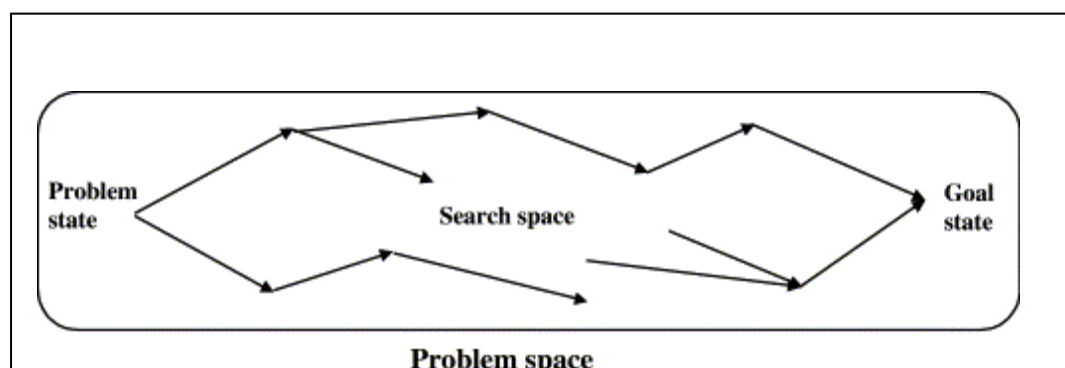
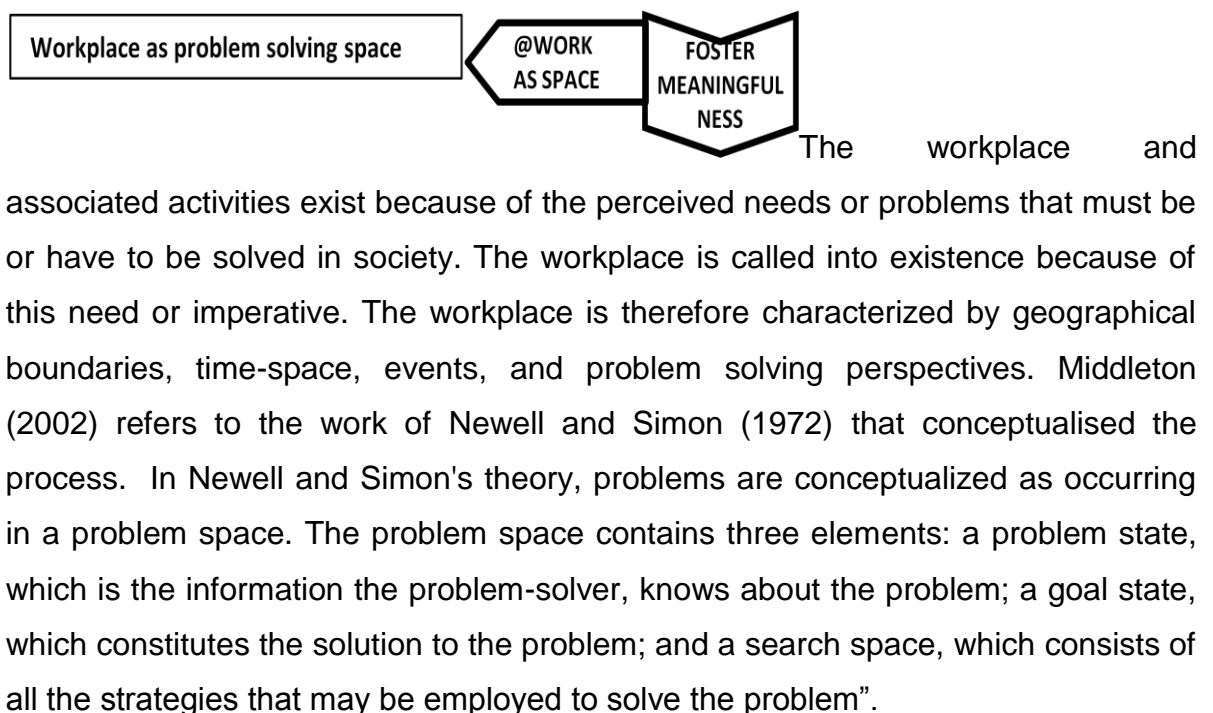


Figure 3.12: Depiction of Newell And Simon's (1972) concept of a problem.

(Middleton 2002)

Middleton modified the basic problem solving model of Newell and Simon to accentuate the complexity of the problem solving process in a contemporary work environment.

The modified model is able to represent the features of complex, ill-defined problems and problems where a new solution may be required. The model provides a structure for analyzing problems and the strategies people use to solve them. A problem space is the description of a problem and the possible strategies that are known to be available to solve it. Whether a particular problem-solver utilizes the available strategies depends on their level of knowledge. Thus, problems exist both as external task environments and as representations of the task in the working memory of problem solvers (Middleton, 2002, p. 70).

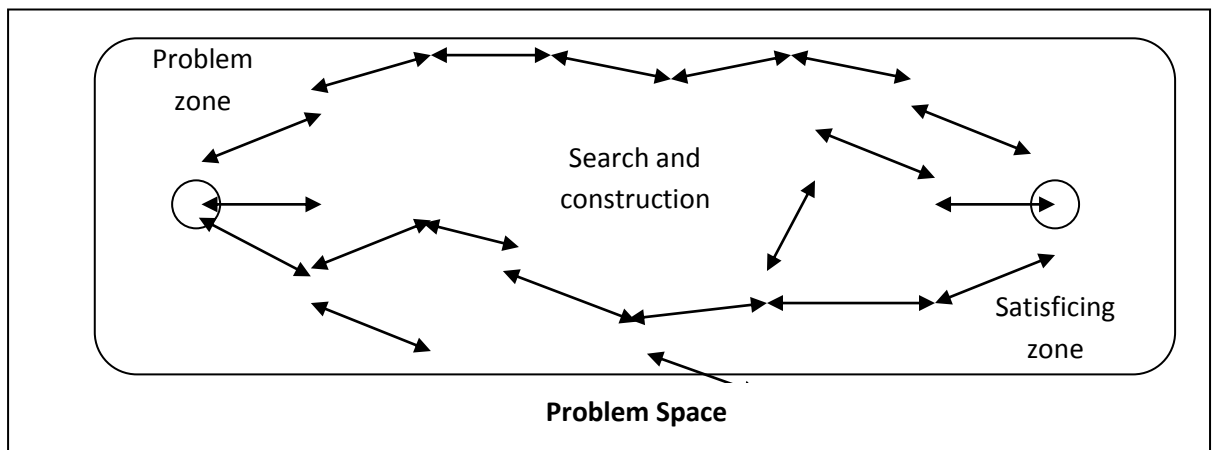
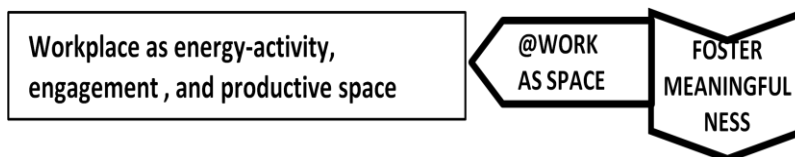


Figure 3.13: Newell and Simon's (1972) as presented by Middleton, 2002, p. 69)

### 3.6.2.6 The workplace as energy-activity, engagement, and productive space



In addition to the workplace being described as geographical space, time space, transformation-event space, and problem solving space, it can also be described as energy-activity space. This refers to the energy that is spent during the performance of work role

tasks by the individual employee. Work could be viewed as an energy expending activity in an attempt to transform the life context.

The workplace is the space where activity takes place. An individual or group of individuals perform an activity or a string of activities which, when stringed together produce a pre-defined output in the form of a product or a service. These activities are normally referred to as work or as a job. Whichever way these activities are perceived and however long it takes to complete them or to string them together as an end-to-end process is irrelevant. Energy spent on performing the activities in the activity-energy-space produces an output. The output is aligned with a predefined strategy which is based on the reason for existence of the particular work space.

The underlying dynamic involved in this process is the varying degree to which people use of their selves physically, cognitively, psychologically/emotionally in work role performance. This dynamic has implications for both their work and their own experience and perception of the workplace (Kahn 1990).

The fundamental question regarding the psychological engagement/disengagement of employees refers to the degree in which they are really present in their work role. An illustrative Table will most effectively convey the meanings of the concepts personal engagement and disengagement (The following Table 3.7 is based on Kahn 1990).

Column 1 contains the concepts that are viewed to be of importance in the context of the current paragraph. The expenditure of energy and the activities that are performed during work role performance can either be associated with personal engagement which, by means of reduction, implies higher levels of energy or disengagement which implies lower levels of energy and self employment. The second column defines the concepts and provides the necessary background to the previous statement.

**Table 3.7: Energy and engagement (Based On Kahn, 1990)**

Concept	Definition
Personal Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refers to the “harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement people simultaneously employ and express themselves physically, emotionally and cognitively during work role performances</li> <li>▪ Self employment underlies what such concepts as effort, involvement, mindfulness, intrinsic motivation</li> <li>▪ Self expression refers to creativity, use of personal voice, emotional expression, authenticity, non defensive communication, playfulness, ethical behaviour</li> </ul>
Personal Disengagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This refers to the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance</li> <li>▪ Withdrawal of personal dimensions in role performance underlies what has been referred to as automatic or robotic behaviour, burn out, apathetic or detached , effortless behaviour</li> <li>▪ Defensive behaviour in work role performance has been referred to as defensive, impersonal or emotionally inexpressive, bureaucratic, self estranged (alienated), closed</li> </ul>

Three underlying psychological factors were identified that act as catalysts for either engagement or disengagement in the work place and during work role performance. Psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability each interplay in the field of personal engagement an disengagement and are briefly noted in Table 3.8 below.

**Table 3.8 Psychological conditions pertaining to engagement/disengagement**

Underlying Psychological Conditions pertaining to Engagement/Disengagement			
	Psychological Meaningfulness	Psychological safety	Psychological Availability
<b>Definition</b>	The sense of a return on investment of the self in work role behaviour	The sense of being able to show and employ the self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career	The sense of possessing the physical, emotional and psychological resources necessary for investing the self in role performance
<b>Experiential components</b>	Feeling worthwhile, valued, valuable, feeling able to give to and receive from work and others in role performance	Feeling that the situation is trustworthy, emotionally secure and safe, predictable and clear iro behavioural consequences	Feeling capable of driving physical, intellectual, and emotional energies into role performances
<b>Influenced by</b>	<p>Task characteristics</p> <p>Psychologically meaningful when tasks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenging</li> <li>Clearly delineated</li> <li>Varied</li> <li>Creative</li> <li>Simultaneously demanding and routine (benefit from existing competence whilst experiencing growth and learning)</li> </ul> <p>Role characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles that identify members as implicitly required role (identity)</li> <li>Roles that carry status or influence (aligned with preferred self image and status)</li> </ul> <p>Work interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpersonal relationships that promote dignity, self</li> </ul>	<p>Interpersonal relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering support, trust, openness, flexibility and lack of threat</li> <li>Group and intergroup dynamics</li> <li>Informal, room to safely express aspects of the self</li> <li>Management style and process</li> <li>Leadership behaviour that demonstrates support, resilience, integrity, consistency, evokes trust and demonstrates competence</li> <li>Organizational norms</li> <li>Shared expectations in respect of behaviours and emotions that leave room for the investment (employment ) of the self role performance</li> </ul>	<p>Physical and emotional energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient levels of energy (physical, mental and emotional) available for investment in role performance</li> <li>Insecurity</li> <li>Sufficient levels of confidence in own abilities and status</li> <li>Level of self consciousness and ambivalence about fit in social system</li> <li>Sufficient emotional and psychological space for self investment in role performance</li> <li>Non-work life</li> <li>The absence of external matters that leave people free to invest in</li> </ul>

Underlying Psychological Conditions pertaining to Engagement/Disengagement			
	Psychological Meaningfulness	Psychological safety	Psychological Availability
	appreciation, sense of value, inclusion of personal and professional elements		their own self in role performance

The structure as briefly discussed addresses the dimensions of people's emotional reaction to conscious and unconscious phenomena in the workplace and at the same time the

...objective properties of jobs, roles, and work contexts; the primacy of people's experiences of themselves and their contexts as the mediator of the depths to which they employ and express or withdraw and defend themselves during role performances; and the self -in-role as unit of analysis, a focus on how both person and role are enlivened or deadened during role performances (Kahn, 1990, p. 717).

In essence, it is the value of commitment and the power of motivation (read: meaning or the lack thereof) that drives work related behaviour in either a positive or a negative direction. Positively speaking, behaviour that is driven by a value system that sustains goal directed behaviour produces outcomes that comply with the purpose and desired results within the task structure for which the individual is responsible. The opposite of this is behaviour that, driven in the opposite direction of the task at hand, cannot produce outcomes, which relate to the structure and purpose of the task at hand, and that consequently facilitate meaninglessness.

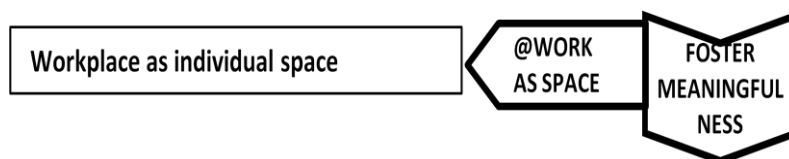
In addition research by Fallon et al. (2000) indicated that conscientiousness as an overall measure was significantly and positively correlated to productive work behaviour. The subscales of conscientiousness include hard work/dependability, orderliness, self control, impulsiveness, loyalty and consideration. Further analyses indicate a significant and positive correlation with certain criteria that was used as comparative measures. In addition to conscientiousness as a predictor for productive work behaviour, it was also significantly and positively correlated to whether supervisors would rehire a certain employee; the orderliness as well as



hard work/dependability measure were significantly and positively correlated to composite/overall performance and attendance, while the measure of consideration was positively and significantly correlated to the intent of supervisors to rehire an individual.

It is fair to state that productive behaviour is not merely based on observable behaviour but is undergirded by certain psychological conditions. Productive work-role behaviour is behaviour that creates and maintains a flow of outcomes that relate to the purpose of the individual's responsibility in a working environment, which in turn relates to the purpose of the organization within which the individual functions. Seen from this perspective "productive work-role behaviour" can be defined as "...a certain manner of existing..." which draws the individual into a mode of coexistence with the working environment. The individual is not the only constituent in this environment, but his or her consciousness is focussed on the concrete structure of required achievements (together with others), which represents a concrete structure of predefined work related outcomes, that eventually become the milieu of the individual's conscious working life. (This definition was adapted from Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1942), "The Structure of Behaviour").

### 3.6.2.7 The workplace as individual space



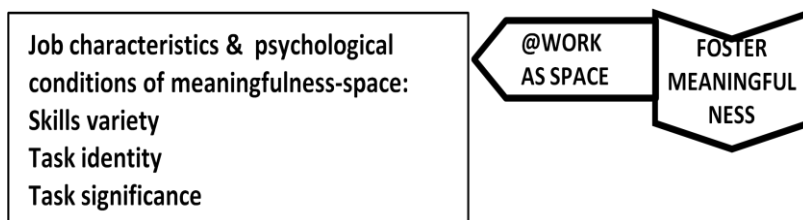
The paragraphs above identify some but not by any means all the factors that clutter the workplace. These nevertheless provide a sufficient perspective of the magnitude and extent as well as the complexity of organizational dimensions that have an influence on the experiences of employees, and of the demands that are made on workers in terms of physical, cognitive and psychological dimensions. The workplace is by no means a simplistic environment guided by linear processes and uncomplicated events.

The individual fits into a group, made up of many individuals, and can eventually define his or her position in the group. At the same time, however the group is dependent on the individual to perform certain tasks that contribute towards the flow of events that will eventually lead to an organizational output. Thus, seen from the perspective of the work breakdown structure of the organization, the individual constitutes the organization, and, to a certain extent, is the organization, albeit a minute part thereof.

On the other hand, the organization represents the body of tasks and activities, arranged in a logical manner so as to eventually provide an output, which is referred to as the purpose of the organization. In the sequence of events the “organization” recruits, selects, retains, manages – remunerates and rewards, trains, promotes, motivates, - the individual to perform at the highest possible level of quality within specific time frames. To this should also be added, the events and purposeful measures that foster meaningfulness at work.

The demands on the individual seen from a psychodynamic point of view are extreme to say the least. The individual not only requires the necessary competencies to cope with work role tasks as such, but also interpersonal adeptness and intrapersonal resilience to create a mental map and manage him/her through the spaces in the work place.

**3.6.2.8 The workplace: job characteristics and psychological meaningfulness space (the Hackman – Oldham job characteristics model)**



The Job Characteristics

Model of Hackman and Oldham (1980) argues that

(E)ssentially, enriched or complex jobs are associated with increased job satisfaction, motivation, and work performance. More specifically, they assumed that five core job characteristics (i.e., skill variety, task

identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from job) influence three critical psychological states (i.e., experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for outcomes of the work, and knowledge of the actual results of the work activities), which in turn affect work outcomes (i.e., internal work motivation, growth satisfaction, overall job satisfaction, work effectiveness, and absenteeism) (Fried and Ferris, 1987, p. 40)

**Skills variety** is an inventory of the abilities, capacities, qualifications, and career goals of the employees, or their total competency set – i.e. that which they bring to a work role which enables them to perform a variety of task within the total work role. “Skill variety” represents the perceived variety and complexity of skills and talents required to perform the job.

**Task Identity** refers to the extent to which a work role involves an end-to-end identifiable piece of work with a visible outcome, as opposed to performing a only a portion of the job. Task identity is an important component of job satisfaction. .

**Task significance** is the extent to which an identifiable piece of work (job) affects, or is important to, others within or outside the organization and the organization as whole. A person’s knowledge of and insight into other people's dependence on the work he or she is doing is an important factor in his or her work (job) satisfaction. “Task Identity” is the extent the job is seen as involving a whole, identifiable task. “Task significance” represents the extent that the job affects the well being of others The job characteristics, according to Fried and Ferris (1987, p. 308) “...can serve as indicators or proxies for the psychological states” (experienced meaningfulness, responsibility for work outcomes and knowledge of work outcomes)

“Autonomy” refers to the extent the job is seen as allowing for personal initiative in performing the work, and “feedback from the job” is the extent that the job, itself, provides information about job performance (Hackman and Oldham, 1980, p. 90). (Note the way in which the Hackman-Oldham Model reverberates with Chalofsky and Terez.)

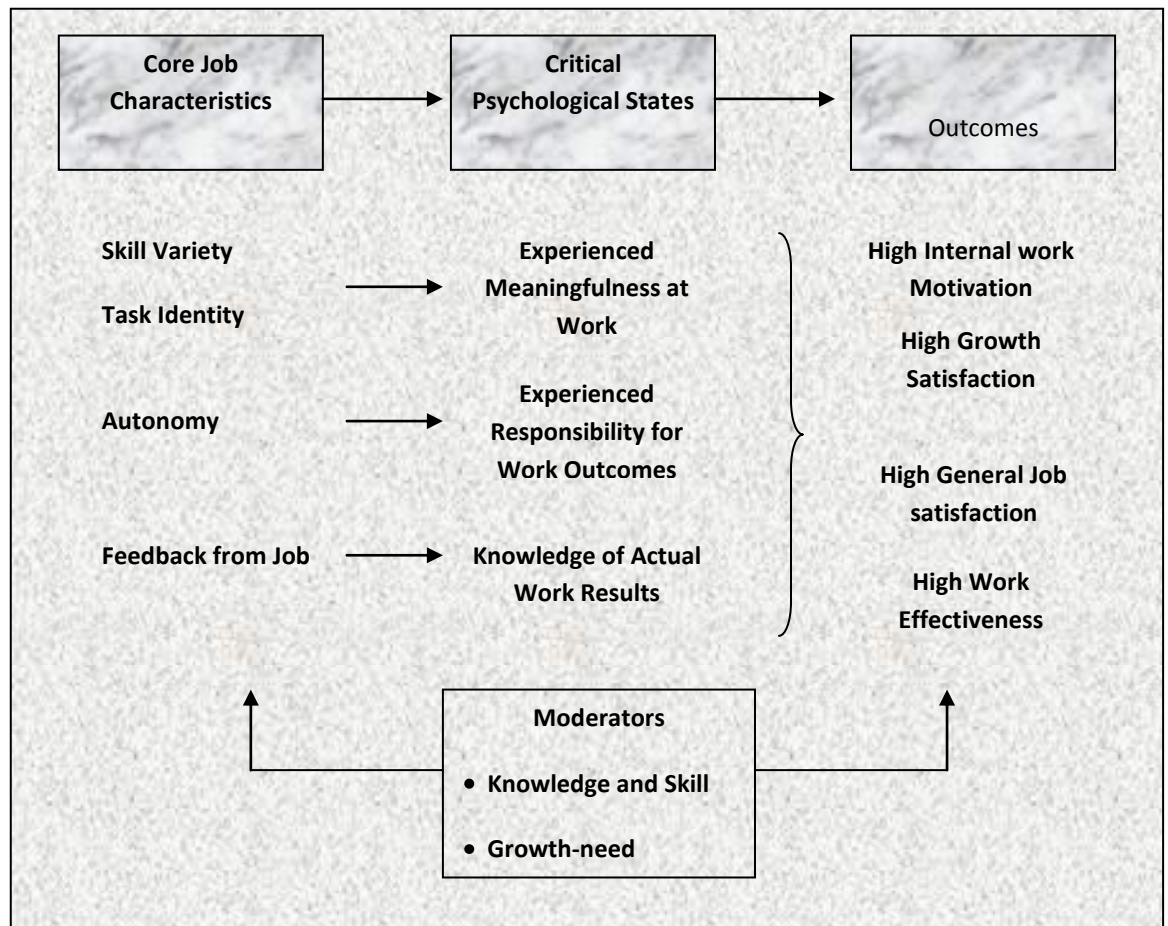


Figure 3.14: The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman and Oldham, 1980)

Fried and Ferris (1987, p. 287) contend that the relationship between job characteristics and psychological outcomes generally seem to be stronger and more consistent than the relationships between job characteristics and behavioural outcomes, “although the latter do exist”. Psychological outcomes, with specific reference to experienced meaningfulness can be improved by focusing primarily on skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and job feedback.

To summarise: Of the five job dimensions skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback, the first three affect the emergence of experienced *meaningfulness* of the work. The fourth dimension, autonomy, contributes to the feelings of personal responsibility for the work outcomes, while the fifth, feedback, determines individuals' knowledge of their effectiveness, or knowledge of results. The three psychological states collude to determine

performance quality, job satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover, but above all else the experience of meaning at work.

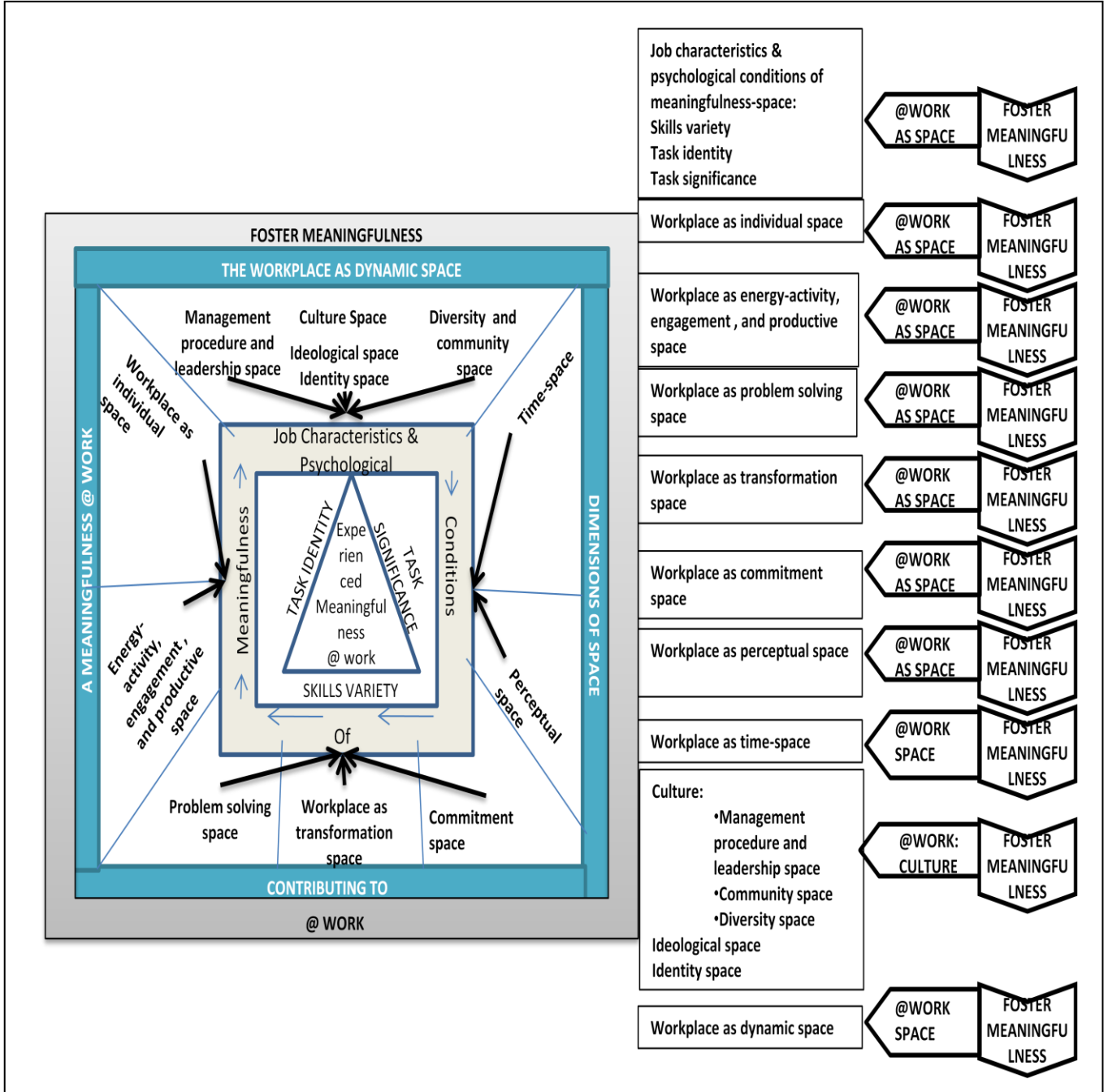
### **3.6.2.9 Summary of paragraph 3.6: Meaning at work: A macro constitutive dimension of the construct: A Meaningful workplace**

The following is a summarised version of the dimensions that have been addressed above. The concept Meaning **at** Work (in the same fashion that the previous macro constitutive dimension –“integrated wholeness in working” and its sub-dimensions) refers to experienced meaningfulness, and thus a **meaningful workplace**, from the perspective of a time space continuum. This particular dimension as described is filled with a complex set of sub-dimensions affect the experience of meaning at work by the individual, to the extent that he/she perceives the workplace and the activities performed therein, based on the deeper experience of integrated wholeness, as value adding and sense making thus contributing to a life that is worth living and working for. The experiences of value add and meaning elevates work and the workplace above the self and creates a spiral of virtue where the employee transcends the slog of futility.

A meaningless workplace where activities do not have positive emotive value is nothing more than a prison of activities and imprisonment in a lifelong spiral of endless effort without any positive reward. (This can be referred to as a Sisyphean syndrome after the myth of Sisyphus)

Thus on a conceptual level it could be stated that the experience of Meaningfulness at Work, thus the workplace as such, is an emotionally laden dynamic space that not only denotes the geographical space or a predetermined timeframe where a certain activity (or string of activities), i.e. work, is performed, but also an emotional space where certain experiences are lived and re-lived by an individual or group of individuals whilst performing tasks.

Graphically paragraphs (3.6 and sub paragraphs) can be presented as in the following graphic.



**Figure 3 15: Conceptual presentation of paragraph 3.6 and sub-paragraphs: Fostering meaningfulness at work: “Meaningfulness @ work model”**

Figure 3.15 should be interpreted as follows:

- The value chain presented in a descending manner on the right hand side of the graphic merely represents the graphics that were used at the beginning of the different sub-dimensions in paragraphs 3.6.1 and following.
- The graphic representation on the left is an attempt at visualisation of the conceptual and theoretical discussion in the mentioned paragraphs and is compiled according to the following reasoning:
  - The different dimensions are encapsulated by the attempt to foster meaningfulness at work. The assumption that is worked out in a theoretical fashion and based on imports from research literature is indicated in the inner block which is titled “The workplace as dynamic space: Dimensions of space contributing to “meaningfulness @work”;
  - The different space-dimensions are noted in the open space surrounding the centre rectangle and triangle. The arrows indicate that the different dimensions contribute toward the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, which are supported by task identity, task significance and skills variety, which foster meaningfulness at work.
  - The culture space seems to be the most encompassing space dimension to foster meaningfulness at work.
- As was mentioned earlier in this Chapter the two models (Meaningful Work and Meaningfulness at Work) collude to construe a model that will be referred to as the **meaningful workplace** Model. It is however first necessary to construct an integrated perspective of all the dimensions that, according to the literature research in this study, contribute towards meaningfulness at work.



### **3.7 ALIGNMENT OF MEANINGFUL WORK MODEL (INTEGRATED WHOLENESS) AND MEANINGFULNESS AT WORK MODEL**

This paragraph poses two challenges: The first is to create a measure of alignment between the concept Meaningful Work (or the extended Meaningful Work Model) as presented in the first half of this chapter and the conceptual model on fostering meaningfulness at work (Meaningfulness at Work Model) as discussed in the latter part of this chapter, and secondly, to integrated the two models on a conceptual level so as to present an integrated whole that could be viewed as an extension of the current footprint of a **meaningful workplace**.

#### **3.7.1 Alignment between the meaningful work model and meaning at work model**

“Alignment” in the sense that it is used here means that the two models seem to indicate dimensions of overlap. The establishment of the measure of alignment is an imperative if the purpose of this study is to be achieved. The obvious reason for this imperative is situated in the requirement to indicate the level of resonance between meaning of work and meaning at work. On the one hand the individual’s needs are addressed (Meaningful Work Model), in the sense that the focus leans towards the inner life of the employee, while on the other hand the possible interventions as seen from the perspective of the organization, that could facilitate the experience of meaningfulness and therefore also the inner life of employees, are addressed. An obvious example of this reasoning is the following:

*It has been indicated above that individuals seeks community in the workplace as an attempt to diminish the immanent alienation of organizational life in a post-modern society, and furthermore that this process actually evolves within the organization. The question that is forced upon organizational leaders and managers is the following: “What can be done to foster community building as a means to treat the humanity of employees as an end in itself?” The reasons why this is an important question is, simply put, that community contributes to meaningful*



*experiences in the workplace. The experience of meaningfulness benefits the individual, the organization, and in the long run, the society within which the organizations is situated and from which it is dependent for sustained existence.*

The background to the reasoning behind this example has been provided in the foregoing discussions as has the fact that this study will eventually also serve itself from an abductive reasoning process. The example draws on certain inferences drawn from the foregoing discussion. This example therefore provides an extensively broad framework for the alignment process that will follow.

The alignment process can be approached from different perspectives and methods of which present themselves as logical options. On the one hand it would be possible to present the alignment between the two models in table format. The other option is to present the alignment in form of “cycles”. Both have advantages as well as disadvantages. The main advantage of a table format is that the alignment perspectives become immediately obvious. The biggest disadvantage as has been argued in this study, is that a perceived linear causality can be construed, which is purposefully being avoided.

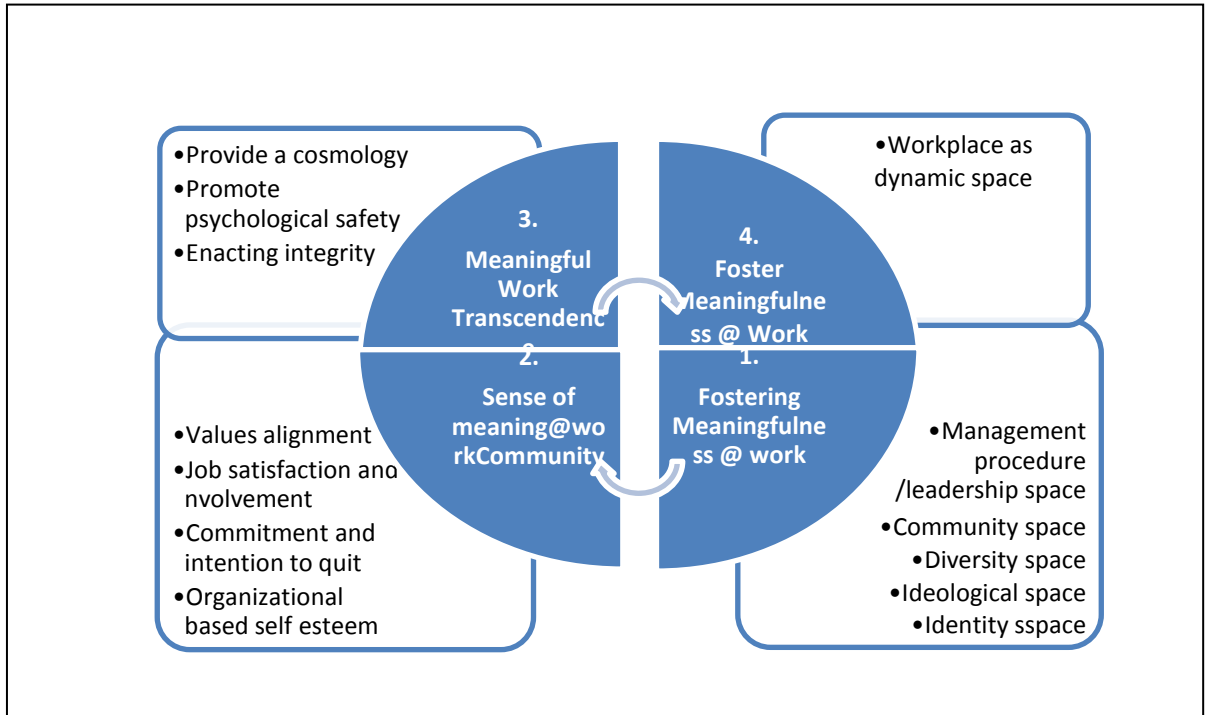
The disadvantage of the “cycle-alignment” method is to be found in the possible differences in interpretation of *what belongs where* in the relationships that are being construed. Although this might pose a problem when commencing from a causal perspective, it does not pose a problem when approaching the relationships from the perspective of “multiple options” Approaching the alignment process as “cycles of alignment” between different dimensions ensuing from the two models, is aligned with a phenomenological research strategy with a post modern mental model. The advantage of a “cycle alignment” process is that it accentuates the dynamic nature of a **meaningful workplace**. The latter approach will be followed.

### 3.7.1.1 Alignment cycle 1: Meaningful work and meaning at work: the culture cycle

The first and most obvious alignment that stems from the foregoing discussion in this chapter is the alignment in terms of culture. In the context of this study the culture dimension for a **meaningful workplace**, implies a fit and the alignment of interventions in the workplace that facilitate the culture within which the individual can experience meaningfulness in relation to various dimensions of work life.

The alignments of the dimensions from the two models that overlap are clustered together in what is herein as a culture alignment cycle. It is hypothesised that the implementation and maintenance of such a cycle will enhance the experience of meaningfulness in and at work, thus contributing to a **meaningful workplace**.

Figure 3.16 is designed to indicate the relationship between the different dimensions from the two models and furthermore the cycle sequence for the maintenance of the “culture cycle” in an organizational setting. It is (or at least should be) obvious that the culture cycle as presented within the context of this study is aimed at the constitutive dimensions of a **meaningful workplace**, and should thus be read and scrutinised from that particular perspective. This is concomitant with a constructivist approach which deviates from the linearity of cause and effect as provided for in commercial culture interventions.

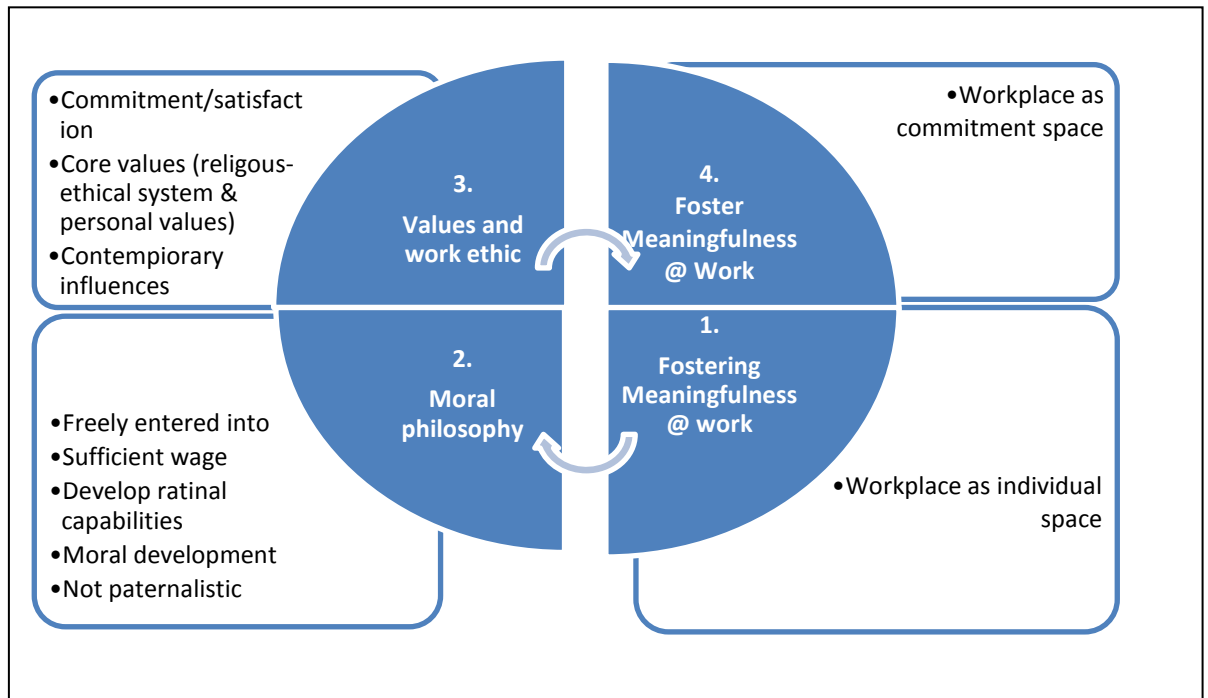


**Figure 3.16: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness a work: The culture cycle**

The “culture cycle” references certain dimensions from both the Meaning of Work Model as well as the Meaningfulness at Work Model. The workplace as dynamic space should, seen from a positive organizational approach, provide for a cosmology of dynamic interaction between employees mutually, and between employees and management on the other hand. The requirements for such a dynamic space requires the accommodation of diversity (in all respects) an ethical organizational ideology and sufficient opportunity for the individual to explore his/her own identity as an organizational citizen. This requires the alignment of values between the organization and the individual, the motivation to belong and to commit. This implies the experience of psychological safety, probably facilitated management/leadership behaviour which establishes trust and projects integrity in terms of inward and outward behaviour. Such behaviour is partially responsible for the level of happiness and satisfaction related to job performance and the experience of meaningfulness in the workplace.

### 3.7.1.2 Alignment cycle 2: Meaningful work and meaning at work: The commitment cycle

A **meaningful workplace** can, in addition to the culture cycle, also be described in terms of a commitment cycle. Such a cycle is mediated by means of processes that ensure commitment and that allow for the maintenance of the individual's adherence to and self alignment with the value system of the organization. Bearing in mind that the individual enters the workplace based on choice and the autonomy of his/her decision(s). This autonomy must be maintained through the commitment cycle with specific reference to the wage dimension (remuneration must be sufficient for the positive self esteem of the individual), the developmental dimension and the freedom to express and collaborate in respect of the work and his/her position in the organization. Maintaining the respect for individual space acknowledging the diversity of personal values that stem from a religio-ethical system and imbedded in the individual as personal values (and respecting these); the need of the individual to also have private space enhances the commitment cycle. It is further hypothesized that the commitment cycle will, through the maintenance of individual/personal space and freedom to develop morally as well as rationally, exercise and align personal values and ethical considerations with the purpose of the organization, be enhanced and maintained.



**Figure 3.17: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness at work: The commitment cycle**

A dimension that also surfaces in this cycle as a perspective from moral philosophy is the expression that meaningful work is not “paternalistic”. This implies, if interpreted in terms of modern terminology, that employees should not be micro managed. This reflects upon the management/leadership behaviour that was indicated in the “culture cycle”. Why is it not the included in the culture cycle in the first place? Because of two reasons: (a) The Moral Philosophy from which this perspective emanates is respected within the context from which it is forthcoming and (b) it is a purposeful choice to retain the Moral Philosophy as a separate contribution towards the enhancement of the Meaning of Work Model. Retaining Moral Philosophy as a separate contributory input towards the Meaning of Work Model, and retaining the reference to meaningful work not being “paternalistic” further justifies the cycle alignment approach that is being followed here, because these type of cross references or dimensional links accentuate the dynamic nature of a **meaningful workplace**. The workplace as “individual space”, implying that the uniqueness of the individual may not be sacrificed on the altar of organizational subservience; or to word it differently: to be absolved in the organizational “we-ness” suspension.

### 3.7.1.3 Alignment cycle 3: Meaningful work and meaning at work: The psychological meaningfulness cycle

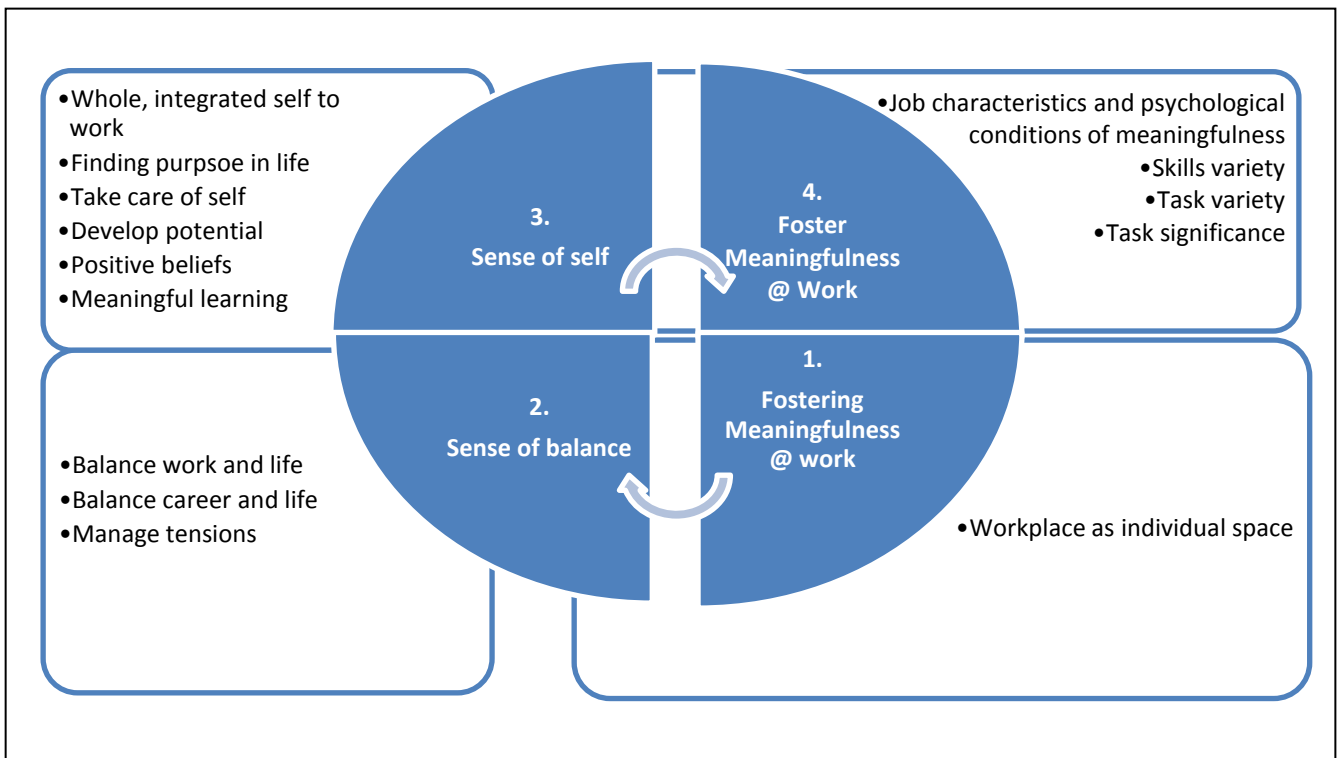
The psychological meaningfulness cycle hinges on the workplace as individual space, and it is hypothesized that the measures to facilitate balance and the sense of self will create a sense of psychological meaningfulness and ensures the experience of the workplace as meaningful. As the different dimensions have been discussed previously in this chapter such a discussion will not be repeated here. Suffice to say that the sense of self (specifically meaningful learning) strongly relates to the previous cycle (work commitment cycle) and specifically the dimensions of moral and rational development. The “Sense of Self” not only refers to the characteristics that are mention in the relevant block in the cycle, but is relatively heavily dependent on the significance of task and the outcomes of job performance, aspects that hinge on the developmental opportunities in respect of skills for successful job performance and ensuring the required outcomes. The development however is not only limited to the rational job related training and development interventions but also on the development of the moral capacity of the individual. The double sided developmental interventions will not only empower the individual towards balance, but balance in respect of work, career and life is also dependent on the acknowledgement of the uniqueness of the individual and the “space” for the individual to retain his/her unique individuality in spite of working within and organizational group or division.

The Hackman-Oldham Job Characteristics Model (1980) which describes three critical psychological conditions and the conditions that lead to these states as well as the outcomes confirms the reasoning that the maintenance of the psychological meaningfulness cycle results in a **meaningful workplace**, or at least, the experience of the workplace as meaningful.

- Psychological state: Experienced meaningfulness at work-
  - Critical Conditions: Skills variety and task identity
- Psychological state: Experienced responsibility for work outcomes

- Critical condition: Autonomy
- Psychological state: Knowledge of work outcomes
  - Critical condition: Feedback from job

The psychological states are then moderated through skills and knowledge, which resonates with (a) moral philosophy which describes meaningful work as dependent on autonomy, moral development and rational development, and (b) sense of self which seeks meaningful learning. This indicates the integrated nature of the constitutive dimensions of the **meaningful workplace**. It provides further evidence of the extent of overlap between the two macro constitutive dimensions (meaningful work and meaning at work).



**Figure 3.18: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness at work: The psychological meaningfulness cycle**

#### 3.7.1.4 Alignment cycle 4: Meaningful work and meaning at work: The work achievement cycle

The achievement of work outputs is the result of two factors: (a) the psychological meaningfulness cycle, which is supported by the critical psychological outcomes as indicated, specifically the psychological state of experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and, (b) the challenge of problem solving in the workplace. It can be argued that problem solving is dependent on knowledge and skills (the moderating factors – according to Hackman and Oldham (1980)). Such a statement should however be supported by the factors emanating from the meaning of work model (e.g. developmental requirements/needs), which once again provides evidence for the integrated nature of the **meaningful workplace** as discussed here.

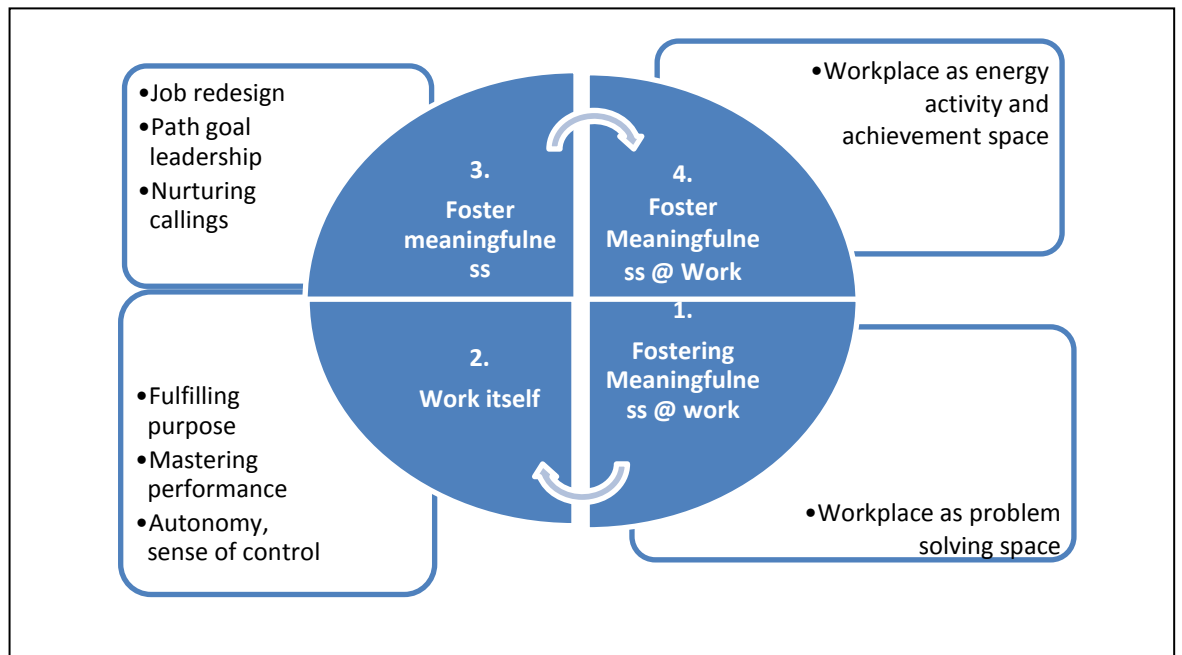
The work achievement cycle further requires an intrinsic need for the mastering of performance and fulfilling one's purpose in working, which is achieved through a continuous evaluation of job design and re-design as conditions in the workplace change as a result of internal inertia or external requirements (thus further enhancing the self or Organizational Based Self Esteem). Kreitner and Kinicki (2001, p. 212) refer to the need for achievement and describe this need as a desire to accomplish something difficult. This summarised description is well aligned with the factors in the meaning of work model that have been included in this cycle regarding the work itself. Meaningfulness is derived when the employee fulfils his/her purpose, masters performance, has a sense of autonomy and control over his/het performance in solving work related challenges or problems in order to achieve work related outcomes.

Fulfilling a purpose relates to the meaningfulness drive of the individual which is more than a superficial motivational drive. It was stated previously that motivation as a theory of performance was introduced when the interest in meaning dwindled into the forgotten realm of thought. Sievers Argued this case in an article titled: "Motivation as a Surrogate for Meaning" (1994), and in an article titled "Beyond the Surrogate of Motivation" (1986) the following is offered in the abstract:



The image of man as presented in the predominant organizational theories of motivation does not accord with the author's experience of working with people in organizations. This dissonance has led to a critique of the concept of motivation and its inherent theoretical shortcomings as to the reality of people in organizations. The main argument of this essay, however, stems from a meta-critical perspective according to which the notion of motivation and its referent theories can be regarded as scientific inventions. The hypothesis is offered and elaborated that motivation is a surrogate for meaning, i.e. for the meaning of work and life which is increasingly lost through the high frequency of fragmentation and splitting in our contemporary work enterprises. Any attempt towards discovering existential dimensions of meaning can be accomplished only if social scientists, managers and workers alike, both individually as well as collectively, again become aware of death as a fact of life; it is only through acknowledging mortality that humanization can occur.

The fulfilment of purpose seems to be closely related to mastering of performance and autonomy as well as a sense of control. The “space” and the conditions in this “space” to achieve and to be able to solve problems must however exist to fulfil the cycle.



**Figure 3.19: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness at work:  
The work achievement cycle**

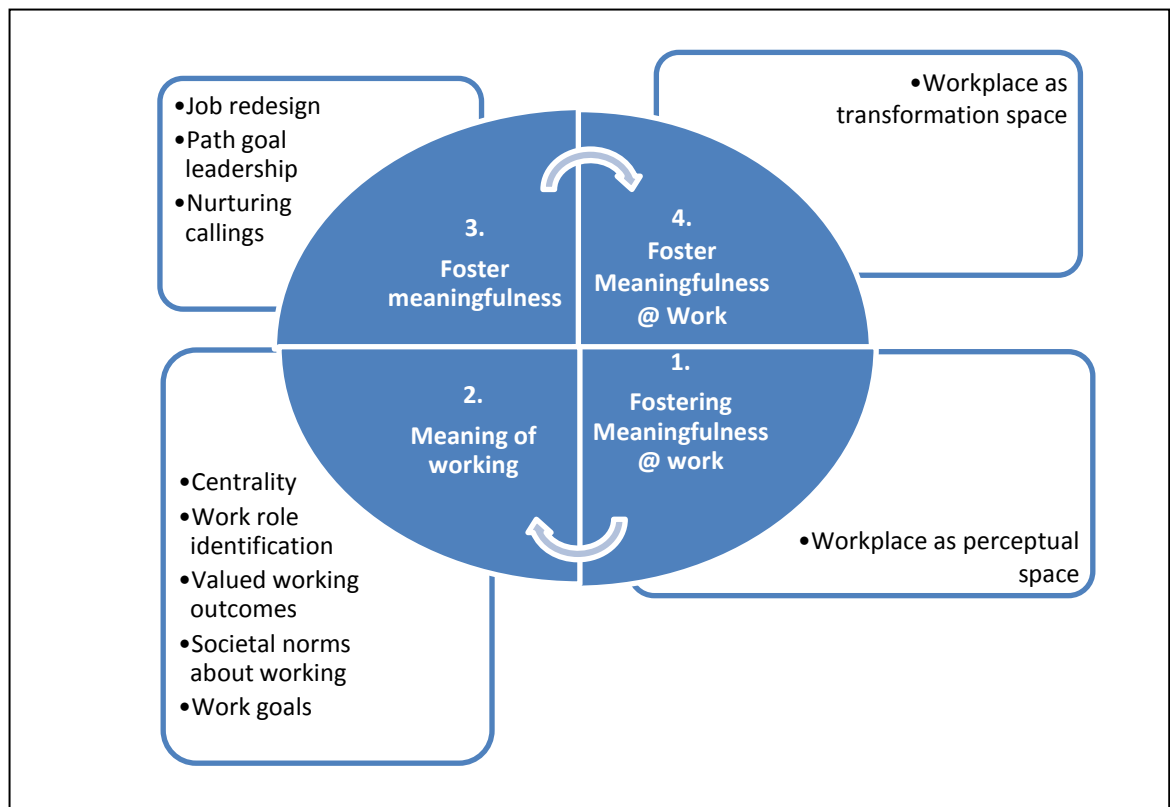
### 3.7.1.5 Alignment Cycle 5: Meaningful work and meaning at work: The transformational cycle

The individual employee enters the workplace with clouded perceptions about (a) the work and, (b) the work place. Perceptions according to Kreitner and Kinicki (2001, p. 173) is “a cognitive process that enables us to interpret and understand our surroundings”. In contrast to our perception of objects, our perception of others (as individuals or as groups of people) is referred to as social cognition and information processing event. This event will of necessity be clouded by previous events. The work space therefore requires the establishment and continuous enhancement of a transformation cycle.

The transformation cycle hinges on the perceptual space which in turn is highly dependent on the meaning of working, thus the perceptions and underlying values, (centrality of work, identification with the work role, valued outcomes – or achievement – and work goals) for the individual employee. Instilling these values,

is achieved through a continuous process of leading with integrity and thus living the ideal work life perception by leaders and managers, a continuous process of job redesign (as indicated in the previous paragraph), and nurturing callings as a basic approach towards work (emanating from the spirituality dimension), in order to achieve an ongoing transformational cycle as a renewal process of and on behalf of both the individual as well as the organization.

Each new transformational cycle should in essence be a renaissance experience for the individual as well as for the organization. Not only will such an experience enhance the experience of meaningfulness but it will also ensure the continuous rebirth of the organization, or possibly even retaining the youthfulness and innovativeness of the organization (if such a metaphor is permitted).



**Figure 3.20: Alignment: Meaningful work and meaningfulness at work: The transformation cycle**

The transformation cycle refers to an extremely dynamic process that lays claim to the emotions as well as the rational capabilities of the employee. Change brings with it uncertainty and fear and very often, if not consistently so, resistance. The organization as change territory is in fundamental conflict with the aspiration towards psychological safety. Therefore transformation must be anchored in two dimensions or interventions. On the one hand and self evident, when the response or human reaction to change is considered, the following imperative presents itself: The Meaning of Work Model, and more specifically the dimension pertaining to the meaning of work, where elements such as work centrality, work role identification, work goals, social norms about working, should be emphasised to re-impose the worth of the individual. In the same vein the individual employee or groups of employees should be involved and co-opted to collaborate in the redesign of jobs and drawn into a perceptive world where the “calling” to contribute is nurtured in order to counter the harshness of transformation. This is assuming that the purpose of the transformation is to enhance effectiveness and not to retrench employees. In the second instance a different strategy could be considered and without going into the details thereof, the focus would be to accentuate the meaning of life and the individual worth of the human being in society. (This perspective does however not belong in the current discussion.)

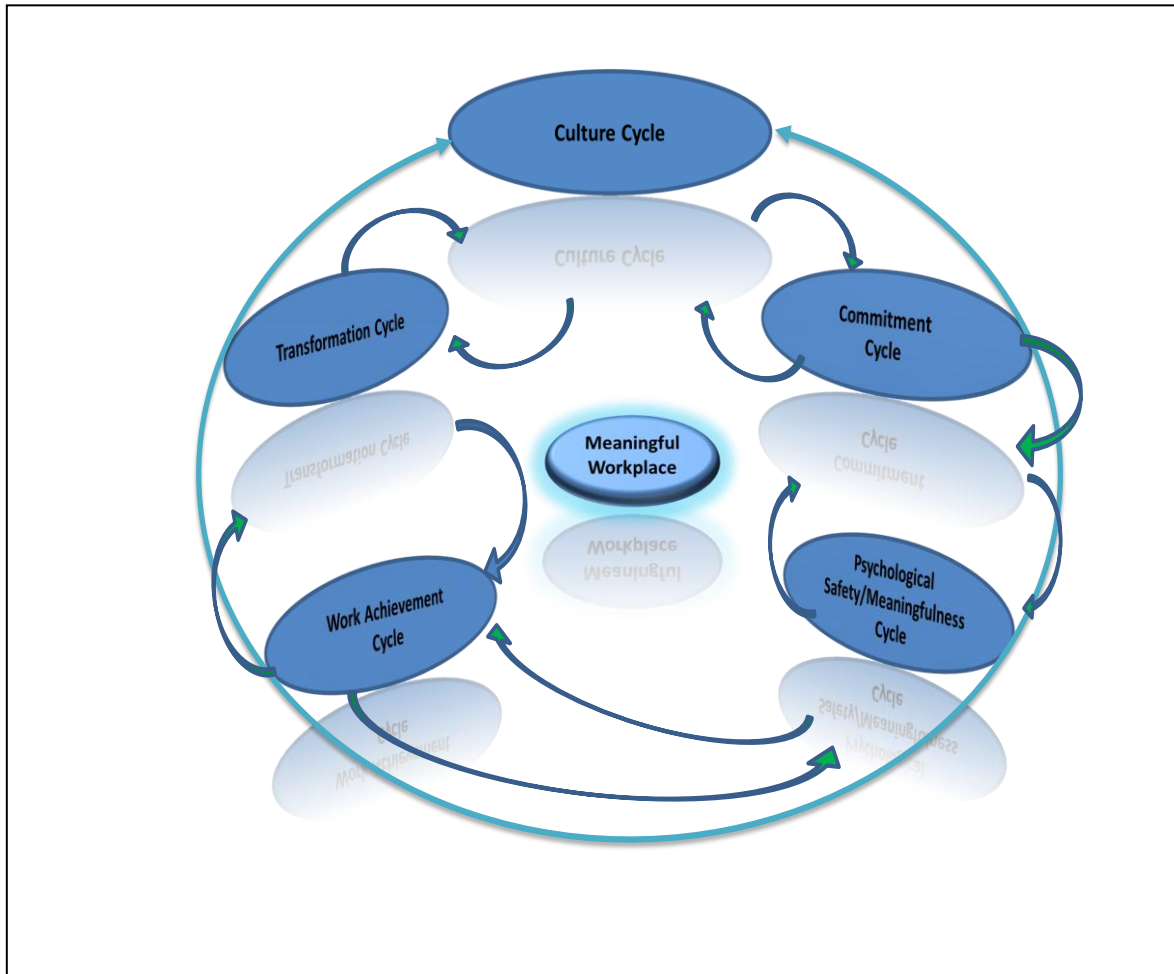
### **3.8 INTEGRATION OF MODELS (Meaning at Work/Meaningful Work Model and Meaningfulness at Work Model)**

It has been mentioned more than once in the foregoing discussion that the different cycles are somehow linked by means of overlapping expressions and implicit meaning references. The following graphic illustrates not only the cyclical nature of the linkage, but also emphasise the integrated nature of the reasoning and the linkage of the two models (Meaningful Work Model and Meaningfulness at Work Model) in moving towards the proposal of an integrated model for a **meaningful workplace**.

Perhaps it is overstating the obvious, but the reasoning should at this juncture be clear in as much as this study is purposefully steering away from linear causality. The moment one de-contextualises the different cycles in the sense of isolating the one from the other, linear thought comes into play thereby rendering the whole argument of potentialities and options for choice obsolete.

This study is characterised by a constructivist approach which immediately implies a sense of relativism in which one phenomenon cannot be presented or proposed as *the* truth par excellence. There are other phenomena which also knock on the door of recognition to be labelled truth or reality. In the postmodern thought process these phenomena collectively represent potentialities. This approach will be frowned upon by positivists and modernists and discarded as pure “literature”. However the phenomenon under discussion is not a matter for pure literature or speculation. Were it not acknowledged there would not have been sufficient thoughts invested in the phenomenon to justify the literature which is available.

The question now arises: How do we integrate the two models that were discussed earlier on into a single and integrated dynamic model? Figure 3.20 is the first step towards such integration.



**Figure 3.21: Cyclical Integration of the Different Cycles**

Figure 3.21 is an attempted graphic presentation wherein which, on a conceptual level, the different cycles are indicated to not only surround a meaningful; workplace, but that these cycles are interdependent and subject to cross influence from each other.

The next step in the process towards integration of the Meaningful Work Model and the Meaningfulness at Work Model is to present the different dimensions in a single graphic. This will obviously accentuate the oneness and integration as opposed to the circular and reciprocal influence between the different cycles

The graphic in Figure 3.22 is proposed below and will be discussed. Following this process, involved as it may be, is necessary to provide a baseline for the enhancement and expansion of the footprint in literature pertaining to the **meaningful workplace**.

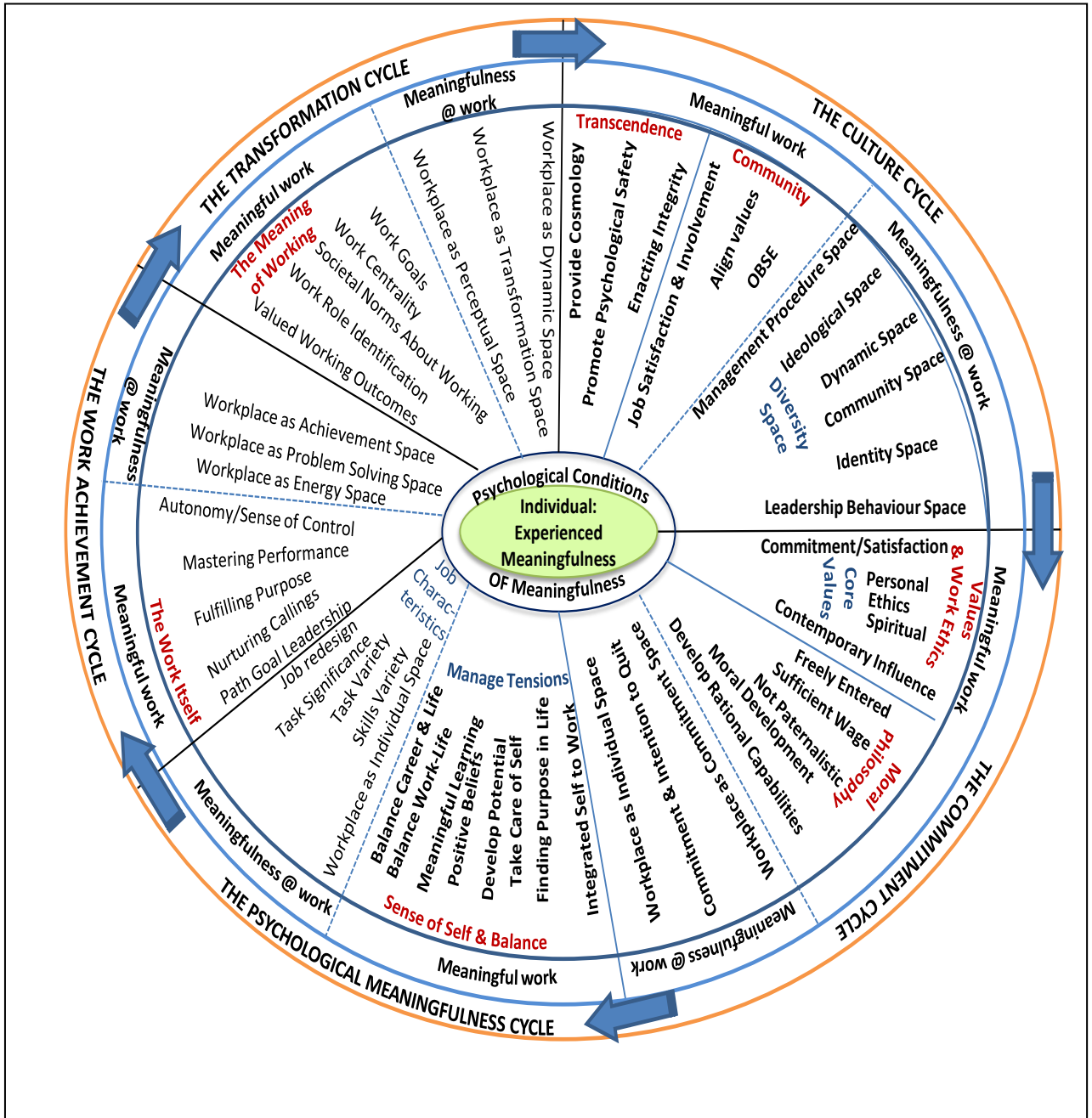


Figure 3.22: Alignment: Meaningful Work and Meaningfulness @Work

The graphic is divided into five main segments each representing one of the cycles that were previously identified. The different cycles are linked by means of arrows that indicate the interdependence, but not a specific direction of flow, nor a definite starting point. The commencement towards a **meaningful workplace** can be initiated at any segment and continue in any direction as was implied in Figure 3.20. It is not the intent to regulate or designate a starting point and to prescribe a direction of flow.

Each Macro segment is divided into two sub segments, i.e. Meaningful Work Model and Meaningfulness at Work Model. The sub segments are divided by means of a dotted line which indicates that the boundary is not fixed, but that the two sub segments are interdependent as was clearly stated or discussed during the proposal and presentation of the five “cycles” This means that the themes or constructs that constitute the two sub segments within the bigger “cycle segments” are interrelated and interdependent and mutually supportive. This study did not employ a statistical pathway to measure whether the hypothesis of interdependence and mutually supportiveness of the constructs in each sub segments, or to correlate these constructs in any way. This study rests in the theoretical propositional hypothesis which is in the nature of qualitative research, that the constructs in the sub segments are interrelated and mutually supportive.

It is further hypothesized that the confluence of all the constructs contributes towards the psychological conditions of meaningfulness as a result of which the employee experiences meaningfulness at work while performing work or job related functions, tasks, or roles. The complex dynamic of all the constructs as indicated in the different “cycle segments” and sub-segments therefore contribute towards a workplace that can be described as a **meaningful workplace**.

### 3.8.1 A preliminary definition

The following discussion or definition of a **meaningful workplace** is at this stage referred to as “preliminary”. The reason for this statement being that some dimensions, that should be incorporated, could emerge from the discussion in



Chapter 4, which investigates the construct or at least the allusion to the construct **meaningful workplace** from three empirical perspectives. After concluding the discussion in Chapter 4, and integration exercise we will of necessity have to be embark on a possible revision.

The individual is imbedded in the work space in which work role performance is required within predetermined timeframes, based on commitment within an environment of constant change which requires problem solving processes to be performed through the expenditure of energy to attain the highest possible level of productivity against the background of a diverse workforce where different cultures collude, guided by personal perceptions, managed within a structure and yet has to maintain his/her individuality as a human being and person and still experience the organizational ecology as a meaningful place to be and of being.

A **meaningful workplace** is a contextually definable environment filled with human dynamic (interactivity and emotionality) and many other stimuli (tangible as well as intangible) wherein people do formal work and that contribute towards a meaningful life condition of which work forms a major part, and where the organization forms an integral meaningful and emotionally laden environment within the total life space of the individual. A **meaningful workplace** refers to a certain reality that is experienced. This reality is not an objective reality waiting to be discovered but a subjective reality that is waiting to be construed in a fashion that will engender meaningfulness that both employees and organizations can subscribe to.

A **meaningful workplace** is an environment where compliance with conditions of a common understanding in respect of the purpose and future of the organization is reached between organization members; where organization members are valued for the contribution they make towards achieving common goals; where there is no limit to the growth and development of people or organizational goals; where people reach the experience of a common social reality and belonging; where the individual is entrusted as the single most important contributor towards organizational goals; where the performer is an integral part of work structure planning; and where all of these factors are orchestrated to create and to sustain commitment and productive work-role behaviour

A **meaningful workplace** is furthermore an environment that enables the employee to apply his/her capabilities to transcend the self and achieve self actualisation through a sense of belonging and achievement. This implies being able to commit, transform expend energy, create a personal space in which to solve problems, perform productively as an accepted member of a diverse set of individuals where the culture allows self expression without punitive measures in the pursuit of a spiritual experience, whilst at the same time the conditions for psychological meaningfulness are present and the experience of meaningfulness is mediated by skills variety, task significance, and task identity.

### 3.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This Chapter set out to determine whether the construct: **Meaningful workplace** is emergent in research literature. Commencing from publications (Terez, 2000 and Chalofsky, 2010), a broad mental framework was established against and within which the literature search would be conducted. Two macro constitutive dimensions were identified Meaningful Work/Meaning of Work/Meaning in Working, on the one hand and Meaningfulness at Work on the other hand. It was proposed (following Chalofsky) that the two macro dimensions converge to constitute the **meaningful workplace**. Based on this proposition research literature was investigated and each of the two macro dimensions was “fleshed out” resulting in an expanded Meaning of Work Model, based on the work of Chalofsky (2010) and a Meaningfulness at Work Model, harnessing the framework of Chalofsky and harvesting from the existing literature. The literature search was eclectic in nature as it was also realised that it is impossible to trace every single detailed dimension of the two macro dimensions. The two macro dimensions were aligned and in the process two aspects were confirmed: (a) the construct: **Meaningful workplace**, does seem to be an emerging construct in the literature from which Organizational Behaviour draws its subject matter, and (b) the initial proposition was confirmed that the two macro dimensions each have their own unique perspectives that have to be recognized to eventually construe a conceptual model for a **meaningful workplace**. As far as (a) is concerned it is noteworthy that the factors or sub dimensions that constitute the

different macro dimensions are not necessarily observable in journal titles, but in many cases “hidden” in the content of journal articles. As far as (b) is concerned it should be noted that the different angles of approach deliver different perspectives which are aligned but that are not the same. The formulation is important as is the angle of approach. In the case of the Meaningful Work Model the approach is from the assumption that an integrated self approaches the workplace and that many of the sub-dimensions seem to be intrinsic and very often, a sub-conscious search toward meaning, bearing in mind that the human lives in the world and that he/she is in a continuous search to escape the inevitable condition of being human, but that there is a striving towards meaningfulness. In the case of Meaningfulness at Work the approach is from the perspective of the organization investigating those measures that eventually facilitate the experience of meaning at work, thus meaningfulness in the workplace, and hence in relation to the organization as such. The two models are mutually symbiotic or stand in a mutually beneficial relationship in terms of addressing the search for a **meaningful workplace**.