

Changing Identities. From DiverseyLever to JohnsonDiversey: a Case of Cultural Integration*

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Abstract

The Diversey acquisition from the Unilever group was official the 1st April 1996. The final aim of this operation consisted in a merger between the new acquired company and Industrial Lever to create a new world leader reality in the industrial cleaning field.

An acquisition process is in every case a complex event that generates a wide relational phenomenology. Two companies that work as competitors in a national market, through a 'far' decision of acquisition, a result of global strategies, have to start a strategic-organisational process of merger.

All the acquisition and merger processes find the existence of a cultural problematic, that is linked to the identity processes of the implicated collective subjects.

Keywords: Corporate Culture; Management; Global Competition; Cultural Integration; Merger and Acquisition; The DiverseyLever Merger

1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to indicate the application perspectives of the ethnographic approach in the organising development projects – through the telling of a case of organising-cultural integration of two company realities with a long

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previous experience of hard and reciprocal competitive trend (Piccardo, Benozzo 1996; Turner 1990, Piccardo2002).

Some initial reflections are oriented to comment to the reader the phenomenology of changeable identities of the collective subjects, that act in the contemporary organising dynamic, sure that the theme of identity can receive remarkable contributions for an innovative declination from the cultural approach to the organising development. Some ending notes are dedicated to the ‘updating’ of the case as to the final market and organising events that have recently interested the studied company reality.

2. Changeable Identities

The phenomenology different from the contemporary society of risk (Beck 1986, 1999; Bauman 1999), its endemic uncertainty and the consequent identification processes, increase the autonomy of the human subjects, raising the attention towards the experiential universe of every single character.

In the organising experience the amount of these processes develop in a continual tendency of change assuming the different phenomenology of the organising change the rule of expressive quality of the contemporary organising experience. Along this trace the big metaphor of the organising learning, inside the new primacy of the ‘know at the work’, tends to put the problem about the transit from the teaching to the learning at the same time as an alternative expression to the change and as activity necessary for it, as accompanying practice (Morelli, Weber 1996; Fulner, Gibbs, Keys 1998; Forti, Varchetta 2001; Quaglino 2001, 2002; Morelli 2002).

In the last twenty-five years the acquisition processes, with the following integration attempts, that marked and still mark, even if with different tendencies, the dynamic of the strategic relations among the companies, brought a particular complexity in the indicated change processes (Comito 1999).

A new characteristic of the identity experience in our contemporaneity is its relational connotation (Grinberg 1975; Elster 1985; Fabbri, Formenti 1991; Melucci 1991).

The identity is becoming processual, it tends to a continual self building, through continual diversification processes, in which the external comparison with the others has a fundamental rule.

These hypotheses, summarily indicated still now, can help to better comprehend the identity dynamics also of the collective subjects, as the companies, and find in the acquisition-integration processes among different companies sceneries of extraordinary expression.

The experiences of uncertainty with the growing notes of a widespread capacity of ‘reflexive modernisation’ (Beck, Giddens, Lasch 1994; Gherardi 2000) lead the identity experience – as already said – to a continual processuality and to an increased individualisation of the sense given to the action (Melucci 2000).

Every individualisation process lead to an uncertainty, that can be recovered only through a relational comparison. If the individual identity is the capacity of a character to act being different from the others, is also the resigned challenge to be recognised by the others. It’s possible to play and nurse the unicity just in the relations: ‘the identity, being a relation that comprehend the capacity of a character

to self recognise and the possibility to be recognised by others, contain the polarity self-recognition and hetero-recognition'¹.

The contemporary identities reveal themselves in different sceneries, but in any case 'public', in which they meet each other; along this dynamic trace the telling practice 'is one of the ways to answer to the identity challenges'².

Uncertainty, conflict and wish find expression in the telling and in the need to be listened while you are telling about yourself: 'the telling as a space that contains and opens in the same time, as word said and as intention to the sense never totally ended, seems to answer to the difficult task to keep together the multiplicity and the incompleteness of the contemporary ego and his need to be recognise and to recognise himself'³. There is more. The insuperable opacity that a telling sometime could generate can be managed with a practice of narrative reciprocity: the self story told by the ego can be returned in a successive telling by the other who has listened, assuming this second telling a higher statute of authentic autobiography (Cavarero 1997; Demetrio 2002).

An acquisition process is in every case a complex event that generates a wide relational phenomenology contemporary characterised by functional and defensive investments – even if it is managed through an organisational development project with an ethnologic approach that puts intentionally the problem about the two cultures as heritages not to deny but to reflect and as resources to 'continue together' a projectual journey (Piccardo, Benozzo 1996; Comito 1999; Forti, Varchetta 2001; Novara 2001)⁴.

Two companies that work as competitors in a national market, through a 'far' decision of acquisition, a result of global strategies, have to start a strategic-organisational process of merger. The programmatic indication, the format, is restricted to the market and organisational problems (market strategies, market segmentation, etc.).

All the acquisition and merger processes find the existence of a third problematic, the cultural one, that is liked to the identity processes of the implicated collective subjects.

In the presence of a careful management this cultural variable is related to an ethnographic-clinic development project, the difficulties can be faced and often many bounds can also let see the opportunities for a new identity construction.

In an acquisition-integration scenery it's possible to understand:

- like the term 'identity' describes a construction process of significance based on a cultural feature, or on a serie of cultural features in relation among them, that assumes a priority as regards to the other sense source⁵;
- like a deep difference can exist between identity and rules being the last defined by institutional rules, external to the human subjects: 'the identities organise the significance while the roles organise the functions'⁶.

The processual and constructive conception of identity puts its construction in contests characterised by power relationship. This note persuades Castells to indicate three different forms of identity construction:

- 'legitimizing identity: it is introduced by the dominant institutions ... to extend and rationalise the power on the social characters...;
- resistenzial identity: it is generated by those characters that are in devaluated and/or stigmatised positions/conditions by the power's logic and that build trenches for the resistance and the survival on the base of different principles and sometime opposite to those that inform the society institutions ...;

- projectual identity: when the social characters build a new identity that define their position in the society and, doing that, try to transform the social structure on its whole⁷.

The model proposed by Castells seems to be useful to comprehend the institutional-cultural dynamic that happens in many cases in the acquisition and integration processes.

The legitimating identity in many cases – and also in our case – is absent or has weak valences. Sometimes there is an institution that ‘play a dominant role’ and if this is real often this institution stands aloof and chose not to show itself as a kind of absenteeism. In some cases of acquisition and integration made by multinationals, the absenteeism of the Corporate institution is very frequent.

The resistential identity seems to be the most frequent, more or less unconsciously and intentionally, especially in the first phases of the acquisition process, when the integration hypotheses haven’t already been fixed and when there are a series of investments especially defensive against anxiety both depressive (‘the others are inferior than us’) and persecuted (‘the others are more skilful than us’) or, finally, confuse for an archaic primary anxiety to vanish.

The projectual identity makes concrete an ego proposal that has its origin in different dynamics, and with the customer role assumed by different institutions, when the defensive systems are in a decreasing phase and can coincide with the work hypotheses built together with a care giving, in the different phases of a project of organising development (Piccardo 1991; Gagliardi 1991; Piccardo, Benozzo 1996; Czarniawska 1997; Forti, Varchetta 2001).

This third form of identity construction – the projectual identity – generates subjects, according to Castells: ‘The subjects aren’t individuals, even if they take form in the relations between the individuals or in the individuals’ interior. They are the social characters through which the individuals receive a general sense to their singular experience⁸.

All this proposes the processual, relational reality of the identity experience in our contemporaneity and, on the other hand, the circumstance of a reflexivity on the experience – thinking about yourself – like a fundamental hinge for the building of the individual identity.

The relational universe in which there is the contemporary dynamic of the identity, puts prominence also the opportunities for an enrichment of the experience of both the individual and the collective subjects.

In a scenario of acquisition and integration, the two companies, bound within a project of organisational development⁹, can compare each other listening to each others self description and information. Together they ‘stand up’ and speak to each other about themselves, believing that the other is listening¹⁰. Sometimes it can happen that one or both subjects, listening to the exchange of information, finally comprehends its true identity ‘for the first time’; as happened to Ulysses, during the dinner with the king of the Feaci, when he cried because for the first time he really understood himself through the narration of his deeds at Troy by an old Soothsayer.

Too much are the options, too much the multiplicity and the incompleteness to solve the identity dynamic just in an endogenous project. Today the identity is also a knowledge process, and such as it is, it is possible through the exchange of internal and external information.

Every change is an possible event for a knowledge different from the previous one which concerns the system in his total integrity; the development takes place inside couplings of various systems in organisational closing regimes characterised by coevolutive dynamics. There is the comparison, in other words, with an endogenous development level (the integrated totality of the system studied) and an exogenous development level (the net of systems structurally coupled). These two levels of the development event are simultaneous and complementary and produce a difference between a 'before' and an 'after'.

If an organisational development project managed with an ethnographic-clinic approach is able to 'contain' the suitable dynamics and the dual complexity of an endogenous-exogenous exchange, it is possible to reduce and to manage risks of drifts, with the prevalence of destroying elements. It is possible to examine, along these experiential tracks, how forms of resistential identity start to communicate and how the new projectual identities aren't the result of models came from far and external input, but they are the result of the development of the resistential identities acted by the involved subjects – the presented case is the confirmation of such possible development¹¹.

2. The DiverseyLever Merger

DiverseyLever was a company of Unilever group, that has its origin in the merger between Diversey, that belongs to the Canadian Molson, and Industrial Lever, that already belongs to the Unilever group. After the first difficult years, 1999 gave to the new company the full approval recognising it as a leader in the industrial cleaning sector and giving it the honour and the name of 'Star Company' as regards the Global DiverseyLever group.

□ *The general manager, Claudio Zucchia, in occasion of the DiverseyLever Day, marked out the following balance of the successful experience as chief of the company. 'To the end of 1998, after having overcome big difficulties, we have started, as company, to have good results, because we have become, very soon, one of the best companies in the international panorama. (...) It's possible to say with proud that today we are a strength, because we offer to our customers the best and the best global competencies, more than the leader products of the kitchen cleaning market, the food hygiene and the beverages, the self care, the building upkeep and the cloth washing. (...) Our annual sales overcome the billion of pound with a presence in 60 countries in Europe, North America, Pacific Asia, Latin America, Africa and Middle East. (...) We are proud to take part of Unilever. Our mother house has over than 300.000 employees in 90 countries in the world, with a trade in 70 countries. Its annual turnover is over than 30 billion of pound. With the born of DiverseyLever, Unilever is now one of the major supplier of services and systems for cleaning and hygiene (...).*

2.1 The Start of the Project of the DiverseyLever Cultural Integration

The Diversey acquisition from the Unilever group was official the 1st April 1996. The final aim of this operation consisted in a merger between the new acquired company and Industrial Lever to create a new world leader reality in the industrial cleaning field. Before Diversey had 235 employees, spread out between Milan, where the offices and the management are located, and Bagnolo, where the factory is located. In Industrial Lever work instead 149 people, also them divided between the offices and the factory both located in Casalpusterlengo.

The Diversey and Industrial Lever integration had been presented as a merger between equal partners, in terms of competition and growth, but in the same time different and complementary. It was also underlined the fact that the acquisition had been realised by Unilever and not by Industrial Lever.

□ *Doctor Varchetta, National Development Department Manager, one of the central staff of Unilever Italy, remembers with the following words those moments¹²: 'When I knew about the acquisition and read the cultural features of the acquired company, I make an idea in my mind, perhaps a little bit fanciful, about what could have happened and I image a sort of hurricane, a fight between hot fronts and cold fronts, so that it could be a cataclysm'.*

With this preliminary takes form the hypotheses to realise a project that can support the integration between two so different realities.

The first Staff's contacts with the company were 'counselling and coaching' meetings.

Some fundamental points emerged during the first meetings. Both the companies were dominant in Europe but in different sectors, (Diversey had a good market also in North America): Diversey was good in the kitchen sector and 'food and beverage', while Industrial Lever in the laundry and floorcare sector. Some products had been already cancelled, but there wasn't a unique portfolio yet. The two commercial nets, very different between them, would have still acted separately until their integration. One of the most critical aspects was linked to the management of the redundancies generated by the merger. It would be necessary to announce the mobility and make an agreement plan with the trade unions. There were also some fears about the possibility that someone could consider the first choices in the management more as a result of power relations among the structures than of comparisons of individual competencies.

'The process that was starting, - Mazzoleni says - and that thanks to our intervention changed its road, was an egoistic management of the redundancies by the two groups: everyone was trying to save its group and this was the biggest danger. (...) 'Information Technology, what lives, this or that?'. This is a process already happened in the beginning, but that then has been retouched. When we had the first contacts with them, everyone was trying to save its group: they had a political obligation with the International Centre to reduce the staff 17% (...).Dismissing 17% of the people is not a joke and we have insisted that this process was not separated by the cultural integration process'.

Finally, to start the integration project, the two companies accepted a solution of contemporaneity between the intervention on the culture and those directed to the manage of the exceeded people.

□ *The first Staff's perceptions about the emotions between the people indicated a strong expectation of defence of the Industrial Lever, that was the 'acquirer' of Diversey, and a remarkable pride feeling of the ex Diversey people ('they sold us because we are good'). The collected 'confidences' between some of the ex Diversey people confirmed the hypotheses of a difficult cohabitation of the two realities.*

In December of the same year at Casalpusterlengo, the factory and Industrial Lever offices seat, was presented the proposal about the cultural integration project of DiverseyLever (see enclosure 1). The representatives' reactions of the Personal function were good and so it was decided a scheme where to report all the happened and foreseen phases, or telluric movements, using the earthquake metaphor.

2 April 1996	Current Phase	June 1997	Oct.-Jan. 1998	1998/1999
1st Announcement	Settlement 1 st and 2 nd line. Preparation and beginning of the 'Integration project'	'Announcement' ¹³	Physical unification of the offices. Legal entity	Factory unification
1st jolt (violent)	Calm (tension and grumbling)	2 nd jolt (violent?)	3 rd jolt (violent?)	4 th jolt (violent?)

The proposal was to work in parallel with two researches, making a difference of the people to listen. The first level (the first Diversey level and the oldest first Lever level) should had been subjected to a series of psychosocial interview. All the interviewers should had been assembled for the presentation of the searching results, before going to the second level.

This presentation occurred in two meetings in which the management, apart from to recognise the differences that characterised the 'spread' Board, accepted positively the proposal of a 'good phased' intervention according to the corporation's terms.

The 'DiverseyLever cultural integration project' was entering in the operative phase to all the effects.

2.2 The Presentation of the Psychosocial Research: 'The Separated Room'

Both the researches started in March.

In April the collection of the data of the psychosocial research which had as objective the analysis of people's life as regards to the merger, with a particular attention of how the people perceive their reality and the 'other'. 18 interviews ('extended Board') had been realised and from their analyses emerged the following results: Diversey was seen by the Industrial Lever people as a dynamic company oriented to the market, to the customer, to the service, to the result, with a slim and agile structure, but also like an fragile organisation with a less structured ideas and with a good managerial style.

On the other hand, Industrial Lever, was perceived by Diversey people like a company oriented more to the brand and less to the market, careful and

sophisticated to the human resources management, extremely structured, but with an excessive decisional slowness.

The analyses of the interviews throw light on some different elements that could have obstructed the integration. The market and culture differences had been cited among the objective difficulties, the geographic separation, the conversion of the roles of ex Industrial Lever sell strength and the adaptation to the Unilever policies of the human resources management by ex Diversey people. Other indicated difficulties had instead their origins in the dynamic of the merger, as the 'took of the power' of Diversey (for the choices about the General Direction and the first line) lived by ex Industrial Lever people and the repartitions interested in the sell strength ('we keep the best and leave the worst to the other').

In conclusion, the elaboration of the collected data underlined the Diversey Lever integration both for the multiplicity of the elements and for the cultural diversity. Furthermore, despite the majority of the management had understood the virtual complementarity of the two cultures, it was possible to perceive a spread uncertainty about the ways to follow and the risks to face.

Also the ethnographic research came to similar conclusion. 14 interviews had been made for the collection of data to a sample of manager and cadres selected in base of a criterion of size and significant of the possessed knowledge.

Apart from the interviews, the analysis of all the written documents (products presentation brochure, products label, national, international and corporation's newspapers) and the observation during the working days and the ceremonial event of DiverseyLever Day were added. The research thrown light on the existence of numerous cultural differences between the two organising realities, that were divided in more dimensions, such as the know manners, the time perception and the perception of the personal policies (see the enclosure 2). In particular, using the metaphor language, Diversey was associated to a feline (a cat or a tiger), that is an agile, clever and opportunistic animal with an excellent sight and smell and well sharp claw, or to a turbo, that is a powerful but expensive vehicle. On the other hand, Industrial Lever, was seen as an elephant, because is walks slowly little step by little step, or it was compared with a Fiat Tipo, that neither earn nor spend to much.

The end of 1997 and the beginning of 1998 were important months for the physical and operative integration of the two companies, and an important occasion of collaboration between ex Diversey and ex Industrial Lever people, to solve the problems that they had in common. In fact the seats collocation was decided: the offices from Casalpusterlengo to Milan and the factory were transferred from Casalpusterlengo to Bagnolo Cremasco. A trade union agreement was found for the transfer: 36 people were transferred from Casalpusterlengo to Milan, 19 employees to Bagnolo, where also 6 workers, who had in Casalpusterlengo indeterminate time contract, were confirmed; finally, 5 employees and 26 workers were absorbed by the HPC division at Casalpusterlengo. The exits (84 people, between members of the Direction, manager, employees and workers) were managed doing recourse to the mobility and incentives. On 1st January with the legal merger of the two companies it was born the DiverseyLever S.p.A.

□ *'After some time we noticed some problems, because this integration effort hadn't been realised from the lowest levels. (...)The second levels didn't received no input from the high, that is they had been cut off from the decisions of the Board. I think, and this is a thing*

that I have already seen in other circumstances, that in conflict occasions the supreme organ tends to hide the conflict because it is frightened that it could break vertically the organisation: so it is said that it is better to quarrel in 'the own family' without let know nothing to the children and only after that all the problems are solved between us, we explained them to the others. Perhaps this process will have its function, but at the beginning there is a exclusion feeling by all the other, the 'children' who don't see what is happening between the 'big'.

For the first time it was recognised that both the parties had some elements to develop.

Successively the Staff elaborated the document that summarises the second phase of the 'cultural integration DiverseyLever Project', and that was divided into four successive moments, in which the intervention would have developed:

- the definition of the values and the local and operative aims, starting from 'vision' and 'mission' and from the analysis of the cultural differences emerged during the ethnographic research;
- definitive composition of the Board through the research of people to insert ('management development');
- to work with the new direction to develop the necessary competencies and to individuate new individual projects of development to fill the gaps;
- to maintain the attention of the managers on the 'leadership style' theme, that has a central and privilege space both in the organising culture analysis (the enclosure 2) and in the competencies' model of the Integrated Approach Unilever.

Trying to define the 'flag' values that are a base of the new leadership style of the Board, on October 1998, the Direction, went to the definition of the principles of the culture that DiverseyLever should have been develop. Summing up, it had been recognised in: maximum efficiency supported by an entrepreneurial spirit, Board visibility in all the department, behavioural coherence of the Board components, recognition of the personal results and aggressiveness on the 'underperformers'. It was visible an effort stretched to the research of a possible cultural integration, visible also in the attempt to coin new slogan that would realise also a linguistic mediation.

On February 1999, finally, there had been some seminars about the valuation of competencies (on the base of the new competencies model in the Integrated Approach) that met in the room, for the first time, two managers' groups of the second line. Those two days not only kept the chief-collaborator couple very busy, in coherence with the Unilever policies of human resources management and in particular of competencies valuation, but they had also an important symbolic value and represented a significant test on the integration level. The participants recognised the own cultural diversity with clearness and they considered them not as a problem, but as a mutual learning resource.

2.3 The Balance on the Reached Integration Status

About this, it would be necessary to realise another research on DiverseyLever to do a balance and, overall, to comprehend the mechanism that had been the base of the integration success of those two organising cultures.

3. The Story Goes On ...

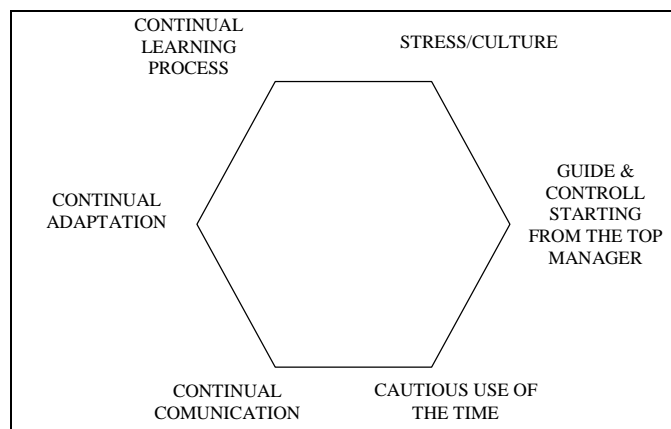
The described case is referred to the acquisition by Unilever of Diversey for the creation of a competitive reality more market-driven in the cleaning market and of the industrial hygiene through the Diversey integration with Industrial Lever.

Our story – even if has some uncertainties – if observed with attention and listening capacity, shows the possibility to continue contemporarily with an attention for the structure costs and for involved human researches development. This underlines the possibility that its possible to find space also for contemporary development interventions of the human researches for all the functions and working levels, even if in front of important needs of reorganisation.

To manage this double strategy, that forgets the alternative logic of the neither... or to meet those of a contemporary possibility of and...and, it needs courage, capacity to think to a realisation and to a development, capacity to give significance to the hopes, a future vision to the people who continued to work in the new company.

Our journey of organising-cultural integration in DiverseyLever tried to follow a double logic of and...and, managing together the reorganisation projects and development projects, inside a conceptual and operative framework that the scheme (Figure 1) summarises.

Figure 1: *Conceptual And Operative Framework Of Organising-Cultural Integration In DiverseyLever*



Even if inside a period marked by tensions and in general by a lot of stress, this approach, in our opinion, had permitted on one hand the realisation of the new corporation structure and the other hand a logic of organising development that had equipped the new corporation towards a new kind of competition such to make it begin the 'European Star' in the own business group.

The contemporary logic of the globalise competitiveness confirm and in some cases overcome all the hypotheses that the daily thought had formulated about the actual society of the risks: in our story all this became real when Unilever at the end of 2001 – inside a cautious strategy of focusing of the own business and of a strategic plan (Path to Growth) – leaves the intentional division DiverseyLever to the SC Johnson with the aim of a merger with Johnson Wax Professional, creating one of the most important company in the world in the industrial cleaning sector.

So our journey went on and all we were surprised to ‘restart over again’ after some years and by our capacity to create a new identity. We had been helped by the consciousness of the already made road, by the new acquired capacities, by an attention to the newness not like a threat and a bound but overall like an opportunity.

We learned from the integration experience between Diversey and Industrial Lever that the two companies are actually unstable on one hand and linked to the relations with the other on the other hand. All we have been become conscious about this and this consciousness had, to say so, stratified in both the two companies a kind of distinctive competence about the fragility and the cohabitation of our identity. Starting this second and new adventure we immediately discovered that it was a different story, completely different from the last one, but contemporary we discovered that the diversity of the last story was a resource to face the different problems giving value to the learning experience of yesterday that permitted all us to understand completely that today the identities are a continual journey, not a port easy to reach after a very difficult journey in which it’s possible to stop for a long time.

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Notes

¹ Melucci 2000, p. 122.

² Melucci, q.v. , p. 125.

³ Melucci, q.v. , p. 125.

⁴ It could be relevant to underline about this point the role of 'accelerator' towards the change made by an ethnoclinic organising development project in circumstances of acquisition-integration, as simplifier of an authentic discontinuity: 'The learning from the experience is the principle source of the human evolutive capacities and is, historically, an essential referent for the comprehension of the historical organising styles.... The manners according to problems and pressures propose to the organised groups show today the insufficiency of the learning from the experience, ... for the asked transformations. The increase in value of the discontinuity and the break of the consolidated balances become ways necessary for the management of complex situations, but they do not seem either predictable or transferable. For these reasons the important and effective solutions as regards the pursued aims seem always to be several ones built in situations between ties and possibility'. (Morelli 2002, pages 131-132).

⁵ Castells 1997, Italian edition , 2002, p. 6.

⁶ Castells , q.v., p. 7.

⁷ Castells, q.v., p. 8.

⁸ Castells, , p. 10; see also Touraine 1992.

⁹ About the use of the metaphor of W. Bion, 'container' for the comprehension of the active dynamic in an organising project we suggest: Forti, Varchetta 2001, pp. 136-139; see also Di Paola 1995.

¹⁰ About the heuristic value of the culture.

¹¹ About this Castells observes that 'the new projectual identities don't emerge from already present identities in the civil society of the industrial age, but from development in the actual residential identity' (Castells, q.v., p. 392).

¹² The text in inverted commas or in cursive characters contains parts of the interviews made by the researchers to the protagonists of the cultural integration project: Giuseppe Varchetta, internal advisor and Giuliano Mazzoleni, external advisor.

¹³ We refer to the moment when the choice about the offices and factory seat has been announced to us.

ENCLOSURE 1

Cultural integration project DiverseyLever (December 1996)

1. THE RECEIVED BRIEF

1.1. The brief's presupposes

The international acquisition by Unilever of Diversey;

The Unilever Corporate reorganisation, along the Category Management's paradigm, that links the Industrial Category, with the other two, Food and Home Personal Care, on the level of the Top Management Corporate;

The organising integration on the European, national and world level of the tops of all the structures.

1.2. The brief's request

To project and manage a plan oriented to facilitate and increase the organising and operative integration between the two members of the new company.

2. THE STAFF'S ORIENTATION

The Staff, after having received the brief, had the opportunity of some contacts with the representatives of the Personal of the new company.

On the base of quantitative and qualitative collected data and on the base of comparable experiences in other organising contests, the Staff proposes to the customers some reflection themes for a new deeper comprehension of the brief meaning.

a) Merger and Stress

It is probable that in the Diversey-Industrial Lever merger some phenomenon's of spread stress could happen at all the levels of the organisation wide documented

by the researches and by the literature about ‘Merger and Acquisition’, originated by three processes, classifiable in:

stress from uncertainty for the fear to lose the job and/or of the own professional balance that has a deep change;

stress for the lost of the control of the informative and decisional processes tested before;

stress for the lost and/or the increasing uncertainty about the own professional and collective identity with the company.

b) Merger and Culture

When two different and far humans’ groups are invited to walk, any time, a common road and to build a common home, and so they are obliged to leave their home and their habits to solve the development problems, it is important to consider that they face (conscious or less) problematic of cultural nature.

The organising culture, in fact, is made up of principles that a group has developed while was learning to manage the adaptation problems to the external and of internal social cohesion ambient condition; the tested good solutions create a base for an organising knowledge heritage, they become roles and values through idealisation processes and are spread out and learned inside and outside of the organisation as the ‘own’ ‘right’ manner to perceive the phenomenon or to individuate right solutions for the survivor of the organisation. The management of this ‘circular iter’ is controlled by the leadership. The specific culture of the organisation (in its rational, affective and normative aspects) represents the knowledge heritage to develop the strategies (products, markets, competitors...), to keep together the people that take part in it (motivations, prising systems, languages and communication models...), to manage the technological processes, the relations with the customers and the suppliers, to measure and value the results (technical and economic) and to control the innovation processes.

Our professional experience permit us to say that every human group give itself, as a fundamental more or less conscious task, the keeping of the own cultural profile more possible unchanged in the time. The specific culture of a group, in fact, is the base element of its identity that make it different from the other groups and make it immediately recognisable as a social autonomic entity and different from the other.

The sence of to belong to a specific culture and the need to defend it – feeling and need in less visible and active normal age – assume a primary importance in the people motivations when processes of different origin impose a common project, merger and integration project, in which the two companies are lost or imagined such as they are.

It’s easy to understand that the loss’s sense – real or forced – of the own identity is the origin of a serie of individual defensive behaviours. They have as result a strong closing of the single culture with their passage from positive identification tools, functional cohesion and answer to the operative problems, to negative factors of refuge and protection as regards to the changes as terrible losses.

c) Merger and Cultural Change

It seems clear that the customer management has to avoid to fall in the, too frequent and documented, trap of the devaluation of the cultural level of the organising integration problem. In other terms it is necessary to avoid that also in local and operative level the reductive approach that usually guides the acquisition decisions of the top level.

This simplistic criterion reduces the variables to the only financial and strategic aspect before an acquisition.

This audit can make easy the following process, decided for the good sorts of the integration.

It's about to elaborate a model (at the first moment a kind of top manager's 'vision') of a new culture of the company that had recognisable elements of the old cultures in a combination of evident convenience: a marriage between complementary entities. In it the singles can recognise partially themselves and partially recognise one of their interest to acquire the partner's 'dowry', starting a experimentation process of new positive experiences, that progressively will merger the new culture.

It's clear the important role that, in the development of this process, will have on one hand- the action and the example of the leadership and – on the other hand - the occasion of support and individual and collective comprehension: counselling, propaganda, communication and formation.

ENCLOSURE 2 THE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES

Industrial Lever

Diversey

<i>Rationality and complexity</i>	The manners to know	<i>Concreteand simplicity</i>
Reflexivity		Pragmatism
Conservatism	The time and the change conception	Avant-gardism
Medium-long term projection		Result of short term
Decisional slowness		Decisional rapidity
Ethic at all costs	Ethic and conception of roles	Utilitarian ethic with the costs
Respect of the roles		The roles must be discussed and interpreted
The 'high school students'	The aesthetics' conception	The 'urchin'
Big value given to the beauty, the exterior look and appearance		Low value given to this beauty

The relation with money	
'Grandeur' spirit	Exasperated saving
The leadership model	
Protect, manage, cover	Dele gate, test
Hierarchy like veto and conservation	The authority like reference point for the action
The father who controls or the classic Unilever manager, reflexive, calm, detached	<i>Managing by walking around</i>
The conception of the personal policies	
Technical sophistication of the systems	Selection 'made at home' and training on the job