EXAMINING THE ROLE OF INSPIRATION IN CONTEMPORARY WORK ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract

The research presented in this thesis examines the role of inspiration in contemporary work organisations by exploring various meanings attributed to the term inspiration in organisational settings.

This research is based on the interpretive philosophical paradigm concerned with understanding of the social world as it is at the level of subjective experience and utilises philosophical hermeneutics as a methodological approach of elucidating inspiration in organisational contexts; whereas philosophical hermeneutics emphasises the importance of conditions in which pre-understanding of inspiration evolves sufficiently to draw technical conceptions of inspiration in organisational settings.

The material for developing a progressive understanding of inspiration has been provided by hermeneutic interviews carried out with volunteers at different levels of organisational hierarchy from three participating organisations to identify the various meanings of inspiration and their use, as well as gain a richer understanding how inspiration affects people at work. The findings stemming from participants’ accounts were then used to conceptualise inspiration in organisational settings.

The results of the study indicate that inspiration is significant to the context of contemporary work organisations and is often intentionally sought out at all organisational levels. The account on inspiration created in this study signifies that currently use of inspiration in organisational contexts lacks theoretical underpinning, wherein inspiration is often merely used in a flexible lexical way to add either clarity or ambiguity to any communication, depending on its context.

Overall, having explored inspiration in organisational settings, this study has identified it as an emerging concept, which fundamentally exists and is recognised in contemporary work organisations. The developed conceptualisations of inspiration allow for the rethinking of various aspects of organisational contexts and leadership and motivation theory in particular. The theoretical underpinning for inspiration laid out in this study can be used as a basis for future research.
Chapter 1. Introduction to the study of inspiration

The research presented in this thesis examines the role of inspiration in contemporary work organisations by exploring various meanings attributed to the term inspiration in organisational settings.

1.1. The rise of inspiration in question

The researcher's interest in inspiration gradually emerged during years working in the telecommunications industry. Initially interest had been triggered by colleagues' responses, who attributed almost every unexpected success in their project implementation to inspiration. This puzzling consistency in referring to inspiration had prompted the researcher to probe his colleagues with enquiries into nature of situations attributed to inspiration. However, the received feedback was quite diverse contextually but in many cases it essentially included the riposte: are you not inspired by that solution?

Subsequently, in attempts to clarify more about inspiration numerous public sources were reviewed. It had been found that inspiration is largely associated with other key concepts of quality of life: happiness (e.g. Tayfoor, 2000; Zadra, 2001), romance (e.g. Sanna and Stewart, 2002; Sheedy, 2004), and friendship (e.g. Appel, 2002). Several books (e.g. Field, 2002; Peale, 2003; Cooper, 2004) and online resources offer inspirational quotes for any occasion (e.g. Hearts and Minds, 1997; Inspirational Quotes, 2002). Inspiration was widely mentioned in the context of ‘mind, body and soul’ exhibitions (e.g. www.mbsevents.co.uk), books (e.g. Dyer, 2006), or holiday offers (e.g. www.ivillage.co.uk) as something that can help people to relax from the dynamism and complexity of life.

In order to have a more focused perspective on inspiration an attempt was made to look at it in the context of work, accessing the science citation index, an online academic service provided by Thomson Scientific and widely known as Web of Science (Thomson Reuters, 2004). It aggregates numerous academic journals in areas of social science, arts and humanities. However, the keyword search on ‘inspiration’ or ‘inspirational’ returned a limited number of results briefly related to respiratory functions of human body, some opinions from neuropsychological research with focus on mental deficits, as well as more generic ideas about inspiration as an encouragement for doing something, leadership, and indirect associations of inspiration with creativity. Apart from leadership, there were no other references related to people at work or a theory of inspiration per se.
Interest in such puzzling discrepancy between abundance of information on inspiration in relation to daily life and apparent scarcity of references to inspiration associated to working life has led to the idea of researching inspiration in relation to organisational settings. This intention to examine inspiration in organisational contexts implemented in the study is presented in this thesis.

1.2. Overview of the research

This thesis presents the research examining the use of meanings and understanding of inspiration in organisational settings. Linguistically, inspiration has been penetrating the management parlance with increasing intensity, but with sparse research to analyse it or its rising popularity (Boyatzis and McKee, 2006; Lockwood et al., 2002; Mats and Stefan, 2003; Weymes, 2005).

Initially, the notion of inspiration is considered herein linguistically (Lyons, 1995), namely from the semantic and etymological (Onions et al, 1966) perspectives, and then, in the context of organisational studies (Clegg et al., 1996). The linguistic analysis starts with a dictionary-based enquiry to ascertain the contemporary meanings of inspiration and then advances to consider the origin and evolution of the word and its derivatives. As a result, conclusions are drawn about a range of meanings associated with the word ‘inspiration’, its derivatives, and contextual connotations. These conclusions are used to inform the further enquiry of analysing inspiration in organisational contexts.

In an organisational context, the areas of leadership studies (Adair, 2003, Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985; Densten, 2002; Goffee and Jones, 2000; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982) and motivation (Geen, 1995; Higgins and Kruglanski, 2000; Medcof and Roth, 1979; Mullins, 2007) are analysed due to explicit utilisation of inspiration at the level of conceptualising certain approaches, namely inspirational leadership (Adair, 2003; Goffee and Jones, 2000; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982) and inspirational motivation (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985). This analysis is supplemented by a review of the psychology-based studies of inspiration (Hart, 1998; Raymond, 1908; Thrash and Elliot, 2003). The conclusions drawn in respect of each area analysed, where the notion of inspiration is used in organisational studies, serve to inform the formulation of a working conception of inspiration to be explored at the later stage of the research, namely organisational contexts of participating organisations in particular. Further, this provides a basis for defining the more focused research aim and an early

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conception of inspiration to be developed in order to inform formulation of the research questions.

Consequently, the aim of the research formulated herein is to explore the use of meanings and understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts of the participating companies. The research questions focus on exploration of meanings and influences of inspiration in an organisational context, while considering drawing its grounded conceptualisations.

After that, the methodological approaches are discussed in order to select the most appropriate one for pursuing the aims of the research and addressing the research questions, including considerations about the role of researcher and validity of the research outcomes.

At the outset, the focus is set on selecting of an appropriate research paradigm. It is dictated by the fairly intricate essence of inspiration and a need to guide the further methodological choices (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Based on the classification supported by the Burrell and Morgan (1979), the interpretive paradigm is identified as an apposite way to accomplish the research aims. The further selection step considers the research paradigm in the context of four schools of thought: solipsism, hermeneutics, phenomenology and phenomenological sociology, distinguished largely by the degree of subjectivity of their ontological stances.

As a result of a comparative review of these schools of thoughts, hermeneutics (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000; Bleicher, 1980; Palmer, 1969), and particularly philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 2004), is identified as appropriate to be used for accomplishing the research aims and addressing the research questions. The main elements of the pursued hermeneutic enquiry, such as prejudices, openness to meaning, horizon and temporal distance (Gadamer, 2004), are delineated subsequently to illustrate their contribution to the practice of interpretation. The fusion of horizons as a metaphorical way of referring to reaching an understanding (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000; Gadamer, 2004) is followed while undertaking an iterative data analysis. It represents an interpretive framework for identifying a historical horizon of inspiration and helps to outline its expansion to contemporary situations by fusing the horizons of the past and the present, while interpreting the participants’ horizons of understanding of inspiration in order to gain a better understanding of inspiration.
The outline of the methodological approach includes a discussion of a researcher’s role as a mediator of languages of lay or everyday language and social scientific or technical language (Blaikie, 2000), which is consistent with a philosophical hermeneutics framework. It is supplemented with the explicit statement of the researcher’s understanding and application of philosophical hermeneutics, followed by the discussion of considerations about validity and generalisability of the research outcomes.

Implementation of the selected research design is described, accentuating aspects of interviewing, organising preliminary fieldwork and arranging access to companies. All interviews were conducted in semi-natural settings (Blaikie, 2000), and as they were carried out on the premises of participating companies, they have endured such operational issues as eventual lack of time, interruptions due to incoming telephone calls, intervening colleagues, double-booking of rooms and other disruptions. To minimise the impact of these operational issues the interview protocol and guidance were designed to maintain focus and deal with such practicalities as keeping records about interviewees, obtaining consent, and audio-recording, as all participating companies denied subsequent access to the research participants after the interviews had been conducted.

The approach strategy of ensuring access to the companies is also explained, as it has significantly influenced the selection of participating companies. The profiles of three (two multinational and one nationwide) telecommunication companies are provided supplemented by justifications of the participant selection. Sampling is an important aspect of fieldwork (Blaikie, 2000; Bryman, 2004), which refers to a process of selecting participants. Non-probability purposive sampling was adopted by inviting participants to share their views on inspiration in organisational contexts without providing particular details indicating what was expected from them. As a result, seventeen employees of the selected companies volunteered to participate in the research. The backgrounds of the research participants, including their reasons for participation, are also provided.

After presenting implementation of the study, the stages of evolution of understanding of inspiration at work are described in detail. It begins with an outline of the presentation conventions, which were followed to present each respondent’s account on inspiration. Then, an explicit review of pre-understanding of inspiration by the researcher is provided. It is continued with introducing horizons of the respondents, grouped by the three research sites and concluded with review of the evolved horizon of inspiration at work. These are cross-
referenced to the original horizons of the respondents, representing the advance of understanding of inspiration in organisational settings. This interpretive work is concluded by the presentation of the evolved understanding of inspiration by the researcher and the outline of the researcher's reflective view on developing of his horizon of understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts.

Later on, the evolved understanding of inspiration is discussed in the context of the reviewed literature to generate new insights on inspiration in organisational settings. This discussion is structured to reflect the research questions of the study. As a result of addressing the main research question, it was found that respondents from the participating organisations often used the word ‘inspiration’ in the meanings of energy or freedom. However, even though these meanings were almost unanimously shared by the participants, the analysis of their insights into these meanings revealed the following somewhat different readings.

The community level participants, or top managers, were concerned with inspiration in the meaning of energy due to their perceived need to energise other employees in order to get the work done. Moreover, at this level ostensibly genuine views towards managing inspiration for the benefits of a company were expressed. The participants of other, technical and managerial, levels referred to inspiration as energy, mostly as distinctively remembered and desirable events or experiences that from time to time brighten their work. Despite a seemingly reciprocal need to inspire and be inspired, inspiration in this context is clearly used by top management to achieve particular objectives, and its meaning often associated with energy indicates a necessity to revitalise some aspects of working arrangements, which raises certain ethical concerns about its use.

Another meaning of inspiration as freedom, while also used by respondents of all levels, had some apparent differences in its rationalisation, depending on the positional level of participants. The participants at technical and managerial levels referred to inspiration in the context of prioritising their own work, freely expressing their ideas, or generally taking initiative. In contrast, for the participants of the community level, inspiration in the meaning of freedom reflected concerns of creating and maintaining certain desirable environment in their organisations. Thus, inspiration as most suitable for that purpose notion was specifically chosen and used by the community level participants for its flexible and positive meanings. This signifies that the community level, or top management, is concerned with their company’s working environment as one of the key determinants of employees’ performance.
This concern of performance fits with the top management’s agenda explicitly to relate to inspiration in referring to company’s working environment in the context of granting certain freedom to employees.

Subsequently, summarising the discussion on how inspiration may affect people in organisational contexts, it has to be noted that the reported effects are largely related to the concepts of happiness and organisational stress, and in a broad sense inspiration was noted to have bearing on individual performance. There were no significant differences in explicating happiness, stress and performance across the three levels of organisational hierarchy. This could indicate either likeness of effects inspiration has on people or certain difficulties in exploiting of inspiration beyond its usual linguistic application.

In an attempt to conceptualise inspiration at work an explicit comparison between motivation and inspiration was drawn. It was noted that all participants distinguished between motivation and inspiration in organisational settings. Furthermore, both inspiration and motivation were to some extent dependant on each other that represents a multifarious relationship, where inspiration often comes first, and motivation then follows. At the same time, in the context of work people have to be motivated in order to be inspired. It suggests that inspiration is another layer on top of motivation, and it complements motivation with a view on contemporary expectations from work due to inadequacy of the latter (Boje and Rosile, 2004).

Mainstream management theory (Adams, 1963; Deci and Ryan, 2000; Elliot and Dweck, 1988; Herzberg, 2003; Leventhal, 1980; Locke and Latham, 1990; Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1987; Mullins, 2007; Vroom, 1995) emphasises a rather optimistic view on motivation at work, while neglecting some other aspects of organisational contexts, such as stress and other emotional injuries, likely to be faced by people at work (Fineman, 2003). This view was supported also by some research participants claiming that motivation, as the most prevalent of the human resource management tools, is based on punishment and fear. It appears that organisations need motivation to reinforce fear as a simple and straightforward approach of reaching targets; then inspiration would be required to instil energy or enthusiasm in people in organisational contexts.

Finally, on the basis of all previous discussions the conceptions of inspiration in organisational contexts have been formulated to address inspiration at the individual and organisational levels. These conceptions are presented in the following section.
1.3. Contribution of the research

Contributions of this research are aimed at advancing understanding of meanings of inspiration in organisational settings and the associated effects attributed to inspiration.

The first issue to be addressed is concerned with multiplicity of meanings attributed to inspiration in everyday life. Based on the linguistic enquiry undertaken into the contemporary and historic meanings of inspiration, it has been found that the word ‘inspiration’ has a quite rich and divergent history, due to which it had relinquished its association with a divine agency, but retained its standing and association with the notion of exemption from errors, which made it well suited especially for emotionally touching and trustworthy utterances.

It has been found that the contemporary meanings of the word ‘inspiration’ are quite diverse and in the generic sense range from a fascinating idea and an admirable example to enthusiasm, encouragement, hopefulness and willingness to act. It also has been noted that all these meanings have in common the way in which someone’s mind or emotions can be stimulated to a high level of feeling or activity. When referred to in a figurative sense, inspiration could carry quite high semantic load and have numerous contextual connotations. In sum, the word ‘inspiration’ and its derivatives, which significantly extend the list of contemporary meanings even further, are not just useful lexical items but a very powerful semantically flexible concept, which can be used to add clarity or ambiguity to any communication depending on context.

The literature to which contribution is made mainly relates to the study of experience of inspiration in ordinary persons (Hart, 1998). This research expands Hart’s study by extending its area to organisational settings and elaborates on the Hart’s description of inspiration as a memorable and invigorating epistemic process naturally inherent in everyone rather than being exceptional, which is argued to ground inspiration to be more than just a useful and flexible linguistic element.

The initial analysis of inspiration in organisational contexts in relation to leadership and motivation theory identified inspiration used purely linguistically or in a non-technical way, as there is no conceptualisation of inspiration provided or sought. Meanwhile, its linguistic use implicitly relies on unspecified meanings of inspiration, with its expectedly positive perceptions.
Later data analysis has supported the Boje and Rosile (2006) view that mainstream motivation theory is inadequate for contemporary organisations. It has been indicated that inspiration is conceivably lined up with motivation (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985; Mullins, 2005), to extend original meanings of motivation as a technical concept by embracing flexible and positive meanings of inspiration. Combined in this way, inspiration emphasises a positive side of motivation, vouching to neglect its detrimental side. Furthermore, the data analysis has revealed that motivation and inspiration are clearly delineated in organisational settings. First, inspiration and motivation jointly co-exist and complement each other at work, with motivation often seen as a basis for inspiration to emerge or to be an extra factor beyond motivation. Second, the expressed view of irrelevance of motivation in contemporary times has been articulated and justified by the argument of using it in relation to fear and punishment, and that appears to be insufficiently applicable or effective nowadays. On the contrary, inspiration is seen as more positive and relevant to contemporary ways of welcoming people’s contribution to work.

Another insight generated by this work confirms the view that contemporary organisational settings, to a large extent, include stress, pain, and other emotional injuries faced by people at work (Fineman, 2003). Inspiration in organisational contexts has been referred to as energy and freedom, indicating the significant differences in use of inspiration in the everyday and work contexts. Subsequently, the cross-level analysis has revealed dissimilar readings in both newly-discovered meanings. Top management reportedly perceives inspiration as energy in a close association with employees’ contribution to work and, therefore, is concerned with revitalising the organisational environment, or making it more inspirational, in order to make employees more productive in terms of individual performance. Meanwhile, for employees at other levels inspiration in the meaning of ‘energy’ is seen as an intermittent and welcome happening occasionally breaking the routine of work. Similarly, another meaning of inspiration in organisational contexts, freedom, also was found having different semantic variations attributed to it depending again on organisational levels. While for the lower-level employees inspiration is associated with freedom as a certain autonomy in prioritising their jobs, top management articulates it as giving an impression of granting certain freedom in work environment to employees in order to boost their individual performance.

The above contributions allowed revision of the initial definition of inspiration (Hart, 1998) to incorporate specifics of organisational settings and, in addition, provided grounds for defining effects inspiration might have in organisational contexts, as below.
Inspiration can be defined as particularly heightened emotional and/or cognitive condition of a person in which the person may feel fairly energetic and enjoy certain clarity of mind, which is sometimes allied with happiness and mental concentration.

Inspiration represents an emotional and/or cognitive appeal that impels anyone, especially in a position of authority, to consciously use it in order to revitalise various aspects of personal or working arrangements.

Inspiration is a guiding complementary force accompanying motivation and after having arisen it is likely to be reinforced because of the attentive and anticipatory nature of human perception.

Individual performance is a function of both motivation and inspiration, mediated by abilities and skills, where inspiration represents a force that has propensity to influence emotional and contextual conditions.

The above conceptions of inspiration are suggested for use as guidelines for future inspiration-related research in organisational contexts.

1.4. Thesis structure

This chapter gives the rationale for the research initiation, its contribution and provides an introduction of the key stages of the research. The outline of chapters of the thesis is provided below to assist a reader through the structure of this thesis.

Chapter 2: Inspiration in contemporary times. This chapter provides a summary of views on inspiration from the semantic, etymological and organisational perspectives. It is concluded by formulation of the aim of research and the research questions.

Chapter 3: Research design. This chapter describes the process of selection of the research paradigm, methodological approach and data collection technique from a set of possible alternatives. It illustrates the selection by evaluating and comparing the alternatives based on their appropriateness for pursuing the aims of the research

Chapter 4: Research implementation. This chapter describes the implementation of the methodological foundation of the research. Development of the research instrument is
portrayed in stages, the research sites are justified and described the profiles of all research participants are provided.

Chapter 5: Expanding the horizon of inspiration at work. This chapter demonstrates evolution of understanding of inspiration at work through exploring the use of meanings and understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts of the participating companies.

Chapter 6: Reflecting on inspiration. This chapter discusses the findings from the analysis of the research participants’ accounts on inspiration and relates them to the reviewed literature to generate new insights on inspiration in organisational settings.

Chapter 7: Conclusions. This final chapter summarises main contributions of this research, identifies its main limitations and highlights potential directions for the further research.
Chapter 2. Inspiration in contemporary times

This study sought to revise the essence and meaning of inspiration in organisational context. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the meaning of inspiration in various contexts in order to outline the focus of the research and to formulate the research questions.

The chapter commences with an analysis of the everyday use of the word ‘inspiration’ and then considers it from the semantic and etymological perspectives, where the former is based on contemporary sources and the latter takes into account historical aspects. Then it moves on to examine inspiration in relation to leadership, and inspirational leadership in particular, and motivation. Thereafter, inspiration is considered from the viewpoint of psychology to contribute to a better understanding of how it works and why it is considered to be important. The concluding section of this chapter states the research questions.

2.1. What is inspiration?

The notion of inspiration has recently been penetrating into the common and managerial daily lexicons. It is not unusual to read or hear that someone is looking for inspiration or to be inspired, while causal and anticipatory occurrences are not always clearly rationalised. The word inspiration itself is used in a rather figurative sense, often distanced from its commonly shared literal meaning of an upbeat example worthy of admiration (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2009; Oxford, 2009). To illustrate these points a practical test has been performed as illustrated in Figure 1.

A simplified content analysis (Bryman, 2004; Tesch, 1990), as determining a frequency of instances of inspiration on the current online news, had been conducted on a random day during the time of writing of this section. As a result, a few news articles had been found using more than one instance of the word inspiration or its derivatives in the Manchester Evening News online portal (Manchester Evening News, 2009). The same style content analysis had been simultaneously performed on the close synonyms of the word inspiration retrieved from thesauri (Thesaurus, 2009). Apparently, such synonyms as enthusiasm, muse, encouragement and motivation generated no results at all, while one article had imagination in it, and both incentive and creativity were referred to in two articles. These outcomes of both content analyses exemplify the above statement of inspiration as penetrating a contemporary daily lexicon.

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The notion of inspiration has recently been penetrating into the common and managerial daily lexicons. It is not unusual to read or hear that someone is looking for inspiration or to be inspired, while causal and anticipatory occurrences are not always clearly rationalised. The word inspiration itself is used in a rather figurative sense, often distanced from its commonly shared literal meaning of an upbeat example worthy of admiration (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2009; Oxford, 2009). To illustrate these points a practical test has been performed as illustrated in Figure 1.

A simplified content analysis (Bryman, 2004; Tesch, 1990), as determining a frequency of instances of inspiration on the current online news, had been conducted on a random day during the time of writing of this section. As a result, a few news articles had been found using more than one instance of the word inspiration or its derivatives in the Manchester Evening News online portal (Manchester Evening News, 2009). The same style content analysis had been simultaneously performed on the close synonyms of the word inspiration retrieved from thesauri (Thesaurus, 2009). Apparently, such synonyms as enthusiasm, muse, encouragement and motivation generated no results at all, while one article had imagination in it, and both incentive and creativity were referred to in two articles. These outcomes of both content analyses exemplify the above statement of inspiration as penetrating a contemporary daily lexicon.

A further contextual analysis, extended to include Yahoo UK and Ireland's online news (Yahoo! News, 2009) for a wider coverage, reveals that inspiration in the news articles was equated to the word outstanding (Crook, 2009), or referred to someone as a commendable example (Gillykins, 2009), or idea (Rae, 2009), or encouragement (Reuters, 2009), or even a disreputable example (Gibbs, 2009). Even such a simplistic approach towards obtaining a commonly acknowledged meaning of the word points to its various connotations. In fact, the contextual analysis has not clarified what is meant by inspiration, as it indicates only that there is indeed a range of meanings, with some being distinctively diverse. For instance, such occurrences as 'inspires disgust' (Serba, 2009) or 'inspire horror copycats' (Toto, 2009) appear not fit well with a commonly shared undertone of buoyancy or upbeat mood generally associated with a contextual use of inspiration.

Figure 1 Inspiration in the mass media
In relation to the information from Figure 1, the following questions arise. Should such concept as inspiration have undisputed clarity of its meaning? Why are there so different meanings associated with inspiration? To address the first question there are some views to be taken into consideration. In daily social life, having one or a few meanings of a word may perhaps cause little confusion and in some instances it could even be appreciated. In an organisational context, at first glance, not having clarity of a communicated concept may lead to miscommunication, conflict and stress (Matthewman et al, 2009). However, ‘organisational context’ itself is not a homogeneous notion. Morgan (1986) suggests organisational context to be seen through the prism ‘of the relationship between individual and organization’, referred to as frame of reference, which is categorised into three broad views: unitary, pluralist and radical.

All three frames of reference are discussed here in relation to a multiplicity of meanings associated with inspiration. In accordance with the unitary frame of reference, having a wide range of quite diverse meanings may distort communication of an idea, fact or news and create a potential for misunderstanding or confusion, effectively resulting into potential and unwanted conflict. The pluralist perspective in general is associated with diversity of views or interests and, therefore, various meanings would represent a normal state of affairs, resulting in misunderstanding, or even conflict, which is to be cleared through communication. The radical frame of reference emphasises inequality inherent in organisational structures that is embedded in language (Burrell and Morgan, 1976). Therefore, diverse meanings are inevitable due to the different agendas pursued by sundry groupings (Morgan, 1986).

Elaborating on the above discussion, the intention of this thesis is to explore the contemporary meanings associated with inspiration in an organisational context. Thus, choosing a particular frame of reference in an arbitrary way would contradict the exploratory nature of the study. However, pursuing the stance of the unitary frame of reference is problematic as explicated earlier, because of the existence of multiple connotations attributed to inspiration by different people and/or distinct frames of reference. Therefore, the pursued line of enquiry will largely follow an anti-unitary view and tackle the grounds for having different meanings associated with inspiration. For that purpose, the next subsections analyse usage of the word inspiration and its derivatives in contemporary and historic usages represented by the semantic and etymological perspectives accordingly.
2.1.1. The semantic perspective

An attempt to look at inspiration from the perspective of linguistic semantics enables an analysis of the meaning usually attached to a word (Lyons, 1995). For this purpose, online versions of most reputable dictionaries of the English language have been used to obtain a detailed and up-to-date set of definitions of inspiration.

The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2009) gives three meanings of the word inspiration, associating it mainly with an idea and an admirable example (Figure 2). Additionally, it provides explanations for its three derivatives: inspirational, inspiring and inspired. The adjectives inspirational and inspiring intuitively appear to carry quite similar meanings and are associated with encouragement, with differences in shades of mood. While the adjective inspirational is more about hopefulness, inspiring suggests a willingness to act. However, the dictionary's equating of the adjective inspired to excellent is totally unexpected. In general, the semantic function of adjectives is to give more information about the noun referent (Lyons, 1995). It is astonishing, how all three inspiration-based adjectives make the original meanings of the word inspiration more semantically flexible by contributing to an increasing number of connotations.

The list of meanings of the word 'inspiration' given by the Compact Oxford English Dictionary (Ask Oxford, 2009) also contains more than one option (Figure 3). One meaning, that it is an idea that inspires, is similar to the one provided by the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2009), while others are different to a degree. A description: a 'person or thing that inspires' also echoes the Cambridge dictionary, which emphasises that inspiration is 'someone or something' that gives 'ideas for doing something' and is reminiscent of an example which inspires. Meanwhile, two other meanings provided in the Oxford dictionary are quite different. One describes inspiration as 'the process or quality of being inspired' and
another strikes with its reference to inspiration in a physical sense of breathing air in lungs, which apparently is not mentioned in the Cambridge dictionary at all, though, it reflects an essential activity of human body. Altogether, the definitions provided by the Compact Oxford English Dictionary (2009) expand a number of meanings up to two more, which begins to lay a foundation for inspiration to be an exceedingly flexible or almost a universal notion.

**Figure 3 Inspiration in Compact Oxford English Dictionary (Ask Oxford, 2009)**

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009) provides four meanings of inspiration supplemented by the collocations (Figure 4), adding an *experience* and *place* to the list of things that gives ideas for doing something. A brief analysis of the given collocations highlights that inspiration can be provided, looked for and taken, that is implying an intentionality and choice in getting and having it. The list of collocations also refers to sources of inspiration, including a divine one.

**Figure 4 Inspiration in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009)**

Furthermore, the list of meanings attributed to the word ‘inspiration’ is extended with the definitions from the Macmillan Dictionary (2009), which equates inspiration, besides others, to enthusiasm and provided collocations suggesting that inspiration can be waited for (Figure 5).

**Figure 5 Inspiration in Macmillan Dictionary (2009)**

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Finally, in order to broaden the pursued perspective, inspiration is looked at heterogeneously in terms of the English language. According to the Shipley's Dictionary of Word Origins (1993: vii), American English, as a language, evolved in a different path than British English. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2009) complements the list of meanings of inspiration with 'stimulation of the mind or emotions' and an agency 'that moves the intellect and emotions' (Figure 6).

The above dictionary-based enquiry into definitions of inspiration indicates that there are several contemporary meanings of the word 'inspiration'. The most common are associations of inspiration with an admirable example or idea, and someone or something like experience or place that may give ideas for doing something. Other meanings include enthusiasm, encouragement, helpfulness, and willingness to act. It has to be noted that at this point no denotation for the word 'inspiration' was found. This conclusion arguably depends on a particular perspective of considering it, but basing it on the ground of linguistic semantics Lyons (1995: 79) denotation is 'invariant and utterance-independent', which cannot be claimed about inspiration.

Furthermore, the inspiration-rooted adjectives extend the above listed meanings, especially their contextual use, even further. By modifying or giving more information about their noun referents, the adjectives broaden their semantic function to be so open that instead of specifying and adding more clarity these adjectives could augment ambiguity of meaning of their noun referents.

The review of suggested collocations indicates that the following actions can be taken in relation to inspiration as a subject of a sentence. Inspiration can be provided, looked for and taken, and waited for. Such customary practices semantically mostly imply intentionality and choice in getting or having inspiration. However, a few other collocations referring to the sources of inspiration intimate a divine origin of inspiration in parallel with drawing it from 'someone or something' (Figure 4).
Altogether, the above semantic analysis of inspiration and its derivatives indicates that it has a range of quite broad meanings, which makes it semantically flexible and thus according to lexicology potentially ambiguous. For that reason, the next section looks at the origin and indirectly reveals a history of formation of the word ‘inspiration’, which is a common approach for clarifying uncertain meanings.

2.1.2. The etymological perspective

Etymology is a study of ‘the origin, formation, and development (of a word)’ or essentially it is a ‘process of expounding the elements of a word with their modifications of form and sense’ (Onions et al, 1966: 686). The etymological perspective in this thesis is intended to provide a broader view on the contemporary meanings of inspiration in the context of its origin and historical transformation.

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary (Harper, 2001), the usage of the word ‘inspiration’ had been influenced by the Old French and Latin languages and in the fourteenth century its main meaning was attributed to ‘immediate influence of God’, suggesting that the holy books were written under the influence of inspiration (Figure 7). Correspondingly, the verb ‘inspire’ in the meaning ‘animate with an idea or purpose’ has been in use since 1390. The adjective ‘inspirational’ as ‘influenced by inspiration’ had existed also prior to 1884, but since then its meaning had been extended to ‘tending to inspire’, matching perhaps some other trends of its use in the society.

![Figure 7 Inspiration in Online Etymology Dictionary by Harper (2001)](image)

It is plausible to conclude that in the fourteenth century the word ‘inspiration’ was closely associated only with religion. There is no indication in Harper (2001) why in the nineteenth century the meaning of the word ‘inspirational’, but not ‘inspiration’, had been extended to include a propensity to inspire others, which previously had been attributed to a divine origin only. The possible explanation can be drawn from the work of Barnes (1993) aimed to analyse the notion of inerrancy, or exemption from errors, of the biblical texts.
Barnes (1993) maintains that 'inspiration denotes the doctrine that the human authors and editors of canonical scripture were led or influenced by the Deity', therefore their writings stand for 'the word of God' and are 'thereby supernaturally protected from error'. Such initial positioning of inspiration would potentially make it a target for a later literary use when there is a need to express something intellectually or emotionally moving.

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (Onions, 1973: 1083-1084) provides a detailed etymology for the word 'inspiration' with the timeline well corresponding to the one provided by Harper (2001). Additionally, it points out on such derivatives of 'inspiration' as inspirable, inspirate, inspirationist and inspirator, which had been in use since the seventeenth century. Notably, none of these derivatives has been found during the semantic review of modern application of inspiration. Is it an accidental or logical development? It can be inferred from the above discussion that a tight associating of inspiration with religion and theology, existed in past up to the nineteenth century, had been abandoned and the word 'inspiration' continued to develop in a more figurative sense. This view is supported by the '1c' reference (Figure 8), maintaining that inspiration also means the 'prompting (from some influential quarter) of the utterance or publication of particular views or information on some public matter', which is in use since 1880. The reported timeline is matching the 1884's change in the meaning conveyed by Harper (2001) and reflects some societal changes in Britain and Europe associated with post-Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution events (Ashton, 1997).
Another noticed change is that prior to 1880s the word ‘inspiration’ and especially ‘inspire’ had been used in a passive sense, as to ‘breathe in or infuse (a feeling, thought, principle, etc.) into the mind of soul’, which is fairly opposite to their contemporary applications as ‘to make someone feel’ or ‘to give someone an idea’ (Figure 2). However, the adjective ‘inspired’ meaning resulting of an action of inspiration initially, that is during the Renaissance time, had been attributed to the ‘divine or supernatural influence’. Then later on, at the time of the Industrial Revolution, it indicates a shift away from a divine agency, as a source of inspiration, but still reinforcing the notion of a ‘un-avowed’ source, perhaps due to difficulties with explaining of how inspiration works.

In an attempt to have an alternative look at the process of inspiring the etymological roots of the word ‘inspiration’ and its French connection has been analysed, as the word came into the English language from the Old French (Figures 7 and 8). The search engine provided by the Dictionnaires d'autrefois (The Project for American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language, 2009) has returned the results displaying the evolution of the word ‘inspiration’ in French dictionaries from 1606 to 1932. These results reflect that besides its usual incorporeal use since 1835 the word inspiration had been associated with enthusiasm in all etymological dictionaries. A comparative look for the word ‘enthusiasm’ in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (Onions, 1973: 664) apparently provides its meaning as to ‘be inspired or possessed by the god’ and ‘fancied inspiration’ (Figure 9). However, later on, after 1716, enthusiasm is referred to as ‘rapturous intensity of feeling’ or ‘passionate eagerness in any pursuit’. It may not be a qualifying explanation of the process of influencing, but it shifts focus from totally unexplainable or incorporeal nature of enthusiasm to the one originated from a person. Taking into consideration the contemporary view on inspiration, as equated to enthusiasm (Figure 5), it becomes understandable why inspiration is thought of being under the sway of a person rather than having a divine origin.

The above etymological analysis of the word ‘inspiration’ indicates that its meaning has been evolving over time and accumulated various societal and contextual influences, resulting in having numerous meanings and connotations in its modern usage. The divine origin, initially
associating inspiration with the notion of exemption from errors, potentially reserved the place for inspiration in modern times, while any other of its derivates, except inspirational, has vanished from the contemporary use of the English language. Furthermore, it is most likely that exactly this close association of inspiration with enthusiasm had shifted its initial passive meaning, as influenced by incorporeal agency, to the more mundane but active, as initiated or instigated by a person, meaning. Altogether, due to particular historical influences the word ‘inspiration’ had been evolving and nowadays has become a useful word when there is a need to express something intellectually or emotionally moving.

2.1.3. A linguistic summary

The purpose of the enquiry reflected in the previous sections was to establish that *inspiration* is more than just an ordinary word having more than one meaning. At the outset, the first general conclusion of the enquiry indicates that the word inspiration has a very rich and complex history, initially pointing to something incorporeal and unreachable by any means available. Subsequently, due to various historical influences, including Renaissance and Industrial Revolution, inspiration, as a word, has relinquished its association with a divine agency but retained its standing and association with the notion of exemption from errors, which had made it well suited for occasions when something emotionally moving and trustworthy needs to be communicated.

The analysed contemporary meanings of the word ‘inspiration’ are quite diverse and in the generic sense ranging from a fascinating idea and admirable example to enthusiasm, encouragement, hopefulness, and willingness to act. Notably, all these meanings have in common the way in which someone’s mind or emotions can be stimulated to a high level of feeling or activity. However, if referred to in a more figurative sense inspiration could carry quite high semantic load and have numerous contextual connotations.

Additionally, it has been noticed that the adjectives with the same root as the word inspiration extend the list of meanings even further, enabling this word and its derivatives to be not just useful lexical items but a very powerful semantic concept, which if used accordingly can add clarity or ambiguity depending on their utterance and the context. The semantic use of inspiration in such utterances and its other meanings associated with organisational context are discussed in the next sections.
2.2. **Inspiration in an organisational context**

The preceding discussion has laid a ground for considering inspiration in an organisational context. An organisational context itself is a broad notion. Generically, it refers to organisations as social units identified with some particular purposes (Shafritz and Ott, 1991), while Fineman (2003) asserts that people are at the very centre of any organisation. More specifically an organisational context can be described by referring to the management theory and organisational studies, with each of them representing a distinct complex body of knowledge loosely delineated into the perspectives and schools of thoughts (Hatch, 1997; Huczynski and Buchanan, 2007; Mullins, 2007).

Mullins (2007) asserts that management is an eclectic and integrative activity and the management theory can be thought of as a development of management thinking. Organisational studies is also a diverse set of academic studies which focuses on ‘organization as theoretical discourse’, where organizing is acknowledged as a ‘social process’ and ‘organizations are empirical objects’ (Clegg et al., 1996: 3). Therefore, both the management theory and organisational studies have been searched through for the logically interrelated claims including inspiration on the conceptual level, where concept is to be understood in a more theoretical sense rather than a general idea (Margolis and Laurence, 2006). The search was not limited to a specific perspective or school of thoughts, but nonetheless only a limited number of theories incorporating inspiration conceptually were found. These include leadership and social psychology based studies, which are critically analysed in the following sections to shape the research questions.

Deriving from the previous linguistic enquiry, the working assumption at this stage is that inspiration is not a merely useful lexical item but a potent semantic concept widely used in organisational discourse. Therefore, the aim of the thesis is to advance understanding of inspiration, which is to be achieved on the basis of the existing studies where inspiration is invoked on the conceptual level, then proceeds to examine how inspiration is used in organisational contexts, and to theorise about its potential conceptualisation.

2.2.1. **Inspiration and leadership**

In this section a relationship between inspiration and leadership is explored to analyse how inspiration is conceptualised in leadership research. Leadership came into the focus of this research as it directly relates the notion of inspiration with one of its approaches, namely inspirational leadership. Leadership ‘appears to be a crucial determinant of organizational
effectiveness’ (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2007: 695), and is an essential domain in organisational studies, commonly referred to as leadership theory.

Leadership theory in the last fifty years has progressed from the trait-spotting approach (Bass, 1990) to the style-counselling (Likert, 1961), context-fitting (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1973) and the new theories of leadership, including transformational (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978), charismatic (Conger and Kanungo, 1998) and inspirational (Adair, 2003; Goffee and Jones, 2000; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982) perspectives. Because of having a number of different perspectives, defining leadership is a complex task, and as Janda (1960, cited in Yukl, 1998: 2) claims:

The term leadership is a word taken from the common vocabulary and incorporated into the technical vocabulary of a scientific discipline without being precisely defined. As a consequence, it carries extraneous connotations that create ambiguity of meaning.

One of the key contributors to leadership theory, Stogdill (1974: 259, cited in Yukl, 2002: 2) reinforces this by affirming that ‘there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept’. Nonetheless, following a fairly comprehensive definition provided by Mullins (2007: 363), leadership is ‘a relationship through which one person influences the behaviour and actions of other people’. Goffee and Jones (2006: 6) reinforce that leadership ‘must always be viewed as a relationship between the leader and the led’, but with an emphasis on what leaders ‘do with other people’ rather than what they ‘do to’ others.

Apparently, this relationship embraces the notion of inspiration as one of inherent leadership tasks and a particular approach to leadership, namely inspirational leadership, which is analysed in the below section. Several leadership scholars maintain that inspiration or the ability to inspire followers is expected from leaders. According to Kotter (1990), one of the world's foremost authorities on leadership and change, motivating and inspiring are a few of many tasks leaders have to carry out. Morden (1997: 522) echoes that as ‘leaders are typically expected to inspire or motivate others’. Zenger and Folkman (2002: 26), drawing on the outcomes of extensive study of leaders’ progression, point out that ‘leaders inspire and motivate their troops’ and ‘the very process of setting a stretch goal is motivating and inspiring for the recipient’. Robbins and Finley (2004: 111) assert ‘leadership is something pretty gritty: getting people to do what you want’ and it is to be achieved ‘by scaring or them or by inspiring them’ (ibid: 131). Furthermore, Kouzes and Posner (2007: 29), in reporting results of the study of leadership credibility, maintain that according to the followers’ beliefs
leader 'must be honest, forward-looking, inspiring and competent'. All these indications of leaders, as being inspiring or able to inspire, creates a strong impression of leadership as being inspirational in its essence. Though, prior to any conclusion the notion of inspirational leadership has to be considered as, at a glance, it comprises inspiration in naming a particular approach to leadership.

2.2.1.1. Inspirational leadership

The focus of this analysis is on an inspirational component of inspirational leadership. Despite it being claimed as 'a new approach to leadership' (Mullins, 2005: 304), there is no definition of inspirational leadership provided in the same text. Therefore, an attempt is made to analyse the origin of inspirational leadership in organisational studies.

After the ensuing search through the management and organisational studies literature, it has been found that the term 'inspirational leadership' most likely was coined in 1982 by Yukl and Van Fleet (1982) in their seminal paper 'Cross-Situational, Multimethod Research and Military Leader Effectiveness'. However, a lexically similar expression 'inspiring leadership' is impossible to attribute unequivocally to any particular author. Some references to inspiring leadership could be traced back even to Socrates and Plato in the fourth century BC (Nails, 2005). Adair, an authority on leadership and its development, has dedicated an entire book 'Inspiring Leadership' (Adair, 2002) to the analysis of the instances of inspiring leadership from a historical perspective. Using numerous documented stories, Adair discusses the cardinal principles of leadership that, in his view, are based on knowledge and experience. Additionally, Adair (2002: 21) offers a notion of a 'good leader', or the one who 'gives direction, sets an example, and shares danger and hardship on an equal footing' and 'has the secret of arousing the willing and enthusiastic support of others to the common task at hand'. According to Adair, this set of behaviours makes leadership inspirational.

Gary Yukl (1981) in his first edition of 'Leadership in organizations', in the context of leadership effectiveness discussion, attempted to classify leaders' influences on followers, naming an 'inspirational appeal' as one of the main influence techniques or tactics. Later on, Yukl and Van Fleet (1982) include inspiration in their taxonomy of leadership behaviour in a military context and define it as:

the extent to which a leader stimulates enthusiasm among subordinates for the work of the group and says things to build their confidence in their ability to successfully perform assignments and attain group objectives (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982: 90).

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In the attempt to identify effective leadership behaviours in various situations, Yukl and Van Fleet (1982: 100) assert that inspiration is one of the ‘four types of leadership behavior appeared to be related to group performance’. It is also claimed that inspiration ‘is an aspect of leadership that has been neglected in most military and nonmilitary research, but indication of its likely importance can be found in case studies and bibliographies of famous military leaders’ (ibid: 101). Besides these insightful claims of the importance of inspiration for leadership studies Yukl and Van Fleet introduce the notion of ‘skilful inspirational behaviour’ as a kind of behaviour which ‘appeals to subordinate values, and ideas, fosters identification with the group and its mission, and builds subordinate pride and self-confidence’ (ibid: 101). Finally, authors indicate a link between inspiration and motivation from different contextual perspectives:

...inspiration was instrumental for enhancing motivation... inspiration also appeared to be more important in a drill situation... due to probably to the nature of the task. Drill practice is boring and tedious, yet subordinates must be highly motivated to achieve the precision and coordination necessary to receive high unit ratings (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982: 104).

However, looking at the provided examples of the leadership behaviours in different contexts, in some instances inspiration is even equated to ‘pep talks’ (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982: 98-99). Such conceptualisation of inspiration, as a pep talk, stimulating enthusiasm and appealing to subordinates’ values, may raise the question of its morality due to its inherent request to foster ‘identification with the group and its mission’ rather than follow personal moral principles. Secondly, strongly resembling leadership rhetoric, or intended to be effective and persuasive speech acts, it has been a subject for intensive debates for centuries and the situational ethics (Aristotle, 2004; Bitzer, 1968; Vatz, 2009).

It is significant that in later editions of ‘Leadership in Organizations’, Yukl (1998) steps back from his previous conceptualisation of inspiration as one of the four types of leadership behaviour and the notion of a ‘skilful inspirational behaviour’ also disappears from his list of behaviours for effective leadership. The only remaining conceptualisation is the notion of ‘inspirational appeal’, which has been carried on in all subsequent editions.

‘An inspirational appeal is an attempt to develop enthusiasm and commitment by arousing strong emotions and linking a request or proposal to a person’s needs, values, hopes, and ideas’ (Yukl, 1998: 209).

Interestingly, another tactic for influencing followers ‘rational persuasion’ also strongly resembles rhetoric, yet Yukl consistently avoids mentioning rhetoric or referring to it. In
pursuit of firm ground for conceptualisation of inspiration the following conclusions can be made while analysing the use of inspiration in the above leadership research.

First, as it has been indicated, inspiration is about influencing a person or a process. Yukl (1981: 10) though defines a leader’s influence as 'the effect one party (the agent) on another party (the target)' which is clearly oversimplified and all-inclusive at the same time. And, apparently, no definition of inspiration or inspirational component of this tactic is given, implying that the word ‘inspirational’ is used purely in a lexical way to extend semantically the meaning of appeal in ‘inspirational appeal’ and the meaning of skilful behaviour in ‘skilful inspirational behaviour’.

Second, the attempt to conceptualise inspiration as ‘the extent to which a leader stimulates enthusiasm’ and ‘says things’ (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982: 90) demonstrates a substitution of inspiration by enthusiasm based on speech acts aiming to instil pride and to provide encouragement (ibid: 98), assuming that it will have a desirable effect on followers. This resembles the situational approach in rhetoric, when rhetors choose what kind of situation or facts are to be emphasised (Bitzer, 1968).

Third, Yukl and Van Fleet (1982: 104) imply that inspiration, as a leadership behaviour, is ‘instrumental for enhancing motivation’ because when exemplified as a pep talk or similar it appears to be effective during ‘boring and tedious’ drill practices. Recalling that inspiration in Yukl and Van Fleet study was defined as something a leader says to stimulate enthusiasm, this inference can be interpreted as a leader’s attention, which could give a spark of interest or similar in boring situations and has very little association with inspiration. Alternatively, it may resemble Mayo’s Hawthorne experiments (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2007), when friendly supervision appeared to increase performance. The relationship between inspiration, as a verbalised attention from a leader, and motivation is very contextual and, therefore, not supported by any other theoretical underpinning.

Goffee and Jones (2000) represent another distinctive attempt to interpret inspirational leadership. There are a few key distinctive characteristics differentiating it from other kinds of previous research on inspiration. Firstly, Goffee and Jones (2000: 70) equate ‘to be inspirational’ with ‘to be authentic’, and portray this personality attribute as one of the merits leaders might have. In other words, inspirational leadership is not a separate or singular approach to leadership, but just one of ‘the underlying ingredients of true leadership’.
Secondly, based on their extensive research, Goffee and Jones (2000) provide a formula for leaders to be inspirational. It is a combination of the four qualities a leader should embody: selectively showing own weaknesses, relying heavily on intuition to engage in actions, passionately empathising with people and capitalising on own uniqueness. It is to be noted that these qualities refer to abilities of leaders and hence, enable them to be inspirational. This conception of inspirational leadership is distinctively different from other interpretations of inspirational leadership where having and communicating vision is often seen to be a main characteristic of inspirational leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Conger and Kanungo, 1998; Densten, 2002; Kotter, 1990). Thirdly, Goffee and Jones (2000: 64) assert that being inspirational for leaders 'is not about results per se'; it is about 'capturing hearts, minds, and souls', which, consequently, results into the great results after all.

This view of inspirational leadership is distinctive in many ways. To start with, inspirational leadership is not denoted as an approach, and 'inspirational' here is rather used to describe a few distinctive qualities of leadership per se, assuming in this case that the word 'inspirational' is the best choice to picture a leader in a positive and bona fide way. Therefore, 'inspirational' is not exactly used in one of its contemporary meanings (Section 2.1), as making someone 'feel hopeful or encouraged' (Figure 2), but represents a category accumulating certain qualities of a true leader. After having established such category, Goffee and Jones (2000: 67) comment on some leadership myths, like 'everyone can be a leader', 'leaders deliver business results' and others. On a more practical side, despite Goffee and Jones (2000: 70) having described in a very illustrative way how those four qualities could be practised, they themselves acknowledge that 'there is no universal formula, and what's needed will vary from context to context', and ideally the qualities must become a part of an executive's personality 'necessary for inspirational leadership', that is, a practice of leadership which is inspirational.

### 2.2.1.2. Inspirational motivation

Another conceptualisation of inspiration to be mentioned and analysed, is inspirational motivation. It first was mentioned during development of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1975) as an attribute of leadership, which can transform a 'level of motivation beyond original expectations' (Bass, 1985: 35). Later on, inspirational motivation has been crystallised as one of the four main techniques used by transformational leaders, along with individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation and idealised influence (Avolio et al., 1991), and is referred to as an attractive vision presented to followers.
In both cases (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985) there is no justification or any other rationalisation provided for including inspiration into the same framework with motivation in the context of transformational leadership. Remarkably, the essence of inspirational motivation has been changed from anything that transforms motivation upwards to a captivating vision, symbolising metamorphosis from quite a narrow aspect, affecting motivation, to a supposedly appealing leading idea or mental image, which arguably may not be motivating at all.

In general, inspirational motivation is strongly reminiscent Yukl and Van Fleet’s (1982) attempt to tie together inspiration and motivation. Yet again, it represents an attempt to extend the meaning of such a technical concept as motivation at the expense of the flexible meaning inspiration usually carries on (Section 2.1). This flexibility also can be clearly observed in the various interpretations of inspirational motivation by different scholars (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985), up to the time when the concept of transformational leadership had been finalised.

2.2.1.3. The inspirational moment

Later on, in 2003, Adair, mentioned above in connection to his advance in relation to inspiring leadership (Adair, 2002), committed his efforts entirely to the concept of ‘the inspirational leader’ (Adair, 2003), forming it on the basis of a reflective dialogue between himself and a young chief executive. In his work, Adair explores the nature and practice of leadership, including skills development. One of the skills is ‘a deep understanding’ of situations, ‘intuitive’ in its essence and derived from an ability of a leader ‘to sense the inspired moment’. This inspired moment is a ‘window of opportunity that opens up briefly’ and if a leader

says the right thing, the switch is thrown on the electrical circuit and that spiritual energy kicks in that enables people to transcend their previous limits or the ordinary levels of performance in a given field. Speaking from personal experience, those are moments you will remember all your life’ (Adair, 2003: 181).

Adair does not discuss the nature of the inspired moment, how it is created and what has prompted or led to it. He follows exactly the opposite route by implying that a ‘leader can sense ‘the inspired moment’ – that time when the right words or actions can trigger off a chain reaction that leads to sustained inspiration’ (Adair, 2003: 183).
This conception of inspiration and inspiring moments has certain implications. Firstly, it indicates a progression of the view on inspiration by Adair himself, from identification of a set of behaviours making leadership inspiring towards an acknowledgement of sensing or even certain spirituality in relation to the practice of leadership. It has to be noted that *sensing* a special moment versus *creating* it represents a point of strong theoretical argument between proponents (Bitzer, 1968) and opponents (Vatz, 2009) of the situational approach to rhetoric. Next, Adair (2003) maintains an importance for a leader to recognise the right moment for his or her intervention rather than creating one. This would challenge the previously discussed concepts of inspirational appeals and inspirational motivation that imply actively achieving the set objectives or targets rather than merely exploiting an inspirational moment, if one comes. Moreover, acknowledging the necessity for a leader to sense an appropriate situation would greatly diminish the significance of leadership rhetoric. Notably, Adair (2003) reflectively gives details on how inspiration works for him, which closely matches one of the meanings of inspiration as the one that can ‘actuate (a person) with a feeling, idea, impulse’ (Figure 8). Lastly, Adair (2003: 183) refers to ‘sustained inspiration’ as a result of a leader’s utterances, which conflicts with his own view of sensing the inspired moment rather than creating one.

The significance of the above observations is that Adair’s attempt to reserve a place for inspiration in leadership studies, yet again with no theoretical base. A theoretical framework is actually replaced by a rather metaphorical description of how inspiration works. However, it would be fair to admit that Adair has gone a step further than any author of the previously discussed works. He expanded the lexical patterns of making references to inspiration in leadership studies with inspiration in the meaning of animating mental or spiritual influence, which reflects its historical roots analysed earlier (Section 2.1.2) from the etymological perspective. This signifies that some history-influenced meanings of inspiration are still active and used to explain certain occurrences in organisations.

### 2.2.1.4. A reflective summary

The following conclusions presented in this subsection are formulated on the basis of the above analysis of the relationship between inspiration and leadership. First, there is a popular view amongst the leadership scholars that a leader is expected to have inspiration or to be able to inspire followers (Kotter, 1990; Kouzes and Posner, 2007; Morden, 1997; Robbins and Finley, 2004; Zenger and Folkman, 2002). Inspiration in these studies is referred to as an element of the lexical form, that is, without any underpinning theoretical conception. Thus, as
the earlier analysis of the contemporary meanings of the word 'inspiration' (Section 2.1) indicates, there are quite a few diverse meanings which can be stretched even further considering also the adjectives 'inspirational', 'inspired' and 'inspiring' for increasing of the semantic load of inspiration in the various contexts of 'stimulation of the mind or emotions to a high level of feeling or activity' (Figure 6). Perhaps it is this degree of flexibility of the meaning of inspiration that makes it so attractive for explaining leadership.

The next conclusion offers some insights into using inspiration in the inspirational leadership approach. In the all analysed instances (Yukl, 1981; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982) inspiration is employed lexically, but not always semantically, like, for instance, pep talks as an example of inspirational leadership behaviour. Perhaps the same absence of a theoretical grounding had indirectly forced these scholars to abandon inspiration in taxonomy of leadership behaviour or skilful inspirational behaviour projects. The survival in all subsequent editions of 'Leadership in Organizations' of the notion of inspirational appeal reflects a generic reference to enthusiasm, combined with emotional appeal, which clearly is a subject for ethical claims (Singer, 1993), surprisingly not tackled by Yukl.

Associating inspiration with motivation in the leadership context (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982) observably has been imposed without defining or characterising inspiration and, therefore, stands for an attempt to extend semantically the meaning of such a technical concept as motivation, while elaborating on flexibility of the meaning of inspiration. This approach reflects the use or creation of a new concept, which cannot be acknowledged as theoretically consistent due to intentionally created ambiguity of the resulting concept.

Adair's (2003) view on inspiration in leadership is slightly controversial, as he acknowledges the necessity for a leader to sense an appropriate situation, rather than creating one, prior to engaging in leadership rhetoric. In this, Adair's view contradicts the contemporary approach to rhetoric (Vatz, 2009), when rhetors choose what to make salient, thus 'linguistically or symbolically creating salience'. Then, after 'salience is created, the situation must be translated into meaning' (Vatz, 1973: 160). On the other hand, Adair (2003) shares his reflective account of inspiration and its value for leadership practice, which can be interpreted as acknowledgement of his long-lasting interest in inspiration or as indication of necessity for further research of inspiration in relation to leadership.
Goffee and Jones (2000) depict 'inspirational' in leadership as synonymous with leaders' genuineness, used as a category comprising certain qualities of true leaders, that is, selectively showing own weaknesses, relying heavily on intuition to engage in actions, passionately empathising with people and capitalising on own uniqueness. Therefore, inspirational leadership is not a style or approach as it was referred to in the previously discussed research (Adair, 2003; Michie and Gooty, 2005; Mullins, 2005; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982), but an encompassing feature of true or authentic leadership that is drawn on in a symbolic sense. All in all, the notion of inspiration is not conceptualised in this research and the adjective 'inspirational' is used to point up some elements of 'true leadership'.

The final point of this leadership-related discussion, where the opening definition of leadership is a relationship between the leader and the led (Goffee and Jones, 2006; Mullins, 2007), reflects the collaborative 'with'-approach, maintaining that leaders are expected to share their aspirations and time with followers rather than just dominate followers. However, the above reviewed studies indicate the reign of the 'to'-approach with the emphasis on achieving leaders' objectives. Michie and Gooty (2005: 442) also designate that 'inspirational leadership is unethical because its rhetoric appeals to emotions rather to reason'. Similarly, Bass (1997: 7) maintains that inspirational leaders tend to oversimplify their message, replacing 'rational facts with an excess of emotional appeals'. It is to be noted that all references to 'inspiration' and 'inspirational' in leadership theory and practice are distinctively seen as tools to impose a certain agenda on followers; to say, used euphemistically.

All in all, it can be inferred from the above discussion that the words 'inspiration' and 'inspirational' are used non-technically, that is, not related to the knowledge and methods of a particular discipline, like organisational studies in general and leadership theory in particular. Therefore, in absence of conceptualisation of inspiration, there is a clearly observable heavy reliance on an implicit semantic load of inspiration, which fruitfully combines notions of 'upbeat' and 'flexibility' in its meanings.

### 2.2.2. Inspiration and motivation

This section was prompted by emergence of 'inspirational motivation' in transformational leadership (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985) and also indicated behaviour of leaders, who 'motivate and inspire those around them' (Bass and Avolio, 1994: 3). These and other referred instances of aligning inspiration with motivation (Kotter, 1990; Kouzes and Posner,
2007; Morden, 1997; Robbins and Finley, 2004; Zenger and Folkman, 2002) led to a question: why is inspiration lined up with motivation? A range of answers certainly would depend on a theoretical perspective or a particular way the relationship between inspiration and motivation were considered. The stance adopted here is intended to be congruent with the previous discussion and takes into account a conceptual meaning and its use in both analysed concepts: inspiration and motivation.

Inspiration was analysed in Section 2.1, and prior to any evaluation of interrelations between inspiration and motivation, the latter has to be defined as well. To begin with, human motivation or motivation as a science is quite broad and includes many influences. Higgins and Kruglanski (2000: 3) maintain that

*motivational science extends not only across the various areas of psychology, including social/personality, abnormal, developmental, organizational, community, animal learning, and physiological, but also beyond psychology to other disciplines encompassing law, business, education, and health.*

According to Medcof and Roth (1979), defining motivation, even just from the psychological viewpoint, would not be a straightforward task, as there are at least five different approaches that have to be considered. The psychoanalytical approach maintains that the concept of motivation is about the reduction of tension any person has due to pleasure-orientated instinctual forces. For the cognitive approach motivation is associated with being sentient, that is, ‘human beings select and interpret stimuli, the responses that occur are responses to the selected stimuli and their interpretations, not to the stimuli themselves’ (ibid: 298). On the contrary, the biological approach ‘makes no generalizations about motivation, due to the complexity of the human organism’ (ibid: 300). The behavioural approach tends to simplify motivation to relationships between stimuli and responses to them. Finally, the humanistic approach holds motivation as a positive internal force generating a goal-seeking behaviour. The common aspect in all these approaches is related to having certain stimuli or goals towards the certain activity or initiation and reinforcement of behaviour.

Geen (1995: 2), in an attempt to unite various perspectives on motivation in the socio-psychological approach, generalises that observing people engaged in the everyday activities can ‘exemplify the basic dimensions of what we describe when we use the word motivation – namely, the initiation, intensity and persistence of behavior’, and these basic dimensions are shaped by a social context.
Summarising the above perspectives on motivation, it can be seen that motivation, representing a fairly complex process, affects even more complex in its essence human behaviour. The key observation here is that motivation is an in-depth researched technical concept. Relating back to the posed question, it is not clear why in many instances motivation is lined up with inspiration which, as discussed and illustrated in Section 2.1, has quite a flexible and rather contextual meaning with no underlying theoretical underpinning.

In mainstream management theory motivation usually is represented by the content and process theories (Mullins, 2007). Context theories (Herzberg, 2003; Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1987) have focus on the internalised human needs and desires for achieving certain level of performance. Process theories identify and examine relationships amongst various dynamic variables, including job satisfaction and rewards, and guiding behaviour (Adams, 1963; Deci and Ryan, 2000; Elliot and Dweck, 1988; Leventhal, 1980; Locke and Latham, 1990; Vroom, 1995). Both clusters of theories implicitly emphasise that some positive intentions of an individual in internalising needs in relation to the desired goals would lead to the further fulfilment, associated with achieving more and more. This optimistic representation of motivation, however, neglects other aspects of human life such as stress, pain, and other emotional injuries potentially faced by people at work (Fineman, 2003). This unbalanced view of motivation as a positive guiding force seems to be effectively complemented by the notion of inspiration, as it is well-suited for the occasions when something emotionally moving and trustworthy needs to be communicated.

To sum up, inspiration is conceivably lined up with motivation to extend original meanings of motivation as a technical concept by embracing flexible, but positive meanings of inspiration (Section 2.1). Combined in this way, inspiration emphasises a positive side of motivation, vouching to neglect its negative side.

### 2.2.3. Psychology of inspiration

This section brings together several attempts to analyse inspiration from the psychological point of view. Psychology ‘is the science that makes use of behavioural and other evidence to understand the internal processes leading people and members of other species to behave in the way they do’ (Eysenck, 2000: 3). In the context of this research the cognitive and social branches of psychology are considered, because they both focus on the way the human mind works and on its influence to a human behaviour.
Three seminal studies of inspiration are reviewed here to reflect the gradual progress of its conceptualisation as a psychological phenomenon, followed by an attempt to view inspiration in the context of human perception and its influence on behaviour.

2.2.3.1. The nature of inspirational influence

The earliest found effort to produce a scientific account on inspiration can be attributed to Raymond (1908: 8), who attempted to address 'the nature of inspirational influences', while dialectically contrasting it with the then commonly accepted theological accords on inspiration.

Raymond's 'Psychology of Inspiration', despite its expressive title, is looking more for a rational method of interpreting the biblical statements as a kind of reconciliation of 'the very highest conception of the sources of inspiration with the most advanced theories of modern Biblical critics' (Raymond, 1908: 158). In other words, in its focus there are sources and outcomes of inspiration rather than inspiration per se. This explains why Raymond (1908: 52), when he raises the question 'of what is meant by inspiration', addresses it by providing quite an insipid answer: 'The word itself may indicate in part an answer to this question'. Then, he asserts that those 'using and justifying the term believe in an inner as distinguished from an outer influence exerted upon the mind, and attributable to a spiritual source' (emphasis added). Raymond exemplifies that 'a man may be inspired in connection with what he hears and sees, as by a patriotic song or a flag', but 'another man, standing by the side of first, might be conscious of no inspiring influence'.

Raymond (1908) is not particular about the nature of a spiritual source. He maintains that the subconscious mind is more receptive to it adding, however, that there are many kind of mental activities in which both 'the conscious and subconscious spheres often work conjointly'. It appears that in Raymond's view inspirational influences are inspirational due to their inner perception as inspirational which, nevertheless, can be a result of external influences or events. Therefore, it is left up to a particular person to decide on how inspirational the external events, people or readings are, without actually defining what is meant by inspiration.

Despite the overall vagueness of the Raymond's (1908) explanation of the conscious and unconscious mind, consciousness itself and the nature of the inspirational influences, his work still attracts definite attention and is pressing even nowadays. Perhaps, due to this persistent interest in inspiration, 'Psychology of Inspiration' was republished a century later, in 2008.
2.2.3.2. The experience of inspiration

Another noteworthy study of inspiration of ordinary people was conducted by Hart (1998). It attempted ‘to understand the experience of inspiration and the role it might play’ in ordinary daily living on the basis of the in-depth interviews with 70 participants with the focus on a detailed description of inspirational experiences, ‘including the phenomenology of the experience, environmental and psychological context, its significance’ (Hart, 1998: 11).

As a result four ‘general phenomenological characteristics of inspiration emerged and are referred to as connection, opened, clarity and energy’. These characteristics or dimensions were used to identify and describe inspiration that then resulted in the concise definition:

> inspiration is a specific epistemic process that provides psychological and spiritual sustenance and is characterized by a remembrance or recognition of some knowledge or perspective valuable in the social or psychological context given (Hart, 1998: 32).

In general, Hart (1998: 32) infers that inspiration is not a rare event reserved for artists and mystics; it ‘appears to be something that nearly all of us experience and have some understanding of’. Furthermore, he asserts that ‘the absence of inspiration seem to correspond to common mental health complaints’. The nature of these mental health complaints is not specified but can be envisaged by referring to the earlier mentioned Fineman’s (2003) view on organisations as contexts with some inherited emotional injuries caused by stress, bullying, harassment or violence at work.

Another essential aspect of Hart’s study is related to an assumption that inspiration may be, if not willed, welcomed by creating certain conditions for its appreciation. One of them would be finding ‘some common triggers’ of inspiration (Hart, 1998: 27) which, however, are quite individualistic, but not limited to particular things. Secondly, inspiration can be ‘contagious’, that is, affecting other people as they are often ‘pulled to the level of those around’ them. Finally, a person needs to be ready for or open to inspirational experiences. This internal readiness can be spawned by following these four stages: focus, trust, letting go and listening. At this point Hart abandons the tenets of psychological investigation and moves to the area of philosophy of mind by advising that in order to follow these four stages one should be ‘unhitching from the train of normal waking consciousness’ (Hart, 1998: 28). Nonetheless, the idea of possibility of cultivating inspiration supports its accessibility to everyone.

According to Hart (1998: 12), all these findings ‘are intended to be part of an ongoing dialogue rather than a definitive statement’ of status quo. However, later on in a private email
Hart mentions that for him the further research appears to be impossible because ‘psychology is a fairly conservative, pathology-based discipline that has tried to be rigorous. It has had identity crises and has eschewed that which can not be measured so easily’, that is, ‘consciousness of things like inspiration’. Therefore, it would be advantageous and logical to consider the above findings in the research on inspiration in an organisational context.

2.2.3.3. **Inspiration as a psychological construct**

The latest social psychology based research of inspiration was conducted by Thrash and Elliot (2003; 2004). As one of its goals, this research was meant to facilitate the further research on inspiration, as it was initiated and developed based on the statement ‘that field of psychology has not given adequate attention to inspiration’ (Thrash and Elliot, 2003: 885).

The research was conducted within a two-stage framework. The first stage aims to offer a conceptualisation of inspiration as a general psychological construct developed ‘to help bring the concept of inspiration to the attention of psychologists’ by creating ‘a measure of inspiration’ (Thrash and Elliot, 2004: 957). The second stage attempts ‘to document the core characteristics of the state inspiration’ and ‘to demonstrate that inspiration may be decomposed into separate processes related to being inspired “by” and being inspired “to”’.

The key findings of the first stage present inspiration recognised ‘as an important empirical construct in its own right’ (Thrash and Elliot, 2003: 886) and explained using such concepts as motivation, evocation and transcendence. There inspiration ‘implies motivation’ as it ‘is evoked rather than initiated directly through an act of will or arising without apparent cause’. As a result of the intention to interrelate inspiration to other concepts, a nomological network examination was employed within which inspiration was claimed to be related to the following concepts: intrinsic motivation, openness to experience, absorption, work mastery, creativity, positive affect, perceived competence, self-esteem, optimism, self-determination.

The key findings of the second stage (Thrash and Elliot, 2004) are related to the two associative aspects of inspiration: positive affect of inspiration, and the relations of inspiration and thus approach motivation. It is asserted there ‘that inspiration serves a function distinct from that of activated’ positive affect per se (ibid: 970) and ‘represents a juxtaposition of two components processes: (a) being inspired by …and (b) being inspired to’ (ibid 969-970). Thrash and Elliot research presents of a very positive upbeat, but, regrettably, it has not fostered any thorough follow-up study, perhaps due to the following reasons.
First, being a social psychology research, it apparently sought to address only the overt socialisation and social internalisation aspects out of the entire scope of the research of this type (Cote and Levine, 2002), without taking into consideration individuals as part of a social system and thus omitting the relevance of other aspects, such as personality development stages (Simanowitz and Pearce, 2003), mental processes, decision making and volition, communication and norms emergence.

Both stages of the Thrash and Elliot (2003; 2004) research encompass exclusively a quantitative statistical research approach, while largely ignoring a qualitative ethological component of social research. Consequently their hypotheses were generated based on the subjective interpretation of inspiration by and in relation to the background of the researchers. The subsequent outcomes were generalised using the developments of the social comparison theory (Suls et al, 2002). It is arguable whether this theory is applicable and adequate, because there is no preceding exploratory element of the research. The key focus of the research made on developing a measure, called the 'inspiration scale' (Thrash and Elliot, 2003: 874). This measure was arbitrarily formed using frequency and intensity indices, drawing on the subjective associations of inspiration by the researchers. Then, the measure was statistically proven to be stable and 'suitable as a trait measure' (ibid: 875). Subsequently, the developed measure was used 'to assess inspiration frequency and intensity and overall inspiration' (ibid: 876) using a nomological network method, resulting in a tripartite conceptualisation of inspiration by transcendence, evocation and motivation.

The sampling strategy of the primary data collection is another aspect of Thrash and Elliot (2003; 2004) research worthy of mention. At each stage of the research the help of a relatively large number of undergraduate students was utilised 'in return for extra credit in a psychology course' (ibid: 874). Such form of a participant selection implies that majority of students across the samples is of the certain stage of personality development (Simanowitz and Pearce, 2003). Moreover, participants were extrinsically rewarded for participation in the research and completion of the questionnaires was organised as in-class or homework exercises with strongly enforced deadlines. Such an approach to primary data collection, that is, convenience sampling (Bryman, 2004) and quite an homogeneous grouping of respondents (Simanowitz and Pearce, 2003), even if coherent with statistical elements of the research, could be misleading from the exploratory or explanatory viewpoint, which should establish a foundation for further research.
2.2.3.4. Perception and inspiration

No research on perception of inspiration was found in the field of psychology. In order to advance the previous discussion of inspiration on the grounds of cognitive psychology and to anticipate its effect on human behaviour, perception of inspiration has to be considered.

Huczynski and Buchanan (2007: 208) maintain that human perception is 'the dynamic psychological process responsible for attending to, organizing and interpreting sensory data'. According to this definition, any information about the world as external to mind and senses is available to people and acquired by them via five sensory inputs, such as sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing and is a subject of selective attention, as it is impossible to attend to absolutely everything within the reach of the sensory inputs. Then, after information is selected, it is processed. That is, ordered and associated with a particular meaning and finally interpreted or realised, which leads to a consequential behavioural response (Ajzen, 1991; Huczynski and Buchanan, 2007; Mullins, 2002; Neisser, 1976). It is sensible to conclude that generically it is perception that guides human behaviour rather than motivation, needs or any other determinant of behaviour. Thus, understanding of human behaviour implies understanding of human perception of the external world.

With a variety of dissimilar views on perception, the Neisser's (1976) model of perception, as being cyclical in its nature, is considered here due to its emphasis on the dynamic nature of perception and because this model has provided a foundation for the further developments in cognitive psychology.

The key hypothesis of the Neisser's (1976: 9) thesis is that the perception should be treated 'as an activity that takes place over time' when 'the anticipatory schemata of the perceiver can come to terms with information offered by his environment'. Explained in this way, perception acquires an active role within the information-perception-action relationship. A reference to the numerous anticipatory schemata implies a predisposition towards certain information available in the external world. Neisser (1976) maintains that his interpretation of the schema is different from those existing in the other theories of perception.

A schema is that portion of the entire perceptual cycle which is internal to the perceiver, modifiable by experience, and somehow specific to what is being perceived. The schema accepts information as it becomes available at sensory surfaces and is changed by that information; it directs movements and exploratory activities that make more information available, by which it is further modified (Neisser (1976: 54).
Based on this, perception ‘is where cognition and reality meet’ and thus ‘perceiving is the basic cognitive activity out of which all others must emerge’ (Neisser, 1976: 9), including making sense of ‘reality’ or simply of information available to one’s senses. Consequently, perception of inspiration can be referred to as a cognitive activity of making sense of inspiration. This cognitive activity is guided by a schema, or even schemata, of inspiration, and in turn the schema is modifiable by new information, that is, reinforced or weakened. It is logical to conclude that perception of objects or events is quite supple. Inspiration, as discussed earlier (Section 2.1), is also quite flexible, that is, having quite a few meanings that can be heavily context-dependent. Therefore, perception of inspiration may vary significantly.

In sum, in a broad psychological view inspiration ‘is a subtle, ephemeral event’ Hart (1998: 12), but once experienced it creates an anticipatory modifiable schema (Neisser, 1976) with predisposition to be triggered by ‘virtually anything’ (Hart, 1998: 27), though quite ‘contagious’ due to an attentive nature of human perception (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2007). This view of inspiration is brought to the next section to formulate the working conception of inspiration, which will be explored in organisational settings.

2.3. Research aim and questions

Following the preceding discussion it is noted that despite extensive deployment of or references to inspiration in organisational studies in general and leadership in particular, there is no conceptual framework to underpin the use of inspiration beyond the linguistic level, aiming mainly to augment other concepts it is used with.

The viewpoint provided by the phenomenological study of inspiration (Hart, 1998), as a memorable and invigorating epistemic process naturally inherent in everyone rather than being exceptional, provides a firm grounding for considering inspiration as more than just a useful element carrying a flexible linguistic function. At the same time, the analysed views of social (Thrash and Elliot, 2003) and cognitive (Neisser, 1976) psychology strongly indicate that empirical exploration of inspiration is likely to be impeded by its highly individualised significance.

At this stage the conception of inspiration is formulated in linguistic and phenomenological aspects. According to the former, inspiration is a quite flexible and potentially ambiguous notion, especially when referred to in a figurative sense. The most common and frequently emphasised meanings of inspiration attribute it to an idea, an admirable example,
encouragement, hopefulness, willingness to act (Figure 2), a person, experience, or place that gives new ideas (Figure 4), and enthusiasm (Figure 5). In a more generic sense inspiration refers to the ‘process or quality of being inspired’ (Figure 3) or stimulation of the mind or emotions or an agency which moves the intellect and emotions (Figure 6). Inspiration can be provided, looked for and taken by person (Figure 4) or it can come from an un-avowed source (Figure 8) and, on the whole, it animates by some mental, spiritual or divine influence (Figures 4, 6 and 8), or it can actuate a person with a feeling, idea, or impulse (Figure 8). Furthermore, the past association of inspiration with a divine origin gives it, or rather its uses, a nuance of flawlessness or of being essentially positive.

Meanwhile, the phenomenological view of inspiration deriving from particular studies (Hart, 1998; Thrash and Elliot, 2003), denotes noteworthy, often desirable and thus relatively easily to be evoked experiences one could have, while defining it as ‘a specific epistemic process that provides psychological and spiritual sustenance and is characterized by a remembrance or recognition of some knowledge or perspective valuable in the social or psychological context given’ (Hart, 1998: 32).

Consequently, elaborating on the linguistic and phenomenological platform, the aim of this research is as to explore the use of meanings and understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts of participating companies. In order to accomplish that the following the main question: what is meant by inspiration in organisational contexts? After addressing this question the further investigation is to be guided by the question: how does inspiration affect people in organisational contexts? The attempt will be made to generate the potential conceptualisations of inspiration in organisational contexts.

2.4. Chapter summary

In this chapter review the notion of inspiration has been initially analysed linguistically and then in the context of organisational studies. The former, based on semantic and etymological perspectives, established that inspiration is more than just an ordinary word having more than one meaning. The analysed contemporary meanings of the word ‘inspiration’ are quite diverse and associated with the notion of flawlessness, which makes it well suited for the occasions when something emotionally moving and trustworthy needs to be communicated. The adjectives formed from the word ‘inspiration’ extend the list of meanings even further, enabling it to be a powerful semantical concept which, if used accordingly, can add clarity or ambiguity depending on their utterance.
The organisational perspective includes the notion of inspiration analysed in relation to the concepts of leadership and motivation. According to this analysis, the words 'inspiration' and 'inspirational' are used in a non-technical way due to absence of conceptualisation of inspiration and noticeably clear intentions to rely on an implicit semantic load of inspiration instead. It has been also noted that inspiration is often lined up with motivation to extend original meanings of motivation as a technical concept, by embracing flexible, but positive meanings of inspiration.

In the end, the working conception of inspiration is formulated based on the discussed linguistic and phenomenological platform. The research aim and questions have been outlined to pursue the further exploration of inspiration in organisational contexts of the participating companies.

The next chapter will utilise the relevant research design literature to identify and justify choices of philosophical stance and research methods.
Chapter 3. Research design

This chapter elaborates on the linguistic and organisational studies’ related analysis of inspiration provided in the preceding chapter and introduces detail of the research design of this study. A research design is ‘an integrated statement and justification for the more technical decisions involved in planning a research project’ (Blaikie, 2000: 21).

In this study, the research design commences with a choice of research paradigm, followed by the review and selection of an appropriate research method and data collection technique. The chapter is concluded by a discussion towards verification of the research outcomes.

3.1. Research paradigm

Selection of a research paradigm is one of the principal choices faced by any research due to its implications to the philosophical assumptions about ‘the nature of reality’, ‘way of inquiring into the nature of the world’ or knowledge of and relationships between theory and practice (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002: 31)

There are two distinctive views on paradigm and its importance for any research. The first one, supported by Babbie (2003), Easterby-Smith et al (2002), Gray (2004), Guba and Lincoln (1994), Symon and Cassell (1998), presents paradigm as a broad set of beliefs about a particular discipline and could be generalised ‘as the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1994:105). Defined in this way, the research paradigm has a bearing on the choice of the broad philosophical beliefs for guiding a research.

The second view, outlined by Burrell and Morgan (1979: 24) is ‘based upon different metatheoretical assumptions with regard to the nature of science and of society’. It suggests that ‘each paradigm results in the generation of a quite different type of organizational analysis as each seeks to address specific organisational ‘problems’ in a different way’ (Bryman and Bell, 2003: 23). This is a more structured view, also associated with certain broad philosophical assumptions. Taking this into consideration, the Burrell and Morgan (1979) view on the research paradigm has been selected and followed in this research.

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), there are four main research paradigms (Figure 10), formed by the interrelation between two dimensions: the horizontal ‘objective versus
subjective’ and vertical ‘radical change versus regulation’. These dimensions and their applicability to this research are reviewed in the following sections.

THE SOCIOLOGY OF RADICAL CHANGE

Ontology: realism
Epistemology: positivism

SUBJECTIVE
Human nature: voluntarism
Methodology: idiographic

Radical Humanist Paradigm

Radical Structuralist Paradigm

INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

Functionalist Paradigm

THE SOCIOLOGY OF REGULATION

Objective

Human nature: determinism
Methodology: nomothetic

Figure 10 Four paradigms, adapted from Burrell and Morgan (1979: 22)

The ‘objective’ part in the former dimension represents a choice in treating social world as ‘a hard, external, objective reality’ with research ‘to focus upon an analysis of relationships and regularities between the various elements’ of that reality, ‘their measurement and identification of underlying themes’. This dimension cannot be adopted in this study due to intentions of this research to explore the multiplicity of meanings of inspiration and its subtle, ephemeral and intricate nature, identified in the previous stages of the research. It leaves the choice with the subjective part of the ‘objective versus subjective’ dimension, characterised by ‘the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in the creation of the social word’. The subjective stance also has a principal concern in ‘understanding of the way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds himself’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 3-8).

The ‘radical change versus regulation’ dimension, in fact, represents ‘the conflict – order debate’, concerned with the ‘problems of change, conflict and coercion in social structures’. The ‘radical change’ aspect of this debate has its basic concern in attempts to find ‘deep-seated structural conflict, modes of domination and structural contradiction’, which characterises the modern society and organisations, as social units with some particular purposes (Shafritz and Ott, 1991). Thus, the focus of radical change is on a ‘man’s emancipation from the structures which limit and stunt his potential for development’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 10-17).
According to the previous chapter's discussion of inspiration in everyday life and its reflection in some organisational studies, it is possible to conclude that there is not enough evidence to place inspiration within the framework of radical change. The only elements of conflict have been noticed in the few studies of inspirational leadership (Goffee and Jones, 2006; Michie and Gooty, 2005; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982), where referring to inspiration may raise some ethical concerns (Singer, 1993). But even in these studies, references to inspiration are made on the basis of its linguistic load, without defining inspiration as a technical concept, greatly diminishing grounds for critique on the basis of situational or business ethics (Solomon, 1993). These arguments leave the choice with regulation within the ‘radical change versus regulation dimension’, characterised by its focus on the need to understand what holds an entity together rather than tears it apart, with the ‘emphasis upon the nature of social cohesion’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 17).

Having identified the subjective and regulation positions within the ‘objective versus subjective’ and ‘radical change versus regulation’ dimensions of the matrix of paradigms (Figure 10) results in the choice of the interpretive paradigm to underwrite ‘the frame of reference, mode of theorising and modus operandi’ for this research (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 23). According to Burrell and Morgan (1979: 28), the interpretive paradigm ‘is informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of social world at the level of subjective experience’. Therefore, since this research aims to explore the meanings of inspiration and how it affects people in organisational contexts, the interpretive paradigm embodies the most appropriate choice.

The key philosophical assumptions of the interpretive paradigm are summarised as nominalism, anti-positivism, voluntarism and ideographic. Each has particular implications for this research. Nominalism refers to an ontological stance that the social world while being ‘external to individual cognition is made up of nothing more than names, concepts and labels which are used to structure reality’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 4). The nominalist stance implies that inspiration is one of those names which in organisational contexts serve as a tool ‘for describing, making sense of and negotiating’ certain experiences associated with a social reality, as purely subjective or created by human cognition.

Next, epistemology is a ‘general set of assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world’ (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002: 31). The epistemology of anti-positivism seeks for ‘underlying regularities in the world of social affairs’ and is fundamentally
relativistic, maintaining that the social world ‘can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 5). Its implication is that any understanding or meaning generated about particular organisational contexts may not be generalised to the other contexts and can be fairly meaningless from a vantage point of an external ‘observer’. Applied to this study of inspiration, it signifies that certain findings and conclusions will not be applicable to other organisations and using a frame of reference of another research could be interpreted differently. This, in essence, is close to the ideographic approach to research, which emphasises analysis of the subjective accounts generated by getting inside situations combined with other impressionistic insights.

Lastly, voluntarism reflects a stance on a model of man as ‘completely autonomous and free-willed’ in respect to choices made in a social world (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 6). For this study it would mean that references to the notion of inspiration can be intentional and rational, though influenced by existing social practices.

Identifying the research paradigm and the related philosophical assumptions sets a broad guiding framework towards recognising the most suitable methodological approach for this study.

3.2. Methodological choice

Burrell and Morgan (1979: 235) argue that the interpretive paradigm ‘can be considered in terms of four distinct but related categories of interpretive theory’ distinguished mainly by a degree of subjectivity and effectively translated into four schools of thought: solipsism, hermeneutics, phenomenology and phenomenological sociology (Figure 11). Out of these four, solipsism even is not considered for guiding this research because it implies that ontologically the world has ‘no existence beyond the sensations’ perceived by the mind or body of a person. Therefore, solipsism represents an ‘entirely individualistic and subjectivist view of reality in which no meaningful discourse is possible’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 239). The remaining three standpoints entail the different ways in which inspiration could be explored in organisational contexts.
The phenomenological approach is represented within the interpretive paradigm by transcendental and existential phenomenology. In general, for the phenomenological approach to guide this research, inspiration needs first to be established as a phenomenon. The preceding analysis (Chapter 2) indicates that the word ‘inspiration’ is flexibly used to refer to a whole range of events and experiences. Elaborating on the previous research on inspiration, Thrash and Elliot (2003) suggest that inspiration, when evoked, can be explained by such concepts as intrinsic motivation, openness to experience, absorption, work mastery, creativity, positive affect, perceived competence, self-esteem, optimism, self-determination. Hart (1998), on the other hand, argues that inspiration is a specific, but subtle and ephemeral epistemic event. However, to be recognised as such, certain of its phenomenological characteristics have to be recognised first in order to be identifiable and that, according to Fineman (2003), can be problematic in organisational contexts due to various emotional pressures. On this basis, it can be concluded that although the phenomenological approach offers certain leverage in analysing ‘the problem of understanding the meaning structure of the world of everyday life’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 246), it may lead to understanding of ‘the social world from the point of view of those living within it’ who use ‘constructs and explanations which are intelligible in terms of the common-sense interpretation of everyday life’. On the practical scale it would signify the study of how people retrospectively make sense of their reality by attributing meanings to the past and future experiences, which in turn would raise a problem of ‘intersubjective understanding’ of experience of others. This and other problems related to understanding of own experiences and sharing it with others have many contributors within

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### Figure 11 The main schools of thought, adapted from Burrell and Morgan (1979:29)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTIVE</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radical humanism</td>
<td>Radical structuralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French existentialism</td>
<td>Contemporary Marxism, social theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anarchistic individualism</td>
<td>Conflict theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical theory</td>
<td>Russian structuralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>Integrative theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretive paradigm</td>
<td>Social system theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermeneutics</td>
<td>Integralism and social action theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenological sociology</td>
<td>Objectivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUNCTIONALIST PARADIGM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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the domain of existential phenomenology but, without a clear methodological stance. Secondly, pursuing this approach would shift a focus of this research to examining inspiration as an experience, concentrating on the process of being inspired. Therefore, the phenomenological approach is not followed in this research.

The second school of thought of the interpretive paradigm, phenomenological sociology, is represented by the two perspectives: ethnomethodology and phenomenological symbolic interactionism. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979: 247), ‘ethnomethodology is grounded in the detailed study of the world of everyday life’. Its purpose is ‘to learn about the ways in which people order and make sense of their everyday activities’. In order to achieve that ‘ethnomethodologists thus bracket or suspend their own belief in reality to study the reality of everyday life’ (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984:11). If ethnomethodology were adopted in this research, it would become a study of how people rationalise their life ‘to make actions appear routine, explicable and unambiguous’. Moreover, as Rogers (1983: 104) maintains, ethnomethodological methods are ambiguous as, according to Garfinkel, one of the key contributors to theoretical advancements in ethnomethodology, they ‘are only partially “tellable”’. Therefore, application, and even understanding, of ethnomethodological methods is somehow problematic due to ‘the admitted inability – or at least reluctance – of ethnomethodologists to adequately describe their methods’. Furthermore, an implication that ‘ethnomethodologists subscribe to some combination of “hard” empirical data – e.g., films, tape recordings, written descriptions – and firsthand observation and participation’ (ibid: 87) would be a considerable impediment towards undertaking this research as such an approach implies that inspiration needs to be evidenced in the video and written reports, and, to some extent, also co-experienced as firsthand observation and participation are required. It appears that ethnomethodology is more concerned with achieving explanations of lay concepts of social life and uncovering taken-for-granted assumptions about everyday activities and, therefore, it has not been selected as a guiding framework for this research.

Phenomenological symbolic interactionism as an approach to this research would emphasise ‘upon the emergent properties of interaction, through which individuals create their social world rather than merely reacting to it. Meaning is attributed to the environment, not derived from and imposed upon individual actors’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 251). This standpoint would accentuate exploring the contextual properties of inspiration, as ‘people are constantly interpreting and defining things as they move through different situations’ (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984:10). If adopted as a methodological approach to this research, symbolic
interactionism would seek for interpretation of people's actions in order to explain why they act in a certain way and for a place of inspiration in formation of people's social worlds. Therefore, phenomenological symbolic interactionism would not be fully congruent with the aims of this research.

The third school of thought of the interpretive paradigm, hermeneutics, is ‘concerned with interpreting and understanding the products of the human mind which characterise the social and cultural world’ (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 235). The central idea behind hermeneutics is that a person, who endeavours to understand a text, or discourse in general, has to ‘seek to bring out the meanings of a text from the perspective of its author’ (Bryman and Bell, 2003: 421). Hermeneutics, therefore, appears to fit the aim of this research: to explore what is meant by inspiration in an organisational context and how it is rationalised in that matter, in order to seek the potential conceptualisations of inspiration in organisational contexts.

In general, it can be noted that hermeneutics has undergone complex non-linear advancement having led to the development of its different perspectives. However, there are certain challenges along the way of making taxonomy of different perspectives in hermeneutics. Palmer (1969) maintains that depending on the position of the interpretative process, hermeneutics can be considered as one of the following: a theory of biblical exegesis, philological methodology, science of linguistic understanding, methodological foundation for the social science, phenomenology of existence and of existential understanding, or a system of interpretation. On the other hand, Bleicher (1980) names five main approaches: theological, existential-ontological, philosophical, critical and phenomenological hermeneutics. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) narrow their grouping to three main perspectives: objectivist, alethic, and existential hermeneutics.

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979: 235), the contemporary importance of the hermeneutic tradition, especially ‘within the context of the interpretative paradigm is rapidly increasing, though up to now has been largely overshadowed by its use in critical theory within the context of radical humanist paradigm’. Jürgen Habermas, the representative figure of the Frankfurt School and a key contributor to the critical theory, argues that hermeneutics should be critical when it comes to a society analysis (Bleicher, 1980; Habermas, 1991). Habermas and Gadamer (2004) were engaged in a decade-long debate on the essence and role of hermeneutics in social sciences, and amongst the other main issues specifically in respect of authority, language, and rationality.
According to Habermas, use of hermeneutics in any society should be critical, and intentionally emancipatory in its essence, as no society is free from authority and its domination within society. Habermas criticises Gadamer’s view on language as a kind of linguistic idealism, as he believes language is just one of institutions of society. Meanwhile, in Gadamer’s view, authority is not merely a force to dominate but has a wider significance associated with the enlightening power of aesthetics and knowledge. While language, in this context, is a medium of understanding, and in a wider sense, ‘Being that can be understood is language’ (Gadamer, 2004: 470). Thus, understanding and interaction are the modes of social co-existence, with language having a key role as understanding occurs through it. By and large, Gadamer’s hermeneutics is more concerned with grasping of how understanding works in a philosophical sense or clarifying conditions of understanding. Burrell and Morgan (1979: 238) conclude that ‘hermeneutics in Gadamer’s hands becomes relevant to all areas of enquiry: ‘a universal mode of philosophy’ and not just a methodological foundation for the cultural sciences’. Consequently, as Gadamerian hermeneutics belongs to the interpretive paradigm and aims to combine various factors which affect understanding, in this instance of the domain of inspiration, it is followed in this research. The key aspects of the hermeneutic enquiry are explicated in the next section.

3.3. The hermeneutic enquiry

This section outlines the details of the hermeneutic enquiry followed in this research largely based on philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 2004).

Gadamer (2004: 292) maintains that ‘the task of hermeneutics is to clarify this miracle of understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but sharing in a common meaning’. Before Gadamer, the hermeneutical circle was regarded as the ‘most fundamental principle of hermeneutics’ (Klein and Myers, 1999: 71) or the means for enquiry Schwandt (1994):

*The hermeneutical circle is a methodological device (in which one considers the whole in relation to its parts and vice versa) that provides a means for inquiry in the human sciences.* (Schwandt, 1994: 121)

To contrast with mainstream hermeneutics, Gadamer accentuates Heidegger’s (1978) concern with being in hermeneutic enquiry and, therefore, refers to the hermeneutic circle as

*ontological condition of understanding; proceeds from communality that binds us to tradition in general and that of our object of interpretation in particular; provides the link between finality and universality, and between theory and praxis.* (Bleicher, 1980: 267)
Gadamer’s approach to hermeneutics emphasises a historically-based understanding, where understanding is a dialectical process of interaction of the self-understanding of the person (his “horizon” or “world”) with what is encountered. Self-understanding is not a free-floating consciousness, not a flickering translucence filled up with the present situation; it is an understanding that is already placed in history and tradition, and it can understand the past only by broadening its horizon to take in the thing encountered. (Palmer, 1969: 183)

Gadamer (2004: 238), in his attempt to solve the epistemological problem of the application of hermeneutics in the human sciences, analyses and advances the concept of horizon. ‘A horizon is not a rigid boundary but something that moves with one and invites to advance further’. This concept itself implies narrowness and time as the main constraints. ‘The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point’ (ibid: 301). Therefore, the fusion of horizons of different social actors brings in a richer understanding as the composite familiarity with certain situations. Gadamer (2004) insists that a degree of ambiguity in describing the fusion of horizons is not a limiting factor, as ‘a consciousness informed by the authentic attitude will be receptive to the origins and entirely foreign features of what which comes to it from outside it’s own horizons’. Moreover, as Gadamer asserts, the horizon is not fixed in time but an open and changing viewpoint, as ‘people are constantly involved in interpreting their world’ (Blaikie, 1993: 36) and ‘interpretation is the explicit form of understanding’ (Gadamer, 2004: 306). This hermeneutic enquiry emphasises the power of the ‘fusion of horizons’ metaphor (Gadamer, 2004; Bleicher, 1980; Moules, 2002; Weinsheimer, 1985) as a figurative way of conceptualising understanding, while holding onto ontological condition of the hermeneutic circle, that is, ‘the generative recursion between the whole and the part’ (Moules, 2002: 30).

In addition to the key concepts of ‘fusion of horizons’ and the hermeneutic circle outlined above, the notion of ‘double hermeneutic’ (Giddens, 1987) is to be kept under consideration during the all consequent stages of this research. The double hermeneutic refers to a principle that ‘social life is a skilled performance which is made possible because competent members of society are practical social theorists who modify their theories about practical aspects of daily life on the basis of their experiences’ (Blaikie, 1993: 188). It implies that attempting to understand people involves interpretation of interpretive beings (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000) and even the fact of studying those people influences them through signalling the importance of the chosen subject, that is, understanding of inspiration at work. Secondly, while respondents contribute and influence research by introducing their lay concepts of inspiration, the findings of the research have a certain effect back on the respondents (Giddens,
The latter thought indicates that this research brings forth a potential change for the research participants as they may experience a transformation from being just passive contributors, who share their views, to active beneficiaries due to rethinking their conceptions of inspiration and other beliefs of their working lives.

The hermeneutics enquiry outlined in this subsection indicates the theoretical framework followed in this research. The next subsection provides details of the mechanics of the fusion of horizons modus operandi.

**3.4. Explicating the method of analysis**

Analysing data in a hermeneutic enquiry is a complex iterative process. In this study enquiry is based on the hermeneutic rule, as 'we must understand the whole in the terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole' (Gadamer, 2004: 291) and follows the 'fusion of horizons' metaphor. The main elements of the hermeneutic enquiry - fore-structures, such as fore-conception, fore-meaning, fore-understanding or prejudices, openness to meaning and shared language (Gadamer, 2004), are delineated below to illustrate their contribution to the practice of interpretation.

**3.4.1. Horizon**

The concept of horizon is not new to hermeneutics. Gadamer (2004: 301) draws on Husserl’s conception of horizon as quite limited in representing the particular experience or 'the way in which thought is tied to its finite determinacy'. He asserts that the horizon is rather 'the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point'; but it already implies 'narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizon, and so forth'. Therefore, horizon represents a particular, historically distant, hermeneutical situation and if there is a need to understand it 'we must place ourselves in the other situation in order to understand it'. For that reason, Gadamer (2004, 302) speaks about 'historical understanding', referring to a condition to 'see the past in its own terms, not in terms of our contemporary criteria and prejudices but within its own historical horizon'.

Hence, the analysis begins with the researcher explicitly expressing his pre-understanding of inspiration in order to elucidate the initial horizon. This is an attempt to put reflectively in the text his personal understanding of the meaning of inspiration at work from the past, which was lived through but has not been rationalised in terms of language. Next, the horizons of the
research participants are to be composed on the basis of dialogues in order to enable an expansion of the initial horizon. For this purpose, besides the historical awareness there are two others aspects of Gadamerian hermeneutics to be explicitly considered: prejudices and openness to meaning.

3.4.2. Prejudices

For Gadamer, prejudices reflect the notion of fore-structure of understanding or ‘a horizon of understanding’ (Bleicher, 1980: 108). Gadamer (2004: 278) maintains that prejudices are not a kind of false judgement, but should be treated as ‘conditions for understanding’ as they incorporate a certain historical aspect. Weinsheimer (1985:170) clarifies that prejudice is the ‘historical reality itself and the condition of understanding it. Thus the elimination of prejudice, were it to succeed, would ultimately be the elimination of history’. Hence, ‘understanding is essentially, a historically effected event’ (Gadamer, 2004: 299).

Gadamer (2004: 298) points that understanding begins ‘when something addresses us’ and evolves, while discriminating amongst prejudices, but not eliminating them. Thus, using prejudices becomes a part of interpretation. Gadamer (2004: 271) asserts that the notion of prejudice ‘certainly does not necessarily mean a false judgement’ and ‘it can have either a positive or a negative value’. How to be aware of it? Gadamer maintains that it ‘is impossible to make ourselves aware of a prejudice while it is constantly operating unnoticed, but only when it is, so to speak, provoked’. An encounter with something different raising a question in a dialogue or text can provide this provocation. ‘The essence of the question is to open up possibilities and keep them open’. As a result, prejudices become noticeable and can be ‘brought into play by being put at risk. Only by being given full play is it able to experience the other’s claim to truth’ (Gadamer, 2004: 299). This leads to next essential aspect of the Gadamerian hermeneutics, discussed in next subsection, openness to meaning.

3.4.3. Openness to meaning

Another essential aspect of the Gadamerian hermeneutics to be mentioned is openness to meaning. The openness to meaning represents more than just an appreciative state of mind of the researcher. It asks for leaving behind the all-too-familiar and by that enabling oneself to learn from ‘what is different’ and ‘not only to tolerate it but to live in it’ (Weinsheimer, 1985:70).
Gadamer (2004: 270-271) maintains that openness to meaning is one of the means to deal with one's fore-structures or to 'break the spell of our own fore-meanings'. If one is open to new meanings than 'meanings cannot be understood in an arbitrary way. Just as we cannot continually misunderstand the use of a word without its affecting the meaning of the whole'. Ultimately, 'when we listen to someone or read a book we must forget all our fore-meanings concerning the content and all our own ideas. All that is asked is that we remain open to the meaning of the person or text'. This condition of being open to meaning was aimed at through all consequent stages of the research.

3.4.4. Fusion of horizons

The fusion of horizons is a rather metaphorical way of referring to reaching an understanding, which 'occurs when horizons of the other and our selves fuse to extend the range of vision' (Moules, 2002). It comprises two dimensions of the hermeneutical process: the first 'between the interpreter and the others, and a second between the interpreter and oneself' (Gadamer, 2004: 387). The latter is explained by Gadamer as a sought state when horizons of the past and present are merged to reflect the act of understanding of a hermeneutical situation. The former encapsulates the notion of understanding as a dialogical process, in which it is possible to 'come to an understanding of the unfamiliar reference system, something which also leads to the gradual revising and/or enriching of our own' (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000: 84).

Blaikie (1993: 650) claims that the medium of the fusion of horizons is language because essentially 'understanding as the fusion of horizons occurs through language'. For Gadamer (2004: 390), language in general 'is the universal medium in which understanding occurs' and at the same time, language is 'a horizon of a hermeneutic ontology' (Gadamer, 2004: 436).

Practically, the fusion of horizons refers to a situation when meanings of inspiration at work and their effects can be mutually understood by the researcher and research participants. This mutual understanding advances the researcher's own understanding of inspiration supporting its further conceptualisation. The next subsection explicitly outlines the role of the researcher in the hermeneutic enquiry.

3.5. The role of researcher

There are diverse views on the role of a researcher within a research project. Easterby-Smith et al (2008: 161) outline the choices researchers can make about their own role in such practicalities as the purpose and cost of the research, the extent to which access can be gained,
or the amount of time available. On the other hand, Blaikie (2000: 52) maintains that the stance of researchers 'towards the research process and participants' has a significant influence on all stages of the research, especially on the data collection and analysis.

Blaikie (2000) identifies the main six stances ranging them from 'complete detachment to committed involvement' of a researcher. The detached observer stance refers to a researcher as an 'uninvolved spectator'. The empathetic observer role implies a higher degree of objectivity mixed with the capability of researchers to share experiences of the social actors. The position of a faithful reporter allows researchers to immerse in the way of life of the research participants to grasp and report the meanings behind it. The mediator of languages position 'rejects the idea of personal detachment' (ibid: 53) and places researchers in the seat of a mediator between lay or everyday language and social scientific or technical language. The reflective partner stance focuses on emancipation of any kind and refers to researchers as the ones, 'whose relationship is that of subject to co-participant' (Stockman, 1983: 152 cited in Blaikie, 1993: 53). Finally, the sixth position, dialogic facilitator, aims 'to produce a 'polyphony' of voices rather than a single voice in order to reduce bias and distortion' (Fontana, 1994: 214 cited in Blaikie, 2000: 54) considering a researcher 'as another actor in the social context being investigated' (Blaikie, 2000: 54).

It can be argued that there is no need to identify an appropriate role for the researcher. However, if explicitly outlined, it would provide certain guidelines for the research practice while obtaining and analysing primary data. Following the Gadamerian hermeneutic enquiry, the preferred role of a researcher is the mediator of languages. In this role, the 'researcher actively constructs an account based on the accounts provided by participants. This process of construction is not neutral; researchers have to invest something of themselves into their account' (Blaikie, 2000: 53) and act guided by the main tenets of this hermeneutic enquiry, as outlined in the next section.

3.6. Understanding of philosophical hermeneutics

This section explains the way Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is understood by the researcher and presents how it is applied throughout the interviewing and all subsequent stages of this study of inspiration. It aims to accentuate the subjective comprehension of philosophical hermeneutics rather than its accuracy, which according to Gadamer (2004: 296) is not undemanding as 'we understand in a different way, if we understand at all' (emphasis in original).
The starting point of this reflection is the central for hermeneutics idea of the 'hermeneutic circle', which 'had been viewed in terms of the interpretative interdependence, within any meaningful structure, between the parts of that structure and the whole' (Malpas, 2005). Gadamer, however, emphasises that the circle 'is not a “methodological” circle, but describes an element of the ontological structure of understanding' (Gadamer, 2004: 294) and its hermeneutical implication is a 'fore-conception of completeness', which is 'always determined by the specific content'. In addition to the hermeneutic circle, the two-fold effect of the concept of double hermeneutic, on fieldwork and later stages of the research, is considered. The two-fold effect includes interpreting of interpretive subjects, who sometimes have ambivalent attitudes and memories, taboos, self-deception and interviewer effect (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000: 202). Furthermore, the fact of studying their views on inspiration, as well as the self-exploratory and shared during their involvement into research findings, have a certain effect back on the respondents (Giddens, 1987). This conceptualisation of the hermeneutics circle and the second double circle accentuates an iterative nature of the interpretative process and of a potentially new understanding emerging while looking for an intelligible unity of meaning.

In general, hermeneutics 'must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language' (Gadamer, 2004: 295). In this research the subject matter is inspiration, often experienced or referred to in organisational settings. The researcher 'is aware that its bond to this subject matter does not consist in some self-evident, unquestioned unanimity'. This bond is to be considered based on 'a polarity of familiarity and strangeness', where the polarity is to be understood 'in regard to what has been said: the language in which the text addresses us, the story it tells us'. Following Gadamer, hermeneutic work 'is not to develop a procedure of understanding, but to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place'. Amongst these conditions there are prejudices, which 'occupy the interpreter’s consciousness', and a ‘temporal distance’, which is named as essential for understanding in philosophical hermeneutics but had been ‘entirely peripheral in previous hermeneutics’.

The notion of temporal difference is given a special status because it represents 'a positive and productive condition enabling understanding’ and is strongly linked to the past. 'Time is no longer primarily a gulf to be bridged because it separates; it is actually the supportive ground of the course of events in which present is rooted' (Gadamer, 2004: 297). Hence,
when something addresses us from the past that means it has survived and retained its appeal and, therefore, can be considered noteworthy. This use of temporal distance is also connected to the notion of critique in hermeneutics, ‘namely how to distinguish the true prejudices, by which we understand, from the false ones, by which we misunderstand’ (Gadamer, 2004: 298). This process of discrimination between prejudices is based on the foregrounding of prejudices possible ‘when something addresses us’ or becomes noticeable; that is, provokes awareness of something which influences our judgement. What addresses us typically ‘has the logical structure of a question’, which is also historically based, as no one’s thinking can be separated from a historical situation. ‘Understanding is, essentially, a historically effected event’ (Gadamer, 2004: 299). In this research, the temporal difference is accentuated by the personal involvement of the researcher with all participating companies. Hence, the researcher and the most of the respondents have shared some inspirational moments in the past, which would assist their understanding.

The essential attribute of situation is the concept of horizon, which ‘is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point’ (Gadamer, 2004: 301). This conceptualisation of horizon implies its narrowness and the possibility of its expansion. On the other hand, it implies the need ‘to see the past in its own terms’, but not in the terms of contemporary criteria and prejudices, otherwise it would be possible to misunderstand the significance of what the past has to say to us. Transposing ourselves into the historical horizon seems to be ‘a legitimate hermeneutical requirement: we must place ourselves in the other situation in order to understand it’ (Gadamer, 2004: 302). Therefore, in this study, being an insider and sharing inspirational occurrences from the past provides the researcher with an opportunity to identify a historical horizon of inspiration and helps to outline its expansion to contemporary situations by fusing the horizons of the past and the present. In fact, ‘understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves’.

Another fundamental thesis of philosophical hermeneutics is concerned with the relationships of understanding, interpretation and language. ‘Understanding occurs in interpreting’ (Gadamer, 2004: 390), while language represents the universal medium in which understanding occurs. Language ‘allows the object to come into words and yet is at the same time the interpreter’s own language’. Understanding, considered in this way, is not to be seen as an epistemologically correct representation of some objective state of affairs (Madison, 1991), and ‘is not merely a reproductive but always a productive activity’ (Gadamer, 2004: 296), that is, transformative or ‘productive of new meanings’ (Madison, 1991: 129). Meaning
itself is inseparable from application that is ‘from the reading subject’s reaction to and appropriation of the text’ (ibid: 130). That reading is never context-free, which makes it phenomenologically anchored to the reading subject’s actual living and allows a decidable meaning. This conceptualisation of relationships between understanding, interpretation and meaning applied to this study of inspiration indicates that the researcher’s and some respondents’ horizons of meanings of inspiration in organisational settings evolves over the period of the study, indicating potentially new conceptions of inspiration.

This section has outlined the subjective understanding of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics by the researcher. It is apparent that another person conducting the same study would have different historical associations, prejudices and linguistic predispositions.

### 3.7. Obtaining empirical material

Following the outline of the philosophical foundations and methodological nature of the research, this section highlights the choice of primary data collection method, which is to some extent prompted by the nature of hermeneutic enquiry. In general, several data sources are available for any research, such as observation, questionnaires, focus groups, interviewing and unobtrusive measures (Bryman, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002; Gray, 2004). Each of these data gathering tools has certain indications towards deployment in research, specifically, in relation to the objectives of the research (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002).

The main criterion for informed choice of data collection method is related to the essence of hermeneutic enquiry. That is, an interpretation of the text or discourse in a wider sense, which includes written text and conversation (Bleicher, 1980; Blaikie, 2000; Gadamer, 2004; Palmer, 1969). Additionally, the quantitative versus qualitative divide needs to be mentioned explicitly (Bryman, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Silverman, 2001; Symon and Cassell, 1998). As Bryman (2004: 19) points out ‘many writers on methodological issues find it helpful to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research’. The discussion of the methodological base has laid the strong grounds for this research to be qualitative. Qualitative research usually emphasises ‘words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data’ and predominantly accentuates ‘an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the emphasis is placed on the generation of theories’. For that reason such research methods as observation, unobtrusive measures and interviewing are largely used in qualitative research.
Observation comprises several approaches (Gray, 2004: 239), such as overt, covert, participant and non-participant observation, and ‘is often associated with ethnographic methodology in that it studies people in their natural settings’. In essence, ‘observation involves the systematic viewing of people’s actions and the recording, analysis and interpretation of their behaviour’. However, there are at least two issues signifying against using observation of any kind as a method in this research. These are difficulties with obtaining access to organisations and, most importantly, the fact that inspiration is not easy identifiable when observing people. Observation would contradict the tenets of the hermeneutic enquiry and, therefore, is not congruent with the aims of this research.

Unobtrusive measures ‘involve the use of non-reactive sources, independent of the presence of the researcher, and include documentary evidence, physical evidence and archival analysis’ (Gray, 2004: 263). From the point of view of nature of the hermeneutic enquiry, unobtrusive measures would be an ideal source of data, but in this particular case it does not fit with the aims of the research to explore understanding of inspiration in organisations and its effect on people. It also would represent a challenge of obtaining access the company’s internal documentation and permission to use it, due to its commercial sensitivity; allocating references to inspiration in it would be an inconspicuous task as well.

Interviewing (Bryman, 2004; Gray, 2004; Fontana and Frey, 1994; Mason, 1996; May, 2001) represents an interactive research method utilising ‘a conversation between people in which one person has the role of researcher’ (Gray, 2004: 213). Interviews can be conducted on the one-to-one basis, and also as group or focus groups interviews. Each method has certain indications for its applicability. The focus group method is more suitable for situations when ‘there is an emphasis in a questioning on a particular fairly tightly defined topic; and the accent is upon interaction with the group and the joint construction of meaning’ (Bryman, 2004: 346). Defined in such way the focus group method is clearly not suitable for this research, as it is exactly a variety of meanings attributed to inspiration that is essential to obtain. Group interviews are also considered as inappropriate due to the fact that respondents represent different levels within organisational hierarchy and, therefore, they may feel restricted in expressing their own views about inspiration in various organisational contexts (King, 2004). Moreover, such conditions as a false consensus, domination of one person, or following the views of other people would affect a genuine expression of own inspirational encounter (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 365; Manson, 1996; May, 2001).
Bryman (2004: 318) offers the term *qualitative interview* 'to capture the different types of interview that are used in qualitative research', with two main types as unstructured and semi-structured interview. In an unstructured interview, there may be just a single or several questions and 'the interviewee is then allowed to respond freely, with the interviewer simply responding to points that seem worthy of being followed up' (ibid: 320). This approach 'is used in an attempt to understand the complex behaviour of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry' (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 366). If applied to this research it would allow perceptions of inspiration to be gathered in organisational settings. On the other hand, as more than one company was expected to participate in this research, at a later stage a possibility to incorporate 'a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an interview guide' (Bryman, 2004: 321) is considered. Therefore, unstructured interviews were deemed to be suitable for this research.

In total, the interviewing process is planned to be *flexible*, with an emphasis 'on how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events'. Interviews should be audio-recorded and transcribed in full. The researcher is responsible for negotiating the recording with each respondent prior the interview. This approach supports the subsequent analysis by capturing not only 'what people say but also in the way that they say' (Bryman, 2004: 329) and produces rich textual content to be further analysed.

To summarise the options of data collection, on the basis of the stated theoretical position interviewing is given preference over other methods of primary data collection, as it allows obtaining the in-depth subjective accounts of the respondents on inspiration in their working lives, thereby providing the necessary material for the further analysis.

### 3.8. Towards research outcomes validation

Considerations about validity and generalisability have been in focus from the very beginning of this research. This subsection attempts to look into an issue of research outcomes verification.

According to Schwandt (1994: 120), any attempt to validate a piece of research based on hermeneutic enquiry within the interpretive paradigm is linked to a discussion about ontological and epistemological stances of the research. It is merely because history and
language are both the conditions and limitations of the enquiry. ‘In other words, we do not simply live our lives in time and through language; rather, we are our history’. In search for the better practice towards validation of hermeneutic enquiry, Smith (1991) suggests that evaluation of the depth of interpretation and deepening the understanding about the subject of enquiry are to be considered as the main criteria. However, it is seemingly impossible to judge about ‘better’ interpretation (Blaikie, 2000; Lee and Baskerville, 2003), as any situation could be seen differently by every participant on the ideographic premise (Figure 10) and due to individual perceptual differences (Hergenhahn and Olson, 2006). Furthermore, interpretation and understanding are essentially historical and linguistic events (Gadamer, 2004), and, therefore, the possible interpretations also differ accordingly.

The traditional approach towards validity of research is to consider internal and external validity. Internal validity ‘as the extent to which a researcher’s observations and measurements are true descriptions of a particular reality’ (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994: 151) is not applicable in this research due to the stated earlier ontological considerations about reality being highly subjective. External validity, or ‘the extent to which it is possible to generalize’ (Gray, 2004: 91) the outcomes of a research, would be desirable but not easily applicable, mainly if the research is significantly influenced by a notion of historicity (Gadamer, 2004; Schwandt, 1994). Kincheloe and McLaren (1994: 151) also maintain a similar view discussing the question of validity in critical hermeneutics research. They assert that in the case of critical hermeneutics trustworthiness ‘is a more appropriate word to use’ while discussing the research outcomes without, however, specifying assessment criteria of trustworthiness. Bryman (2004: 273) also argues that external validity in the qualitative research is unreliable due to ‘small samples’ and uniqueness of social settings.

Apart from the traditional approach, there are other approaches for assessing outcomes of qualitative research. Silverman (2001: 233) argues that triangulation and respondent validity generally ‘have been suggested as particularly appropriate to the logic of qualitative research’, though their application is also not without difficulties. Respondent validation, as a method of verifying research outcomes, has been strongly criticised in the research methods-related literature. Fielding and Fielding (1986: 43, cited in Silverman 2001: 236) assert that:

there is no reason to assume that members have privileged status as commentators on their actions... such feedback cannot be taken as direct validation or refutation of the observer's inferences. Rather such processes of so-called 'validation' should be treated as yet another source of data and insight.
Bryman (2004: 274) also maintains that respondent validation indicates 'a good correspondence' between the research findings and 'the perspectives and experiences' of the research participants. In spite of its popularity amongst researchers due to its convenience, such an approach, however, 'may occasion defensive reactions on the part of research participants and even censorship'. Moreover, it is unlikely that the method of data analysis would be meaningful to research participants, as they typically do not have a detailed knowledge of the research method application.

Triangulation typically refers to 'the use of several kinds of methods or data' (Janesick, 1994: 214) and is 'very much associated with a quantitative research strategy' (Bryman, 2004: 275). However, it is often applicable to an ontological stance when reality 'exists independently of the observer' (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002: 34), and thus, reality can be better verified by using 'a variety of data sources', 'several different researchers', 'multiple perspectives' or 'multiple methods to study a single problem' (Janesick, 1994: 215). From the ontological point of view, triangulation can not be used in this research. Furthermore, if suggestions of Janesick (1994) are to be considered independently of the ontological stance, then the following conclusions can be drawn. First, the above review of potential alternative data sources indicates that interviewing is the optimal one. The main objection of using participant observation, as the only viable alternative, is that an observer would be blind 'to important events that occurred before his entry on the scene' (Silverman (2001: 234. Second, engaging more than one researcher is considered beyond the scope of this research as a doctoral research is an individual process in its essence. Third, adopting an alternative theoretical perspective is also not possible because there is no theoretical foundation considering inspiration in organisational settings. Finally, employing of more than one method of analysis would be inconsistent with the tenets of the hermeneutic enquiry outlined in this chapter and, therefore, if applied, would lead to an independent line of research.

To conclude this discussion about validity and generalisability, it is worth mentioning the viewpoint of Taylor, asserting that any attempt to look from another angle into using of hermeneutic interpretation is, in fact, a creation of another interpretation:

*there is no verification procedure we can fall back on. We can only continue to offer interpretations* (Taylor, 1987: 75, citied in Schwandt 1994: 121).

All in all, the main intention of this research is to follow the Gadamerian approach to interpretation and understanding. That is, to be concerned not so much with understanding more correctly, as with understanding more deeply and truly (Palmer, 1969).
3.9. Chapter summary

This chapter is an attempt to outline the key choices made during the research design process according to the aims of this research. In doing so, it identifies the interpretive paradigm as the most appropriate choice for exploring the notion of inspiration in organisational settings.

The ontological status of this research, as delineated by the interpretive paradigm, is nominalism, which assumes that reality of the world depends on the mental processes of a person. The epistemological stance of the research is based on the notion that the real world is not independent from human cognition, and a researcher, participants and social settings influence each other. It results in the standpoint that knowledge is socially determined and, therefore, subjective. The research follows the tenets of Gadamerian hermeneutics, emphasising the role of pre-understanding, prejudices and history, and utilising the metaphor of 'fusion of horizons' for interpretation of the participants' accounts obtained through dialogues.

The next chapter proceeds by describing the stages followed through this research according to the research design detailed in this chapter. It also elaborates on developing of the research instrument and reasons the choice of research sites. Finally, it provides the details of the ethical considerations and profiles of the research participants.
Chapter 4. Research implementation

The aim of this chapter is to describe an implementation of the research design. It provides explanations of the key research stages, details the primary data collection and highlights of the interviewing strategy, research sites selection approach and profiles of the research participants.

4.1. Research implementation overview

This research cannot be described in a linear way due to numerous practical and methodological complexities. In order to provide a clearer overview of the research progress it is illustrated in Figure 12 as consisting of the certain stages. The data collection and analysis stages are not displayed separately there owing to the nature of hermeneutic enquiry when every act of interpretation contributes to the ongoing expansion of the horizon of understanding.

The initial stage (Figure 12) indicates the main activities undertaken aiming at the conceptual sensitising of inspiration. It brings forward a preliminary literature review on inspiration in the context of the contemporary organisational studies, including the notions of inspirational leadership and motivation. In addition to that, a written account on inspiration from a vantage point of the researcher is produced to signify an initial understanding of inspiration.

The next stage (Figure 12) illustrates a sensitising procedure to the interviewing process. The need for it had emerged as a result of the preliminary and pilot interviews, which had indicated certain difficulties associated with gathering of any information about inspiration, including its articulating and rationalising. This stage results in producing the guiding principles towards conducting the research interviews in organisations.

On the stage of expanding of the horizon of inspiration (Figure 12) the interviewing at all research sites and data analysis take place, while aiming to advance understanding of inspiration. This stage is required for the producing horizons of understanding of inspiration in organisational settings of all respondents, which later should contributed to generating the evolved horizon of inspiration.

The last stage (Figure 12) identifies the main activities towards rationalising of the evolved understanding of inspiration in relation to organisational studies. Having analysed the
associated effects of inspiration in organisational contexts and linked them up to the corresponding mainstream theory, it draws the potential conceptualisations of inspiration at work.

4.2. Interviewing

All interviews were conducted in semi-natural settings (Blaikie, 2000), asking individuals on the premises of their companies to share their views on inspiration. In many cases, intending to conduct an interview in the settings similar to a typical work environment, the participant’s workplace or the company’s meeting room was used for this purpose.

4.2.1. Protocol

The interviews were conducted following the specific and straightforward interview protocol in order to avoid any potential disturbances that might emerge on the company premises. Its first step consisted of the brief introduction of the research and the researcher, obtaining
consent and permission of audio-recoding of the interview (Section 4.4). Then each interviewee was invited to introduce him or herself to provide an insight of his or her background at the company and determine the reasons for volunteering to participate in the research. The summary of this information is presented in Section 4.5.

During the interviews, the main concern of the interviewer was to maintain the attentive listening and time-keeping in balance. Despite the fact, that in the preliminary schedules each interview had been planned for an average of two hours, the factual time of the interviews varied between one hour and two hours, mainly due to some operational issues at the research sites and the interviewees’ eventual lack of time for interviews. Frequently the interviews were disturbed and interrupted by intervention of the interviewee’s colleagues, incoming telephone calls, or because of such operations issues as double booking of a meeting room or similar.

Ideally, the further processing of the interviews’ data would involve a follow-up correspondence with the interviews’ participants. However, all of the requests to establish an email contact with the interviewees had been denied on a corporate level referring to the risks of violation of the company policies on exchanging information with the third parties.

4.2.2. Gaining discernment of fieldwork

At the first phase of the research the preliminary informal interviews had been conducted in order to find out views and perceptions of interviewees on inspiration and to sensitise different interviewing tactics. The informal conversational interview technique, which is ‘the most open-ended form of interview technique’, was employed, as it offers the highest flexibility ‘in terms of what path the interview takes’ (Gray, 2004: 217). The necessity to obtain data using informal conversational interview was dictated by the difficulties faced in rationalising inspiration in general.

The informal interviews were conducted with volunteers randomly selected by the researcher because of their expressed interest in inspiration. All together thirteen preliminary informal interviews had been held with two fellow researchers, nine postgraduate students and two lecturers, who agreed to participate on a voluntary basis. Prior to the beginning of each interview the participants were briefly informed about the nature of this research. The audio-recording was not used in order to maintain an informal and non-coercive environment.
The focal outcome of the preliminary interviews had indicated that open-ended unstructured
interviews may generate a massive amount of data, but taken without a specific context it
appears to be difficult to interpret, group and analyse the collected data. At this stage, an
ttempt was made to try the alternative data analysis methods, such as the grounded theory
method (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) and thematic analysis (Aronson, 1994; Bryman, 2004).

Essence of the difficulty with the data contextualising can be broadly summarised to
inspiration being an empirical construct (Thrash and Elliot, 2003). The attempts to link it to
organisational settings resulted in producing a list of attributes that could inspire employees in
the workplace environment. Analysing data of the preliminary interviews on the basis of the
grounded theory had been stopped at the stage of coding because the number of emerging
concepts was too low, as the interviews had generated quite rich non-verbal discourse, but the
textual component was limited, and even using the closed-ended questions did not improve it.
Therefore, a consequent categorising became unfeasible, while theoretical saturation had been
proved to be unachievable. The thematic analysis also generated only few mainly related to
the workplace environment themes.

This had led to the re-thinking of a research strategy in general, and data collection and
analysis methods in particular. After a period of cogitation, which included attempts to
approach several companies for participation in the research (Section 4.3.1) the overall
research approach had been re-aligned with the hermeneutic enquiry.

4.2.3. Guiding the interview

As an outcome of the preliminary interviews, outlines of an interview were devised to assist
the researcher ‘to glean the ways in which research participants view their social world’
(Bryman, 2004: 324) and to keep interviews focused on the aim and objectives of the
research. The outlines consist of a reminder for obtaining the ‘facesheet’ information about
interviewees, ‘because such information is useful for contextualizing people’s answers’ and ‘a
certain amount of order on the topic areas’ reflected in thoughts to explore. Additionally, the
interview outlines contain a word of caution about the reactive effects of interviewing, as
people ‘may lie’, ‘not know’ or ‘tell us what they think we want to hear’ (Huczynski and
Buchanan, 2007: 21).

As a crucial assisting element of the preliminary interview phase, the structure and content of
outlines had been verified by Dr. Richard Macdonell, an organisational psychologist and the
expert in certain areas of organisational studies (Georgiades and Macdonell, 1998), who was
the lead supervisor at that point of time.

4.2.4. **Pilot work**

The aim of the pilot work was to test all elements of the interviewing process. The pilot
participant was invited by the researcher mainly because she claimed to be an inspirational
person when it comes to work. This participant had been working in the capacity of a team
leader and was well known for her inspiring qualities, especially in critical and pressurising
circumstances. The context of the pilot was congruent with the main principles of the pursued
enquiry, including the shared ethos and workplace in the course of implementation of
technological innovation.

This pilot work had provided a genuine opportunity to verify all steps of the planned
interviews at the potential research sites, as well as to probe a tactic of referring to
inspirational moments in the working life. On the other hand, the pilot has indicated the
difficulty with defining and speaking about inspiration, faced even by the person who claimed
to be inspirational and appreciating inspiration in work settings. Blaikie (2000: 98) supports
this finding by maintaining that participants ‘live in largely taken-for-granted worlds, and
therefore, would not always be able to articulate the motives of their actions’. As a result,
enquiring about the essence of inspiration or request to define it had been marked as optional
in the outlines of interview. Instead, the entire focus of enquiring had been shifted to the
contextual attribution of meaning of inspiration at work.

4.2.5. **Multicultural aspects**

The conducted interviews are multicultural as they took place in different countries and the
respondents represent in all at least three different national cultures: Latvian, Russian and
Dutch. Gray (2004: 228) maintains that there are certain ‘implications of conducting
interviews with people who are of a different ethnic, social or cultural group to that of the
interviewer’. Among other factors there are two dominating ones to be taken into account: use
of language and a necessity to build and maintain rapport with the interviewees during an
interview.

Typically, a process of communication comprises at least three elements, such as words, tone
of voice and body language. Mehrabian (1981) introduces the ‘7%-38%-55%’ rule of any
face-to-face communication, with 93% of weighting for the non-verbal elements of voice tone
and body language and only 7% of weighting for the words or content of the total communication process. Therefore, the techniques of active listening, observing and summarising reporting (Gray, 2004; Gumperz, 1992) had been selected and used in order to ensure an adequate communication and rapport during the interviews. The English language was a main medium used in the conducted interviews. Noteworthy, for all interviewees English is a second language. A few respondents had used Latvian and Russian language as a main medium or simply for giving some illustrative remarks in order to express themselves adequately and more vividly. As the researcher is proficient in both the Latvian and Russian languages, using these languages in the interviews had enhanced establishing of the rapport and in general was to their advantage. All communication in Latvian and Russian during the interviews was translated into English. Such approach to the interviewing ensured richness of the respondents’ accounts (Gumperz, 1992) providing their views on inspiration.

4.2.6. Sampling

This section explains how interviewees were selected for this research. The multiplicity of sampling methods can be summarised into two broad categories: probability and non-probability methods (Blaikie, 2000). Probability sampling refers to a group of methods with the aim ‘to represent the population from which the sample is drawn’ (ibid: 198). According to the nature of this research, it is impossible to determine the population of people, who have been experiencing, believe in, or understand inspiration. In other words, it is impossible to ‘adequately identify the members of a population in order to draw a sample’ (ibid: 203). Therefore, the non-probability sampling approach had been followed in this research. The main non-probability sampling methods are convenience, purposive, snowball and theoretical samplings (Blaikie, 2000; Bryman, 2004).

While choosing an appropriate sampling method to be used in this research, the initial stance was to follow the Bryman’s (2004: 333) assertion that purposive sampling is most appropriate for qualitative research, as ‘the researcher samples on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research questions’. However, due to the difficulties with arranging access to companies outlined in the next section (Section 4.3) this approach had to be reconsidered to include the notion of ‘exemplary case’ (Short, 1991). Hence, an attempt was made to identify interviewees with the insights into inspiration by relaying an invitation to share views on inspiration in organisational contexts to the companies’ access holders.
4.3. Research sites

Initially, search for the research sites was guided only by the aims of the research. Then later, it had been narrowed down to address historicity as an essential aspect of the hermeneutic enquiry.

The hermeneutic tradition commonly emphasises the importance of historical context on the grounds of historical settlement and connectivity between the past and the present (Turner, 2003). The philosophical hermeneutics emphasises a historical context as positive and indispensable to a quest for enhanced interpretation and understanding. Gadamer (2004: 268) vouches for developing a historical awareness to help 'discriminating' between the prejudices. He advocates that the temporal distance is a helpful factor for developing understanding, as the present and the past are tightly linked together and answers to the present questions are to be looked for in the past. Therefore, enquiring in the present about inspiration in organisational situations would be actually a request about the particular, historically distant situation, as Gadamer (2004:305) maintains that 'the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past'.

4.3.1. Arranging access to companies

At the initial stage, quite a few telecommunication companies had been approached and invited to participate in the upcoming research of exploration of the role of inspiration and its associations in the telecommunication industry. It is difficult to hypothesise about the true reasons, but the response rate was very low. Consequently, after reconsidering the scope and objectives of the research, the decision was made to focus on the companies, where the researcher had had a direct involvement in the past. Thus, the researcher formerly either had provided the external business consulting services to the company, or had been working there in managerial positions at different levels. This approaching strategy appeared to be more successful and, as a result, a few companies had agreed to participate in the research. Consequently, access was granted to the two multinational and one nationwide telecommunication companies.

The profiles of each participating company are presented in the following three sections (Section 4.3.2, 4.3.3, and 4.3.4). Hereby, the label 'site' and a unique corresponding number have been assigned to each of these companies, and they are referred hereinafter in the research related documentation as site 1, site 2 or site 3 respectively.
4.3.2.  Research site 1

The research site 1 is one of Europe’s leading alternative telecom operators (Tele2, 2008). Tele2 had entered the Latvian telecommunication market in the year 2000 by acquiring a relatively small but dynamic and fast growing local telecommunication company – Baltcom GSM (Tele2, 2008b).

Baltcom GSM itself was founded in 1995 and it has been awarded with GSM 900 license in 1996. The commercial launch of GSM services was in March 1997 and associated with the new era in mobile communications market development in Latvia, as it ended a monopoly of the Latvijas Mobailais Telefons company (LMT, 2008).

It was a drastic change for Baltcom GSM from being flexible and innovative in terms of offered services and addressing the customers’ needs to being a part of a multinational company with a high degree of division of labour between different area offices leading to efficiency and the focus on cost consciousness and centralised decision-making (Tele2, 2008a).

For people working for Baltcom GSM and lately for Tele2, it was a change of motivation and objectives. Baltcom GSM had a priority to address customer needs in as flexibly as possible by providing new services and initiatives and by that to increase the market share. It was the way of a ‘challenger’ to the former monopolies in telecommunication market. Tele2 in contrast announced the price leadership strategy and defined its main goal as being No 1 mobile services operator in Latvia. This goal has been reached in 2004 when Tele2 market share for the first time has become higher than its competitors’.

4.3.3.  Research site 2

The research site 2 is one of the biggest Latvian terrestrial broadcasting and other telecommunication services provider Latvian State Radio and Television Centre (LSRTC, 2008). The history of LSRTC dates back to the 1920's when the first radio broadcasting station was established in Latvia. The company went through numerous reorganisations and re-brandings. The most dramatic changes the company had to undergo was in 1991. It was during the time when the Republic of Latvia regained its independence from the former Soviet Union. That epoch-making event has changed the political and economical systems of the country and correspondingly, LSRTC had to reconsider its every process and procedure (Britannica Online Encyclopaedia, 2008).
At present, LSRTC is the largest media and broadcasting service provider in Latvia, providing infrastructure and multimedia services all over the country. Despite the fact that the company is fully owned by state in the face of the Ministry of Transport of Latvia, it has been gradually expanding its operations from the core network infrastructure services to a full spectrum of telecommunication services until 2003. That tremendous growth in potential and investment in technological advances made the company a leader in new telecommunication services and inevitably attracted thoroughgoing attention of wider public and politics (Cerina, 2002; Delfi, 2003; European Television Guild, 2006).

At the end of 2003 due to some changes in the political environment of Latvia and tightening state’s control, LSRTC has faced a change in top management and consequently a vision of the company’s future. The company’s internal structure and processes became more regulated by the state, inline with rule of public media services. Nevertheless, the company has been continuing to provide qualitative and reliable core network services including terrestrial broadcasting (Ostrovska, 2001).

Additionally, LSRTC has extensive and diverse experience in planning, engineering, monitoring and maintaining various communication networks, and it allowed it to maintain a deserved position among the leaders on Latvian and Baltic telecommunication networks markets.

**4.3.4. Research site 3**

T-Mobile is one of the world's biggest mobile operators (Deutsche Telekom, 2008), providing telecommunication services in Europe and the United States. In year 2000 T-Mobile acquired its 49% stake in BEN - the second biggest mobile operator in the Netherlands, and two years later it became 100% owner of BEN (T-Mobile, 2008a).

BEN was founded in 1998 by Belgacom and Tele Danmark as the third mobile operator in the Netherlands. The company's successful development was ensured by its ability to respond adequately and implement the newest technological trends. It is proven to be flexible and innovative; and thus it quickly had gained the image of the young and proactive service provider and attracting similar people as customers and employees (T-Mobile, 2008).
After the acquisition, BEN continued to maintain its opportunity to use an essence of internationally proven technology and service excellence, but did it already in cooperation with its foreign partners and preserved its reputation as an innovative and excellent service company. However, internally the company had to undergo the dramatic process of changing of the company's corporate culture. As a member of the multinational T-Mobile Group, BEN had to comply to ‘T-Spirit vision’ the T-Mobile Group corporate strategy and culture, focusing on transparency and consistency while following corporate principles of superior value, passion for the customers, innovation, respect, integrity and top excellence (Deutsche Telekom, 2008a). In 2003, following multinational branding policy for all T-Mobile subsidiaries BEN was re-branded to T-Mobile Netherlands.

Joining T-Mobile Group led T-Mobile Netherlands to transformation from a technology-oriented to a customer-oriented service company. It required from the company and its employees a high degree of adaptability to the frequent changes of the fast-growing international company, resulting in a constant need for an integral reconciliation of the necessity to comply with the corporate goals and values with the internal strategy and policies. It demanded from the employees a completely new approach to the decision-making and management processes.

4.4. **Ethical considerations**

The ethical considerations of social research are ‘related to the treatment of human respondents or participants’ (Blaikie, 2000: 20). Gray (2004: 235) maintains that the central ethical issues 'surrounding data collection through interviews' can be summarised to participants having are rights for confidentiality, to withdraw from interview or research and not to be harmed in any way.

This research was initiated at the point when the procedures about ethical considerations in research had just been introduced at the University of Salford. Therefore, based on the advice of the research lead supervisor, the Market Research Society’s code of conduct (MRS, 1999: 3) was followed ‘in order to provide a more comprehensive framework of interpretation’ and to ensure that personal details of respondents are obtained, recorded and hold according to the data protection principles.

*A respondent is any individual or organisation from whom any information is sought by the researcher for the purpose of a marketing or social research project...This includes those approached for research purposes whether or not substantive information is obtained from them and includes those who decline to participate or withdraw at any stage from the research* (MRS, 1999: 5)

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According to the Market Research Society’s code of conduct, each respondent of this research was:

- informed about purpose of the research;
- informed and asked for the permission of audio recording of the interview;
- reassured in the anonymity and confidentiality of his or her identity and offered the option to withdraw his or her consent at any time during or after interview.

All respondents participated in the research on an entirely voluntary basis and informed consent has been given by each respondent. The preamble used as a part of the interview protocol (Section 4.2.1) is located in the Appendix 8.1. A copy of the statement of the Academic Audit and Governance Committee of the University of Salford, confirming that no ethical regulations have been breached, is located in the Appendix 8.2.

4.5. **Respondents’ profiles**

The research aim is to explore understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts. For this the focal point in the participating companies is people or individuals, employed by the organisations (Layder, 1993). Mullins (2002) distinguishes different levels within organisational hierarchy in relation to organisational power and division of labour. He maintains that:

> Organisations are layered. The determination of policy and decision-making, the execution of work, and the exercise of authority and responsibility are carried out by different people at varying levels of seniority throughout the organisation structure. It is possible to look at organisations in terms of three broad interrelated levels in the hierarchical structure: the technical level, the managerial level and the community level (Mullins, 2002:532)

This classification is useful as it facilitates an additional cross-level analysis of the respondents’ opinions about inspiration. Each level was assigned with a single letter label that is t, m and c respectively. Each respondent was assigned a generic consequent number within a particular level. As a result, a complete personal reference number for each respondent within the research includes the site number, the level letter and a generic consequent number within the particular level. These numbers are assigned in the following sections, where a brief background of each respondent is provided.
There were three respondents at the research site 1. The profile of each respondent is supplemented with a personal reference number to enable cross-referencing to the respondent's text in a concise format.

The respondent, IT Department Director (s1c1), has been with Baltcom GSM/Tele2 from almost very beginning of the establishing, that is, for more than 9 years. She joined the company as Customer Care and Billing Director and then after re-organisation was appointed to her current for more than 6 years position. For her, inspiration is almost a necessity in a modern fast-changing life, it helps her to tackle work-related stress and safeguard her from becoming cynical in her daily life. She volunteered to participate in the research because she believed it would give her an opportunity to find out more about her personal sources of inspiration in order to be able to use them purposefully.

The respondent, Customer Care Department line manager (s1m1), has been with Baltcom GSM/Tele2 for 8 years, since she joined the company as a Customer Care Expert at one of the company's walk-in offices. Her passion to the work and capability to take managerial decisions were noticed by the company's management and after a year she had been promoted to the position of Team Leader and then a year later to her current position. She maintains that inspiration gives her a reason not to get irritated with the monotonous routine in her daily work. She volunteered to participate in the interview because she believed in inspiration and its influence on people's life and wanted to find out more about it.

The respondent, Customer Care Department senior employee (s1t1), joined Baltcom GSM/Tele2 9 years ago, at a moment when the company experienced gradual and high-paced growth. She started as a part-time Archive Assistant, and after graduation continued her work in the company as a Customer Care Specialist. After the company's reorganisation she was appointed as a Senior Expert at the Customer Care Department. She considers herself an artistic person and for her inspiration is more related to her private life, her personal feelings and inter-personal relationships rather than to her daily work. She volunteered to participate in the interview due to her curiosity of participating in the university research.
4.5.2.  Research site 2

There were six respondents at the research site 2. The profile of each respondent is supplemented with a personal reference number to enable cross-referencing to the respondent’s text in a concise format.

The respondent, Director of General (s2c1), has been with LSRTC for slightly more than a year and was appointed to the current position by the overseeing government institution. For him, inspiration is ultimately a personal experience and is beyond the usual process of creative thinking. He volunteered to participate in the research as he believes in theoretical advancement of ways of organising people at work and wants to assert his view on inspiration.

The respondent, Technical Director (s2c2), has been with LSRTC for more than 12 years. He took his first job at the company as a technician, while continuing his study at university. Then he was appointed to a position of an engineer and after seven years of service he was promoted to a senior level. For him inspiration is an idea, which could overtake him for a while from conceiving it up to its implementation phase. He volunteered to participate in the research as he believes that inspiration is important for him personally and to anyone in a higher position within organisational hierarchy.

The respondent, RRTS section’s manager (s2m1), has been with LSRTC for more than 16 years. He grew with the company and all its re-organisations. He joined the company as an engineer and has progressed up to the senior level. He thinks as inspiration as an extra energy is necessary for certain jobs. He volunteered to participate in the research as he believes that inspiration plays a positive role for a company such as LSRTC.

The respondent, MRPG section’s line manager (s2m2), has been with LSRTC for more than eight years, while progressing steadily from an engineer to a line manager. He claims to understand inspiration and has positive attitude towards it. He volunteered to participate in the research due to his interest in inspiration in general.

The respondent, IT Department employee (s2t1), has been with LSRTC for more than five years. It was his first permanent job and he progressed from a position of IT technician to an IT professional. For him, inspiration is an absolutely necessary thing, either at work or life in general. He volunteered to participate in the research as he believes that inspiration can make a difference in his workplace.
The respondent, IT Department senior employee (s2t2), has been with LSRTC for more than six years. She joined the company as a personal assistant to a managing director and after re-organisation was moved to the caging communications department and finally ended up in IT department. She believes that without inspiration she would not be able to enjoy the work. She volunteered to participate in the research as she considers herself being an inspirational person.

### 4.5.3. Research site 3

There were eight respondents at the research site 3. The profile of each respondent is supplemented with a personal reference number to enable cross-referencing to the respondent’s text in a concise format.

The respondent, Finance Department Director (s3c1), has been with T-Mobile Netherlands for more than three years, where he was invited because of his previous successful career. For him, professionals are inspired people otherwise they would not be professionals. He volunteered to participate in the research due to his strong conviction that inspiration has place in all aspects of our lives.

The respondent, Human Resource Department Director (s3c2), has been with T-Mobile Netherlands from very beginning of the company and prior to all mergers and acquisitions, which is for almost 25 years. He started as a recruiting specialist and grew up to the senior manager’s level, while the company has gone through numerous re-organisations and re-brandings. He maintains that working for large company with a lot of bureaucracy is impossible without inspiration and that telecommunication business is very inspirational. He volunteered to participate in the research because of his belief that with inspiration people will be more content at work.

The respondent, Vice President Consumer Sales (s3c3), has been with T-Mobile Netherlands for more than seven years. He joined the company because he believed he could make a difference by making people’s spirit fly. For him, inspiration is a tool for motivation and anything can be a source of inspiration. He volunteered to participate in the research because in his view inspiration helps to deal with the stress of modern life.
The respondent, Executive Vice President Sales and Retail (s3c4), has been with T-Mobile Netherlands for more than 11 years that is prior to its two last re-brandings. He claims that modern focus on money in organisations is overemphasised and people need to concentrate on other things like inspiration, and they can be inspired by working for certain company. He volunteered to participate in the research rather driven by curiosity and desire to know more about inspiration.

The respondent, Accounting Manager (s3m1), has been with T-Mobile Netherlands for more than five years and was promoted to his current post less than 2 years ago. He thinks that inspiration is a kind of motivation. He volunteered to participate in the research because it would help him to manage better his own career, as in his view people need to be inspired in a long run.

The respondent, Director Marketing Services (s3m2), has been with T-Mobile Netherlands for more than four years. He joined the company in the capacity of a senior manager during the last acquisition. He associates inspiration with a vision of some kind. He volunteered to participate in the research as he believes that companies should be more and more inspiring, especially from marketing point of view.

The respondent, Human Resource Department employee (s3t1), has been with T-Mobile Netherlands for more than eight years in the same department, but in different roles. She welcomes inspiration in workplace and sometimes in private life. She volunteered to participate in the research because of her appreciation of inspiration and interest to explore it.

The respondent, Personal Assistant to Head of Department (s3t2), has been with T-Mobile Netherlands for more than six years in the same capacity. She associates inspiration with a kind of freedom, especially at work. She volunteered to participate in the research to get better understanding of herself and inspiration.

4.6. Chapter summary

The concern of this chapter is implementation of the research. Initially, all four stages of the research implementation are described. Then, subsequently, interviewing and all the details of selecting the research sites and participants are being explained in the context of the research theoretical foundation explicated in Chapter Three.
Interviewing was identified as the main method of data collection in the research. Therefore, the details relevant to such aspects of interviewing as developing protocol and interview strategy, considering ethical and multicultural issues are given here. The implications and outcomes of the preliminary and pilot work are provided in the context of developing an instrument for data collection.

Along with explaining of the research sites selecting process, this chapter describes each research site with brief narrative statements. Backgrounds of the research participants are presented in their profiles here as well.

The next chapter proceeds with providing horizons of inspiration of all respondents in order to indicate their contribution to the expanding horizon of the researcher. It aims at explicating the meaning of inspiration in organisational contexts.
Chapter 5. Expanding the horizon of inspiration at work

This chapter describes the evolution of understanding of inspiration at work. It begins by explaining the presentation conventions of respondents’ horizons followed in this chapter. Then, it proceeds with an explicit outline of the pre-understanding of inspiration by the researcher and continues by presenting horizons of the respondents, which are grouped by the three research sites. It concludes by reviewing the evolved horizon of inspiration at work, which is cross-referenced to the original horizons of the respondents and represents the progress of understanding of inspiration in organisational settings.

This chapter concludes by presenting the evolved understanding of inspiration by the researcher and outlining a reflective view on the development of his horizon of understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts.

To supplement the analysis the full transcripts of some interviews, one from each research site, are presented in Appendices 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5. Enclosing of all analysed interviews is not feasible due to the large volume of text. A representative detailed analysis (Section 5.3.1) is based on the interview of respondent slcl.

5.1. Presentation of data

Blaikie (2000: 240) maintains that exploring the advancement of methods of analysis represents a challenge of choice in the context of ‘the extent to which the researcher remains close to the language, the concepts and meanings of the social actors rather than imposing own concepts and categories on lay accounts’. In the case of a hermeneutic enquiry, the suggestion is for a low stance, ‘in which the researcher derives concepts and meanings from lay language’ and subsequently to develop ‘technical concepts and theoretical propositions from accounts provided in lay language’ (ibid: 241). Therefore, this chapter is structured in a way that shows the gradual expansion of the initial horizon of inspiration using excerpts of interviews and their readings into technical concepts, based on the researcher’s role of a mediator of languages. The horizons of all respondents are developed using their original expressions.

5.1.1. The presentation’s conventions

This section explains the conventions of presenting respondents’ horizons of inspiration in their organisations. A personal reference number is assigned to each respondent to enable
cross-referencing to the respondent’s horizon in a concise format (Section 4.5). To supplement the analysis the full transcripts of interviews, one from each research site, are presented in Appendices 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5. The numbering of the interview transcript’s text lines is used in order to make the data analysis more transparent.

The presentation of respondents’ horizons utilises direct speech given in italics with single quotation marks to preserve original expressions of the respondents (Blaikie, 2000: 241). This style of presentation was chosen instead of using the excerpts from transcripts as it is concise and more adequate for the purposes of interpretation.

In order to illustrate the mechanics of the data analysis method the presentation of the horizon of the first respondent from research site 1 (respondent slc1) uses different presentation conventions from the presentation conventions used for all other respondents. It utilises the line numbering in the round brackets, to refer back to the source text provided in Appendix 8.3, and the direct speech provided in quotation marks to preserve original expressions of the respondent. Meanwhile, the horizons of all other participants are presented only with the use of direct speech in order to focus on interpretation rather than on the mechanics of the method of analysis.

Utilising the combination of direct speech and line numbering, instead of using the excerpts from transcripts, is chosen as it is concise and more adequate for interpretation. The transcript’s excerpt in Figure 17 illustrates the outlined line of reasoning.

151 people. I’ll give you an example. Previously, when I worked as Billing and
152 Customer Care Director, I had to work closely with our marketing team.
153 Basically they generated ideas all the time and my department was in charge
154 of technical implementation of all innovations. I knew that every idea was
155 extra headache for me, and that sometimes they create ideas for the sake of
156 ideas, taking this process not as serious as it should be. Of course, these were
157 my thoughts, and my evaluation of situation. May be I was too critical, but
158 this is not the point in my example. Usually, receiving their proposals for
159 innovations I thought “Oh, please, not again... what a crazy idea...!” And
160 then our discussion followed. I actually can recall very well my office and
161 these marketing managers and their director sitting next to me and trying to
162 convince me that what they want to introduce is a brilliant idea and very
163 transparent and easy for implementation. Well, it was not easy in most of the
164 cases. Of course, I had to be objective and to put implementation costs on the
165 table. But I remember this feeling, when their inspired state impacted me at
166 the end of our meetings I accepted their position, and forgot my negative
167 attitude to their proposal of something new. Of course, it doesn’t mean that I
168 said ‘Yes’ to everything they proposed, but, what I try to say is that their
169 attitude and inspiration by their ideas changed my attitude and brought our
170 discussion to more constructive and less subjective basis.

Figure 13 Excerpt from an interview with line numbering
A respondent tries to illustrate that for her it is preferable to deal with an inspired rather than any other colleague despite the fact that ideas, used by these colleagues to influence others, might not be plausible or interesting in essence. If the excerpt approach is used, then, firstly, it could significantly decrease the readability of a horizon as at least 20 lines between lines 151 and 170 need to be cited. Secondly, if, instead of citing those 20 lines, only the lines 165 and 166 were to be provided in an excerpt with the text 'their inspired state impacted me at the end of our meetings', they would be taken out of the context and as a result could have been interpreted quite differently.

5.2. **Pre-understanding of inspiration**

This section summarises the pre-understanding of inspiration by the researcher to mark his early understanding of inspiration.

Inspiration was seen by the researcher as something that impelled him, moved him forward. With its presence he would gladly engage in any activity at work regardless of the promised rewards. The key source of his inspiration was a potential to apply in practice his technical knowledge and to gain novel experience associated either with his position within the company or other business consultancy opportunities. In attempts to reflect on those numerous inspirational instances an early understanding of inspiration at work can be silhouetted with the following questions and answers.

What is inspiration at work? It is largely associated with meaningfulness of work. Making sense of work potential, which includes mainly new projects, often made the researcher feel inspired. On the other hand, having been offered financially lucrative but not really challenging projects or tasks, he found nothing inspiring about them.

How long does inspiration last? Sometimes inspiration appears just like an instant spark, which could make any day a bit brighter, but usually it lasts for days or even weeks if reinforced by the activities related to implementation of ideas.

What are the main sources of inspiration? It appears that the main sources of inspiration are new ideas and projects; but, all in all, it is in general about having a potential to create new solutions or apply technical expertise in practice.
After reviewing various linguistic sources and organisational context literature (Chapter 2), the above early understanding of inspiration had been expanded to include such meanings as an admirable example, encouragement and enthusiasm. It became relatively clearer that inspiration generically refers to stimulation of the mind and/or emotions. However, it was quite obscure why colleagues had often preferred to refer to inspiration, having quite a wide vocabulary and a large number of concepts to label or call events or feelings. It gave an impression that inspiration appears to be an exceptionally open category rather than a specific concept, though, having a fairly positive undertone.

The following subsections present the horizons of understanding inspiration by all other respondents of this research, grouped by the research sites, and are concluded with an outline of the researcher’s evolved horizon of inspiration.

5.3. Views on inspiration at research site 1

After having stated explicitly the pre-understanding, this section continues to the next stage of the analysis and presents views on inspiration expressed by respondents at research site 1. The overview of this research site’s business (Section 4.3.2) and respondents’ profiles (Section 4.5.1) are given in Chapter 4.

Each horizon is outlined as a succinct narrative, unfolded in paragraphs according to the presentation conventions outlined in Section 5.1 and supplemented with the researcher’s commentary on what had been discussed in relation to each respondent’s view of inspiration at work. It has to be noted that each horizon is not simply a summary of what the respondent had said. It represents ‘the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point’ (Gadamer, 2004: 301). Arguably, not every person has a particular range of vision on inspiration, but as all respondents volunteered to participate in this research they assumed that they had a view on inspiration at work or were interested in it. Therefore, for each respondent an attempt had been made to compose a horizon following the tenets of Gadamerian hermeneutics (Chapter 5).

5.3.1. Outline of respondent’s s1c1 horizon

This section presents an outline of the respondent’s s1c1 horizon, composed from a transcript of the interview with the respondent following the tenets of hermeneutic enquiry, as described in Chapter 3. The full transcript of the interview is located in Appendix 8.3.
This respondent embraces inspiration in her private life (2-3, 5-12) and at work (15-21). Interestingly, at home she usually gets inspired by ‘doing something creative’ like cooking or sewing and, in general, by anything that gives her a feeling of ‘eternity’. But at work she feels inspired when she faces ‘some challenge’ or when she has to ‘make decisions, to do something what requires some efforts’. It appears that she can be inspired as a result of her own effort rather than passively accepting an incoming inspirational influence. She believes that she is inspired when her ‘work can make difference’. Inspiration gives answers to her doubts (17), enables her ‘hidden potential’ and helps her to perform more efficiently (18-19, 83-88), but generally it is something that recharges her inner energy (10-12), gives ‘extra energy’ (96, 130) and frees up her creativity (255). It seems she attributes inspiration to a source of extra energy, while clearly she is an actual source of energy herself. The respondent endeavours to illustrate her understanding of inspiration by the example (21-36) and refers to inspiration as ‘something inside me and this something makes me doing things’ (32). In fact, it illustrates the just emphasised point that her own efforts of dealing with challenges give her extra energy and enables her extra potential. Inspiration in this case serves as an attribution of her energised state.

Shedding light on the duration of inspirational occurrences, the respondent maintains that for her it lasts as long as an inspirational situation or a situation that causes inspiration exists (38-41). At work it could be a challenging task (39), in daily life it could be cooking (46) and knitting (47), or thoughts related to an implementation process itself (43, 46-47, 72-73, 98-101) rather than its results (45-46, 49). On the other hand, getting certain material, long desired things (54-56) or having implemented projects (61-67) can be a source of inspiration as well. Looking analytically, this long list of causes of inspiration signifies that the respondent needs to apply her efforts anywhere in order to be inspired, as she creates inspirational moments by herself. This is also indirectly confirmed by the respondent maintaining that inspiration initiated by her internal cognitive activities last longer (39-41, 51, 64-69). It also enables her reflexive re-evaluation of other routines or behaviour (68-71).

While pointing to the sources of inspiration as something that triggers (107) it, the respondent maintains that there are external (72-78, 122, 246, 248, 381) and internal (108, 177, 378) sources, though, she cannot clearly distinguish between their origin. On many instances these triggers are attributed to something new (3, 55-56, 70, 108, 112, 167, 246, 279, 349-350, 353), ideas (62, 72, 108, 116, 149, 169, 359, 382), events (117-119, 184, 248), products (55-56, 72).
places (8-10), people (125, 154-165), processes (7, 43, 46-47, 72, 116, 132), implementation process (62-70) of an idea and, of course, challenges (16, 20, 223-234, 246).

The respondent maintains that she has inspiration at work (15, 96-97, 115-116, 120, 244-245, 297-298, 423-424) and it is important for her to be inspired at work (264-267, 395-396), because she spends 'so much time at work' and feels much better when inspired. Therefore, she is 'ready for being inspired at work' and, interestingly, inspiration 'comes exactly when it's needed'. All this signifies that she initiates inspiration or a self-inspiring mode, which reminds an internal mobilisation of resources or will.

Her claim that inspiration is helpful at work appears to have practical grounds. It helps to avoid becoming frustrated by the monotony and routine (67-68, 83-89, 272-292, 422), gives her extra 'energy' (11-12, 56-57, 96, 128-130, 252-254), enables her 'hidden potential' (18, 109-110) including reaching a different viewpoint on situations or solutions (71, 75-77). She extends this claim further and argues that she considers inspiration to be a tool in her managerial toolbox (271-292, 400), and in such case it has to be controlled (269-270).

The respondent believes that people, when inspired, are less subject to stress (143-145, 337-338, 355). She theorises that when a person's mind is engaged in or rather preoccupied by activities caused by inspiration (345-348), then this person experiences lower stress. Similarly, when stressed, people can cope better with stress if inspired, as their attention shifts away from the problems themselves to a focal point created by inspiration (358-370). Meanwhile, the respondent mentions that 'a challenging task at work' 'creates stress' for her. This contradicts her previous statements that challenges at work create or support her inspiration, unless stress itself is her inspiration. In the latter scenario, it can be assumed that a 'genuine' stress is overshadowed by the inspiration-stress.

With respect to the organisational hierarchy, the respondent maintains that in her experience there is a higher need for inspiration (388-391) at a higher position in a chain of command. The respondent claims that one of the reasons is that the importance of tangible benefits is lower for people at a higher level of organisational hierarchy (411-412). People at higher levels are more easily inspired as they follow their interest and ambitions in work (414-416) rather than mere bonuses (418). Captivatingly, the respondent states a higher need for inspiration within higher levels of organisational hierarchy and at the same time a higher
openness to inspiration, while implying that for others or at the lower levels of hierarchy rewards would be enough.

The respondent extends her managerial thinking to the relationship between inspiration and motivation of employees and demonstrates a clear understanding that there is a difference between inspiration and motivation (175-177, 184-186, 203-213). She implies inspiration can enhance motivation (205-206, 220-221), especially in recruiting, promoting and rewarding employees. This supports her previous statements that inspiration is just a tool within organisations and her view on the inspiration-motivation relationship represents a positioning of this tool.

The respondent maintains that being inspired at work increases her performance (93-94, 276-278). In her inspired state she inspires or influences others (258-262, 379-386) and also affects positively their performance. However, inspiration could have a negative effect (270-281) as well, because it could distract or even scare (312) other people. Therefore, she maintains inspiration at work should be controlled (269, 286, 307-309) to avoid its negative effects. By control, the respondent implies managerial control, which should be exercised in line with inspiring on herself and others.

**Researcher’s commentary**

The respondent metaphorically equates inspiration to hidden potential and something that gives her extra energy. In everyday life, it appears that she regards inspiration as related more to an aesthetic context. However, while exemplifying her statements about being inspired at work it become noticeable that she mobilises herself in the face of challenges and it gives her an extra energy. The process of inspiring at work is arguably associated with the respondent’s cognitive activities, while reinforcement of inspirational moments comes through reflexive re-evaluation of past situations.

The respondent confidently claims a place for inspiration at work, quoting various situations as examples, but then provides her rationale for inspiration to be there as she spends so much time at work. Therefore, her statement that inspiration comes tenuously when needed illustrates a cognitive ability to create it, that is, a kind of a self-inspiring skill. Furthermore, having been a senior level manager for years, she speaks about inspiration as one of the tools in a managerial toolbox, which has to be properly controlled, especially in subordinates. She justifies her use of inspiration as a carrot for employees, with stressfulness of work.
Inspiration can be exceptionally helpful during times of change, when the attention of employees may need to be diverted from stressful issues to something inspirational.

5.3.2. Outline of respondent's s1m1 horizon

This section presents the outline of the respondent's s111 horizon, composed from the transcript of the interview with the respondent following the tenets of hermeneutic enquiry, explicating in Chapter 3. To outline the respondent's horizon emphasis is made on use of direct speech, provided in quotation marks, instead of referencing using the line numbering routine, to keep focus on interpretation rather than on the mechanics of the method of analysis. This style of presentation is followed for all other respondents. Unfolding the respondent's horizon is presented in unstructured style influenced by a dialogue between the researcher and respondent.

The respondent maintains that in her particular 'profession [a] person doesn't depend on inspiration a lot'. The respondent is a radio engineer by education and affirms that without inspiration by her own objectives she would not be able to pull through her studies. She maintains that learning science is impossible without inspiration and generalises that 'it is difficult to learn if you are not inspired', as there should be something reinforcing the process of learning by 'ability to do it, by your success' and at the same time learning gives her inspiration and leads her 'to the process which will lead to the next inspirational push'. Learning is mentioned as inspiring in the contexts of getting 'knowing foreign cultures' and 'how to understand the person who is absolutely opposite to you'.

Referring to inspiration in her past the respondent describes that being inspired 'gave a passion' and 'ability to prove' herself. She acknowledges that there 'have been a lot' of inspirational moments equated with the 'moments of happiness' in her working life, but hesitates to give a uniform description of how it felt, because 'each situation can be different, it's like different cuisines'. She admits that if such moment occurred, it usually was 'related to something new' or, in particular, to 'something new what happened in our company'. The respondent tries to describe her inspirational moments by giving examples and it comes out with the statements 'we all worked hard' and 'we all were very proud'. On the other hand, she maintains that inspiration in her personal life had helped her at work and made her capable 'to survive through difficult moments in... professional life' by giving her 'a kind of secure feeling'.
The respondent distinguishes whether she is inspired or not, as inspiration makes her 'feeling a bit new' and engages her 'hidden resources'. She repeatedly refers to inspiration in relation to her 'energy' levels, mentioning that 'inspiration fills...from inside with energy', and also consumes 'some energy, but giving back even more'.

According to the respondent, 'inspiration often is a continuous process' and it is difficult to determine how long it usually lasts. After experiencing an 'emotional boost' of inspiration she usually feels like she 'wants to dive into her sofa', which is a sign that 'inspiration is over'. The break time between flashes of inspiration may 'last also a day, a month or several months'.

The respondent exhibits awareness of sources of inspiration, she provides examples from her private and working life and maintains that when it comes to inspiration 'there is no much difference between work and private life'. However, she emphasises a usefulness of inspiration mainly at work, while in private life it seems to be taken for granted. Referring to books, the main sources mentioned are 'variety of choices, this unpredictability, this uniqueness... world of words', but in general sources of inspiration could include an 'idea, feeling, personal achievement, something new or... something renewed'.

She thinks about herself as a person 'who can be inspired by external events, but also by internal ones, those processes, thoughts, feelings that are inside' her. The main internal sources include believing in herself and 'hope for the change', which particularly helps her to survive in the daily work routine. Talking about external sources of inspiration a communication with somebody who is inspired or whom the respondent considers her 'inspirational leader' comes up, and she maintains that it can be inspiring as this person would give her 'an inspirational push'. In regards to the sources of inspiration at work, the respondent believes that they are very individual and working for her they 'may be absolutely unacceptable for' somebody else. On the other hand, all mentioned inspirational sources do not appear to be highly unique, unless she mainly referred to her own thoughts.

The respondent gives an impression that having inspiration is essential in her current position, maintaining that work 'can become a nightmare... if it is performed without proper... inspiration'. If working without inspiration she would 'be drained immediately' and it could lead her to the drama of hating her job, her life, and 'then the whole universe'. According to the respondent inspiration mobilises her and makes her feel like she 'wants to do the job'.
Although inspiration makes the respondent ‘able to notice things’ she ‘never paid attention to’, it also ‘can take’ her ‘away from reality’. It appears that somehow inspiration is indispensable in her workplace, but it is difficult to image it to be included in her job description. In this instance the respondent may refer to escapism or diversion as inspiration.

On the other hand, the respondent believes that there are people who ‘could never be able to experience inspiration in their lives’, stating meanwhile that ‘most of people may experience inspiration on duty’. It is just a matter of choosing the right job. Notably, being able to experience inspiration is associated with a choice of job, where the ‘wrong’ choice can block inspiration. At the same time the respondent maintains that potentially most of people ‘experience inspirational moments at work’, they just never notice or pay attention to it.

The respondent admits that she is not sure about clear distinction between motivation and inspiration, referring to motivation as ‘money...some other benefits’ and to inspiration as a ‘feeling of satisfaction’. However, it is not clear how she gets satisfaction having such demanding job. Motivation is ‘very important’ for the respondent, it makes her feeling ‘acknowledged’ and stimulates her loyalty to the current employer. She also states she likes ‘to be well-paid for the work’, and ‘it inspires’ her. It rather introduces a dilemma: is money a motivator or inspirer?

Money itself comes up several times during the interview and the respondent finds it inspiring thinking about money or ‘the ability to spend it’. It implies the answer for the dilemma for money being an enabler to satisfy certain needs. Inspiration for the respondent is about the ability to love her job and ‘to put soul into it’. Despite the significant role of money in her life, the respondent can’t recall any situation at work ‘when money or motivation helped’ her ‘to do work better’. Therefore, projecting it to the organisational setting the respondent suggests that for the increasing of involvement of employees into the work processes the companies ‘can try to inspire them’, because, otherwise, ‘lack of inspiration leading to passiveness’ consequently could cause ‘losing customers’. It represents a very complex relationship between motivation and inspiration in which money, and especially its absence, plays a certain role.

The respondent maintains that inspiration helps her to deal with stress at work by absorbing or taking stress away and, in general, by shifting focus of her attention. Due to the specifics of her job, the respondent has to deal with the customers’ complaints and problems every day.
and she points out that only her ‘ability’ to be inspired at work prevents her, an ‘emotional person’, from becoming ‘a very irritated person’. In essence, all her considerations about inspiration at work related to the survival at work with its help proving a sort of an escape route from the often faced problems.

The respondent believes that inspiration helps her ‘to get these positive emotions’ and ‘look at the situations positively’. For her ‘stress doesn’t block the channel through which inspiration flows into’ her, that is, she can be inspired while stressed and her ‘inspiration absorbs stress’. This would complete her view on inspiration as something of panacea to avoid stress at work.

**Researcher’s commentary**

In the context of the previous life experience, the respondent refers to inspiration as inventiveness and imagination [of her mind], especially while engaged in such activities like learning. To learn, particularly science or anything difficult for comprehension, she needs to be inspired and learning in turn provides her with an inspirational push. On the other hand, a state of being inspired is referred to as a moment of happiness, reinforcing an association between both notions.

The respondent’s perception of inspiration is quite mixed. She claims the certain usefulness of inspiration in her work, while in the everyday living inspiration exists freely or is taken for granted. However, the respondent sees little difference between work and private life. Working at her current position as a line manager would be allegedly impossible without inspiration; otherwise her energy would be drained out quickly. This leads to another interpretation of inspiration as an enabler of her inner energy levels. She interchangeably refers to inspiration as energy. Nonetheless, the respondent acknowledges that at work days and even months have passed without inspiration.

Naming the sources of inspiration, the respondent explicitly puts communication in first place; but in her examples she emphasises a highly cognitive aspect of her inspirational moments at work. To narrow it down, she indicates that handling customers’ complaints requires diversion of attention or thoughts, and this is exactly what inspiration provides her with. Thus, she suggests a connection between presence of inspiration at work and her mental well-being in the context of stress at her workplace.
Lastly, indications of a complex relationship between motivation and inspiration are noticeable in her aspirations. Motivation is tightly associated with money and money is an enabler of her needs' satisfaction, while inspiration is more about enabling her to be proactive.

**5.3.3. Outline of respondent's **

The respondent indirectly defines inspiration, when she speaks about it as something that 'you can feel it, but very often you can't say, what it is'. Inspiration, for her, 'could be sensed, but usually it can't be defined'. In many instances the respondent equates being inspired with being 'happy' and uses both notions interchangeably. She generalises that when inspired or happy people are 'full of energy and ...can work better'.

The respondent maintains that she needs to have her 'daily life in order' to become inspired by her hobby activities such as 'knitting process itself, the garden and flower arranging'. This pre-condition of having a certain order can be applied to her work; it is 'the same at work... a well set up environment is important'. And only after having everything in order she becomes perceptive to the 'inspirational factors from outside to get inspired'. At work it could be 'something sudden and spontaneous to do with colleagues', 'a successful working day', the 'management's attitude', or her 'boss's attitude. This is important and it inspires'. However, according to the respondent, she is not a 'career-oriented' person and 'wouldn't want to put too much efforts... to make a career'. She believes there must be 'a balance' between work and 'home'. It appears from her remarks that for her being inspired at work or at home is possible if the pre-condition of having everything in order is met. Having a work-life balance is another element of her pre-condition.

While explaining that her inspiration can be driven by a task or project, the respondent maintains that in her view inspiration is not continuous, 'it is fragmental'. She claims that a 'person can't be happy all the time... It is periodical'. This intermittent nature of inspiration combined with its suddenness and spontaneity seems to make it unique and easily distinguishable one from other notions.

According to the respondent, motivation and inspiration are different. Motivation 'can be achieved with the certain activities', or 'HR management' and the 'company's management' should 'organise some activities to motivate an employee'. Inspiration, on the other hand, is not something one can plan. It 'appears in everybody from inside, without any stimulation or any activities'. The respondent generalises that a 'person can just get inspired [by]... good
weather... good colleagues, good team, good microclimate’, implying that good, or rather positive aspect of occurrence, is inspirational. Several times during the discussion the respondent attempts to put forward that inspiration is associated with external sources, but it works or appears from inside.

The respondent iteratively relates inspiration to energy. The same context of energy is also mentioned in the discussion about stress. Inspiration helps her in the tense situations ‘to switch to something else... get over the stress... to return back to work’. Thus, associated with distraction or diversion of attention from the stress to something else, inspiration also appears to give energy to get over stress. The respondent, therefore, concludes that from the organisational perspective ‘inspiration is required from time to time to keep energy on the certain level to keep a person in a shape’.

Another aspect associated by the respondent with stress is change. She does not ‘like changes in general... But, well... they are unavoidable’. Despite her obvious dislike of changes in general, she notes that if a change is ‘reasonable’ and ‘positive’ it could be understood and even ‘could raise inspiration’.

Researcher’s commentary

The respondent refers to inspiration as happiness and uses both words in many instances interchangeably, while mentioning that both are related to energy or being energetic. At the same time, it is noticeable that the respondent is in favour of an intermittent nature of inspiration and welcomes its spontaneity which can be triggered by many factors, but mainly environmental ones. These include the attitude of management, settings in the office and others, which reflect the respondent’s technical level within organisational hierarchy. Her expectations of inspiration rely on good colleagues, a good team, good workplace microclimate and similar, illustrating her self-conscious dependence on others with expectation of the ‘good’ or positive aspects.

In that context, the respondent refers to motivation as originated from her company’s management, while inspiration appears to be available to her internally from certain external stimuli, matching her expectations. Increasingly, she refers to inspiration as giving her enough energy to get over stress in order to get back to work, and that indirectly emphasises the overwhelming importance of work to her. Thus, the respondent claims the need for inspiration at the workplace in order to deal with work and stress.
5.4. Views on inspiration at research site 2

This section presents the horizons of the respondents from the research site 2. The overview of this research site’s business (Section 4.3.3) and the respondents’ profiles (Section 4.5.2) are given in Chapter 4.

Each horizon is outlined as a succinct narrative, unfolded in paragraphs according to the presentation conventions outlined in Section 5.1 and supplemented with the researcher’s commentary on what had been discussed in relation to the each respondent’s view on inspiration at work.

5.4.1. Outline of respondent’s s2c1 horizon

The full transcript of the interview with the respondent s2c1 is located in the Appendix 8.4.

For the respondent s2c1 ‘inspiration is on the same line as thinking that is goes beyond’. He clarifies that thinking for him is a repetition of ‘ideas which have been internalised by cultural process and in the best case it is worse than repeating the words’. Therefore, he perceives ‘inspiration as something that goes totally beyond the usual process of thinking’. The respondent clarifies ‘beyond’ as ‘the next step of thinking’, and suggests that it is possible ‘to draw parallels between’ inspiration and that kind of thinking. He believes that thinking ‘might be creative, but inspiration is something that’ is ‘unique in meaning something new almost like breakthrough’. When the respondent happens to be inspired, he maintains that he feels ‘happy’ and ‘delighted’.

The respondent differentiates motivation in organisations from inspiration in organisations. He confirms that he ‘distinctively remember these situations’ when he was inspired in his job. However, referring to an imaginary intentional use of inspiration at work, he holds that ‘it is a very earthly understanding of inspiration’ and would slip ‘into the direction of motivation’. He reinforces his belief of ‘inspiration as breakthrough concept’ and asserts that because of that ‘it is difficult to keep it everyday’. Meanwhile, expressing his views on the role and tasks of a manager, he insists that because inspiration is ‘too personal, it shouldn’t be on the list of must do things of a manager’. At the same time he makes a remark that, if included in a managerial toolbox, ‘it should not be for a standard’ as it would be an invasion into individual’s privacy or beliefs. ‘It is such a private thing’.
The respondent believes in the notion that "bad things happen" and especially at work. Therefore, a manager should rely solely on motivation in company’s operations, but not on inspiration. He elaborates that engaging with 'inspiration is tricky' as it could 'kick someone from the track'. It leads to a moral question of whether such engagement is 'good for that person or is it not'. Additionally, the respondent utters that he is 'very sceptical about introducing or using' inspiration intentionally in organisations and concludes that it 'simply should not be there' as he considers it to be an attempt 'to control...personal life' of employees. He insists that 'there is motivation' as a tool for influencing employees and that is enough. Meanwhile, the respondent admits that having inspiration at work 'is good', but in many cases 'hard work' is sufficient, even if it is lack of 'creativity'. This implies that motivation at work can ensure even the hard working. Hence, utilising inspiration in any way would not be morally right, even creativeness of work is at stake.

The respondent speaks about 'people around' as of a main source of inspiration or an 'inspiring moment'. Inspiration for him can be triggered by something like 'conversation' on 'strange topics' with various people. He admits that for staying inspired he 'should always have people' around. For him 'educational development', or even 'IQ' of those people, is not important for getting inspired. Even more, he maintains that 'the formal education' could be 'dogmatic' and dogma 'is a main killer of inspiration'. This, however, to some extent contradicts his assertions which align inspiration with a cognitive activity, which largely depends on learning and individual development.

**Researcher's comments**

It appears that for the respondent inspiration is something in between normal thinking and its breakthrough, which indicates that he associates inspiration with a cognitive activity and, if so, it may depend on individual development. However, the respondent is rather opinionated against formal education, labelling it dogmatic. Thus, it is not clear how the cognitive processes can be advanced to reach inspirational levels as, according to him, inspiration is beyond the usual thinking. His second association of inspiration is with creativity, which also bears a certain resemblance with particular cognitive activities.

The respondent seems to object any use of inspiration in organisational settings on moral and ethic grounds, as it would be an invasion into private life and an attempt to control it. He
insists that motivation as a tool or concept is sufficient and appropriate to any instance. It even could foster hard working, which in his view is an alternative to creativity.

The main source of the respondent’s inspiration is people or rather conversation with them on out of the ordinary topics which, at closer look, represent an opportunity for him to glimpse an alternative viewpoint on any subject.

5.4.2. **Outline of respondent’s s2c2 horizon**

The respondent s2c2 maintains that he had experienced inspiration at work. He equates inspiration with ‘an idea’ and ‘emotions related to this idea’. He asserts that inspiration at work is important for him and argues that if inspiration is not there people could ‘be replaced by robots’, and then metaphorically implies that ‘a person will feel like a small screw’ without inspiration at work. This stance implies that organisations are similar to the complex machinery, where a human element is distinguishable from equipment by having emotions and inspiration, in particular.

The respondent maintains that, in general, inspiration influences him ‘in a positive way’, and at work it is certainly ‘stimulating’. Stimulation can come from an idea, and a person ‘can positively influence ...colleagues’ by openly exhibiting his own excitement with this idea, otherwise ‘others will not believe, and they will not have reason for inspiration’. This indicates that it is not an idea itself that is inspirational, but the excitement with the idea, and exactly it affects others. Then, in relation to managing organisations the respondent claims that if ‘management doesn’t have inspiration, goals, vision, then organisation will not have it also’. He admits that it is possible for organisations to function without inspiration as there would ‘remain corporate culture, relations, etc.’, but ‘sooner or later employees will notice’ lack of inspiration and ‘then it just kills employees’ psychological attitude’ towards work. This view introduces inspiration as a basic influence or an emotion, which affects people. In this context, lack of inspiration is seen as a conventional but undesirable from respondent’s point of view organisational situation.

While attempting to explain how inspiration works for him, the respondent maintains that being inspired does not happen instantaneously as ‘nothing happens out of the sudden’. There is always a kind of preparation when one has ‘to come to this point in a certain way’ and then ‘bang!’ - it happens. On the other hand, attempting to generalise his view on how others can be inspired, he claims that for ‘any employee, independently of his position,’ in order to be
inspired the condition of not being worried ‘about his position in the organisation’ has be met. It potentially can be translated to having a job security in order to be inspired.

In the context of the different nature of different jobs, the respondent implies that it ‘will be very difficult to inspire’ certain categories of employees, 'because it is very simple work' they do. Secondly, if a person does not like the workplace, ‘it is difficult to inspire him’ and, in fact, ‘it depends on his colleagues, on his... line manager... how they inspire him’. This indicates that as a senior manager the respondent logically correlates a complexity of job with the need of inspiration, and by that he acknowledges significance of inspiration at workplace.

From the workplace level the respondent moves up to the organisational level in highlighting the value of inspiration as a unifying idea, which affects people in organisations. Especially at the start-ups, the common idea unites employees, ‘whatever the idea’ is. But then the ‘organisation grows... moving towards stable base ...and inspiration can disappear at that time’. In this context, leadership can make a difference. It 'is a kind of...art', and it works through the 'positive emotions towards' a leader. However, ‘there must be positive psychological attitude’ of the followers or ‘nothing will happen’. Therefore, on an organisational scale inspiration is seen as a unifying idea which amalgamates employees together.

When enquired about the necessity to have inspiration in organisational settings, the respondent insists that it is important ‘to push’ employees ‘out of the routine’ in order to break some ‘stereotypes’, and that ‘inspiration helps to do it’. However, ‘inspiration can be transformed into obsession’, which could paralyse an organisation. He provides an example of inspiration on the national scale in Latvia ‘in 1991, when here were barricades...organisation’s work was paralysed, because it was one huge inspiration, one common idea... events of this scale happen rarely’. However, a unifying idea has to be kept updated and obligatory implemented, otherwise if ‘the idea hadn’t been implemented for a long time... inspiration would be lost’. This signifies that irrespectively of how attractive a unifying idea is, it has to be implemented or updated and should progress to the next level, which implies that it has to signify a process rather a mental image.

While being fairly optimistic about inspiration the respondent holds that there is one ‘negative’ aspect of inspiration, that is, when ‘emotions overtake the situation’. In another
instance he also notes that 'the idea can be so exciting, that you lose feeling of reality'. but controlling and avoiding this should be a responsibility of the person rather than the company.

The main source of inspiration for the respondent is an 'idea' and 'an interesting point of view to things, work'. 'the approach, how to do the work'. The respondent can find inspiration in another person if there is 'a mutual understanding with him'. Additionally, the work related 'tasks...inspire', but the respondent 'can't formulate why' and how it works. Possibly, as 'inspiration is related to a little stress, but positive stress', it raises a level of attentiveness of the respondent.

**Researcher's comments**

This respondent notably attempts to portray inspiration as a necessity and an integral part of an individual and an organisation. In both contexts inspiration is associated not just with an idea, but with emotions or excitement related to this idea. This indicates that inspiration is an emotion itself, or a basic influence, which distinguishes people from other organisational resources. It appears that working without inspiration is possible but not very engaging, especially on a larger scale of organisational contexts where inspiration is seen as a unifying idea. In order for an inspirational idea to work, job security has to be ensured for each employee.

To stay inspired, having a unifying idea is not sufficient for a long time as excitement related to it will be lost. As a recipe for its longevity, an idea has to be seen as an active process of implementation and as an extension to another level. One of the key factors ensuring the idea's permanence is leadership, which is seen as an art and can be inspirational if leaders could infuse or evoke positive emotions in the followers.

In the context of job complexity, inspiration appears to be necessary for multifaceted jobs, but not for the simple ones. Furthermore, inspiring people in simple jobs would be even a difficult task, as a little excitement is possible there.

**5.4.3. Outline of respondent's s2m1 horizon**

The respondent s2m1 maintains that he professionally grew from an engineer and became a manager, but he 'still feel like an engineer' when it comes to inspiration, implying that he lacks inspiration in his new status. He still keeps a locker with some 'electronics with failure'
at his workplace and from time to time he spends hours trying to fix it when he feels up to doing it. For him this is the best way to obtain inspiration on a personal scale.

The respondent is sure that he had experienced inspiration at work. While trying to describe it, he rationalises it as an ‘excitement’, or a feeling when he becomes ‘excited about that idea’. But it is rather his desire associated with the idea or need ‘to research it’, that inspires, but not an idea itself. Additionally, the respondent relates inspiration in the past to the necessity to learn something new, which appears to fade with accumulating experience.

Challenges associated with his work like reaching the ‘certain conclusions’, developing a ‘personal opinion’ on any job-related matter or anything of such kind on a larger scale are particularly inspiring for him. According to the respondent, having more ‘responsibility’ could be inspiring as well. He would enjoy to be given ‘rights to do something independently’ to a bigger scale. He admits he would not mind to switch to ‘another job, which is more inspirational’, and where he ‘can do more’ using his own initiative. ‘Inspirational’ stands here for more responsibility and independent problem-solving. It is quite striking that the respondent relates these aspects of a managerial position to inspiration, as at the same time he appeared to be filled with nostalgia about his previous engineer job referred as a very inspirational. The respondent suggests that a ‘promotion opportunity in this organisation’, if existed, would stimulate his inspiration as it would offer new challenges and motivate him ‘to learn more’.

The respondent relates inspiration to mood and believes his ‘work performance will be higher’ when he is ‘in a better mood’ and inspired. Inspiration apparently cannot distract him from his work, but does just the opposite. It gives the respondent a kind of focus as it pushes him towards ‘implementation’ and helps to see through any initiative, from an initiation until it is ‘finished and this is inspiration’. It looks as by applying his expertise the respondent feels inspired by his own power of experience.

He associates motivation with something ‘material’ and believes that ‘there is no inspiration if there is no motivation at all... there is certain relation’. As an example he mentions that everyone with ‘a micro salary’ can not be inspired. He rhetorically exclaims: ‘what kind of inspiration he could have? Nothing’. There is a place for inspiration at work only if employees are paid ‘sufficient’ enough ‘that they shouldn’t think how they will pay’ their bills ‘or what to eat’. If not paid adequately, employees would ‘think all the time about’ their
'needs' and their work would suffer respectively. This view puts motivation as the basis for inspiration to transpire.

According to the respondent, there 'can't be a state when organisation makes a progress, earns more money, develops because of inspiration'. 'Everything should work also without inspiration' and inspiration in organisation 'is a kind of add-on' only. He personally could work in an organisation without inspiration, but then more efforts will be need to achieve the same outcomes.

The respondent has a strong opinion that if he is 'stressed, it is difficult' for him 'to get inspired'. On the other hand, if he is inspired 'then it is difficult to get stressed'. He is not certain of how it works, but is strongly convinced though that it is 'more difficult for sure' to get stressed when inspired as it makes him feel 'energetically strong' to resist stress.

**Researcher's comments**

This respondent continuously compares his previous inspiring work experience as an engineer with his current managerial post lacking inspiration. The former engineer jobs are associated by him with inspiration due to the excitement and learning opportunities they had provided. The process of researching while learning is inspirational because of the possibility to discover something of interest that is new. His managerial position, on the other hand, lacks responsibility, independent decision making, or challenges, which are strongly associated with inspiration that comes with a heightened mood and sharpened focus.

It appears that the relationship between motivation and inspiration is clear for the respondent. Motivation is a compulsory basis for inspiration to flourish. That is, necessary without adequate pay it would be almost impossible to inspire employees and subsequently their performance would diminish sharply.

Similarly, the relationship between stress and inspiration is quite unambiguous for the respondent because inspiration gives energy and thus it increases immunity to stress.

**5.4.4. Outline of respondent's s2m2 horizon**

The respondent s2m2 finds it difficult to give a definition of inspiration. Using comparison, he states that 'there is nothing similar to' inspiration and that inspiration makes work in general 'more pleasant'. On the contrary, he is very clear about the meaning of motivation.
which ‘is money’ According to the respondent, ‘motivation is about money and other incentives, but inspiration... is inspiration’.

The respondent associates inspiration with ‘something new’ and maintains that inspiration comes when there is ‘something what is really liked’. He shares that if at work there is ‘the routine job everyday, it may become tiresome or boring’, and inspiration in this context ‘is something new’ and ‘anything new would delight’ him. Therefore, he likes ‘new tasks’, they inspire him, but to sustain this inspiration these tasks should be done at once, otherwise ‘inspiration disappears’.

The respondent believes that inspiration is needed at work, mainly because it would ‘enable people to do their job better’. Furthermore, even if his feeling of security at work is not strong enough, inspiration would make him feel ‘more secure’.

The respondent emphasises that for him it is ‘difficult to imagine’ job without inspiration, but he believes that if the circumstances would put him in a position of working in such conditions, he ‘could do it for half a year, but not more’. On the other hand, the respondent notes that without a proper salary there is no ground for his inspiration. If he would have been offered a job with much higher salary but no prospect of having inspiration there, he admits he would accept this job attempting then to look for inspiration outside his work.

According to the respondent, when he is inspired, his ‘attitude’ towards his colleagues changes in a way that he finds it easier ‘to talk’ to and ‘to approach others’.

When it comes to duration of his inspiration, the respondent recalls that inspiration could last ‘one hour, a couple of hours... half a day’. The duration differs depending on whether the cause of inspiration is ‘the problem’ or ‘the place’.

Researcher’s comments

This respondent is sure that in general there is nothing similar to inspiration, but its main manifestation is related to the notion of novelty or variety of the tasks to be done at work. This makes anything perceptually different from daily routine inspirational. Any new task or challenge at work will be inspirational until it is dealt with, implying that its inspirational influence is quite short-lived.
Inspiration at work is vouched for because of its propensity to enable people to work better. Motivation alone can not provide that. In essence, inspiration makes work more delightful; that is, it changes the quality of work. In relation to making a choice of job and such motivational factor as salary, the respondent gives preference to salary, but admits that he would be looking for inspiration elsewhere to compensate its absence at work.

5.4.5. Outline of respondent’s s2t1 horizon

The respondent s2t1 maintains that although he certainly had experienced inspiration in his life, he still is not able to explain what inspiration is. He asserts that inspiration can be ‘anything that has some sort of motivation to go on with what you do and it’s related to the work in general’. Meanwhile, he easily provides an example of his most recent momentous inspiration when he ‘participated in the national championship in the mountain hiking’. In relation to work, he relates inspiration to his ability to generate technical solutions or to ‘make it work’ and, consequently, to ‘make people’s work better’. He stresses out that he always learns at work and through work, and this is inspiring, but on a grand scale, being helpful to his colleagues is his inspiration at work.

Attempting to describe inspiration while comparing it with anything else, the respondent finds it difficult in the beginning. Taking a moment of reflection, he compares inspiration with ‘a kind of engine that drives’ him to achieve the planned, but considering inspiration more practically, he finds it related to ‘the possibility to create something new’, or, ‘to some degree’, to creativity. He asserts that inspiration and creativity are different, but in some ways quite similar, and ‘it is difficult to distinguish which is a result of the other’ and ‘they go hand by hand’. In this context, inspiration refers to a ‘possibility’, and the ‘ability to create something, even theoretical, is inspiring’.

The respondent discerns sources of inspiration to internal and external ones. For internal ones, he refers to his ‘desire to make things work better’, but the external sources he attributes to people’s ‘understanding’ that ‘what it is there is not as good as it might be’. It indicates a certain desire for empathy as a main external source of inspiration. It also can be seen in his assessment of his job: ‘sometimes it is very and sometimes it is not’ inspiring at all. He reflectively acknowledges that such change in perception of the job is, in fact, related to the ‘attitude of other people’, who are not always appreciative of his efforts.
The respondent describes himself as a person, who "can't stand ...lack of inspiration" and hence he maintains that inspiration is needed at work because without it work 'is possible' but 'not too interesting'. This is a reason for him to appreciate inspiration at his workplace, as 'work is not the place where you come from 8 to 5'. He asserts that he needs 'more inspiration than motivation'. Therefore, he is proactive in relation to seeking inspiration and tries 'to do different things' to avoid 'some routine' at work.

The respondent suggests that usually people get prevented from being inspired because of their own 'personal attitude' or the 'attitude of other people' that might affect them, or due to some unpleasant events or 'problems in personal life'. He believes everybody can make himself 'being interested in something that inspires' him particularly 'at least in a short term', and there is no external force that could prevent it. This signifies a state of openness to inspiration as a main condition for getting it.

The respondent maintains that he appreciates changes, especially 'when they go towards some other positive direction', but 'in general any changes are good'. He also shares his observation that people usually do not appreciate anything new because they 'don't want to learn something new, they don't want to change anything'.

**Researcher's commentary**

Notably, the respondent attempts to explain such an ambiguous notion as inspiration by using a well established concept of motivation. It signifies a need for inspiration to be more plainly defined in general. By way of comparison, inspiration metaphorically is described as an engine that drives the respondent's life. In more general way, inspiration represents a possibility to create something new and hence resembles creativity, but still there are certain distinguishing differences between them.

Learning and a propensity to learn are identified as a way to reach or create anything new and therefore are closely associated with inspiration. In similar vein, reluctance to learn leads to dislike of inevitability of changes in life and work and prevents people from being inspired. It appears that people lock themselves in their routine and are not willing to be open to inspiration that can be seen as a result of a certain attitude or self-preservation.
5.4.6. **Outline of respondent’s s2t2 horizon**

The respondent s2t2 maintains that it is difficult to tell what inspiration is, as ‘nobody can answer’ this question. She proceeds rhetorically: ‘what is love, what is happiness’. It is understood but unspoken. However, referring to her past experiences, she believes that when inspired, she tends to do everything ‘better’, enjoys the process of doing and does not ‘care how others will evaluate it’.

The respondent embraces inspiration when she is ‘in a good mood’. On the other hand, she likes to inspire others, especially those people in a bad mood. In her daily job she feels constrained at her ‘level’ as ‘there is nobody, whom’ she could ‘influence’. But at her evening job she likes to ‘inspire people very much’. Thus, it appears that she attributes her positive reception of inspiring others to a certain positive influence. When enquired about such discrepancy in her attitude at these two jobs, she reflectively concludes that in her evening job she is allowed to take initiative and ‘nobody orders or asks’ her what ‘to do’ and how ‘to do it’, therefore, she feels free to ‘decide it’, and this is inspiring.

She maintains that ‘psychologically’ inspiration is a ‘very intense state’ for her, which also makes her energetic, but sometimes this ‘energy is not creative, but destructive’. For instance, ‘it also can destroy’ her work and, therefore, it puts her under a risk to be ‘burned out’, as when inspired she tends ‘to speed up things’. For that reason she welcomes the state of inspiration only for a short time and is cautious of it, because she just starts ‘living in a kind of other reality’ when inspired. However, in most cases the respondent finds it difficult to account for an average duration of inspiration, suggesting that ‘if it is related to work, it lasts as long as’ the work task prolongs.

According to the respondent, she consciously is looking for the ‘new ideas’, ‘new areas’, ‘new knowledge’, and ‘new information’ and, while engaged into those new endeavours, she usually meets ‘interesting people’ and gets ‘inspired from these contacts’. As a distinctive example, she mentions her former manager, referring to him as the ‘boss’ and the ‘leader’ who was inspirational for her at work. After he had left the company this source of inspiration was gone as although she had got a new manager, ‘nobody can appoint a leader’ for her.

The respondent stresses out that for her personally, getting a ‘normal salary’ is a prerequisite of inspiration, that is, it ‘enables inspiration to appear’. She mentions her previous experience of working with ‘no inspiration, only motivation’, admitting that ‘without this motivation’ she
'would resign immediately'. In her current position she had been inspired in the past, but now there 'is nothing that inspires' her there. She stays with her current employer only because she is 'motivated by security', which is important for her.

The respondent considers that inspiration and stress could be related as, when she is 'inspired, there is a little bit of adrenaline in' her, and the same is happening when she is stressed. However, she is not sure that 'stress can cause inspiration'. When she is inspired she may 'become a bit despotic' and, therefore, less susceptible to stress.

**Researcher's commentary**

It is difficult for the respondent to define inspiration, even though she claims inspiring others in her line of work. This desire to inspire is closely related to the notion of being able to influence others positively and is allied to a clearly articulated need of independent decision making. This draws a parallel between inspiration and freedom, which the respondent is aware of, and thus, endeavours to hold back, as she reminds herself that she is just a line employee and is not free to exercise that freedom.

Inspiration, while making her feel better, represents a certain danger, as the respondent feels so energetic that this energy can be destructive in the aspects of relationships with others or in relation to the outcomes of her work. Moreover, those inspired states may result into formation of another reality without the proper feeling of time, responsibilities and accountability.

Having the proper salary is considered to be a prerequisite for inspiration and is equated to the motivation for work. If this condition is met than inspiration could take place in her work, either stimulated by a leader or by another sources, because it is not always a case that there is a leader at work, as leader can not be appointed.

**5.5. Views on inspiration at research site 3**

This section presents the horizons of the respondents from the research site 3. The overview of this research site's business (Section 4.3.4) and the respondents' profiles (Section 4.5.3) are given in Chapter 4.

Each horizon is outlined as a succinct narrative, unfolded in paragraphs according to the presentation conventions outlined in Section 5.1 and supplemented with the researcher's
commentary on what had been discussed in relation to the each respondent’s view on inspiration at work.

5.5.1. **Outline of respondent’s s3c1 horizon**

The full transcript of the interview with the respondent s3c1 is located in Appendix 8.5.

The respondent s3c1 appears to have a strong view on inspiration. He associates it with ‘energy’, which can be applied to ‘the things you like’ and as a result could inspire others. For him inspiration is about the future and, more specifically, about a decision making for the future. He draws a parallel between dedication and inspiration, that is, ‘complete focus’, which could result in ‘a risk of hurting others’. In general, as the respondent presumes, ‘inspiration itself is positive, but there are a few risks’ of neglecting opinions of the colleagues while being inspired.

The respondent displays the understanding of a clear distinction between motivation and inspiration. For him motivation ‘can be pushed… via instrumental HR tools’. It ‘can also come from fear. It is possible’. Inspiration, in contrast, ‘is much harder incentify’ and it can not be ‘bought’, as there is a point ‘where money is not the most critical worth to offer’. The respondent insists that inspiration cannot be ‘forced’ or ‘ordered’ and it ‘is pretty much bound to the freedom that persons are willing to’ accept as a norm. For him inspiration is related to personal values which should not be ‘compromised’, as it would take ‘away inspiration from what you are doing’.

The respondent asserts that on the organisational level inspiration is about ‘giving choice’ to employees to ‘make their contribution to success’ at all levels. He maintains that ‘on lower level of organisation it is necessary to have this inspiration over there’ by keeping ‘an open door’ or giving ‘the possibility to talk’. He believes that organised in such a way everyone’s ‘contribution’ to an organisation would lead towards ‘continuous improvement’ and work as ‘a sort of self-inspiring mechanism’. The respondent prescribes the similar approach, which is maintaining an openness and ‘transparency’, for an ‘inspirational leader’, particularly, in decision making.

The respondent indicates that for him inspiration comes from ‘financial or business and economic understanding’, and from ‘pushing’ himself beyond the frontiers of the industry. He states: ‘as soon as I am done this in theory in this company or industry... I probably will find
another industry’. He closely associates himself with his employer and maintains that they are ‘a challenger in this market, which is...definitely inspirational’. For the respondent this positional power combined with personal knowledge and expertise serves as a ‘self-inspiration’. He claims pushing ‘the edge most of the times, which gives ...inspiration’ as well.

The respondent maintains that inspiration usually lasts ‘two or three’ or ‘several months or so’, or ‘at least for a few weeks’ and disappears when the ‘push work’ or ‘the flow’ of routine work begins. In general, for him ‘inspiration is longer lasting’ than motivation.

The respondent links stress at work with absence of confidence and, as a result, absence of inspiration. He maintains that ‘stress and inspiration don’t come at the same time’ and ‘stress and self-confidence don’t come together’. But, he infers that anyone needs ‘a self-confidence to be inspired’. According to the respondent, stress is a detachment from the reality and is a ‘nasty dream’. People usually need help to get back to reality to regain their confidence.

The respondent expands that stress ‘is a sort of uncertainty ...of fear’. He generalises that ‘most of HR tools are based on punishment’. He goes even further asserting that ‘bonus schemes are based more on punishment rather than on rewarding’. Another factor, contributing to stress, is reorganisation. It is usually followed by cost-cutting and, as the respondent perceives, ‘nobody gets inspired if there is a sort of reorganization in the company’.

The respondent speaks of performance as of contribution of everyone within an organisation supplemented by inspiration. He explains that ‘all organisations benefit from contributions from everybody’ and for them focusing ‘on the operations and inspiration’ would provide results ‘automatically’, where ‘performance is a result’ in effect.

People may choose not to be inspired, if they ‘just working around...and consciously probably decided not to put their best energy in there’ in the working process. The respondent reinforces that ‘energy’ or a ‘level of energy’ is related to inspiration. If applying own efforts to ‘the things you like’ is followed by appearing of inspiration that would give more energy in turn.

The respondent believes that ‘freedom’ and ‘transparency’ in the context of ‘clarity on what you can do and what you can’t do’ are essential to foster inspiration at work. The ‘rules’, on
the other hand, make employees feel that ‘they are allowed’ or permitted to do their work. But the respondent implies that this feeling of permission would diminish inspiration as ‘if they are allowed, they can’t be inspired’.

**Researcher’s commentary**

Notably, the respondent has a very clear view on inspiration in personal life and its engendering at work. On a personal scale, inspiration is associated with energy, combined with power of knowledge, resulting in control over the own future, where the control has rather to be seen as a particular achievement of set goals. Being able to master inspiration in his own life, the respondent is quite confident of how to initiate and support it in his or any other organisation.

The factors fostering and preventing inspiration at work are clearly rationalised and allegedly followed by the respondent. However, he is not pushing everyone in his company to be inspired, but only helping to get inspiration to those who had chosen this way. One of the key factors which leads to shortage of inspiration is stress, which essentially is associated with uncertainty, fear and loss of confidence similarly to the outcomes of typical people management tools, such as motivation.

### 5.5.2. Outline of respondent’s s3c2 horizon

For the respondent s3c2 being inspired is about ‘feeling good’. On the other hand, he metaphorically maintains that ‘inspiration is more or less... is a fuel on which engine is going’. He ‘can’t imagine’ life without inspiration, he likes ‘to be inspired’ and illustrates it by referring to an example of ‘this afternoon... meeting’ where he was seeking to ‘pick up’ inspiration in ‘new thinking ... new ideas’ of other ‘HR directors as presenters’.

Speaking about sources of inspiration, the respondent mentions a variety of things, from ‘just walking on the shore or on the beach and looking at people’, ‘art’, ‘music’, to ‘many other things’. As a rule, usually ‘people are very inspirational’. In relation to work he is inspired by his own ‘competence’ and his ‘constant drive to move forward, the constant flow of newer thinking, newer concepts’. He accentuates it by saying: it ‘is really inspiring for me’ that ‘we are part of that future, we are shaping the future... in telecom organisation’. In general, he maintains that he is ‘open for inspiration’, needs it and is looking for it ‘deliberately’.
The respondent claims that his company inspires him by giving ‘enormous opportunity’ to him and ‘to many other people to achieve personal growth’ and ‘become a better person’. In his opinion, it is achieved by maintaining a ‘very open communication culture’. He himself facilitates ‘exceptional open communication’ always ‘providing feedback to people’ on what ‘they have to change in order to survive in that industry’ of telecommunication, and he believes ‘that this is very inspirational for people’. However, the fact that he is one of the top managers of the company probably influences the employees’ reaction on his feedback.

The respondent maintains that ‘T-Mobile is very inspirational environment’ and when it comes to ‘people’ anyone ‘will find a lot of inspiration in this organisation’. He personally endeavours to ‘make sure that we are perceived differently comparing to competition’. He also believes that ‘people... here are inspired by that creative environment they are working in’ and because they have ‘more or less freedom to explore new ways of working’. Nonetheless, he is quite ambiguous about what constitutes this inspirational and creative environment and how it is formed, unless that freedom refers to autonomy of some kind which is granted for employees.

The respondent thinks that he may not be inspired ‘by working in a kind of massive big organisation’ with ‘a lot of bureaucracy’. He sees ‘environment, where’ one ‘can be creative’ and where there is ‘some kind of space, freedom’ as one of the conditions to be inspired. In his position he is monitoring that environment to make sure that ‘people... are also very inspired’ at work there. At the same time, the respondent speaks about ‘sharing power’ and hiring subordinates and other personnel who are ‘successful... more knowledgeable... more aggressive or more ambitious... with better educational background’. He adds that such approach has ‘a danger in it, because... one day they can... push you away’. These people usually ‘have some kind of entrepreneurial way of working... they are also self-starters. they are willing to explore new areas for themselves and for the organisation’ and this is how his organisation goes about hiring inspirational kind of people without including inspiration in the ‘job profiles’.

The respondent maintains that inspiration may have a negative effect in organisations, as it might lead ‘to a wrong target... it might endanger whole organisation’. He refers to the generic ‘examples of big leaders who get inspired, but were not able to link their inspiration and the ideas they got from their inspiration into the common objectives’ and rhetorically adds that ‘you have to have a right inspiration’ to follow.
According to the respondent, people in 'a senior management position', like him, less care about themselves more ‘taking care for others’. He refers to it as a kind of ‘altruism’ and maintains that in his position, as a head of human resources department, his ‘role is also transferred from purely managing to some kind of culturing role’. At the same time, his employees ‘appreciate tremendous accountability’ letting him to believe that he is an ‘inspirational factor’ in the organisation.

The respondent believes that because he had ‘rationalised a lot of fears’ he hence ‘become more inspirational’ for himself and others. He infers that fear ‘forms and transforms that thinking about life and how you do stand in life’. Therefore, realising fears would make it easier for anybody ‘to become inspirational...for others’ letting ‘that inspiration flow’ inside.

**Researcher’s commentary**

The respondent is fairly metaphorical in defining inspiration as a fuel of his engine. Then, in connection to the inspirational environment of his organisation, he refers to the freedom of communication and exploration of different ways of working as the fostering conditions of inspiration, frequently facilitated also by him. Another aspect of making his company inspirational is to hire people who are susceptible to and appreciative of inspiration. It is achieved by employing people who are self-starters and practise an entrepreneurial way of working. This again aligns inspiration with freedom and generating new ideas.

According to the respondent, rationalising one’s own fears is the essential prerequisite towards being more inspirational to oneself and others. He denies that his demands for inspiration are linked to his position of a top manager in the company, and claims to be altruistic in his endeavours to help people to work differently, by implication not following stereotypes of paid work.

### 5.5.3. Outline of respondent’s s3c3 horizon

For the respondent s3c3 inspiration ‘is a way to create positive energy’, ‘a sort of ... information’ or ‘a source that helps to change’ one’s ‘insights’. Then speaking metaphorically, he compares inspiration with ‘putting gasoline in your car’ and describes it as something ‘like an additional push’, which ‘helps you to live’. The respondent asserts that people should ‘make use of inspiration’ on the personal level, as ‘it helps...to become another or a better person’. He implies that the same use of inspiration also is ‘possible for the
organisations'. Inspiration is a 'source of finding all these ideas of doing things in a different way' or also a source of 'innovation'.

The respondent maintains that 'inspiration can come from everywhere'. He associates inspiration 'with self-reflection', which can be supported or 'helped by other means', such as 'books... speeches... pictures, it can be the way building is built'. Also 'people inspire each other'. In the organisational context, the sources of inspiration are 'related to process... to people'. Blending a 'good mixture' of people or rather 'personalities' in an organisation is inspirational, because these people will be 'inspired by each other'. On a more practical scale, also a room's setting 'helps' the respondent 'to be open to inspiration' at work.

The respondent reflects that motivation and inspiration are different. Inspiration 'comes from external to internal'. For him, inspiration 'works in sense that it clicks' in his mind, initiates 'thinking about' something and creates an intention or even a push 'to do something'. Motivation, on the other hand, 'starts from the person himself'. Inspiration 'is a tool for motivation' in a sense that 'it can be used for motivation'.

The respondent suggests that inspiration 'is a part of a culture of organisation' presuming that there are inspiring and inspired people in it. This organisation, or rather people, is 'a customer-driven organisation' and a market driven one, and people are everywhere 'in that process' here. The respondent believes that 'inspiration results in energy'. He claims that in terms of time spent at work, 'long hours or short hours it doesn't matter'. Inspiration 'links' him 'to energy' and then the 'higher' is his 'energy, the higher the quality of the time' at work. He mentions that his colleagues comment about him being so energetic, and he believes it is because he is 'more open to inspiration at all times than others'.

The respondent suggests that there is a direct relation between inspiration and 'performance' at work. If 'somebody is not inspired', then that person's work 'results will be like' performing 'not in a good mood', in other words, 'below average'.

Although the respondent perceives inspiration in general in a positive way, as 'positive energy', 'positive mood', 'positive experience', or 'positive behaviour', he asserts that it has to be treated with care. When inspired the respondent is 'very loaded and that is also danger for other people', because he may perceive others as an obstacle if they would not share his inspiration. On the other hand, he generalises that there 'are people who have a lot of
Inspiration’, but they ‘are not able to bring it to other people’ and this potentially may create communication and interpersonal problems.

**Researcher’s commentary**

This respondent demonstrates highly developed understanding of inspiration and even of its use in organisational settings. Inspiration is referred to mainly as a way of creating positive energy, which in turn can be applied where needed. It appears that the respondent is quite concerned with the use of inspiration because he is one of the chief marketers of the company, and inspiration represents a source of new ideas or innovation for him.

Interestingly, inspiration is perceived as being a purely positive, but the respondent indicates that it could take him over and may lead to negative consequences in the context of relationships with others. It is especially significant as the same people can be also a source of inspiration for him.

Motivation and inspiration are clearly delineated for the respondent in terms of directions of influence on him. Inspiration mainly comes from the outside world and triggers something in him that stimulates his alertness, while motivation is clearly related to the internal visualisations or reasoning. As inspiration carries a highly reflective disposition for him, it can be used as another motivational incentive for work.

5.5.4. **Outline of respondent’s s3c4 horizon**

The respondent s3c4 maintains that ‘inspiration also is quite near the energy’. He thinks that ‘inspiration has to do with the work and also the industry’, and in his opinion the ‘telecom industry’ ‘can inspire people’ by having from time to time a ‘technology push’.

The respondent believes that being inspired depends on many factors. Among them he names ‘education’ and ‘industry’. For him as a senior manager, it is important to have ‘a possibility to create environment’ which would give employees ‘energy’, and ‘energy is quite near to inspiration’.

The respondent mentions that as he is on the ‘older stage’ of his life and career, it ‘is inspiring’ for him to work ‘in organization that is growing’ and ‘technology’ driven. His ‘workplace’ as such ‘has a lot of emphasis on inspiring’ him. He also is ‘proud to work for’ his employer as it is ‘the company with passion ... a challenger in the market’ The employer
has a vision to ‘become a highly regarded service company... it is an ambition, it is inspiration’ for the respondent.

The respondent sees a difference between motivation and inspiration. He refers to motivation by giving an example of people, who are doing work they don’t like, ‘but they do it... because they get the certain income...’ and ‘money is also one of the motivators’. Inspiration comes together with motivation ‘in a certain environment... that gives’ an energy and appears to be ‘the extra layer on top of motivation’. He has this extra layer at his work as his organisation is an ‘inspirational environment’, where even customers could ‘feel this kind of inspiration’. The respondent maintains that in his organisation ‘there also are people who are sitting here only for... let’s say... money’ and there are others, ‘who are inspired’. Generally he finds that ‘it is easier’ to motivate ‘people who are sitting there for the money’.

The respondent maintains that inspiration has to be ‘in the organisation because it is one of most important things to energise people’, and adds that ‘there are certain parts where you need the inspiration... In all the departments you don’t need it’. He particularly mentions ‘sales’ department as the one, where inspiration is bound to be present. On the other hand, he weights up that ‘from organisational prospective... everybody needs to have a certain level of inspiration, otherwise’ he would die. Then, speaking about his current employer, the respondent admits that it gives him ‘a positive feeling’, which he associates with inspiration, because ‘T-Mobile is a challenger in the market... the company with this passion... with... let’s say, a certain feeling’.

The respondent indicates that in his view inspiration ‘is a part of a leadership’. He maintains that leaders who are in a managerial role in the company ‘need to give also a certain freedom... possibility of grow’ to their followers or subordinates ‘and that gives that inspiration to do things’ to all of them. He reports that he tries to inspire his team in many ‘different ways’, but does not provide any particular detail, just mentioning that he approaches ‘them on a different wave’. He also allows the possibility that he could ‘approach people in a wrong way... and then people will not be inspired and will not be motivated’.

The respondent asserts that ‘as organisation or as manager’ one ‘can put some inspirational elements in a job’, but there always would be people who cannot be inspired, and ‘it will never work, because it has to be a part of a certain person’. 
**Researcher’s commentary**

This respondent, while acknowledging the connection of inspiration to energy, still differentiates them. He is adamant that inspiration could energise him and also others and thus it has to be in a certain way associated with energy. It implies that inspiration is originated internally, and then, when it is initiated, it results into energy. Such factors as education and a technology-driven nature of the telecom industry are particularly powerful in influencing the respondent’s internal propensity to be inspired.

While motivation is compellingly related to money and other tangible benefits, inspiration is seen as a layer on the top of motivation, which is fairly broad and includes variety of potential triggers, such as ambitions, workplace environment and others. Therefore, inspiring employees depends on personalised objectives and is quite a complicated process with variable success. According to the respondent, people differ in the degree or levels of inspiration they require for work.

**5.5.5. Outline of respondent’s s3m1 horizon**

The respondent s3m1 maintains that inspiration is ‘something that you get from a vision of what you have on a market’ and he associates it with an ‘internal energy source that keeps’ him going. According to the respondent, having ‘a goal for future’ is his way to inspire others.

For the respondent, ‘inspiration comes first, and motivation comes second’. He compares his company with a ship and mentions that motivation ‘is to make sure that people just stay on the boat and don’t jump out from the ship’. For the respondent, inspiration is related to future goals. Therefore, he maintains that ‘having the goal that people also believe’ would make them having less ‘scepticism’; then also motivating them would be easier, as ‘motivating much more sceptical people is more complex’.

The respondent maintains that while his position within the organisation is ‘motivating’, his inspiration comes from understanding a direction or a ‘vision where to go’, the vision he can ‘believe’ in. It would help him to generate something ‘innovative’ such as ‘a new product launch’ or ‘a new price plan’ and would give a feeling of ‘doing the right things’.

The respondent suggests a few sources of his energy, which he equates to inspiration at work. Those include ‘colleagues, having interesting discussions... sharing thoughts’, which all could be named as ‘a very good source of energy’. In his opinion, susceptibility to inspiration
depends on the personal traits such as an 'introvert or extrovert' orientation. At the same time, he mentions that inspiration ‘comes from... really having... a goal for future’ and a tendency ‘to work hard...’.

The respondent reflects that inspiration ‘is something that is good for an organisation’ as it unites the company by ‘a common goal where everybody goes for’. He adds that ‘inspired people are more productive doing their job than people that are not inspired’ and explains that, when inspired, ‘it also makes those - not nice things to do - much easier to cope with’.

The respondent refers to the recent unusual strategic move of his company, which was ‘very inspiring’ for everyone. Its successful implementation had made the employees ‘getting on the easy ride mode’, which, in fact, ‘could be dangerous’ and, therefore, does not seem inspiring for him. The other perceived danger of losing inspiration is in ‘becoming a part of very large organisation’ as it gets ‘more and more formalised, more and more bureaucratic’. According to the respondent it is ‘not inspiring... to work for the bigger company’.

The respondent names weak ‘communication’, lack of ‘big meetings... where people are informed about how the company is doing, what’s going well, what’s not going well’ as ‘one of the problems’ that prevents people from being inspired at work. His company, however, keeps open many communication channels and ‘people are informed about how the company is doing’, especially, when it comes to success ‘to keep us inspired’.

The respondent states that he cannot work without inspiration and asserts that for him inspiration at work is ‘very important’. Moreover, if his boss ‘wouldn’t inspire’ him ‘personally, besides the fact that the company wouldn’t’ inspire him, he ‘would switch’ his job. The respondent associates inspiration with constant realisation that he and his organisation are ‘working for the same goal... that right goal...it’s very important’. The respondent does not comment on duration of inspiration, but mentions that he is usually fully aware of when it has gone or when he has ‘missed this spark’ or ‘when that spark would be gone’. Then he ‘would be searching’ for the next spark.

Researcher's commentary

The respondent is fairly practical in his conceptions of inspiration deriving from a vision or future goals and complimented by motivational incentives. Therefore, inspiration can be seen
as a pathfinder, which makes motivating people easier. At the same time, inspiration is a source of inventiveness for this respondent, who claims to be fairly motivated by his job.

Inspiration is also useful in dealing with routine tasks and stimulating for being more productive in general. However, when an organisation grows this routine expands, and hence it gets harder to be inspired. Communication is another problem, which prevents people from being inspired as it may block seeing a conveyed vision.

In his current position as a line manager, the respondent expects to be inspired at work by his company and his boss. Being inspired is essential for him, even up to considering another job, if the current one lacks of inspiration.

5.5.6. Outline of respondent’s s3m2 horizon

The respondent s3m2 refers to himself as a ‘rather rational’ person. He believes it is not worth breaking the rules, even if they are ‘too crazy to be true’, maintaining also that, as it comes to T-Mobile, ‘one of core values of this company’ is ‘to stick to the rules’. On this basis he asserts that for him ‘inspiration is a motivation’ and these two factors ‘compliment each other’. The respondent believes the field of inspiration’s use is ‘wider than just work’ and its presence extends to the family, which also induces him ‘to get better on things’.

Reflectively considering work without inspiration, the respondent generalises ‘that people without inspiration... they can do work for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 years, but when the moment comes... they are asking themselves... why am I doing that... why am I here?’ The respondent suggests that if he was ‘not inspired by the products’ or ‘the services’ they ‘as a company deliver’, he would ‘become less motivated, inspired’ and finally would be looking for another job with more challenges or even ‘would stay home’. For him personally inspiration in this context adds an extra weight to the reason for staying with this particular employer or, in other words, reconfirms the ‘importance of this work’ he is doing, appearing, thus, as a kind of motivational tool. He also admits it is easier to inspire and motivate younger colleagues rather than those with 10-15 years of the working experience.

While identifying his sources of inspiration, the respondent refers to his company suggesting that a ‘success is something that inspires’ and enables him to ‘feel happy’. He also feels ‘very much inspired by the pragmatic approach’ of his ‘boss’, and by his colleagues and the way they work together, especially by ‘the way they think ...set ...and meet...goals’.

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The respondent admits that besides achievements, people, or, more exactly, their ideas, a mistake or 'a failure ...can be inspirational as well', but 'first will be disappointment' that comes out of this experience, and only when it had been realised and learned 'what went wrong', then 'for the next time' it will be inspirational to use this experience and to 'see it working'. In addition, the chance to 'really work independently' and 'get a lot of freedom' at work inspires the respondent.

In relation to his current employer, he maintains that not everybody is inspired at work there, but suggests that these employees 'may have inspiration at home or they may have other things that inspire them'. He thinks 'that everybody must have something that inspires him', in private life or at work.

The respondent considers that it is possible to inspire people by example. Purportedly, some of his colleagues really 'feel inspired by the way' he behaves. With respect to the growth versus cost saving rhetoric, the respondent states that 'the growth is inspirational thing ...not the saving' money.

The respondent can not give a definition of inspiration but claims he can 'feel a lot of energy' and 'become more energised' or 'able to do more' and 'more efficiently' when inspired. He generalises it to the statement that 'your battery is charged' when inspired, hence, 'it is positive to have inspiration'. At the same time, the respondent implies that he controls his inspiration at work in order to avoid it because his 'normal life' would suffer if too much time and attention were paid to his job duties, but he works 'to live and not another way around'.

The respondent acknowledges that inspiration for him lasts while he is investigating another 'idea', which has given him an inspirational thrust. This time may vary from one hour up to one day and not longer, as he is able to master his time and hence controls inspiration. But in general inspiration does not continue for a long time 'because of the nature of the work' he does.

The respondent believes that despite his 'rational' nature and the pedantic approach towards work he needs inspiration for his work. As he mentions, his job is about the rules, and 'general accountancy rules' in particular, and 'one of core values of this company' is 'to stick to the rules'. This respondent perceives an impact of his inspiration at work as having 'a lot of
energy’ or becoming ‘more energised’ and ‘able to do more in this time, to do more efficient’ his daily tasks, which mainly is about doing a very responsible and precise but still the routine work of an accountant.

The respondent is thoughtful about inspiration at work and confirms that for organisations ‘it is positive to have inspiration’. He believes that when an employee is inspired or ‘fully charged’, he wants ‘to make the best out’ of it not only for himself, ‘but also for the people that’ he works with. He also mentions that this could have a positive implication for the business, because customers feel if the company is ‘inspirational’ or ‘fully energised’.

**Researcher’s commentary**

The respondent introduces a wider scope for inspiration, extending it beyond the boundaries of work to include private life as well, while motivation for him is just a work-related subject. Therefore, inspiration and motivation complement each other at work and inspiration can be seen as another motivational factor, which enables him to work better and adds more meaning to it. However, such factors as age and work experience could reduce inclination to be inspired.

Notably, while referring to inspirational instances or sources the respondent mentions the company’s success or failure, conduct of his manager and colleagues and their reaction to it, but does not include anything apart from the organisational scope. However, he accepts that not everyone in his current company shares the same stance and some colleagues look for inspiration outside their job. However, for him personally, the company’s growth and having freedom in his line of work are fundamentally inspirational.

When inspired the respondent becomes much energised and thus makes an effort to control his inspiration, avoiding that it expands beyond his work and affects his life at home by taking time from his private life.

### 5.5.7. Outline of respondent’s s3t1 horizon

The respondent s3t1 claims she is frequently inspired at work, but finds it difficult to describe ‘what we mean by inspiration’. While trying to exemplify it, she mentions that if she cannot apply her ‘creativity’ to work, then she is ‘not happy’ and ‘not inspired and will not come with new ideas’. And when she is too busy at work, her ‘inspiration will be less, because there is too much to do’.

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Describing her sources of inspiration the respondent refers mainly to those related to her work. She finds inspiring a given ‘possibility to arrange’ her tasks by herself, ‘to help a colleague or within organisation to help people’, or the situation, when she would get her manager to listen to her ideas. The respondent believes that at work a number of things or events could be inspiring, like, for example, her ‘nice workplace’, just because her desk is placed ‘next to the flowers’, or the situation when she gets inspired ‘with new project going live’, as it signifies her contribution as well.

Referring to her present employer, the respondent thinks this organisation ‘is inspiring’ ‘because of the projects we are running’ and ideas for the new projects being freely exchanged, as well as because of the ‘freedom’ to ‘talk about problems’ openly. She maintains that her company ‘is very dynamic organisation’, and referring to the company’s management she points out that ‘they welcome inspiration, new good ideas’.

The respondent distinguishes between motivation and inspiration, stressing that motivation ‘is about why you are doing’ the work. On the contrary, inspiration has no motive and ‘there is no why you do something’. It is about making people able to generate ideas. The respondent admits that she needs money and works ‘for money’, but she needs inspiration as well, otherwise she has ‘to work somewhere else’ to be ‘happy’.

The respondent attempts to explain why some people cannot be inspired at work relating it to the ‘personality of a person’, but then later suggests that it should not be understood as a psychological term ‘personality’, but is about the attitude of people towards work or particularly towards the ‘direct manager or management in general’. It is also about willingness of people to ‘do anything extra’ beyond their usual responsibilities.

The respondent connects stress with workload to a great extent. For her it is really inspiring when a ‘project has a deadline approaching’. She clarifies that she perceives deadlines as stressing, but ‘not stressing in the negative way, rather in a positive way’. On the other hand, when there it is ‘much to do’, she ‘cannot feel freely about’ helping other people and this reduces her inspiration.
The respondent maintains that her ‘working status is important’ as much as her work, but not more than her family. She believes she can ‘control’ her inspiration when it is getting about to overtake her at the expense of her private life, that is, her child.

The respondent explains that when she is inspired she feels ‘more secure’, ‘happy’ and willing to ‘help’ others. If not inspired, she would do only what she has to do in her job and at the same time she would be ‘distracted as well by not really caring’ and, therefore, may ‘oversee something’, implying that she tends to be more attentive when inspired.

**Researcher’s commentary**

The respondent appreciates inspiration in her work and appears to divide it into two levels: personal as in her workplace and organisational as her perception of her current employer. On the personal scale, she refers to inspiration as something deriving from an application of her creativity and making her feel happy. In respect of the organisational level, she claims that inspiration comes from the freedom to express herself, continuously coming up new projects and attentive attitude of the company’s management.

Despite praising her company as inspirational, she indicates that she gets stressed there as well. Stress usually comes not from normal miscommunication or attitudinal issues, but from high workload. Nonetheless, she claims that this kind of stress is quite positive, but it still reduces her inspiration or rather consumes all her time at work leaving none of it for inspiration.

Notably, even though she claims that the attitude of management is very positive and there is a practice of open communication in her organisation, still some people there are not willing to be inspired at work. As she implies, this appears to be a matter of their attitude towards work in general rather than an effect of the company’s attitude to the employees. This also echoes with her other interpretation of inspiration as doing something extra or beyond the usual job responsibilities. In other words, not everyone in her company is willing to add extra effort to their work just because of being inspired.

**5.5.8. Outline of respondent’s s3t2 horizon**

The respondent s3t2 acknowledges understanding of inspiration but cannot define it specifically. She uses various broad descriptions for describing inspiration, such as ‘inspiration is coming out of yourself’ and is about ‘freedom’ in making decisions and setting
'priorities'. Inspiration for the respondent also means having 'fun' while 'doing work'. When inspired she feels like having 'more energy' and being 'more motivated to do' her work. In order to be inspired at work she believes she has to feel there at 'home', which largely means being unrestricted and welcomed. Therefore, in general, the respondent appreciates having inspiration at work as it at least helps 'to look more positive at things'. Then, when inspired, for her 'it's easier to cope with changes' as in this state she would be 'a bit more positive about change'.

The respondent is inspired mainly by other people, especially by her line 'manager', 'colleagues', and by her organisation in general, or by the events organised by the company and the 'management' in particular. Thus, she refers to the launch of 'a new product' as one of the inspiring and at the same time motivational examples. She thinks that having 'structure, clearness' and 'open and honest communication' at work also contributes to strengthening an inspirational image of the organisation. She mentions that the management of her organisation 'wants this company to be inspiring and inspirational' and for her it is also associated with the flow and sharing the 'ideas' within. She believes that even though presently she feels at home and inspired in her 'quite young' organisation, it will grow up and possibly with years it would transform into not so inspirational one.

The respondent maintains that she is 'always willing to serve people', her manager and colleagues, as this need to be a help to somebody is a 'part of' her 'personality'. When inspired she can handle an increased 'workload' calmly because, as she exemplifies, in this state she can cope 'easier' with 'stress' of the workload, and just tends to prioritise the tasks to 'do one thing at the time' and first execute 'more important' things with 'less stress'. However, if 'the workload is coming too high, and then inspiration is gone'.

The respondent endeavours to express her awareness about differences between inspiration and motivation, but she can articulate only that they are 'very close'. Speaking about her motivation, the respondent mentions that she is 'always trying to stay one step behind' her 'boss', 'helping as much as' she can. She mentions that the realising her ability to do her 'job good' is in fact her motivation, generalising: 'You can do your job good, even if you are not inspired'. The respondent supposes that 'motivation is something other people can help you with' Conversely to motivation, which 'can come out from yourself', inspiration 'is coming out of yourself'. The respondent maintains that inspiration could supplement motivation in a way that 'inspiration helps your motivation to do your task'.

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The respondent asserts that she ‘hates’ to ‘make a mistake’ and it prevents her from being inspired as she describes herself as ‘a perfectionist’ and mistakes just ruin her perception of doing her job well. But working in her organisation and with the manager encourages her to ‘learn’ from the mistakes.

**Researcher’s commentary**

The respondent broadly outlines inspiration as associated with having a feeling of being at home or, in the narrower sense, having freedom in prioritising her work and even having fun at work. However, she could not be more specific on this matter as she had never thought about it explicitly.

Being a management assistant, she is very concerned of what management of the company and her direct manager thinks. She cites managerial utterances about company as being inspirational [and inspiring] for customers and employees. Invited to elaborate on these statements, the respondent refers to a clear structure, open and honest communications, flow and sharing of new ideas. That appears to be just cliché as she is seemingly unable explain how those notions affect her.

Similarly, when inspired she claims to prioritise her job tasks better. She also can handle higher workload, which arguably is the aim of the company’s management in proclaiming it as being inspirational.

**5.6. Review of the Evolving Horizon**

This section discusses contributions of the horizons of all respondents to advancing the understanding of inspiration in organisational settings. In order to articulate the evolving horizon of inspiration in a more structured way it is silhouetted by the questions that had emerged during the analysis of horizons. These questions are not posed here in the original wording, as they are used to indicate an expansion of the researcher’s directions of thoughts about inspiration.

This discussion is opened by a very generic question of what is inspiration. This question had not been posed directly in the interviews but, nevertheless, almost all respondents implicitly endeavoured to address it as they all claimed having experienced inspiration at work.
5.6.1. **What is inspiration?**

This question was not asked directly in the interviews because at the preliminary stage of the research certain difficulties in defining inspiration had been noticed (Section 4.2.4). Similar difficulties were also described by some respondents. Inspiration 'could be sensed, but usually it can't be defined' (s1t1). The meaning of inspiration is understood but 'nobody can answer' what inspiration is (s2t2). As a result, attempting to define inspiration indirectly, the respondents used several different ways to do it.

The main ways of defining inspiration can be summarised into some where inspiration had been described or replaced by another concept, or with inspiration named as similar, or likened to something else. Altogether, each of those ways defines inspiration by substituting it with another concept, which arguably would expand a range of meanings already associated with inspiration.

The following meanings of inspiration were brought in by the respondents. Inspiration is 'energy' (s1t1 and s3c2), 'quite near the energy' (s3c4), or an 'internal energy source' (s3m1), and it 'results in energy' (s3c1). Inspiration is a 'state of spirit' (s2c2), or it is related to or can be triggered by an 'idea' (s1c1, s1m1, s1t1, s2c2, s2m1, s2t1, s2t2, s3c3, s3m2 and s3t1) and 'emotions' related to an idea (s2c2). Inspiration is 'freedom' (s3c1, s3c4, s3m2, s3t1 and s3t2), generically or of some kind, like, for instance, 'freedom to explore new ways of working' (s3c2). Inspiration is a 'breakthrough' (s2c1) related to thinking.

Similarity of inspiration to the other notions includes the following instances. Inspiration is similar to 'thinking' (s2c1 and similar in s1c1, s3c2 and s3c3) or 'dedication' (s3c1). It is 'a sort of... information that helps to change your insights' (s3c3).

There are certain metaphorical ways used by respondents for describing inspiration. Inspiration is like 'putting gasoline in your car' (s3c3) or 'a fuel on which engine is going' (s3c1), it gives a feeling that your energy has 'been recharged' (s1c1) or filled in (s1c1 and s1m1), or, in the other words, inspiration 'is continuous through new energy' (s3c1). Inspiration is 'like an additional push', which 'helps you to live' (s3c3); it is 'a kind of engine that drives you on to the different thing' (s2t1). Additionally, some metaphorical functions are assigned to inspiration. Inspiration gives answers (s1c1, s3c3) and enables one's 'hidden potential' (s1c1). Inspiration makes a person 'happy' (s1t1, s2c1, s3m2 and s3t1).
Summarising all these lay conceptions of inspiration, it can be noted that irrespective of what exactly inspiration means it affects self-perception of a person resulting in an elevated state or feeling of having more energy or being energetic. This elevation, in comparison to the usual state, can be related to the heightened emotional or cognitive functions of a person. An emotionally affected person may feel more open to others and, on a practical scale, could be more attentive to other people. If cognitive activities are affected the person could be more focused on the tasks in hand or experience a greater clarity of mind in general.

Consequently, inspiration can be defined a particularly heightened emotional and/or cognitive condition of a person in which the person may feel fairly energetic and enjoy certain clarity, sometimes allied with happiness and mental concentration.

5.6.2. Is there inspiration at work?

All respondents acknowledged having experienced inspiration at work. Some of them described their inspiring moments (s1c1) or inspiring state (s1c1 and s2m1) at work. Meanwhile, with respect to inspiration it had been expressed that ‘there is no much difference between work and private life’ (s1m1 and similar in s2t1, s3c2 and s3t1).

While unanimous in acknowledging inspiration at work, some respondents claim that having inspiration at work helps them ‘to survive through difficult moments’ (s1m1) and to avoid frustration by the monotony or routine of work (s1c1, s1m1, s2m2, s2t1, s3m1 and s3m2). Inspiration, as a unifying idea (s2c2), affects people in organisations by providing ‘a common goal’ (s3m1); it is a ‘source of finding all these ideas of doing things in a different way’ (s3c3).

While at work, everyone is expected to contribute towards the organisational goals and objectives (s3c1). Having inspiration at all levels of organisation is about ‘giving choice’ to employees to ‘make their contribution to success’ (s3c1) and to establish a particular work environment. The ‘inspirational environment’ (s3c2) can be created by maintaining ‘transparency’ (s3c1) and a ‘very open communication culture’ (s3c2, s3t1, s3t2). If successful, this approach could work as a ‘self-inspiring mechanism’ (s3c1).

The above lay accounts on inspiration at work demonstrate that inspiration or being inspired is natural for people and can have its place at work. Secondly, it had been indicated that
inspiration has its presence at work as a countermeasure to the work routine. Notably, the latter opinion was not expressed by any of the respondents of senior management level.

5.6.3. **Is there any need for inspiration at work?**

Inspiration was claimed to be needed at work by all respondents except s2c1. However, opinions about the extent of its necessity at work vary. According to some respondents, inspiration has to be present at all levels in an organisation (s2m2). Others held the view that inspiration has to be present at least for certain professions (s1tl1, s2m1, and s2c2). or especially on the ‘lower level of organisation’ (s3c1). Conversely, respondents in managerial positions claimed that the higher is the point within the organisational hierarchy, the more inspiration is needed there (s1c1 and similar in s3c2 and s3c4). Finally, others asserted that in organisations managers should also have inspiration at work (s2c2, s2t1, s2t2, and s3t2) and have to inspire their subordinates and other colleagues (s1t1, s2c2, and s3c3).

The main argument for needing inspiration at work is linked to two perspectives. The first can be summarised as the notion of help or usefulness. Inspiration helps to deal with job-related issues such as routine (s1c1, s2c2, s2m1, s2m2, and s2t2), difficult customers (s1m1 and s1tl1) or situations (s1c1), or stress in general (s1c1, s1m1, s3m2, and s3t1). Inspiration gives energy or energises (s1c1, s1tl1, s3c1, s3c4, s3m2, s3t2, and s3m2) a person, enables hidden potential or resources (s1c1 and s1tl1), makes people happier (s1m1, s1tl1, s2c1, s3m2, and s3t1), serves as unifying idea in achieving shared goals (s2t2, s3c3, and s3m2), and, in general, enhances individual performance (s1c1, s2c2, s2m1, s2m2, s2t1, s2t2, s3m1, s3t1, s3t2, and s3c3).

The second perspective relates inspiration to means which can be used and controlled by management (s1c1, s2c2, s3c1 and s3c3). Inspiration as a tool was mentioned in the context of enhancing employees’ motivation or satisfaction at work (s1c1, s1tl1, s2c2, s2t2, s3c1, s3c3, s3c4, and s3m1). However, because of its supposed ‘negative’ influence on work processes (s2t2, s3c1, and s3c3), it has to be controlled as employees may be distracted from their direct duties (s1c1 and s2c2) or led to the ‘wrong target’ (s2t2). The contrasting opinion indicates that it is unethical to make a conscious use of inspiration at work (s2c1). However, there is no argument for such opinion provided apart from a statement that inspiration ‘is such a private thing’.

The heading of this subsection may appear rhetorical at glance, but in the context of two previous subsections about essence and presence of inspiration at work, it can be seen that on
the level of lay accounts, or the language used by the respondents (Blaikie, 2000), inspiration is given a particular significance. On the contrary, the organisational studies literature (Chapter 2) has only an oblique mentioning of inspiration in relation to a particular approach to leadership (2.2.1) but without any theoretical underpinning. That is, seemingly including inspiration in its widely accepted or the common sense meaning. However, as the semantic and etymological perspectives-based review (Section 2.1) indicates, inspiration is associated with a range of meanings and its contemporary linguistic use is quite flexible. Therefore, despite of lack of conceptualisation of inspiration it is nonetheless frequently used and purportedly required in organisational contexts. This subsection summarises respondents' views on necessity of inspiration at work that simultaneously reflects on a need for technical conceptualisation of inspiration.

5.6.4. What are the sources of inspiration at work?

The wide range of inspiration sources were exemplified, with a distinction between internal and external ones, where a source refers to a particular trigger perceived to be initiating inspiration. The set of external sources includes people, that is, colleagues (s1c1, s2c2, s3c3, s3c4, s3m2, s3m1, s3t2, and s3m1) and personalities (s1c1, s1m1, s1t1, s2c1, s2t2, s2t2, and s3c3), places as working or organisational environment (s1t1, s2m2, s2t1, s3c3, s3m2, s3m1, and s3t1), events (s1c1, s1m1, s1t1, s2m1, and s3c3), processes and challenges at work (s1c1, s1m1, s2m1, s2t1, and s2t2). The internal sources of inspiration are mainly associated with ideas (s1c1, s1m1, s1t1, s2c2, s2m1, s2t1, s2t2, s3c3, s3m2, and s3t1) and current challenges (s1c1, s3c1, s3m2, and s3t1).

An idea as a source of inspiration had been mentioned among both an internal and external sources. In the context of internal source it was mentioned as a new (s1c1, s2c2, s2m1, and s2m2) or sudden (s1t1 and s3m2) idea, which just appears in the mind of a person without an obvious reference to an external cause. An idea, as an external source of inspiration, was mentioned in the context of communication with colleagues or management (s1c1, s1m1, s1t1, s2t1, s2t2, s2t2, s3c3, s3t1, and s3t2), and as getting new information (s2m2, s2t2, s3c3, and s3t2).

Additionally to the notion of source, conditioning of the inspirational moments had emerged in the discussions. Several conditions were named as prerequisites for becoming inspired, including an appropriate environment (s1t1), attitude of other people, such as colleagues (s2c1,
s2t1, and s2c2), or management in particular (s1t1 and s3t2), education (s2c1 and s3c4) and working in the particular industry (s1c1, s1m1, s3c2, s3c4, and s3t1).

A brief analysis of the above sources and pre-conditions of inspiration indicates that there is nothing extraordinary required for the respondents to be inspired. This signifies that inspiration at work is available to anyone, unless due to certain particularities of a personality (s3t1 and s3t2), attitude (s2c2, s2t1 and s3t1) or personal choice (s2c1) some people prefer not to have it.

5.6.5. How long does inspiration at work last?

The duration of inspiration or inspirational moments varies greatly and can last for days (s2t1 and s3m2), weeks and even months (s1t2, s3c1, s3m2, s3m1, and s3c1). This indicates that inspiration can be a relatively stable state rather than a lasting for a short time spark, which for remaining requires constant reinforcement.

In some cases, when inspiration occurs, a person may lose a feeling of reality (s1c1, s1m1, s2c2, and s2t2) or just be unable to account for time (s2c2). At first glance, it may represent nothing more than a challenge for a person, but referring back to the subjectivity of social reality within the interpretive paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) it may be explained just by the intensity of the inspired state when inspiration overshadows other emotional or cognitive drives.

5.6.6. Is inspiration different from motivation?

Following the line of argument of the psychology-based research, motivation is a broad concept that fairly comprehensively explains human behaviour, seemingly leaving no space unfilled that could be taken by anything else, including inspiration. However, due to an impact of the social context on human behaviour, dominance of the supposedly all-inclusive motivation appears to be reduced by numerous social influences. On that basis, enquiring about distinguishing between motivation and inspiration was included in interviews where possible. As a result, the majority of respondents had provided their insight into that dimension, with a prevailing view that inspiration and motivation are different. Their responses are summarised in this subsection.

The respondents had indicated that motivation is associated with money (s1m1, s2m2, s2t2, s2m2, and s3c4) or other incentives (s1t1, s2m2, s3c1, and s3c1), and it stimulates (s3t2) a
person at work, while inspiration, in general, energises (s1c1, s1m1, s3c1, s3c4, s3m2, s3t2, and s3m2) or enables a person to do 'things in a better way' (s1c1).

From the other perspective, motivation is related to fear (s3c1 and similar in s3c2) and usually is pushed on the employees using the instrumental human resources management techniques in organisations (s1t1 and s2c1). It implies that motivation 'can be achieved' by a particular effort of management (s1t1). In contrast, inspiration cannot be bought, ordered or pushed out as it is related to the individuals' values and beliefs (s1c1, s1t1, s2c1, and s3c1). Inspiration can enhance motivation (s1c1) or assist it as 'a tool for motivation' (s3c3). In general, it can be seen as 'the extra layer on top of motivation' (s3c4).

From the way it works, motivation comes from within; that is, initiated by a person (s3c3). Inspiration, on the other hand, can also be initiated internally (s1m1, s1t1, s2c1, s2t1, s3c4, and s3t2) as well as externally (s1m1, s1t1, s2c2, s2m1, s2m2, s2t1, s3c4, s3m1, and s3t1), and this internal versus external distinction appears to be closely associated with the sources or triggers of inspiration.

Respondents explicitly had sequenced inspiration and motivation, indicating that inspiration 'comes first, and motivation comes second' (s3m1). Also, 'there is no inspiration if there is no motivation at all' (s2m1), suggesting that motivation has to be put in place in firsthand.

Summing up, motivation is needed 'to make sure that people just stay on the boat' (s3m1), but inspiration then enables them to have less scepticism and makes motivating them easier (s3m1). In general, inspiration and motivation appears to be bonded tight and do 'complement each other' (s3m2). Altogether, these lay accounts on a relationship between motivation and inspiration contribute to the view that both concepts are perceived to be different and complementary in some ways.

5.6.7. Is there any relationship between inspiration and stress?

A fairly complex relationship between inspiration and stress had emerged at the outset of the interviewing process (s1c1), in brief suggesting that inspiration reduces stress or diverts attention from stress to the inspirational cause. Therefore, enquiring about stress was included in the interviews, where appropriate.
In general, inspiration in this relationship has a helping function of preoccupying a stressed person, and, therefore, making him or her less subjected to stress (s1c1, s2c2, s2m1, and s3t2). Similarly, when stressed, people could cope better with it, as their attention is being shifted from the stressing factors to the ones, related to inspiration (s1c1, s1m1, s3c1, and s3m2). In contrast, there are other views that ‘it is difficult …to get inspired’ when stressed (s1t1 and similar in s2m1) or that inspiration would be ‘gone’ under stress (s3t2).

Another aspect of the ‘inspiration vs stress’ relationship is related to the cause of stress, which is typically associated with change (s1t1, s3c3, and s3t2). However, if there is a ‘reasonable’ (s1t1) and ‘positive’ change, which can be understood and appreciated (s2m2 and s2t1) by employees, then it ‘could raise inspiration’ (s1t1) as well.

There had been expressed the contrasting view that inspiration is a ‘little stress’ itself, as it affects ‘the level of adrenaline’ (s2c2). Yet, inspiration being a stress is perceived by the respondents as a ‘positive stress in this case’ (s2c2 and similar ins3m2). Hence, according this view, there are two different perspectives for looking at stress: a genuine stress and inspiration-related stress.

This overview of the lay accounts on the relationship of inspiration and stress indicates that inspiration, if established to be willingly triggered, can be seen as a particular device or a tool to reduce stress in organisational contexts. Meanwhile, it had been asserted that stress itself is associated with lack of self-confidence (s3c1). Therefore, stress and inspiration do not ‘come together’, as everyone needs ‘a self-confidence to be inspired’ (s3c1).

This concludes the main contributions of the horizons of all respondents to advancing the understanding of inspiration in organisational settings. The following section presents the evolved understanding of inspiration by the researcher.

5.7. The evolved horizon

This section summarises the understanding of inspiration by the researcher after a multifaceted iterative process of interpreting the horizons of the respondents. Arguably, this section can be entitled differently, for instance, to reflect on the process of fusion of the horizons. However, having been guided by philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 2004) it became apparent for the researcher that his personal quest for understanding of inspiration may avert his focus from the aims of this research. This concern will be looked at in detail in
the next section outlining a reflective view of the researcher on the developing of his horizon of understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts.

In the beginning inspiration was seen by the researcher as something that moves him forward. That effectively matches some respondents' views of naming inspiration as 'putting gasoline in your car' (s3c3) or 'a fuel on which engine is going' (s3c1) or similar. Therefore, the meaning of inspiration at work was mainly associated with a perceived potential of work, largely attributed to current and upcoming projects intuitively associated with possibilities to apply technical expertise. Inspiration, for the researcher appeared as a sudden spark lasting then for days or even weeks, potentially being reinforced by new ideas emerging while working on those projects.

Later on, after iteratively going through the text of the interviews, while trying to fuse the horizons of the past inspirational situations, shared with the respondents, and the present of interviews, followed by formation of their horizons, the understanding of inspiration has evolved to a level of transforming the researcher himself. Now, from a denotation-like search inspiration became an expression of rethinking of the entire working life and the role of verbal communication in it.

As a result of that reflexive cogitation, the call for finding a definitive answer of what inspiration is has been supplanted by realising that there just is no plain answer. Actually, inspiration encompasses a multiplicity of meanings, often varying in contexts, and its use is informed by more than just a desire to explain adequately own thoughts or feelings, but often prompted by a perceived necessity to hide its fuzzy meanings. All this indicates that inspiration represents a subconscious attempt to deal with ever increasing complexity of organisational contexts, while reflecting on the changing patterns of contemporary working and life in general.

5.8. Reflective view on developing of horizon of understanding

This section outlines a reflective view of the researcher on the development of his horizon of understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts, with an emphasis on the challenges faced while interpreting the research participants' views.
The first matter of concern to be commented on is a richness of the participants’ accounts on the subject matter of this research. All interviews generated a sheer volume of outlooks on inspiration, with some being more informative and insightful than others. This remark does not intend to diminish the importance of any particular interview in terms of volume or significance. On contrary, they all have greatly contributed to this research, but these were the shared situations in the past (Gadamer, 2004) that could have determined such interest to this research and influenced their decision to volunteer to participate because of predisposed curiosity. Secondly, attempting to understand people involves interpretation of interpretive beings (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000), who also can be influenced by the process of studying the past and present inspirational situations at work. To summarise the expressed points of view, it had been noted that in some interviews a close rapport was established with the respondents, who also endeavoured to express themselves in relation to the subject matter of this study in a highly articulate manner. Therefore, Smith’s (1991) suggestion of an ‘exemplary case’ for interpretive practice is supported here; that would allow deepening the understanding of the subject of enquiry rather than pursuit of a greater number of interviews.

Another challenge is related to the formation and presentation of respondents’ horizons. The role of the researcher had been identified as a mediator of languages (Section 3.7). According this role, the researcher should reconcile lay language of the research participants with language of this study, connecting it with the further aim to generate a technical conception of inspiration. But keeping lay language used by respondents together with being decisive in presenting their accounts signifies a possibility of becoming overly critical in interpretation of their accounts. On the other hand, according to contemporary trends in management research (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008), even interpretive research has to be critical, but it would be unreasonable to expect respondents to use the appropriate naming and paradigmatic conventions referring to events of their organisational life. In contrast, Gadamer (2004: 299) indicates that anyone attempting to understand should be aware of the conditions of understanding, where being critical is embodied in the foreground of his own prejudices and typically ‘has the logical structure of a question’. This argument, however, does not signify that the respondents’ accounts and any other aspect of this research are taken uncritically, because the ‘hermeneutical task becomes of itself a questioning of things and always in part so defined’ (Gadamer, 2004: 271). On contrary, questioning has been an integral part of the research process and the next chapter presents it in the context of application of the achieved by the researcher understanding of inspiration at work.
This leads to the final part of this reflective view on the process of developing the horizon of inspiration as a complex interplay between questioning, understanding and application of the understanding. Following Gadamer (2004: 370), ‘the dialectic of question and answer… makes understanding appear to be a reciprocal relationship of the same kind as conversation’. Therefore, understanding of inspiration has been redefined here as this relationship represents something different than grasping a content or noetic meaning. It is a dialogue. This explains why in the previous section the evolved horizon is referred to as a result of transformation of the researcher’s quest for a discrete meaning of inspiration at work to the realisation that inspiration is more than that and should be seen as a broad concept encompassing or reflecting a subconscious attempt to deal with ever increasing complexity of contemporary organisational contexts. Therefore, this understanding of inspiration will be applied in the following chapter to address the research questions.

5.9. **Chapter summary**

The evolution of understanding of inspiration at work has been presented in this chapter through exploring the use of meanings and understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts of the participating companies.

To indicate a starting point of that process, the pre-understanding of inspiration by the researcher has been explicitly formulated to mark his early understanding of inspiration. Then, the horizon of inspiration of each respondent has been developed using the transcribed interviews and guided by the tenets of hermeneutic enquiry based on philosophical hermeneutics. The review of the evolved horizon of inspiration at work has signified advancing in the understanding of inspiration in organisational settings.

In conclusion, the evolved understanding of inspiration is supplemented by a reflective view of the researcher on the developing of his horizon of understanding of inspiration in organisational contexts has been outlined. It will be discussed in the next chapter in the context of the literature sources reviewed in Chapter 2.
Chapter 6. Reflecting on inspiration

This chapter discusses the findings from the analysis of the research participants’ accounts on inspiration and relates them to the reviewed literature to generate new insights on inspiration in organisational settings. The chapter’s structure reflects the research questions.

6.1. What is meant by inspiration in organisational contexts?

This section looks into the meanings of inspiration in the organisational contexts of the participating companies. It starts with a recap of an initial conception of inspiration and proceeds with discussion of the most-recurring meanings attributed to inspiration in organisational context.

The initial conception of inspiration formulated on the basis of the literature review (Chapter 2) indicates that it is a fairly flexible and vague notion rather than a well-established concept in referring to the everyday life’s events. List of the meanings frequently attributed to inspiration includes such references as: an idea, an admirable example, encouragement, helpfulness, willingness to act, a person, an experience, a place that gives new ideas, and enthusiasm (Figures 2, 4, and 5). According to potential collocations (Figure 4), inspiration can be taken, looked for and provided, but sensibly it comes from an un-avowed source, as it is hard to envisage how it would work unless assuming that it is animated by some mental, spiritual or divine influence (Figures 4, 6 and 8), or that it can actuate a person with a feeling, idea, or impulse (Figure 8). From the psychological perspective (Hart, 1998; Thrash and Elliot, 2003), inspiration can be defined as ‘a specific epistemic process that provides psychological and spiritual sustenance and is characterized by a remembrance or recognition of some knowledge or perspective valuable in the social or psychological context’ (Hart, 1998: 32). It also has to be pointed out that the absence of inspiration seems to be related to an abnormal condition of human mental health, which is another indicator that inspiration is not a rare event reserved for artists and mystics, but available for and existing in almost anyone.

As a result of the analysis of research participants’ accounts (Chapter 5), the following references to inspiration at work were noted: energy, freedom, and breakthrough. Particularly, the main associations of inspiration at work used by several respondents were energy and freedom. Notably, neither was in the list of meanings identified by dictionary-based enquiry in the linguistic review (Section 2.1). In an attempt to check whether these words had not been overlooked all dictionaries referred to in Chapter 2 were re-checked, but neither a choice
of meanings nor examples of a typical usage were found for ‘energy’ or ‘freedom’. Such a
striking discrepancy may indicate amidst many other explanations one clearly salient, related
to the different uses of the word in particular contexts.

Dictionaries typically provide linguistic meanings of a word in its most frequent use and,
ocasionally, its foremost specialised meanings, if available. But when the research
participants attempted to explain their understanding of inspiration at work, they used words
that referred to very different concepts, in contrast with those provided by dictionaries. For
instance, inspiration was called freedom and the meaning of the word ‘freedom’ is quite
dissimilar to any meaning indicated in the dictionary-based enquiry into meanings of
inspiration. This leads to the point that meanings identified on the basis of linguistic enquiry
are different from meanings shared by the research participants. The main difference can be
related to the context of defining inspiration, or to an organisational context in particular.
Thus, it would be logical to assume that a specialised business or management dictionary
would contain a definition of inspiration in relation to an organisational context. However,
examination of the purportedly most prominent business and management dictionaries
(Business Dictionary, 2009; Glossarist, 2009) and even the consolidated dictionary search
engine OneLook (2009), found no specialised definition of inspiration. This signifies the
appropriateness of the established conclusion that the research participants certainly attributed
different meanings to inspiration due to the particularities of an organisational context.

It was outlined earlier that an organisational context could be considered as a broad notion,
where ‘organisational’ largely refers to organisations as social units existing with some
particular purposes (Shafritz and Ott, 1991) with people engaged in work-related activities
(Armstrong, 2006) and management, as a ‘cadre’ of people and as an activity (Easterby-Smith
et al, 2002; Mullins, 2007). Also in Fineman’s (2003: 1) view ‘people are at the very centre of
organization – they constitute the organization, what it is and what it can achieve’. Therefore,
the perspective adopted here emphasises people as a main constituent of an organisational
context, and this constituent is not homogeneous, as people there vary according to the ‘levels
of seniority throughout the organisation structure’ (Mullins. 2007: 566). As an immediate
implication, the views of the research participants can be considered in the context of
organisational hierarchy (Section 4.5), as they are affected by dissimilar agendas in relation to
responsibilities, decision-making and the execution of work (Armstrong, 2006; Huczynski
and Buchanan, 2007; Mullins, 2007).
All respondents were categorised by membership of one of the three main levels of organisational hierarchy (Section 4.5): technical, managerial and community levels, implying that they have essentially dissimilar and potentially contradictory goals and positional power (Clegg et al., 2006; Mullins, 2007).

6.1.1. Inspiration as energy

The most recurrent meaning attributed to inspiration was associated with energy. That is consistent with Hart’s (1998: 19) indication that respondents of his study had reported a ‘dramatic shift in emotional and physical energy’ when inspired. Hart depicts this emotional change as ‘an immediate and powerful shift in mood’ which had ‘an enlivening and peacefulness occurred within the same moment’. This research corroborates Hart’s findings and extends them to an organisational context, essentially signifying that inspiration is not a rare event reserved for artistically gifted people. Next, following the specifics of organisational context, the question of how different are the meanings of inspiration expressed by respondents of the different organisational levels must be addressed.

The respondents at the technical level associated inspiration with energy in the sense of becoming more energetic. Inspiration enabled them to have ‘more energy’ and, therefore, be ‘more motivated to do’ the work (s3t2). Then it was generalised that inspiration ‘is required from time to time to keep energy on the certain level to keep a person in a shape’ (s1t1). It was a ‘very intense state’, which made an inspired person more energetic; however, sometimes this ‘energy is not creative, but destructive’ leading to a desire ‘to speed up things’ in this state (s2t2).

The managerial level respondents’ views on and considerations of inspiration were somewhat elaborative. Thus, inspiration was associated with an ‘internal energy source that keeps’ an inspired person ‘going’ (s3m1). Inspiration made the other respondent of this level feel ‘energetically strong’ to resist stress at work (s2m1). It ‘fills’ the respondent ‘from inside with energy’ (s1m1); it also consumes ‘some energy, but giving back even more’. It purportedly enabled the respondent to ‘feel a lot of energy’ and ‘become more energised’ or ‘able to do more’ and ‘more efficiently’ (s3m2).

The views of the community level respondents echoed those of the management level respondents and also added some detail. Inspiration ‘is a way to create positive energy’ (s3c3); ‘inspiration results in energy’ (s3c4). The ‘higher’ is this ‘energy, the higher the
quality of the time' (s3c4) at work would be. According to another view, inspiration was claimed to be 'quite near the energy' and, on the other hand, 'energy is quite near to inspiration' (s3c4), which implies rather a reciprocal relationship between these notions. Then again it was made more functional by proclaiming that inspiration is 'where you get your energy level from' (s3c1). It increased energy levels of respondents and also of their colleagues, who sometimes they 'just working around...and consciously probably decided not to put their best energy in there' in the work process.

The meaning of inspiration as energy, or a higher level of energy, was fairly unanimously shared by the respondents of all three levels. However, it became noticeable that the technical level respondents appeared to refer to inspiration as a sporadic happening, while the managerial and community levels' respondents associated inspiration with energy in more articulate way. For the managerial level respondents, inspiration was something that makes them more energetic in a more regular way, but the community level respondents seemed to bring this energy to a more practical plane by referring to inspiration in the context of contribution or the work results of other employees. Rationalised in this way, inspiration may be seen as a subject of managerial or leadership attention. This conjecture about managing inspiration in organisations can be examined by revisiting the managerial and community levels respondents' views.

The community level respondents explicitly sought to inspire and, in this context, to energise employees in order to get work done (s1c1, s2c2, s3c1 and s3c3) and even claimed controlling 'expressions of inspiration to make use of it in the way, which is beneficial for company' (s1c1). If inspiration was 'lost' employees 'become passive and develop negative attitude' towards work (s2c2). Another senior manager insisted that his subordinates should find inspiration in work by themselves. His recommendation was: 'be an entrepreneur... put your energy in', or otherwise 'they are out' (s3c1).

Another reason for explicit managerial control of inspiration was its supposedly 'negative' or distractive influence on the performing of the employees' direct duties (s1c1 and s2c2). Inspiration itself 'is always positive' (s3c1), but it may lead 'to a wrong target' (s3c2). Therefore, everyone should 'have a right inspiration' otherwise 'it might endanger whole organisation' (s3c2). Looking at inspiration from this angle raises the concern about authority to decide about having right inspiration.
Notably, it was not seen as 'unethical' by senior managers to control employees' inspiration as it was 'for employees benefits, as not everyone could manage his or her own mood effectively' (s1cl). Only one out of seven interviewed senior managers suggested that it 'might be seen as unethical' to make a conscious use of inspiration at work because inspiration 'is such a private thing' (s2c1). However, the suggestive tone and awareness that engaging with 'inspiration is tricky' as it could 'kick someone from the track' did not indicate a denial of using inspiration at work, but was rather a sign of awareness of unpredictability of such process, as for him inspiration was 'almost like breakthrough' in thinking. This ethical stance of the senior managers can be traced back to leadership polemic (Section 2.2.1), in which leaders validated their actions on the grounds of the need to 'successfully perform assignments and attain group objectives' (Yukl and Van Fleet, 1982: 90). Goffee and Jones (2006: 10) also indicate certain trends in attitudes of leaders, asserting that 'leadership is something we do to other people', but it 'should be seen as something we do with other people'. This emphasis on achieving leader's objectives, or the 'to'-approach, was evident in the community level respondents' responses.

6.1.2. Inspiration as freedom

The second most-recurring meaning attributed to inspiration was associated with freedom and, noted earlier, no similar meaning was found in the reviewed dictionaries. The inference advocated here relates this divergence with the context of using the word 'inspiration', as dictionaries typically provide linguistic meanings of words in their most frequent use. However, neither general dictionaries nor specialist business and management dictionaries (Business Dictionary, 2009; Glossarist, 2009) explained inspiration as associated with freedom. This leads to the conclusion that such unexpected meaning of inspiration can be associated with organisational settings of participating in the research companies.

The word 'freedom' typically refers to 'the condition or right of being able or allowed to do, say, think, etc. whatever you want to, without being controlled or limited' (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2009). Surprisingly, similar meanings were expressed by some respondents while explaining their views on inspiration at work.

At the outset it was noticed that inspiration and freedom were used interchangeably. That was well-illustrated with the example of respondent s2t2, who felt free to take initiative in her evening job, where 'nobody orders' her what 'to do' and how 'to do it'. Therefore, she also felt inspired and believed to inspire others by sharing her inspiration with them. In contrast, in
her full-time job she had to remind herself that she is just a line employee and not free to exercise that freedom. In this instance inspiration and freedom were seen as the interrelated notions.

Another technical level respondent believed that her organisation ‘is inspiring’ also because of the ‘freedom’ to ‘talk about problems’ openly and having the management purportedly set to ‘welcome inspiration, new good ideas’ (s3t1). According to a slightly different view of the other technical level respondent, inspiration ‘is coming out of yourself’; it is about ‘freedom’ in making decisions and setting ‘priorities’ (s3t2). Both views refer to inspiration and freedom but, according to the former, freedom appeared to be allowed and enabled by management. But the latter clearly indicates that not being constrained in work-related decision-making facilitated the respondent’s inspiration in the meaning of freedom.

The managerial level respondent also buttressed the view expressed by the technical level respondents with his point of view that a chance to ‘really work independently’ and ‘get a lot of freedom’ at work inspired him (s3m2). Thus, in the articulated context freedom seemed to represent something that triggers inspiration rather than being one.

The community level respondents’ views on inspiration as freedom were fairly different from the two other levels and seemed to reflect a prescribing or authoritative view on fostering inspiration in organisations by giving a degree of freedom to employees.

According to respondent s3c1, a Financial Department Director, inspiration could not be ‘forced’ or ‘ordered’ and it ‘is pretty much bound to the freedom that persons are willing to’ accept as a norm (s3c1). Moreover, that ‘freedom’ and ‘transparency’ in the context of ‘clarity on what you can do and what you can’t do’ were essential to encouraging inspiration in a workplace. Meanwhile, the feeling that something is allowed should not be confused with freedom as employees ‘can’t be inspired’ by permissions.

On the contrary, another top manager, a Human Resource Director, believed that in his company employees have ‘more or less freedom to explore new ways of working’ and, therefore, ‘people... here are inspired by that creative environment they are working in’, where a creative environment stands for ‘some kind of space, freedom’ in work (s3c2). And not surprisingly, he was not alone in his stance. The respondent s3c4, an Executive Vice President, was fairly straightforward in his thinking. For him inspiration ‘is a part of a
leadership", where leaders, especially those in the managerial roles, ‘need to give also a certain freedom... possibility of grow’ to their followers.

The community level respondents’ views on inspiration in the context of freedom, while being quite different and even opposing in essence, reflected the concerns of facilitating inspiration in their organisations. A quite open and unpretentious view (s3c1) recommended setting the objectives for employees and leaving it up to them to meet those, even letting them to decide whether to comply with or company rules. Meanwhile, other views were not so liberal and affirmed giving employees just some kind of space or freedom, which was vaguely articulated and still implied an ambiguous direction setting in imposing that freedom on them. Nonetheless, the fact of having clearly articulated respondents’ concerns of having and fostering inspiration in an organisational setting suggests its acceptance and significance at the community level in organisations.

6.1.3. Revising inspiration

The two most frequently-expressed meanings by the respondents of inspiration: energy and freedom were discussed in the above subsections.

The meaning of inspiration as energy, or a higher level of energy, was unanimously shared by respondents of all organisational levels, although with slight difference in its construal. Respondents at the technical and managerial levels referred to inspiration in respect of energy as distinctively remembered and desirable events or experiences that from time to time brighten their working days. The community level respondents, on the other hand, were concerned with inspiration due to their perceived need to energise other employees in order to get the work done. At this level supposedly genuine views towards managing inspiration for the benefits of a company were expressed. This situation, when some employees desire to be inspired, while others vested with a positional power rationalise a need to inspire the former, would remain a reciprocal arrangement until one or both parties decide to misuse that arrangement, thus changing its status from a reciprocal to inequitable or unethical. However, the concern here is a matter of this arrangement, i.e. inspiration, which clearly is used, especially by senior managers, to achieve certain objectives, and its meaning often associated with energy indicates a necessity to revitalise certain aspects of working arrangements or environment.
The second recurrent meaning of inspiration as freedom was also used by respondents of all levels, but with some apparent differences depending on organisational levels. For respondents at technical and managerial levels, inspiration signified prioritising their own work, freely expressing their ideas, or in general, taking initiative. However, for respondents at community level, inspiration in the meaning of freedom reflected the concerns of creating and maintaining a desirable environment in their organisations. Thus, not surprisingly, inspiration as a notion was chosen and used at the community level as its meaning was usually flexible and somewhat positive, as indicated in the previous analysis (Chapters 2 and 5). In sum, this signifies two points. First, it could be that there was insufficient freedom for lower level employees in respondents’ organisations to take initiative at work or that such initiative was not required and, therefore, these employees articulated it as inspiration. Second, the community level, or top management, was concerned with their company’s working environment as it was one of the key determinants of employees’ and, consequently, company performance (s1c1, s3s1 and s3c3). Therefore, the concern of performance compels the top management agenda to explicitly regard inspiration in referring to company’s working environment in the context of granting certain freedom to employees.

These considerations about inspiration in organisational contexts provide a rationale for revising of the previously established meaning of inspiration (Section 5.6.1). First, in respondents’ lay accounts on inspiration, it was referred to as a particularly heightened emotional and/or cognitive condition of a person, in which the person may feel fairly energetic and enjoys certain clarity sometimes allied with happiness and mental concentration. Subsequently, elaborating on the preceding discussion, it can be seen that inspiration is not just a heightened emotional and/or cognitive state; it also comprises an emotional or cognitive appeal that impels senior management to use it intentionally in order to revitalise particular aspects of working arrangements and, thus, elevate employees’ performance.

6.2. **How does inspiration affect people in organisational contexts?**

This section discusses views conveyed by the respondents on averred effects of inspiration in their organisational contexts.

To begin with, all respondents except s2c1 explicitly claimed that inspiration needed to be present at work. The range of reasons justifying this need can be summarised to a notion of general usefulness of inspiration, which is explained by its effect. It appeared to be useful at
work as it gave energy or energised (s1c1, s1t1, s3c1, s3c4, s3m2, s3t2, and s3m2) a person. It perceptibly improves individual performance (s1c1, s2c2, s2m1, s2m2, s2t1, s2t2, s3m1, s3t1, s3t2, and s3c3) and made people happier (s1m1, s1t1, s2c1, s3m2, and s3t1), and helped dealing with stress (s1c1, s1m1, s3m2, and s3t1). These accounts are entirely congruent with inspiration defined as a heightened emotional or cognitive condition of a person, in which the person may feel fairly energetic and enjoys certain clarity sometimes allied with happiness and mental concentration. Being comparatively energetic and happier noticeably suggests the after-effects of inspiration or inspirational moments; but associations of inspiration as aiding performance and minimising stress, superficially, imply an effect that inspiration may have while being a part of process rather than an outcome.

6.2.1. Inspiration and happiness

Happiness is often associated with feelings or emotions (Lewis et al, 2008), which can affect mood even in long-term (Aron and Aron, 1987), but more specifically it is a state of having someone’s desires fulfilled (Annas, 2004: 47). Happiness has penetrated management thinking in the context of managing employees’ welfare, but, with no direct evidence that it improves individual performance (Chiumento, 2007), and there also had been some attempts to analyse how increase in happiness can reduce stress at work (Schiffrin and Nelson, 2008). On the other hand, according to respondents’ accounts, being or making someone happy at work (s1c1, s1m1, s1t1, s2t2, s3c2, s3c3, s3m1, s3m2 and s3t1) was used with and without relation to inspiration, and that potentially is an indication of significance of the state of happiness for people.

Summarising the main associations between inspiration and happiness, two trends can be noted. Inspirational moments at work have been equated with ‘moments of happiness’ (s1m1). The state of being inspired was also equated with being ‘happy’ and both notions were used interchangeably (s1t1). Next, when happens to be inspired at work it was reported as feeling ‘happy’ by the respondents (s2c1, s3m2 and s3t1). Referring back to happiness as a state of having desires fulfilled or achieved (Annas, 2004), the following question has to be raised: what exactly has been achieved by inspiration that makes respondents happy? The definitive answer is that ‘success is something that inspires’ (s3m2), but it was given by only one respondent. For all others, it seems that the inspired state itself or achieving it provided a heightening of normal mood, emotions or cognition, which then could be associated with happiness.
6.2.2. **Inspiration and performance**

Reviewing respondents' comments on the relationship between performance and inspiration, it can be noted that reportedly in the inspired state performance increased (s2c2, s2m2, s2t2, s3t1) or was just ‘better’ (s3t2), especially in terms of ‘quality’ (s3t1). But in general performance increased because ‘inspiration gives... an extra energy’ by freeing out a person’s ‘hidden potential’ (s1c1), or enabling ‘having a higher energy level’ (s3m1). When a person is inspired, performance ‘will be higher’ because the person is ‘in a mood’ to work, and ‘if people are in a good mood, their performance increases’ (s2m1).

Individual performance at large can be ‘interpreted as expressing the relationship between a person’s capabilities and what the person actually achieves, usually related to a person’s job’ (Banfield and Kay, 2008: 267). Thus, individual capabilities, as a cornerstone of performance, can be seen as being affected by inspiration in such a way that a person becomes more energetic or feels in a better mood. However, it cannot be assured that being in such state would cause a person to focus on job-related activities as the person may do other things, diverting his or her attention from work, to be expressed and followed (Frederickson, 1998). In other words, inspiration might increase performance from time to time, ‘but sometimes it can move you to one particular thing and other things are left behind. It depends’ (s2t1).

6.2.3. **Inspiration and stress**

A fairly complex relationship between inspiration and stress emerged from respondents’ accounts. It was noted that inspiration helps to deal with stress (s1c1, s1m1, s3m2, and s3t1), or routine-related stress (s1c1, s2c2, s2m1, s2m2, and s2t2), or stress caused by dealing with difficult customers (s1m1 and s1t1) or situations (s1c1). In general, a few respondents shared that when they are inspired ‘then it is difficult to get stressed’ (s2m1). It worked so that when ‘you are inspired, all your doubts, fears, all these disturbing things disappear and you keep going and you don’t feel stressed and tired anymore’ (s1c1). Even if a person is stressed it would be possible to ‘start being inspired’ and then as soon as they are inspired, ‘stress decreases or even disappears’ (s1c1). Finally, inspiration was purportedly effective in dealing with stress, as ‘stress can be positive and negative’, but also inspiration itself is ‘a little stress, but positive stress in this case’; thus, both work in a similar way, i.e. based on ‘the level of adrenaline’ (s2c2).

Stress, as a biological response to any perceived danger, is essential for human survival and usually manifests as a fight-or-flight behavioural adrenaline-driven response. However, as
Fineman (2003: 139) argues, organisations ‘work against this evolutionary grain’, as within the work processes employees often have to return to unresolved stressful situations and are expected to continue working productively.

Stress at work ‘has already been identified as a major area of concern, and can be regarded as an umbrella term for a range of problems’ (Foot and Hook, 2005: 340). There is a significant number of factors that could cause stress at work, including work relationships, conflict handling, overwork and role ambiguity; ‘these factors are referred as stressors’. The typical approach to dealing with stress is based on removing the stressors, occasionally supported with providing counselling to an affected employee (Armstrong, 2006; Arnold et al., 2005; Foot and Hook, 2005; Matthewman et al., 2009). It appears from the respondents’ views that inspiration may significantly change the way stress is handled by individuals and organisations. Removing stressors in many contexts as, for instance, dealing with customer problems on daily basis in customer care services, may not be an option. In sum it can be noted that the relationship between stress and inspiration is quite multifaceted but with an overall trend that inspiration may have a propensity to reduce stress by re-focusing the attention of a stressed person.

6.2.4. Summary on effects of inspiration

Summarising this discussion on how inspiration may affect people in organisational contexts, it may be noted that these effects are largely related here to the concepts of happiness and organisational stress, and in a broad sense inspiration have bearing on individual performance. Notably, there were no significant differences in explicating happiness, stress and performance across the three levels of organisational hierarchy. This could indicate either similarity of the effects of inspiration has on people, or certain difficulties in exploiting inspiration beyond its usual linguistic application.

Certain similarities were noted in the effects caused on a person by inspiration and happiness. They can be summarised as having certain uplifted feeling, mood or mental clarity. Happiness is a well established concept from philosophical and psychological perspectives. Therefore, further research on inspiration can be guided by drawing a certain parallel between these two concepts.

Inspiration, while exhibiting a complex relationship with organisational stress, appears to help in reducing stress by diverting or re-focusing attention of a stressed person to other things.
Although it sounds quite superficial, it may greatly diminish existing approaches to managing stress in organisations, as removing stressors from modern workplace seems unachievable. This aspect of stress management, however, would require further substantive research into the inspiration-stress relationship and inspiration per se.

Finally, inspiration was claimed to be related to improved performance in organisations, mainly because of its close association with energy, or an emotional state of feeling energetic. It potentially ensures its distinctive remembrance, but is noticeably detached from an adequate appraisal of actual performance. Performance and its appraisal represent a vast domain of study and require further contextual research for examining it in respect to inspiration. But even within the scope of this study it can be noted that it is impossible unambiguously to conclude whether inspiration does improve performance.

6.3. Conceptualisations of inspiration in organisational contexts

This section attempts to conceptualise inspiration at work on the basis of all previous discussions. It starts with an explicit comparison between motivation and inspiration, and then proceeds to elaborate on earlier conceptualisation derived from previous research (Hart, 1998) and lay accounts of the research participants.

Motivation was brought into this research mainly due to the following reasons. First, in mainstream management thinking motivation is a fairly broad concept and represents 'some driving force within individuals by which they attempt to achieve some goal in order to fulfil some need or expectation' (Mullins, 2007: 250). It is considered essential in organisations, because people’s behaviour is largely determined by what motivates them and, therefore, has a direct impact on individual performance, mediated by abilities and skills. Secondly, despite the all-embracing nature of motivation when it comes to stimulating and inducing employees, it is noticeably paired up with inspiration in transformational leadership (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985), and both concepts are often lined up as leader’s tasks, that is, to motivate and inspire (Kotter, 1990; Kouzes and Posner, 2007; Morden, 1997; Robbins and Finley, 2004; Zenger and Folkman, 2002). However, as the analytical review of both concepts revealed (Section 2.2.2), motivation has a strong socio-psychological foundation and is represented in an organisational context by a number of the content and process theories. Inspiration, on the other hand, is used in management and in leadership in particular, without any theoretical underpinning, elaborating mainly on its common-sense linguistic meaning, which, following
the results of the linguistic enquiry (Section 2.1), is quite flexible and significantly affected by the context of its use.

On the other hand, alternative views on motivation claim that modern motivational theory represents a repressive and puritanical ideology (Boje and Rosile, 2006) and in practice aims at controlling desires in order to channel them into efficiency and productivity. On this quest motivation struggles with soldiering, laziness, inefficiency, and dissatisfaction, which arguably are associated with contemporary living and working because human nature is somewhat more complex than a set of needs and desires manipulating those a required performance could be achieved.

Analysing respondents' views, it was noted that all respondents acknowledged distinguishing between motivation and inspiration in organisational settings. Together with the previous discussion on effects of inspiration (Section 6.2) it suggests that a dominant view in the mainstream management, that regards motivation as a key determinant of individual performance, has to be amended to include inspiration together with motivation, abilities and skills.

Furthermore, inspiration and motivation do not co-exist independently, but compose rather a complex sequenced relationship, where inspiration 'comes first, and motivation comes second' (s3m1). However, it appears that 'there is no inspiration if there is no motivation at all' (s2m1), suggesting that motivation has to be put in place prior to attempting to inspire employees; and this view on their order was dominant amongst respondents. Inspiration could enhance motivation (s1c1) or assist it as 'a tool for motivation' (s3c3). In general, it can be seen as 'the extra layer on top of motivation' (s3c4). All this suggests that inspiration and motivation do 'complement each other' (s3m2).

It also was noted that mainstream management theory emphasises a rather optimistic view of motivation at work, while neglecting some other, often quite negative, aspects of organisational contexts, such as stress and other emotional injuries likely to be faced by people at work (Fineman, 2003). This view was buttressed also by some respondents, claiming that motivation and 'most of HR tools are based on punishment' rather than on actual rewards (s3c1), as they emphasise what people will not receive unless they reach particular targets. Thus, 'motivation can also come from fear' (s3c1) or 'direct threat' (s2c2) of losing something people think they already have. If people could rationalise their fears it
would be ‘easier to become inspirational’ or inspired (s3c2). In other words, it appears that organisations need motivation as a reinforcement of fear and a simple and straightforward approach to reaching targets, because there are no clear indications of how inspiration can be created and maintained in organisational contexts.

In general, it appears that inspiration is perceived in a rather more positive way than motivation, which is imposed on employees by organisations. One of its reasons is potentially related to a positive attitude typically associated with inspiration (Thrash and Elliot, 2004), as deriving from its past association with divine agency (Section 2.1). It also was indicated that inspiration is trustworthy, as it derives rather from people themselves, i.e. internally (s1m1, s1t1, s2c1, s2t1, s3c4, and s3t2) as triggered by some external influences (s1m1, s1t1, s2c2, s2m1, s2m2, s2t1, s3c4, s3m1, and s3t1), which typically include new (s1c1, s2c2, s2m1, and s2m2) or sudden (s1t1 and s3m2) ideas, colleagues (s1c1, s2c2, s3c3, s3c4, s3m2, s3m1, s3t2, and s3m1), and challenges at work (s1c1, s1m1, s2m1, s2t1, and s2t2). Furthermore, based on the anticipatory nature of human perception (Neisser, 1976), inspiration once experienced calls from memory an anticipatory modifiable schema with predisposition to be triggered by the same or new triggers because of the attentive nature of human perception (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2007). Therefore, inspiration can be welcomed internally (Hart, 1998) and reinforced externally by triggering it knowingly.

To conclude, the following conceptions of inspiration in organisational contexts can be formulated from the above discussion.

First, inspiration can be defined as particularly heightened emotional and/or cognitive condition of a person in which the person may feel fairly energetic and enjoy certain clarity of mind, which is sometimes allied with happiness and mental concentration.

Second, inspiration represents an emotional and/or cognitive appeal that impels anyone, especially in a position of authority, to consciously use it in order to revitalise various aspects of personal or working arrangements.

Inspiration is a guiding complementary force accompanying motivation and after having arisen it is likely to be reinforced because of the attentive and anticipatory nature of human perception.
Individual performance is a function of both motivation and inspiration, mediated by abilities and skills, where inspiration represents a force that has propensity to influence emotional and contextual conditions.

6.4. Chapter summary

This chapter has related the findings of the research to the reviewed literature in the context of addressing the research question.

First, comparative discussion of meanings attributed to inspiration in everyday life and in organisational contexts revealed that inspiration is referred to frequently as energy and often as freedom. Such a striking discrepancy was rationalised by certain particularities of an organisational context and especially by influence of organisational hierarchy, implying an effect of dissimilar agendas in relation to responsibilities, decision-making, and the execution of work at different functional levels.

It became noticeable that at the technical level inspiration represented a sporadic happening occasionally brightening a routine of work. Whereas at the managerial level, inspiration appeared to be something more regular, enabling employees at this level to be more energetic and forward-looking. At the community level, inspiration represented energy or rationalised as closely associated with individual contribution to work energy. Such understanding of inspiration at this level clearly rationalises it with a need to seek inspiration and consequently inspire others, which purportedly is not regarded as an unethical practice.

The second most-recurring meaning attributed to inspiration was associated with freedom, but again this meaning had different semantic variations at different organisational levels. For the technical and managerial level employees inspiration represented a certain autonomy in prioritising their jobs, while at the community level it is vaguely articulated as granting a degree of freedom to subordinates with a clearly outlined concern about expecting increase in individual performance in return.

Subsequent discussion on how inspiration may affect people in organisational contexts noted particular effects are largely related to the concepts of happiness and organisational stress. Drawing on an apparent similarity of inspiration and happiness summarised as having certain uplifted feeling, mood or mental clarity, a suggestion towards how further research on inspiration may be guided has been formulated. It also was noted that inspiration, while
exhibiting a complex relationship with organisational stress, appears to help in reducing stress by diverting attention of a stressed person to other things. Nonetheless, while appearing promising, this line of thinking also would require further research to substantiate this claim.

Finally, drawing on the comparison of inspiration and motivation, a suggestion about a complementary and more suited for contemporary work organisations essence of inspiration has been formulated.

In conclusion, the conceptions of inspiration in organisational contexts were formulated in order to provide a basis for further advancing of understanding of inspiration.


Chapter 7. Conclusions

The findings of this research, presented in the previous chapter, were discussed in the light of the literature and how these findings corroborate some outcomes of previous research (Eliot and Trash, 2003; Hart, 1998; Neisser, 1976).

This thesis also elaborates on previous research on inspiration in ordinary people (Hart, 1998) and attempts to extend it by examining the use of meanings and understanding of inspiration in organisational settings. The presented synthesis of findings of this research and the reviewed literature appears to be the most promising for augmenting existing understanding of inspiration in organisational settings.

This chapter summarises the preceding examination of inspiration in organisational contexts of the participating companies. The limitations of the research process are also presented together with an outline of suggestions for future research.

7.1. Contribution to understanding of inspiration

This section brings together all previously expressed ideas about the expanding of understanding of inspiration from an everyday notion to the concept used in organisational contexts.

7.1.1. Inspiration in everyday life

The opening linguistic enquiry has revealed that the word ‘inspiration’ has a very rich and not fairly straightforward history, initially pointing to something incorporeal and unreachable by any available means. Then, as a result of various historical influences, especially during the Renaissance and Industrial Revolution periods, inspiration as a word had relinquished its association with divine agency, but retained its standing and association with the notion of exemption from errors, which made it well suited for utterances when something emotionally touching and trustworthy needed to be communicated.

The subsequently analysed contemporary meanings of the word ‘inspiration’ were indicated to be quite diverse and in the generic sense ranging from a fascinating idea and an admirable example, to enthusiasm, encouragement, hopefulness, and willingness to act. It has been noted that all these meanings have in common the way that someone’s mind or emotions can be stimulated to a high level of feeling or activity. However, when referred to in a figurative
sense, inspiration could carry quite high semantic load and have numerous contextual connotations. Additionally, it has been noticed that the same root adjectives extend the list of contemporary meanings even further, enabling this word and its derivatives to be not just useful lexical items but a very powerful semantical concept, which can be used to add clarity or ambiguity to any communication depending on context.

7.1.2. Inspiration in organisational contexts

In organisational contexts inspiration has been analysed in relation to the concepts of leadership and motivation, because they clearly embrace inspiration on a level of particular approaches, such as inspirational leadership and inspirational motivation.

7.1.2.1. Inspiration in leadership theory

Analysis of the inclusion of inspiration in leadership had indicated that there is a popular view amongst the leadership scholars, prescribing that a leader is expected to have inspiration or to be able to inspire followers (Kotter, 1990; Kouzes and Posner, 2007; Morden, 1997; Robbins and Finley, 2004; Zenger and Folkman, 2002). Inspiration in these studies is referred to as an element of the lexical form, namely without any underpinning theoretical conception. Such use of the word and its derivatives utilises flexibility in meanings of inspiration making it particularly attractive for explaining the leadership.

As derives from the conducted analysis, different scholars offer dissimilar and quite distinct interpretations of inspirational leadership as a specific approach to leadership. Analysis of the Yukl and Van Fleet (1982) version of inspirational leadership indicates that references to inspiration in their study utilise it rather lexically and even not always semantically. For instance, pep talks are indicated as an example of inspirational leadership behaviour without making clear what exactly is inspirational in it. Later on, the absence of a theoretical grounding had perhaps indirectly led these scholars to remove inspiration from the taxonomy of leadership behaviour.

Another analysed version of inspirational leadership is presented by Adair (2003). This view without offering any conception of inspiration, focuses on the leadership rhetoric for engaging followers. Adair suggests a fairly controversial way for leaders to inspire followers based on sensing an appropriate situation, rather than creating one, prior to engaging into leadership rhetoric. Needless to say, it contradicts the contemporary approach to rhetoric (Vatz, 2009).
which maintains that rhetors choose what to make salient and when, and after ‘salience is created, the situation must be translated into meaning’ (Vatz, 1973: 160).

The last analysed version of inspirational leadership is formed by Goffee and Jones (2000). Notably, instead of emphasising it as an approach to leadership the scholars depict ‘inspirational’ in leadership as a synonym of the leaders’ genuineness used as a category that accumulates certain qualities of true leaders, including showing selectively own weaknesses, heavy reliance on intuition to engage in actions, passionately empathising with people and capitalising on own uniqueness. Therefore, for Goffee and Jones (2000) inspirational leadership is an encompassing feature of true or authentic leadership which is drawn on in a symbolic sense. All in all, the notion of inspiration is not conceptualised in this research and the adjective ‘inspirational’ is used to accentuate some elements of ‘true leadership’.

Another use of inspiration in leadership theory is seen in the context of the transformational leadership concept (Avolio et al., 1991; Bass, 1985). In this instance inspiration is paired with motivation as inspirational motivation, representing one of the four main techniques used by transformational leaders. This linkage imposed without defining or characterising inspiration in any way stands, therefore, as another attempt to extend the semantical meaning of such a technical concept as motivation, while elaborating on flexibility of the meanings attributed to inspiration. This approach reflects the formation of a new concept with intentionally inserted ambiguity evidently attributed to the resulting concept.

In sum, it can be noted that the words ‘inspiration’ and ‘inspirational’ are used in leadership theory in a non-technical way That is, with no conceptualisation of inspiration and, therefore, relying on its implicit semantic load, which effectively combines the positive upbeat and flexibility of its meanings.

7.1.2.2. Inspiration in motivation theory

The analysis of interrelations between inspiration and motivation has indicated the following main points. First, motivation is a technical concept researched in-depth from the psychological (Medcof and Roth, 1979), sociological (Geen, 1995; Higgins and Kruglanski, 2000) and organisational (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2007; Mullins, 2007) perspectives. In relation to management, however, there is a dominating optimistic view (Adams, 1963; Deci and Ryan, 2000; Elliot and Dweck, 1988; Herzberg, 2003; Leventhal, 1980; Locke and Latham, 1990; Maslow, 1943; McClelland, 1987; Vroom, 1995) portraying motivation as an
ultimate regulator of needs, desires and achievements at work, thereby making work the only source of satisfaction in life, implicitly increases work addiction and facilitates a consumption drive (Boje and Rosile, 2006). Second, this optimistic representation of motivation also neglects such aspects of human life as stress, pain, and other emotional injuries potentially faced by people at work (Fineman, 2003).

Inspiration, on the other hand, has quite flexible and rather contextual meanings with no underlying theoretical underpinning (Section 2.1) and, therefore, represents an ideal candidate for supplementing motivation to highlight a positive essence of a communicated message. Therefore, inspiration is conceivably lined up with motivation to extend original meanings of motivation as a technical concept through embracing flexible and positive meanings of inspiration. Combined in this way, inspiration emphasises a positive side of motivation, vouching to neglect its negative side.

Following the respondents accounts' analysis, it has been noted that all respondents acknowledged distinguishing between motivation and inspiration in organisational settings. Moreover, it has been asserted that inspiration and motivation jointly co-exist and complement each other at work, with motivation sometimes seen as a basis for inspiration to emerge or be an extra layer on the top of motivation. However, at the community level the view of irrelevance of motivation in contemporary times was expressed and justified by the argument of using fear and punishment in relation to motivation. On the contrary, inspiration is seen there as more positive and relevant to contemporary ways of encouraging people's contribution to work.

7.1.2.3. Meanings of inspiration

The linguistic enquiry into historical and contemporary meanings of inspiration revealed a range of meanings summarised above (Section 7.1.1) and identified it to be a semantically powerful and flexible concept, adding either clarity or ambiguity to any communication, depending on the context. Meanwhile, based on the reviewed literature it has been found that in organisational contexts inspiration and its derivatives are being used in a non-technical way, that is, without any conceptualisation and clearly relying on its implicit positive linguistic flexibility.

As a result of exploration of meanings attributed to inspiration in the organisational contexts of participating companies, it has been found that inspiration there is frequently referred to as
energy and often as freedom. These meanings of inspiration are significantly different from those provided by contemporary dictionaries (Section 2.1). These differences have been rationalised by specifics of organisational contexts and particularly by the effect of authority of organisational hierarchy, imposing dissimilar agendas in relation to responsibilities, decision-making, and execution of work at different organisational levels.

The comparative analysis of inspiration in the meaning ‘energy’ has revealed that at the technical level inspiration was seen as ad hoc and an intermittent happening occasionally breaking the routine of work. At the managerial level, inspiration was welcomed and, therefore, seemed to foster certain demand for it and occurred more regularly. The community level, or top management of the participating companies, appeared to perceive inspiration as energy in close association with employees’ contribution at work and, therefore, they had explicitly discussed inspiration in the context of a particular environment, which would make people more productive in terms of individual performance. Secondly, purportedly inspiration, as a way or energy to influence, has been intentionally sought at the community level for subsequent influencing of employees. Notably, only one of the interviewed top managers expressed some concerns, although not substantiated, about ethical consistency of such practices.

Another meaning of inspiration in organisational contexts, freedom, was also found to have different semantic variations attributed to it depending again on the organisational levels. While at the technical and managerial levels inspiration was associated with freedom as certain autonomy in prioritising their jobs, for the community level it was vaguely articulated as granting a degree of freedom to subordinates with a clearly outlined expectation of increasing individual performance in return.

Both discovered meanings are visibly connected to differences in goals and objectives of different positional levels organisational contexts. Nonetheless, inspiration has been claimed to be needed at work, although, the extent of its necessity varies greatly. Thus, it is impossible to discern any pattern in it, but it can be summarised as helpful or useful. Based on the conducted analysis, this helpfulness of inspiration is largely associated with its impact on people at work.

It has been noted that effects inspiration may have on people in organisational contexts are largely related to the concepts of happiness and organisational stress, which potentially
reflects on organisational settings as somewhat hazardous. While the association of inspiration with happiness can be summarised as having certain uplifted feeling, mood or mental clarity stemming from inspiration, the help of inspiration in the case of organisational stress is attributed to its captivating and thus diverting essence.

On the basis of reflective comparison and analysis of literature and respondents' accounts, the following conceptions of inspiration in organisational contexts have been formulated. From the individual perspective, inspiration can be defined as particularly heightened emotional and/or cognitive condition of a person, in which the person may feel fairly energetic and enjoy certain clarity sometimes allied with happiness and mental concentration. From the organisational perspective, inspiration represents an emotional and/or cognitive appeal that impels anyone, especially in a position of authority, to use it consciously in order to revitalise various aspects of personal or working arrangements. Arguably, these conceptions signify certain advancement in understanding of inspiration in general and in organisational settings in particular and, therefore, are proposed to be a basis for further research on inspiration.

7.2. Limitations of the research

This research is based on the interpretive paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), which allows creation of an explanatory account of inspiration in an organisational context. However, this account is neither aimed nor could withstand detailed examination based on the different ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions of other paradigms. On the other hand, this account can be used as a basis for making further enquiries into inspiration based on the assumptions of the radical humanist, radical structuralist or functionalist paradigms.

Similarly, the methods of data collection and analysis have their own limitations mainly due to their highly subjective nature (Blaikie, 2000; Bleicher, 1980; Bryman, 2004; Gadamer, 2004; Palmer, 1969). Significant effort was made to overcome those limitations by ensuring consistency of all stages of the research and by rigorously following the underlying methodological assumptions.

Another limiting factor is that all participating companies belonged to the telecommunications industry. Such selective approach was dictated by the methodological underpinnings of the study. Extending the study beyond the telecommunications industry would be an obvious step further to assessing the reliability of current findings. On the other hand, due to the impact of
such macroeconomic conditions as recession, even a repeat of this study could provide somewhat different outcomes.

7.3. Suggestions for future research

The following section outlines a number of directions for future research developed based on the notion of replicability of a research in different contexts. At the outset, following the latter limitation (Section 7.2) it can be recommended to recreate this study within any other industry. This approach would signify whether the current findings are industry dependant or not. In any case potential outcomes of such future work would contribute to advancing of understanding of inspiration in organisational settings.

In light of the exploratory nature of this research as belonging to the interpretive paradigm, further research could be replicated according to the tenets of other paradigms. The most feasible candidate, at first glance, is the radical humanist paradigm, which also utilises hermeneutics, but from the critical perspective. This approach could aim to uncover other perspectives on inspiration altered by 'overthrowing or transcending the limitations of existing social arrangements' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 32). Subsequently to the change of paradigm, the method of data analysis would have to be reconsidered to ensure it is relevant and consistent within the radical humanist paradigm for the purpose of analysing inspiration in relation to the modes of domination or emancipation.

7.4. Final conclusions

The study of inspiration in this thesis has contributed to augmenting of understanding of inspiration, previously reported in the literature (Hart, 1998). The focus of this research was set on inspiration particularly in organisational settings, as previous studies attempted to analyse inspiration in general in daily life. The findings of this study have established a recognised need for inspiration to be considered in contemporary organisations and presented the conceptions of inspiration, which can be subsequently tested or advanced further, depending on the intended objectives of further research.
Appendices

Chapter 8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix: The preamble used in the interview protocol

Thank you for your participation in this interview. This interview is an integral part of the postgraduate research conducted by me – Alex Avramenko - at the University of Salford, UK.

The purpose of this research is to examine the role of inspiration within contemporary work organisations. It aims to explore perceptions of inspiration as an influential factor within work organisations and focuses on companies in the telecommunication industry. More information about the research is available and will be provided upon your request.

You are invited to express your personal opinion. If in the course of this interview any of company-related or particular person-related information will be mentioned, this information will remain confidential and will not be published or shared with anyone. It will be used only for the purpose of this research and your name will not be mentioned within the research documentation. Any reference to your opinion will be made on the basis of a specific identifier, which includes a company’s identification number, your positional level identification and a sequential number of a respondent from this company.

It has to be mentioned that this research is conducted in accordance to the Market Research Society’s code of conduct (MRS, 1999). The Market Research Society is 'the world’s largest international membership organisation for professional researchers and others engaged in (or interested in) marketing, social or opinion research' (ibid: 2). According to this code of conduct, your opinion will be treated as anonymous and confidential, and appropriate procedures will be applied to protect your identity. With your permission the interview is to be recorded using a voice recorder. You will be able to withdraw your participation and opinions at any time during or after the interview.
There will be no financial, organisational or similar benefits for you from this research.

Please confirm that all principles mentioned above are clear and fully understood by you.

Please confirm that you do not have any objection for this interview to be recorded using a voice recorder.

I am interested in your personal opinions and there is no need for you to comply with any rules, traditions, beliefs or whatsoever. Your opinions are of what really matters.
8.2. Appendix: Approval of this project by Academic Audit and Governance Committee

Academic Audit and Governance Committee
Research Ethics Panel

To Alex Avramenko
cc: Professors Elaine Ferneley & Jocelyn Evans (DGS)
From R. Flynn, Chair, Research Ethics Panel
Date 16 January 2009

Subject: Decision of the REP
Project Title: The role of inspiration within contemporary work organisations

The Chair of the Research Ethics Panel (formerly Research Governance and Ethics Committee) considered the request for retrospective approval from Alex Avramenko and Professor Elaine Ferneley.

The Chair's decision is that, formally, retrospective approval cannot be granted because the fieldwork and data-collection have already been completed, and the applicant had not submitted an application to the former RGEC.

However, on the basis of the documentation and information provided by the applicant recently, and the acknowledgement by the student and PhD supervisor that there had been a misunderstanding of the university's procedures and requirements, the Chair's view is that (as far as he is aware) no ethical regulations have been breached, and no research misconduct has occurred. On this basis, the Chair does not have any objection to the submission of the PhD Thesis.

This memorandum should be brought to the attention of examiners.

Regards,

[Signature]
Professor R. Flynn
Chair, Research Ethics Panel

For enquiries please contact
Ms D Pilley, Contracts Officer
Contracts Office for Research and Enterprise Development
Funders Building
Telephone 0161 295 2634 Fax number 0161 295 6551
E-mail mun Pilley@salford.ac.uk

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8.3. Appendix: The transcript of the respondent’s s1c1 interview

Researcher: Does inspiration have place in your life?
Respondent: Yes it does… in my hobbies, in my private life… at work. When I am getting a new job, or a new difficult and challenging task – I am inspired.
Researcher: How can you know it?
Respondent: I just feel. When I see that my work can make difference – I feel better, uplifted… so, inspired. Sometimes I am inspired when I am doing something creative at home like cooking or sewing, or writing greeting poems to my friends. I am a person that can be easily inspired by the scenery. I enjoy nature in its different expressions… watching sunset, or flying butterflies, or rainy forests… anything like that… it gives me feeling of eternity… I don’t know how to explain. I feel much better after experiencing it, I feel like my energy has been recharged. I can do everything better after these experiences.
Researcher: Is it the same feeling - to be inspired at work or by Mother Nature?
Respondent: At work feeling of being inspired comes, when I face some challenge, perhaps… and when I have to make decisions, to do something what require some efforts. Inspiration gives me answers… to my doubts, it enables me to perform more efficient… it enables my hidden potential, if I may say so. Factually, inspiration is inherently in the answers or solutions… sometimes more challenging solution or decision can give loads of inspiration… I’ll give you an example. Imagine that I have a bad habit. For example, I am lazy to work out. I want to lose few pounds, but I am too lazy to go to gym, or to exercise at home. Every Sunday I promise myself to start jogging in the morning on Monday and every Monday I have hundred justifications why I can’t do it. But one day all circumstances are set in a way favourable to start jogging. … I push myself and just do it. After doing that I feel so proud of myself, that next morning I wake up an hour earlier than usually even without alarm clock and I feel that want to jog … I think this is inspiration that wakes me up and I even don’t need to put efforts to pull myself out from bed, and I actually feel I want to do that I couldn’t push myself to do just a day ago. Outer conditions haven’t been changed. So, it is something inside me and this something makes me doing things I never thought I would and it also makes me doing this thing well. I couldn’t jog a lot even when I was a teenager, but now I jog and feel that my body enjoys it. I have no other explanation than inspiration. Nothing else would make me enjoying it.
Researcher: How long does your inspiration usually last?
Respondent: Huh… How long did it last…? If this is a problem at work or a complicated task – it lasts the time until the task was solved or at least the right way to the resolution is found. Actually I think it lasts as long as it is needed to mobilise the resources from yourself… these resources, which you can’t access otherwise, except of being inspired. And then it’s over. If you write or paint, or cook… it’s different. Usually I am inspired when I cook, and for me it lasts until I see the result… until the sort of expectation is involved… then I see the results, I am satisfied, enjoy it but it is different. So, I think I am inspired during the factual process of cooking, not by results.
When I knit I am inspired in a very beginning, when I choose the model, colour, etc... But when it comes to the routine work which follows the start-up point, I think my inspiration decreases, and I just do it.

*Researcher:* Hmm...

*Respondent:* In general it can last from an hour to a week or so. Perhaps it can be longer for others, but never happened to me... factually, when I feel inspired to a certain degree time loses its importance for me... Aha, another observation – it usually is related to inspiration that is caused by getting something you really wanted to have... for example, a new dress or a new car.... You feel inspired in general, like you suddenly have new ideas and energy to implement them, and also in areas that are not related to the source of inspiration. In this case inspiration lasts for some time and this time doesn’t depend on the source of inspiration. I remember at work I participated at the conference and there through communication with colleagues, who work in the same sector only in other countries I learned about one innovative product that we could implement in our company. I liked that idea, and I understood that this is something with could increase market shares of our company. So, I returned home and introduced the idea to our management team. It took six months to implement it and implementation process hasn’t been started immediately, but since I came back I felt this kind of rousing or inspirational feeling inside. It influenced my work, of course, because things that I considered unpleasant and routine didn’t seem routine for me anymore, and I even remodelled some internal departmental procedures and made them more efficient. They were not related to the new idea at all. But discovering the new thing just enabled me to look at the old thing differently. Well, to sum up – if I am inspired by something what I am doing: process, idea, product, and my inspiration is applied in the process, then it is conditional, how long it lasts, and there are some dependencies, related to the duration of the process you are doing. If I am inspired by something what I just have heard, seen, felt, owned and it inspires me in general to look at my life, work, process differently, then duration of inspiration depends more on outer factors, like weather, surrounding, family... I hope you understand what I am talking about...?

*Researcher:* Yes, thank you, it is all very interesting... You mentioned that inspiration is a kind of feeling for you... Can you describe it in one way or another?

*Respondent:* Inspiration... It makes us able to do the work or the certain task. You want to do the job, but inspiration helps you to achieve the result... in work and in daily life.... like in my example with jogging. In my normal I would call it ‘not inspired’ state of my mind I’d never be able to run more than 500m, but when inspired I could make 2km without feeling tiredness. At work, in my case, it makes possible that I can perform the work itself, especially, if it is something difficult or extraordinary or... if it is routine work... it makes possible that I take it with emotional or mental interest that I perform the task in a shorter time or better, or in a different not standard way... Perhaps it is something that brings your new abilities into what you are doing. I think that if you are inspired in your daily tasks in your private life, it will influence your attitude and performance at work.

*Researcher:* Hmm... in what way?

*Respondent:* I think inspiration gives you an extra energy, it frees out your
hidden potential... It is in your private life and at work as well. Let's take an example from my current job. Imagine, I have to develop the strategic vision of IT development of our company. I have some points, but I don't see the comprehensive picture yet. But I know I have to start, so I start from something and... then step-by-step the process takes me in, and it is like a flow and I don't push myself to think, or to create... The process entirely takes over me...

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: Why? I think because I am inspired. My mind accesses the sources of my brain which in normal, uninspired, situation are not accessible for me. What triggers it? I'd say - for me the easiest and more powerful source of inspiration is a new idea. I have an idea, I am excited about it and I mobilise all my resources mental and physical, and... in this process I achieve the state when I can access my 'golden fund' - something what usually sleeps in me... Hmm... may be it is just my fantasy, but this is how I feel and what I think. Then it can be a process itself. Let's say - I was not fond of new idea. May be I even didn't want to do what is required. But I had to. So, I started, and in the process I realised - wow, it's great... But I need a little bit more of me... and then the inspiration comes and makes me able to perform the task. It can be at work, it can be in my not-work related life... Idea, process... these things can inspire me... then it also can be some event, result of something. Like... I don't know... you got a prize in a lottery, and it can inspire you to rearrange the furniture in your apartment. Okay, it's a humorous example, but the same can be at work as well. Then... a person can be source of inspiration... Well... all these spiritual leaders... and...or... Imagine... you met somebody, and that somebody was just... sparkling, because something good happened or is happening in his life... this person has influenced you in a way that he has inspired you to look at your life, job, task... to change something... whatever...

Researcher: Okay... It seems quite comprehensive and fuzzy description. You already outlined it, but could you please recap what is inspiration for you?

Respondent: Hmm...For me inspiration is impulse, something unusual. But if you ask me to explain it in two words... well I feel it is like an extra help, extra energy, extra knowledge which come from inside of myself...Okay, actually I don't know where it comes from... and it is usually associated in my mind with hard work. I mean with doing something very intense. Not necessarily hard physical work, but intense mental activity or... yes, with production process... I'll give you an example... Imagine! You have to cross the forest to get somewhere. It is early morning, still dark... and the forest is dark, you have to go, you try to do it, step-by-step, step-by-step. It's very intense... you have to mobilise all your senses. Your eye are getting tired from your efforts, all your muscles are tired from controlling every your movement to prevent you from falling. If you know the way - you can do it, but very slow, and it is very tiring. But if this way is new for you, you can easily lose you way. And then morning comes and sun raises and everything becomes light and you see the road, you can go fast, easy, without extra efforts, fear... I think this morning sun is inspiration. When you are inspired, all your doubts, fears, all these disturbing things disappear and you keep going and you don't feel stressed and tired anymore. This is what inspiration for me is... and for me it is very important to be surrounded by inspired people. I
think when several team players are inspired; they stay in the inspired state much longer, than they would by themselves each alone... I like to communicate with inspired people, even, if their ideas don’t seem attractive for me, I prefer to deal with inspired rather than with bored and indifferent people. I’ll give you an example. Previously, when I worked as Billing and Customer Care Director, I had to work closely with our marketing team. Basically they generated ideas all the time and my department was in charge of technical implementation of all innovations. I knew that every idea was extra headache for me, and that sometimes they create ideas for the sake of ideas, taking this process not as serious as it should be. Of course, these were my thoughts, and my evaluation of situation. May be I was too critical, but this is not the point in my example. Usually, receiving their proposals for innovations I thought “Oh, please, not again... what a crazy idea...!” And then our discussion followed. I actually can recall very well my office and these marketing managers and their director sitting next to me and trying to convince me that what they want to introduce is a brilliant idea and very transparent and easy for implementation. Well, it was not easy in most of the cases. Of course, I had to be objective and to put implementation costs on the table. But I remember this feeling, when their inspired state impacted me at the end of our meetings I accepted their position, and forgot my negative attitude to their proposal of something new. Of course, it doesn’t mean that I said ‘Yes’ to everything they proposed, but, what I try to say is that their attitude and inspiration by their ideas changed my attitude and brought our discussion to more constructive and less subjective basis.

**Researcher:** As a Director what do you think about connection of inspiration and motivation? In other words, do you differentiate inspiration and motivation?

**Respondent:** Yes, definitely. These are two different things, they appear in different ways. Motivation stimulates us to do the things, but inspiration makes us doing these things in a better way, in a way which we never would think about. It just comes from nowhere and free up your potential. I’ll give you an example. Imagine I am just an employee. I have a good job, nice workplace, good company, fair colleagues and manager, good compensation package... This is what motivates me, of course... I come to work every day, perform my tasks as it is written in my job description... and my company is happy, they make some profit out of my work and... that’s it. If my company wants me to do more work or faster, or better, they can motivate me ... with money, promotion, other motivation tools, they can promise me something in exchange to my performance. It can not stimulate my creativity... at least, in my case. I’ll give you an example from my past career. As almost everybody I started my career path from the ground-level employee – I was a programmer... just graduated. I was so happy with my employer, proud of the company which I had an honour to join. I was given some tasks and I did my job properly. Sometimes worked overtime because... I liked the process of getting results and making difference, I knew my company need it....because I knew it will be appreciated by my manager and my colleagues – very important... appreciation, and acknowledgement... and because... I was paid for that. So I worked in this way for few years and nothing has been changed in the setting – I still liked to make the difference, importance of my work raised, my work still was appreciated and my manager and colleagues were
relying on me and I have my salary raised as well... It was nice to get more money, wonderful feeling of being promoted, but I lost a kind of enthusiasm and energy inside myself. Honestly, the job which inspired me in the beginning became a routine, and ... I couldn’t explain, but I felt my life is passing by... I was missing something... something important... And then I started work if not slower, than may be without initiative, I’d say...... So, motivation was still there, but inspiration wasn’t. Even if nobody could see this change inside me, obviously, but I felt it. During that time I was promoted twice, but it didn’t help. May be because I lost my inspiration, which I had in the beginning, something what helped me to find unusual and successful solutions to the technical tasks, to work 10-12 hours a day and don’t feel tiredness, in the morning to walk to work feeling happy that there is another working day and I can do what I like and what I dreamed to do all my life. I was motivated, I felt secure, but... there was no emotional drive anymore.

And therefore – there was no inspiration.... But motivation was there, and, of course I did my work properly. So, from employer’s prospective I was a good employee – honest, productive, reliable. So, no reasons to worry... Or???

Researcher: Hmm... interesting explanation, indeed. Can you recall inspirational moments or inspiration as such in your working life?

Respondent: Okay... If I’d continue my previous example about beginning of my career, after graduation I had huge, enormous desire to find a job like that, than I found it and it inspired me so much! The fact that it really happened! I think that was the thing. Another example... That was my first position on a top-level position. Imagine! I was so proud of myself... Of course, I had much higher salary that before, but also feeling of taking a position of Director in one of the biggest companies in Latvia... It felt so good... So...I had a couple of really challenging tasks on my plate. My predecessor left the company in a quite bad condition, there were no procedures, no control schemes... employees were a bit lost... and... I real challenge to clean up that mess and to bring work of my department to the stable operating. Honestly. I had no experience, and there were no basis to build something new on, no experienced team.... Only obligations of my company in front of more than 10 000 customers... And the number of customers was growing dramatically every day! I had to start from scratch and moreover – I didn’t have much time... Customers didn’t have to feel that something is wrong inside our company. I didn’t know what to start with...but I felt such enormous inspiration inside and it helped me to find answers to all my questions, it helped me to overcome my fear of making mistakes... This feeling or state of myself helped me to do my work, the work which some of my colleagues considered to be impossible. I am sure I wouldn’t be able to find solutions if I wouldn’t be inspired. Another example... Imagine you have very challenging and unpleasant topic for negotiation with your partners. You believe you are right, but they wouldn’t give up. Moreover, they are more experienced in such things... Now I can recall this feeling so lively... if I am inspired, I think I can carry on my business meetings better. It’s the way you behave... more self-confidence, more articulate, more calm and... more creative in getting arguments, examples, alternatives for compromises. I think other participants feel it and are influenced in a way they may never have noticed... Why I am giving this example? I think more inspiring for me at work are situations that are problematic, or new for me, where I don’t feel confident in the
beginning... definitely not a routine. Then I say myself – if others can do it, I could as well, and this thought warms me up, I think I am inspired by getting the right result. Better than before, better than others can get...

Researcher: Can you please summarise how, in general, inspiration affected your working life?

Respondent: If I look back to my entire career, I think that all my main achievements were possible only because I was occasionally but often inspired. It sharpened my mind, lessen my doubts, gave me more energy, freed up my creativity. It helped me to perform better and to show great results, which were acknowledged by my management and it gave me an opportunity to be promoted, to grow as a professional. I think that without inspiration I would never succeed even half of what I had. I also think that my inspiration worked in a positive way onto my staff, people, who worked in my team. In some cases they also were getting inspired by my example, they performed better. In some cases they just felt more secure, because they saw their manager confident and successful.

Researcher: Do you seek inspiration or are you inspirational by your nature?

Respondent: You know... I feel much better if I am inspired at and by my job. I am just ready for being inspired at work and it comes exactly when it’s needed. I spend so much time at work, everything related to that is very important for me. As for me, I can overcome difficulties in my personal life if I can fulfil myself at work, but not vice versa. But of course, it’s different for different people. It’s just me... I’ll give you example. When, if not controlled properly, inspiration influences negatively work process. When I worked as a line manager I had a programmer in my department. He was great specialist, one of the best in my group. Experienced, creative... Programming for him is a routine job. Yes, he has to be creative everyday, but it is everyday and nothing special for him. He was very well motivated with money and other bonuses, but I could feel that he becomes bored from time to time and then his productivity falls. So, as his manager I stimulated his attitude to work by inspiring him with innovations from time to time, or assigning him difficult and challenging tasks. He liked it, and I could see his eyes sparkling, but then... the negative moment appears immediately. He likes the new task or role, of course, but I still want to keep him as a programmer, I still want him to do also routine programmer’s work at least 70-80% of his working time. If I wouldn’t control him, he will dive immediately in his new task or role and will forget his primary programmer’s job. So, by playing with inspiring him I can achieve that he would be interested to stay in my company, that he will not look for other job and will not go to our competitors, but if I will not be able to control his behaviour while he is inspired... well... I will lose him as programmer anyway, because he will not do his job properly. I think it is even worse if I pay his salary, but will not get the results. What should I do? Hmm, good question. If we look at this example what did I do as a line manager? I followed the progress of his work. As soon as I saw that he devoted more time to the new tasks and it impacted his routine job, I immediately directed him into right track by... by different means.

Researcher: So, you use the notion of inspiration or your understanding how to inspire to control your employees?

Respondent: Absolutely! ...and ...and I don’t think it is unethical or so... It was for employees’ benefits, as not everyone could manage his or her own
mood effectively... Another example, when inspiration shouldn’t be left
without attention at work... It happened just recently – a month ago. One of
junior programmers worked hard to resolve one task, and at the end he
succeeded. He was so inspired that ‘improved’ few extra things related to the
solution he programmed. As a result, he spent half a day doing work, which
he was not authorised to, and which was useless from the company point of
view. In normal state he would never do it, but he was inspired by his success,
by the fact that he was able to prove he can do the work which was assigned
to him and... and impacted by this excitement he spent his work time doing
obsolete thing. This is also a good example, how important is to understand,
that these situations may occur and to managers also must be able to control
expressions of inspiration to make use of it in the way, which is beneficial for
company.

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: I think inspiration, if over-expressed by one of employees, may
scare others. I believe that not everybody understand what inspiration means.
I believe that every person can reach only certain level of inspiration. You
can’t expect that web designer and PC technicians feel, react to and express
inspiration in a same way. There are also other aspects like culture, religion,
age... All these factors have to be taken into account. But I understand that it
is complicated...I am sure that even gender makes a difference. If you ask
men and women about their attitude to inspiration and their experiences, you
will see certain tendencies in answers of both groups. And their answers will
be different. I read an interesting book about women at work, especially
women – top-managers. There were a lot of examples how men and women
would behave or react in the certain situations. I was shocked.... and I
projected everything what I read to myself, to my possible behaviour in one of
mentioned situations... I was impressed... because most of statements were
correct. I am sure the same will be valid for inspiration if you differentiate
between both sexes. May be inspired female can inspire female colleagues
much more effective, than males. And her inspiration can sometimes stimulate
negative or sceptical reaction among male colleagues, especially if they are
sexists. I think this is different topic and I am not sure that I am right... it just
came to my mind... However...I just think... if inspiration causes some
chemical changes in your body and other people can feel and accept it
unconsciously... than there should not be difference between male and female
reaction... well... I don’t know...

Researcher: In the beginning of our conversation you mentioned that when
you are inspired you do not feel stressed. Working life is sometimes
associated with stress. How it works for you?

Respondent: You know when I am inspired I am sure that I survive stress
easier. If I have a challenging task at work it creates stress, of course. In the
beginning I doubt how successful I can solve it. I start thinking about it and
my stress grows. Then, I make a plan and start doing real actions to perform
this task. And as soon as start, I feel I can make it. It inspires me. The first
step has been made and I think I am on a right way. So, I continue work more
intense, harder, because I feel I can make it. It is inspiration that makes me
feeling like that and that actually sometimes gives me sudden answers to my
questions. And in this process I become so excited by getting the results that I
stop noticing my stress. It is gone... Definitely, if inspiration is there – there is
less stress. I can start being inspired while I am stressed, but as soon as I am
getting inspired, my stress decreases or even disappear… I think it can work
in a different way. Imagine, you have a new task, you have to learn something
new, and you are excited by that. You can’t stop thinking about it… it takes
all your attention. Learning process is usually slow and difficult. If it would
be just a duty you would be stressed, because every learning or creating
something new is try-and-fail process. But when you are inspired, you don’t
consider failure as a bad thing… you stand up and continue your path toward
a result. So, I think there is less place for stress in an inspired person rather
than in uninspired.

Researcher: Any example?
Respondent: Hmm… recently one department in our company had to
implement a kind of innovation in their work. They are so taken by this idea,
they work hard and all their minds are concentrated on getting the result. And
at the same time another department of this organisation was surviving
reorganisation. They are changing their business processes, optimising their
work… Nothing tragic, but people worry, rumours were spreading over the
company. Are the employees of the first department affected by these
rumours? Of course, they heard them, but their minds are concentrated on
their interesting and promising work. I think the probability that they will
switch their minds to this reorganisation is much lower if these employees are
inspired by something else. There is something exciting in their work. Why
should they give it up? … no reason… So, I think in certain cases inspiration
can even reduce probability of appearing of stress among employees.

Researcher: I have been asking all these questions about yourself. Do you
think other people may have experience inspiration while they are on duty?
Respondent: It depends… to the great extend, on the work, which every
person has to do. For example, all people, whose work depends on non-
conventional thinking… Many scientists said they made their discoveries out
of the sudden, in the state of mind that is called inspiration. Composers,
writers, dancers, artists, actors – they created their genius works being driven
by something they didn’t understand. Something sudden, that guides you from
inside. Another point, I think when people are inspired, they can inspire
others. Not only actors and politicians, who in fact also are good actors,
sometimes, I think they just simulated that they are inspired by the character
they are playing, or by the idea, they are trying to sell as a politicians…but to
make others to believe… They have to have inspiration inside. They, like in
my case, are inspired by something extraordinary, that only they can
achieve… I think also salesmen to make great deals have something more
than motivation. They must be able to make a potential customer to believe
them and rely on them. They must have something inside, and I think they can
do the best job only if they are inspired… So, from my experience, need or
desire for inspiration also varies from level to level. If we are looking at my
case, as higher position I undertake in the organisation, as stronger desire to
be inspired I have, and it becomes more and more fruitful. In the very
beginning of my career motivation was more important than inspiration, and it
played most significant role in my work process. But now it’s different… Of
course, also earlier I was inspired, as I said before, but it was a kind of side
effect. I think I could work for few first years of my career without being
inspired and I could do a good job. I think it could be also for a longer time
for a person, who does the same routine job all the time and it is related to the manual operations, not to the mental activities. In this case inspiration could be there, but its role isn’t critical and probability that it is there all the time is very low. Also, may be... it is more difficult to inspire people on this level... I think... They are more interested in some material compensation from their work, much more than in mental satisfaction. I think if they had to choose between 200 USD and feeling of being inspired at work, they would choose the first one. If they can get both – fine, but if not – not such a big deal.

Researcher: You are saying that the lower is position of a person within a company the lesser is probability to be inspired?

Respondent: Hmm...yes! If a person has potential and ambitions, he goes from promotion to promotion and the degree of responsibility grows and also grows the desire for something more than just package of incentives. Motivation works of course as a mean of satisfying an employee, but it doesn’t last for a long time. It is more difficult to motivate the person on the higher level, especially, if this person doesn’t feel inspired by what he is doing. If you look at the success stories, a lot of them were made by groups of individuals, who even didn’t think about what they could get in return. They liked what they do, they were interested in the result at first glance, but in fact a process of getting there had taken them. They had their ambitions and something else in them and they made it happens, something what others couldn’t. Yes, a lot of them got their bonuses for that or may be not, but that was not the primary reason. What I am saying that for some extra results at work just a promise of bonus or promotion is not enough. It will not make you able to do the thing. It will make you able to want to do it, to try. But it will not make you able to achieve the results, different than routine. So, my answer is – people not only may, but they also must have inspiration at work, otherwise they can’t work.

Researcher: Thank you very much for your time and input! Your opinion is highly appreciated. After the analysis of the results of today’s interview I will send for your confirmation my understanding of interpretation of inspiration at work. Could you please review and amend it if something is not as you expected?

Respondent: Yes, you are welcome and if you need any clarifications later please contact me via e-mail.
8.4. Appendix: The transcript of the respondent's s2c1 interview

Researcher: Were you ever inspired in your job?

Respondent: Yes, I can distinctively remember these situations. Perhaps, before I answer any dipper to this I should explain what I mean by that. In my understanding inspiration is on the same line as thinking that is goes beyond. What I mean is that common use of the word thinking is. It is mainly repeating some ideas which have been internalised by cultural process and in the best case it is worse than repeating the words. The more we can repeat the more thinking personally we are perceived. Inspiration and the next step of thinking is when we are able to draw parallels between processes which are similar and by this way we get out of the box but again we are still limited by the language we use. I would talk about inspiration as something that goes totally beyond the usual process of thinking. Thinking is regarded as TV watching, but maybe thinking is the same TV watching as least thing the brain can do. But thinking might something which is going beyond TV watching and might be creative, but inspiration is something that unique in meaning something new almost like breakthrough.

Researcher: In organisational context, can you recall at least one or any situation when you have been inspired? ....in your job, by your job

Respondent: Inspiration is sort of thing that brings deeper satisfaction and I can do differently, can do more efficiently, not I can get bonuses or recognition, but just more for satisfaction of myself. Bonuses should follow, usually, but it’s not a case. But yes, more or less I can say about this job I had felt these situations but I wouldn’t connect them with job as such, I would say certain state of mind I hopefully trying to maintain and which is one side is critical, ironical and little bit distractive within current perception of time.

Researcher: What exactly initiated that state of mind.. ..inspirational?

Respondent: Hmm... Many things: even good conversation with friend, or something like that. First of all, I have to be open to that and this is maintaining a state of mind that something like that (inspiration) can come and by the maintaining the state of mind I would say that critical perception, ironical perception, paradoxical thinking. I can say one anecdotal thing that happened to me. We were hiking in Croatians mountains in Romania, around 2000 m. It was very poor area... we stayed in one station and person there initiated the strange topics like 'why there some blood was needed in revolutions in 1991 and was it totally pre-arranged was the part of the nation? Etc. It was very interesting evening and night conversation and next morning it was difficult to depart and he said something I could not forget: Thank you for the very interesting night and conversation, which was unexpected. We had such a conversation there! He was happy he found a conversation partner with whom he could share... I was thinking about that moment for a long, long time. It was one of the big moments. That was an inspiration or sort of surprise....

Researcher: What do you think in this case, and any other cases.... what are the sources of inspiration? ....or what is a source of inspiration in this case?

Respondent: Practically, the management theory usually talks about thinking out of box, but you cannot really do that.... This goes beyond the common
thinking and I would stick to the point that this is preserving a special state of
mind. That you are should be ready to this thing to come. You are like open
and do not claim that you know all the truth, that you are ready to say ‘I am
wrong’ and you like a final instance – you are the top manager of the
company and final decision is yours. But by this you have to remember that
you can be wrong and someone knows better or there is no good answer for
that and you shouldn’t give in that social role that work on you. The social
role puts pressure on you: you are on the top, you should know best. But there
are certain things I know but in certain things I can take risk, but in all
situations I should stay open. This is the key thing that balance is in your
mind. This is the great pressure. People are looking at you.... One of the big
temptations: power.

Researcher: What do you think is inspiring in your working place? Is
something inspiring or not? If it is what’s that?

Respondent: In my understanding these are two different things: work and life
as such. If not, we are the slaves to our work. That probably comes from
Greeks: only slaves can have a leisure time. Free citizens of P...[name of a
city] do not have a leisure time because always in journey. Coming from this,
I am sort of journey person than a goal person: hiking in the mountings, etc.
But for the journey, key is that always people around. This is most critical
issue. And then the question was about inspiring moment that is when the
people around. I should always have people around...

Researcher: Do you think inspiration might change or influence something in
organisations? Why?

Respondent: Hmm....

Researcher: Can inspiration be welcomed in organisations?

Respondent: ...According this we should probably look back at the Soviet
system, so called 'razpredlozhenije' ('improvement' in Russian). Sounds to
me like this: people on the top, they know better and then they can calculate
better... and improve our processes. This couldn’t be applied to inspiration.
Or it is a very earthly understanding of inspiration: to make our processes
more efficient... It is slightly slips into the direction of motivation, but this
would keep to the definition of inspiration as breakthrough concept. Therefore
by its nature, it is difficult to keep it everyday or everyday thing... Okay, for
example employees do very good job and each evening or morning you write
e-mail: ‘I appreciate your moments... Thank you’. It is motivation!

Researcher: Again, as in case of inspirational or charismatic leadership, you
may spend more time and attention to your team without actually motivating
it to achieve something. Do you think this type of time sharing or pattern of
behaviour could welcome inspiration time-to-time? Do we need to influence
organisation if this way? ....or motivation is more than enough for
organisations?

Respondent: Absolutely! But....we again go against this principle of consumer
society. Probably, I understand this concept of consumer society very
narrowly. You see, for an organisation or a company the bottom line is a
bottom line: is it in red or black? What is a profit, etc? If you are the owner of
a company, you could select a right team. But what happens practically, on
practical side? If it is a big company, you get into existing theme. Some
culture has been established, you can feel the culture of the company, like
here. When you can start little by little, not because you want the de-
motivation put for you, not just you wants the profits goes up, but it is a part of your life. It is about people not about profit, its measures… It might be seen as unethical… How quickly and efficiently the certain management approach translates into the profit. I don’t think that there is a straight line, but on the other hand, why not? If you are like this, why be different in your job… If we think about intentional change in organisation it is motivation. Inspiration is more personal. If we think about changing something which is personal, it is… I remember this story about a banker, who was dressed as a priest, who travelled somewhere… Idea is that each morning you wake up and should load into yourself a set of beliefs, which is a very rational procedure like cleaning teeth. There is nothing inspiring in it, just boring routine, which is performed on daily basis.

Researcher: Do you think being CEO, you could do everything in organisation, is very inspirational?

Respondent: Hmm…. This is tricky! This is personal! I personally try to draw the line between personal relationships and this motivational thing. But inspiration is tricky in a sense that you imagine. You could kick someone from the track? Is this good for that person or is it not? I would try to be very cautious with it and I remind myself: who am I?

Researcher: Are you overwhelmed by notion of responsibility?

Respondent: Yes.

Researcher: Might be you afraid because you don’t see a bigger picture? …change might be a good thing…

Respondent: I got my theory here: bad things happen. And I am sticking to it… Therefore it is like ‘inaction’ approach. One has to be a real master of the life in order to ‘go with a flow’…It is not in sense ‘sitting and doing nothing’. It is just knowing and trying to get this ‘flow’. How many times looking back we realise that we were influenced by logic. But it is about to handle emotions.

Researcher: Might be this ‘going with a flow’ is inspiration?

Respondent: Most likely… We are getting into the same waters as people using meditation in order to achieve a better performance at the stock market… It is unthinkable…the same with inspiration or enlightenment: applying it to boost performance…

Researcher: Sorry, I know you have to go now. It’s two to eleven…

Respondent: Yeah….it’s eleven. It’s Okay. We are here. They know we are there…

Researcher: Oh, Okay…because I understand… sorry…. for interrupting… I understand your point… I myself so many years was studying all these philosophical approaches of different cultures… especially in sense of religions, etc… I understand this… but in Hindu tradition a lot of sayings about that… for example…. There is one example where many use so called wheel of death. People just through themselves under and … they die…. and even they are dead, they are dead for…. in their understanding…. it’s for the best and…. In this case, if you change something in organisation and even if you are stuck for now or something like this…. Yes, it is like a bad thing… but may be this is the time for person to start new life? You never know, because you never see the bigger picture. You see only one prospective; you might be seeing few, but not all of them…

Respondent: but… it’s… I got my theory here…. It’s… bad things happen, not
best things happen. I’ve seen a lot of that.

Researcher: you should think about that....

Respondent: This is my answer. This is the point: bad things happen. Not to make... this is all within... this is within... and certainly I was not inspired by that... and... Its more... from the western approach... its... ‘inaction’... if it can be re-worded... inaction... its passiveness... and the situations about...

You don’t know... One has to be a real master of the life in order to ‘go with the flow’... This is the true master to go with the flow... Not to work on your free concept, not to work on your rational, because rational is... you certainly can not know everything... I know one anecdote about real sword master.

Who went at night to the village and sitting to understand what happens, what is around, and he took his sword..., and circled it around himself... and he said: wow – 4 robbers were there at this moment. But he went with the flow.

He was not prepared but he was ready for this situation. In this case we can go and say – yes. We have these... robbers... Its a next chance... But that the hand of the master... and this is to let the thing happen. If... if you have to buy the thing, if you have to start, if you have to care of... then it has to be with the flow... the situation...

Researcher: But might be in this case, exactly in this case, because it was a master it may be this going with flow exactly is inspiration?

Respondent: Most likely... Then it’s the same. Then the reason of the freedom is the same... you can not be free if you don’t have reasons for your life, you can not have reasons for your life if you are not free... so, reasoning... and, and, and... We are getting into the same waters as people using meditation in order to achieve a better performance at the stock market... To use for...

some similar reason, yes? You use one technique... it could grow in the totally different direction... and to use it to improve your life... and this with inspiration as enlightenment: applying it to improve... to boost performance...

it is unthinkable direction...

Researcher: Yes... and this is exactly what I didn’t say at very beginning... because it would be difficult for me to explain, because why there is no...

Why only academic approach to inspiration here? Because... you spotted it absolutely correctly... because organisation and people in organisation... or organisation... may try to use it as another level of control... but to the certain extent... this one is like... extreme... another extreme, or not extreme, or just normal way of doing things that inspiration might be used to improve our feelings... because there are different organisations of course, etc., etc. but... a general notion now that organisation is a place of pain, toxic, people suffer, because if for example I don’t want to work but I should, of course I will suffer, and of course my performance is not good... yes... and my personal...

of course I should be neutral, but my personal approach is this is place, this is how to help people to live in organisation. But of course it has many absolutely scientific discovery, it will be used in many other ways... this is life and this is like about stock exchange... and I know many examples or many facts how people use motivation... Hmm... mediation on many things... and well... yes. But what to do? It’s life. But the difference is – it’s our choice.

Because we are doing choice, not someone else, and as you mentioned correctly, you do the choice to fire someone, or to change the flow or not to change the flow... and it’s our choice.

Respondent: Yes. But to me the best is to let it go, inaction...
Researcher: To be honest you are the first senior executive whom I met who said this.

Respondent: But this is not in the sense of this work perception inactivity of sitting and doing nothing... this is just going and trying to get this flow, as a master said, you can only take it with you... but try to go with this... try to go with this... Because... how many times looking back you are a sort of scratching you hands and say: Oh! Why did I do that...? I felt right at that moment... it wasn’t logical; it wasn’t a sort of true rational. Of course you try to get all the necessary information and think about the future... and... then you go back in half a year... and think about that situation and how logical the logic was there... then we are speaking about different... algorithms... but how much were you influenced by the logic? How much by in something else? ...to put logic there? It’s...

Researcher: Now I get it better...

Respondent: It’s really... it’s really to try to have your emotions... that... at this moment... Just a few weeks ago I didn’t hire one person, because I didn’t feel it’s right... she was quite high-qualified... my manager of personnel ... she said she wants to hire that person... but I said No, because she said something I didn’t like...

Researcher: I have heard a lot of noises, but what can I say... I really admire your approach because it will be extremely difficult to lead organisation like this with this approach...as far as I worked here before.

Respondent: Again... with this analysis about this gradual majority... that is known for example... but again... yes... too much poking follow to this. It’s... but the other thing is about the leader... we think about leader... one think it is whom people fear, another – whom people admire, then the third is that the true leader is that people stand ...ourselves... we didn’t buy ourselves...

Researcher: Yes.

Respondent: ...that sort of thing that is the true leader, that is visible to them. That could be the correct thing for the inspiration. I would put a motto ‘my recent thing was...’ ha-ha...

Researcher: Okay. You probably have to go?

Respondent: Yes.

[After a break]

Researcher: We stopped on the very interesting point...

Respondent: Hmm... Do you think inspiration might influence organisational life or not, as tool...? ...remember you said that inspiration can be used... to achieve the same profit objective or it can be used, this was my comment, to help employees to feel better? Why we are doing? Because we are spending at least... quarter or half of their lives there...

Respondent: Hmm... I think ... the personal... for...for...for... for rest of the cases it’s motivation

Researcher: Yeah

Respondent: that should be...

Researcher: I agree...

Respondent: And then in certain cases when the main thing gets right, then it
could be something along the inspirational life...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...then we keep in mind that inspiration...

Researcher: Yes

Respondent: ... Those there are not for us...

Researcher: Yes... but I personally think that only these few actually... lead masses, because... we can check it any someone use it under influence of inspiration but don’t know how to say... use to draw something... this product or outcome will inspire in many centuries other people and this is ... it’s good as example, but it’s no how man felt, yeah... Inspiration should not be like motivational scheme, like improving something, but... hmm... why here is concern about organisational life? Because people, you are absolutely right, people are different and different people can make different... hmm... this is like playing with words but what I mean... if someone has potential to be inspired why not to use it, but not for the sake of profit but for the sake of... creativity there, etc, etc, etc... and why... I am not trying to draw the global concept like inspiration is like improvement of motivation... What I am trying to do in this case... to understand its place in a bigger picture. And this is why research as such pursue quite simple... role to understand the role and significance of inspiration on three levels of organisation. You represent this top or so called senior management level... there are others like middle management or line management... and other level as...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...and the last level or the first founded depending on direction – the shop-floor employees, this is who is doing some kind of... low level job... and... but you on the level who actually drive the certain organisation into certain direction. Of course, I understand all these political forces, all these situations in the society, because we can’t separate organisation from society, this is part of it, Yeah? But for your organisation you create so called..., not, you participate in creation culture and change if necessary... etc... And this is why your opinion is very important for me as I said in a very beginning it is absolutely private and what I want from you is just your personal reflection of inspiration to ... because logically your perception of inspiration will be different from the people on other levels. Or might...

Respondent: I always remember... there are sometimes... discussions what is cultural person (said in Russian: what is intelligent person). I always ask what...it was intelligent person. He was very simple man, who was in balance and total understanding with his surrounding. He knew his place in the structure and hierarchy there...

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: He knew his place vice verse, the tiger, the forest, other people, and, and, and... his living depends on him and...

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: ...and the cancer didn’t make him... didn’t make him un-cultural or something... very... That’s why it’s very hard for me to say that those people probably... who are not from the top-level management, but low level jobs would be somehow different...

Researcher: People not, but as they have different objectives, different tasks... and... their way of thinking within organisational terms, I am not saying in general life. In general, of course, everything is linked, of course,
but in general life might be different. This is exactly one of current field that
organisations, as such, are ruining human being lives. Why? Because it is not
a fair place to be... etc... This is exactly my personal motivation why I study
inspiration - because I see that a certain level... I can... this is for me... it is up
to me and this is for me to change something if I could...

Respondent: I, yeah, I... in order to answer this inspirational thing... As I said
this inspirational thing it should work on the person-to-person basis. I am in
personal contact with, let's say, ten or more to fifteen people in the
organisation. It's also logical...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ... that I am away from 'aparats' [bureaucratic system] here...
Researcher: Hmm. I am not in the position to agree or disagree, but what can
I say in this case... What do you think how inspirational leadership as well-
established known field in management is linked?

Respondent: Okay, one can not certainly make other people happy, or... to...
make them happy. The way I see for myself is I have to provide a playing
field, so, that the rules in the organisation have to be open and honest, just
because there is certain level of intention. So, there should be a
champion...and this is the role and this aspect the culture...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ... that to establish the culture in this way... and then if the
people are ready to use it or not... naturally leaning towards us, leaders,
towards justice. Who can observe I think in a very many cases why an
ordinary person becomes crooked...who was his or her integrity. One hand it's
that person, on other hand its conditions or surroundings. And the conditions
are - they say whether you do as we say and join us or get out. And this is
where manager should provide that there are no such conditions...

Researcher: Hmm...Unfortunately, not the managers think like you... hmm...
But may be in that case you can answer the next question which would be...
Do you welcome inspiration in your organisation? And I remember your
answer that this is only for few etc, but you... for example imagine we have
got these few people who might be these few, but do you welcome an
organisation for them or do you cultivate it, or do you encourage it or not, or
you just leave it as it is?

Respondent: Answer whether I should welcome... this is my co-workers with
whom I have a direct touch I can see what works with them, imagine I can see
what works for certain people...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ... the way I should approach,

Researcher: May be in this case we can replace the ending of the sentence: do
you welcome inspiration just in life, not in organisation, but
everywhere... or...? Yeah...? This was my assumption...

Respondent: Hmm...

Researcher: ... and this is why I have asked this question about organisation
because (as we agreed before) this is part of our life... part of our life... and...
why not?

Respondent: Hmm... well... this inspirational thing is... and I have an
observance of some cases that it doesn't depend upon once whether we should
have education for example... I know the CPU is working with bigger speed
... or... CPU is preserved and not fainted by alcohol, drugs, and...
Researcher: Do you mean exactly CPU, or perception of the person?

Respondent: I would say that... the brain, the number of connections... and...

Researcher: you mean pure technical term, yeah?

Respondent: As much as I understand from biology there has to be... in order to have these number of connections you to exercise the brain, and, and, and... but in other cases you just have to... you don’t need to kill those neurons by... by... by... poisons, natural poisons... amount of genes should help the amount of brain that has...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: and, and, and then ... I’ve seen this is with older generation that in our perception, in our understanding without any proper education six-seven-eight classes ...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...there anyone is a great chess player. Chess – is what I was good or could be ... there wasn’t personal brain driver...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...and, and, and... things like that ... I know like my dad... he sometimes, he can create such a chain of logical events and combinations...

How can he do that?! Of course, his premises could be wrong just because the lack of education...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: but the fact that he can construct these chains of events...and, and, and... I don’t know how to...

Researcher: Yeah... I understand... the same... I am just trying to make in other words... but could you say in this case that what we need inspiration at work? Obviously you answered that we need it in life but do we need inspiration at work?

Respondent: It’s good if it’s there, but to say... ... let’s say our engineers... we are observing the action of the equipment, all the hard work ... today really we can not do it without inspiration, but do just a repetitious good job, and it’s more with the view with personality, look at the lack of... job...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...whether one wants to develop himself or so as a personality...

Researcher: Hmm... Just correct me if I am wrong, what you are implying is the more developed intellectually person...... the higher chance to be inspired or... huh?

Respondent: Absolutely not... I am trying to say. absolutely not, that in the sense that this educational development it’s not necessarily related... for me inspiration is not necessarily related to the educational development.

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: it’s level of education...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...level of formal education... this IQ thing, it might be related to this EQ

Researcher: or... SQ

Respondent: but, but, but...

Researcher: Hmm... Ok... I understand...

Respondent: ...yeah... the formal education... it depends on how dogmatic it is. Dogma is a main killer of inspiration...

Researcher: Hmm probably... and of everything...
Respondent: Yeah... and probably dogma doesn’t ... for inspiration
Researcher: Hmm... Okay, but in this case what actually prevent people from
experiencing inspiration at work? Because probably as we discussed before in
real life, in general in life, it is not problem at all and it’s quite welcome. But
actually preventing people of being inspired at work? ... Does something
prevent them or?
Respondent: I think inspiration is like birthday or Christmas or those... which
can not be everyday... it comes for those ...
Researcher: Might be... somehow I got impression that... we discussed
previously that in real, in general in life it’s easy to be or more chances,
easier... I don’t know how to explain or extend, but ... It’s like easy to be
inspired... or... in... than in organisational settings. May be I am wrong, but
I’ve got this impression
Respondent: In the source that the conditions are right and the surroundings
are right or...?
Researcher: In this case it’s probably it is not a very correct answer, because
in this case what do we understand... in working life... do we understand the
organisation, do we understand the working life environment, conditions,
particular work environments, settings, working desk arrangements... and this
is why it’s quite biggest question
Respondent: See, I don’t think such that the inspiration is good, but whether
this is absolutely necessary that’s ...people, or accountant, or technician who
deals with this hard work is just doing his job and applying his knowledge in a
best way and...and... so there is ... what room... what necessity... how...
how necessary the creativity is? Of course it’s better if it’s present, but...
Researcher: What you are saying is that for some kind of routine jobs
inspiration is not needed, yeah?
Respondent: No, it’s ...huh...
Researcher: I understand, I just trying to...
Respondent: What role would it play?
Researcher: Yes, I understand, oh, if you ask me what role it would play I
would say in even no role that person will feel better and for me it’s very
important because at the end of the day everything is about how do we feel
Respondent: Hmm
Researcher: If we discuss something about meditation or this side of our
existence or all these western oriental approaches to life that say that mood is
the main thing, if I am in a bad mood I ruin our life and why I am living for...
And this is why for me inspiration is more like a lay of living – the more we
are inspired the less we suffer. This is why I am asking so...
Respondent: This then bring us back to the manager’s task to provide for a
good work environment, for a good aspect, and the rest is... the person
understands this and ...lay who provides for his family, does his job, does
what he can and is asked, citizen and society... and he gets his satisfaction
there... it’s not to much to do with... the mood thing is not too much to do
with...
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: But providing good environment where is no pressure, people,
employees are treated equally, and managers sort of cater, as much as they
can, the individual needs...
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: and... but then it depends individually...

Researcher: Yes, you are right... but have you heard before about alienation, because much of what you just said is what Marx was saying that we exchange our life time, we are paid for that and initially we might find ourselves alienated from others and at the end of the process alienated from the society, from our life, from everything because we just exchanging our life time... I am not very much in Marx, but what you just said it's just like proving - yes, person exchange his or her time against money, management ensure fair rules and that's it. Who cares about our feelings or how do you feel... or... yes, well, how do you do our job with emotional context. I am not saying that this is important. I am just trying to clarify your point, yeah...?

Respondent: These conditions, these are minimum for ...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...the lowest level, if we say that.

Researcher: But in general, do you think we need to include inspiration in set of possible conditions or not? Of course if we can cultivate it. Assume we can cultivate it or assume we can encourage it - should we include it in this list in order to create a perfect working place or not?

Respondent: I am afraid I would say No.

Researcher: No...?

Respondent: It's too personal, it shouldn't be on the list of must do things of a manager. It's on a list, Okay, if they are there that's okay, but it should not be for a standard...

Researcher: It's like breaking priorities, something like it?

Respondent: Yeah... There is too much in there. Motivation is okay.

Researcher: Motivation is understandable, but I imagine somebody trying to...

Respondent: to... (says in Russian) to treat me to teach me how to live

Researcher: Okay

Respondent: The manager tries to ...read in the book about the inspiration and talk about the inspiration... Ok, I am going to teach you some inspiration, ha-ha... no, no. no...

Researcher: Okay

Respondent: It is such a private thing...

Researcher: Ok, Fair enough, I think. I want to ask you from another prospective - What ... for example someone has, as we discussed before... very creative job, etc, or something like this, but what does prevent people to experience inspiration in organisation?

Respondent: Well, we are returning to this question, whether it's needed. I don't think there is a general approach, a general rule or something... If a person is not required to do that... if he or she doesn't have this mindset towards, they ...

Researcher: Yeah, if you want to generalise, for example - this is particular person, he is welcoming inspiration or she is welcoming inspiration, what prevent actually her or him to be inspired, because I understand it is somehow a leading question and of course it's linked to need of inspiration at work... but why I am asking is because with notion as I said before there is inspiration and leadership, and enormous amount of books are written about how to inspire, how to create or how to be inspirational

Respondent: This is a brainwashing!
Researcher: This is why I am asking why it works
Respondent: No, no, no. It is different. The inspiration it that is something we need – brainwashing…
Researcher: We should again touch there…
Respondent: The plain inspiration as it is beside desires and alcohol, this is probably... we have to be very careful with inspiration at work place. And putting this in the textbooks and, and, and…
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: It’s too private…
Researcher: Yeah, it’s slightly aside, I am diverting from a topic, just to let you know... You know what was the last topic which was included in the organisational theory? It was spirituality in the workplace...and now it’s considered as a part of it.
Respondent: How did it happen?
Researcher: Talks started something back in 1999, but there is a number of researches, books, textbooks that say that spirituality at work is the same as soul at work – person is there, spirituality is there...and this is why you are so against situation... but you see – strange things happens…
Respondent: At work!!! It’s my life! ...but it’s nature of work
Researcher: Okay, to the some extend I agree, but other point of view. What is organisation? Organisation is about control. And these might be other degrees of control, or, alternatively way of perceiving of this is how to help people to do this routine and monotonous job and to be happier or just happy.
Respondent: Control is always about of having your feedback, and by understanding your rules, meaning your spirituality, your way of life towards other people you are doing nothing else but providing that ... very good… that... have... that you can plan for their feedback. Yeah, but another thing is just to take things as they are and then analyse the details. And to try to tell you that each person ...
Respondent: ...and this standardisation of thinking, standardisation of spirituality sends your name to the mobile operator and …
Researcher: And this is how it is...
Respondent: No, no, no…
Researcher: If we diverted slightly again, from spirituality in management theory, such thing as very popular nowadays it’s new linguistic programming. And related to... and this is all about organisation, and there is a special term like emotional... IQ, EQ, now it spiritual quotient – SQ intelligence... You see so many things happening and this is why ... I am not thinking... I don’t think I am running ahead of train, but I try to do in this particular case... I try to understand the particular place of inspiration within working settings within organisation.... Do we need to study it or not it’s another... but... but my task is to understand that’s place. All your comments are very welcome because your work is very unusual I’d say.
Respondent: It’s typical…
Researcher: Hmm…
Respondent: It’s typical…
Researcher: That’s quite Okay, because initially you didn’t have any opinion, now you have this – it’s absolutely normal. But now the next question – exactly as you said now you are quite typical, but what do you think –
There is a positive or negative effect in the organisational life or towards organisational goals or...?

Respondent: Shouldn’t be... shouldn’t be considered there is a... answer... What I am saying that I am very sceptical about introducing or using this aspect in the organisational life, probably I should not be answering whether it is good or bad for organisation – it’s simply should not be there. But this will be a little bit too much that my employers would try to control my personal life. I think there is motivation...

Researcher: Hmm do you see it as a breakthrough, like a break out some kind as human rights at work?

Respondent: It’s... the situation is always tricky with manager and employee... supervisor and employee... They are naturally in the position when one was given an authority and by that it is presumed that he has... he possesses more truth...

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: ...and... if that is misused and ... than it’s simply... it’s simply bad!

Researcher: Yeah, very good answer.

Respondent: Just in very small cases, very occasional cases, when it’s more to do with human relationships...

Researcher: Hmm... How much time do we have, because, well... now we are...?

Respondent: What is personally, what advised... ten more minutes?

Researcher: Yeah...

Respondent: Good

Researcher: Hmm ... I just asked about positive and negative, I just want to re-phrase this... I understand the answer, just to hear yours Yes or No...

Respondent: Hmm

Researcher: Can you imagine working life without inspiration?

Respondent: Yes

Researcher: Okay. And... emotional side of all this...we’ve mainly discussed philosophically or generally how organisation or individuals in organisation feel themselves. But emotional side... Do you think or how does inspiration impact your feeling or...?

Respondent: I am more concerned of whether I am being treated...

Researcher: Yeah... but it’s just one thing, but assume that there things are absolutely on fair basis...and you are inspired. Can you do a job? Because what the question is... because... some people say Yes, some people say No. When inspired we can’t work, we start loosing stimuli, and something... can’t concentrate on something what we start what inspirational... because in general in life...

Respondent: It’s still motivation, because... ha... if you are... no, no, no... no, no, no... the limiting line is the management, the supervising the jobs, the owners they could not and should not go into the meaning of the life for the employee. It’s too much!

Researcher: Too much of personal concern?

Respondent: Too much of... of...of... brainwashing or... something...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: Because I see the way how it can be misused...Organisational goals, vision, determination... oh...
Researcher: It is used and misused almost everywhere...
Respondent: Yeah, but... It's all the motivational thing, it's all on the motivational level. Okay. Here I am selling my job, I have a ... I am selling my knowledge, my skills, I have interesting colleagues, I have a good goals to work for, it's Okay. I have salary that satisfies me, it's Okay... but don't ask me... I am talking as an employee...
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: ...but don't ask me to think your way...
Researcher: Hmm?
Respondent: In the management prospective of course it is better if you can control, you can predict the way that people think, that people react, but the one think is to understand, and then to cater their needs, but the other way is to install this new software, this software when we are not absolutely sure of their response... but... hmm
Researcher: Yeah... I understand... but for example... for example I work on some kind of project, and the project is just exciting, or I can feel like wow... one day I really excited to do that, I am so...
Respondent: ...but this is job satisfaction, this is not inspiration. This is job satisfaction.
Researcher: How to distinguish between that? Because it... I work on project for example... for two months, but suddenly one day something like another view of something... or another sudden idea like highlighted... I can do that... and this is inspiration and...
Respondent: ...quality of job or...
Researcher: Yeah, but what do you think in these conditions... we will be able to perform a job?
Respondent: You mean when there is no inspiration?
Researcher: No, no, no... there is such kind of blink and I am inspired, and how it could impact exactly my job duties or job responsibilities?
Respondent: You see... I don't think you can write it in the job description to be inspirational. No. If the manager wants to create the circumstances, to get right next to people, huh... the conditions and then to hope for the best... And to get them from the right cultures, probably...
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: ...and in this sense I think the theory goes the West and there is more power for the inspirational thing, because they insist on the personal freedom, and on the rights of the individual, whether in the east it's more about collective rights and collective needs. When...
Researcher: Yeah... but if it is collective rights or collective needs, then collective values or collective goals dominate my own. This is not fair.
Respondent: Huh...
Researcher: Ok, but how does inspiration impact your force of feelings in this case? Your answer - it should not be impacted at all.
Respondent: Hmm....
Researcher: Or may impact or it doesn't ...?
Respondent: I am happy when it happens, I am delighted...
Researcher: But can you ... this is exactly the question... but can you work after that? Can you perform your duties when you are inspired? Can you continue working this day?
Respondent: ...everyday duties? Yeah, yeah
Researcher: Okay... and...

Respondent: It's said it probably is easier to be a monk somewhere in the
cave... alone... it's much more difficult to...
Researcher: Yeah, exactly... then to be a divine person in a real life and to do
your family and site-off work duties. Yeah, I absolutely agree with
that... and... It's very interesting, but in general, if we continue this example,
that you feel inspired or generally if you inspired does it affect your feeling of
security at work? Feeling of security — what do I mean in this case... It's a
fear or thought of how secure someone is at his or her job, yeah... Why I am
asking this... because it is related to the previous question. Sometimes an
inspired, or in the state of inspiration, or I don't know how to say it in a
different way, people can do strange things and... actions to some things that
may ruin their career or something like this. Do you think in this case
inspiration may affect your feeling of security, you might be careless, or not
change at all, or...

Respondent: Hmm... just decisions and actions have to be rational, it's...
It's... yeah... hmmm... Imagine, that somebody is coming to you and we are
employers and saying -- why did you do that? Oh, I was inspired. I thought
this, oh, you know, I was inspired. It doesn't work!

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: It's... again we are talking about routine, we are not talking
about the project, let's say, some academic environment, or... some serious
research project, or... something... Although I'd say that they would have
more routine than anybody else... and... No, I wouldn't take it for an
answering...

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: That doesn't suit thing because I was inspired. It's too personal,
again and again; it's too personal to be used in a job context. It can be among
your colleagues which you understand very well. I think you understand very
well.

Researcher: Yeah, but if it happened, if you suddenly inspired by something,
in this case it might be some idea or new way of the doing thing, how it might
impact your job duties’ performance, feeling of security or other things.
Because these things happen...

Respondent: Hmm...

Researcher: Do you think so?

Respondent: That's real what organisational culture you need. You need
routine, very stagnant, or that this person does his job... or that you creating
the team...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...there you do very many experienced things.

Researcher: Hmm, but...

Respondent: Won't you manage those differently?

Researcher: This is what I am trying to find out, because initially... my initial
assumption was like you said right for routine job we don't need it, for highly
creative job we need it. But somehow in the course of research I changed my
mind

Respondent: I'd say for the routine job it's not critical I think critical for
routine — not at all. I think it's critical for some highly creative tasks.

Researcher: It is critical, but do you think it is must or not... to have it?
Respondent: For those probably is who have it creative. When you have to
find some sort of unusual solution, then it’s when you are looking for the
breakthrough, then of course it’s critical...

Researcher: Hmm... Okay, thank you. It was very interesting...

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, when... to get to this whether it’s... But mostly it’s
not needed and it would be against if my employer trying to inspire...

Researcher: ...manipulate...?

Respondent: Yeah... It should be another word for manipulation. But then of
course it can happen on a personal basis and just ... and then there are for
some certain jobs... for some highly creative jobs.

Researcher: Okay, thank you, it was very interesting

Respondent: Yeah... a conversation......

Researcher: May be just few more formal questions... Remember we
discussed at the end of the first session about this owner or proprietor of the
organisation who can do change etc... But you, at your level – you are a top
person at the company. Do you feel yourself as a part of organisation, or just a
visitor or just an exchanger, or ... Can you highlight slightly why?

Respondent: If I am on this position, first of all I care for these people. This is
a kind of ... I’d expect the same treatment from my supervisors. And, and,
and... this is what I am trying to provide for the people...

Researcher: Hmm.

Respondent: ...and... I am responsible for the time of their life that they are
staying here.

Researcher: In this case do you feel or associate inspiration with some kind of
altruism? Do you know what altruism in organisational settings is?

Respondent: I don’t see the link.

Researcher: Yeah... Might be there is no obvious link, but if you really
care... Why in general do we have altruism as a notion in organisation ...
Because some people trying to do things actually they don’t need to do, but
they do things? In normal it’s called they go extra mile.

Respondent: Extra mile, yeah.

Researcher: Yeah and why do they do that? Is it somehow related to
inspiration of being in this organisation or not?

Respondent: I never thought of this as being part of inspiration... just more
than they are just decent people. And, and, and...

Researcher: Yeah, but this is... we are saying they ‘just...’ somehow
different. But what exactly caused this ‘just’...? Is it motivation, definitely...
altruism. They don’t need money, they don’t need any even recognition they
just do things, they just... and this is my assumption. That might be somehow
linked to... because we even don’t know what drives them actually...

Respondent: Do they mind self in the position of employee ... if I am treated
fairly and all organisational structure is fair for me, then I for that choose to
go the extra mile....for the organisation, for my colleagues.

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: If a treatment is like... any other... and...any less than that or
substantially less than that, then you would not have any extra mile from me.

Researcher: Okay

Respondent: That’s consciously...

Researcher: And this is nothing to do with inspiration?

Respondent: Hmm.... No, just plain, plain, motivation, plain treatment...
Researcher: Okay. Absolutely last question, I am sorry for it...

Respondent: No, no worry...

Researcher: It's some kind of strange might be, but ... what happens with performance in a case if someone is inspired, if you are inspired with a job or something like this. Do you think inspiration might impact performance or productivity or...

Respondent: I think it's really hard to measure that. Imagine to trying making the function within the moments of environment... your productivity is accordingly dropping ...ha-ha...

Researcher: But... now in this sentence actually you spotted why all motivation theories are not very effective, because it's very difficult to measure.

Respondent: It shouldn't be than treating persons the way you want to be treated... Being all the human beings, provide for the just environment and then hope that there other people are decent people and, and, and... Not putting people for the positions where they can break.

Researcher: Okay, thank you for your time...

Respondent: Thank you for the interview and ...and at least now I know what is in the academy on the management side.
Appendix: The transcript of the respondent’s s3c1 interview

Researcher: First question is in general...or on general level of our understanding... Do you distinguish difference between motivation and inspiration?

Respondent: Ha... You might not see the difference in the results... But...inspiration is longer lasting... It is there...

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: Motivation can be pushed when inspiration is much harder to incetify via instrumental HR tools. I don’t believe in those tools...as creating inspiration...to put them on the table... I’d say motivation can be bought. Inspiration can’t...be bought for money. If you say everybody works for money... there is a difference in the way... there is a sort of satisfaction point’s level, where money is not the most critical worth to offer...

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: When these people, those inspired people, these real professionals...then its different circumstances... Then it comes to indeed trying to find those factors that attract people that have that inspiration...

Researcher: Yes...you just said ‘these real professionals’... there like inspired... it’s like in your understanding...it’s like being real professional or high level professional... it’s like to be inspired person...

Respondent: Yeah, yeah...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: I make a distinction between finance and HR... Especially... they are not necessarily bound to telecom... We talk about inspiration in telecom, but... In the background we do have a profession... I do have a profession, I do finance... I don’t do telecom, I do finance. It’s not the same...that knowledge is not necessarily bound to the telecom sector itself... the tries are bound...creating net incomes probably is bound to the factors that are in telecom... but the profession itself can be any kind of the industry

Researcher: Hmm... but do you feel the difference working for...in finance for telecom to other industry, for example food industry? Do you feel the difference in your profession?

Respondent: Yes

Researcher: Yes...?

Respondent: Yes, that comes with...a...probably mobile telecom...because it’s not necessarily true for a fixed telecom...

Researcher: Yes...

Respondent: especially mobile telecom...you can have...better...because the sector is crowded...it a positive a sort of outlook...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...for an industry and just a company itself. The member of company is also competition...we all know it can be appointed ...because it’s license... you know...you know your competitors...which makes it easy...you can pinpoint a sort of common enemy if you know...they are several, but only few... they can’t come from anywhere else because it’s license...sort of...pretty much...you find a plain field...
Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: it's... it comes close to playing a game...match with an enemy which is already there. It can't be that somebody else is taking over...it can't be that Japan is suddenly taking over...you know...understand for some who are around here having... for example...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...for logically-minded people, for those who are logical... pretty focused competition... which is...I found a part that I am not everybody...

We are not yet a biggest, we are loose, but we are a challenger in this market, which is...definitely inspirational...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: I mean it's a kind of growing organisation, because of all kinds of new opportunities that we didn't have before, because we are growing, creating value... in a sense of growing... I hate the word of shareholder's value, but we are... we are not doing it for shareholders; we are doing it for a fun. At least I am doing it for a fun... of creating value...That's a positive for me. I am a little positive opportunistic kind of person...The other thing that we have in mobile which is inspirational is that... we are all over the place, it's a mess market over there. Directly with consumers, it's a consumer... It's something between fast moving and the energy sector...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: It's a sort of flux and feel of intense moving the consumer goods

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: when at the end of the day you have a possibility of...a revenue stream from...a complete customer, of course...which give all kinds of levels and drivers...and tricking... marketing tricking...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...that are not very well known for business to business kind of markets..

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: so, there are a lot of levels to play with...

Researcher: Hmm...and... Are you happy with idea...probably of course you are not happy...that any... solution, ...because it is technology-driven industry, ...that any solution can be pocketed easily? What's your personal view on that, what's your personal comment, or what's your personal opinion on that?

Respondent: It... I think it's not as technology driven as classical view on telecom sector is probably... I mean... at least inspiration is not probably coming from technology... at least not for me... The real... technology does change the real game from time to time... which give you new game, new opportunities, new licences...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ..eee...different playing field... That's it... I am fine with that...yet we get profit, it is costly...that means huge amount of money in my profession it's always nice...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: huge amount of money that are required and that's ...gonna be...they are back as well... and that's come from the consumers... It's a mass market, sort of... consumer needs...we are talking about that we need... the real [unclear]...made in the consumer playing field...which is not necessarily
technology driven... They are naming it but the real competition is somewhere else...

Researcher: Hmm, is it on the people level?
Respondent: Absolutely...
Researcher: Ok...
Respondent: Absolutely...
Researcher: And if we look at your personal feeling level or understanding level... have you been inspired at your job? Have you ever been inspired at your job? In this job or a recent job?
Respondent: Well... at the quite high level of self-inspiration it seems that... I am pushing the edge most of the times, which gives me inspiration that I need... eee... seeking the edge in sales and marketing as well, that's providing a lot of... radical thoughts, real radical moves. That can be inspiration that comes from... financial or business and economic understanding... I believe in pushing my finance results... by pushing operations... I probably am inspired... as soon as I am done this in theory in this company or industry... I probably will find another industry...
Researcher: Hmm... you have put it in a very interesting way that you are self-inspired... Could you expand please what do you mean by that? Do you find inspiration for yourself or you just inspired all the time... or... how do you feel it?
Respondent: I love change; I need change... to be stimulated in different thinking... I am seeking the competition, looking for competition and it's nice that you are knowing your competition, that's companies are known... some of the people are known. I am that competitive, I'm that result-driven... To get there it's becoming more and more challenging, more and more difficult that's to say...
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: to play off more and more levels to get to that result... that's far... that gets more complex. The inspiration is... inspiration... first level of inspiration is that you can make this company survive...
Researcher: ha-ha
Respondent: That wasn't so easy... I came from totally different industry... I am coming from... health, recruitment... really... a little differently but in 90s here in Netherlands... sort of growth when you can find... when you can see sort of service offerings, business models... completely going around... I like to play with the time and money... not transaction-driven... like retail, for example...
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: ... like in most... consumer goods... I mean that's no fun. Those negotiations are bundle prices... and some product features may be that's not inspiring. I like to play with time and money, sort of recurring revenues...
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: ... contracts, and... that's a part I like... that you can play a volume kind of thing, volume and time... and little boundaries. The business model is probably that you can change that or influence that... It's probably what gives me inspiration as soon as competition is on. It's nice.
Researcher: Ok... hmm... Just to summarise this part... two questions... What in this case inspiration is... like you said - challenge, change... or...? Or it's all about it... challenge, change, change, and rush? What... you said so many
things...and...OK... Could you take any examples from your inspirational situation and explain...try to highlight in details...what...I understand what you just said that this is how you... How you put yourself in inspiration situation, how you play with it. What do you feel in that time? Do you feel differently or the same is it your mind or all the body? Just try to recreate this feeling...

Respondent: The feeling is continuous through new energy...

Researcher: energy...

Respondent: New energy... A couple of my new reports few years back... It's unbelievable. I've got six pin...doing this...still keep this level of energy...

You get in a flow a sort of a mindset that goes actually... You get in that sort of thing where in two ...or three...there will be a tremendous growth around 60 percent...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...everybody said that the market was saturated which simply proved it's not...every investment bankers report proved that there are five to fifteen thousands new customers coming from 1.3 to 2.3 million around...in one year! It was a sensation! ...pretty complete organisation...I mean...thinking of something, breaking the rules, going through the roof...

Knowing that a couple of your thinking lessons contributing to that changing the situation... That makes your energy pulls that is lasting until the flow end. That you try to...a sort of have a flow going...as long as you can, expand your mindset and feeling at that stage...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...as long as possible...

Researcher: Hmm... and then... When this flow ends...what happens? Do you look for the next one or possibly awaking the next one? What happens when this flow of events changes?

Respondent: You gonna find the next one...

Researcher: Seeking?

Respondent: Absolutely... I told, in my various reports was sort of...we are 6-7 years around, a lot of things become a sort of normal...regular...normal...it was last summer...yeah... my managers were doing a work, that kind of things... I advised to simply do themselves what they like most...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: You are the boss... you pick it up...just pick it up, just do it. Kind of 'create it yourself'. That's also what I try to do for myself. I mean the nice pieces, you simply do, that's where you get your inspiration from...that create your sort of success, that's concrete contribution to what you are doing... You have to find where you have concrete contribution...in that thing...and...it is going to bring you to the next level, it puts you back in the flow...in your flow. I mean it's not impossible. But you really have to actively look for opportunities...

Researcher: Hmm...and how...you all the time mentioned... For how long usually this flow last? ...approximately

Respondent: It depends... I mean two or three... at least several months or so...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: I mean if you...I mean...inspiration lasts at least for a few weeks because otherwise it’...it’s...push work, a sort of hard push...or...the flow is
not exactly the same as inspiration. I mean...the inspiration is before the flow starts probably...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...inspiration is... It has something that can change...not necessarily does, but...can challenge, in your belief, a part of the world that you are working in...

Researcher: Hmm...And do you think, in this case, the positive or negative effect of inspiration? Because...it's just...you said: challenging the way you live...

Respondent: yeah...

Researcher: Is it positive or negative?

Respondent: Challenge is always positive...

Researcher: And for? It's for you...But for organisation? What do you think?

Respondent: For organisation...there is nothing...

Researcher: Hmm...in the way...it is interesting statement...

Respondent: For organisation, there is nothing... I mean...its people that make up organisation. I mean the organisation is a sort of various kind of thing that comes from people...

Researcher: Yeah... in this case organisation is not as entity, organisation as a function... this means it’s a way of organizing...

Respondent: Hmm

Researcher: This means it may threaten the way...for example, in the way T-Mobile is organised...In this case is it positive or negative or just neutral?

Respondent: It’s... I think you understand what I said. Inspiration is always positive... challenge is always positive...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...if people feel it differently, they can’t be inspired...

Researcher: Aha! Okay...ha-ha...but...it’s not a secret, that many people that are not inspired of organisation...just work there because of different reasons... and what do you think prevent them from being inspired?

Respondent: Themselves!

Researcher: Themselves?

Respondent: Yeah...your energy...you have to have a certain level of energy, but...your energy that you put in when you do something – is your choice.

Those people who are not inspired, just working around...and consciously probably decided not to put their best energy in there...

Researcher: That means it’s about conscious decision...

Respondent: Energy is...

Researcher: Yes, because in this case we have so called a Cartesian problem, this means that mind, which is intangible, causes something tangible in life, like changes in this case...

Respondent: Yes...

Researcher: It’s very interesting...

Respondent: Yes. What I normally say, that not only in business, but also in private things are pretty much the same...and you will get...only if you know what you are about yourself...you can... I choose...I do something or I don’t... It’s very clear and there is nothing in between.

Researcher: Hmm...

Respondent: So... It’s really black and white, it’s really explicit. And it goes wrong if most organisations, most people don’t choose that black and white.
They let it go...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...or they leave...they decide to walk the path that everybody does... But if you consciously make your choices, that not necessarily it a different choice that anybody else’s...If you make that choices and you decide to put your energy in then, it always in line with your choice. Nobody else then yourself can decide what you are going to do... If you don’t want to do it — leave!

Researcher: Hmm. It’s a very good instruction for HR department. Hopefully eventually they will implement it. But not now...ha-ha...

Respondent: So, what I do for new recruitments of my personnel, my controllers. It does always make a best, if you have fun... You have fun and you learn...tremendously. You want to make more money, and then you have to go somewhere else... If you work somewhere you better make sure you have fun, because otherwise ...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: I mean sitting... It’s not obliged about, I mean...life and business come... it that sort of better. I mean...make your own choice, decide where to put your energy. But there is no problem to put your energy there but only in this combination, your own choice... sort of model... other school of freedom...that sounds that there could be restrictions... you have to decide if you are going to play according to rules that are in the organisation...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: If you don’t please... do something else. Be an entrepreneur... I mean those things are pretty close for me. You decide for yourself, you choose, you put your energy in... But the last thing is not the difficult if you made the first...because it’s always your choice.

Researcher: Hmm. It’s seems that your approach is - be active. Don’t stay passive, be active...

Respondent: Absolutely... absolutely...

Researcher: And we just...

Respondent: ...also that you know that are things where you will not put your energy in, there are sort of thing you are going to do...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...but you take those, because you know that go through that source. That you minimise that and put your energy in the things you like. Not like... [Unclear]...what my managers are doing... Stupid... I mean the nice force you should bring yourself. That’s why you are here, that’s why you put your inspiration in, that’s where you get your energy level from. Just do it yourself. Pick it up again. Just sit there, don’t wait. Go in there, pick it up. Do it!

Researcher: And how do you deal with people who decide to stay passive and even not informing that they are passive? Do you deal with them or just leave them alone?

Respondent: Most people - I deal with them...because it’s my sort of thing... To be fair... I tell them that I am done. Find, decide, do their work properly. Fine! No growth, No nothing. That’s it. Even I ... pretty good. If they start bothering somebody else... sort of rumouring or gossiping...they are out!

Researcher: I see. You just mentioned that inspiration is an active thing and
you just mentioned this - what leading and something like that...

Researcher: Yes

Researcher: But do you think inspiration is possible not only for leaders but also for followers as well?

Respondent: Yes

Researcher: And what happens if this inspiration clashes?

Respondent: I don’t think inspiration is clashing...I mean, they might not like a couple of those choices, though if you are explaining...very openly, very transparent... where they come from... I said in T-mobile... the biggest risk that this organisation has that it is not sort of not decided here since... it’s pretty much closed to not invented here, but it’s not decided here. Everybody who are here has his own decision, in principle... you can’t take every decision by yourself you have to take decisions from someone else. The only condition that... the only thing you have to make sure as a probably good inspirational leader... is that you don’t decide before you know openly what your direct report think about it...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...not only think... what...everybody should write to put their organisational prop. Because then it is open, it is clear, everybody has a feeling that he has been heard... Of course he has to do something with a difference that makes sense... You have to know the alternatives... You have a complete playing field... Don’t compromise too easily... Simply don’t compromise, but discuss... and then really discuss...because if you are coming from these positions... this could be the only playing field. This could be the playing field...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...and you only know it if you discuss...

Researcher: Yeah

Respondent: ...May be you decide... and...it should be completely open talk... with being open...actively see the discussion before you make up your mind and does before you decide... I hate action lists for that reasons... I hate action lists because what that does it focuses on the action list and not on...eee...

Researcher: Yeah, I see. Is it correct if I summarise just saying that your approach to inspire or inspiration is – just don’t leave it yourself?

Respondent: Absolutely

Researcher: Okay

Respondent: ...not before...you can limit yourself. It should be your own decision. Don’t let yourself being limited.

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: That’s not necessary also. I mean...all the values in the future, sounds strange that kind of thing... all the values in the future ... I don’t care... I mean... blaming and being guilty... I don’t care... I really don’t...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: But you gonna find the solution, see what it causes, take out that causes... That’s where you need a discussion again... Because I mean...doing that too quickly might be wrong when seeking a real cause... I am trying to look for the cause, not the guilt.

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: I don’t care about guilt. Of course, never make the same mistake
again... because now you know...

Researcher: Now you learned?

Respondent: Hmm... now you know. You better know – that is wrong. I have
to get something else. It's not about the guilt; it's about values for the future.
So you better find the correct answers for the future.

Researcher: You think inspiration is linked somehow to that future?

Respondent: Absolutely

Researcher: Future is your inspiration?

Respondent: Yeah.

Researcher: Okay. Thank you. And what do you think ...

Respondent: You can change the future...

Researcher: Yeah... exactly. It is for learning only...

Respondent: Yeah

Researcher: ...not for grieving!? And do you think inspiration has a negative
effect in this sense? If we are neglecting... we can miss some things...or only
positive... as you say, everything is about the future is about to be positive...

Respondent: There are risks... that inspiration itself is positive, but there are a
few risks... probably the bigger risk that you forget that others have probably
a good argumentation as well. This is like... we had a discussion three months
ago... we decided it then... don't change that again. A lot of people reason
like that, you know... we discussed that only three months back, if you don't
like that... or don't get in that discussion, say other arguments or... not at least
a time, a time, a time again... if you are... the risk is to be open again for a
slight differences that might appear in time. You have to have a sort of way to
come back to the earlier decision. The risk is with the real inspired... I mean
there is a difference between inspiration and dedication. Dedication, complete
focus... that kind of things...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: Inspiration is a positive part, that complete a sort of single focus
dedication and then you have a risk of hurting others or not being open
enough

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: It's necessarily a negative, but it's a risk as I said. Probably the
other risk is that you start collecting unconsciously... I mean conscious is a
different thing; it's what the dedication is... But unconsciously you might to
go over too easy, to quickly some of the materials that might be some learning
lessons from the history, there might be something in there. Sort of data
mining, learning, understanding... too much inspiration might become a sort
of dream that looses the connection to the real time operations.

Researcher: Yeah

Respondent: That's not negative itself, but it's again a risk...

Researcher: Is it controllable in your case or not? Can you control it when you
feel detached from reality?

Respondent: I think I can control it... I think I can. And... what I need, I have
to create those moments of self-reflection ...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ... reflection also for the business you are doing, for organisation.
You need that reflection; you need to bring it back as a sort of evaluation over
the time and time again... You need to do that also in your private life, you
have to have creative efforts, and you have to look at that...
Researcher: The question is – how often?

Respondent: It can be...

Researcher: Do you have your own system of reflection, like daily, weekly...monthly?

Respondent: I've got my wife which sounds...which is doing a... [unclear]...

which works positive in a sense that I don’t have any difficulty in splitting my business and private kind of moments if I am walking a door at home I am private. There is no choice. Because, there are seven people are waiting me over there. There is no single cell in my mind which can think about this.

There is a political thing, I turn off my phone, everything that is something to do with the mobile telecom... that’s the thing we do. There are three people that have my private home number. If this is really important – they phone.

But it’s also not that urgent. Because I am not paid for the urgent decisions, I am paid for the longer terms. It should to be able to wait until the next day.

But it is also get the people to this...because that split is that I don’t arrive before night. And if it is really important, really important meeting, I create a time or sort of that..... I am not coming earlier if it is really important... If it is really important something else is gonna to move...with few exceptions...but in the last six years – almost none. Almost none! But this is a creating of full independence, at least in my mind... I can really put it on and on. Because in this case it is independence, it is self-confidence... you need to have it to have inspiration, because if you are lack of self-confidence, you are not going to challenge decisions, or streams for thoughts, or... You are not going to really seek the discussions. You gonna self-confidence, knowing, what you are saying, knowing what you are doing, understanding that emotionally you are in there, because otherwise you can’t fully open out. I am real in this sense. Really real!

Researcher: Yeah. It’s...really... but do you encourage the same...the same pattern of behaviour for your employees? Like no extra hours, no working at home...

Respondent: They look at me. When I arrived at this company it was at 2003, they were working from 7am till 10 pm, they are still doing that. I am not going to be here to work that many hours because then... I am not good. I limit myself, but I put all my energy to do more in that time, that I do more in that time than you have ever seen.

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: And I really went home around six. I have promised at home to arrive between 6:30 and 7 pm... at home... my average is 6:55, but nevertheless it is within that promise. Many of technology directors nowadays say – we don’t try, we do. It’s intentional, it is really intentional...

Researcher: Yeah

Respondent: We don’t try, we do. I like this phrase. We don’t try, we do.

Researcher: Yeah... being of yourself ...

Respondent: Absolutely. If you start compromising with yourself, you are gone... Don’t compromise with yourself. Never ever! Because that’s the way... it is taking away inspiration from what you are doing.. I mean...

motivation can also come from fear. It is possible. And most of HR tools are based on punishment rather than on...

Researcher: Care?

Respondent: All bonus schemes are based more on punishment rather than on
rewards...

Researcher: Yeah

Respondent: You say 'yeah', but you are the first one who is admitting that... and normally that sort of things... This is a thing I learned from one of my former bosses... I have got a kind of few. I have worked for the certain years on the same position... I am not a self-hunter or job-hopper, as I call it. I stay here for six years till now, do the same kind of thing as what I started with... I was pretty young. I am 40 right now. But I said – you have a bonus scheme, sharing scheme basically not kept as a simple percentage of revenues. I have from every year-all that they bring in as revenue; the total thing we can share is 20 cents. They get together as a team 5% - unlimited, no limitation. So I get 15 cents of every... they bring in, of course I am not going to limit it. They are earning a fortune... that wasn’t taken over... different acquisition of US-based company... They are rather sales guys... They can’t get it because that is costing too much... that is a sort of game... two or three more or less the same thing... They were looking at the bonus costs... not at the total margin that they brought in and a lot of unlimited potential at the end of the day it’s going to play off. It’s not a cost factor... that is going to be a play off. So, we did more or less the same thing in 2003. We were in a middle of the crisis of mobile telecommunications... in 2002... everybody was thinking about cost-cutting, efficiency... I get lost. We are not going to grow cost basis. This is not what we are going to do!

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: The efficiency is two ways: either you cut costs or you grow your revenue.

Researcher: Yeah

Respondent: We grow...

Researcher: And everyone was declining...

Respondent: Yeah, but we grow. We grew 60%. Against alls! Our efficiency on the cost basis was immense.

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: Far better than we have before. Far better!

Researcher: Hmm. And can you say in one single sentence what was behind that?

Respondent: Don’t even think about costs! That’s my job. I control the costs. There is a budget. The only rule I have – you don’t overspend. That mean... for the rest – I am not going to cut if you don’t overspend. You focus on sales. You bring in the revenue.

Researcher: So – focus and creativity, yes?

Respondent: Full focus on the positive thing. I mean... in other saying – you can’t earn more than your revenue line.

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: You can’t get more profit than your revenue line. So, basically, you can’t expand your revenue line then you make more focus. Cost cutting is [unclear]... let’s focus on your revenue line. That’s the positive. Knowing what your risks are on the costs in this sense, on the negatives... but is it philosophically... inspiration comes from... nobody gets inspired if there is a sort of reorganisation... Because the association with reorganisation is cost-cutting. That doesn’t make sense. Get lost...

Researcher: Yeah... anyway – any cost-cutting has a limit...
Respondent: That can’t be... that’s not a strategy... common... that’s... may be they can to do it for a couple of months. We survived, survived without any reorganisation here. That’s were... No big lay offs. Every operator here in Netherlands had big lay-offs...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...also two or three competitiors we have here... We didn’t. We still around 1400 right now.

Researcher: Yes, this is amazing.

Respondent: No trouble, no trouble at all, 20 % down.

Researcher: This is really amazing story. And... if you try to summarise what you said, because I just think... I could write another kind of research... ha-ha...

Respondent: Ha-ha

Researcher: How T-mobile did it? ...and... do you think inspiration has some kind of impact or influence on the organisation’s life? I mean, when I say organisation, I mean way of organising, not an entity, which you would not appreciate. Or... if I would simplify, because you just said, when inspired you don’t think about all these risks... what happens in this case with power? Because you are controlling your power. If you are making risk or allowing it, what will happen in this case? Do you loose your power, or do you loose your control over situation or organisation?

Respondent: No

Researcher: No?

Respondent: No... what... not at all... it’s less formal. Because a lot of people don’t... They come back. They will definitely come back, because not to ask something, but to point out that there is a possibility of risk that more and more... that is a kind... you kind of talk to risk as all... you got to make sure that you have got a quite examples that... the examples. This is something you can add to your thinking block... or opportunity box... I don’t know how to call it. But people do make their contribution to success. They... if you have a creation or some of the promotions of the...opportunities... if there is a terrific example, or what you mean... something that is may be a little more abstract... Use it; talk about it... its sort of positive cause. You can share little successes to open up the way for the big success. It is more...

Researcher: Yes, it is exactly what I asked... I just want to clarify slightly in different angle... before... we just like inspiration on a global level, because you are a financial director and you have all this power to inspire yourself and inspire others, but... do you feel or do you distinguish between to be inspired and to be creative and not to limit yourself on global level and on the working place like everyone especially somebody... need his working place... and do they need it there or it might cause some kind of disturbance, like they could not concentrate on... if they... in general the question is about level. Do we need inspiration on a global level as such, as a global idea in company as you explained, or do we need it on a workplace at each... member?

Respondent: Hmm...

Researcher: Why I am asking...

Respondent: I think there are... there are... there always helps to have different players... that is not necessarily that we need it everywhere at the same time. It is not necessary tool... I think it wouldn’t change often this role... So it can be pretty much limited to the definite boxes. I think on lower
level of organisation it is necessary to have this inspiration over there that...
the understanding is there that is they create a sort of limit or group...in
organisation there is always the possibility to talk about it... an open door...
and... they all listen if they have good reason.

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: The word that comes from there is very open... because it is
that... if it is not possible...if people feel that is not possible, they stop
taking...They stop contributing to that sense. There also needs to be
understanding that there are things that are difficult to move... whatever it
takes... But difficult is not the same as impossible. So, if there is something,
that can’t be moved directly, they should accept it and leave it there, because
otherwise you turn them negative about ... it starts de-notifying. So, it comes
with accepting that not everything is possible. With some rise, the other day it
is coming...there is a difference between there. It is not totally free...we also
... we are living in... I got to do a couple of things for my money as well... and
that’s fair...there nothing is for free. There are a couple of ...as long as people
can accept that they are... never accept it as a fixed kind of thing. Or quite
argumentation and things are done... then if people can work in that sense,
than I think inspiration can be there. It needs to come I would say with... what
my boss says... good work can be done better. It’s a sort of self-inspiring
mechanism. They should be looking for continuous improvement.
Continuous... that a quoting kind of thing that needs... in that stories like
quality cycle,

Researcher: Hmm... I am just thinking... you just said very interesting thing
that if I understood correctly, that means inspiration is possible within limit.
This means if I limit...

Respondent: Yes, absolutely... as long as those limits are accepted. Otherwise
inspiration is... it has a border... that it is absolutely possible on a lot of
levels...if you open up a possibility, to put ideas in, or something... You
would be amazed all the time how many ideas will come in...someone
gets...the follow-up to that people, the communication back to what they
brought in is valuable...and explanation is why it can’t be fulfilled... you
know... it’s some limitations are given... people will accept it as positive. But
the network of people that gave in their ideas is tremendous, that shows that
people are always in my view positively minded in a sense that they are
willing to contribute to the society. In this case, to the organisation... slightly
different....

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: I don’t believe in criminal life. There are creeks, but 95-98% of
the people do want to contribute...
Researcher: If they are given choice, yes?
Respondent: Yes
Researcher: And in this case your view on inspiration: this is exactly
inspiration of giving choice... Am I correct?
Respondent: Yes
Researcher: Yes... thank you! And you said about Japanese, and all this
quality cycles, and quality management... Do you have any insights how
inspiration could be linked to that... because in academic management notion
of all this total quality management... perceived to a negative...
Respondent: If I brought it out... Positive, because what it shows in my...
probably the negative association with that is because it looks so
instrumental... I don’t believe in instruments. What they manage to do
correctly there, is that within very-very small thing within total organisation,
those cycles were focusing on the area where there is a need to discuss and
improve things.

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: It is instrumental, because it is a sort of box. But people in
there... that I can imagine... and the way I look at it... felt so inspired
because they had that freedom that is completely new in Japanese... I mean in
that society is...They never had that freedom. It’s always obligations and
never rights... They had for the first time right to discuss, right to improve,
they had their own contribution and that was different than just following the
procedure...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...of course the rest of the society is like us – we don’t like the
rules, western people... Your country may be is slightly different; you are
used to it... But there need to be rules to focus us. They focus on three things
that make it look for western people like more instrumental...but for those
people in there the normal playing field is even smaller. That means it was a
huge playing field for them.

Researcher: and I would say it’s an excellent explanation of all this theory
about that quality management... in this case, if we think about generalisation
of this experience... how to generalize all this experiences for different
organisations? and this is where probably all these quality management
theories are lost.... What do you think in this case....How, do you think, in
your interpretation or in context of inspiration how could we generalise this
even not between organisations, within teams? How could we generalise that
thing from finance department to IT department, for example? Do you think it
is possible to generalise? Because we feel we have different Heads of
Departments... different Heads – different personalities... everything is
different... and he might say...‘Oh, please do that...’ but nothing happen...

Response: Hmm... you can’t order inspiration... You can force motivation,
you can’t order inspiration... this is pretty much bound to the freedom that
persons are willing to... I meant, different persons – different rules. That’s
what I say... I mean I don’t think you can generalise. In fact that influence
positive, people are pretty well done. A lot of those factors can not necessarily
be grouped... can contribute to inspiration... for inspiration good example is a
good rule doing simply that. As you said – different bosses different rules...as
there are fewer rules, probably good boss... because people understand
automatically orders... what they are contributing and doing... it is pretty
hard to generalise...

Researcher: Yes

Response: There is freedom, there is transparency, let’s say – clarity on
what you can do and what you can’t do... that ‘not can to do’ is obligation for
bosses as well because...most bosses are not clear want they don’t want.
They don’t say it because it’s a sort of...you can’t say it because you always
want to do something...you know... Be clear about it... communicate it. Be
more explicit on what not can to do. In that sense you have to be clear on the
choices. Never ever! Everybody knows that everything Yes... with... you are
not...well... be clear what you really choose and what you are not gonna to
do. And that ‘not gonna do’ is more important because it eliminates back of
your mind...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: Fine that’s...why I hate these action lists. They always lock...
You can do only two or three things... that brings in the focus. Only three
things...two or four...three items remind until end up of this month... you put
everything on this list... I don’t care; I am not going to do it...may be next
month. I’ll show you the list... Next month... Again... three items. You keep
that clarity... That’s right behind...

Researcher: No, no... It’s excellent! What you are actually offering you are
offering like a recipe for inspiration... just say what is forbidden...everything
else is allowed...

Respondent: Yes...

Researcher: It’s simple and... it’s not a freedom... but it’s freedom...

Respondent: Yes

Researcher: It’s really, indeed... I should think about that. Because... in this
case... can I say that if leader or boss or manager... doesn’t state what is
forbidden he is preventing people from being inspired... in fact...? Or just in
simple sentence... What is just preventing people from being inspired in
organisation?

Respondent: It the only, I guess, that rules... because that’s... if they are
allowed, they can’t be inspired... Then they are allowed, they simply make it,
than they are repetitive... If everything completely is a must...it should ...
you give some orders and tasks... you are gonna concur the world with giving
orders... I mean if anybody is still using it... you are not... do allow them to
bring in their own ideas and contributions... there must be a month or two or
three...or area where they can do some...

Researcher: You are quite happy with sharing power in fact...

Respondent: Absolutely! The power is a wrong thing.... At least formal
power...

Researcher: Positional power I meant...

Respondent: Absolutely wrong! People get...you get your respect for
knowing what you are talking about... I have done that before ... do things
yourself... show your expertise, show your interest, real interest, not quoting
by... if you know what your job is it doesn’t make sense... people feel that.
People simply feel if you know what you are talking about. So, formal
positional power, being appointed in that position...it doesn’t help. I might
have formal power here, but most things I get through in this organisation...I
simply talk to people... what I see, listening, what their view is... think it over
again, making my own mind and put it forward again... Most of time I leave
it up to people doing themselves, if you can’t do it now... a couple things you
have to do, but... you can’t order creativity, you know... like I said...all in
decision making. If there is no openness...talking to Thomas, that’s a boss
and CEO in Germany. If I can make my point, he is free to decide, because I
brought my point. There could be difference at first...explain it to me if you
have made up your decision. I am fine with that... But don’t decide before
you listen to me...

Researcher: Before you ask...

Respondent: Yes. Don’t decide before you have listened...and... don’t ask if
you don’t really want to know my opinion...
Researcher: So, this actually, if I understood correctly your opinion, is killing your inspiration...

Respondent: Absolutely!

Researcher: ...to participate, to do that...

Respondent: ...then I am not for trouble...

Researcher: ...go formally...

Respondent: ...you win, you manage...

Researcher: Okay. Oh...

Respondent: Ha-ha...

Researcher: I am just thinking about time...

Respondent: ...otherwise we are probably not to...

Researcher: just thinking how to elaborate everything... hmm... in general...

when you feel inspired, does you attitude towards or against others changes?

Colleagues, for example...working life... someone coming with another idea... Does it change your attitude? Does it influence your behaviour?

...between colleagues in organisation...

Respondent: I think people can feel when I am up to something... I think they can... and if this level is higher I mean... you are looser... you know... more joyful.

Researcher: Do they feel disappointed? Because they come... imagine the situation – they come to you with something, but you are completely focused, as you said, energised for something else and they want to...

Respondent: No... there was that risk with inspiration... if you are too focused then it becomes too negative and that’s the thing you can avoid somehow... but... so, if there are... make sure that you still are open to change...To change your opinion and your own kind of idea...

Researcher: Hmm, change for the change

Respondent: Because if you don’t... those people will be gone again... end of inspiration. Everybody, main of the people want to make their contribution on the floor. That means... if you are inspired... when you have a sort of idea... that this sort of area we are going to touch... those people will start contributing... that... then you should have the time, to understand what they mean, see if they can contribute...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: Take it, also let them know where you place it... could be all the way when you are not going to use, and still thank them...

Researcher: Giving that feedback?

Respondent: Absolutely! You should do it immediately, because otherwise it’s very uninspirational... I mean... if more people get their inspiration, they share it with more people... get that...

Researcher: common level of inspiration?

Respondent: ...better solution... more people do more than one man... you never know...

Researcher: Hmm, this slightly aside, what you just said, but do you think that there is any relationship between inspiration and security at work? I mean how people feel secure at their jobs?

Respondent: It’s pretty much the same...

Researcher: Pretty much the same?

Respondent: Yes. Secure is more or less a translation that might have self-confidence...
Researcher: Hmm. Yes...
Respondent: They should be convinced they are good anyway... that's secure... I mean there no any fears around...and... There could be realities, but realities are different than fears... if there is something let's talk... you better share... if it is... a risk you know... especially if it is a risk... don't leave it unspoken... if it is a bad message you better bring it, before you got a good message...
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: ...but you bring it... make people confront it or make people face a reality...
Researcher: I see... and do you think that yourself or your colleagues... when they inspired, then they can be stressed by some kind of risk or new information...or vice versa... if they are stressed can they be inspired?
Respondent: Not at the same time...
Researcher: Not at the same time, yes? Because as I understand, it's related to your interpretation of confidence and if someone is stressed that means that level of confidence is fading away...
Respondent: Well... if somebody... I mean stress and inspiration don't come at the same time... Stress is a sort of uncertainty...of fear. As soon as possible, as quick as possible you have to take out that stress... when people feel secure, feel safe they get back their confidence... stress and self-confidence don't come together.. You need a self-confidence to be inspired... in one person...
Researcher: You have to be happy...
Respondent: In one person it can't be in the same time... unless you know some examples...
Researcher: Hmm... no, I don't... ha-ha, therefore I ask...
Respondent: Not that kind... People that are stressed never can be inspired, if you don't talk to them... don't take it out... You have to confront them to the reality... Most people have a second round if there is something serious happening in their private lives... You better know, you better talk to these people... simply talk... you better listen.... They can leverage it a little bit, then they become a bit open to the reality, otherwise they live in their sort of their nasty dream...
Researcher: You have to be happy...
Respondent: Dream is not good... nightmare is even worse. You have to bring them out. There isn't reality in there...
Researcher: Breaking isolation from...
Respondent: Absolutely, absolutely... reality is probably better... in business life this is what we always face... you try to get to the real causes and real facts...
Researcher: Hmm
Respondent: Don't assume!
Researcher: Okay... and probably last question... thank you for all your time!
It is just amazing that you are Financial Director but you talk like you have degree in psychology... and...do you associate inspiration with altruism in organisational settings? Altruism means people inspired and they are doing something without looking to be paid for that, particular for that, just do out of...
Respondent: Yes... exactly the difference between... I would say... inspiration
and forced motivation... I mean...what we normally say in Dutch... [Unclear] being too good is too much health; reason is full... for the rest of the society...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: Sort of... there is always a balancing what you get back or respect... or acknowledgement... it goes too far for health reason... the extra effort has to have an acknowledgement of what has been done. But not necessarily... of getting something tangible that’s not necessarily, not always... to be fair... I mean if you compare it in a bonus schemes, if you... [unclear]... then you are fine and it’s just fun and an additional inspiration... It’s not a one to one kind of rewarding system that needs for that. That’s the reason for an element of altruism to be in there. It shouldn’t be that... it’s... if you... the recognition, or... acknowledgement or whatever comes to it. Not necessarily monetary...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...inspiration starts without... because there is a discrepancy between motivation and inspiration... inspiration is starting from it’s... from altruistic starting point... in all, it’s move you have all these intakes of acknowledgement...

Researcher: it should be supported... in other words...

Respondent: Yes

Researcher: ...somehow... or I’d say – encouraged...

Respondent: Exactly!

Researcher: And do you think organisation... in outer world explain in common question of performance... what happen with performance when you feel inspired? Or what happens with organisational performance when organisation is inspired? What is your personal view?

Respondent: Well, the performance of organisations is... financially... there are different kinds of performances I am afraid... but financially all organisations benefit from contributions from everybody. Otherwise inspiration is in different minds in different people... I mean there is... I have no worries of the result, I don’t focus on the result but I focus on the operations and inspiration. That’s what I said before. Result will come automatically!

Researcher: Hmm... can I say that you are actually focusing not on results; you are focusing on the process...?

Respondent: Absolutely! I try.

Researcher: Yes...

Respondent: I am influencing the process...

Researcher: Is inspiration driver in this case or helping?

Respondent: Yes!

Researcher: Yes?

Respondent: Absolutely! Performance is an automatic thing... Performance is a result. It is not something you create... You create a process, you create a business model. You influence everything... the purpose... I think you can stimulate the continuous thing and the processes... seem you can fly basically....

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: Performance and results are automatic. Unless... heavily, heavily result on the other...
Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...simply never...and that's saying... We don't try, we do! That's self-confidence as well, that shows our strength. Not power necessarily, it is strength. And if you have got that sort of mindset... you feel secure, it simply start influencing what you are doing. If you know what you are doing, it shouldn't say that without knowing the business... you should know the business of course...

Researcher: Yes, of course...

Respondent: You can pretty much plan. Every plan is a reflection of what you know at that point of time. If you are inspired or get into inspiration you can bid plan, or action. That sort of element there, a sort of complexity you never ever going to loose... I am playing that...hold it more than a life... That complexity, competitiveness...combined with knowing that if it is necessary you can turn on the levels slightly more... and inspiration if you make a right selection do that completely out... people make the contribution. Contribution is always possible! Because... in the plan, you don't count on those contributions...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: ...you simply don't know them...

Researcher: Yes...

Respondent: That's the future, you know... Plans should be life with the present knowledge or the contribution should be positive, so you can bid plans forward...

Researcher: That means we need plan as a starting point only?

Respondent: Yes... don't forget about it...

Researcher: Ha-ha... yes, we all need to write our business plans...

Respondent: ...and don't take an argument that I have no budget...

Researcher: Hmm

Respondent: I do the budget, you do the work. We are not going to doubt... if something is necessary, we simply gonna do it... we are not going to leave it out if necessary; because there is no budget... we simply got to do it. That's what you said. So we do it...

Researcher: Like I usually say... do what ...in terms of job, of course... do what you like and everything else will follow.

Respondent: Yes, absolutely. absolutely!

Researcher: Thank you.

Respondent: Yes.

Researcher: Ok. Thank you indeed for you time and very valuable input... I think I’ve got a lot of information to elaborate on in this research. At that point of time there are no so called tangible results expected, because this is inspiration... What I mean ‘tangible’... like we discussed here like... management... quality circles, etc. We are not going to advise companies like... issue some kind of guidelines... like do like that or do like this...

Respondent: Rather impossible...

Respondent: Yes. This is... I am glad you understand, because few of my colleagues insist on that... but any outcome tangible or intangible... I definitely will let you know. Hopefully, it will be interesting for you. And hopefully all discussion today... that would be considered as interesting because I really enjoy all your reflections. Because... I will try to build... I will try to interpret, of course, in my way what you said to understand your...
world, how you understand...

Respondent: Yes

Researcher: ...and this is... different in this research, because we are not trying to solve any problem, like normally functional approach to management... solve their problem, solve it there... we try to understand what is hidden in the organisation, what is actually there. Just point to that and say - please use that or just be aware of that. This is main task... main aim of this research... that's why... if any... of course I'll let you know. And thank you indeed!

Respondent: You are welcome. Do you need to come... to go somewhere else, to talk to somebody else?

Researcher: No. Not today...
Chapter 9. References


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