



Hogeschool van Amsterdam
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SAFETY CULTURE DEVELOPMENT: THE JOURNEY AND THE PARADOXES

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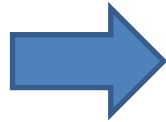
CREATING TOMORROW



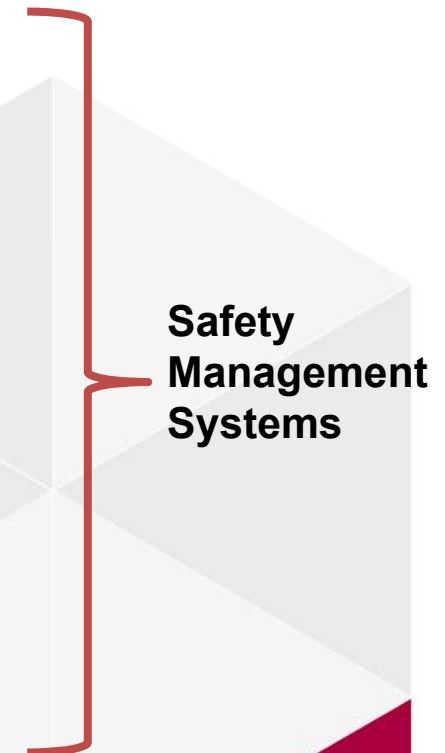
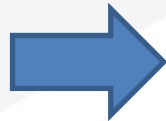
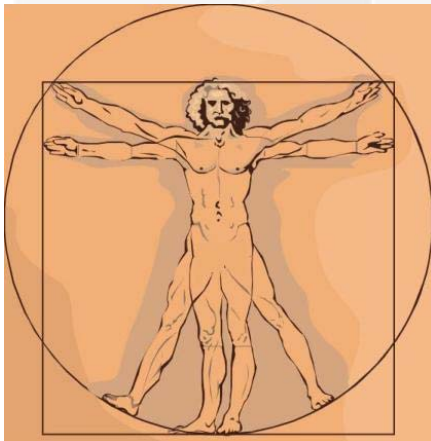
FROM SIMPLICITY TO COMPLEXITY



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SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND SAFETY CULTURE





HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND “SAFETY CULTURE”?

- “Safety culture” was firstly introduced in 1986 as part of the Chernobyl accident investigation report.
- Since 1986 plenty and diverse definitions.
- Confusion between the meanings of safety culture and safety climate.
- What is the result?
 - Different guidance provided by various industry sectors.
 - Divergent safety culture activities amongst organizations.
 - A wide range of safety culture assessment instruments.



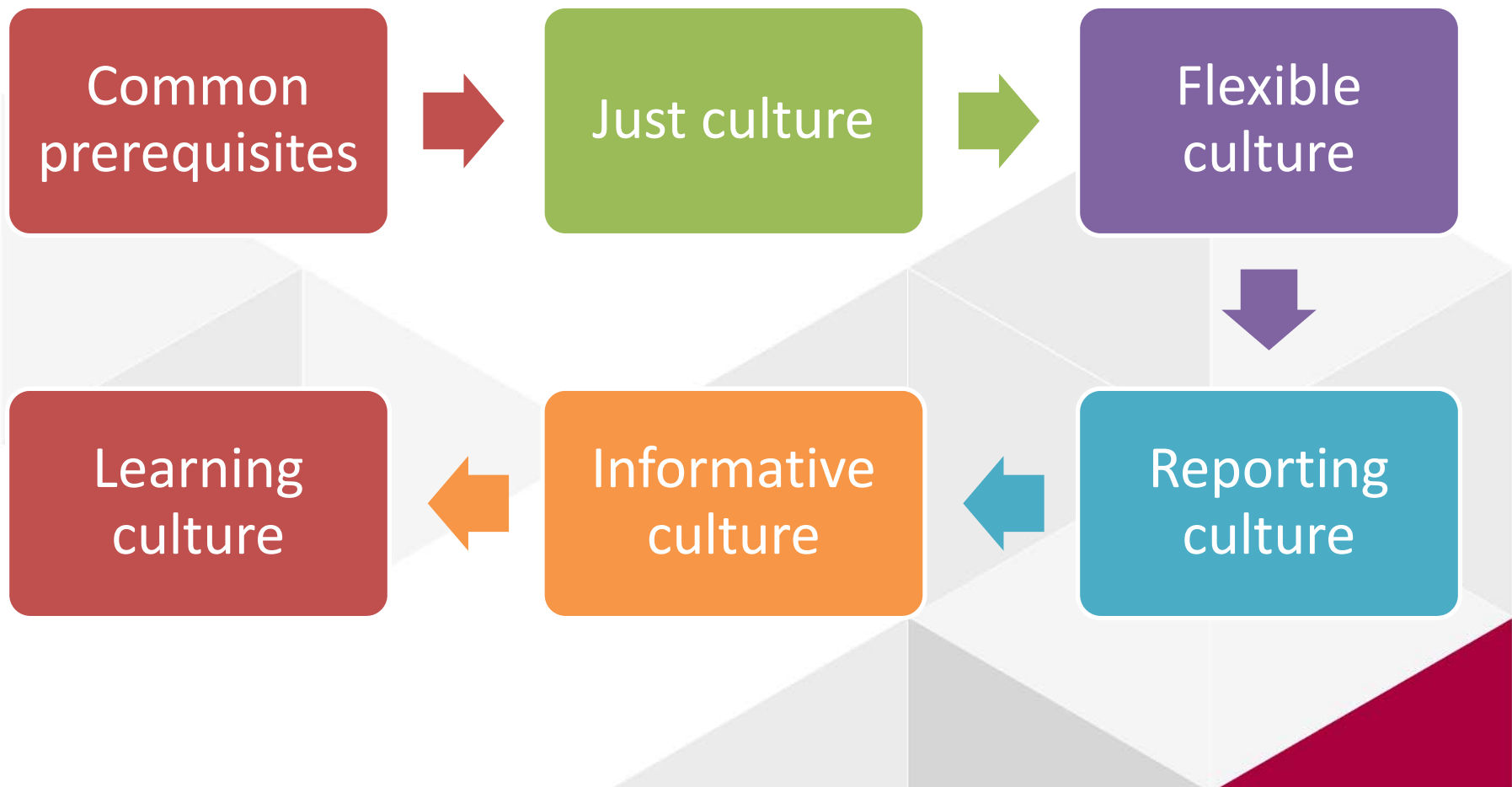
THE MISPERCEPTIONS AROUND “SAFETY CULTURE”

- Safety culture can be the new scapegoat during safety investigations.
- Seen as sum or product of individuals, rather than a matter of interaction and sharing.
- Measurement methods and tools:
 - Address dimensions (i.e. “what”) but do not uncover the underlying mechanisms (i.e. “why” and “how”) if not followed by qualitative analysis.
 - Lack a valid reference point for comparison.
 - Do not explicitly explore how safety competes with other parallel organizational goals (e.g., production, security, quality).

REASON'S DECOMPOSITION OF SAFETY CULTURE



THE SUGGESTED JOURNEY FOR SAFETY CULTURE DEVELOPMENT





SOME PARADOXES: JUST CULTURE

- Just culture is applied:
 - Differently, depending on the actual severity of safety events – the worse the outcome the more the “justice”.
 - Frequently to the visible actors (e.g., pilots, engineers, ATC) and not to higher management levels – the latter are most of the times immune to “just” culture.
- Just culture does not apply when we are rewarded for our performance (e.g., promotion, bonus). When we are benefited, it is by default fair – we do not question the decisions.
- Staff is informed about the just culture policy after they join the organization – they do not know and accept the “terms & conditions” in cases of adverse events.



SOME PARADOXES: FLEXIBLE CULTURE

- We accept flexibility (i.e. distance between work-as-imagined and work-as-done) when we receive the desired output.
- When things do not go as expected, flexibility becomes a causal factor!
- We ask from seniors to allow us space for flexibility, but:
 - We want to exert full control over subordinates.
 - We request full compliance from workers during audits – we ask from them to pretend!



SOME PARADOXES: REPORTING CULTURE

- We view increased reporting as positive sign of trust and contribution to safety, but we expect reports from end-users, whereas managers across all organizational levels rarely submit reports.
- We collect data about hazards and problems and we lack reports about solutions and good practices.
- We do not regularly record the informal reports (e.g., around the coffee table!).

SOME PARADOXES: INFORMATIVE & LEARNING CULTURES

- We share safety information but we do not schedule time in working plans so workers can access, read and understand such information.
- We confuse information dissemination and safety training with learning – the latter is a journey towards changing our views and attitudes.



IS PLANNING FOR SAFETY CULTURE ENOUGH?



SOME LAST REMARKS

- SMS was introduced to address and not to increase complexity.
- A bureaucratic approach to SMS ensures compliance, but compliance does not equal to safety.
- Safety culture and thinking are not fostered through paper work.



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Questions?

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