

Titel of Dissertation:

LEARNING ACCORDING TO GREGORY BATESON AND LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

**The changing of social systems through organisational learning**

by Siegfried Ziegler

Within the context of corporations adapting themselves to a changing world, particularly since the beginning of the 1990s, there has been much talk of 'organisational learning' and 'learning organisations'.

The existing approaches to learning organisation are, however, based upon vastly differing theoretical models. With terminological specification firmly in view, the conception of the learning organisation will be reconstructed on the basis of Bateson's learning theories and afterwards examined through a singular case study to gain insights on its practical relevance.

Bateson introduced the term 'learning' on the basis of three differing models: Learning within the 'machine model', the 'action model' and the 'system model'. In regards to intervention possibilities in the field of organisational advising, König and Volmer subsequently reconstruct Bateson's learning theories into the 'personnel system theory'.

Using the system of concepts stemming from the personnel system theory, the changes in the organisations that were examined, and in particular the changes wrought to serve the adaptation of the system to its surroundings, can be differentiated and described in the form of differing – individual as well as organisational – learning processes of the types 'Learning 0', 'Learning I', 'Learning II' and 'Learning III'; the connections between the learning of a system, its 'complexity', 'adaptability' and therewith its 'ability to survive' can be revealed. Recommendations for structuring a learning organisation can be elicited from these findings.