THE ABC MODEL

A ‘ground theory’ on how key primal needs shape archetypal family systems that in turn greatly shape leadership and organizational culture key typologies.

Pedro Fernandes

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Executive Summary

The purpose of my thesis is to explain that three primal needs (Affection, Belonging and Control) underpin the drivers of three major archetypal family systems (Independence, Protection, Performance) that are responsible for shaping major types of management and leadership styles and major organizational cultures typologies. The same primal needs underline the basic dynamics of interpersonal relationships particularly in what concerns the spiraling up and down of human relationships. Understanding the dynamics of these primal needs can help leaders and coaches to more effectively manage change and transition spaces in individuals, groups and organizations by improving root cause diagnostic and better design intervention tools and experiential learning.

My thesis (hereafter called the ‘ABC model’) tries to design a kind of ‘meta framework’ or ‘ground theory’ that bridges underlying root patterns across different fields and theories. The intention is not to prove through research this thesis but instead to architect the so called ground theory and to provide some insight on how to test it or research it further and elaborate on its practical applications to help different audiences.

The FIRO B theory from William Schutz (Schutz, 1958, 1966) and the Censydiam consumer motivation model (Callebaut et al., 1999, 2002) are important theoretical frameworks upon which I have built bridges and some important hypothesis. My
thesis also brings into play my work experience and knowledge with empirical consumer purchasing and behavioral decision making and my professional experience background across fields, geographic and organizational cultures through the acquired lenses of INSEAD’s EMCCC experience.

The following inference and learning points constitute the backbone of this thesis.

The primal needs
Affection (Love), Belonging (Inclusion) and Control (Performance) are according to Schutz’s FIRO theory at the heart of human interpersonal relationships. I hypothesize that the ABC primal needs that he refers to shape in a fundamental way family archetypal systems.

While Schutz focused on the direction (wanted/expressed) of the need among the individuals and on its degree (low, medium, high) and elaborated extensively his theory (Schutz, 1958, 1966) I use the same primal needs but looked at them in terms of shaping motivational drivers.

In my model I articulate how each need is a kind of double sided coin. I hypothesize that each primal need has a positive and a negative source of motivation: the ‘fear’ and the ‘aspiration’. Both parts are strong catalysts for action. Hence understanding well the primal needs and its intrinsic ambivalence can help us to design better nudges to help individuals consider options and cope with change.
The family archetypes

Three family systems are rooted in the mentioned three primal needs.

- **Independence family system** (e.g. Northern Europe, certain countries in the Middle East) is rooted in Belonging (Inclusion/Exclusion) needs. Parenting style aims at the independence of the child who is treated as equal among family members and decision taking process.

- **Protection family system** (e.g. Southern Europe, most of Latin America and certain countries in Northern Africa) is rooted in Affection needs. Parenting style aims at the protecting children from the environment. Children are children and hence they need to be protected, taken care of.

- **Performance System** (e.g. certain countries in South East Asia and North Asia) is rooted in Control needs. Parenting style clearly defines and assigns role to the children in the family. Very hierarchical this system breed compliance and little challenge of authority.

Family systems shape individuals but also society in general. As units families are the stem cells of society. They weave the social fabric of human groups and relationships. All systems co-exist at a certain point in time and hybrid combinations (independence – protection) are possible. However one of the archetypes tends to dominate and shapes the dominant system.

The management styles and organizational cultures

The management styles or cultures stem from the family archetypes.

- **Empowerment / Shared Leadership**
Normative Independence family systems tend to breed organizational cultures with traits of openness, directedness, meritocracy, empowerment, accountability. We tend to witness these traits precisely in Anglo-Saxon companies. The associated leadership styles tend to rely on trust, empowerment, and feedback. They are the precursors of the co-shared leadership model.

- **Feudal / Territorial clans**
  Protective family systems tend to breed hierarchical, clans and power driven organizations. They encourage a feudal type of leadership. They display traits of Protectionism turfs, withholding information, Power status driven leaders, control-dependency based relationships. They tend to breed Gods vs. helpless crowds. They tend to breed talent centric models.

- **Normative and compliance performance.**
  Performance family systems are norm and compliance obsessed. Output being the measurement. There is little room for creativity. Hierarchy is dominant.

**The dynamics of relationships**
Based on the work of Manzoni and his set up for fail syndrome (Manzoni, J.-F., 2002) I constructed a hypothesis that relationship spiral up or down based exactly on the three primal needs.

This notion is particularly important for leaders and coaches as every day they are called upon to fix and deal with relationship disorders. Understanding the order and sequence of spiral up and down will help to better diagnose at which stage people
are and design the right nudges and experiences to empower people to solve them. This is also highly relevant for Marketers to understand engagement and divorce between consumers and brands and pick up signals from the sequence of stages.

Inspired by the ‘set up to fail syndrome’ (Manzoni, J.-F., 2002), particularly by the relationship down spiral and rescue strategies, I hypothesize that each primal need has a kind of intrinsic ‘yin-yang’ or if you want an intrinsic ambivalence mechanism. It is as if need is a kind of double sided coin. Each face has a positive and a source of motivation, one negative pole (led by ‘fear’) and one positive pole (led by desire, aspiration).

So What? The theory at play...

According to me this ground theory is highly relevant and it can contribute to the following areas:

- Intervention levers between individuals-families-organizations
- Diagnosing relationship health. Enrich set-up to fail syndrome research.
- Communication with audiences to drive change
- Complement to family business model development
- Complement the Organizational Culture assessment toolkit
- Contribute to Tool Design and news areas of applied research
- Complement of the CCRT toolkit

Validating and testing the theory
There are four fundamental assumptions and/or fields that I would propose to be further researched and validated:

- Family archetypes final validation: validate the assumption that three family systems are indeed the major archetypes (is there another one missing?).
- Relationships: investigate and inventory further the sequences by which relationships spiral up and down.
- Learning from the extreme cases: studying abnormalities or deviation from the norms would enrich our knowledge of the mechanism of contagion.
- From Families to Organization: validation of mechanism of contagion
THE WHY OF THIS THESIS

After the family module on EMCCC that I have done as my 7th module in November 2012 (as I skipped the initial one in Singapore due to the birth of my daughter Julia) I was struck by a thought. Families are not only the business fabric of economies representing over 90% of existing companies portfolio around the world but they are also the social fabric of society. In fact families are a kind of ‘stem cells’ of society. They are responsible for values’ transmission and contribute greatly to culture formation.

Having worked decision making and purchasing motivation among families across Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Africa, Europe and in most of the Americas zone I had come across some family typologies based on some motivational drivers. When I reflected upon the underlying motivations of each family typology I came to three primal needs that I had heard before in another theoretical framework, the FIRO theory from William Schutz (Schutz, 1958-1966). FIRO standing for Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation was based upon three key motivations guiding human relationship: Inclusion, Control and Affection.

The parallel was established but I did not feel the butterflies on my stomach by this pattern recognition. The ‘ah-ah’ moment came when I connected the dots with the underlying pattern of these needs in the topic of decision making under uncertainty and nudge design and also on the topic of relationships and the set up to fail syndrome. Suddenly like a constellation lighting up I saw the hypothetical interrelations of these three primal needs with the above mentioned topics but also with negotiation topic on the simulation module, with the leadership paradigms topic,
with the dysfunctional organization types from (Kets de Vries, M., 2003) as well as with the CCRT topic. In my mind I could hypothesize about these inter-connections and it felt intuitively clear.

The last tipping point was the parallel between marketing communication to family typologies and coaches motivational interviewing. In both cases the aim is to generate change in behavior. I saw the potential of bridging the nudge development, motivational interviewing and marketing communication. Sounds odd but it looks to me as an opportunity of knowledge cross-fertilization. I really felt the pertinence of the communication strategies to families applied to the way leaders and coaches communicate with their audiences.

Despite all of this felt very intuitive to me, it was indeed complex and challenging. I saw the opportunity to bring my work and field of experience into play and cross fertilize it with the EMCCC theoretical framework. It felt highly relevant to me, to my work, to my EMCCC thesis and ultimately as a concrete wrap up of the tools and lenses that I have learned. I felt that I would learn from this experience. I felt that I had a clear idea for my thesis. But I found it too ‘easy’ and too good to be true. As once someone said “clear ideas are those that have the same degree of confusion as my own”. In any case I was determined. I wrote the ‘draft thesis subject’ and submit it. Feedback was good and in line with my intuition. I was up for the challenge.

Winston Churchill once said that “it takes a long time to write a short letter”. He was right and I was about to find that out myself.
THE PRIMAL NEEDS

At the heart of the ABC model are the primal needs of Affection (Love), Belonging (Inclusion) and Control (Status, Performance). These needs are drawn from the FIRO theory (Schutz, 1958-1966). According to the author William Schutz these are key motivations at the heart of human interpersonal relationships.

Schutz elaborated on the direction (wanted/expressed) of the needs among the individuals and on its degree of expression (low, medium, high). Schutz also studied these needs in the context of groups and initially in a military context. He then later carried on to transpose his theoretical findings to the management world.

The A: Affection need

The need for Affection has to do with love, care and the notion of being emotionally close to others. Wanted affection is related to emotional closeness and complicity while expressed affection will mean expressing liking towards others (Schutz, 1958-1966).

Again my empirical observations show that his expressed affection towards others is particularly true for mothers (and parents) are Southern Europe, Latin America and some countries in Northern Africa and Middle East. The expression of liking and emotional warmth towards children and others is public and frequent.

I have seen mothers expressing the need for affection by wanting to be acknowledged as good mothers and doing the right thing for their children. They needed the feeling of being appreciated and loved back. This was particularly true
in Southern Europe and some Northern African countries. In fact these mothers (and parents) were more sensitive to communication that acknowledged them rather than functional attributes of the products that they were being exposed to. Only then, once acknowledged, mothers were willing to consider ‘new news’ about whatsoever. This acknowledgement was a form of ‘love back’, recognition and reassurance.

The B: Belonging need

The need for Belonging (Inclusion) has mainly to do with being in or out with respect to interaction and association with others. Given the two dimensions of wanted/expressed needs then one can view the wanted need of belonging as a need of receiving recognition and acknowledgement. In the FIRO model (Schutz, 1958-1966) the low (introverted, loner) and the high (buoyant) represented extreme expressions of this need but in both cases both individuals expect an unfulfilled need to feel important.

Expressed belonging towards others it mean acknowledgement of others and it is critical for group working. It is a key characteristic of consultants at play as they need to connect with clients and be included and accepted among their clients’ organizations and be able to include multiple people in their projects. Family wise and according to my direct observations this is a key characteristic of mothers (and parents) in the Middle East and some South East Asian countries, namely India and Vietnam. The concept of family is usually larger in number and of the who belongs to the family. Grand parents and relatives are part of the family circle and
usually live close by or co-live together. But this support system can be extended to neighbors as well.

The C: Control need

The need for Control (Status, Performance) concerns mastering over rules, performance and power status vis-à-vis others. People wanting more control versus expressed means that they are better at ease with submissive positions. They prefer to be told exactly and clearly what to do instead of taking the lead. On the other side of the scale we have the individuals who want to make the rules, who intend to lead and make sure there are no surprises. They need the status and implicit recognition of this status (Schutz, 1958-1966).

In most of South East Asia I have found what I could call ‘performance’ mums. They are the ‘boss’ at home and they run the family, even if sometimes behind the scenes. They pretty much control home, money, logistics and go beyond to dictate high expectations to their kids demanding from ambitious performance at school. Kids need to perform well at school to succeed in life…at all cost. They tend to buy products that perform and deliver, at least the products that contributed to the ultimate mission of kids in succeeding in school and in life. They rather spend more money on a branded performing product if they can rather than sticking with a lower performance but lower priced product, offering no guarantees. This sense of control and status is very well encapsulated into the insight from my findings that sometimes for lower income populations acquiring a higher priced branded product is also a sign of status and of improved living conditions that is very rewarding for one’s self esteem.
THE ARCHETYPAL FAMILY SYSTEMS

In my work experience I developed significant knowledge together with research partners on consumer goods segmentation and knowledge about consumer target groups, namely families and children. I came across the Censydiam’s consumer motivations model (Callebaut et al., 1999) developed by Censydiam founders and consultants at the time. I first came across this model by reading the work of Censydiam Institute “Motivational marketing research revisited” (Callebaut et al., 1999). The most remarkable thing about this model is its versatility in explaining different phenomena from mother typologies, to brand positioning, to mapping market opportunities while travelling across business sectors and geographies (please refer to appendix 3 for visualization of the model).

The Censydiam Consumer Motivation model is based on two fundamental axis:

- **Personal dimension** (how we feel in relation to ourselves).
  
  This axis is about the tension between indulgence and control (a little like Id and Super Ego on the extremes). It is the axis of psychodynamics applied to consumer behavior. The associated motivations are Control and Enjoyment (Callebaut et al., 1999).

- **Social dimension** (how we feel in relation to others).
  
  This axis is about the tension about fitting in or standing out. It is linked with Inclusion/Exclusion elements. The ‘Me’ is also a more active, assertive, masculine symbol while the ‘We’ is more passive, feminine symbol. The ‘Me’ is more narcissistic and towards exclusion and less accessibility while the ‘We’ is more inclusive and altruistic. The associated motivations are Power and Belonging (Callebaut et al., 1999).
The remaining four consumer motivations are combinations of the main 2 dimensional axis: Security (Belonging x Control), Conviviality (Belonging x Enjoyment), Recognition (Power x Control) and Vitality (Power x Enjoyment).

The model works very well in different fields but especially for market mapping of products and brand portfolios. In an example (please refer back to appendix 3) of the clothing category you would see the following positioning of brands in the respective quadrants/axis:

- Power: Ralph Lauren
- Control: Asics
- Enjoyment: H&M
- Belonging: GAP (but we could also join Zara)

On another example you could also allocate the following product types to the axis/quadrants:

- Power: Imported Brands, Designer Brands, Celebrity Chef recipes
- Control: Anti-bacterial, Low Calories, Vitamin Fortification, Doctor’s approved/recommended, Organic
- Enjoyment: Ice Cream, Chocolate, Starbucks coffee shops
- Belonging: popcorons, variety packs for sharing

The model is quite intuitive, for those familiar with it, and allows you to immediately feel the psychodynamic tensions for a consumer and to feel the emotional space between brands within a portfolio or category. Any gaps within a market would theoretically constitute an opportunity space to launch or investigate launching as
the motivations would be universal and apply across markets and geographies. The questions would be more about the size of the opportunity or the cost to access/implement it.

Taking a stance back at the Censydiam model, and making a parallel with Schutz’s three motivations, we see that the model already incorporates two primal needs as fundamental segmentation axis: Control x Belonging (Inclusion/Exclusion).

Deepening our analysis one can see that the ‘Conviviality’ motivation is unveiling the third primal need: the love and affection. This motivation drives on the will to share moments with others taking the opportunity to express and share emotions such as love, esteem, friendship, emotional warmth. It is based on emotional bonding.

All in all the Censydiam model encapsulates the three primal needs of Affection, Belonging and Control. Furthermore during my work with Censydiam and other professionals (among which Dirk Lorre, who is today an ex-Censydiam consultant and consumer psychologist) a mother/family typology work was developed. It so happens that the underlying motivational drivers of each of the mother/family typologies coincide precisely with each of the primal needs. Hence the following family systems could be derived:
The Independence system

This family system has associated a mother (or parenting style) that aim at the independence of their children. Independence being the driver, by the above mentioned, is therefore linked with Belonging (Inclusion) primal need. Parents value the fact that their kids experience the world on their own. They will design and expose them to experiences to facilitate their growing up and self-learning. Parents believe that their kids will develop naturally at things that they are innately good at. At the heart of these families children have their own status as equal when decision making takes place. Negotiation, empowerment, deal making, coaching are frequent traits of the family dynamics.

I found the predominance of this typology in Northern Europe, North America, Australian (most of the Anglo-Saxon based countries) and certain countries in the Middle East. Interesting to notice that ‘business’ coaching seems to be more developed in these countries where exactly feedback, empowerment, coaching parental style tend to be at the heart of the family dynamics.

The drawback of this system amid such a stimulus for independence of children being on their own is a potential neglect.

The (Love &) Protection system

This family systems has associated a mother (or parenting style) that believes that kids are kids and that they need to be protected and loved. Love/affection is the driver primal need here. In fact this (over)protection can actually stimulate a relationship of dependency of the child and in some cases delay their
emancipation as adults later on (e.g. consider the age at which adults leave parental home in UK by contrast with Italy). At the heart of these families kids are treated like kids and hence taken care of...at all times. Parents tend to make all the decisions and generate strong dependency relationship forms. Frequent display of love, emotional warmth is part of the bonding that makes kids feel part of the family. Parents usually expect love expression back (payback) as this is also their driver.

As mentioned the drawback of this system is the opposite of the previous one as kids could grow up spoiled and highly dependent on their parents. Another side effect of an over-spoiled child could be the development of a narcissistic personality.

My empirical observations tell me that this system is most pervasive in Southern Europe, most of Latin America and certain countries in Northern Africa and Middle East.

**The Performance system**

This family system has associated a mother (or parenting style) that aim at the performance and compliance with norms. Control is the driver primal need. Parents will often take charge and will be domineering. They will set rules, boundaries. They will punish and reward. There will be plans, rules, expectation for children. At the heart of these families children have their own place, status and role in the family hierarchy and will obey and respect this line of command. I found the predominance of this typology in Northern Asia and in some countries of South
East Asia). Children are set high expectations earlier on and they are used to
competition from early ages. Succeeding in Education is of essence to succeed in
life. The drawback of this system is that parents can set too high expectations for
their children thus putting them under a lot of pressure. It is therefore no surprise to
see that it is exactly in Asia where the highest suicidal rates show up among
teenagers and students (e.g. South Korea has one the highest suicide rates
among teenager/young adult students in the world).

On a side note it is interesting the feedback that I had in Singapore from some
western coaches that mentioned that coaching is different in Asia as coachees
expect concrete actionable tools and concrete ‘tell me what to do’ advice from the
coaches because they want to see results (the ‘performance’ culture at play).

**Upbringing style shapes driving primal needs**

According to Schutz (Schutz, 1958-1966) children develop response strategies to
the way their parents (or family systems) treat them as toddlers. The needs
emerging then in terms of relationship development tend to gain certain inertia
thereafter. The importance of the upbringing environment is crucial and the first 3-4
years in children’s lives are crucial in shaping coping strategies to parental
dynamics.

This importance of the toddler ‘window of opportunity’ is seconded by some
experts on birth order dynamics (Leman, 2009) that claim that a difference of 4-5
years between siblings within a family can mean in fact different families. A last
born with a difference of 4-5 years to the middle or first child can actually become a first born in its own behavior exhibiting the same traits as the first born.

If it is true that family systems shape individuals, they also impact the social and cultural landscape. As units, families are the stem cells of society. They weave the social fabric of human groups and relationships. All systems co-exist at a certain point in time and hybrid combinations (e.g. control + protection) are possible. However I hypothesize that one of the family archetypes tends to dominate and shapes the dominant system.

THE IMPACT ON MANAGEMENT STYLES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Based on these findings and assumptions I hypothesize that in fact there are three archetypal family systems, each driven by a primal need and they account for the shaping of some management styles, leadership paradigms and even some organization culture typologies. All of them stem from and are linked by the driving root primal need/motivation.

Based on my professional and empirical observations I saw three major management ‘way of doing things’ or ‘sort-of-cultures’ around the world that do seem somehow to emerge from these family ‘embryo’ systems.

- **Empowerment / Shared Leadership**
  
  I hypothesize that this stems from the Independence archetype. This management ‘culture’ shows values of autonomy, meritocracy, empowerment, accountability. The associated leadership styles tend to rely
on trust, empowerment, feedback, coaching and team work. We tend to witness these traits precisely in Anglo-Saxon companies. Competence, Results orientation are priority. Examples are Unilever, Diageo, Shell, Heineken, among others. Americas, Northern Europe (Scandinavia, Netherlands) and Australia/New Zealand are the geographic epicenters.

One can see the mechanisms of contagion and root causality of the parental upbringing style and the system of values, norms and ultimately management culture. Children being raised as equals in family decision taking earlier on will tend to treat others as equal. They are treated with trust and will tend to reproduce this trust via empowerment. The same their parents gave them when designing learning experiences for them. The group (family) is important and individuals will abide for the sake of the whole. Teamwork and cooperation are standards as early on kids participate in family tasks and are raised to cooperate. The coaching style of parenting is seen is wide acceptance of coaching and feedback in management culture. Meetings are focused on output as work and output are values of the independence family system. What you do and your work experience is more important than your status or origin.

- **Feudal / Territorial Clans.**

I hypothesize that this stems from the Protection archetype. This management culture is hierarchical, silo and clan driven with low team work or cooperation. A kingdom of kingdoms pervades and it is a hierarchical environment.
A model of feudal leadership paradigm tends to arise in these environments. Entrepreneurial, Talent centric and action biased these environments tends to produce clans and a control-dependency relationship between ‘the general or godfather’ and its clan members. Trust and Loyalty are priority. Examples are L’Oreal, Ferrero, Sodexho, among others. Southern Europe, Latin America and some Middle Eastern and Northern African countries harbor the essence of these ‘models’.

Again the mechanisms of contagion and root causality of the parental upbringing are visible. The family systems create a dichotomy of dependency (of kids) vs. power of one (mum/dad). The same feudal traits we see on the leadership paradigm of these organizational cultures. Add more groups to the party and you have a kingdom of kingdoms. Teamwork and cooperation are not standards as mum does everything for you because you are a kid after all… even after you have grown up.

- **Normative and Compliant Performance**
  I hypothesize that this stems from the Performance archetype. Rules, Systems and Roles are usually well defined and not to be challenged. This management culture is hierarchical and very normative. The collective is more important than the individual. Team work and collaboration are high. Entrepreneurship and personal initiative is lower as one is expected to be told what to do and obey the boss/hierarchical. Creativity can be low but
discipline and compliance are high. Compliance to norms and Performance are priority. Examples are Toyota, Hyundai, among others.

Again here the parenting style influence is so strong that kids are raised being taught about their role in the family and they are not allowed to challenge authority. They must comply. Hence in organization seldom the employees challenge their bosses. Loosing face or status is not permitted. Social norms are high and hence people expect to be told what to do and to execute in perfection as when they were kids they needed to excel at school.

It is importance to stress that management ‘cultures’ are not reduced to only these three types. Combinations of the above and other variations do exist. However the above represent in my opinion big broad ‘cultures’ that pervade geographically in certain if not most parts of the world.

Primal needs’ as root-causes in dysfunctional organizations

It is interesting to analyze the five dysfunctional types of organization proposed by Manfred Kets de Vries (Kets de Vries, M. 2003) under the lenses of ABC primal needs. I would hypothesize that the three primal needs are underlying the major theme of the dysfunctional organizations. Here are my assumptions.

- Dramatic Cyclothymic – Affection/Love primal need related. Dysfunction from Protection archetype.
- Detached – Belonging need related. Dysfunction from Independence system.
• Suspicious – Control need related. Dysfunction from Performance system.
• Depressive – Control need related. Dysfunction from Performance system.
• Compulsive – Control need related. Dysfunction from Performance system.

THE IMPACT ON HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

During module 6 of EMCCC wave 12 we had a lecture from professor Jean-Francois Manzoni on human relationships where we were exposed to the set-up to fail syndrome. This module was quite enlightening for my thesis construction path. I was particularly drawn on the why relationships would spiral down and eventually reach rupture (and vice versa) and on the palliatives or rescue strategies to adopt.

I connected the above topic with an ex-colleague’s experience in a certain professional setting. The manager in question failed his integration just six months after the arrival into the new country where he was an expat. I remember that his boss at the time was justifying afterwards the root causes of the failure. He mentioned that leaders would need three aspects in their leadership role vis-à-vis their teams: trust, respect and likeability. He continued by saying that likeability is a nice to have and often assumes the role of charisma which helps to bond teams and hold them together in the long term. However, he argued, the fact is that you can work and have a professional relationship and a leadership role even if people do not like you as long as you have respect and trust. In the absence of the latter the role is unsustainable. This triggered again the link in my mind with the primal needs. In fact there is a strong parallel:

- Trust can be seen as a form of Control-led need (no surprise, no let down on people, do what you say).
- Respect can be seen as a form of Inclusion as no-respect usually breeds contempt and exclusion from the network.
- Likeability is nothing but a form of Empathy and Affection.

Researching for this thesis I discovered that according to Schutz the primal needs are at the heart of human relationship and a specific sequencing pattern of interaction is followed at the beginning (coming together) and at the end (separation) of a group dynamics (Schutz, 1958-1966). Schutz argued that group initiation would follow an Inclusion-Control-Affection (I-C-A) sequence while it would separate according to the Affection-Control-Inclusion (A-C-I) sequence.

However based on my empirical evidence Empathy (Affection) is key to bonding and to kick start and develop a relationship. Even coaches need to develop an empathic wall to develop the relationship first upon which Trust (Control) is built. Hence I would argue, unlike Schutz that in every initiation between two individuals the sequence is rather or also A-B-C (spiral up) and for the separation is A-C-B (spiral down).

This process is somehow confirmed by John Gottman who studied some couple compatibility and was able to predict when couples would divorce based on a few interactions (Gottman, 1995). Among the findings Gottman came to conclude that the separation process between a couple would start by erosion of likeability, lack of trust and ultimately loss of respect. Contempt was according to him a killer emotion that when displayed was a serious killer signature of a relationship. In effect contempt is a discriminatory and rejection emotion that links with the
Belonging need more precisely with exclusion. Once you decide to exclude others, others will feel it and if you shed this expectation on them and most likely the self-fulfilling mechanism of the set-up to fail syndrome will kick in. So I hypothesize that relationships start BCA or BAC and derail ACB.

This notion is particularly important for leaders and coaches as every day they are called upon to fix and deal with relationship disorders. Understanding the order and sequence of spiral up and down will help to better diagnose at which stage people are and design the right nudges and experiences to empower people to solve them. This is also highly relevant for Marketers to understand engagement and divorce between consumers and brands and pick up signals from the sequence of stages.

Inspired by the ‘set up to fail syndrome’ (Manzoni, J.-F., 2020), particularly by the relationship down spiral and rescue strategies, I hypothesize that each primal need has a kind of intrinsic ‘yin-yang’ or if you want an intrinsic ambivalence mechanism. It is as if need is a kind of double sided coin. Each face has a positive and a source of motivation, one negative pole (led by ‘fear’) and one positive pole (led by desire, aspiration - please refer to appendix 2 for a visual scheme).

Understanding these motivation poles is key in designing nudges and learning experiences to help individuals and groups to navigate through change process. I hypothesize that fear (of eminent loss of love, exclusion, failure, humiliation, etc.) can be effective in generating action and change in behavior. However once the fear is gone the new behavior might disappear. The desire or aspiration led
motivation can be more long lasting in behavioral change if it induces to self-reinforcing rewards. These hypothesis are based on the discussion had during the EMCCC wave 12 during the module on nudges and decision making under uncertainty. Hence understanding well the primal needs and its intrinsic ambivalence can help us to design better nudges to help individuals consider options and cope with change.

As conclusion on this human relationship section it seems to me that there is still exploration room to be done in terms of association between ABC model and eventually CCRT and hidden competing commitments topics. These will not be deepened here but they constitute in my opinion an interesting link check.

SO WHAT? THE THESIS AT WORK...

So far I have been concerned with explaining the theoretical and the inference of the building blocks of the ABC model. Now the time has come to answer to the question ‘So What?!’. Why does it matter? And to whom?

The ABC primal needs underline the basic dynamics of interpersonal relationships particularly in what concerns the spiraling up and down of human relationships.

My thesis intends to establish the chain causality that ABC primal needs are the shaping drivers of three major archetypal family systems (Independence, Protection, Performance) that, on its turn, are responsible for determining major types of management and leadership styles and major organizational cultures typologies.
According to me this ground theory (once validated) is highly relevant because of the following relevant impacts:

- **Intervention levers between individuals-families-organizations**
  Insight of root-causeality and clarification of mechanisms of contagion and shaping of relationships, family dynamics and management styles/cultures. The richness for me is not so much the typology itself but the how we get to the typology which is what I call the “recipe for the making of…” This will help us to understand the leavers that coaches and leaders have to work on more in depth.

- **Diagnosing relationship health. Enrich set-up to fail syndrome research.**
  The patterns of sequencing of relationship spiraling up and down can be a great help to help design experiences to rescue those same relationships at work or in other contexts.

- **Communication with audiences to drive change**
  In fact consumer decision taking theory will gain by lending the lenses of human relationship and family dynamics to improve its behavioral change impact. The relationship between two individuals can be extrapolated for a relationship between one individual and one brand and its personality.

  The engagement and disengagement process with a brand could follow similar patterns and eventually have the same root causes. In fact we hear more and
more in the Marketing world about Trust (Control), Performance (Control), Bonding (Affection) and Co-Construction (Belonging). However I do not think that marketers have fully exploited this bridge opportunity to gain further insight and connection.

Likewise, leaders and coaches can eventually benefit a lot from the learning of family typology and communication towards families. IAs an example, when communicating towards say a Protection family system, one should not put in evidence the product characteristics upfront. Instead one should start by acknowledging the parenting system and how competent it has been (recognition – e.g. I am a good and competent mother, I am appreciated).

If it was an Independence system the independence of the children should be put forward before talking about the brand, let alone the product. Finally only in the case of the Performance system one should directly and upfront concentrate the communication upon the product features, its performance and all in detail as the parenting style is focused on performance.

According to the family systems the elements of the message are similar but the order of priority changes and the drive core argument (the hook as I call it) is different every time and so it is the tone of voice.

- **Complement to family business model development**
  Further shed some light on the fundamentals of family dynamics and its shaping power of society, management styles and organization culture. The
ABC model for me is quite an interesting complement to the Family business module in understanding how owner’s family shape the organization cultures and where does it come from – the root causes. It is a good framework to complement the genogram.

- **Complement the Organizational Culture assessment toolkit**

  It can be part of the tools and framework kit to assess organizational culture assessment. It is particularly useful to detect the underlying relationship theme throughout the organization and perhaps to understand the mechanisms of contagion between groups within the organization and between geographical zones.

- **Tool Design and news areas of applied research**

  It can help in better diagnostics but particularly to the drill down of motivation territories and respective tool designing. Affection and Love are vast generic territories that just like colors can have many sub-themes, which are tonalities and hues. The drill down and repertoire of those will help us to prevent staying at generic level and really by more customized and relevant in the managing change, relationships or while designing nudges.

- **Complement of the CCRT toolkit**

  Being at the core of human relationships the ABC can certainly help to assess in a simple framework some themes or motivational topics on individuals with relationship episode issues.
The above mentioned is just a small hint of what I have in mind in terms of pervasiveness of impact and potential applications of the findings. One thing is for sure, by writing this thesis and gathered these conclusions and equipped with EMCCC lenses I have already gained my day as I learn new angles of insight in my business and consumer decision taking discipline.

VALIDATING AND TESTING THE THEORY

I have the notion that this ground theory is vast, complex and eventually not easy to research. Given its building blocks it will certainly demand stage by stage research according to each building block: needs, relationships, families and organizations.

At this stage in my thinking I would therefore risk the below for testing and researching further. I am aware that this is a first stance at it and that is far from being adequate as I am not an expert in the field.

There are four fundamental assumptions and/or fields that I would propose to be further researched and validated:

**Family archetypes final validation**

- Firstly I would propose to validate in first instance the assumption that three family systems are indeed the major archetypes (is there another one missing?).
Relationships: motivation unfolding sequence
- Secondly I would investigate and inventory further the sequences by which relationships spiral up and down. This would help us to understand whether there are additional causalities in the sequence.

Learning from the extreme cases
- Third, I would investigate further the dysfunctional cases of family’s, their root causes and what societal impact do they have. Studying abnormalities or deviation from the norms would enrich our knowledge of the mechanism of contagion.

From Families to Organization: validation of mechanism of contagion
- Fourth I would investigate further the mechanism by which families or a critical mass of families from a system dominates over the others. Does the mechanism changes according to system typology and in what context? I would follow to validate how the transposition from family to management happens.

Qualitative and Quantitative research would be needed in almost every case. The choice and design of the exact tests would have to be done with the help of experts.
REFLECTION TIME

Finishing a thesis is a sunrise moment for me. New horizons have been lightening up uncovering new possibilities and knowledge development.

The experience in itself is a mini journey. It has a pass or fail system just like in real life with the expectations of our parents. It is something we have never done or wrote about it before and hence it reproduces every new challenge that we have never done before.

It will get better if you reach out to others and exchange about it. It will get better if you ask for help and support. It will get better if we do the “reality check”.

There are times in the journey when you have doubts about many things. There is a start and a finish.

It is also a great experience to deal with ambiguity and vastness. In some cases it can be an empty vacuum. One can get lost in the subjects, the length, the scope…but in the end it is about hope, belief, optimism, reality.

I believe that it is mostly all about the choices we make. And as Jeff Bezos said in his Princeton University speech “We are our choices. Let’s build ourselves a great story”.

The End
APPENDIX 1
THE ABC MODEL DYNAMICS

Primal Needs
- Affection (Love)
- Belonging (Inclusion)
- Control (Status, Performance)

Archetypal Family Systems
- Independence
- Protection
- Performance

Management Styles / Cultures
- Empowerment/Shared Leadership
- Feudal/Territorial Clans
- Normative Performance

APPENDIX 2
THE ABC MODEL in HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

INITIATION / SPIRAL UP
- Trust (Control)
- Respect (Belonging)
- Empathy (Affection)

DISRUPTION / SPIRAL DOWN
- Empathy (Affection)
- Trust (Control)
- Respect (Belonging)

FEAR
- (-) Negative Motivation
  Avoidance (short term effect)

ASPIRATION
- (+) Positive Motivation
  Rewarding (long term effect)
APPENDIX 3
THE CENSYDIAM MODEL


APPENDIX 4
THE CENSYDIAM MODEL – ARCHETYPAL FAMILY SYSTEMS

Source: Censydiam Consumer Model; P Fernandes.


Leman, K., (2009) The Birth Order Book: why you are the way you are. Revell


