Why change implementation failed in a continuously changing organization.

A case study of a governmental organization

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Change and constancy are relative concepts; group life is never without change, merely differences in the amount and type of change exist’ (Lewin, 1947a: 199).
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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to get a deeper understanding of why implementation of organizational change fails by drawing upon organizational change theory and applying these theories on results obtained during the observation of an organization that was experimenting extensive and continuous change. The methodology adopted in this paper is case study research, since it is considered to be the best methodology for answering research questions that focus on getting a deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon in the social world; in this case change management at a large governmental organization. The period of the study was twelve months during which the author observed the implementation and conducted several interviews with all employees and managers affected by the change implementations. Through these interviews it was found that, the implementation of change did not follow the most known change management models (Kotter and Kanter), but most importantly, the author observed how the constant succession of large scale change projects had a negative impact on the organizational culture. Since many of the previous change implementations in the organization had been unsuccessful, the employees had developed a negative attitude towards change in general. This in turn, added resistance to new change projects that also failed, resulting in a negative spiral. It is therefore found that effort has to be put on addressing the parts of the culture that impede change implementation before trying to implement new changes.
1. Introduction

In today’s world, organizations are in constant change and are expected to reinvent themselves continuously. As expressed by Burnes (2009: 288): “organizations today are seen less and less as stables and enduring institutions, and more and more as ‘work in progress’ subject to continuing and continuous change…”. This includes all types of organizations, from private companies to governmental institutions, so to be able to successfully manage these continuous changes it is necessary to review change management theory.

Change management as a discipline has existed for over half a century, during this time many change frameworks and models have been created by researchers, authors and consultants. Yet despite all the change models and all the resources allocated to change management, statistics show that 60-70% of all organizational change projects fail; this failure rate has stayed unchangeable for over 40 years (Ashkenas; 2013). So, why have most organizational change project failed? Have researchers, managers and consultants missed something over all these years? These questions were the starting-point for this study.

Many studies within the field have focused on different aspects of organizational change, but few have discussed the effect of organizational culture on the success or failure of a change implementation. And even fewer case studies have been conducted on the subject.

Hence, the research questions of this study are focused on investigating why change projects failed and if this was somehow related to the organization’s culture. In the next section, the research question will be presented.

1.1. Research questions

The overall aim of this paper is to uncover and understand the key factors, and the relation they have with each other- that impede implementation of successful organizational change. Specifically the author wants to get a deeper understanding of how organizational culture affects the implementation of organizational change.
Since the author had previously worked for the organization, the research questions are based on the author’s experience that most of the change management efforts had resulted in failures¹.

The research questions for this thesis paper are:

- What are the key factors that impede successful implementation of organizational changes in the unit of study?
- How does organizational culture affect the success or failure of a change implementation?

1.2. Limitations

The limitations of this research paper are the following:

- This paper is only one case study; although as explained in detailed in Chapter 3 Methodology, the unit of analysis is representative and has all the necessary characteristics for the purposes of answering the research questions.
- The time frame of study was twelve months, although it is quite an extensive period of time it did not cover the whole timeline of changes in the unit of analysis.
- This research paper does not aim to present suggestions of how to implement successful change nor does it want to create a model for how to successfully implement change. The purpose of this paper is to better understand the phenomenon of change and present the reader with the factors that impede its successful implementation. It is then up to the reader how these findings will be used.

2. Theoretical background

Change management is not a rigid, clearly-defined discipline. It is a discipline that includes a number of different social-science disciplines. This makes it harder to describe the origins of Change management and define its core concepts (Burnes, 2009). This chapter aims to present the theory of change management that is considered as the most important for this case study. The theory was chosen to allow the author to answer the paper’s first research question by identifying key factors that impede successful implementation of organizational

¹ This affirmation was confirmed by four out of five managers interviewed for this research paper.
changes in the unit of study. Specifically the author decided to use theories that were accessible for managers and employees that are not specialists in change management, which was the case for the ones working for the unit this paper is based on.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section will introduce the planned approach to organizational change. The second section describes the emergent approach. The third section presents the nature of change in terms of frequency and magnitude; and the fourth section describes shortly the most well-known models for successful change. In the fifth section, the construction of framework for change will be display and in the sixth section a short description of how the theory will be utilize in the data analysis.

2.1. Planned approach to organizational change

Planned change as a term was first used by Kurt Lewin to differentiate change that is planned and change that happens by impulse, accident or that is forced upon an organization (Marrow, 1969).

Even though there currently exists a wide variety of models on how to successfully manage planned change; the planned approach to organizational change is mostly known to be related to the Organization Development (OD) movement. As being mentioned by French and Bell (1995): ‘OD is (also) about planned change, that is getting individuals, teams and organizations to function better. Planned Change involves common sense, hard work applied diligently over time, a systematic, goal-oriented approach, and valid knowledge about organizational dynamics and how to change them’.

In the table beneath is presented the four core values of OD together with the five main approaches used by OD practitioners.
Planned change as understood by Lewin and the OD movement is a collaborative effort where the organization, managers, recipients of change, and the consultants together diagnose the organization’s problems, and jointly plan and design the specific changes that will improve the organization’s effectiveness.

**Table 1. Organization Development – Core values and main approaches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four core values of OD</th>
<th>Five main approaches of OD</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The belief that the needs and aspirations of human beings provide the prime reasons for the existence of organizations within society.</td>
<td>Empower employees to act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change agents believe that organizational prioritization is a legitimate part of organizational culture.</td>
<td>Create openness in communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change agents are committed to increased organizational effectiveness.</td>
<td>Facilitate ownership of the change process and its outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD places a high value on the democratization of organizations through power equalization.</td>
<td>Promote a culture of collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote continuous learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1. Lewin’s 3 step model to manage change**

- **Step 1 Unfreezing**
  - The equilibrium needs to be destabilized (unfrozen) before old behavior can be discarded (unlearned) and new behavior successfully adopted. Schein (1996) identifies three processes necessary to achieve unfreezing: disconfirmation of the validity of the status quo, the induction of guilt or survival anxiety, and creating psychological safety.

- **Step 2 Moving**
  - As Schein (1996: 62) notes, unfreezing is not an end in itself; it ‘...creates motivation to learn but does not necessarily control or predict the direction’ Lewin (1947a) recognised that, without reinforcement, change could be short-lived.

- **Step 3 Refreezing**
  - Refreezing seeks to stabilise the group at a new quasi-stationary equilibrium in order to ensure that the new behaviours are relatively safe from regression. The main point about refreezing is that new behaviour must be, to some degree, congruent with the rest of the behaviour, personality and environment of the learner or it will simply lead to a new round of disconfirmation (Schein, 1996). This is why Lewin saw successful change as a group activity, because unless group norms and routines are also transformed, changes to individual behaviour will not be sustained. In organisational terms, refreezing often requires changes to organisational culture, norms, policies and practices (Cummins and Huse, 1989).
2.1.1. Criticism of planned change

Levin’s model, as other planned change models such as Bullock and Batten’s model, focuses in change at the individual and group level. This however has been subject of critics from OD practitioners that believe that organizations nowadays are living in a disruptive moment in time in which they are being reinvented, their tasks are being reengineered, their markets’ rules are being rewritten and even their fundamental nature is changing (Downes & Nunes, 2013). So to be able to manage planned change it is becoming necessary to broaden the managerial focus out beyond individual and group behavior.

Many authors criticize the planned change approach firstly because they believe that it does not fit well the present organizations’ nature. These authors believe that organizational change is more a continuous and open-ended process than a set of discrete and self-contained events (Arndt and Bigelow, 2000; Black, 2000; Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997; Kanter et al, 1997; Peters, 1997; Stacey, 2003).

Secondly the planned change approach is based on the assumptions that all parties involved in the change will be willing to cooperate and work towards a common goal. In other words it does not consider conflicts and politics within the organization and it assumes that problems can easily be solved; such assumptions are difficult to support because many organizations lack a cohesive culture that bonds its personnel together for a common purpose (Burnes, 2009).

And thirdly, other criticism is directed at the planned change approach’s inability to incorporate radical, transformational change; especially because this type of change has become more and more frequent (Wessel & Christensen; 2012).

The planned approach may be applicable to incremental change, but it is not relevant to larger-scale and radical transformational changes (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997; Hayes, 2002). It is also applicable to individual and group context but it does not seem to fit system-wide changes.

In conclusion, the planned approach focuses on resolving group conflicts and improving group performance by bringing together managers, employees and change consultants. Their main focus is that these actors learn more about their situation so as to be able to identify more effective ways of working together (Burnes, 2009).
2.2. The Emergent approach to change

The Emergent approach bases its theory on the belief that change is a continuous, dynamic and contested process that emerges in an unpredictable and unplanned fashion; it is the product of an ongoing combination of accommodations, adaptations, and alternations in everyday work. This is why many times change goes unnoticed (Burnes, 2009).

Supporters of this approach argue that the Emergent approach considers elements that the Planned approach does not, such as;

- The rapidly changing environments in which organizations operate,
- Changes even in stable situations tend to have an emergent and unpredictable nature.
- Managers cannot be relied on 100%, commitment to change might not be achieved
- Plans or methods might not be understood and can be hard to be implemented

Taking into account the factors mentioned above, the Emergent approach can better understand the problems and practice surrounding change management.

The Emergent approach has distinct groups of supporters, the processualist and the postmodernists. The processualist group provides one of the main ideas of the Emergent approach; they study change through focusing on the interrelation of individuals, groups, organizations, and society. To them the process of change is a complex and messy combination of rational decision processes, individual perceptions, political struggles and coalition-building (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001). The processualists recognize ‘the importance of planning for change’ and the presence of ‘processes of continuity’; but they argue that these two need to be constrained and influence by the complex and messy nature of change (Dawson, 2003).

The postmodernists consider the importance of power and politics as one of the main factors to take into account when managing organizational change. This is one of the main difference between the planned approach and the Emergent approach. Many authors such as Pugh (1993) and Hardy (1996) believe that not taking into account these factors can be the reason why many planned change projects have failed; they also reject simple classifications of change and approaches that promise success if they are followed.
According to the Emergent approach, the reciprocal relationship between an organization and its environment has deep implications for how organizations understand and manage change. And the ability to scan its external environment is considered a vital competence for organizations. To be able to achieve this it is necessary for companies to become open learning systems, with strategy development and change emerging from the way the company as a whole obtains and interprets information. It is also important to adapt a ‘bottom-up’ rather than a ‘top-down’ approach to initiate and implement change, this is based on the view that the environment changes rapidly and in a complex way so it is almost impossible to believe that a handful of senior managers can effectively identify, plan and implement the necessary organizational responses, that is why workers need to be actively involved. And for the workers to be actively involved, the managers need to empower them, make sure that they have the necessary motivation, skills, tools and power they need to change processes.

2.2.1. The Emergent approach to successful change

Even though the Emergent approach’s authors generally reject the idea of having a set of defined set of rules or steps to successful change, they identified five features that can promote or obstruct successful change, these are: organizational structure, organizational culture, organizational learning, managerial behavior, and power and politics.

2.2.1.1. Organizational structure

The organizational structure is considered being an important facilitator of change. Galbraith (2000) notes that: ‘The theory of organization has always identified some types of (organizational structures) as being more easily changeable than others.’

A flat organization tends to be more flexible and less change-resistant than a hierarchical organization (Kotter, 1996). According to Brown and Eisenhardt, semi-structured organizations have the ideal structure for successful change, because they possess some kind of structure that enables organized change, but its structure is not rigid enough to obstructs change.

Nowadays organizations tend to move towards a more customer-centered structure, and this makes them more flexible and responsive to the changes in the market rather than just focusing on the different functions of the organization (Galbraith, 2000; Hamel and Prahalad,
1994; Stace and Dunphy, 2001). This in its turns places more focus on effective horizontal processes and embodies the concept that, whether one is looking internally or externally, everyone is someone else’s customer.

2.3.1.2. Organizational culture

If proposed changes contradict cultural biases and traditions, it is inevitable that they will fail to embed in the organization. That is why to successfully manage change, it is necessary to understand which part of the organizational culture needs to be changed and to anchor the change in the organization’s culture (Clarke, 1994; Kotter, 1996).

Changing organizational culture is a long and difficult process that requires continuous reinforcement if wanted change is to be sustained against the tendency to revert back to old behaviors. So to ensure that the change will happen it is important that organizations include change as a part of the way they do all things; i.e. as a part of its organizational culture (Clarke, 1994).

2.2.1.3. Organizational learning

Learning allows employees to understand their environment so as to detect and solve errors. It is an important factor for successful change, because a willingness to change often only comes from the feeling that there is no other option (Argyris, 1999; Pettigrew et al, 1992).

To achieve organizational learning, it is important to have an effective top-down communication and the promotions of self-development and confidence (Clarke, 1994; Nadler, 1993). Employees should feel empowered and informed so as they can take advantage of the opportunities that appear. They need to be involved in the diagnosis of problems and the development of solutions, because these enable them to challenge the status quo (existing norms and established practices), and to be able to own the change process (Clarke, 1994); this is the essence of bottom-up change, rather than managers pushing the staff towards change.
2.2.1.4. Managerial behavior

The manager’s role plays a very important part in the change process. In the past, managers were only seen as a controlling and directing figure; but nowadays they are expected to be coaches and facilitators that empower employees to identify the need for, and achieve change (Bennis, 2000; Carnall, 2003).

Kotter argues that the main skill a manager must have to bring about successful change is leadership, because ‘Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen … ’ (Kotter, 1996: 25).

Other important managerial tasks will be to; identify sources of inertia, evaluate the skills existing within their organization and analyze whether their own managerial attitudes and styles are appropriate. They need also to recognize that there are different types of change, which require different approaches (Stace and Dunphy, 2001).

2.2.1.5. Power and politics

To bring about successful change it is necessary to manage appropriately the political dynamics of change by involving ‘those [actors] whose involvement really matters…Specifically seek support from two general groups: (1) power sources and (2) stakeholders.’ (Kanter et al, 1992:508)

Nadler (1993) recognized the importance of shaping the political dynamics of change so that power centers support the change rather than obstruct it. Senior (2002) describes in four steps what an organization needs to do to manage the political dynamics of change.

### Table 2. Senior’s (2002) four steps

| Step 1 | Ensure or develop the support of key power groups. |
| Step 2 | Use leader behaviour to generate support for the proposed change. |
| Step 3 | Use symbols and language to encourage and show support for the change. |
| Step 4 | Build in stability by using power to ensure that some things remain the same. |

Adapted from Senior (2002)
2.3. The frequency and magnitude of organizational change

Many recognized Change Management authors such as Kotter and Kanter claim that organizations are changing at a much faster tempo and in a more fundamental way than ever before. To further understand how to manage change according to their frequency and magnitude, different types of models of change will be presented in the sections below.

2.3.1. The incremental and punctuated models of change

This model has been around for a long time and it has one of its most representative authors in Quinn, who view strategic change as ‘muddling through with purpose’, meaning that the best way of dealing with change is by using a continuously evolving and consensus building approach (Burnes, 2009).

Supporters of this view see change as being a process whereby each part of an organization handles change incrementally and separately with one difficulty and one target at a time. To them managers should respond to pressures in their internal and external environments in this way so as to, over time, transform their organizations (Miller & Friesen, 1984). However, one can argue as Mintzberg (1978) did, that even though organizations experience long periods of incremental change, they are often combined with spans of rapid and disruptive change.

This last statement brings us to the punctuated equilibrium model, which sustains that organizations are normally always evolving through long periods of stability (also known as equilibrium periods); and that now and then relatively short bursts of fundamental change (also known as revolutionary periods) happen. These periods of fundamental change are the ones that disrupt the organization’s established patterns and establish the basis for new equilibrium periods (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994).

This means that organizations are normally in equilibrium periods until disruptive events happen and new patterns are established to be later on change by other disruptive event. This model has received a lot of criticism that mainly emphasized on the lack of evidence the followers of the punctuated equilibrium model present to support their theory.
2.3.2. The continuous transformation model of change

The followers of this model argue that organizations need to develop the ability to change continuously so as to be able to survive. This is specially noticed in fast-moving sectors, ‘If you look at the best retailers out there, they are constantly reinventing themselves’ Greenwald (1996: 54).

For many organizations such as Wal-Mart and IBM, the ability to change rapidly and continuously is not just a core competence but also the heart of their organizational culture. (Applegate et al, 2009)

The logic behind this model is that the environments in which organizations operate are experiencing continuous change rapidly, and many times radically and unpredictably change. This means that only by continuously transforming themselves can organizations survive (Peters, 1997). However, the creators of this model have not given enough empirical evidence to support this view (Burnes, 2009).

2.3.3. Varieties of change

As previously mentioned, change can be categorized by whether its main focus is the individual, groups or systems and sub-systems. If these categories together with the three main models of change (incremental, punctuated and continuous) are combined, the following matrix that covers most change situations is obtained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matrix 1. Varieties of change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incremental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Burnes (2009)
Change can be viewed as ‘running along a continuum’ from being incremental to transformational, this follows the logical assumption that change ranges from small-scale to large-scale and from operational to strategic (Burnes 2009).

Incremental forms of change are related more to changes in an individual or group level, like for example changing the activities, behavior, attitudes of individuals and groups. While transformational change is related to changes that affect the entire organization, for example changes regarding the processes, structures and culture of the organization (Burnes, 2009).

Although knowing the type of change is an important factor to take into account, what is most important to consider is how change should be conceived and managed. Critics of the planned change argue that planned change stands at the left end of this scale while emergent change stands at the right end (see figure 3); they believe that what divides planned and emergent change is the nature of the environment the organization lives in.

As can be seen in the figure above, planned change is thought to be more suitable for stable environments, while emergent change is believed to be more appropriate for more turbulent environments.
2.4. Model for successfully managing strategic and operational change

As stated early in section 2.2.1, many advocates of the emergent change approach do not believe there is ‘one’ recipe for managing change, many have suggested different sequences of actions to follow to bring about successful change.

Unfortunately, the problem with much of the advice offered by advocates of the Emergent approach is that it tends to be too general and therefore difficult to apply. Nevertheless two well-known authors have created models that guide organizations in their effort to change. These two authors are: Rosabeth Moss Kanter and John P Kotter, and their change models are presented in table 3 and 4, and each step in the models is explained under section 2.4.1. and 2.4.2.

2.4.1. Kanter’s Ten Commandments for executing change

Table 3. Kanter’s Ten commandments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten commandments for executing change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Analyze the organization and its need for change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Create a shared vision and a common direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Separate from the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Create a sense of urgency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Support a strong leader role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Line up political sponsorship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Craft an implementation plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Develop enabling structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Communicate, involve people and be honest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Reinforce and institutionalize change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Kanter et al (1993:362-3)

Kanter’s commandments are grouped together in sets of three and four by the author; one to four in one set, five to seven in another and eight to ten in the last. Each commandment is described in this sub-section.

The first commandment of Kanter’s model refers to understanding how the organization works, in what kind of environment it operates, what its strengths and weaknesses are so as to
determine the need for change. The next commandment, proposes the creation of a central change vision that will reflect the core values of the organization in relation to the change and will guide the decisions to be made during the change processes so as to achieve a successful change implementation.

The third and fourth are tightly connected to the second step and refer to discontinuing the status quo and engaging into a new way of doing things by accepting the new vision, and also gaining support from the employees by creating a sense of urgency, especially if the situation does not naturally create a sense of urgency.

The fifth and sixth relate to the leadership of the change and are about supporting a change leader that can guide and drive the change process by creating a vision, developing the structures necessary for change, as well as encouraging the employees to accept the vision. Support is also needed to be gained from the other parts of the organization including managers and top managers to be able to implement the change. What is then needed is to construct a detailed implementation plan that should describe how the implementation will be conducted, as well as when it will be done, and the milestones in between, which is commandment number six.

Number seven is a suggestion to construct a detailed implementation plan that should describe how the implementation will be conducted, as well as when it will be done, and the milestones in between.

Commandments number eight, nine and ten are all related to how to make sure change actually happens. The eight is about the structures that will enable change, which means that new structures shall be created if considered necessary. Examples of these structures are: workshops, training programs and reward systems.

The ninth refers to the importance of communicating and involving people in the change implementation. The aim of this step is to have an open and honest communication with all personnel affected by the change so as to gain commitment and minimize resistance to change. And the last commandment relates to rewarding and reinforcing commitment to the change processes so as to incorporate the change in the daily operations of the organization.
2.4.2. Kotter’s eight steps to successful change

Table 4. Kotter’s eight steps

| Step 1 | Establishing a sense of urgency. |
| Step 2 | Creating a guiding coalition. |
| Step 3 | Developing a vision and strategy. |
| Step 4 | Communicating the change vision. |
| Step 5 | Empowering broad-based action. |
| Step 6 | Generating short-term wins. |
| Step 7 | Consolidating gains and producing more change. |
| Step 8 | Anchoring new approaches in the culture. |

Adapted from Kotter (1990)

Kotter’s steps are grouped together in sets of two and three by the author; one to three in one set, four to six in another, and seven and eight in the last. Each step is described in this subsection.

Kotter’s first steps are similar to Kanter’s first commandments mentioned above. The first consists in convincing managers and employees that the status quo needs to be disrupted, that changing is much more beneficial than not changing; while the second suggests the creation of a change group – a “guiding coalition” - that can lead change; this group needs to have the power necessary to be able to do so. The third relates to creating a change vision and developing a change strategy so as to be able to reach that vision.

The second set of steps is somewhat more practical than Kanter’s fifth to seventh commandments, although they are also about how to actually start changing. Kotter’s fourth step focuses on communicating continuously the change vision and strategy to all employees so as to gain commitment and encourage new behaviors; while the fifth refers to empowering the employees to act on the change vision by giving them the mandate that is necessary and removing the obstacles that obstruct change implementation. The last step in this set emphasizes the identification and celebration of short-term wins that will allow for the employees to notice the progress in change implementation and will help increase commitment to change.

The last two steps relate to the institutionalization of the change. The seventh step stresses the importance of using the credibility gained by the short-term wins to be able to change structures, processes, or any other obstacle that obstructs the fulfillment of the change vision.
This step also refers to recruiting and training employees that can help in the implementation of new change projects. Finally, the last step focuses on integrating the newly implemented changes to the culture of the organization.

Kotter explains that these eight steps are a process so as to successfully manage change; an organization must go through all eight stages, trying to quickly get ahead without a solid base or skipping one stage will most definitely create problems.

Although both Kanter and Kotter provide a good guidance for implementing change, they are not considering the role of the change agent. Theory regarding this important individual is presented in the following sub-section.

2.4.3. The role of the change agent

The planned and the emergent perspectives have their own definitions of what a change agent is; however they both recognize that change needs to be managed, and that someone has to take responsibility for ensuring that change takes place (Burnes, 2009).

The role of change agent has evolved during the last decades, from ‘the heroic leader’ capable of transforming organizations, towards the call for lines managers to become change agents and the growth of internal and external management consultants as ‘catalysts’ for change (Caldwell, 2003).

The planned approach to change provides an outline for the behavior and attributes of change agents that are supported by a host of tools and techniques for analyzing organizations and managing change (Cummings and Worley, 1997).

The emergent approach believes that change is not a specialist activity driven by an expert but that it should be part of the managerial role (Clark, 1994). The critique to this view is that it ignores the ‘specialist skills’ necessary to manage the different types of change, whether it is done by a change specialist or a manager. Buchanan and Boddy (1992) advocates of the emergent approach, argue that a change agent should be a skilled and well-trained political operator with in-depth knowledge of change processes, tools, and the personal qualities; and experience to use them. In contrast to this, the planned approach sees change agents as neutral facilitators that should help, those involved with change, to identify the solutions so they can make their own choices.
To the emergent approach, the change agent should be an active manager of change, trying to promote or impose his agenda by managing and shaping the perceptions of those affected by the change (Pettigrew, 2000; Weick, 2000). The main goal of a change agent should be to reduce the uncertainty of change, and they can do this by for example reinforcing the feeling that change participants are taking part in a controlled and well-managed process of change (Schuyt and Schuijt, 1998).

Change agents are also supposed to be innovating and creative so as to exploit the opportunities present in the organizational context (Buchanan and Boddy, 1992; Mirvis, 1988). They should not just use a set of diagnostic tools but also experiment with the unknown. It is impossible for one type of change agent to possess all the high-level skills and knowledge necessary to manage all types of change.

2.5. Building a change framework

Planned and Emergent approaches to change present us with good theoretical and practical benefits; however, both approaches can be criticized for being limited and flawed. Planned change does not take into consideration the rapidly changing environment but advocates of emergent change can hardly agree on what the main elements of their approach are. That is why, to be able to address both the Planned and Emergent approach limitations, it is needed to create a change management framework that will include the concepts neglected by the planned and emergent approaches.

The first step of building this framework includes the formation of a table in which the three main change theories are connected to one another in a logical way, that helps compare the results found in the unit of study with the most recognized theories of change management. Hereby the summary of the three main change theories is presented.
This will enable the construction of a framework that allows different change situations to be matched to appropriate approaches to managing change. However, the focus on frequency and magnitude of change is not included and that is why the framework for this study is also based on Burnes’ (2009) analysis of the varieties of change. This framework considers the change continuum and the two approaches to change, described in the previous sections. Burnes’ framework for change is presented in figure 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lewin's three step model</th>
<th>Kanter's ten commandments</th>
<th>Kotter's eight step model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Unfreezing</td>
<td>1. Analyze the organization &amp; its need for change</td>
<td>1. Establish a sense of urgency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Create shared vision &amp; common directive</td>
<td>2. Create a guiding coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Separate from past</td>
<td>3. Develop a vision &amp; strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Create a sense of urgency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Moving</td>
<td>5. Support a strong leader role</td>
<td>4. Communicate the change vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Line up political sponsorship</td>
<td>5. Empower others to act on the vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Craft an implementation plan</td>
<td>6. Generate short term wins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Communicate, involve people and be honest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Reinforce &amp; institutionalize change</td>
<td>8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Lewin (1947), Kanter (1992) and Kotter (1996)
It is important to take notice that changes are not only attitudinally oriented or structural oriented as mentioned by Burnes (2009). A large structural change project may need to involve changes in the organization’s culture.

2.6. Theory as a base for pattern matching

The theories present in the theoretical framework, and previously described in detail in section 2, will be used in chapter 5 Data Analysis, to find patterns in the data collected so as to be able to compare whether “observed pattern” matches an “expected pattern” based on theory (Hak & Dul, 2009).

These change management theories will help the researcher to gain a better insight of why theory is (or not) applicable in this study and if some theory is not applicable, the researcher will try to infer why. The steps that were taken for analyzing change in this case are listed in the figure below.

Figure 6. Steps for analyzing the results

1. Analyze which approach (planned or emergent) fits the characteristics of the change implemented in the unit of study.
2. Analyze the results obtained in the research by comparing it with the changes management models by Lewin, Kanter and Kotter.
3. Determine the frequency, magnitude and focus of the changes implemented in the unit of study.
4. Define new theory based in the observations and results of the analysis.
3. Methodology and method

The aim of this study is to identify and understand the key factors, and the relation they have with each other, that impede the implementation of successful organizational change. Specifically, the author is aiming to get a deeper understanding of how and why organizational culture affects the implementation of an organizational change project in a large organization. In this chapter, the author will present in detail the method and methodology that was used to best answer these above mentioned research questions.

The chapter is divided in two parts: Methodology and Research strategy. Under Methodology, the philosophical foundations of the study are presented and explained, leading to the second part of this chapter, the Research strategy, where the type of research, the number of cases, selection of criteria, etc. are presented and explained.

3.1. Methodology

The objective of this paper is to be able to get a deeper understanding of the organizational change phenomenon. To be able to achieve this objective, different research methods have been analyzed according to how they allow the author to get closer to the phenomenon.

The methods considered were: experiment, case study and survey. An experiment deliberately separates the phenomenon from its context by controlling this context in laboratory environment; a survey can try to include the context in the study but usually their ability to investigate the context is extremely limited (Yin, 2009). The method selected was case study research because it allows an in-depth study of a real-life phenomenon in its own context, as explained by Yin (2009:18) ‘a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’.

Case study research is a flexible strategy that can be used in different contexts to answer a wide range of research questions. This flexibility can be seen as one of the main strengths of this method, but it can also be seen as a weakness ‘in the way that the research is executed,
where it may be misinterpreted as a lack of rigor by readers’, as mentioned by Dawes (2012:10).

3.1.2. Philosophical assumptions

We all view the world in different ways and this affects the way we formulate our arguments and analyze evidence. To be able to understand how the author of this paper formulates its theory and interprets the data collected, it is necessary to present the philosophical assumptions made in this research. This study follows an ideographic ontology, which means that the author believes that the world is socially constructed and that to be able to understand it, it is necessary to first understand the perceptions of individuals that make up this world (Dawes, 2012).

Derived from the ontology, the epistemology approach of this paper is considered as interpretivist, which is why closer engagement with the research phenomena has been favored. Interpretivism is based on the belief that the social world requires a different logic, compared with the natural world, that reflects the distinctiveness of humans (Bryman, 2001). This study is concerned with understanding the views of individuals that formed an organization, and how these individuals interpreted the organizations they work at and attribute meanings to it. The highest aim of interpretivism is to gain an understanding of cultural realities by an active interaction between researcher and the object of investigation, in this case an active interaction between the researcher and the individuals working for the selected organization. It is important to clarify that the author is not trying to be a detached observer but an active agent.

As well as the epistemology approach, the axiological assumptions are derived from the ontology approach of this paper. The axiological assumptions made for this paper, state that values are important because they will allow the researcher to determine and interpret facts, although it is considered that this can produce bias in the findings; the author seeks to achieve transparency in her research by explaining where the bias can appear.

Possible sources of bias

- The author worked for the selected organization for over two years, and had worked directly with some of the individuals that have been interviewed for this paper. This can be considered to be a source of bias because the closed-working relation the
researcher has had with some of the interviewees can affect the way the results are presented and/or analyzed in this study, to neutralize this bias the author has recorded the interviews and transcribed them entirely so as not to omit any comment that might be important for the analysis. The analysis of the data collected was done according to the methodology plan and based upon Case Study research literature. At the time this paper was presented the author was working for another organization.

- The fact that the author was directly answering to one of the line managers involved in the case study can also be seen as a bias (pressure to present results that would not damage the image of the line manager). Nevertheless this research was carried out independently and all interviews were anonymous. Apart from an in-depth interview and a couple of meetings for coordination purposes, the author did not meet the line manager.

- The bias that some interviewees did not answer truly because of fear of reprehension from top/line management; this was neutralized by conducting all the interviews anonymously, which created a sense of trust for the interviewer and made the participants feel they could speak freely.

- The language barrier can in many case studies constitute a source for bias. All the interviews and all the written material obtained for this case study were in Swedish. The researcher does not speak Swedish as a native language however her command of the language has allowed her to work entirely in Swedish. The majority of the interviews (all but one) were recorded so as to avoid misunderstanding due to the language barrier.

Nonetheless, it is known by the author that some level of bias will be present in this paper, and even though this might seem as a weakness for many readers, it is also considered a strength because the author has a good understanding of the organization’s context, values, culture and challenges. These allowed the author to be an active observer of the changes described in the case study, and be able to understand them more fully than would be the case for an outside observer.
3.2. Research logic

This paper uses an abductive approach that moves back and forth between induction and deduction, so as to make a judgment which offers the best explanation for the observations (Thomas, 2011). This means that the researcher in some cases has, looked at theory first and then made a hypothesis and in other cases observed behaviors then identified a pattern and then created a hypothesis.

![Forms of Inference](image)

3.2.1. Research design

The research design is the logic that will connect the data collected and the conclusions drawn in this paper to the initial research question. It is also the plan that guides the researcher in the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting observations (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). This plan will deal with: what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyze the results (Philliber, Schwab, & Samsloss, 1980).

3.2.1.1. Components of the research design

According to Yin (2009) five components are most important when designing a case study:

1. **Study questions.** To uncover and understand the factors that lead to the failure of organizational change implementation -and the relation they have with each other.
Specifically the author is aiming to get a deeper understanding of how organizational culture affects the implementation of an organizational change.

2. **Study propositions.** The values and perceptions related to organizational culture affect the way individuals perceive change. In some organizations it may be vital to embark in a project of changing organizational culture so as to be able to successfully achieve structural change.

3. **Unit of analysis.** To be able to answer the research questions, the author has selected one unit of analysis, represented by a department, located in the headquarters of a large public organization, which has been implementing large changes in the way they work and its structure. This unit is made up by different groups of individuals, and it is integrated by 24 employees 21 workers and three managers, 57% women and 43% men, ages ranging from 28 to 64 years old.

This unit was chosen for this study because of its current change status and because of its availability and will to allocate resources for this study. The organization has driven several different organizational change projects in the last four years but this specific department has been through over four major change processes since its creation in 2011. This case study involves one single case with one unit of analysis. The rationale for selecting this case was that it represents an extreme case of organizational change, where numerous major changes have been implemented in a short period of time. This case can also be classified as longitudinal case because the observations and interviews for this study were done during a period of twelve months.

4. **Linking data to propositions.** This study paper connects data collected to the study’s prepositions by using the following techniques: pattern matching, explanation building, logic models, and cross-case synthesis. These techniques will be further explained in the next chapter.

5. **Criteria for interpreting the study’s findings.** As mentioned by Yin (2009) a major strategy for interpreting the findings is to identify and address rival explanations. This was done by the reviewing the theories opposing the research prepositions before starting the collection of the data.
3.2.2. Theoretical review

The goal of theory in this research paper is to act as a sort of blueprint that will guide the study in determining what data is necessary to collect and the strategies for analyzing the data. The theoretical review has been presented in the previous chapter.

Using theory as a template for comparing the study’s findings is a common doing in case study research (Yin, 2009). This is called ‘analytic generalization’.

Figure 8. Case study – Analytic generalization

Adapted from Yin (2009)

3.2.2.1. Criteria for judging the quality of research designs

Four tests are commonly used for evaluating the quality in research studies, these are:

- **Construct validity.** It refers to the development of the correct operational measurements for the concepts being discussed. This is often pointed out as a weakness in case study research, because researchers tend to fail to construct sufficient operational measurements and that ‘subjective’ judgments are used for collecting the data. To be able to pass this test, the author of this study has used different sources of evidence (internal reports, interviews with different participants, meetings’ minutes, etc.). The author has also used another tactic known as “chain of evidence”, in which a chain of evidence is maintained by citing appropriate documents and interviews.
(evidence) in connection to the research questions. Finally a draft case study was reviewed by a couple of informants so as to minimize the bias of the author.

- **Internal validity.** Mainly applied for studies that are explanatory such as this one, where it is important that the researcher takes into account all possible information before making any inferences of the findings. The specific tactics used to achieve internal validity are: pattern matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanation and using logic models (Yin, 2009).

- **External validity.** It refers to the generalization of the findings beyond the immediate case study. This test is considered a major barrier in case study research, because many critics considered that single cases -such as the one presented in this study- offer a poor basis for external generalization. However, it is important to state that case studies rely on analytic generalization and not statistical generalization, which means that the researcher strives to generalize her findings to some broader theory.

- **Reliability.** This last test wants to make sure that if another investigator would like to replicate the case, he/she would just need to follow the procedures describe in the study. To be able to achieve reliability, the researcher of this paper has documented all the procedures followed for this case study. Two tactics used for dealing with this test are: (1) use of case study protocol and (2) the development of a case study database.

### 3.3. Data collection

In terms of collection of data the mixed method approach has been used for this study; this approach refers as mentioned by Dawnes (2012) to ways information is collected and analyzed.

#### 3.3.1. Sources of data collection

As described by Yin (2009), there are six sources of evidence commonly used in case studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. For this study all but the last of these sources were used.
Documentation

The documents collected for this study include: agendas, announcements, minutes of meetings, and other written internal and external reports such as the HR annual report and the organization’s annual report. The advantages of collecting data from documents are: they can be reviewed many times, they contained exact references and details, and they can cover a long span of time. The disadvantages are that they might not always be accurate and might not be absent of bias. That is why for this case study, the documents have been used mainly to corroborate and expand evidence from interviews and observations.

Archival records

For this case study, archival records include: service records, organizational charts and survey data. This information will be used in combination with the information collected by observations and interviews.

Interviews

Interviews are essential sources for this case study. These interviews followed the case study protocol annexed in this paper. The interviews’ questions were semi-structured meaning that they were broad so as to leave space for the interviewees to express his/hers opinion on the matter. The interview questions were developed based on the experience of the author as well as the change management theory mentioned in the previous chapter. The set of questions presented in annex 3 were revised and found to be suitable after the first couple of interviews, although a couple of questions were added. The interviewees have also gotten the opportunity to suggest other persons for the author to interview, as well as other sources of evidence.

The literature was revisited between interviews to gain a better understanding of the data collected.

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2 Questions 17 and 19 of the first page of annex 3
**Interview sampling**

The author had the opportunity to formally interview all the unit’s employees, two top managers and two internal experts. In total 28 people were interviewed by the author, according to following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I (spring-summer 2013)</th>
<th>Phase II (autumn 2013-spring 2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 unit’s employees incl. unit’s manager</td>
<td>13 unit’s employees incl. all managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 members of top management</td>
<td>2 members of top management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 experts</td>
<td>2 experts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the interviews, except one, were recorded and scheduled upon convenience and availability of the interviewees and interviewer. In total 31 interviews were conducted; in phase I the author interviewed all employees that at that time were working for the unit (during the implementation new workers were added to the unit that later on became a department, that is why 10 more interviews were conducted with the new employees). The aim of the author was to have follow-up questions for the 14 employees that were interview in phase I, however five employees were not working for the unit anymore and others had difficulties allocating time for interviews, hence just three out of nine employees were interviewed again.

**Direct observation**

The researcher has done observations during formal and informal activities. Formal observations were made when the researcher was part of group meetings or conferences and informal observations were collected during coffee-breaks and lunch.

The form used to document these observations is annexed to the case study protocol.

As referred by Yin (2009), observational evidence can prove useful in providing additional information about the research object.
Participant-observation

In the beginning of this study the researcher was working at the selected unit, this allowed her to have special access to documents, internal systems, formal meetings and other informal gatherings. This helps the study to provide the readers with an insider’s information of the unit that will enrich the research instead of just collecting data from an external point of view. It also provided the opportunity to, in first person, observe and analyze important situation for the purpose of collecting data.

The major problems with participant-observation are related to potential bias from the part of the researcher in terms of having to assume positions or advocacy roles in favor of the organization and contrary to the interests of the study; this situation was addressed in two different ways. In the beginning the researcher just documented the observations as she saw them, after that she discussed her observations with other participants to make sure that what she had written was also observed by other participants. After the collecting of half of the interviews the researcher was assigned to a different department not related to the unit of study, which helped to detach the researcher from the group.

3.3.2. Data collection principles

Three principles of data collection as mentioned by Yin (2009)

1. **Use multiple sources of evidence.** This study used five different types of sources for collecting data, as explained in the section above. The use of multiple sources enriches the study and provides the researcher with a more unbiased set of data. The rationale for using multiple sources of evidence is also known as triangulation which is a well-known strategy for analyzing data. It aims at collecting data from different sources so as to corroborate the same fact or phenomenon, meaning that data has been triangulated when it has been supported by more than a single source of evidence. According to Yin (2009), the main advantage of using several sources is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration.
Even though the collection of data from several sources is more expensive and demanding, the researcher of this paper believes it was necessary to do so as to address the validity and quality questions of this research study.

2. **Create a case study database.** Documentation is an important topic that is many times ignored or forgotten by case study researchers. For this study the researcher has built up two separate documentation collections: (1) data obtained by interviews, observations and other written material; and (2) the case study report. The importance of the first lies in helping other investigators to do an independent inspection of all the data collected for the study, even the data that was not used for the study report. Nevertheless, the study report includes enough data so as to allow the readers to draw independent conclusions about the case study.

3. **Maintain a chain of evidence.** This principle refers to allowing the reader to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to the conclusions or the other way around (Yin, 2009).

### 4. The case of study

#### 4.1. Background

The organization of the study was restructured in 2008 after the implementation of a large change project that involved the merger of two medium-large organizations. The objective of doing this was to increase the efficiency of the management of resources so as to be able to achieve more ambitious goals set by the national government.
Since 2008 the changes implemented in the organization have had different natures; most of them have been structural organizational changes, while others have been more isolated changes involving one or two departments. Some change efforts have affected the whole organization by changing their way of working, an example of this is the latest IT system implementation.

Many organizational changes are visible in the organizational charts from 2008-2013 (see appendix 1), during this period several departments and/or units were created, later dissolved and then re-created again. One of the major structural changes was the elimination of a whole line of middle managers that completely changed the hierarchy within the organization as well as the way of reporting.

As for the unit of study, it was created in the end of 2011 and started functioning as such in the beginning of 2012 with only four workers but grew to become 14 later on during the same year. By the end of 2012 EY got the task from top management of making an in-depth analysis of all the departments and some highly prioritized units of the organization, one of these units was the unit of study. The EY analysis was officially presented to top management in March 2013. This report showed that, to be able to improve the management of the unit’s resources, and in its turn the unit’s results, it was highly recommended to establish a strategy for the unit and change the unit’s structure and methods of working. This meant that the unit needed to create a strategic mission, vision and objectives as well as it needed to change its structure so as to include several new positions and eliminate others as well as transforming its way of working both internally within the organization and externally with their customers and other stakeholders.

A couple of weeks after the report was presented to top management, the unit’s manager communicated to the employees the results and discussed what could possibly happen to the unit in the upcoming months. However, due to delays in the decisions of top management, the unit’s manager could not officially present in detail what changes were to be made in the unit until the beginning of May.

At the beginning of April 2013 the roll out of a new IT system started. This event had a big impact on the way the whole organization worked, and it particularly affected the unit, for a period of one month they could not access the system. In parallel with the roll out of the new IT system, new administrative and reporting routines were also implemented.
In June 2013 a kick-off event was organized by the unit’s management. All the unit’s workers (old and new) participated, the intention of the meeting was to inform all workers about the new way of working and to ensure their acceptance and commitment to the changes. The magnitudes of the changes happening in the unit were not the same for all. The first change affected most of the members of the group, from which 50 % were going to get a new job title and respectively different tasks that had less prestige than their previous positions.

Later on, in July 2013 the decision to transform the unit into a department was taken by the former General Manager. The reasons why this decision was taken related to the fact that the unit’s operations were closely related to the core processes of the organization, and were categorized as highly prioritized by the board. The new department was the result of the integration of two units and involved hiring new people for specific tasks such as reporting and administration.

In August 2013 the General Manager of the organization was dismissed and the organization was left without an official manager until April 2014; this had a big impact on the steering of the organization as well as on the strategic decision-making due to the fact that the deputy manager could not take these decisions.

After the summer 2013 the new department got a new department manager, a vice manager and two unit managers. The old unit’s manager became the vice manager of the department and the old employees of the unit got a new unit manager that had not previously worked within the organization. This manager took over after the summer 2013 and after working for two months he left the organization; the vice manager was then prompted to take the unit’s manager position. By the end of the year 2013 four employees of the unit had left the unit.

At the end of the summer 2014 the department is expected to merge with two other departments, the reason for this is to have better control of the quality of the services they provide and to obtain a better coordination between departments that are highly related to one-another. During the writing of this paper the effort was ongoing and a pre-study was taking place. The effort of joining the departments is expected to be finalized during the autumn of 2014.

Internally, the unit of study had changed management several times, and new people have been entering and leaving during the last year. Presented below is a timeline summary of the main events that affected the unit since the beginning of 2013.
Figure 10. Timeline summary of events

1. April 2013, EY report on the unit’s performance is presented to top management. The report included suggestions on how to restructure the unit.
2. May 2013, the unit’s manager started the implementation of the changes that involved changes in the roles and structure of the organization according to the EY report.
3. July 2013, the general manager of the organization together with the management team decided on turning the unit of study into a new department.
4. End of August 2013, the general manager left the organization.
5. October 2013, a new manager is assigned to the department of study.
6. End of February 2014, top management decided to join several departments into one larger department. The department of study is one of them.
7. Mars 2014, a new general manager is assigned.
8. August 2014, the new department is expected to be officially created.

During the tie of the study was conducted, communication within the unit functioned as follows:

- From March 2013 until December 2013 weekly meetings with the whole unit were conducted. The meetings were focused on daily work operation and the implementation of changes. Participation during these meetings was not mandatory and often the manager and other members were not present.
- From January 2014 until the end of the study, meeting once a month. The main focus in these meetings was daily operations. Participations were mandatory and managers were most of the time present.
4.2. Results

In this section the most relevant information collected during formal and informal interviews is presented. As stated previously in the methodology section, this research paper is based on a case study with an abductive approach, which means that the author has studied the theory, after that made observations and then went back to the theory to see if any connections between the observations and the theory could be made. This iterative process made it possible to identify five themes present in the answers obtained through interviews and observations. These themes are: feelings regarding change, change strategy, communication of change efforts, trust for the management and frequency of change efforts. The first four themes are directly related to the three main models of change management presented in section 2.5.

Some of the most relevant statements from the interviews are presented follow by the summary of the rest of the interviews.

4.2.1. Feelings regarding change

The following table is a summary of the answers given by the interviewees when asked about their feeling towards the change implementation in the unit. After the table a short summary of the interviews related to this theme will be presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings regarding change</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Internal experts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“…there are moments of frustration when you feel you don’t know what to do, the only thing we do is to wait until others (management) decide what to do first…. It’s a little bit like being in limbo, it’s just to wait and see what happens”</td>
<td>“It is of course a moment of stress for many, I think it is very important that the people working for the unit can actively participate on the implementation of the changes. But of course it is a challenge to find the right moment for this participation. I believe that we have an open environment that allows the workers to speak freely”</td>
<td>“I believe that some of our workers have gotten immune to change, meaning that they have experienced it too many times so now they are not even trying, some even joke about the fact that management says A and they do B…and of course there are others that just expressed being confused on what they need to prioritize. This is however quite common in large</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 01, Stockholm 2013-05-07

Fragment taken from interview with Manager No.1, Stockholm 2013-05-08
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“I used to have one job, pretty much the same job for several years. It was a job that I enjoy and that I did well and now they are suddenly changing everything about my job, without even taking into account all these years of work and all the results me and my other colleagues produced...They have asked for our opinions but not listen to us at all”.</th>
<th>“I believe the group is taking things in a good way. Even though it’s a lot right now for them, I believe that they are managing everything in a good way...I haven’t heard any complain from them, so I’m sure everything is working as it should...”</th>
<th>“People are never going to be jumping out of joy because of a change implementation...feelings of frustration, stress, rejection and denial are very common. In our organization we have surveys that try to capture how the workers feel, these have given us a picture that our workers feel stress, unhappy and confused”.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 02, Stockholm 2013-05-07</td>
<td>Fragment taken from an informal interview with Manager No. 2, Stockholm 2013-09-11</td>
<td>Fragment taken from interview with Expert No.02, Stockholm 2014-04-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it is positive with changes, we will see what happens to the unit in a year but right now I don’t think there is nothing I can do except to like the situation. I don’t feel worried about it.</td>
<td>My feeling on these changes...well I can say that “I wouldn’t be working for this organization if I didn’t like changes. I am used to this continuously changing environment. Many people working for this organization change jobs because they don’t like changing all the time. It is a very turbulent environment but this is our every day in this organization”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 04, Stockholm 2013-05-13</td>
<td>Fragment taken from an interview with Worker No. 08, Stockholm 2014-03-24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the beginning of the implementation, several of the unit’s employees felt quite confused and stressed about facing change. Out of the fifteen interviews conducted during the beginning of the change implementation project, ten people commented feeling negative feelings towards...
change, (e.g. being tired, confused, worried or feeling ignored by management). All the people that were directly affected by the change, meaning the ones who had their roles re-structured, confessed feeling negative about this change implementation; some of these employees had been through similar changes in the past with unsuccessful results.

On the other hand there were some employees that did not expressed negative feelings about this particular change process; they said they were feeling just as usual and some said that they were feeling positive towards change and wanted to actively participate in these change processes occurring in the unit. In this last group we could find the unit’s manager and the newest members of the unit as well as people whose roles were going to remain in principle the same.

Six months after the change implementation had started, another round of open-interviews were conducted by the author. The results of these interviews showed that five employees out of 24, had quit their jobs and left (or were leaving) the organization. 15 out of the 24 interviewees expressed feeling more negative about change and confessed feeling unhappy about their jobs and how the changes in the unit were being implemented; some commented on starting to look for other jobs within the organization. The reasons they gave for doing this was that they believed that they had not been listened to by their managers, they had not received enough information about the changes and strategy, and they felt the priorities given by top management were not in line with the priorities given by their line managers. All of employees of the unit of study agreed that it was not just them feeling this way but other employees of other units felt that turbulent change and lack of communication was part of the daily activity of this particular organization. Around 30% of the employees expressed that changes were just part of the organization and that there was nothing to do except accepting the situation they were in.

4.2.2. Strategy related to change efforts
As a consequence of the report presented by EY, in which the lack of strategic planning within the unit was mentioned; the unit’s manager was assigned by top management to establish a strategy for the unit that would guide them towards achieving the organizational goals. The process of
creating a strategy, mission, vision and objectives for the unit started in March 2013 and was abandoned after the summer of the same year. The following table is a summary of the answers given by the interviewees when asked about the strategy related to change.

**Table 7. Results related to strategy related to change efforts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy related to change efforts</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Internal experts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Changes happen quite fast and often that I don’t think there is a strategy behind them”.</td>
<td>“Changes happen quite fast and often that I don’t think there is a strategy behind them”.</td>
<td>“We are working on our unit’s strategy, I am the one doing most of the job but of course it is important to have the employees input when writing it...we have not created a specific strategy for the change implementation because of lack of time and resources” .</td>
<td>“(Have you have an strategy behind all the change implementations?), I do not think I can answer to this question, you should have asked our former general director, maybe we have a common strategy but I’m not so sure we do. Sometimes I’ve wondered why we do things in one way for a certain implementation and in a completely different way for another, even though they are the same type of change implementation” .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ I don’t know what is the strategy behind these changes, I hope that it is somehow connected to our overall strategy, but then again I haven’t read or seen our unit’s strategy...”</td>
<td>“ I don’t know what is the strategy behind these changes, I hope that it is somehow connected to our overall strategy, but then again I haven’t read or seen our unit’s strategy...”</td>
<td>“No I really don’t think that the organization has had a strategy behind all the changes. I think that the strategy part was up to the project leader or responsible in managing the change. But I believe that we are right now working towards a common strategy, we see the need of having a strategy that will be in line with our mission/vision. I think that in the past it has been very hard to see what the organization’s mission or vision is. We have been very bad at communicating it and we need to get better at it to be able to succeed with the implementation of changes” .</td>
<td>“No I really don’t think that the organization has had a strategy behind all the changes. I think that the strategy part was up to the project leader or responsible in managing the change. But I believe that we are right now working towards a common strategy, we see the need of having a strategy that will be in line with our mission/vision. I think that in the past it has been very hard to see what the organization’s mission or vision is. We have been very bad at communicating it and we need to get better at it to be able to succeed with the implementation of changes” .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 04, Stockholm 2013-05-13*

*Fragment taken from interview with Manager No. 01, Stockholm 2013-05-08*

*Fragment taken from interview with Expert No. 01, Stockholm 2014-04-01*

*Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 06, Stockholm 2013-05-08*

*Fragment taken from interview with Expert No. 02, Stockholm 2014-04-01*
Throughout the interviews it was stated by the unit’s manager, the department’s manager, the head office experts and most unit’s workers that a strategy related to change implementation was many times missing in both large and medium size change implementation projects. In the specific case of the unit of study, a strategy was also missing at the unit level meaning that a mission, vision and objectives were not defined for the unit which hindered the possibility of acting upon a strategy when making decisions or when trying to explain the reason for change.

Other findings related to this theme include the lack of communication of the organization’s strategy, 75% of the workers that were interviewed did not know what the mission and/or vision of the organization were and how their department objectives related to them.

4.2.3. Communication of the change efforts

The communication of the change efforts was a theme that came up several times during open- and informal interviews. The most relevant answers related to this theme are presented in the table below, followed by a summary of the results regarding this theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication of the change efforts</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Internal experts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 03, Stockholm 2013-05-07</td>
<td>“I guess I received more information than the rest of the team because of the role I have (unit’s coordinator). However I don’t think I have received enough information about the time line of this project, the specifics of the upcoming changes or the strategy behind these changes”.</td>
<td>“In our unit we have had a lot of meetings where we have talked and discussed about these changes, what is the unit’s strategy, why are we changing, what are we going to accomplish with these changes, etc. But of course there will always be some workers that might want to receive even more information. I feel like I have given them the information that was needed at the time and the information I was allowed to give”.</td>
<td>“It’s very worrying to hear when people say they do not know why they are doing something... Managers should continuously communicate the reasons for change, it is not just communicating them during the kick-off...Sounds simple but I know for a fact that communication is a big issue in our organization”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“…I do not believe I have</td>
<td>“We know that communication is not a priority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragment taken from interview with Manager No.01, Stockholm 2013-05-08</td>
<td>“I believe we meet very often and we are ”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Table 8. Results related to communication of the change efforts"
Communication of the change efforts is considered to be an important factor for implementing successful change according to all interviewees; however, the results of the interviews showed that even though it is considered to be a crucial factor, there was a lack of communication between management and workers. Nine workers out of 25 explicitly stated that management was not sufficiently focusing on communicating the reasons for change, the timeline of the implementation, and other change-related issues. They believed that lack of communication results in confusion and misunderstandings that many times delayed the implementation plan.

However not all the unit’s workers believed that communication was an issue in the implementation of change in the unit; three workers remarked the fact that the unit’s manager always tried to have an open communication with the workers and that on several occasions she expressed the possibility to book a meeting with her in case of feeling the need to discuss any questions regarding the change implementation.
4.2.4. Trust for the management

The most relevant answers related to trust for management are presented in the table below, followed by a summary of the results regarding this theme.

Table 9. Results related to trust for the management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust for the management</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Internal experts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s quite hard to trust the management, after some years working here you become very disappointed at your managers. Our unit’s manager does a good job but there is only so much she can do, because it is top management that have the last word. Top management has big ambitions for the unit but they don’t provide us with the resources or training that we desperately need to be able to achieve these utopia-goals...we have seen what has happened to other units that didn’t get support but got high demands from top management...hopefully we won’t end up like them”. Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 10, Stockholm 2013-08-26</td>
<td>“I do believe we have a trust issue for the management in our organization...even though I’m a manager myself, I know that workers are very disappointed at their managers. Specially in relation to change implementation projects...we have failed to successfully implement change many times”. Fragment taken from interview with Manager No. 01, Stockholm 2013-05-08</td>
<td>I think that if you work with strategic organizational change in a large organization such as this one, you need to be in a way consistent, you can’t just outline a change and then after two months change it again, you need to wait a while, changes take time to be implemented. So with that in mind, one can argue that we have had many changes and even say that they have been too many changes. I know that our internal HR survey shows low trust for the management (line, middle and top management) and after many failures one can understand them but we need to remember that it is not we (managers) that decide to change the organization, it is the board that does it because the environment changes. Fragment taken from interview with Expert No. 0, Stockholm 2014-04-01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t particularly trust our management, today for example we got informed that our new manager was leaving us, after only two months working with us...now we are going to be without a manager until who knows when...and to put it in different context who can trust a management that today in the morning says you need to prioritize A and then later on the afternoon says you need to also prioritize B, C.D..” Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 4, Stockholm 2013-08-27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“It is not easy to trust our managers, some days we hear we should focus on the change implementations and the next day they tell us to put all our energy on delivery results…you can’t prioritize everything!”

Fragment taken from an informal interview with Worker No.9, Stockholm 2013-09-24

The results obtained, after the second round of interviewees was completed, were that most of the unit’s employees felt they could trust the unit’s manager. Only two employees expressed that they did not trust her because they felt that she did not listen to them, that she had hidden information from the unit’s employees and that she acted many times without planning which had affected the unit’s results.

About the department’s manager, many expressed not feeling sure about trusting him and said it was difficult to have an opinion of him because he had not been working as their manager for a long time.

Crisis within the organization as a whole meant that departments and units needed to focus more in their daily results, so as to show improvement to the board which made prioritizing change implementations difficult. This did not help improving the trust for the management; workers felt confused and mistrusting of the information they got from their managers.

Regarding the organization’s top management, all the workers felt that they could not fully trust them. The reasons stated behind this were mostly related to failures in implementing changes such as new ways of workings and the always increasing demands related to the unit’s deliveries. Other reasons stated for not trusting management were that they did not take into consideration the workers and their feelings when it came to changing their roles or way of working.
4.2.5. Frequency of change efforts

The following table is a summary of the answers given by the interviewees when asked about the frequency regarding change implementations in the organization and particularly in the unit. After the table a short summary of the interviews related to frequency of change efforts will be presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of change efforts</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Internal experts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“This organization has been through almost countless changes since its creation...it worries me that we are always changing and we almost never have the opportunity to land on the new situation. We have no time for reflection; so when we are getting used to work in “the new way” we noticed that we are suddenly implementing another “newer way”. I believe that these make our work less effective,... and it creates this ad-hoc way of working, ‘learning by doing’ that doesn’t produce the results that top management expects”. Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 03, Stockholm 2013-05-07</td>
<td>“yes, we have change quite a lot the last years. This department specially, we were first just a handful of people and then we became a unit, after a short time we developed new roles and routines and almost in parallel we became a department...and here I’m not counting all the other changes in the organization that have also affected us”. Fragment taken from interview with Manager No. 01, Stockholm 2013-05-08</td>
<td>“(how many change efforts have been implemented in the last 5 years?) I think this is impossible for me to answer; it depends on the impact of the projects in terms of money and impact on the mindset. However I don’t think anybody in the organization has listed all the changes; I can only say that at least between 5 to 10 big changes”. Fragment taken from interview with Expert No. 02, Stockholm 2014-04-01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Results related to frequency of change efforts
| “I’ve worked for such a long time in this organization that I am very aware that changes come and go all the time, so it is just about waiting. If you would change every time they want you to change you would be very confused and stressed all the time, because sometimes changes contradict each other, so what I do is just keep doing what I was doing and wait and see what happens next. I know it sounds tragic but that’s how it works around here…changes come and go and then we just continue working pretty much as we did before. Changes don’t really happen in here”.  
*Fragment taken from interview with Worker No. 06, Stockholm* | “…this organization changes all the time, sometimes one change will restructure a whole unit and after a year another change will put the structure back to how it was one year before”.  
*Fragment taken from interview with Manager No. 02, Stockholm 2013-10-03* | “…this organization has had a great number of changes. If you look at our organizational chart you can see that it is not at all similar to the one 3 years ago…We have changed the way our structure looks and works, our management and governance has changed in different ways, I cannot count a specific number but I can say that is has been many changes”.  
*Fragment taken from interview with Expert No. 01, Stockholm 2014-04-01* |

As could be read in section 5.1 Background, the organization has changed its structure several times. The unit of study has had at least four major changes in its structure and way of working since its creation in the end of 2011. During the formal and informal interviews conducted in 2013 and 2014, the frequency of change appeared repeatedly as the most mentioned factor related to the organization’s change efforts.
All the interviewees agreed upon the fact that the frequency of changes in the organization, specifically in the unit was high, meaning that continuous changes were always being implemented. More than once the scope of these changes has had a strong impact on the unit and its workers which in its turns has lead to poor results.

Employees also talked a lot about old experiences with change that resulted on failed change implementation. Some workers believed that there was no real reason to change because the probability of new changes happening in the subsequent months was bigger than the probability of continuing to work according to the newly implemented changes.

60% of the workers felt uneasy about having to change now and then having to change again within a short period of time. At first the author thought it had to do with plain fear of change, but after some cross analysis of historical documentation, it was clear there was another, perhaps more relevant reason; top management had driven changes that were many times contradictory to one another. An example of this was the creation of a department in the beginning of 2013 and the dismantling of it right after summer 2013. Another clear example of this is the creation of the unit of analysis that became a department and that, at the time of writing this paper, is expected to be a unit under a larger department, all this happened during less than a year. As result from this, 30% of the unit’s workers mentioned that they did not feel motivated to change their way of working.

It is also important to remark that even the internal experts, one of them member of top management, that were consulted could not count the number of big to medium change efforts done within the organization within the last four years; members of the unit’s management team could not count them either.

4.2.6. Summary of the results

Hereby a summary of the results found in the interviews and observations connected to the five main themes: feelings regarding change, strategy related to change efforts, communication of the change efforts, trust for the management and frequency of change efforts; is presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major theme</th>
<th>Results found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feelings regarding change</td>
<td>10 out of 14 employees felt uneasy at the beginning of the implementation and by the end, five workers had left the unit and 15 out of 24 employees were feeling negative about working for the unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and about the success of the implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy related to change efforts</th>
<th>Most change efforts in the organization do not possess a strategy behind them. In the unit of study strategic planning was nonexistent. Most workers did not know the strategy of the unit or the organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication of the change efforts</td>
<td>Although all interviewees agreed on its importance, most of the workers believed that there was a lack of communication between managers and workers regarding the implementation of change within the unit. Very little information regarding time-plans was offered to the workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust for the management</td>
<td>In general workers of the unit trust their line manager but highly distrust the organization’s top management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of change efforts</td>
<td>Continuous implementation of change efforts within a short period of time. Scope of changes varies but in general affects more than one department. The unit of study has being through at least four large-medium changes since its creation at the end of 2011.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to acknowledge that even though the author has tried to remained objective in the collection of information at interviews and observations, some level of bias will always be present due to the author’s connection to the organization and its employees. However as explained in detail in chapter 3, the author has tried to minimize this bias by recording the interviews, and by cross-referencing the results with the employees to make sure what was understood by the author was what they meant to say.
5. Analysis and contribution to theory

In this chapter the author analyzes the results obtained from the interviews and observations based on the change management theory, presented in chapter 2. The aim of these actions is to determine what the key factors that impede the successful implementation of organizational changes in the unit of study are and how organizational culture affected the failure of these change implementations.

5.1. Case analysis

In this section the description of each step taken for the analysis of the data collected is presented, as described in figure 6 under section 2.6. The aim of this section is to be able to answer the research questions proposed in chapter 1.

5.1.1. Analysis of change approach

The two approaches for managing change discussed in chapter 2 of this paper are: the planned and the emergent approach. In this sub-section the author will discuss different aspects of the change implementation found and tie these to theory and ultimately argue for which change approach best fits the case of study. The purpose of this is to determine which factors are the key factors that impede successful implementation of change, by identifying which of these factors were not followed in the unit of study and then argue that the factors that are not being followed are the ones that impede the successful implementation of change.

Decision to change and participation

According to the results found during the research, change was not planned for the unit of study. It happened suddenly and rapidly, the decision for changing was not part of a long term plan; it was taken shortly after EY presented a report on the unit’s performance to top management. The implementation project started a month after the decision was made, no pre-study was done, and no extra resources were allocated for the implementation. In addition, participation of the unit’s workers was limited and expert participation in form of change agents/consultants was nonexistent.

These results are not in line with the characteristics of the planned approach to change that argues that change should be a planned effort that should involve participation of the managers, the recipients of change and change consultants (Lewin, 1947). And as referred by
critics of the planned approach such as Black (2000), planned change does not incorporate unplanned and transformational change, like the one the unit of study experienced.

On the other hand the emergent approach considers the fact that contemporary organizations are not rigid and that they live in an ever changing environment in which change cannot always be predicted nor planned (Burnes, 2009). This is the case for the unit of study where changes happened suddenly and continuously.

Organizational structure

The type of structure of the unit of study, as is the case for most governmental institutions, is hierarchical. In a hierarchical organization the chain of command looks like a pyramid where several employees are directly managed by a smaller number of managers, as can be seen in appendix 1. Organizational charts.

Hierarchical organizations tend to be more rigid and more change resistant than flat (horizontal) organizations (Kotter, 1996). In the unit of study it was possible to see these because the hierarchical chain of command made it hard for the unit’s and department’s managers to openly communicate information to their workers. This structure was also the driving force behind the large number of changes within the unit which were mostly focused on different functions of the organization, which did not allow them to focus more on the customer so as to be more responsive to the changes in the environment (Galbraith, 2000).

Organizational culture

Clarke (1994) and Kotter (1996) argued that to successfully implement change, it is necessary to identify and understand which parts of the organizational culture are contradictory to change objectives, so as to be able to change them.

In the context of this case study, organizational culture has been an important factor that has influenced the failure of several change implementations. As could be observed in the interviews, the idea of change being continuous is part of the workers’ mindset. Both managers and employees interviewed for this paper agreed on that statement. This is contrary to the view of the planned approach in which change is a one-time event.

Part of the organizational culture is as well the rejection to change by workers of the unit, which could be explained by the amount of change implementations that had failed since the
organization restructured in 2008. The feelings of rejection made it impossible for the change implementations to succeed.

**Organizational learning**

Argyris (1999) and Pettigrew et al. (1992) argued that learning is what allows workers to understand their surroundings so as to be able to detect and solve problems; in other words they suggest that for a worker willingly wanting to change he/she needs to first realize that there is no other option. But achieving organizational learning is not easy, it often requires an environment where workers can feel empowered, informed and that they can actively participate in the diagnosis and solving of problems.

In the case of study, the working environment was not considered ideal by most of the employees and during unit meetings the researcher observed heated discussions between members of the unit that ended, more than a couple of times, in members leaving the room. And even though most workers felt they had participated in one way or another in the identification and solutions of problems that later on led to the creation of the changes, they believed their input was ultimately not considered. On the other hand, the managers did try to empower the employees giving mandate to an internal group for leading change; this try was, nonetheless, unsuccessful due to factors such as lack of motivation and time from part of the workers.

Finally, it can be said that even though the environment of the unit included factors that would allow for organizational learning, workers did not feel the changes that were implemented were the solutions for the unit’s problems nor did they feel they were the ones who owned the change processes.

**Managerial behavior**

In the emergent approach, managers are considered to play a crucial role in the management of change, as mentioned by Bennis (2000) and Carnall (2003); in this particular unit of study, managers were most of the times responsible for the implementation of change projects. However as could be seen several times during interviews and meetings, they did not managed to gain commitment for changing the status quo from the workers.

The factors that prevented the managers from achieving this can be related to the fact that the unit and department managers did not have the necessary skills or the knowledge in change
management to be able to roll out a change communication strategy or to define a change strategy. This means that the managers lacked the training in change management subjects, such as change strategy and leadership.

In addition to this, the department manager did not possess the trust of their workers, as could be seen during interviews and the HR survey results.

**Power and politics**

In the planned approach the focus is on group collaboration, it expects the group to agree on working together towards a common goal; however, as mentioned by Burnes (2006), it does not consider situations when there is a lack of cohesive culture that may keep a group working together. This has been the case in the unit studied for this paper. During the interviews conducted in 2013 and 2014, the group described the working relation with each other as functioning but not ideal, “…even though we work in the same unit and we sit next to each other, we are very busy with our own stuff and don’t have much time to chitchat”, “I don’t really know what the BA 3 do, we hardly talk about what we are doing…”, “I wouldn’t call our group a ‘team’ more like a bunch of people working in our own ways towards our own project’s goals”. These feelings can possibly be explained by the fact that many of the employees have been moved from other units to this particular one without being consulted, some others are new and most of them work individually in their own projects. In other words they are not used to working together or collaborating with each other.

The planned approach, as mentioned by Burnes (2006), does not either take in consideration the power struggle within the organization. Its followers believe that collaboration is a natural act and that groups should collaborate with each other in order to achieve a common goal.

On the other hand, the emergent approach considers both: power and internal politics, and unforeseen change. This is another aspect which points to the emergent approach being considered to fit best the case of study; even though one can argue that basing the decision for change on a report, can be seen as having a plan (this paper considers that is not a plan because the decision of change was not premeditated and did not fall into the organization’s yearly strategic plan).

Internal political issues in the organization have had a strong negative effect on the way changes are driven in this particular organization. During the time frame of this study, the

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3 BA is a position within the unit – author’s comment
author came to the realization that employees and managers had many times different agendas. Relating this to the model by Senior (2002) the four steps were not followed (see table 11) which led to the power centers obstructing the change instead of supporting it.

### Table 12. Comparison between Senior’s model and the results found in the unit of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior’s four step model</th>
<th>What happened in the unit of study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ensure or develop support of key power groups</td>
<td>Managers did not ensure nor develop support of the unit’s employees or top management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use leadership to generate support for change</td>
<td>Managers did not succeed in using their leadership skills to gain support for the change implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use symbols and language to encourage and show support for change</td>
<td>Employees did not feel they were supported by their managers nor did they feel encourage by them in any particular way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Build stability by using power to ensure that some things remain the same</td>
<td>Stability after the changes were implemented was not reached by the time the study was finalized.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own creation

### The role of the change agent

For supporters of the planned approach such as Cummings and Worley (1997), the responsibility for ensuring the correct management of change is on the change experts that many times are external consultants. In the unit of study, no external consultant was hired and no internal change management experts were ever consulted. As can be seen in the interview with Expert No. 01:

“…some change projects are seen as less important by top management and that is why they don’t get extra resources…it is up to the managers to ask for expert competence if it is needed but in the end it is the managers who are responsible for implementing the changes…” (Interview with Expert No.01)

This last statement is in line with the emergent approach’s belief that the ultimate responsibility of managing change should lay on the management. But for managers to be able to be accountable for change they need to first possess the knowledge for managing change.

Although managers are not the only ones that can be change agents, for this unit of study this was the case. Outside the unit, but within the organization, it was possible to find internal change experts that were not utilized in the implementation of changes in the unit.
Summary

By analyzing all the factors mentioned above it can be concluded that the approach that best fit the unit of study is the emergent approach because it considers several factors that were presented in the case and that are not taken into account in the planned approach, like power and politics straggle within the unit, limited participation, lack in change leadership, insufficient knowledge in change management and the non-existence of change agents in the form of internal or external consultants. In table 12, a summary of the main characteristics of both approaches is presented and compared with the characteristics of the unit of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned change</th>
<th>Emergent approach</th>
<th>Case study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No conflicts or internal political issues</td>
<td>Takes into consideration conflicts and internal political issues</td>
<td>Several conflicts and internal political issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works for individual and group change</td>
<td>Works for individual, group and system change</td>
<td>Changes in a group level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.2. Comparison of the outcome with previous change management models

In this section, the three change management models mentioned in chapter 2 will be compared and discussed with the results observed during the interviews and meetings from this case of study. The aim of doing this is to be able to answer whether the factors mentioned in the models of Lewin, Kanter and Kotter, can be comparable with the results obtained in this case study, so as to answer if the absence of any of these factors can impede successful implementation of organizational changes in this unit.

Analysis of Lewin’s first step, Kanter’s first to fourth commandments and Kotter’s first to third steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lewin’s three step model</th>
<th>Kanter’s ten commandments</th>
<th>Kotter’s eight step model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Unfreezing</td>
<td>1. Analyze the organization &amp; its need for change</td>
<td>1. Establish a sense of urgency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Create shared vision &amp; common directive</td>
<td>2. Form a guiding coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Separate from past</td>
<td>3. Develop a vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Create a sense of urgency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this particular case of study, the analysis of the unit’s status quo and the need for change was not directly done by the unit’s employees but by an external consulting company EY who based their analysis on interviews with most of the unit’s employees, top management and major customers. However, as many authors like Kotter argue, the realization of needing to change should come from the workers so as to gain their commitment, which in this unit of study did not happen.

No real “sense of urgency feeling” was created in the unit; even though the unit’s manager tried to communicate to her workers the results found by EY and discussed what could possibly happen to the unit in the upcoming months. This could be explained by the fact that the manager could not officially present in detail the changes to be made in the unit, due to delays in the decisions of top management. This caused a lot of uncertainty between the workers and many of them expressed feeling as if their opinions weren’t taken into consideration.

A shared vision and a common directive were not created in the unit of study, this can possibly be explained by the fact that the unit lacked a strategy that could be used as base for justifying change. When the first interviews with the managers and the team were conducted, many of them said that they were currently working with defining the strategy for the unit while starting to implement changes that were going to affect its structure and the way of working. During the interviews it was also documented that very few of the unit’s workers (30%) were aware about the strategy of the whole organization and none of them had heard anything about establishing a strategy for implementing the current changes in their unit.

As mentioned before in this paper, no pre-study was conducted and no strategy for implementing the changes was created. Lack of time and resources for the implementation can be considered as possible explanations to why this did not happen.

No guiding coalition was formed, and the possible reasons for this can be that no extra resources were allocated for the implementation of the changes and expertise knowledge about change management in the form of a change agent was not utilized either. The fact that some of the unit’s employees had previous experiences with the implementation of changes and therefore knowledge of lessons learned was also disregard by the management. There were, as mentioned by the unit’s manager and then later on department’s manager, other
priorities that needed more attention. Nonetheless, there were a couple of tries to form a team that would serve as sort of guiding coalition, but these were ultimately not successful. Lack of time and motivation from the team made it hard for the group to stay together and after a couple of meetings the idea was abandoned.

**Analysis of Lewin's second step, Kanter's fifth to seventh commandments and Kotter's fourth to sixth steps.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lewin’s three step model</th>
<th>Kanter’s ten commandments</th>
<th>Kotter’s eight step model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Moving</td>
<td>5. Support a strong leader role</td>
<td>4. Communicate the change vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Line up political sponsorship</td>
<td>5. Empower others to act on the vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Craft an implementation plan</td>
<td>6. Generate short term wins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having a strong leader that can successfully guide the implementation of changes is considered to be one of the most important factors for successful change. In the case of this unit, the person managing the team had never managed a team before, and even though most of the workers agreed that the unit’s manager was a strong and committed person, they felt that their manager was not paying as much attention to the change implementation as she paid attention to the daily office work. This in its turn set “unofficially” the line of what was expected of the employees, in other words daily work was considered as a higher priority than the implementation of change.

The unit’s manager communicated several times during meetings the reasons why it was important to change but no strategy was actively communicated because of, as mention before, no change strategy was ever developed for the implementation of the changes in the unit or in the unit’s strategy.

Even though the manager often did communicate the reason for change to the employees, not all employees seemed to have understood what their manager was saying, and many constantly disagreed with these reasons which lead to heated discussions as can be seen in the interviews.

Regarding political sponsorship within the organization, the manager of the unit officially counted with the support of top management. However, in reality the support never
materialized in terms of resources or extra help regarding the implementation, and in several meetings it was expressed that there were no resources available for the unit. Political sponsorship within the unit’s organization was not obtained; this could be because of the internal conflicts, in which employees and managers had different agendas which were not always in line with the implementation of the changes.

The department’s and the unit’s managers tried to empower the unit’s workers by creating a group that could help in the implementation of the changes. However this group was not successful, this could be explained by the fact that no vision was defined for the change and that there was a lack of motivation from the rest of the unit’s employees, which negatively affected the group that dissolving after a couple of months of being formed.

An implementation plan was not officially created for this implementation, although drafts and ideas of how the implementation could be realized were presented to top management. However, these did not include a detailed time plan or amount of resources needed. According to the managers and the unit’s coordinator much of what was done was done in an ad-hoc way following the organization’s line of doing things, i.e. “learning by doing”.

Due to the lack of detailed planning it was hard for the managers to see the possibilities of short-term wins. When wins did occur they were not identified and certainly not celebrated or acknowledged. Not receiving praise from part of the management when obstacles were overcome enhanced the lack of motivation and negativity within the group.

**Analysis of Lewin's third step, Kanter's eighth to tenth commandments and Kotter's seventh and eighth steps.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lewin’s three step model</th>
<th>Kanter’s ten commandments</th>
<th>Kotter’s eight step model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Communicate, involve people and be honest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Reinforce &amp; institutionalize change</td>
<td>8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structures that could enable the change implementation were not always present. Regular meetings were booked monthly, but no workshops regarding change were held and just one
training session regarding the use of new tools was held in which participation was scarce; only one kick-off event where all workers (old and new) participated was conducted. It is important to mention that even though the official main purpose of these meetings, workshops and training programs was to highlight the reasons for change they ended up focusing mainly on daily operation and discussions on internal political issues.

Although the manager tried several times to involve people and motivate them to participate, very few people actually did. Most of the workers thought of these meetings as a waste of time, either because they thought they were not necessary or because they felt that they never got anything out of them.

The communication throughout the change implementation was not always ideal. Even though the managers tried to keep the workers updated, the organizational rules and top management’s secrecy caused the delay of the information reaching the workers. This in its turn was interpreted by the several workers as dishonesty from part of their managers, and it helped increase the feeling of uncertainty, as can be seen in the interviews summary in section 5.2.6.

According to the emergent supporters such as Kanter, managers should prioritize the change efforts and show commitment to the transformation process, as well as reward employees’ positive behavior towards the change. In the unit of study this did not happen, managers did not prioritize change over daily operations, partially because they felt they could not afford to change the focus due to the large press coming from the external environment and even from top management to increase their deliveries.

Consolidating gains and producing the effect of continuous improvement was not a part of the implementation of the changes in the unit of study. Although the idea of having continuous improvement can be related to the fact that the organization has had several continuous changes, it did not officially include this idea in its strategy (but as stated earlier in the paper, a strategy was never developed). These continuous changes were aimed at improving the way of working, but this connection was never really communicated by management; a possible reason of why this did not happen can be that they thought it was a very clear connection.

Anchoring the new way of working in the culture is a step that even though it is important was certainly not considered by the managers. Partly because they believed that change happens and naturally institutionalized, they believed that when something has officially been
implemented then it should be up and running almost “automatically”. This ignores the fact that humans do not always take change with arms wide open and, on the contrary, can be very reluctant to change (Kanter, 2011). Something that was observed regarding this step was that even though the changes in themselves (meaning the new way of working and the mindset of following up results) did not become a part of the group culture, they did have an effect on the organizational culture of the group. Employees expressed feeling tired of the organization’s several changes, they even described them as waves that come and go, and that are many times contradictory to one another. Because of this, they expressed their unwillingness to change or actively participate in a change implementation.

5.1.3. Definition of type of change in relation to frequency, magnitude and focus

According to the theory explained in chapter 2 the changes happening in the unit of study can be classified as ‘continuous changes’ because all changes implemented in the unit and/or department have been done either in parallel with others or one right after the other, without allowing for a period free of change. These changes had a large impact on the way of working of the whole group and were mainly structure oriented; which means that their main focus was on adding a layer of employees between management and workers, and changing quite radically their operational processes.

Large and continuous changes, together with the lack of change strategies, caused confusion and rejection feelings in the group, as well as delays of the implementation time plan and finally contributed to the failure of the change implementations.

It can be concluded, after reviewing the results from the interviews as well as historical documentation, that the nature and frequency of the changes had an impact on the organizational culture which in its turn made it close to impossible to implement new changes.

5.1.4. Discussion

Being an organization that has gone through radical restructurings, changes were not unusual; they are expected, and many times needed, to be able to continue with the organization’s
activities and to comply with local and/or international legislation. As for the unit of study, change meant a way of improving results and methods of working.

- In the previous sections, the different factors considered as most relevant by recognized change management experts such as Lewin, Kanter and Kotter; have been compared and analyzed with the situations happening in the unit of study so as to determine whether they follow, or not, the steps of the three models. The aim of this process was to identify the key factors that impede successful implementation of organizational change and to determine whether organizational culture has an effect on the success or failure of the unit’s change implementations.

It was then determined that all the steps mentioned in the Kanter’s and Kotter’s models were not followed completely or not followed at all by the unit; this can be seen in the summary table 13 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>According to Kanter &amp; Kotter</th>
<th>Identified in the unit of study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze the organization &amp; its need for change</td>
<td>Done by EY, low participation of the unit's workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create shared vision &amp; common directive</td>
<td>No change strategy was created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate from past</td>
<td>Many of the unit's workers continued working in the same manner as they had done in the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a sense of urgency</td>
<td>Managers tried to create a sense of urgency but this was never established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate the change vision</td>
<td>Managers tried to communicate the reasons for change but no vision was officially created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower others to act on the vision</td>
<td>Managers tried to empower employees but no results were achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form a guiding coalition</td>
<td>An internal change group was formed and after two months dissolved due to lack of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line up political sponsorship</td>
<td>Top management officially supported the department and unit's managers but in reality no support ever materialized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft an implementation plan &amp; generate short term wins</td>
<td>No implementation plan was officially presented which made it difficult to identify or celebrate short term wins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Develop enabling structures | The existing structures were not used for the change implementation but rather for daily operations which were always prioritized by the managers and workers of the unit.

Consolidating change & producing more change | Change was not consolidated; although, more changes were planned to be implemented soon

Anchoring new approaches in the culture | The new approaches were not anchored in the culture; however, the rejection to change was enforced by the failure of this change implementations

Other important factors that were identified and were not specifically mentioned in the theory were the effect of the magnitude and frequency of changes in the organizational culture. From open interviews to informal conversations, it could be observed that the mismanagement of the changes, many times due to the lack of knowledge in change management; in combination with the frequency and magnitude of the changes, have created a culture of “automatic” rejection to change.

Employees of the organization are used to see change efforts fail, one after the other. They are also used to the implementation of changes that contradict each other, or that go in an opposite direction to a previously implemented change. However, one can argue that it is normal to have changes that might, in a way, contradict each other when new methods are being tested; this does not mean that is not important to keep in mind that doing so can affect the way people perceive change.

The same goes for the implementation of several parallel change efforts; they need to be in line with the overall strategy of the organization, and a change vision needs to be created and communicated to the group of people affected by the change. It is also important to categorize change implementations according to their priority. As one member of top management said, “we cannot tell our workers that everything is a priority, for one thing to be a priority we might need to ‘sacrifice three other things’…”. Doing this could help improve the trust for the management as well as help gaining commitment for change.

In conclusion, by the unit not following the steps mentioned in the theory, it is difficult to determine whether the change implementation could have been successful if all steps would have been followed. Nonetheless, because of how the organizational culture influenced the perception of change it is difficult to believe that without changing this part of the culture a strict adherence to the steps of the model would have led to successful change.
A final note regarding the objectivity of this research paper must be mentioned. It is important to keep in mind that the author has strived to remain objective during both the collection and analysis of the information; however, as is the case in many research case studies, especially in ones using participant observation such as this one, objectivity cannot be 100% secured. Nonetheless, the author has documented its research process and interviews following the guidelines in chapter 3, which does enhance.

In the next section, a more detailed description of how frequency and magnitude of change affected the organizational culture will be presented.

5.2. Contribution to theory

The case presented in this paper is a unique case that presents characteristics that have not, to the knowledge of the author, been widely covered in the literature of change management. It represents an extreme scenario, where several changes have been and currently are being implemented in an organization that has not had an overall strategy that can logically connect all the implemented changes.

This situation presented a unique opportunity for the author to try to understand what other factors could have an impact on the success or failure of organizational change implementation, apart from the ones mentioned in the most well-known change management literature presented in section 2.4.

The observations, interviews, and internal documents helped determined the following:

1. The high frequency and large magnitude of the changes implemented in the organization within a short period of time, together with the lack of change strategy and knowledge in change management led to the failure in the implementation of change.
2. Employees’ mindset regarding change was altered by the several failures of change implementations in the organization. Resulting in employees rejecting change even before these were presented to them.
3. In the long term the belief that change implementations always failed became a part of the organizational culture of the unit. New employees rapidly were schooled in this mindset by older employees.
4. This belief, rooted in the organizational culture, makes it hard (if not impossible) for the change implementations to succeed.

5. To implement change in this organization successfully, it is important to first identify and change the part of the organizational culture that prevents new changes to be implemented.

In short, when planning to implement a change in an organization that lacks a change strategy and that has had several continuous changes in the past, it is important to analyze whether these mentioned factors have had an impact on the organizational culture, as was the case for the unit of study. If it is determined that organizational culture is an obstacle for implementing new changes, it is necessary to create a strategy to change the parts of the organizational culture that obstructs the successful implementation of change. In other words to be able to implement new change, it will be needed to change the culture of the organization.

This logic is an important aspect to consider for organizations that have tried to implement organizational change in the past and had not succeeded.

6. Conclusion and future research

6.1. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to uncover and understand the key factors, - and the relation they have with each other – that impede the implementation of successful organizational change. In addition, the author wanted to get a deeper understanding of how organizational culture affects the implementation of organizational change. To be able to achieve this, the author studied the unit throughout the period of twelve months. During this period, interviews were conducted with all members of the unit in different stages of the change implementations.

To be able to answer the first research questions regarding the key factors that impede successful implementation of organizational changes in the unit of study, the author made a comparison and analysis of the major management theory and the results found in the unit of study. As a result of this, it was observed that the unit did not follow the steps recommend for managing successful change by three of the most recognized change management experts - Lewin, Kanter and Kotter. This made it hard for the author to determine then which step could have been the crucial one that determines whether an implementation could fail or not. Nonetheless, some factors were identified as being crucial by studying the theory and the
interviews with the unit’s employees. The factors identified were managing employees’ feelings regarding change, the communication of the change efforts, the lack trust for the management and the frequency of change efforts.

The latest mentioned factor is the one recognized by the author as the one that had the largest effect on change by having an effect on organizational culture regarding change, which bring us to answering the second question in this research paper; how organizational culture affects the success or failure of a change implementation. Large and continuous changes in a short period of time have affected the organizational culture of the unit which in its turn negatively affected the implementation of change by making it hard for employees to accept changes.

It is important to remark that the author cannot proclaim that the relation of frequency and magnitude of changes will always have an effect on organizational culture. It could be so that this particular unit had other factors that might have facilitated for this phenomenon to happen such as lack of strategic planning, resources, change management knowledge and employees commitment. Nevertheless, it is not improbable that this would indeed be the case in other organizations as well, and is an area that would require more research.

As mentioned under the limitations section in chapter 1, this paper did not aim to present specific suggestions or models of how to implement change; but rather it aims to provide the reader, and change management researchers, with the set of factors identified in the unit of study that impeded successful implementation of change. It is up to the readers, researchers and the governmental organization of study to consider this information when planning to implement change.

The case study research method chosen for this paper was appropriate for the situation and allowed for the author to have a unique opportunity to follow a group of individuals experiencing change in extreme conditions; which in its turn helped the author to get a deeper and better understanding of the change phenomenon, and the factors surrounding it such as organizational culture, which would have been impossible to do using other research methods.

**6.2. Future research**

Although the study’s primary objective was to observe and understand the factors evolving successful change, the outcome from this study also includes the proposition of new theory regarding the possible connection between frequency and magnitude of change, and the effect it has on organizational culture.
This two-way connection is suggested in section 6.1, and it is the paper’s contribution to future theory on change management. However, to validate this as new theory, future research on the subject is needed. Considering that this study was done during a period of twelve months, the time span was relatively short so as to be able to validate a permanent change in organizational culture. Much of the evidence collected to propose the suggested connection came from interviews, reviews of internal HR reports and surveys, as well as the researcher experience working in the organization. It is, therefore, important to state that no HR reports or surveys included questions specifically on this subject, which means that to be able to validate this theory it would be necessary to design a survey specifically for measuring the suggested connection.

As explained in other sections, the nature of this case is quite unique and this helped the author with identifying possible connections that might not be clearly visible in changes in other organizations. Future research on the suggested theory might find it useful to look at other unique organizations as well as “regular” organizations and try to apply this theory so as to validate it.
7. Bibliography


8. Appendix

Appendix 1- Organizational charts

In the following organizational charts the changes in the structure of the governmental organization of study, can be observed.

Organizational chart 2008
Organizational chart 2011

Organizational chart 2012
Appendix 2. Summary of case study protocol

Overview

The aim of this case study research is to uncover and understand the key factors, -and the relation they have with each other- for the implementation of successful organizational change. Specifically the author wants to get a deeper understanding of how organizational culture affects the implementation of organizational change.

The main objective of this case study protocol is to serve as a guide for other researchers to be able to repeat the results and the analysis presented in the research paper, it also helps ensuring that the data was collected properly and to minimize interviewer bias.

The data was collected during a time period of twelve months during which changes were being implemented in the unit of study. Interviews and observations were conducted according to diagram 1.

Diagram 1. Phases of the research

Phase 1
• Set up and understanding of the unit. 1st round of interviews

Phase 2
• Follow up of change implementation. 2nd round of interviews

Phase 3
• Analysis and creation of case study report
The unit of analysis

For this study the unit of analysis is a unit that is part of an organization that had been continuously changing its structure and way of working during the past five years. The reason why this unit was chosen had to do with convenience and the characteristics of having gone through a particularly high number of changes during a short period of time.

The unit was composed of 24 workers and three managers. During the first and second phase of this research, the author was working for the organization, which facilitated the collection of information and the understanding of the unit of study.

Interview sampling

The author had the opportunity to formally interview all the unit’s employees, two top managers and two internal experts. In total 28 people were interviewed by the author, according to following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Interview plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase I (spring-summer 2013)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 unit’s employees incl. unit’s manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 members of top management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 experts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the interviews, except one, were recorded and scheduled upon convenience and availability of the interviewees and interviewer. In total 31 interviews were conducted; in phase I the author interviewed all employees that at that time were working for the unit (during the implementation new workers were added to the unit that later on became a department, that is why 10 more interviews were conducted with the new employees). The aim of the author was to have follow-up questions for the 14 employees that were interview in phase I, however five employees were not working for the unit anymore and others had difficulties allocating time for interviews, hence just three out of nine employees were interviewed again.
Phase 1. Set up and understanding of the unit

In this phase, information regarding the change implementation was collected as well as the first round of interviews was conducted according to the confidentiality guidelines established by the organization of study.

Meetings with the organization’s contact person, which in this case was one of the managers of the unit, were conducted mainly in the beginning of the research so as to establish the guidelines for how the interviews and observations should be conducted. It was determined by the author in coordination with the manager that interviews with all workers will be conducted in the beginning of the study and later on during the end of the implementation. An agreement regarding confidentiality was also discussed, the author agreed not to mention the name of anyone being interview nor the name of the organization. It was acceptable to state the size of the organization and in which sector it operates as well as using the organizational charts of the organization, this as long as they did not contain information that could be connected to the organization. The manager also allowed the author to participate in the unit’s meetings and informal gatherings so as to observe the change phenomenon closer.

Interviews were arranged according to availability of the interviewees and were most of the times recorded and transcribed afterwards. One of the interviewees did not want to be recorded and the author had to take notes. The recorded interviews and transcripts are available upon request.

Documentation for this research was conducted electronically according to the guidelines given by the company and the literature regarding case study research. In the diagram below, the structure of the folders in the study data base can be observed.
Phase 2. Follow up of change implementation

This phase was conducted at the end of the change implementation. Not all employees that were interviewed in the first round were interviewed in the second one, this due to availability problems because several employees did not continue working for the unit during the whole period of implementation.

Interviews conducted in the second round were recorded using electronic equipment and later on transcribed.

Phase 3. Analysis and creation of case study report (thesis paper)

In this last phase, the analysis of the interviews and observations in comparison with the change management theory, previously selected, was completed and the study paper was written according to the following structure:

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical background
3. Methodology and method
4. The case of study
5. Analysis and contribution to theory
6. Conclusion and future research
Guidelines for interviews

These guidelines were presented to the author by the organization of study. These guidelines came from the book “Guide to organizing semi-structured interviews with key informants” from the Safety diagnosis tool kit for local communities written by the ministry of public security of Quebec, Canada.

Procedure

PLANNING INTERVIEWS

Identifying respondents:

Key informants from a community under study are “privileged witnesses, or people who, because of their position, activities or responsibilities, have a good understanding of the problem to be explored. These witnesses are not necessarily members of the population targeted by the study, but they all have a major interest in that population.”

In addition to being privileged witnesses of specific problems, they may represent specific client groups and areas, have administrative responsibilities in a municipality or community organization, be experts in a particular field, and so forth.

It is recommended that the stakeholder table or the list of community organizations be consulted to identify key informants. If necessary, members of the safety diagnosis committee can also be asked to suggest respondents or even to act as key informants themselves. It can be useful to draw up a list of potential respondents before launching the recruitment process.

Number of interviews

It is hard to determine the exact number of interviews that have to be done for a safety diagnosis. However, several questions must be taken into account in deciding on how many interviews to conduct:

• *Qualitative and quantitative data sources already used for the diagnosis.* During a safety diagnosis, it is important to cover all safety topics with a range of sources. In this context, semi-structured interviews may be viewed as a way of supplementing other data collection methods, and it may be sufficient to conduct only a few interviews with key informants from the study community. However, if semi-structured interviews are the sole source of information, more interviews should be conducted.

• *Range of viewpoints represented in the diagnosis.* Semi-structured interviews can be a way of capturing concerns and perceptions of groups that have not been contacted with other data collection methods.

• *Available time and resources.* At least two days are needed to prepare, conduct, transcribe and analyze a semi-structured interview. It is recommended, therefore, that the number of interviews scheduled take into account available time and resources. It is also important to consider the fact that key informants are often stakeholders in high demand and therefore not always available. As well, there is the question of the total length of the data collection phase.

• *Data saturation.* Under optimal conditions, data collection from key informants should end once data saturation is achieved, i.e. when interviews do not provide any new or additional insights because the information gathered is repetitive.
Preparing interviews

Even though semi-structured interviews are flexible, they require rigorous preparation. It is essential to define their objectives, devise an interview plan and draw up a consent form. Some of the main steps are as follows:

- Study the interview plan (see the section “Key informant semi-structured interview plan – Instructions for use), decide which questions are most appropriate for the respondent or prepare new ones.
- Draw up a consent form specifying the rules of the interview and the confidentiality commitment, or adapt the sample form given in Appendix 2.
- Contact the respondent: explain the goal of the interview and the safety diagnosis project, obtain his/her permission, schedule an appointment and agree on where the interview will be held. The place selected should be neutral, confidential, comfortable, quiet, free of distractions, and easily accessible for the respondent.
- If necessary, send the consent form and the interview plan to the respondent.
- If necessary, prepare equipment for recording the interview.
- Contact the respondent again to confirm the date and location of the interview.

INTERVIEWING RESPONDENTS

Semi-structured interviews should last from 60 to 90 minutes. Sixty-minute interviews are perfectly acceptable and ensure that neither the interviewer nor the respondent loose their concentration.

Initiating interviews

An easy way to start an interview is to introduce yourself to the respondent and then remind him/her of its goals and projected length and the topics to be discussed. It is important to tell the respondent that he/she will be interviewed as an expert or as a representative of a group of people or an organization. If the interview is to be recorded, the respondent must be asked for his/her written or verbal consent and reminded that his/her statements will be kept confidential at all times. This is a good time to have the respondent sign the consent form, if necessary.

It is highly recommended that interviews be taped (with a digital or other type of tape recorder), even if they will not be transcribed in full. Note that taping can only be done with the prior approval of the respondent (see Appendix 2). If he/she refuses, notes must be taken instead.
Preparing interviews

Even though semi-structured interviews are flexible, they require rigorous preparation. It is essential to define their objectives, devise an interview plan and draw up a consent form. Some of the main steps are as follows:

- Study the interview plan (see the section “Key informant semi-structured interview plan – Instructions for use”), decide which questions are most appropriate for the respondent or prepare new ones.
- Draw up a consent form specifying the rules of the interview and the confidentiality commitment, or adapt the sample form given in Appendix 2.
- Contact the respondent: explain the goal of the interview and the safety diagnosis project, obtain his/her permission, schedule an appointment and agree on where the interview will be held. The place selected should be neutral, confidential, comfortable, quiet, free of distractions, and easily accessible for the respondent.
- If necessary, send the consent form and the interview plan to the respondent.
- If necessary, prepare equipment for recording the interview.
- Contact the respondent again to confirm the date and location of the interview.

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# Observations template

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Appendix 3. Interview questions

Interview questions for unit’s workers

1. How long have you been working for this organization and for this unit?
2. What did you work with before starting to work for this unit?
3. When you changed positions and started working for this unit, did you receive any kind of support from the organization, to ensure that you could to do your new job in the best possible way?
4. What kind of support would you like to receive from the organization, related to training or leadership?
5. You are experiencing in this moment a large amount of changes in your structure and also in the way you work, how do you feel about them?
6. How do you think the others in the group feel about these changes?
7. Is your job going to be affected by these changes?
8. Why so many changes in such a short time?
9. Do you know and understand what your tasks are at work? Is there any difference between the old tasks and the new tasks?
10. Do you feel you understand the difference between the KA role and the BA role?
11. Do you feel you understand the difference between the KA role and the MA role?
12. Do you know and understand what your tasks are at work? Is there any difference between the old tasks and the new tasks?
13. Do you understand why it was necessary to implement these changes? Do you believe they are necessary?
14. Do you believe there is a connection between the organization’s strategy and the changes going on?
15. Do you think you have gotten all the information you needed to feel secure and confident in your position during the implementation of the changes?
16. Do you feel you are being involved in the change process? What is your role in this process?
17. What do you think is the greatest risk for this change process?
18. Who do you think is going to be responsible for these changes?
19. What are your expectations after these changes have been implemented?
Interview questions for unit’s managers

1. How long have you been working for this organization and for this unit?
2. When you changed positions and started working for this unit, did you receive any kind of support from the organization, to ensure that you could do your new job in the best possible way?
3. What kind of support would you like to receive from the organization, related to training or leadership?
4. The unit is experiencing in this moment a large amount of changes in its structure and also in the way its workers work, how do you feel about this?
5. How do you think the others in the group feel about these changes?
6. Is your job going to be affected by these changes?
7. Why so many changes in such a short time?
8. Do you understand why it was necessary to implement these changes? Do you believe they are necessary?
9. Do you believe there is a connection between the organization’s strategy and the changes going on?
10. Do you think you have gotten all the help you needed to be able to implement these changes?
11. Do you feel you are being involved in the change process? What is you role in this process?
12. What do you think is the greatest challenges/risk for this change process?
13. Are you getting help with managing these risks?
14. Do you feel you have gotten all the information that you needed to start the implementation of these changes?
15. Do you think you have given all the necessary information to your employees so that they can feel secure and confident in your position during the implementation of the changes?
16. Do you think your employees are actively participating in the change implementation?
17. What are your expectations after these changes have been implemented?
Interview questions for top managers and internal experts

1. How would you define organizational change?
2. What kind of organizational change projects does the organization manage?
3. How many big change projects have the organization manage/implement during the last four years?
4. How do you think these changes have affected the organization?
5. How are these changes being managed? (top/bottom)
6. Do you believe there was a strategy behind these changes, and if so were they in line with the organization’s mission/vision? Which resources were used? Were there any follow up activities done?
7. Who is responsible for managing the organizational changes? (Top-management/line-management?)
8. What kinds of help, in terms of for example resources, get these managers/project leaders? (Resources/change agents)
9. What is the roll of the change agent?
10. Does this organization follow some kind of model for managing their organizational changes?
11. How do you think the organization prioritize organizational change projects? E.g. are more resources gives to technological related changes in comparison with re-structuring changes, if that is the case, then why do you think it is so?
12. What are the bigger challenges that the organization faces when talking about organizational changes?
13. Has the connection between the low levels of trust in the organization and how the changes are managed, being discussed and analyzed by top management?
14. How important do you think organizational culture is when managing organizational change projects?