Organizational Change in Practice

The implementation of change and its relationship to organizational identity: A case study of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

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Abstract

Today, organizations are constantly changing. To successfully implement change, organizations are largely dependent on their employees who must implement the changes in their daily practices. This study provides insight into the perceptions of lower-level employees regarding their support and active implementation of an organizational change in the public sector. An exploratory case study of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations exposes the difficulty and challenges involved with implementing organizational change. Relatedly, this study explores the influence of- and relation to the organizational identity.

A qualitative method consisting of 18 semi-structured interviews with employees of the ministry yielded rich and detailed accounts of participants' perceptions, interpretations and reflections towards the organizational change guidelines as well as the organizational identity of the ministry. A selection of key communication concepts relevant in a change context, in combination with an analysis of internal documents, provided the foundation for the research instrument. Thereby, the interviews dealt with assigned meanings and reflections on change implementation in practice, as well as identity features, identification and commitment processes.

The findings of this study indicate that the change elements are mostly supported by participants, but implementation in practice proves difficult. Moreover, current change implementation has been hampered by insufficient communication of the change trajectory throughout the organization. Finally, the findings point towards the existence of multiple organizational identities and as a result a limited collective identity. The findings further support that lower-level identification (e.g., workgroup or departmental) is stronger than identification on the organizational level.

To gather more support for the change, this study underlines the importance of members' sensemaking and recommends management to account sufficient room for such processes. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of communication in order for the change to be a succes. In this line, it recommends improving change communication, with a focus on middle managers, to further advance the change throughout the organization. Finally, active refinement and management of the organizational identity is recommended.

Keywords: organizational change, change implementation, organizational identity, change communication, public sector

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1. Introduction

In modern society, organizations are increasingly expected to be more proactive, to respond to complex circumstances and to take active stances in prominent issues (Hay et al., 2021). Consequently, organizational change is fundamental for organizations to survive (Lüscher & Lewis, 2008). For this reason, organizational change is well-presented in literature, focusing on the processes (van de Ven & Poole, 1995), parties involved (Oreg et al., 2011) or outcomes, i.e., success or failure (Chrusciel & Field, 2006; Hay et al., 2021). In relation to this, support and resistance to change are also well-covered in literature (Huy et al., 2014).

Generally, organizational change scholars agree that successfully implementing organizational change is not straight-forward (Jacobs et al., 2013) and can involve a variety of challenges to overcome. For example, for a top-down change initiative, this often includes a lack of support at lower levels of the hierarchy (Heyden et al., 2017). In this context, authentic communication and information on the change have been found important in stimulating change support among change recipients (Heyden et al., 2017; Oreg et al., 2011). The lack thereof is a common cause of organizational change failures (Salem, 2008; van Knippenberg et al., 2006), for example because the urgency of the change is not sufficiently clear to employees (Huy et al., 2014).

But as Salem (2008) further argues “complaints about inadequate information are [in reality] complaints about the lack of opportunities to make sense together” (p.338). Related to this, Bartunek et al. (2006) point towards a possible gap between what top management (as change initiators) considers to be the meaning of the change and its goals compared to the meaning held by other employees in the organization. This implies that even if managers account for sufficient room to make sense of the change as an organization, change implementation may remain difficult as different groups hold different perceptions of the change.

At the same time, employees who are expected to incorporate the change in day-to-day practice, but did not initiate it, are often not the primary focus for organizational change scholars (Bartunek et al., 2006; Hay et al., 2021). Extending this, the current study will make a contribution to this stream of research by focusing on those employees at lower levels of the organization, who have not initiated a change, and exploring their perceptions of change implementation and understanding of elements of a change.

Another challenge that can arise while implementing organizational change is related to the identity of an organization. This is largely dependent on whether the change is at odds with the existing identity (Jacobs et al., 2013). For change recipients, organizational change can invoke strong emotions and lead to ambiguity and confusion (Bordia et al., 2004; Klarner et al., 2011). For such impactful and ambiguous changes, the change effort can then lead to questions pertaining to who the organization is and what it stands for, i.e., the organizational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Corley & Gioia, 2004). Some research goes even further by arguing that for significant organizational changes, it is imperative that the organizational identity changes as well (Clark et al., 2010). Therefore, this study will incorporate the concept of organizational identity with the aim of exploring how it might be related to an implemented organizational change.

This study will combine these two strands of research by performing a qualitative, exploratory case study at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (further: the ministry). The ministry, founded in

1798, is one of the oldest ministries in the Netherlands. In its essence, it stands for democracy and good public governance (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, n.d.-a). The ministry is active in various policy areas and themes, including housing, spatial planning and a well-functioning government organization. In addition, there are a number of shared-service organizations, executive agencies and contract agencies, which also belong under the umbrella of the ministry (e.g., Logius, RVB, RvIG and SSC-ICT). Consequently, the ministry has almost 12,000 people in its employ. Often, the ministry has a coordinating role, e.g., in liaison with other ministries or local authorities. Its responsibilities and activities also extend to Curaçao, St. Maarten, Aruba and the Dutch Caribbean. Because of its rich history as a department and its particular role(s) and responsibilities within the Dutch government, the ministry is often also referred to as “the mother department” (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, n.d.-b).

The ministry provides a rich and interesting context to study organizational change and identity. In 2018, a change trajectory was initiated by the (top) management of the ministry. This trajectory was mostly based on insights from the Dutch management book “Verdraaide organisaties” (Buiting & Hart, n.d.). Essentially, the book and the change trajectory revolve around advancing the idea of “working from the intention” (in Dutch: *werken vanuit de bedoeling*). Generally, this refers to a particular way of working in which a specific task or intent is placed at the center of one’s work. This intent, in turn, may refer to a higher goal or shared purpose underpinning the work. Inherently, this requires employees to continuously ask themselves “what is the purpose or intention of my work?”. In this sense, the trajectory aimed to bring more focus to the way of working within the ministry and to bring about a change in mindset among employees.

Along with the introduction of the organizational change trajectory, specific guidelines were communicated to reinforce the organizational change trajectory throughout the organization and to help employees make the desired change in mindset and behavior. These five organizational guidelines (in Dutch: *organisatorische richtingwijzers*) focused on the desired behaviors for employees and the type of organization the ministry wants to be, with the goal of helping employees implement this behavior on a daily basis. These organizational guidelines can be related to both organizational change implementation and organizational identity literature.

Firstly, the guideline “buiten = binnen” refers to a way of working in which issues outside the organization are leading for how one deals with them “inside”, and thereby the ministry contributes to important social issues in the Netherlands. Secondly, “lef” refers to a way of working which requires employees to go the extra mile where necessary, e.g., through innovative and creative approaches, but also being critical and daring to question management. Next, “1 x raken” focuses on more efficient and effective ways of working. Fourthly, “samenwerken > afstemmen” focuses on improving internal collaboration, in which working across borders, working integrally and working on the basis of trust, are central. Finally, “kracht van heel BZK[1] benutten” refers to making the best use of the knowledge and expertise that resides within the entire ministry, so as to function as one collective, strong functioning ministry.

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[1] BZK = Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, a common abbreviation used for the Ministry of the Interior

Given that the organizational change trajectory is also a top-down change initiative, similar difficulties have arisen with its change implementation. While the top management of the ministry assigns strategic importance to this (new) way of working, there are concerns whether this importance is also supported and understood by members in lower levels of the organization. Therefore, this study focuses on those members to assess the extent to which the change is currently implemented in the organization and is actively enacted and lived by its members. An internal evaluation in 2019 revealed that the organizational guidelines were not (yet) sufficiently translated into practice. Therefore, this research concentrates on the implementation of the five organizational guidelines. Through semi-structured interviews, this study aims at assessing whether these guidelines are currently supported and implemented by members of the organization. In addition, the organizational identity of the ministry is researched to explore the potential influence of organizational identity on the implementation of the guidelines.

1.1 Theoretical Relevance

This research fits in with other research on organizational change implementation and organizational identity. While organizational change has often been studied, it is still relatively understudied for the public sector (van der Voet et al., 2015). This study extends existing literature for this sector by applying a communication perspective, where commonly public management perspectives prevail. In addition, the topic of organizational identity also remains underexplored in this sector, despite its importance (Bankins & Waterhouse, 2018; Doering et al., 2019). Even more, to the researchers' knowledge, the relationship between change implementation and organizational identity is not often, at least explicitly, made. This study thus contributes to the existing literature by exploring how change implementation may be influenced by perceptions of the organization's identity.

1.2 Practical Relevance

The study is commissioned by the communication department of the ministry and is practically relevant for the organization in question. It provides the organization, and in particular its management, with practical insights to improve the change implementation as well as advice on how communication can enhance or support the change implementation. This can help the ministry to further embed the organizational change trajectory within the organization. Besides this, gaining insight into the organizational identity of the ministry can aid the ministry in formulating and expressing an identity that is consistent with employees' current perceptions. Finally, the findings may be relevant for other (Dutch) public organizations having implemented or planning on implementing similar changes.

This study will thus make a contribution to organizational change and identity literature, and provide practical implications for communication professionals and the organization studied. This will be achieved by answering the following central research question:

"To what extent are the organizational guidelines ("organisatorische richtingwijzers") supported and implemented by the organization's members and how do those guidelines relate to the organizational identity of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations?"

2. Theoretical Framework

In order to answer the central research question, important communication concepts and their relation to the research context will be explained.

2.1 Organizational Identity

Firstly, it is important to define the concept of organizational identity and demonstrate its relevance in this research context. *Organizational identity* (OI) was first conceptualized as a scientific concept in 1985 by Albert and Whetten. In their seminal paper, they explained how events within an organization may trigger members of an organization to ask “Who are we as an organization?” and thereby question the identity of the organization (Brown et al., 2006; Corley & Gioia, 2004). Consequently, they proposed that the response should contain three criteria, which together constitute the identity of an organization: central character, distinctiveness and temporal continuity (Albert & Whetten, 1985).

Over the years, OI has gained considerable popularity, but its application from different, opposing perspectives has led to a fragmented and somewhat complicated field (He & Brown, 2013; van Rekom et al., 2008). Therefore, the definition of organizational identity will be elaborated upon first. For this purpose, a social constructionist perspective is adopted to define organizational identity (Gioia et al., 2013; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Afterwards, Albert and Whetten’s three criteria will be explained in more detail, whereby the relevance of OI in an organizational change context will also be addressed.

Many scholars agree that OI is not a definitive “thing” that *is* the organization, but rather it is a subjective collection of what members *view to be* essential and distinctive about the organization (Brunninge, 2005; Coupland & Brown, 2004). Instead of merely existing in the minds of organization’s members, it is suggested that these beliefs are constructed through interaction, within the organization and outside of it (Gioia et al., 2000; Hatch & Schultz, 2002).

Here, it is important to make a distinction between OI and organizational image. *Organizational image* has been described as the beliefs members have about how the external environment sees their organization (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). It is closely related to concepts such as corporate identity and reputation, and commonly all these concepts refer to some external influence in their conceptualization (Brown et al., 2006; Gioia et al., 2000). Even though several scholars have affirmed that external perceptions can influence the OI of an organization, it is not what constitutes it (Gioia et al., 2010). Therefore, OI and image are to be treated as separate constructs (Whetten, 2006). In this study, the focus will be on the internal perceptions of who the organization is, thereby omitting the external perceptions.

In addition, OI refers to a *collective* set of beliefs, meaning that the beliefs must be shared and recognized throughout the organization (Albert et al., 2000). Although it is highly unlikely that all members within a large organization share exactly the same perceptions, it is necessary that the beliefs are shared and institutionalized to a certain extent. Otherwise, it is likely that they in fact do not reflect the essence of the organization. For this reason, OI often includes elements that may be obvious or self-explanatory in the eyes of members, as it is a shared belief that this is how the organization works (Corley et al., 2006; Scott & Lane, 2000). In this regard, Whetten (2006) also noted that “the core point here is that organizations are best known by their deepest commitments—what they repeatedly commit to be, through time and across circumstances” (p. 224).

The formulation of the three criteria by Albert and Whetten was adopted by many researchers, but also often criticized in the process. Firstly, the *central character* criterion refers to features or attributes which members hold as essential or at the core of their organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Arguably, this criterion may be most important, because without a perceived essence of the organization, it becomes difficult to talk about identity (Gioia et al., 2013). These central characteristics are assumed to be rigid, mainly because they are rooted in the history of the organization (Gioia et al., 2000; Schultz & Hernes, 2013). Thus, how an organization behaved in the past determines the boundaries of acceptable behavior now, i.e., it determines what is considered essential and typical behavior for the organization in question (Whetten, 2006).

Secondly, the *distinctiveness* criterion refers to unique or distinguishing features that members hold, when comparing their organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Features are included that demonstrate how an organization is different from others, but also how they are similar (Corley et al., 2006; Gioia et al., 2013). Here, the features may depend on the context of comparison, as different features may come forward as members compare the organization to different entities (Ashforth et al., 2008). For example, in the context of the ministry, a member may identify different distinctive features when comparing with other ministries, than when comparing with public organizations or even commercial organizations. In addition, given that these features concern members’ perceptions, it seems most important that members themselves perceive these features as distinctive, and of less importance whether they are objectively true (Gioia et al., 2013).

Thirdly, the *temporal continuity* criterion refers to the temporal aspect of OI, which has been the subject of a vigorous debate (Gioia et al., 2013). Originally, it was contended that features should be “enduring”, meaning that they are consistent over time (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Whetten, 2006). In the years after, various scholars adopted the view that OI is rather dynamic and in fact capable of change (Corley et al., 2006), although this is proven difficult (Gioia et al., 2013). Scholars adopting this view therefore prefer to describe this criterion as “continuous” (Ashforth et al., 2011; Corley et al., 2006). This study also adopts the view that OI can, albeit slowly or subconsciously, change. Therefore, this study adopts a definition of OI as members’ shared beliefs of central and distinctive features of the organization, which can be constructed through interaction, and may be more or less continuous over time.

This view is particularly relevant for this research context, as it provides a foundation for connecting OI and organizational change. On the one hand, scholars have researched how organizational change can provoke a change in OI. For example, empirical studies have focused on changes in the content of an OI (Margolis & Hansen, 2002), on the effect of mergers and spin-offs on (the formation of) OI (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Ernst & Schleiter, 2021), and on long-term patterns of change in OIs (Cloutier & Ravasi, 2020). On the other hand, scholars have also researched how OI may hamper the implementation of an organizational change. OI can influence how members respond to an organizational change and the extent to which they accept or resist it (Eilam & Shamir, 2005; Gover & Duxbury, 2012). In particular, members have been found to resist changes that are incongruent with their current perceptions towards the organization (Ravasi & Phillips, 2011; van Dijk & van Dick, 2009). Thus, in the context of the ministry, support for the organizational guidelines and active implementation may be influenced by the ministry's OI. For example, if strong beliefs are held of what the ministry is and stands for, and these beliefs do not correspond with the content of the organizational guidelines, this could negatively impact change support and implementation. In addition, given the focus of the organizational guideline "kracht van heel BZK benutten" on a collective identity, the concept of OI may also be directly related to the implementation of this particular guideline.

2.2 Organizational Identification

Organizational identity (OI) is unequivocally connected to *organizational identification* (OID). In fact, scholars have referred to both as "root constructs" in organizational studies, emphasizing their importance and necessity (Albert et al., 2000; Fiol, 2002). Even more, there is much empirical evidence supporting that a strong identification can be beneficial to organizations (He & Brown, 2013) and its relevance in a change context has also been established. However, similar to OI, literature on OID is vast and various definitions and approaches exist (Edwards, 2005). To avoid confusion, it is important to first elaborate on the definition of OID and its close relationship with OI.

An overlap between the answers to the questions "Who am I?" and "Who are we as an organization?" may imply that a member identifies with the organization in question (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). In addition, a members' identification may manifest itself by a perceived congruence between personal and organizational attributes, such as similar values, goals and beliefs (Ashforth et al., 2008; Scott & Lane, 2000). This study therefore adopts a definition of OID proposed by Mael and Ashforth (1992) as "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization, where the individual *defines* him or herself in terms of the organization(s) in which he or she is a member" (p. 104). This perception of oneness can be expressed through use of inclusive language, e.g., when a member talks in "we" and "us", and consequently merges their identity with the organization as a collective (Fiol, 2002).

The extent to which a member feels they belong to the organization as a collective may determine how a member behaves, whereby a high identification can lead to demonstrating behavior consistent with the (collective) OI (van den Heuvel et al., 2014). Related to this, scholars have argued that a strong OI can provide the foundation for a strong identification. This is especially true when the collective aspect of OI is in effect: the more certain perceptions are shared by members of the organization, the stronger the OI and the better members can (theoretically) connect their own identity to that of the organization (Ashforth et al., 2008).

Thus, the degree of identification may influence employees' behavior and determine whether they are willing to implement the organizational guidelines. Extending this, OID has been found important for organizational change processes and change implementation (van den Heuvel et al., 2014; van Knippenberg et al., 2006). For example, van Knippenberg et al. (2006) investigated the influence of identification on change and found that a higher identification may have a positive effect on a members' interest in the change process as well as the outcome. However, the role of identification may also be detrimental in this context. Particularly, if members perceive the intended organizational change as threatening to their current identity (i.e., how they perceive themselves and the organization), they may become resistant to the change (Conroy et al., 2017; Jacobs et al., 2013).

Furthermore, several authors have researched the existence of multiple organizational identities (Corley, 2004; Pratt & Foreman, 2000). Members may have different, possibly conflicting views regarding who the organization is, a phenomenon particularly common in complex and large organizations (Coupland & Brown, 2004; Gioia et al., 2000). These differing views may be subconsciously or consciously held by members of the organization (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). Scholars have argued that the existence of multiple organizational identities may confound processes of OID for members, e.g., because it allows them to identify with different identities at once or because the identities are somehow conflicting (Foreman & Whetten, 2002; MacLean & Webber, 2015). Even more, the existence of multiple identities within an organization may complicate the implementation of organizational change, particularly if they are not properly managed (Ravasi & Phillips, 2011).

Here, a distinction can be made between ideographic and holographic identities (Albert & Whetten, 1985). *Holographic* identities imply that multiple identities exist and are held simultaneously by different units within the organization. For example, different units within an organization may hold two different identity perceptions, but these are the same perceptions across all units. Contrarily, *ideographic* identities refer to the existence of various identities per unit, meaning that each unit may have different perceptions of the OI. For example, in the context of the ministry this could mean that employees working in policy hold different perceptions of the OI than those working in administration. Besides this, other scholars have also argued towards other types of identity differentiations. For example, Corley (2004) examined the extent to which differences in perceptions can occur due to organizational hierarchy. Here, differences in identity perceptions were found between members in management positions in comparison to members in lower levels of the hierarchy. These findings may also be relevant for this study, as the case studied involves a large, complex organization in which multiple identities may reside.

In addition to multiple identities, research has also pointed to different *levels* within an organization that a member may identify with besides the collective organization, such as a department or a work-group (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Here, identification with the work-group has been found to often prevail over identification with the collective (Riketta & van Dick, 2005), and is also a stronger predictor of members' beliefs and behaviors (D. van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). For this research context, this means that the extent to which members identify with the ministry as a collective or with their work-group may influence how they perceive the organization, how they perceive the organizational guidelines, or how they respond to the guidelines (in terms of behavior).

2.3 Organizational Commitment

Organizational identification (OID) is often confused with organizational commitment (Miscenko & Day, 2016). *Organizational commitment* (OC) can be defined as the extent to which a member feels attached to or involved with an organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Saks, 2006). It may be marked “by a person's (a) belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (b) willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and (c) desire to maintain membership” (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979 as cited in Mael & Ashforth, 1992, p.23). Allen and Meyer (1990) strengthened this definition by distinguishing three components of commitment: affective, continuance and normative commitment. Of these three, affective commitment, which involves an emotional attachment expressed by a willingness to remain in an organization, is arguably essential to OC (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mercurio, 2015).

To incorporate both OID and OC in this study, it is important to address the difference between these constructs. The confusion between the use of OC and OID is mainly due to overlap between the constructs (Ashforth et al., 2008). In this vein, Ashforth and Mael (1989) argued that OC is less organization-specific than OID. This can mainly be explained by the adopted definition of OID, in which (part of) a members’ identity merges with the organizational identity, whereas commitment implies more separation between the member and the organization in question (Ashforth et al., 2008; van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006). Consequently, when a member leaves an organization with which he or she identifies, it would likely be perceived as a loss, whereas if that person felt committed this would not necessarily be the case (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

In literature, much support can be found for the beneficial effect of OC in organizations (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Even though OC is not often studied in the particular context of the public sector, there are some examples that underscore the importance of the construct for this sector as well (Steijn & Leisink, 2006; van der Voet et al., 2015). Important to this research is the finding that OC holds the ability to influence employees’ behavior (Meyer et al., 2002).

In addition, the construct is often studied in the context of organizational change. Here, the influence of commitment has been studied primarily in two ways: either as a reaction to the change or as an antecedent of the change (Oreg et al., 2011). This study focuses on the latter, where employees’ commitment to an organization may predict the extent to which they are ready to change and accept the change (Oreg et al., 2011). Here, OC has mainly been found to have positive effects, but, similar to identification, high levels of commitment can also negatively impact an employees’ readiness to change. In this research context, this may imply that highly committed employees are more likely to be positive about the change and thus more likely to support and implement it in daily practice. At the same time, employees who report a high level of commitment may also have been committed to the way the ministry was operating prior to the change trajectory, and in that way an employee’s high OC could negatively impact the implementation of the organizational guidelines.

2.4 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Another relevant concept for this study is *organizational citizenship behavior* (OCB), which is often referred to as employees' display of behavior that "goes above and beyond" what is expected of them (P. Podsakoff et al., 2000). The original definition focused on two elements that constitute OCB: behavior (often) not formally rewarded by the organization, nor included in the formal requirements of a members' job description (N. P. Podsakoff et al., 2009; Smith et al., 1983). Later research has established that a broader definition might be more appropriate and this study therefore adopts the definition of OCB proposed by van Dick et al. (2006) as "any discretionary individual extra-role behaviour advantageous to the organization" (p.284).

For this study, the concept of OCB may be relevant for multiple reasons. First, even though not explicitly researched, studies have found OCB to be a facilitator of organizational change (Avey et al., 2008). In addition, OCB concerns employee behavior, which is consistent with the focus of the organizational guidelines on employees' behavior. Moreover, the provided definition of OCB seems to conceptually overlap with the organizational guideline "lef". Besides its application in this research context, OCB is also closely related to both identification and commitment. Empirical support has been found that OC can positively predict OCB (Ocampo et al., 2018; P. Podsakoff et al., 2000), also in the public sector (de Geus et al., 2020). For example, Zheng et al. (2012) argued that employees engage in OCBs to demonstrate their commitment to the organization. Moreover, OCB has been found as a potential outcome of OID (van Dick et al., 2006). This relationship suggests that the more people identify with an organization, the more willing they are to "go above and beyond" for their organization (Marstand et al., 2021).

In an extensive review of OCB, seven dimensions of OCB were distinguished (P. Podsakoff et al., 2000). Three of these are incorporated in this study, because they can be related to characteristics that have been studied in the context of organizational change.

Firstly, *individual initiative* includes individual acts that are well beyond what is expected in order to contribute to the organization, e.g., taking on special projects or working long hours (Organ et al., 2006). The distinction here with "regular" employee behavior is that when an employee portrays behavior linked to individual initiative, it is with such passion and intensity that it may almost seem voluntary (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). This dimension is particularly interesting in this research context, as scholars have argued that it includes behaviors that focus on fostering change and improvement in an individual's work or in the organization's effectiveness (Choi, 2007; Vigoda-Gadot & Beeri, 2012). In addition, research on organizational change has emphasized the importance of taking into account the reactions of individual employees for successful implementation of change (Vakola, 2014; Wanous et al., 2000). Given that individual initiative also focuses on an individual employee's behavior, this concept may be relevant in this research context.

Secondly*, helping behavior* "involves voluntarily helping others with, or preventing the occurrence of, work-related problems" (P. Podsakoff et al., 2000, p. 516). Given this definition, this behavior mostly occurs on an interpersonal level, e.g., between employees. This dimension may be relevant in this research context for two reasons. First, it can be related to research on organizational change, which has pointed to the importance of social support among colleagues and its positive effect on employees' change intentions, e.g., employees' support of the change (Madsen et al., 2005; Oreg et al., 2011). In addition, this type of behavior has proven vital in the public sector because of the general interdependence of public employees (Lim & Moon, 2020).

Thirdly, *civic virtue* refers to the interest or involvement of employees in the overall governance of the organization (N. P. Podsakoff et al., 2009; P. Podsakoff et al., 2000). This can manifest itself in employees making an effort to be well informed about what is happening within the organization, as well as making suggestions for improvements, with the aim of contributing to the functioning of the organization (Klotz et al., 2017; Organ et al., 2006). Civic virtue has also been studied in the context of organizational change (e.g., Bellou, 2008). For this study, if employees are interested or involved in the governance of the entire organization, it is also considered more likely that they will be interested in the change, which is why the concept is included in this study.

2.5 Organizational Culture

Finally, closely related to the concepts previously discussed is the concept *organizational culture*. Scholars have investigated how perceptions of culture influence the extent to which a member identifies with an organization (Schrodt, 2009; Vijayakumar & Padma, 2014). More frequently it has been associated with organizational identity (OI). Initially, prominent authors in the OI-field mainly tried to distinguish organizational culture from OI (e.g., Corley et al., 2006; Whetten, 2006), but increasingly organizational culture and OI were examined together to establish interrelationships (Hatch & Schultz, 2002; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006).

In these papers, scholars agree that organizational culture and OI are closely related, yet distinct. For example, Hatch and Schultz (2002) proposed a model in which there is a reciprocal relationship between the two: cultural elements can be expressed through identity and at the same time, identity can be embedded in culture through members' reflections on who they are. Consistent with the latter, Whetten (2006) proposed that when members use cultural elements in their discourse on OI attributes, then such elements become a part of the OI. In addition, an empirical exploration of the relationship found that organizational culture can help members in making sense of their OI (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006).

Organizational culture is incorporated in this study for its influence on successful change implementation (e.g., Drzensky et al., 2012; Lucas & Kline, 2008). In this regard, scholars have found that organizational culture can influence employees' attitudes towards a change, which can result in acceptance or resistance (Danışman, 2010). Moreover, this influence may vary depending on the culture's characteristics (Jones et al., 2005). For example, some types of cultures were found to influence employees' acceptance more positively than others (Abdul Rashid et al., 2004).

In addition, organizational culture is relevant in this context for its presumed influence on employees' behavior (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Vijayakumar & Padma, 2014). Organizational culture encompasses the entire organization (Schrodt, 2009), and in this regard it has been posited that "to a large degree, culture provides an interpretive framework through which individuals make sense of their own behavior, as well as the behavior of collectivities in their society" (Scott & Lane, 2000, p. 49). Thereby, it can be related to the organizational guidelines with its focus on employee behavior. By giving directions for standard ways of working, the organizational guidelines may thus even reflect a desired organizational culture.

While there are many ways to measure or capture an organization's culture, this study adopts elements of the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI) (Cooke & Lafferty, 1987 as cited in Balthazard et al., 2006), particularly for its more concrete approach by focusing on behavioral norms (Balthazard et al., 2006). These behavioral norms consist of certain expectations of "suitable" behavior that are embedded in the organizations' culture. In this research context, such expectations may influence the implementation of the organizational guidelines. The descriptions below are all adapted from Balthazard et al. (2006).

On the one hand, the OCI contains several constructive styles, including a self-actualizing and humanistic-encouraging culture. A self-actualizing culture focuses on the employee as an individual, whereby instead of focusing on quantitative outcomes, quality is placed above quantity and the organization encourages members to develop themselves. The description of this culture seems to overlap with aspects of demonstrating individual initiative (OCB). A humanistic-encouraging culture is similar to a self-actualizing culture, but instead focuses more on the relational aspect, whereby members are expected to behave in a supportive manner towards others in the organization. The description of this style seems to overlap with the description of helping behavior (OCB).

Contrarily, the OCI also contains some passive styles, of which conventional culture and dependent culture are expected to be relevant in this research context. In particular, these may be relevant for the public sector, because bureaucratic structures are thought to prevail in public organizations (van der Voet et al., 2015). For a conventional culture, members are expected to follow tradition and prevailing rules, and this culture is typically marked by a high degree of bureaucracy. Finally, in a dependent culture, much importance is placed on the hierarchy, and members are expected to do what is asked of them, and certainly no more.

In conclusion, the concepts discussed in this theoretical framework are relevant to this study because of their influence on employee behavior (corresponding with the focus of the organizational guidelines), as well as their strong relationship to the concept of organizational identity. But more importantly, all concepts are relevant in the context of organizational change. Organizational identity can be a source of change resistance, especially if the change is incongruent with employees' beliefs (Drzensky et al., 2012). Similarly, both identification and commitment can affect how employees respond to and either support or resist the change (Rooney et al., 2010). The dimensions of OCB can be related to important change characteristics, which in turn determine employees' responses. Finally, organizational culture can (subconsciously) inform how employees behave and respond to certain situations, including organizational changes. Thus, all of these concepts may influence employees' support for the organizational guidelines and ultimately the extent to which they actively (want to) implement the organizational guidelines in practice.

3. Method

In this chapter, the chosen methodology for data collection as well as rationale behind choices made, will be explained in detail.

3.1 Study Design

To investigate the research question "To what extent are the organizational guidelines ("organisatorische richtingwijzers") supported and implemented by the organization's members and how do those guidelines relate to the organizational identity of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations?", a qualitative case study was designed. This research question is exploratory in nature, with the purpose of gaining an in-dept understanding of the current implementation of the organizational guidelines and their use in practice. Qualitative methods allow for flexibility in data collection, which suits the exploratory nature of this research (Boeije, 2010). Accordingly, semi-structured interviews were conducted, which provided the flexibility to deviate from the formulated questions or to ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses. Furthermore, this allowed for the exploration of subjective interpretations, opinions, and experiences of employees regarding (the implementation of) the organizational guidelines. In addition, qualitative case studies with interviews as primary data are common for research on organizational identity (Fortwengel, 2021; Ravasi & Canato, 2013). Consistent with this, the semi-structured interviews also had the function of providing rich and detailed insight into employees' perceptions regarding their organization and its identity.

Prior to the data collection, the study was ethically assessed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Twente. (See also Appendix A)

3.2 Participants

For this study, 18 employees were recruited and participated in the research. All participants were employees actively working for the ministry. A purposive sampling approach was adopted in this study, which involves selecting participants according to a deliberate set of inclusion criteria (Boeije, 2010). Overall, the objective of this sampling method was to approach a reflection of the organizations' population to account for a wide range of perceptions, consistent with the organization's structure. Consequently, participants were selected based on their position within the organization, gender, hierarchical position and organizational tenure.

First, a selection was made based on the department or suborganization to which the employee belonged. The ministry can be roughly divided into two groups: policy and administration (in Dutch: *beleid en uitvoering*). It was expected that perceptions might differ between these groups. In addition, a large majority (almost 85%) of the ministry's employees work in administration. Therefore, this distinction was reflected in the final sample, with 7 participants working in policy and 11 in administration. In addition, approximately equal numbers of men and women were selected, to prevent possible gender differences affecting the research. In the final sample, 10 men and 8 women participated. Besides this, upper management employees were excluded from this study, as they are not the focal point of this research. Middle management and lower management levels were accepted, as they are expected to be actively involved in the (daily) implementation of the organizational guidelines. Finally, only employees who had been working at the ministry for a minimum of six months were invited to participate in the interviews. This was decided to ensure that the participants had a good understanding of the ministry as an organization and also possessed sufficient knowledge to participate in the interview.

During the early stages of the research, the researcher attended 22 hours of meetings at the ministry, where she had the opportunity to observe approximately 180 employees. These observations thus gave the researcher access to a wide variety of employees for the recruitment of participants. Based on the inclusion criteria, between 14 and 21 June of 2021, 29 employees were invited via email to participate in an interview. Each invitation was personalized by including a reference to the observation in which the employee had been present. In total, 11 employees did not respond to the invitation. An informed consent form was sent to the 18 participants to sign prior to the interview, which included the research purpose and additional statements regarding the ethical procedure. Table 1 gives an overview of the participants and their characteristics.

Table 1

Participant characteristics (N=18)

Number	Gender	Group	Tenure (years)
Participant 1	Male	Administration	3
Participant 2	Male	Administration	5
Participant 3	Female	Administration	5
Participant 4	Male	Administration	9
Participant 5	Female	Administration	15
Participant 6	Male	Administration	8
Participant 7	Male	Policy	0,5
Participant 8	Male	Policy	2
Participant 9	Male	Administration	2
Participant 10	Female	Administration	6
Participant 11	Male	Policy	2
Participant 12	Female	Policy	37
Participant 13	Female	Administration	2
Participant 14	Male	Policy	5
Participant 15	Male	Policy	15
Participant 16	Female	Administration	3
Participant 17	Female	Administration	3
Participant 18	Female	Policy	3

3.3 Research Instrument

The interview guideline consisted of two separate parts. For the first part, questions were formulated based on the literature concepts addressed in the theoretical framework. For the second part, the organizational guidelines ("organisatorische richtingwijzers") of the ministry provided the basis for the questions. Consequently, the initial outline for the interviews represented the following structure:

- Introduction
  - Position
  - Content work
- Part 1: Organizational identity
  - Central features and distinctive features
  - Organizational identification and commitment
- Part 2: Organizational guidelines
  - General knowledge change trajectory
  - Organizational guidelines implementation

3.3.1 Organizational Identity

This part mainly focused on organizational identity with elements of identification and commitment (see e.g., Margolis & Hansen, 2002; Oliver & Vough, 2020). The questions used in literature were translated and adapted to the current research context. These included questions about the central and distinctive features of the ministry (i.e., organizational identity), questions about the reasons for working at the Ministry of the Interior (focusing on identification) and questions to assess the extent to which the participant felt part of the ministry (i.e., identification and commitment).

3.3.2 Organizational Guidelines

This part included questions for the five organizational guidelines. These questions focused on the meaning and interpretation that participants assigned to the organizational guidelines, as well as their reflections on implementation of the guidelines in their daily work. Specific follow-up questions were formulated for each guideline. In addition, some general questions were formulated to assess the general knowledge of participants with regard to the change trajectory and the guidelines.

Both the questions and follow-up questions formulated for the organizational guidelines were based on a document analysis performed by the researcher. A detailed list of the documents used for the analysis can be found in Appendix B. Most importantly, the documents "Selfies organisatieontwikkeling" were analyzed, in which all departments and sub-organizations of the ministry gave a reflection on the organizational change trajectory and its implementation in practice. Overall, the document analysis provided insight into the definitions of the organizational guidelines as determined by management, but also the meanings given to them by the various sub-organizations and possible dilemmas with regard to active implementation. Consequently, these insights informed the interview guideline and provided a solid foundation for exploring employees' perceptions regarding support and implementation of the organizational guidelines. Below, the five organizational guidelines are described in more detail to clarify their connections with the literature concepts. The ministry has not assigned any specific order to the guidelines, so they are listed here in no particular order.

Buiten = Binnen. This guideline can be literally translated as “outside = inside”. With this guideline, the management of the ministry wanted to stress the importance of its external environment and relations in order to create public value and/or societal impact. It may include being in contact and cocreating with various parties, such as (local) governments, knowledge institutions, the market and customers. In addition, it may refer to the higher purpose and priorities of the ministry, and how social issues *outside* the ministry can be positively appropriated *within* the ministry to create public value, with the end-user in mind: the Dutch citizen. This higher purpose and priorities may for example be reflected in the organizational identity of the ministry.

Lef. There is no literal translation of the Dutch *lef* into English. Relatively similar terms that cover the meaning of “lef” are courage, guts and daring. In the context of the ministry, this guideline reflects the ministry’s desire to see its employees portray behavior to think and/or act outside the box, be innovative and to persevere despite adversity. In addition, this behavior may include being able to challenge others (including bottom-up), the ability to say no, helping others and room for making mistakes. Given this description, this guideline mostly seems to overlap with the definition of organizational citizenship behavior and its related dimensions, such as individual initiative and helping behavior.

1 x Raken. This guideline roughly translates to “hit the mark once” or “bullseye” and refers to a way of working which is more efficient, effective and goal-oriented. This guideline emphasizes the need to reassess existing structures and traditions, e.g., when the public is involved, to make it as easy and accessible for them as possible. In addition, this guideline also addresses the tension between accountability and responsibility, in that clear decisions should be made regarding responsibility and who can be held accountable. Consequently, decision-making processes should be more efficient, as only those responsible can make the decisions and be held accountable, rather than bureaucratic structures that require going through the entire chain. Thereby, this organizational guideline may be related to organizational culture, e.g., elements of a conventional or dependent culture.

Samenwerken > Afstemmen. This guideline roughly translates to “cooperation > coordination”. It refers to an optimal form of cooperation, both between the various departments and sub-organizations within the ministry, as well as outside of it. An integral approach and going beyond the borders of the ministry are also important here, in order to add the necessary (public) value. In addition, it includes the importance of focusing on a common purpose or task at hand with collaborating parties. This guideline thus focuses on the relationship that is entered into as well as mutual trust and connection. This organizational guideline may be related to organizational identification and commitment, e.g., because the extent to which employees feel part of the ministry may determine the extent to which they actively focus on internal relationships and collaboration.

Kracht van heel BZK benutten. This guideline roughly translates to “profiting from the strength of the entire Ministry”. This involves all departments and sub-organizations functioning together as one collective ministry, maximizing the use of its strengths. It is closely related to the previous guideline, whereby this guideline focuses even more on the internal coherence within the ministry. Thereby, this guideline may include the relationship between policy and administration and the desire to bring these groups closer together, as well as promoting substantive connections and knowledge sharing within the organization. Given this description, this guideline may be related to the concept of organizational identity. For example, understanding the strengths of the organization may help employees to actively implement this guideline and perceptions of the identity features may influence *how* employees implement this guideline.

3.3.3 Adaptations Instrument

During the interviews, the two parts of the instrument appeared to merge together, given the relations between the organizational guidelines and the literature concepts previously described. Some participants elaborated quite extensively on particular questions and thereby mentioned the identity features and/or the organizational guidelines earlier or in different ways than anticipated. Consequently, the final research instrument reflected a more integral approach: incorporating both the literature concepts and the organizational guidelines. As a result, during the original “first part”, the organizational guidelines were also (to some extent) discussed, and in the original “second part”, aspects were also discussed that could be related to the literature concepts discussed in the theoretical framework.

In addition, after the first round of interviews, some minor adjustments were made to the interview guideline. Firstly, the order was adjusted by bringing forward a question that the researcher noticed was easy for participants to answer (reasons for working at the ministry or their department). In addition, a question regarding the organizational identity was removed (describing the ministry to external people, e.g., family), because it appeared that the other questions were sufficient to get people talking. Some participants started to repeat themselves, which was a sign that saturation had been reached on this topic and one question could thus be omitted.

Prior to the data collection, a pre-test was performed with an employee of the ministry, whom had no specific knowledge of the purpose of the research and was not considered in the results of this study. This pre-test allowed the researcher to practice the interview and detect necessary modifications to the interview guideline. The final overview of the interview guideline can be found in Appendix C.

3.4 Procedure

Between 22 June and 28 July 2020, the interviews were conducted online via the platform Cisco Webex Meetings. The interviews lasted between 32 and 50 minutes, with an average of 42 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed afterwards.

Each interview started with an introduction by the researcher and a verbal confirmation of the ethics principles, to ensure that the participant fully understood and accepted all the conditions. Afterwards, the audio recording was started. First, participants were asked two introductory questions. The first was about their position within the ministry and the content of their work, and in addition, they were asked about the tenure of their employment with the ministry. This allowed the researcher to contextualize the participants' work, but also allowed the researcher to build up a rapport with the participant as it is generally an easy topic for the participant to talk about.

After the introductory questions, participants were asked to describe the ministry as an organization in three words. This association question often elicited a wide range of responses, and the argumentation that participants provided could sometimes also be linked to the organizational guidelines. Subsequently, questions were asked regarding the identity of the ministry, including its central and distinctive features. Then, participants were asked whether they felt part of the ministry, which could be related to identification and/or commitment processes. The order of these questions was occasionally changed, depending on the participants' answers. Where necessary, the researcher asked follow-up questions to uncover reasons behind the answers given.

When participants began to repeat themselves, the interview moved on to the organizational change trajectory. Here, some general questions were asked about the organizational change trajectory, to see to what extent the participants were familiar with the content of the trajectory and the guidelines. If the participants were familiar, the researcher asked them to elaborate on whether they actively used the organizational guidelines and if so, how. For those participants that were unfamiliar, the researcher reassured them that this was more common and continued with the interview. Next, the researcher shared her screen with the participant, to show a communication poster created by the ministry. This poster envisioned the five organizational guidelines with related concepts. The poster was used here as a tool, because it was expected that the majority of participants had never seen the poster (and/or heard of the guidelines), and in such cases it would be very difficult to talk about the guidelines. In addition, it also gave participants the opportunity to take a more active role in the interview by discussing things in the poster that appealed to them.

Subsequently, the content of the poster and the organizational guidelines were discussed, focusing on participants' interpretations and reflections on the implementation in daily practice. Here, no fixed order was used for the organizational guidelines and not all organizational guidelines were discussed during all interviews (partly due to limited time). In doing so, participants also discussed aspects that could be related to the literature concepts, as explained previously.

Finally, when the researcher noticed that the participant had no new additions, or when at least 40 minutes had passed, the researcher began to conclude the interview. Thereby, the researcher gave the participant an incentive to provide final comments, ideas, and/or questions, after which the interview was concluded.

3.5 Data Analysis

Each interview was transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Subsequently, ATLAS.ti 9 software was used for data analysis. For this study, data collection and data analysis were an iterative process. After an initial round of interviews, the interviews were transcribed and then analyzed. Then, the researcher resumed data collection based on the initial analysis. Thus, the researcher iteratively alternated between conducting the interviews, transcribing, and analyzing in different rounds. This way of working corresponded with the exploratory nature of this research, as initial findings in the data analysis informed the interviews that followed (Boeije, 2010).

Initially, the codebook created also consisted of two parts. The first one included the five communication concepts discussed in the theoretical framework and the second one included the five organizational guidelines with definitions and subcodes, which were derived from the communication poster used in the interview and the document analysis. This initial codebook can be found in Appendix D. After all interviews were conducted, transcribed and analyzed in a first round, intercoder reliability was measured to ensure that the coding process was performed in a consistent manner. In particular, this measure focused on whether another coder would assign the same codes to the excerpts from the interview transcripts (Campbell et al., 2013; Hemmler et al., 2020). For this purpose, a second coder, who was familiar with this type of research, analyzed and coded 15% of the total quotes explicated, based on this initial codebook. Consequently, a satisfactory Cohen's Kappa was obtained (ƙ=0.788).

However, this first analysis revealed the close relationships (and sometimes overlap) between the organizational guidelines and literature concepts. Therefore, the two parts of the codebook were integrated, using the organizational guidelines as the foundation. Thereby, the researcher engaged in axial coding with the aim of organizing the dataset (Boeije, 2010). Codes that had become redundant were removed and some codes were merged when synonyms were present within the data set. Moreover, a separate category labelled "personal identification" was created, in addition to the organizational guidelines. The content of some quotes referred to personal motivations of participants, which could not be linked to the way of working (i.e., the organizational guidelines), which is why it was necessary to create this additional category. In addition to these six categories, a final category called "organizational change trajectory" was included, which comprised of more general reflections and comments related to the organizational change trajectory and its implementation. These reflections both occurred after the closed questions asked, and at the end of the interviews where participants sometimes wanted to share their perspective on what was necessary to move the implementation forward. Table 2 shows a concise overview of the final, integrated codebook used for analysis.

After these modifications, all transcripts and documents were analyzed and coded for a second round. Finally, the second coder analyzed and coded 10% of the total quotes with the use of the final codebook (see Appendix E for a comprehensive overview of the final codebook, including an exemplary quote per code). This resulted in a Cohen's Kappa of ƙ=0.800, which signifies substantial agreement.

Table 2

Concise Codebook

	Codes and sub codes	Definition
1	Buiten = Binnen 1.1 Custom approach 1.2 Stay in touch 1.3 Co-creation	This code refers to a way of working in which issues outside the organization are leading for how one deals with them “inside”, as well as working (intensively) with partners outside on the same issues. With the purpose of contributing to important social issues and ultimately serve the Netherlands and/or its citizens.
2	Lef/ Organizational Citizenship Behavior 2.1 Individual initiative 2.2 Allow for mistakes and opposition 2.3 Helping behavior	This code refers to an employee who “goes above and beyond” by engaging in some sort of discretionary individual behavior not explicitly mentioned in one's job description, e.g., thinking outside the box and challenging management, and that is beneficial to the organization and its functioning.
3	1 x raken 3.1 Conventional culture 3.2 Responsibility and accountability 3.3 Abandoning routines 3.4 No talking, but action	This code refers to working more efficiently and goal-oriented without compromising on the outcome.
4	Samenwerken > Afstemmen 4.1 Interconnecting with common purpose 4.2 Integral approach 4.3 Across borders	This code refers to a way of working in which collaboration is optimized in every form. This means not simply coordinating and focusing on one's own goals, but trusting others, an integrated approach and crossing boarders where necessary.
5	Kracht van heel BZK benutten 5.1 Sharing knowledge 5.2 Organizational identity 5.2.1 Uncertainty identity features 5.2.2 Distinctive features 5.2.3 Central features 5.3 Local identities/ sub-identities 5.3.1 Policy and administration 5.4 Organizational Commitment 5.4.1 Civic virtue	This code refers to a way of working which makes ultimate use of the strength of the ministry in its entirety, by encouraging closer connections between various parts within the ministry, with the purpose of learning from each other and sharing knowledge. In addition, codes are included that refer to employees' perceptions of who the organization is, as well as accounts on whether one feels part of the organization.
6	Personal identification 6.1 Reasons working at ministry	This code includes identification on a personal level, e.g., when an employee mentions aspects of their personality as reasons for identification, and thus are separate from ways of working of the ministry
7	Organizational change trajectory 7.1 Opgave-gericht werken/ werken vanuit de bedoeling 7.2 Organizational guidelines	This code includes general references, comments, and reflections related to (the implementation of) the organizational development trajectory and its contents

4. Findings

In this chapter, the findings of this study are presented. The findings are based on the semi-structured interviews and, where relevant, are supplemented by findings from the document analysis.

Table 3 shows a sorted overview of the total number of quotations per organizational guideline for both participant groups, along with the table relative frequencies. The organizational guideline “kracht van heel BZK benutten” had the most quotations, while “buiten = binnen” had the least. Here, it is important to note that more employees from administration than from policy participated. For example, among policy staff, 36 quotes were found for the organizational guideline “1 x raken”, which is about 7% of the total number of quotes found in this study. By contrast, this organizational guideline included 30 quotes from administration participants. Thus, the number of quotations for "1 x raken" among policy participants is relatively high in comparison to that of the administration group. Hereafter, the findings will be explained per guideline.

Table 3

Overview Quotations per Organizational Guideline with Table Relative Frequencies

Organizational guidelines	Policy	Administration	Total
	N=7	N=11	N=18
Kracht van heel BZK benutten	67 (12,86%)	128 (24,57%)	195 (39,72%)
Lef / Organizational Citizenship Behavior	21 (4,03%)	49 (9,40%)	70 (14,26%)
1 x Raken	36 (6,91%)	30 (5,76%)	66 (13,85%)
Samenwerken > Afstemmen	20 (3,84%)	26 (4,99%)	46 (9,57%)
Buiten = Binnen	17 (3,26%)	28 (5,73%)	45 (9,17%)
Total quotations	195 (39,96%)	293 (60,04%)	488 (100%)

4.1 Buiten = Binnen

Participants generally had a good notion of what was meant by this organizational guideline. More than once, a reference was made to the ministry as “the ivory tower” from which to step, which seems to be a common remark particularly in the policy environment. An example of this interpretation can be seen below. In addition, several participants mentioned practical examples of how they actively enacted or applied it in their work. Also, various groups were mentioned with whom they collaborate, e.g., the market, the citizen and external networks.

“We are all a small piece in the system and everyone tries to do something in his or her own policy area so that we can... get movement outside on the issues that really matter. And (…) we also do this more in connection with the citizen. That we don't just do it from our ivory tower in the Hague. So that we also connect more with the provinces, with the municipalities, with (…) the citizen." (P12, policy)

The relative low number of quotations for this organizational guideline can mainly be explained by a difference in interpretation related to the content of the work. In particular, participants from administration indicated that they generally found it relevant in the context of their work, e.g., because they often worked in close contact with society. For policy staff, this connection may at times be more indirect or difficult to make. This difficulty was mentioned by different participants, an example is shown in the following quote.

"But it does make you wonder, yeah, what does outside entail? Yes, outside for me in daily practice means the relationship with other ministries, the relationships with the organizations in the countries and that's where it ends in reality. So the step from co-creation to, for example, actual society or really responding to the needs of society is somewhat more difficult. Because you are very much bound by legal frameworks.(…)" (P7, policy).

4.1.1 Custom Approach

This difference in interpretation was also visible for customization. This subcode was only mentioned by a few participants with relatively little elaboration. Only participants from administration mentioned this subcode and commented that in their work it was important as a starting point. This was also supported by the document analysis, which showed a larger number of excerpts from the suborganizations in administration referring to customization as a priority, particularly for business management (in Dutch: *bedrijfsvoering)*. However, the importance of this approach was also questioned in some cases, e.g., one participant indicated: *"Yes, customization, is that what you want? Sometimes, customization is really a very wrong starting point. How do you deal with that?" (P9, administration).*

4.1.2 Stay in Touch

Various participants mentioned examples of staying in touch with parties outside of the ministry. Participants stressed its importance and generally participants reported that it was feasible to implement this in daily practice. An example of a similar reflection is shown in the quote below.

"I see the sign outside=inside, so bringing in the outside world, yes, that's going well, because we really do want the input from this outside world, from our network. (...) So that we really have that broad scope and really look broadly at what is going on in the Netherlands, what needs municipalities or organizations have and what should we do about it. So, fortunately these discussions continue to be well-executed." (P8, policy)

4.1.3 Co-Creation

At the same time, there were also participants who were more critical and felt that this guideline is not yet sufficiently applied everywhere. This became particularly evident in discussions about co-creation, as participants viewed this as a step beyond "normal" collaboration. This still proved difficult, as the quote below also makes clear. Other reasons for the experienced difficulty were related to the fact that parties involved have different systems or different quality standards, in which case one must weigh up which is more important.

"So, for example co-creation, that's something that I think "yes, I'm really trying to encourage that with us". And that's very difficult, because of how our processes work and our decision-making processes about what exactly we're creating all together. So, there's a lot of conversations in there with stakeholders, but that's not co-creation. And if you really try to do co-creation, then (…) it's all very complicated (…), so no, the reality is a lot more unruly than that. But I think it's a really nice goal." (P13, administration)

In addition, two participants gave a reflection on what they think is necessary for the implementation of this guideline, as can be seen below. Both quotations involve looking at the issue in a different way, where the first one reports on the beneficial effects that can be created, and the second one is an example of how a participant tried to make sense of the guideline during the interview.

“So, I think that if the market is given more space to come up with solutions, that it also adds much more value, so social value to our projects. And I think that we then also spend our tax money much better, that we get much more in return. But we all have to start looking at the same matter in a different way there. And that's very difficult.” (P10, administration)

“And maybe that's the conclusion that from the outside in is also mainly just having a constructive conversation with each other and at the same time continuing to take your responsibility as the Ministry of the Interior. And not so much sharing responsibility, but having the conversation about your own responsibility much more collectively." (P15, policy)

4.2 Lef / Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Almost every participant mentioned this organizational guideline and its enactment. As shown in Table 3, the number of quotes for the administration group were relatively high. Participants were willing to talk about this guideline as it often resonated with what they find important and liked to exhibit in their work. The way participants interpreted lef in their work context was found to be consistent with the definition of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) previously defined. For example, this conceptual overlap is clearly shown in the following quote: *“lef is to ... undertake things, take initiatives outside your job description that do ... contribute to the realization of your goal." (P1, administration)*

Some participants made a distinction between implementation on a personal level and on an institutional (i.e., organizational) level. They agreed that on a personal level it was often possible to enact the various behaviors pertaining to “lef”, but on an institutional level, this became more difficult. In this regard, the political context and environment reportedly had an influence. Participants indicitated that sometimes they had to operate within certain (legal) frameworks in which it is difficult to apply “lef” directly. Also, some participants perceived the ministry as more cautious and even risk averse because of its environment, as is explained in the following quote: *“No, I think because you're in a political landscape, people don't like that so much. And I think that's the difference between commercial and public. In commerce you look for more risk and within government it's risk averse.” (P4, administration)*

Besides this, the relationship between policy and administration was indicated as a reason. This is for example indicated by a participant who mentioned *“(…) there it often clashes with (...) precisely the Ministry of the Interior at that operational level, because (...) the Ministry of the Interior tries to do it all in one way." (P6, administration).* Here, the participant indicated that the tendency of the ministry to have uniform ways of working interfered with the implementation of “lef”, by not giving flexibility and freedom to suborganizations to do work beyond what is expected. Extending this, some participants also referred to a hierarchical position that the executive agencies (in Dutch: *uitvoeringsorganisaties*) can be in, which made engaging in "lef" particularly complex and difficult. These elements of a dependent culture also arised in the document analysis.

4.2.1 Individual Initiative

All participants mentioning "lef" agreed that it is important to the organization to demonstrate this kind of behavior and recognized its value in daily practice. Various participants were able to mention concrete examples in which they applied this guideline by showing initiative individually. It was noted, however, that some participants are opposed in demonstrating this initiative or that this attitude is not yet shared by everyone. For example, it was mentioned that some people do not always think in possibilities or have a more passive attitude, and thus only take specific actions when they feel like there is no other option. The following participant reflected on this by saying *"(..) It seems to be the case here that we only do something if we <u>really</u> have no other choice. If we have no way out of it to <u>not</u> do it or something. I find that quite a pity." (P11, policy)*

4.2.2 Allow for Mistakes and Opposition

Related to this passive attitude is the following subcode, which indicated whether or not participants felt they were allowed to make mistakes and to oppose others. Multiple participants reported on this subcode and clearly demonstrated that there are improvements to be made in this regard. In this context, some participants referred to a "culture of fear" present within the ministry. The examples mentioned by participants included the fear of making mistakes, the fear of holding others accountable and/or the fear of saying no. All participants who referred to this were working in administration. However, there were also various excerpts from the document analysis of policy departments that referred to a similar fear. The citation below shows an experience of a participant in this context.

"(…) On the one hand it seems as if you have a lot of freedom as a civil servant (…), but on the other hand I sometimes don't feel safe at all to say no or to contradict a higher authority. I do that sometimes, and then you don't always get very nice reactions, you know, then you are put in your place. I've had people say things to me like "those discussions are held elsewhere, that would only distract you". And just very much like "go away" and I find that very difficult." (P13, administration)

Even more, this was also seen in the way employees may adopt what is determined by top management, but do not challenge or change anything in reality, consistent with elements of a dependent culture. This is also mentioned in the quote below.

"What I often see... what the management board (BR) says is very much being listened to and translated almost literally. Whereas I always think you have to "challenge" executives, because you are the expert, so you are supposed to think about that. So … I have quite often discussions about that. (P6, administration)

In addition, several participants mentioned that implementation largely depended on their leaders and their leadership style. Participants explained that if a leader envisioned the guideline and actively supported the employee in its implementation, this helped them greatly. At the same time, participants stressed that management can also interfere and make it difficult for them to implement "lef". Besides this, it was mentioned that exemplary behavior demonstrated by (top) management could help with active implementation. In line with this, there were also a number of participants who argued for more active guidance and control by management to guide employees and help them enact “lef” in their daily work. Those participants revealed that sometimes lef-related behaviors seemed more optional and certain behaviors were accepted that do not (necessarily) benefit the organization. This is also demonstrated in the citation below.

“(…) I think that we should actually be able to hold each other accountable much more, and that this would also have an effect. I think that at the moment that doesn't happen in many cases, and when it does, nothing is connected to it in terms of actions. So it's sometimes too open-ended (…). There should sometimes be stricter guidance." (P10, administration)

4.2.3 Helping Behavior

In addition, implementation of “lef” may also be facilitated by a supportive culture in which asking for help and getting help is regular practice. Few participants directly referred to this, but those who did where positive and remarked that they felt this is true for the ministry. Hence, the limited number of quotes may be explained by the fact that participants are positive about this. An example of this is shown in the quote below.

“Maybe asking for help, but that's just more among colleagues. It's true that we do quickly make contact with each other and say: “Can you take a look at this?” It's not (…) that they immediately say to you, you know, “figure it out yourself” or anything like that. You can just ask the questions, so I recognize that especially.” (P11, policy)

4.3 1 x Raken

As can be seen in Table 3, this organizational guideline is mentioned relatively frequently, especially among policy participants. However, the findings indicated that this was mostly due to ambiguity and confusion around “1 x raken”, both in terms of its meaning as well as its implementation in daily practice. Particularly, participants from policy reported that they find it difficult to implement “1 x raken” in practice. For example, time pressure and insufficient information at their disposal where mentioned as reasons that made it difficult to reach a goal “at once”. In addition, two participants indicated that, with a strict adherence to the principle of “1 x raken”, a tension could arise between this guideline and the subcode “allow for mistakes and opposition”, because making mistakes could then be seen as ineffective. The following quotes show examples of this perceived difficulty.

“(...) the term has been dropped more often also within my team, I always find it just a bit unnecessary. But I do see now what is meant. But this does not really fit in with the daily reality of my work. (...) I don't know if I don't believe in it, I just think that in reality it's very difficult. I believe that this works very well with really an executive agency (...) For us... no. “ (P7, policy)

“Yes, I find that one quite complicated. I don't really know what is meant by that... If they mean that something has to be done right the first time or something like that, then it goes a bit against the idea that making mistakes is allowed. (…)" (P13, administration)

"Yes, and besides, sometimes you are under time pressure. So then something has to be finished before a certain time. Which maybe also undermines the effectiveness sometimes. Sometimes it is also a conscious choice. (...)" (P14, policy).

4.3.1 Conventional Culture

While several participants emphasized that efficiency has generally improved over time, several examples were also given of bureaucratic elements still present within the ministry (which suggests a conventional culture) and most participants emphasized that various processes could be organized more efficiently and goal-oriented. The following quotes demonstrate such reflections.

"*They always say "oh this is just one of those Ministry of the Interior things", that everything has to be in black and white, everything has to be examined a hundred times (…) Then I think, why, don't you believe me, or? And only when you start talking, it turns out that it is not meant personally, but that it is apparently the culture that everything must be in writing." (P11, policy)*

"Yes, could it be a little more efficient? Yes, definitely. I think that sums it up exactly. (...) So could it be a bit more efficient, well, for 6000% it can be more efficient. And in that way, I think we can also achieve much more impact together." (P10, administration)

At the same time, some participants elaborated on the value of more efficiency in the way of working and organization of the ministry. For example, a participant mentioned: *"I think we do keep going back to the... I call it the drawing board, by constantly asking ourselves the question of: "what is our goal?" It may sound strange, but by constantly refining it, you get increasingly better results." (P8, policy)*. At the same time, another participant commented that sometimes people are too rigorous in implementing this guideline, stating: *"(…) Then at some point the process that you have thought of doing becomes leading over the content and then... you're not going to hit 1 x anymore in my opinion." (P14, policy).* Thus, increasing efficiency is generally supported, but it is important to look at the added value of more efficient methodologies.

4.3.2 Responsibility and Accountability

In order to be able to work according to the principles of "1 x raken", it can be important to have a clear understanding of who owns a project, who is responsible and who is accountable. The relative high amount of quotes that can be related to this subcode, as well as findings from the document analysis, demonstrated that this was still a challenge for the ministry. Here, participants agreed that even if it is not technically your responsibility, that does not automatically mean you are not held accountable and can decide not to do the work. The quote below also shows this dilemma. Extending this, several participants mentioned that it is then often difficult to find out who *is* responsible and that there can be ambiguity as to what does and does not belong to the responsibilities of a suborganization.

"(…) Then with every new case, every new issue that lands on your plate you're thinking, yes, am I responsible for this? Partly. Am I being held accountable for it? Yes. So we at least want to do something with it. Can I trust that there is another organization that is doing this in the same efficient or at least in the same intensity that

we want to do it? I don't know. And with that, you very quickly reach certain decisions where you actually pull things towards you." (P7, policy)

4.3.3 Abandoning Routines

This subcode was mentioned relatively little, but participants who did comment on it, recognized its value. Mostly participants from administration commented on this subcode. It was recognized that people in general tend to stick to routines and that in practice it can be difficult to break those patterns. It was mentioned that it is especially difficult for an individual employee to change this and conversely it was noted that if it was determined by management, it was suddenly possible. This contrast is discussed in the following quote.

"Fortunately that is different now, but it was very difficult (...). That stubbornness of "no, we always do it this way". While yeah, if it is suddenly decided from a higher level that you have to tackle this, [for example when they say] "you have to (...) ensure that you reach certain goals with regard to procedures". Then suddenly it is possible." (P3, administration)

At the same time, there were participants who were positive about this and noted that they have seen improvements in this regard. It was also noted that both trust and patience are needed, as can be seen in the examples below. In addition, there were also two participants who argued for some nuance in the description of this subcode, especially to indicate that routines can also be good, in that they make work easier.

"So saying goodbye to routines, yes. But it's not overnight. I do notice that. And that you're caught up in the national narrative. So you really have to... do that step by step and then we'll get there. (…)" (P16, administration)

"Yeah, we just often have to deal with change. So... what I notice is that it's difficult to get people to go along with you. And yes, that's also a bit of trust, (...) sometimes things have to happen and things have to change and one has to say goodbye to routines. And that is just very difficult. But it is sometimes necessary. So I think it's good that it's mentioned here." (P17, administration)

4.3.4 No Talking, but Action

For this subcode, there were two responses distinguishable. On the one hand, a number of respondents indicated that this subcode is very relevant and that they personally try to apply this in their work. They felt that not enough action is taken and indicated that it is often better to develop things under the radar, because that works more effectively. This is also visible in the quote below.

"(…) A lot of times we talk about things without actually taking things in hand. And when I talk about myself, I often get the remark (...) "at least you're someone who wants to tackle things with both hands... and wants to push through", so towards the solution. And I have indeed noticed that there are many colleagues here, no matter where, who only talk, but nothing comes of it. They all know better, but when something has to be done, you see nothing." (P2, administration)

However, this perception was not shared by all participants. In this context, a participant mentioned: *“Well, if anything goes wrong with us, it's that we don't talk, we just do it.” (P9, administration)*. Other participants, especially from policy, indicated that talking is often essential to their work and that this actually ensures that work can be done more effectively, as shown in the quote below.

“But talking is part of it. We are, of course, a policy department. It is precisely through talking that you can clarify exactly what needs to be done, who needs to do what and why. So I don't think we'll get anywhere without talking. But it is the willingness to take action, that is there, yes. (…)” (P11, policy)

4.4 Samenwerken > Afstemmen

As shown in Table 3, this organization guideline contained relatively few quotes. In terms of content, all participants agreed with this guideline, and the majority of participants endorsed the importance of collaboration and its value. There were also several examples mentioned of collaboration within departments, both integrally and across borders. This view was also confirmed in the document analysis, in which numerous examples of this guideline and its sub-codes can be discerned. The two quotes below show examples of this perceived value.

“And that's why I think it's great that the Ministry of the Interior is working so hard internally to seek out that cooperation. So go and see who else is doing something in your field and can we pick things up together, instead of everyone reinventing their own wheel and putting their own car together and everyone going in their own direction." (P8, policy)

“But I'm like yeah, together you get ahead. I mean you just need each other. You don't know everything and you can't. And the more you know, the more you also know that there are a lot of things you don't know yet. And that's why you have to know how to find each other in order to buckle down together. So yes, to seek that connection is, as far as I'm concerned, super important to move forward.” (P10, administration)

At the same time, there were also a number of participants who indicated that in their perception this was not yet fully the reality. These participants indicated that in some cases, it was still mainly coordination and that this can be improved. For example, some participants explained it was more a “casual” collaboration sought by participants themselves, rather than embedded in the organization's way of working. This is also illustrated in the following quote.

“(…) But then it's always a make-do infrastructure. We call them like “Hey, can we talk about whether we can do something for each other?” That's what it is. It is not institutionalized cooperation. It's a haphazardly collaboration, initiated from below.” (P1, administration)

4.4.1 Interconnecting with Common Purpose

The same picture also emerged for this subcode. The importance of both seeking mutual connection and determining the common purpose were supported by several participants, but it was repeatedly mentioned that active implementation remained difficult and requires attention. An example of this is shown in the quote below. Here, it was also indicated that trust and vulnerability towards the other party, which can be expressed through a certain commitment, can be important in this.

“Yes, connect before you start. (...) This very often does not happen in my opinion. And the risk, that's a bit with “1 x raken”, that's where the tension lies, I think, because you don't want all kinds of old-fashioned discussion groups with all kinds of people who may have something to do with it at some point, and so on. You don't want that either.” (P6, administration)

Besides this example, there were two other participants who connected this subcode to the implementation of “1 x raken”. Examples of accountability and responsibility challenges were given, whereby a stronger focus on a common purpose from the ministry could partly solve this, provided that trust and respect are then also offered. See also the quotation below for an elaboration on this.

“But that also means that the people responsible for this purpose must also be given the space to advise on the basis of their own expertise and responsibility. Because when there is only one line [purpose] and you are pushed away as a legal expert or as a communications advisor and overruled, it is of no use. But as soon as there is that respect for each other's expertise and quality, then you actually have to say, you know, we're not going to put a whole lot of governance on top of it. Because then we won't get very far.” (P15, policy)

4.4.2 Integral Approach

Five different participants paid attention to this, agreeing that integral working is already going well and that they are consciously working on it. At the same time, participants also indicated that there is still room for improvement, as is shown in the example below.

"Purely from my own work: I work at the Ministry of the Interior, but I actually work government-wide. (...) So that makes it quite complex, that you have to deal with many different interests. To give an example: the labor market. (...) So each department puts out its own vacancies, often trying to fish in the same pond. (...) While we also feel like: also look at your colleagues, (...) perhaps you can work together. If you are all looking for the same people, see if you can achieve a bit of mobility amongst yourselves." (P11, policy)

Besides this example, it was indicated that it could be valuable if there was a more holistic understanding, so that employees have more of an idea of what their work now means in the aggregate of the ministry's work, which explicitly seems to refer to the organization’s identity. It was also indicated that although integral working is being implemented, this is not yet sufficiently conveyed by the parties working together. This is also illustrated in the quote below.

“So, you work in an integral way, but everyone still does their own thing within it. And that could actually be better in terms of communicating to the outside world. So, we do work integrally because we all need each other, but really promoting the common goal and really showing it to the outside world, I think that could be better." (P17, administration)

4.4.3 Across Borders

For this subcode, it is important to indicate that a number of departments within the Ministry of the Interior work purely for the Ministry of the Interior, while a number also have a government-wide function and therefore look more at the government as a whole. The latter group therefore already works "across borders" on a daily basis. The quote below indicates the tension that can arise in this context.

"(…) So very often the question is... what they call the Ministry of the Interior's "small hat", so really pure Ministry of the Interior or the "big hat" [government-wide role], that's quite... I notice that there is sometimes some friction between them. Do you have to preach to your own choir or do you just look at the perspectives of the entire government? I'm always in favor of the latter, but I also notice that not everyone is." (P11, policy)

Several participants recognized this subcode and mentioned different examples of interdepartmental or government-wide collaborations. Its importance also became clear from the document analysis, given the large number of references to such collaborations. However, it was indicated that it can sometimes be very difficult to set up something for the entire government, e.g., because interests can conflict each other. In addition, it was mentioned that this way of working does not seem to be encouraged everywhere within the ministry, as becomes clear from the quote below.

"Yes, organizational challenges, because that's not how our process necessarily works. (...) I therefore very much agree with this picture. I think that you have to do it together, that you have to seek each other out, in every layer of the organization, when necessary for your work. But that's really not encouraged internally. It depends on the person, but there are certainly managers who do not encourage it (…)." (P13, administration)

4.5 Kracht van heel BZK Benutten

This organizational guideline contained by far the most quotations, which can be mainly attributed to the overlap and relation with findings on the organizational identity of the ministry. For this organizational guideline, a difference was visible between policy and administration. A number of policy staff members gave mainly positive reflections and mentioned examples that they recognized and implemented it. On the other hand, people from administration indicated that they find it very difficult in practice and do not see it being implemented sufficiently. It was noted that they need to take initiative, as usually they don't get any further contact within the organization than who they are working with directly. Some participants therefore argued for more guidance and involvement from the ministry towards its suborganizations, so that the subunits are more involved in the tasks that the ministry is working on. The quote below also shows this, as well as a relation to an organizational/collective identity.

"And I expect a bit more guidance, also from the ministry. And I think that this will also ensure that we are much better funneled into the project and that everyone, from the various departments and subunits from the ministry, will ultimately be on the same page. I don't really have the "we" feeling at the moment. A lot of initiative comes from the workplace and sometimes that makes you feel quite alone, (…) sometimes it's difficult to get things done." (P10, administration)

In addition, several participants mentioned a lack of overview of what others (e.g., colleagues, departments, sub-organizations) are working on, as is also explained in the quote below. This also emerged from the document analysis, that it is difficult to maintain a complete overview and thus make optimal use of internal knowledge. Several participants indicated that much more is possible than is currently being done, if this overview and the internal connections were improved. In addition, a number of participants also indicated that they are interested in setting up a "community" within which various parts of the ministry can be connected.

“The organization is so big that people often don't know about each other's work. So, I feel like sometimes people work past each other or really work on (…) the same kind of project, but separate from each other, so they don't know about each other and can't learn from each other. (…) I don't know what's a solution to that, but that does happen, quite a lot.” (P13, administration)

Even though several participants from administration indicated that they would like to see rapprochement and sometimes also more control, some participants elaborated on a dilemma that arises more often in this context. They explained that this may be difficult to achieve in practice, without taking away too much freedom from the subdepartments. The quote below also elaborates on this.

And the dilemma of: are you going to do things centrally for all parts or leave it more with the subunits? Yes, that comes back in a lot of things. (...) I mean you either have to make something that really helps the units, or else they'll say in no time “yeah, sorry, can't do anything with it, we'll do it ourselves”. (...) And the question is, are you going to give that customization? Or do you say no, this is what we agreed, it has to be in that mold? (P14, policy)

4.5.1 Sharing Knowledge

In general, participants mentioned that knowledge sharing is going quite well, especially within teams and departments. Several participants acknowledged that this is consciously practiced and mentioned examples such as good onboarding processes and a “knowledge hour” (in Dutch: *kennisuurtje*). The quotation below also gives an example of active implementation.

“And anyway, I am also aware that there are people working at the Ministry of the Interior who have previously been involved with [my field]. So, I also sometimes approach them to ask them, "Oh, what choices were made at the time?" and sometimes to ask them, "What do you think about this?” (P8, policy)

At the same time, participants mentioned that improvements were possible here as well. For one, it is not always clear where to go for certain information, which is indicated in the quote: *“And in that [alphabet] conversation, it also became very evident that sometimes, specifically from my portfolio (...), I am often still searching for the expertise within the Ministry of the Interior, and am not logically able to find it.” (P7, policy).* In addition, another participant argued for a knowledge base in which certain knowledge is rendered accessible to everyone. Besides this, a number of participants also indicated that knowledge sharing often works well, especially within one’s own discipline or department, but that there is sometimes a need to obtain and share knowledge outside one's own discipline, as the quote below shows. It was noted, however, that this is also difficult to achieve in practice, e.g., in combination with an already high work load.

"Knowledge sharing is often limited to the field. (...) What I do miss a bit is the feeling of the different disciplines about the knowledge of the others. So, we must, as a group, as an organization, we must achieve the goals with these different disciplines. And within the fields there is enough knowledge being shared, but cross-disciplinary knowledge (...) is not being shared yet." (P9, administration)

4.5.2 Organizational Identity

The findings above already describe aspects such as internal coherence and collective identity that refer (implicitly) to the organizational identity and its importance. Even more, the findings seem to indicate that participants' perceptions of the organizational identity influence the implementation of the guideline "kracht van heel BZK benutten" in practice. Therefore, the main findings regarding identity are explained in this section. In the quote below, a participant explains why a strong brand and identity can be beneficial.

"And the moment you mention the Ministry of the Interior (...) as a brand name, you see that people want to join very quickly, because the Ministry of the Interior is a powerful name (..). And that makes the work incredibly easy, because you (…) get a lot done and the doors open quickly. (…)" (P8, policy)

Uncertainty Identity Features. However, the findings revealed that there was no obvious answer to "who the ministry is" or "what it stands for". Ten out of eighteen participants made remarks that expressed a certain level of uncertainty or difficulty regarding the identity of the ministry and its central or distinctive features. Mainly two reasons were mentioned for this difficulty: the size of the organization and the diversity of topics the ministry is concerned with, an example is shown below.

"Wow, I don't know actually. I find that hard to say, because I think the topics that belong to the ministry are quite diverse. I mean Kingdom Relations is very administrative, business management is very managerial so to speak and internally focused. Kingdom Relations is much more in relation to the outside world. The strength of the ministry…" (P5, administration).

In the same vein, it was mentioned that it is at times difficult to talk about identity, because the existence of the ministry is never truly questioned. There has to be a Ministry of Interior, as every country has one. The following quote elaborates on this argument.

"So, when you talk about identity, I notice very much an identity of "we're just here". And deal with it. (...) It is often taken for granted by the Ministry of the Interior that they have the formal power (...). The ministry should become better at this, so that you have a basis of support at the front end, that you have established a solid foundation, and that you don't rely on the formal power, because I don't think that will do in the future. (…)" (P6, administration)

Another participant referred to the current vision of the ministry and indicated that it does not give a clear indication of how the ministry presents itself. This was also confirmed by other participants, who indicated that it is necessary for the ministry to start talking about its identity and who they want to be, also because of the great diversity of topics. This also emerged from the document analysis, that there is a need for a (common) point on the horizon. This uncertainty was especially expressed by the administration participants, which seems to correspond to the finding that administration had more difficulty implementing this guideline.

Central Features. Many different answers were given, from generic, abstract topics to more substantive ones. Several participants referred to the policy topics for which the ministry is specifically responsible, e.g., strategic personnel policy, legitimacy of democracy and sustainability. These associations often seemed to be related to what a participant personally valued, i.e., their personal identification. For example, some participants indicated collaboration or commitment to sustainability as a strength for the ministry, with the motivation for this often arising from their own identification with these topics. An example of this is given below.

"(…) Yes, that it is an organization that is ambitious and wants to join in and make a difference. I think sustainability is an important issue. (..) Yes, what I'm also proud of in the sense that we do try to put down a really ambitious program as [suborganization]. (…) Because you are, I think, pioneering for other organizations. (…)" (P16, administration)

Other characteristics that were mentioned as central to the ministry were: innovative, transparent, approachable, involved and results-oriented. In addition, "connecting" was also seen as a strength by several participants. Both within the Dutch government, but especially outside with lower authorities, seeking the connection between these parties was reported as a strength of the ministry. This is also expressed in the quote below.

"Only when you really want to get a complete picture, do you really need to look at it with different municipalities, different angles, because one looks at the problem this way and the other again has that angle. The problem of one municipality has already been solved by the other municipality last year and vice versa. And this overarching overview is something that you have at the Ministry of the Interior. (...) That makes it nice, in order to gain insight into the problem. (...)" (P8, policy)

In addition, the executive power of the Ministry of the Interior was also mentioned multiple times, particularly because in the last ten years many executive agencies have been placed under the umbrella of the Ministry of the Interior. However, the remark was repeatedly made that this executive power is still not widely communicated and that this could be strengthened.

Distinctive Features. Whilst identifying the strengths of the ministry was already experienced as difficult, identifying distinctive features was even more difficult for participants. Particularly, as this depended on their work experience at the ministry and possible other Dutch ministries. In this context, participants referred to the ministry as more dynamic, informal, and having less visible impact compared to other ministries. In addition, several participants mentioned the coordinating role of the ministry as typical compared to other ministries. The quote below also describes this. At the same time, this coordinating role was sometimes reported as a reason why the identity may be difficult to determine, because the ministry has no concrete authority over many things, but merely coordinates.

“And in addition, (…) that it’s a coordinating department for a great number of themes. A good example of this is Kingdom Relations, where there are many departments that do things in the Caribbean, but the Ministry of the Interior is the coordinating department. It ensures that everything is coordinated, that nothing falls through the cracks, and that things are not done in parallel. And that applies to several themes. (...) I think that's more than in other departments.” (P14, policy)

4.5.3 Multiple (Local) Identities

While multiple participants indicated uncertainty regarding the identity of the ministry or not knowing what it stands for, they did know what their subunit or department stood for. Extending this, more than half of the participants indicated perceiving a distance between their subunit or team and the ministry as a whole. Participants gave several indications for this perceived distance, which can mostly be related to their organizational identification. Besides the size of the ministry, several participants mentioned that it was unclear to them why their suborganization belonged under the ministry. Also, multiple participants referred to an “island culture”, meaning that the suborganizations often functioned as separate islands underneath the umbrella of the ministry. In addition, several participants mentioned that if they had to choose, they identified more with their subunit, as that concerned their daily work and interactions. The quotations below show examples of this.

“I don't know BZK at all. I know my unit and for the rest, it's so big. I haven't got a clue. Yes, I do have a faint idea of course, but that's something that happens at a great distance from here.” (P1, administration)

“Yes, and it is also striking that the [suborganization] is quite an "island" within the Ministry of the Interior. And we do very different things than the other departments of the ministry.” (P9, administration)

“I feel more [suborganization] than Ministry of the Interior. And that's just because you're working day to day, with your own colleagues, so you're actually... just an organization in a big organization.” (P17, administration)

This perceived distance is also evident in the way most participants discussed the ministry during the interviews. In particular, participants often referred to the ministry as “they” and their own team or department as “we”, which seems to refer to a stronger identification with their team than the ministry. Various participants also referred to the ministry as a distinct organization from the one they work at. The quote below also demonstrates this, which explains that a suborganization profiles itself externally as such, and thereby potentially increases this perceived distance.

(...) and that one is interesting in relation to the ministry, because we as [suborganization] have actually been our own brand on the labor market since that time. Because we notice that the Ministry of the Interior is for our target group, for example technicians, not so relevant, that's what I notice on the labor market. (…) (P6, administration)

Relatedly, participants also mentioned that the different suborganizations often have different cultures, making it difficult to ascertain a collective identity of the ministry. One participant commented on this by saying "*Because if you say "is there 1 BZK?", I think the answer to that is "no"." (P12, policy).*

Policy and Administration. Besides the fact that there are multiple local identities present at the ministry, this can be explored more in-dept by looking at the relationship between policy and administration. This relationship was perceived as important by several participants, which was also supported by the amount of quotes in the document analysis that can be related to it.

In particular, mostly participants from administration indicated perceiving a distance, which often resulted in them not feeling part of the ministry. It was recognized that improvements have been made, but at the same time mostly participants from administration indicated that the interrelations could be even better. Closer collaboration was mentioned to this purpose, but it was also pointed out that administration should be given a more central place and could be appreciated more. Thus, there was still the perception among various administration participants that there is a clear difference between policy and administration, which hampers the implementation of this guideline. The quote below reflects this.

"Yes, the question is also what you want to be. Because if you establish that three-quarters of your work is administration... Yes, then express that powerfully (...). But I have the impression that a large part of the Ministry of the Interior actually thinks that the policy core is more important or more interesting, you know. And I don't think that's the reality, but that's the brand you want to convey apparently (…)." (P6, administration).

As previously discussed, the day-to-day implementation of the organizational guidelines can differ between these two groups. The hierarchical relationship (part of a dependent culture) is at the root of this according to several participants from administration. The quote below shows an example of this perception. This feeling was not or hardly expressed by the participants from policy. In contrast, some participants from policy indicated perceiving short lines of communication towards management.

"In some ways we're just heartily hierarchical all together. And if there are people in high positions who are not in favor of it, then it doesn't happen. Or you have to sort of... unobtrusively try to do it yourself anyway, with all the risks involved." (P13, administration)

4.5.4 Organizational Commitment

Half of the participants made remarks that can be related to organizational commitment. The underlying quotes were predominantly positive and included examples and reasons why participants positively valued working at the ministry and felt committed. These included working with a variety of people, an accessible way of communication and being able to contribute to the organization's goals. Also, some quotations showed elements of affective commitment, e.g., by participants indicating that they are proud of working for the ministry or the work that they do. An example is shown below.

"Yes, in my view, it's the people. (...) And yes, I like it as an employee that I have freedom, that I can act independently, that I am valued so to speak. And that I can develop myself, that I get nice assignments, that I get opportunities. And well, I have actually experienced that all these years. And that's why I really enjoy working here." (P12, policy)

Besides this, two participants indicated that they were not concerned with whether they felt involved with the ministry. In this context, several participants also mentioned that they felt "triggered" when the ministry was mentioned in the news, but this was often not related to the content. In addition, three participants expressed that they were considering leaving the organization, but all indicated simultaneously that this was not because of the ministry as an employer.

Civic Virtue. This code can be seen as a further elaboration on organizational commitment. Some participants who indicated perceiving a distance also mentioned that they do actively try to participate in the organization, e.g., by staying informed, to increase their commitment with the organization. Initiatives on behalf of the ministry, such as the "alphabet conversations" and newsletters from the Secretary General[2], were mentioned in this regard. Participants positively referred to these initiatives and mentioned that such initiatives helped to decrease the perceived distance. The quotation below is an example of this.

"Yes, I do try... I'm actually very much a community person so I actually think it's all too big. Just give me a clear overview. But I did try to integrate with the ministry, for example by taking part in this interview and then (…) I also (...) sometimes read messages from the ministry, like what are the colleagues at the Turfmarkt[3] doing?" (P16, administration)

4.6 Personal Identification

This category includes quotations that mention an identification with the ministry on a personal level, e.g., a personal drive or motivation.

4.6.1 Reasons Working at the Ministry

Almost half of the participants mentioned content of work or a specific position as reasons for applying or being at their current job. Additionally, other reasons mentioned were career and development opportunities and personal reasons. Only two participants had a clear identification with the ministry as an organization, as can be seen in the quotations below.

"Yes, it may sound very crazy, but when I'm working for the ministry, it's like I'm working for leisure. It's something that drives me, it's in my personal motivation, so it's like just doing ... yeah, what you would like to do in life." (P8, policy)

"So let's say the whole themes that lie with the Ministry of the Interior, they really have my interest and my heart, so to speak. So that's... the whole democracy side, the whole constitutional side, that's where I feel most

[2] The highest-ranking civil servant within the ministry
[3] Address where the Ministry of the Interior is located

at home. Just in terms of affinity and background. So the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is a logical place for me to work." (P15, policy)

These participants, both working at policy departments, indicated a strong sense of belonging and clearly felt part of the ministry. Interestingly, both participants also indicated an identification at the level of the Dutch government (in Dutch: *Rijksoverheid*). This is in line with statements made by several other respondents, whom mentioned personal motivation to work for the Dutch government and/or to make a (social) contribution to the Dutch society. Other participants often indicated that they did not choose for the ministry on purpose and stated that they could have been working at another ministry or suborganization as well, indicating a limited degree of identification.

4.7 Organizational Change Trajectory

This code included more general references to the organizational change trajectory and its implementation. When prompted, half of the participants did not know about the content of the change trajectory and its guidelines. Also, three participants indicated that their own department or suborganization had formulated different guidelines or core values.

4.7.1 Opgave-gericht Werken/ Werken vanuit de Bedoeling

Quotations included in this context revealed that participants gave various interpretations and meanings to the terms associated with the organizational change trajectory. Participants gave other (related) terms or the two terms were elaborated upon as two different things, whereas the ministry communicates them as being synonyms. In addition, three participants from policy indicated that they had heard of the terms, but did not know or could not elaborate on what it meant. Some participants also indicated that they had learnt about this way of working through other sources than the ministry, such as personal experience or prior work experience. A number of participants also mentioned that they need this way of working and thinking, and find it important from a personal standpoint or motivation. In addition, some participants also indicated not fully understanding the importance of these terms or implying it was obvious that one should work this way. This is also reflected in the quote below.

"I heard something about it. I thought in terms of the title it was a bit... "werken vanuit de bedoeling", I thought, yes, how else are you going to work? (...) No, we're going to work from what's <u>not</u> the intention. I thought it was such a strange title. And in terms of content, I don't know anything about it either." (P11, policy)

While several participants indicated that on a personal level, they were familiar (to a certain extent) with this way of working, at the same time they often indicated not recognizing it at the organizational level. This was especially true for participants from administration, see also the quote below.

"But what I often see is that the work is not at all task-oriented and based on the intention, but that we work on the basis of what has the most political pressure or what is desirable in terms of policy or what is the easiest to do or the fastest, and not at all what is most necessary for society. So that's why I'm very happy that those

programs are there, (…) maybe it helps. But let's not fool ourselves that that's already how we work, because that's not at all the case." (P13, administration)

It was also mentioned that it can be more difficult to enact this way of working in daily practice, because it is more suited to strategic, larger issues or due to technical complexities. In addition, it was mentioned that these terms may require a more abstract and different way of thinking, which is not yet adopted everywhere.

4.7.2 Organizational Guidelines

Half of the participants had no prior knowledge of the organizational guidelines. The majority of the participants did have a positive view of the organizational guidelines and recognized them as important topics for the ministry. At the same time, the general consensus seemed to be that improvements are possible and that the guidelines are not actively enacted throughout the organization, which is also mentioned in the following quote.

"(…) It's the first time that I've seen this.(...) I think it's actually very good. Because I do see the things that I think "oh yes, I would really like that". Or that is what we all want very much, but it is not quite... there yet so to say." (P17, administration)

Also, in some cases implementing the organizational guidelines is still clearly obstructed by processes within the ministry. For the organizational guidelines "buiten=binnen", "lef", and "samenwerken> afstemmen", budgets or finances were mentioned as a barrier to translating the organizational guidelines into daily practice. This also becomes clear from the quotation below.

"No, you know, there's always a fuss about money. That's really the only challenge. The time you spend on those activities outside the central government, they have to be accounted for. And those hours are hard to allocate, that's still a challenge sometimes. So that tension always remains in it." (P1, administration)

Besides this, there were also some participants that expressed doubts whether the organizational guidelines really helps them in their daily work. They were more hesitant and sometimes even cynical towards these kind of. These participants referred to the guidelines as laughable, management terms or utopian. This was also shared by the participants from coordinating positions, who confirmed that such attitudes are more common among employees. At the same time, these participants confirmed that they themselves do try to actively translate the guidelines into their work, and that the guidelines also help them to steer their employees in the right direction. The following quotes demonstrate such perceptions.

"(…) Those guidelines are always a bit of... the laughing stock of the ministry. In the sense that people think "what am I going to do with it?" That's always the case with things like that. That they think… well, nice effort, but let me just do my job. Well, I notice that... for me, I value it. I can work with it." (P15, policy)

"(…) So the smartest tactic is just (...) to proclaim "yes, we think it's very important" (…) and then we go back to our workplaces and we go about our business and nothing changes." (P14, policy)

5. Discussion

This research explored employees' perceptions of how an organizational change was implemented in practice. The aim of this research was to answer the question "To what extent are the organizational guidelines ("organisatorische richtingwijzers") supported and implemented by the organization's members and how do those guidelines relate to the organizational identity of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations?".

5.1 Main Findings

5.1.1 Support and Implementation

The findings of this study indicate that participants generally perceived the organizational guidelines as important and relevant concepts for their day-to-day work. Across the five guidelines, participants mentioned various examples of implementation of the guidelines, as well as reasons why certain behaviors were important in their opinion, thus indicating participants' support of the organizational guidelines.

One of the organizational guidelines that was mentioned relatively frequently was "lef". In terms of content, this guideline was supported as it generally resonated the most with participants. The findings showed that the definition of "lef" as formulated by the ministry and the interpretations given by participants corresponded with the definition of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in literature. This is an interesting fact, because thereby the application of OCB becomes less discretionary than in its original conceptualization, as it seems the ministry wants to label this behavior as "normal", rather than going beyond expectations. By incorporating the concept in this way, this study provided insight into what may be preventing employees from applying OCB in their work. One particular finding in this regard is the influence of leadership on demonstrating OCB. Participants mentioned that their direct leader and leadership style influenced whether they were able to demonstrate "lef" in their work, which is supported by other research into OCB (e.g., P. Podsakoff et al., 2000). Moreover, in this study, civic virtue was included as a subcode of organizational commitment (OC). Participants explained demonstrating interest in the organization as a whole (i.e., civic virtue) and mentioned that this decreased the distance they perceived and at the same time increased the extent to which they felt part of the organization. While research has mainly focused on OC as a positive predictor of OCB (Ocampo et al., 2018), this research suggests that OC may also be an outcome of OCB.

In general, this study's findings demonstrate that participants supported the content of the organizational guidelines. However, two exceptions were found in this regard: both the interpretation of "werken vanuit de bedoeling" and "1 x raken" were experienced as difficult and/or ambiguous. Here, participants were not entirely sure what was meant, had different interpretations or it was unclear why it should be important, which can all impede active implementation of these principles. At the same time, the findings showed that despite general support, the organizational guidelines are currently implemented only to a limited extent. Participants were generally critical and the findings thereby indicated several improvements that could be made per guideline.

For several of the organizational guidelines, it was indicated that this limited implementation was due to the current organizational structure, the design of processes, and the practices in place that do not necessarily promote and support the implementation of the organizational guidelines. Here, participants stressed that outcomes of processes must be assessed in a different way, so that they correspond to the principles of the organizational guidelines. For example, for the guideline “samenwerken > afstemmen”, it was mentioned that certain collaborations are not yet institutionalized and thus common practice, or are impeded by current processes. In addition, organizational culture elements seem to play a role, as participants reported (high) levels of bureaucracy and hierarchy still present within the ministry, which for example impedes the implementation of “lef” and “1 x raken”. Specifically, the discussion of “1 x raken” showed that elements of a conventional culture are still present within the ministry and that this should be improved in order to increase the efficiency of the ministry. Thereby, the findings indicate that the organizational guidelines, in terms of behavior, are not yet part of the organizational culture.

Moreover, given that this study focuses on a public organization, certain implementation difficulties found may be typical of the public sector. For one, this study’s findings seem to support the significant influence of “environmental complexity” on the implementation of top-down changes. This concept refers to the degree to which members find their work environment difficult and complex, particularly prominent in public organizations (van der Voet et al., 2015). This complexity may vary dependent on members’ perceptions. The guidelines in itself cover this complexity, as they incorporate exterior influences, internal collaboration as well as government-wide collaborations. This complexity is also present in this study’s findings as they reveal participants’ perspectives and reflections on implementing a change in a complex environment such as the ministry. For example, in discussing “buiten = binnen”, participants mentioned legal frameworks to influence implementation. In addition, the findings addressed factors, such as conflicting interests and complexities due to the coordinating role and the independence of executive organizations, which all complicated active implementation of the organizational guidelines. This study thus reveals interesting insights into how this environmental complexity may be experienced by participants and its effect on implementation.

In addition, the distinction between policy and administration (in Dutch: *beleid en uitvoering)* is also typical of the public sector. This study’s findings pointed towards implementation differences between participants from policy and administration, e.g., in the implementation of “buiten = binnen” and “1 x raken”. Even though no firm conclusions can be drawn, the findings indicated nuances and limitations that administration experiences but policy does not (or to a lesser extent). For example, the hierarchical relationship between policy and administration was indicated as a reason why the implementation of the guidelines can be more difficult. This hierarchical relationship seems both embedded in the organizational structure and the organizational culture. As a result of this hierarchy, administration participants reportedly had a limited sense of being allowed to make mistakes and go against management, i.e., demonstrating “lef”.

5.1.2 Communication of Organizational Guidelines

Another reason for the limited implementation of the organizational guidelines had to do with the introduction and communication throughout the organization. The organizational change trajectory and organizational guidelines were introduced several years ago as a top-down initiative. This research focused on lower-level employees and thereby found that a large part of the employees was not or hardly familiar with the content of the trajectory and the organizational guidelines. This finding suggests that the cascading of the change trajectory and guidelines through all organizational layers was not (sufficiently) accomplished. Even if a majority of participants appeared to support the organizational guidelines, if it is not known to all employees that these guidelines represent the desired behavior, it is also difficult to demonstrate this behavior.

This may also explain why participants recognized implementation on a personal level, but often not on the organizational level. In the interviews, it emerged that a number of participants found elements of the organizational guidelines important and took the initiative themselves to further this in the organization, but often felt alone in this, had limited support or reported that this effort was not shared by colleagues. In addition, some participants expressed limited support and leaned towards cynicism regarding the change trajectory and guidelines. A possible explanation for this is that the urgency and importance of the organizational guidelines was not adequately communicated to employees. Thus, it seems not all employees within the ministry have internalized a mindset consistent with the organizational guidelines, which may be caused by the insufficient communication throughout the organization.

5.1.3 Limited Collective Identity

Besides the support and implementation of the change, this study also explored the organizational identity of the ministry and related concepts such as identification and commitment. The findings of this study indicated that participants were mostly unsure of what the identity of the ministry is and what it stands for. The answers given varied to a large degree, which point to the conclusion that there is not one, unambiguous organizational identity for the ministry. These findings can be explained by the existence of multiple identities within the ministry. This has been found more often, particularly for large and complex organizations, which characterizes the ministry as well (Gioia et al., 2013; Humphreys & Brown, 2002). More specifically, the findings indicate the existence of multiple *ideographic* identities (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Even though not explicitly, the findings pointed towards differences in perceptions, e.g., between policy and administration, but it is also likely that within administration multiple identities exist.

As established, a strong identity can influence participants' ability to identify with the organization (Ashforth et al., 2008). As identification occurs when members "define themselves at least partly in terms of what the organization is thought to represent", it is not surprising that the findings showed a very limited degree of identification on an organizational level (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004, p. 2). Thereby, the findings confirmed that difficulties may arise in terms of identification for multiple identities (Foreman & Whetten, 2002).

Simply put, the inability to answer questions pertaining to the identity of the ministry could imply that those participants are poorly motivated and/or feel a limited commitment to the ministry. However, based on this research, this conclusion cannot be drawn. In contrast, the interviews revealed a high level of drive, commitment and in many cases willingness to do more than is asked of them, only this can be related in a limited extent to the ministry as a collective. Instead, in this research context, it seems that most employees identify more with their suborganization, department or team than with the ministry as a collective. Thereby, the findings support other research on different foci of organizational identification, whereby workgroup identification was found to be stronger than organizational identification (D. van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000).

Although it is not possible, on the basis of this research, to make any causal explanations, it does seem that the implementation of the organizational guidelines and the previously described findings may be related. Overall, research into organizational change has reported the beneficial effects of strong identification, commitment and identity on employees' change reactions and how this may ultimately predict their willingness to implement a change (Oreg et al., 2011). Thus, the reported limited identification, lack of collective identity and existence of multiple identities may complicate the implementation of the organizational guidelines.

In addition, these findings may have a particular impact on the implementation of "samenwerken > afstemmen" and "kracht van heel BZK benutten". This study's findings indicated that participants often perceived a lack of a common purpose towards which the ministry's employees may work together, which may be explained by the lack of a collective organizational identity. Besides this, participants from administration often perceived a great distance from the ministry as an organization. Combining this with the limited identification, it can become difficult to make use of the strengths of an organization (i.e., implementing "kracht van heel BZK benutten"), if it is unclear who the organization is and what it stands for, or if one does not or to a limited extent feel part of that organization.

5.2 Research Limitations

As this research concerns a case study, which focused on one organization and used the ministry's organizational guidelines as a starting point, the generalization of this research is limited. Nevertheless, the results may at least be of interest to other public organizations that want to implement or have implemented similar organizational changes, because it provides detailed insight into possible factors that may influence implementation. In addition, it also shows how important it is, regardless of the content of the change, to communicate well, across levels, for successful implementation.

Besides this, the unusual circumstances under which this study was conducted may have affected the findings in some way. Due to the corona crisis, the ministry's employees had been working (almost) entirely at home for over a year. Some participants mentioned during the interviews that they felt more distance towards the ministry than before the corona crisis. Therefore, working from home could also be a possible explanation for the limited collective identity as well as the limited implementation of the organizational guidelines, as this may have been less prioritized. Nevertheless, the findings provide good insight into employees' interpretations and considerations related to the guidelines, that the ministry could take to advance implementation.

In addition, because all interviews had to be conducted online, this also created a practical limitation. In a large part of the interviews, problems with the internet connection were experienced, which was disruptive and caused time to be lost. In addition, it may be more difficult to interact organically with the participant in an online interview, because it is not possible to speak at the same time and it is more difficult to interrupt a participant if something is not relevant to the study.

Finally, in the research instrument, a limited distinction was made between organizational commitment and identification. As frequently discussed in literature, these constructs are conceptually very similar and thus often mixed up (Ashforth et al., 2008). Since this study focused primarily on the organizational guidelines and its relationship to organizational identity, only one question was asked to cover the extent to which participants felt they were part of the ministry. By adding more questions around these constructs, this study might have yielded more significant results in terms of differences in identification and commitment. However, this was not explicitly part of the purpose of this study.

5.3 Theoretical Implications and Future Research Directions

This discussion started with demonstrating how this study's findings fit in with existing research into organizational change implementation and organizational identity. However, the findings of this study may also be relevant in a different light, by building on previous work by Nag et al. (2007) and Kump (2019). Although the former focused on strategic transformation and the latter on radical change, it is argued that the findings of this study can be related to these studies and possibly extend them in future research. Therefore, these two studies will be briefly discussed, to explain why they are relevant and to connect them to the findings of this study.

First, in their case study, Nag et al. (2007) focused on how an attempt at strategic transformation failed because of the interplay between "identity ("who we are"), knowledge ("what we know"), and practice ("what we do")" (p. 842). Here, the studied organization tried to change its identity, which also required a change pertaining to knowledge that employees needed to accommodate this change. This proved problematic, however, because this knowledge was embedded in the way the organization operated and in the perceptions held by employees regarding the essence of their organization. In addition, the researchers argued that a change in one of these three elements could also cause a change in another element, and this in turn could affect the power relations within an organization. Consequently, the change may be resisted because people want to maintain these power dynamics.

Second, Kump (2019) extended Nag et al.'s findings to the context of radical change. In this conceptual paper, it is argued that in addition to these power conflicts, other negative outcomes can arise at the intersection of identity, knowledge and practice. Here, she proposes a model that connects the individual levels with the organizational levels of these three components. For example, it is argued that the individual routines of an employee may influence the aggregate way of working (i.e., practices) of an organization. Consequently, if a change in an organization's practices is required, an individual employee may therefore need to change his or her habits. Thereby, this model can explain both individual employee reactions to radical change, as well as the problems occurring at an organizational level.

Even though the current study focuses on an organizational change *trajectory*, and not a radical change, the content of the organizational guidelines is focused on changing the way the ministry works, which corresponds to a change in the organizational practice of the ministry. In addition, the three components discussed seem to be related to the content of the organizational guidelines, e.g., "kracht van heel BZK benutten" also includes knowledge sharing, and "1 x raken" includes abandoning routines that are no longer necessary. This study's findings showed that the implementation of the organizational guidelines is not yet institutionalized. In addition, not all employees seem to have a mindset consistent with the organizational guidelines and the culture contains elements that are opposite to the direction of the organizational guidelines.

In addition to the explanations previously given, these findings may potentially be explained by exploring the interplay of the three components and relatedly, the influence on power dynamics. In the implementation of the organizational guidelines, the findings of this study also refer to certain power relations as a reason why implementation is not yet a reality. Both within the sub-organizations and between policy and administration, certain (hierarchical) power relations are present that influenced the implementation of the organizational guidelines. In addition, the multilevel perspective provided by Kump (2019) may also provide an explanation of why implementation of the organizational guidelines has not yet succeeded on an organizational level, e.g., because there has been insufficient (or no) change in routines at the individual level.

Thus, for future research, it may be interesting to more closely examine the relationships between current practices, identity and knowledge, and in particular the influence of- and relation to power relations on the implementation of the organizational guidelines. More generally, it is recommended for future research to empirically examine the interplay of these three components, potentially in other change contexts than radical change. Thereby, new and enlightening connections could be found to explain their interactions, advancing organizational change research and providing further insight into factors influencing change implementation as well as employees' reactions to change.

Additionally, this study focused solely on internal perceptions towards change implementation and organizational identity. However, literature has established that organizational identity is influenced by and strongly related to external perceptions (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gioia et al., 2000). Even more, it has been highlighted that research into the interrelations between organizational identity, image and reputation in the public sector is limited, while their importance for this sector has been acknowledged (Bankins & Waterhouse, 2018; Doering et al., 2019). It is therefore recommended that future research incorporates the relationship with organizational image in the context of the ministry, as more insight into external perceptions towards the ministry could further explain the findings of this study. Also, these insights could potentially contribute to a reformulation of the ministry's organizational identity and result in a better positioning for the outside world.

5.4 Practical Implications

Finally, this study and its findings underline several practical implications that may arise with the implementation of an organizational change.

This research indicated that the organizational guidelines can be partially embedded in communication literature and important concepts such as organizational identity, organizational identification and organizational commitment can be related to it. This strengthens the rationale for top management to continue using these organizational guidelines. However, the findings highlighted a variety of challenges pertaining to the actual implementation in daily practice. The suggested improvements for the different guidelines may thus be adopted by top management to advance the implementation within the organization. At the same time, it is recognized that it is not realistic that all challenges can be solved by top management. Therefore, to support the organizations' members with implementation in daily practice, it is advised to give sufficient room and opportunities for sensemaking with regard to the guidelines. Research has indicated the importance of sensemaking in the context of change and implementation (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Stensaker et al., 2008). In this context, it is recommended to engage members in sensemaking, by exploring questions such as "what do the organizational guidelines mean in the context of your work?" and "how do you deal with certain challenges or obstacles?". In this regard, the organizational guidelines can be used especially as a tool to facilitate such conversations. Additionally, this may help reduce the ambiguity surrounding some (aspects of) the organizational guidelines and the essence of the trajectory.

In addition, the findings showed that the change initiative and guidelines have not been communicated throughout the organization to all employees. Therefore, if top management still prioritizes active implementation of the guidelines, it is recommended to more explicitly demonstrate and communicate the guidelines throughout the organization. Here, consistent, authentic communication expressing the urgency and importance of the organizational guidelines is key (Heyden et al., 2017; Salem, 2008). Additionally, this may also reduce the found organizational cynicism towards the guidelines. Given the distance perceived between some subunits and the ministry, it would be advised to focus on middle managers' role in this regard. Research has established the importance of middle managers in change communication (Heyden et al., 2017; van Vuuren & Elving, 2008). The findings of this study seem to give reason for this as well, because the participants in coordinating positions indicated that they recognized cynicism towards the guidelines and that they used the organizational guidelines as a tool to have a clear view of what the organization considers important.

Finally, the findings indicated that there is a limited collective identity present at the ministry. This is mostly due to a lack of clarity regarding the essence of the ministry, because "it is difficult to conceive of a reasonably strong identity (that is, an entity that appears to have a clear sense of who/what it is) that does not have a more or less clear mission or role, along with certain values, goals, beliefs, and so on" (Ashforth et al., 2011, p. 1145). Literature has shown that a strong identity can influence identification and commitment, and ultimately impact organizational members' behavior in a positive way. It is therefore recommended to define, through interaction with the organization's members, a clearer purpose and delineation of what the ministry does and does not stand for. Ultimately, this may also help members with active implementation of the organizational guidelines.

6. Conclusion

This study focused on employees' perceptions and interpretations of elements of an organizational change, and thereby explored the support and experiences of members that did not initiate a change. It contributes to research on change implementation and OI in the public sector. Thereby, it provides insight into the implementation of change in this sector and particularly, the difficulties that may be associated with it.

The findings of this research demonstrate that in general, there is support for the importance and relevance of most organizational guidelines ("organisatorische richtingwijzers"), however the active implementation in day-to-day practice proves difficult. Therefore, the organizational guidelines seem to be implemented only to a limited extent. In addition, it was found that the essence of the organizational change trajectory and the organizational guidelines has not been sufficiently cascaded and communicated throughout all the layers of the entire organization. Finally, the findings point towards the existence of multiple, possibly conflicting, identities within the ministry, resulting in a limited sense of collective identity which in turn may influence the implementation of the organizational guidelines.

This study provides management with recommendations on how to effectively advance change implementation throughout the organization. Specifically, by encouraging members' sensemaking of the organizational guidelines, increasing change communication and defining a stronger purpose and identity of the ministry, the implementation of the organizational guidelines could be improved.

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8. Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Procedures

To ensure that this study adheres to ethical norms and procedures relevant for social science research, the study has been ethically assessed and approved by the Ethics Committee of BMS (University of Twente). All data collected is treated confidentially and rendered anonymous.

For the interviews, all participants signed an informed consent form designed by the researcher. Here, the purpose of the research and ethical procedures undertaken, were explained. In addition, participants had the option to give consent for specific elements, such as the use of citations and audio recording. One participant did not give permission for the use of citations in the final publication. In addition, three participants verified the used citations before publication. The informed consent forms are available upon request, in consultation with the researcher and on the basis of a legitimate reason.

In addition, for the non-participant observation, participants were only informed at the beginning of the sessions. They did not sign a consent form, as only notes have been taken during these meetings. These notes were anonymized as well. Finally, all documents obtained for analysis were provided to the researcher, with consent of the original authors.

Appendix B: Document Analysis

In the early stages of the research, the researcher read a plethora of internal documents pertaining to the ministry as an organization and to the organizational change initiative. A total of 23 documents were selected as most important for this research. Table 4 gives an overview of these documents. These documents were primarily used to create the interview guideline, to conduct the interviews and to support the findings from the semi-structured interviews.

The document “Praatplaat BZK- Richtingwijzers organisatorisch” was used during the interviews. In addition, all references to the document analysis made in the findings section are based solely on the analysis of the documents “Selfies organisatieontwikkeling” and “Selfies organisatieontwikkeling (Rijksportaal versie). These documents were analyzed with the use of ATLAS.ti 9 software. They contained a total of 39 “selfies” created by each (sub)department of the ministry. These selfies were designed as a portrayal of the departments in the context of the organizational change trajectory and focused on three elements: reflection of the past year, the purpose of your organization (in line with “de bedoeling”) and potential feedback for an external review committee. Thus, these selfies provided rich texts which were used to formulate (follow-up) questions for the interviews and to support the findings of this research.

Table 4

Overview Analyzed Documents Ministry of the Interior

Title document	Year
BR update organisatieontwikkeling (several versions)	2020-2021
De Krant nummer 1	Nov-18
De Krant nummer 2	Apr-19
De Krant nummer 3	Jul-19
Infographic impuls organisatieontwikkeling BZK	2021
Informatiedocument BZK Corporate Story	n.d.
Introductiedossier BZK	2017
Kick-off Corporate Story BZK	n.d.
Medewerker onderzoek	2021
Non-paper terugkoppeling externe werkbezoeken SG	Nov-18
Nu we er toch zijn… in het kort	2018
Opbrengst alfabetgesprekken	2020
Opbrengst alfabetgesprekken	2021
Praatplaat BZK- Richtingwijzers inhoudelijk	n.d.
Praatplaat BZK- Richtingwijzers organisatorisch	n.d.
Reactie Bestuursraad op visitatierapport	2019
Selfies organisatieontwikkeling	2021
Selfies organisatieontwikkeling (Rijksportaal versie)	2021
Stakeholder onderzoek 2017	2017
Visitatierapport 'Wat bedoel je? Meer waarde in het werk'	2019

Appendix C: Interview Format

Below, the entire script used for the interviews is outlined, including the introduction by the researcher and the interview questions. The original interview format used was in Dutch and was translated to English by the researcher. The introduction is not included in the audio recording, as consent had already been gathered through the consent form.

Introduction

Greet participant. Thank for participating.
"I have already explained some things via email, but I will nevertheless give a short introduction about myself and the research, and then we will get started shortly.
My name is Manon Tolkamp and I study Communication Science at the University of Twente. In March this year, I have started graduating at the "Directie Communicatie" of the Ministry of the Interior. For my study, I conduct interviews with employees throughout the organization. Two topics are addressed here. Firstly, the identity of "BZK": Who is "BZK" and what does it stand for? - In order to try and find a sort of common thread. And secondly, the guidelines, but that is mainly about how you work at "BZK".
In addition, I would like to say in advance that there is no right or wrong, it is all about your perceptions or what *you* think about. You have also signed the consent form, but briefly to reiterate:
You may stop the interview at any time and without giving a reason. I will process the data anonymously so it is not traceable to you as a person and I would like to record the audio. Are you okay with that? (Yes/No) > Then I will turn on the recording now."

Start interview

- What is your exact position within the ministry? (Important: specify which department/entity within the Ministry of the Interior, and also policy versus administration)
- How long have you been employed by the ministry? (In case, this has not been mentioned yet)

In this part of the interview, I would like to discuss your attitude towards the ministry as an organization and its identity.

Organizational identity of the ministry

- Can you try to describe working at the ministry in three words? What comes to mind first?
    - Can you indicate why you choose these words? And if so: what do you mean by this?
- What is the most important reason(s) for you to work at the ministry?
    - Has this always been the case or do you think it has changed?
- What do you see as the core strength of the ministry? (May use central features instead of core strength)
- Or: how does the ministry distinguish itself from other public organizations, such as other ministries? (Insofar as you can estimate this, e.g., through previous work experience)

- Do you feel part of the ministry? (This question is particularly relevant for administration, as it is expected that they often feel less part of- and more distance to the ministry)
    - If so, why do you feel part of the ministry?
    - If not, why not? Do you feel part of something else instead, e.g., your team/department?

Organizational guidelines ("organisatorische richtingwijzers")

General

- Are you familiar with "opgave-gericht werken" or "werken vanuit de bedoeling"?
    - Yes > Can you give an example of a specific (work) situation, project or something you were involved in where this was evident, where this became clear?
    - Can you tell me something about how you translate this into your work? / Are you working on this consciously in your perception or is this more of a subconscious process?
- Are you also familiar with the specific organizational guidelines associated with this?
    - If yes, to what extent do you (generally) apply these guidelines in your work?
    - If not, briefly explain (not necessary to give definition, simply that it is okay to not be familiar) and continue to share poster on screen.

For this interview, the focus is on the organizational guidelines (not the content!). I would like to walk through some of the organizational guidelines with you to see to what extent these guidelines are lived and actively implemented by you. Therefore, I am going to share a poster with you on my screen. (share "Praatplaat BZK – richtingwijzers organisatorisch") > Are there any guidelines or words that stand out to you?

Buiten = Binnen

- Do you recognize this guideline?
- What do you think is meant by this guideline?
- To what extent do you implement this guideline in your (daily) work?
    - Negative response
        - Why not?
        - Do you feel in some way constrained in the implementation and if so, can you indicate why?
        - Do you need anything more in order to be able to implement this better in your work?
    - Positive response
        - Can you give an example or specific situation where you clearly applied this guideline in your work?
- Does implementing this guideline create any particular tensions or challenges?
    - If so, can you also explain an example or specific situation here?

Follow-up:

- Do you collaborate often with external parties?
    - If so, how does that work? Are there any challenges in doing so?
- Are you supported in this by the organization in any way?

Lef

- Do you recognize this guideline?
- What do you think is meant by this guideline?
- To what extent do you implement this guideline in your (daily) work?
    - Negative response
        - Why not?
        - Do you feel in some way constrained in the implementation and if so, can you indicate why?
        - Do you need anything more in order to be able to implement this better in your work?
    - Positive response
        - Can you give an example or specific situation where you clearly applied this guideline in your work?
- Does implementing this guideline create any particular tensions or challenges?
    - If so, can you also explain an example or specific situation here?

1 x raken

- Do you recognize this guideline?
- What do you think is meant by this guideline?
- To what extent do you implement this guideline in your (daily) work?
    - Negative response
        - Why not?
        - Do you feel in some way constrained in the implementation and if so, can you indicate why?
        - Do you need anything more in order to be able to implement this better in your work?
    - Positive response
        - Can you give an example or specific situation where you clearly applied this guideline in your work?
- Does implementing this guideline create any particular tensions or challenges?
    - If so, can you also explain an example or specific situation here?

Samenwerken > Afstemmen

- Do you recognize this guideline?
- What do you think is meant by this guideline?
- To what extent do you implement this guideline in your (daily) work?
    - Negative response
        - Why not?
        - Do you feel in some way constrained in the implementation and if so, can you indicate why?
        - Do you need anything more in order to be able to implement this better in your work?
    - Positive response
        - Can you give an example or specific situation where you clearly applied this guideline in your work?
- Does implementing this guideline create any particular tensions or challenges?
    - If so, can you also explain an example or specific situation here?

Follow-up:

- Do you collaborate often with other parties within “BZK”?
    - If so, which parties, why and how do you do it?
    - What are the challenges or what do you encounter when doing so?

Kracht van heel BZK benutten

- Do you recognize this guideline?
- What do you think is meant by this guideline?
- To what extent do you implement this guideline in your (daily) work?
    - Negative response
        - Why not?
        - Do you feel in some way constrained in the implementation and if so, can you indicate why?
        - Do you need anything more in order to be able to implement this better in your work?
    - Positive response
        - Can you give an example or specific situation where you clearly applied this guideline in your work?
- Does implementing this guideline create any particular tensions or challenges?
    - If so, can you also explain an example or specific situation here?

Follow-up:

- What can you say about the relationship between policy and administration? Do you experience this directly in your work?
- Do you feel that you belong to one collective BZK?
    - If not, where do you belong? (e.g., own team, SSO)
- Are you satisfied with the (way of) sharing knowledge and information within the organization?
    - Can you elaborate on this?
- To what extent do you feel that other units within the ministry know what you are doing and understand your challenges?

Conclusion

Finalize interview:

- If you look at the poster, is there anything missing?
- Or given what we have discussed, is there anything you would like to add?
- Any additional remarks, questions, comments?

Thank again for participation. Should participant find interesting, keep informed of research and findings.

Appendix D: Initial Codebook

Part A Communication Literature

Code	Description
A1 Organizational Identity and Identification	Refers to employees' perceptions of who the organization is and what it stands for as well as accounts of employees' ability to identify with specific identity features of the ministry and/or its subunits.
A1.1 Central features	Employee refers to features that are considered central, and in their view describe the core of the ministry, in terms of its strength(s) and the way it operates.
A1.2 Distinctive features	Employee refers to unique features that are assigned to the ministry specifically and distinguishes the ministry, possibly in comparison to other ministries, other public organizations, or other organizations in general.
A1.3 Uncertainty identity features	Employee expresses uncertainty, lack of clarity or is unable to identify clear features that reflect the identity of the ministry.
A1.4 Local identities/ sub-identities	This code exemplifies that there are various identities present within the ministry with which the employee may or may not identify. For example, an employee may mention identifying as part of a (sub-)unit and as part of the ministry as a whole. In addition, employee may perceive a distance between themselves (or the unit with which they identify) and the ministry.
A1.5 Reasons working at ministry	Employee refers to personal or professional reasons as to why they are currently working at the ministry or have chosen to do so in the past. For those employees that only identify with their sub-unit or team, this code can also include specific reasons why they are working at their subunit, without a relation to the ministry as a whole. In addition, it may refer to reasons why they, as a person, feel part of the organization.
A2 Organizational Commitment	Employee expresses a feeling of commitment to the ministry, which might be demonstrated by a positive attitude towards the organization and a willingness to stay in the organization.
A2.1 Affective commitment	Employee expresses an emotional, positive attachment to the ministry and/or a desire to make a contribution to the organization's goals.
A2.2 Perceived organizational support (antecedent of organizational commitment)	Employee reports on the ability of the ministry to meet their socio-emotional needs, on whether they feel their contributions are valued by the ministry and the extent to which they feel the ministry takes care of- and is concerned for its employees.
A3 Organizational Citizenship Behavior	Refers to an employee who 'goes above and beyond' by engaging in some sort of discretionary individual behavior not explicitly mentioned in one's job description, and that is beneficial to the organization and its functioning.
A3.1 Helping behavior	Employee mentions (a general willingness to) take actions to support and/or help other employees or co-workers with work-related issues. This includes addressing potential errors or oversights made by a co-worker.
A3.2 Individual initiative	Employee mentions showing individual initiative on behalf of the organization that extends far beyond what is generally expected of the employee by its direct leader or the organization. Such initiatives may include innovative or creative approaches to improving the individual's job or organizational procedures, as well as demonstrating enthusiasm and effort to accomplish the job.
A3.3 Civic virtue	Employee indicates having an interest, or commitment to, the organization as a whole. In particular, employee mentions actions related to actively participating in the governance of the organization, by actively staying informed of the organization's updates, monitoring for threats and opportunities, and advocating for the organization's interests.

Code name	Description
A4 Organizational Culture	Employee refers to or mentions (elements of) the organizational culture present at the ministry.
A4.1 Self-actualizing culture	Employee describes elements of a self-actualizing culture, in which for example creativity, task accomplishment and individual growth is valued and quality is more important than quantity.
A4.2 Humanistic-encouraging culture	Employee describes elements of a humanistic-encouraging culture, in which members are expected to be supportive, constructive and open to influence by helping others to grow and develop.
A4.3 Conventional culture	Employee describes elements of a conventional culture, which consists of conservative and traditional elements and is generally marked by bureaucratic structures: members are expected to conform and follow policies and practices in place.
A4.4 Dependent culture	Employee describes elements of a dependent culture, in which hierarchy is important and employees are generally non-participative. Decision-making is centralized and employees are expected to do as they are told and to clear decisions with their superiors.
Part B Organizational Guidelines (“Organisatorische Richtingwijzers”)	
B1 Buiten = Binnen	This code refers to a way of working in which issues outside the organization are leading for how one deals with them 'inside', as well as working (intensively) with partners outside on the same issues. With the purpose of contributing to important social issues and ultimately serving the Netherlands and its citizens.
B1.1 With and for the Netherlands	Citizen central, working for "BV Nederland" or reference to ultimate (working) purpose.
B1.2 Co-creation	This code refers to a particular type of collaboration with the 'outside' world, by creating jointly with partners inside and outside of the ministry.
B1.3 External view	Involving experts outside of the ministry.
B1.4 Stay in touch	Keeping in touch with external partners, but also with the citizens (or representatives) themselves.
B1.5 Custom approach	Finding appropriate solution for each citizen in the Netherlands, ensuring flexibility to adapt to individual situation.
B2 Lef	Outside the box thinking and working/thinking outside existing frameworks.
B2.1 Mistakes are (really) allowed	In order to devise and try out new initiatives and solutions, there must be room to make mistakes.
B2.2 Asking for help	Asking for help when needed, not letting things simmer unnecessarily, daring to be vulnerable.
B2.3 Agreeing and addressing	Making clear agreements and at the same time having the courage to address each other if something is not going well.
B2.4 Is friction allowed? ("Mag iets 'schuren'?")	A solution does not always fit immediately, interests can get in the way of each other, give space to this.
B2.5 Daring to say "no"	Dare to say no to each other, but also dare to say no bottom-up.
B3 1 x raken	This code includes general reflections on what “1 x raken” means and its implementation in practice, to work more efficiently and goal-oriented without compromising on the outcome.
B3.1 Responsibility and accountability	Ownership; clear who is responsible and who is owner. Avoid letting everyone have their say, without taking responsibility.
B3.2 Face-call-mail (no CC)	More efficient working methods and communication in which the right, responsible parties are involved in a targeted way.
B3.3 Adding value	Adding value by working on the tasks, keeping the end goal or end user (e.g., the citizen) in focus.
B3.4 Can it be more efficient?	More efficient design of current practices and procedures.
B3.5 Goal-oriented	Establish ways of working and procedures that serve the end goal.
B3.6 Abandoning routines	Critically evaluate routines and habits, adjusting and making them more effective where possible.
B3.7 No talking, but action	Instead of a culture of negotiation and "polderen", daring to make decisions and take action.

Code	Description
B4 Samenwerken > Afstemmen	No more us-versus-them, rather a way of working in which collaboration is optimized in every form. This means not simply coordinating and focusing on one's own goals, but trusting others, an integrated approach and crossing boarders where necessary.
B4.1 Common purpose central	Prior to collaboration, discuss what the common purpose is that one is working towards.
B4.2 Connect before you start	Before starting a new project, partnership or the like, seek connection with relevant parties.
B4.3 Trust on each other's professionalism ("vakmanschap")	Rely on everyone's professionalism and skills to deliver high quality work.
B4.4 Working integrally	Interdisciplinary work, from different roles and perspectives looking for the right result. Different (conflicting) interests may come to light; an integral approach must weigh these up.
B4.5 Across borders	(Where necessary) Not to remain within one's own framework, but to cooperate across borders: within the ministry, but also outside it ("Grenzeloos samenwerken"). This includes forms of inter-governmental or inter-departmental cooperation, projects and/or programs.
B4.6 Don't only send, also think of the recipient	When working together, not only have your own interests at heart, but work together to determine what cooperation is needed that benefits both parties.
B4.7 Commitment/Involvement	Commitment to each other, within team, between departments, between supervisor and employee.
B5 Kracht van heel BZK benutten	This code refers to a way of working which makes ultimate use of the strength of the ministry in its entirety, by encouraging closer connections between various parts within the ministry, with the purpose of learning from each other and sharing knowledge.
B5.1 Substantive connections	Creating links around substantive themes and tasks in order to share knowledge and learn from each other.
B5.2 Administration and policy	Connect administration and policy where possible, involve administration on time, don't work in separate silos.
B5.3 Sharing knowledge	Easily and quickly share relevant knowledge and information throughout the ministry and also be aware of what is going on at various departments and sub-organizations.
B5.4 1 BZK	Keep collective identity of “1 BZK” as a starting point, with everyone ultimately working towards the same ideals.
B6 Organizational change trajectory	This code includes references, comments, and reflections related to (the implementation of) the organizational change trajectory and its contents.
B6.1 Opgave-gericht werken/werken vanuit de bedoeling	This code includes a general description, example or reflection related to the way of working called "werken vanuit de bedoeling", "opgave-gericht werken", "werken vanuit publieke waarden" or similar terms.
B6.2 Organizational guidelines	This code includes a general description, example or reflection related to (implementation of) the organizational guidelines of the organizational change trajectory. This also includes remarks in which references are made to multiple guidelines at once.

Appendix E: Final Codebook

Code		Description	Example
1	Buiten = Binnen	This code refers to a way of working in which issues outside the organization are leading for how one deals with them 'inside', as well as working (intensively) with partners outside on the same issues. With the purpose of contributing to important social issues and ultimately serving the Netherlands and its citizens.	“We are all a small piece in the system and everyone tries to do something in his or her own policy area so that we can get movement outside on the issues that really matter. And what you also see is (…) that we also do this more in connection with the citizen. That we don't just do it from our ivory tower in the Hague. So that we also connect more with the provinces, with the municipalities, with the citizen.”
	1.1 Custom approach	This code is about ensuring flexibility in the work to be able to adapt to individual situations and where necessary to provide an appropriate solution for specific citizens or customers.	“(…) I see indeed that... customization for example. Well, that's really one that hits [suborganization]. We get a lot of customization requests, of course. So, users from the various ministries can make a custom request to us. (...) So I definitely do see customization reflected in our work.”
	1.2 Stay in touch	This code refers to (the importance of) staying in touch and engaging with external partners, including the Dutch citizen (or its representatives), in daily work. For example, with the purpose of ensuring that what is conceived also works in practice for the envisioned target group.	“I see the sign outside=inside, so bringing in the outside world, yes, that’s going well, because we really do want the input from this outside world, from the network. (...) So that we really have that broad scope and really look broadly at what is going on in the Netherlands, what needs municipalities or organizations have and what should we do about it. (…)”
	1.3 Co-creation	This code refers to a particular type of collaboration with the 'outside' world, by creating jointly with partners inside and outside of the ministry.	“So, I think that if the market is given more space to come up with solutions, that it also adds much more value, so social value to our projects. (...)”
2	Lef / Organizational Citizenship Behavior	This code refers to an employee who 'goes above and beyond' by engaging in some sort of discretionary individual behavior not explicitly mentioned in one's job description, e.g., thinking outside the box and challenging management, and that is beneficial to the organization and its functioning.	“Lef is to ... undertake things, take initiatives outside your job description that do ... contribute to the realization of your goal.”
	2.1 Individual Initiative	Employee mentions examples where they demonstrated initiative in the workplace, beyond what is generally expected by their direct leader or the organization. It may include innovative or creative approaches to improving the individual's job or organizational procedures, as well as demonstrating enthusiasm and effort to accomplish the job.	“And yes, in [sub-organization] I have a lot of trouble getting that put on the agenda. And well, in that respect I also have contact with people from other ministries, but also from other parts of ministries (...). And I am now also following an innovation course. (...) But we can still go the extra mile from [sub-organization], so in that respect I also want to look, in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, at how we can meet each other in this and strengthen each other. So that I can also get it on the agenda within [suborganization].”
	2.2 Allow for mistakes and opposition	Employee elaborates on the extent to which they feel they are allowed to make mistakes, they are able to say no (also bottom-up), and whether others are being held accountable for mistakes. In addition, it may refer to room for discussions and opposition.	“But now... on the one hand it seems as if you have a lot of freedom as a civil servant (...) but on the other hand I sometimes don't feel safe at all to say no or to contradict a higher authority. I do that sometimes, and then you don't always get very nice reactions, you know, then you are put in your place. (...)”
	2.3 Helping behavior	Employee mentions (a general willingness to) take actions to support and/or help other employees or co-workers with work-related issues. It also refers to employees asking for help themselves and possibly being vulnerable.	“Maybe asking for help, but that's just more among colleagues. It's true that we do quickly make contact with each other and say: 'Can you take a look at this?’ (...)”

	Code	Description	Example
3	1 x raken	This code includes general reflections on what "1 x raken" means and its implementation in practice, to work more efficiently and goal-oriented without compromising on the outcome.	"To me, "1 x raken" has to do with effectiveness and efficiency. If you do what you have to do and you do it well. (...) And that as an organization you ensure that there are no two parts that are working on the same thing in an illogical way. (...)"
	3.1 Conventional Culture	This code includes descriptions of a conventional culture, which consists of conservative elements and is generally marked by bureaucratic structures. This can be recognized for example by unnecessary rules and procedures that do not serve the organization. In addition, it includes references to more efficient and goal-oriented design of current practices and procedures.	"They always say "oh this is just one of those Ministry of the Interior things", that everything has to be in black and white, everything has to be examined a hundred times (…) Then I think, why, don't you believe me, or? And only when you start talking, it turns out that it is not meant personally, but that it is apparently the culture that everything must be in writing."
	3.2 Responsibility and accountability	This code is about ownership and refers to clear decisions that should be made regarding responsibility and who can be held accountable. This to avoid a situation where everyone has their say, but no responsibility is taken.	"Precisely from the coordination position of the ministry, sometimes things end up on my plate of which I think yeah, I'm not responsible for this, but actually there is no one really responsible, so then I just do it."
	3.3 Abandoning routines	This code includes employees' perceptions whether they feel it is common practice to critically assess routines and habits, and adapt them to be more efficient where possible.	"So, saying goodbye to routines, yes. But it's not overnight. I do notice that. And that you're caught up in the national narrative. So, you really have to... you have to do that step by step and then we'll get there. (…)"
	3.4 No talking, but action	This code refers to behavior where actions are undertaken and decisions are made, rather than a culture of negotiation, "poldering" and endless discussions which hamper efficient working.	"But talking is part of it. We are, of course, a policy department. It is precisely through talking that you can clarify exactly what needs to be done, who needs to do what and why. So, I don't think we'll get anywhere without talking. But it is... it is the willingness to take action, that is there, yes."
4	Samenwerken > Afstemmen	This code refers to a way of working in which collaboration is optimized in every form. This means not simply coordinating and focusing on one's own goals, but trusting others, an integrated approach and crossing boarders where necessary.	"And that's why I think it's great that the Ministry of the Interior is working so hard internally to seek out that cooperation. So go and see who else is doing something in your field and can we pick things up together, instead of everyone reinventing their own wheel and putting their own car together and everyone going in their own direction."
	4.1 Interconnecting with common purpose	This code is about (the importance of) actively seeking connections, based on trust, with relevant parties before starting a new project, partnership or the like. This can also refer to the importance of determining a common purpose to work towards together.	"(…) So that you really discuss with each other... this is the goal, this is what we're going to do, just to get on good terms with each other, manage expectations, that's all part of it. Focusing on the common purpose is very important. And that's what sometimes falls short."
	4.2 Integral approach	This code refers to working interdisciplinary, from different roles and perspectives looking for a satisfactory result. This may reveal different (conflicting) interests, which must be considered in an integral approach in order to reach a decision.	"Purely from my own work: I work at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, but I actually work government-wide. (...) So that makes it quite complex, that you have to deal with many different interests."
	4.3 Across borders	Where necessary, an employee does not remain within their own (limited) boundaries, but actively cooperates across borders: within the ministry (between departments), but also outside of it, for example with other ministries. This code also includes various types of inter-governmental or inter-departmental cooperation, projects and/or programs.	"So that you no longer think, 'This is the Ministry of the Interior, only employees of the Ministry of the Interior do that,' but that you just really think, 'This job has to be done, who do I need for this, what expertise, where can I find that?"

Code	Description	Example
5 Kracht van heel BZK benutten	This code refers to a way of working which makes ultimate use of the strength of the ministry in its entirety, by encouraging closer connections between various parts within the ministry, with the purpose of learning from each other and sharing knowledge. In addition, codes are included that refer to employees' perceptions of who the organization is, as well as accounts on whether one feels part of the organization.	“And how do we ensure that what you have in mind, and therefore what is also our point on the horizon, how do we ensure together, we as part of the Ministry of the Interior, that we also deliver what you expect of us? And what kind of time frame is linked to that? And what kind of products should we deliver? As far as I'm concerned, it's still a bit too far away. (...)”
5.1 Sharing knowledge	Refers to sharing relevant knowledge and information easily and quickly throughout the ministry, establishing connections around substantive themes and tasks and also being aware of what is going on in various departments and sub-organizations.	“And anyway, I am also aware that there are people working at the Ministry of the Interior who have previously been involved with [my field]. So, I also sometimes approach them to ask them, "Oh, what choices were made at the time?" and sometimes to ask them, "What do you think about this?”
5.2 Organizational identity	Refers to employees' perceptions of who the organization is and what it stands for as well as references to a collective identity of the ministry as an organization, whereby everyone ultimately works towards the same ideals.	“My perception of the policy side of the Ministry of the Interior is that it is kind of formal, a bit archaic, a bit conservative, we do things the way we do them. (...) I don't know if it's justified, because I am not involved in that (...)”
5.2.1 Uncertainty identity features	Refers to employees' expressions of uncertainty, lack of clarity or inability to identify clear features that reflect the identity of the ministry.	“Yes, because it's just so gigantic, there are so many directorates, there are so many domains, there are so many areas of focus, that I just don't have anything to do with. Yes, don't ask me about the common thread in all those areas of work. I would not know.”
5.2.2 Central features	Refers to employees' perceptions of features that are considered central, and in their view describe the core of the ministry, in terms of its strength(s) and the way it operates.	“The Ministry of the Interior is the coordinating department. What the strength of the ministry is... That it, yeah, connects things together. That it's not that we're about one issue, but it's very much that we seek cooperation and improvement.”
5.2.3 Distinctive features	Refers to employees' perceptions of unique features that are assigned to the ministry specifically and distinguishes the ministry, possibly in comparison to other ministries or to commercial organizations.	“Because at the Ministry of the Interior, if you descend for a very long time, you can also have to deal with technicians. (...) I can't really imagine another ministry where you end up also having people working who are... well, very much linked to practice, in the sense of technical practices shall I say.”
5.3 Multiple (local) identities	This code exemplifies that there are various identities present within the ministry with which the employee may or may not identify. For example, an employee may mention identifying as part of a (sub-)unit and as part of the ministry as a whole. In addition, an employee may perceive a distance between themselves (or the unit with which they identify) and the ministry.	“I feel more [suborganization] than Ministry of the Interior. And that's just because you're working day to day, with your own colleagues, so you're actually... yes, just an organization in a big organization.”
5.3.1 Policy and administration	This code also refers to various identities within the ministry, but includes references which focus on the specific relationship between policy and administration and possible variations in perceptions between these groups.	“(...) This is how it appears to us as administration employees, that it is still very hierarchical, that there is policy and underneath that there is administration. Whereas administration is simply very powerful, and also contributes very much to that policy. And so, I now have the idea that they dare to make that connection more. (...)”

	Code	Description	Example
	5.4 Organizational Commitment	Employee expresses feeling committed to the ministry and part of the ministry, which might be demonstrated by a positive attitude towards the organization, a willingness to stay in the organization and/or a desire to make a contribution to the organization's goals.	“Yes, in my view, it's the people. (...) And yes, I like it as an employee that I have freedom, that I can act independently, that I am valued so to speak. And that I can develop myself, that I get nice assignments, that I get opportunities. And well, I have actually experienced that all these years. And that's why I really enjoy working here.”
	5.4.1 Civic virtue	Employee indicates having an interest, or commitment to, the organization as a whole. In particular, employee mentions actions related to actively participating in the governance of the organization, for example by actively staying informed of the organization's updates.	“(…) But I did try to integrate with the ministry, for example by taking part in this interview and then (…) I also (...) sometimes read messages from the ministry, like what are the colleagues at the Turfmarkt doing?”
6	Personal identification	This code includes identification on a personal level, for example when an employee mentions aspects of their personality as reasons for identification, and thus are separate from ways of working of the ministry.	“Yes, it may sound very crazy, but when I'm working for the ministry, it's like I'm working, say, for leisure. It's something that drives me, it's in my personal motivation, so it's like just doing ... yeah, what you would like to do in life.”
	6.1 Reasons working at Ministry	Employee refers to personal or professional reasons as to why they are currently working at the ministry or have chosen to do so in the past. For those employees that only identify with their sub-unit or team, this code can also include specific reasons why they are working at their subunit, without a relation to the ministry as a whole. In addition, it may refer to reasons why they, as a person, feel part of the organization.	“(...] I've always been interested in politics, but never really done anything with it in terms of work. And I noticed that I increasingly had an opinion about how things were going with... yes, with the debates and so on, and I thought, yes, perhaps I can contribute something myself. So that was actually a bit of an intrinsic motivation to really start looking at the central government.”
7	Organizational change trajectory	This code includes references, comments, and reflections related to (the implementation of) the organizational change trajectory and its contents.	“So how do you make sure that the people, the employees who have to change, <u>really</u> feel the importance of the desired change and start to feel and experience ownership for it? So that they will <u>actually</u> do something.”
	7.1 Opgave-gericht werken/ werken vanuit de bedoeling	This code includes a general description, example or reflection related to the way of working called "werken vanuit de bedoeling", "opgave-gericht werken", "werken vanuit publieke waarden" or similar terms.	“What it means in general, I think, is that you look at what social task we are facing, so what impact do we want to achieve with our work and that you then do everything with that perspective. And that you try to remove as many obstacles as possible that stand in the way of that societal purpose.”
	7.2 Organizational guidelines	This code includes a general description, example or reflection related to (implementation of) the organizational guidelines of the organizational change trajectory. This also includes remarks in which references are made to multiple guidelines at once.	“I know there are these organizational guidelines, but at least consciously I do nothing with them. I could mention maybe two, but not more than that either. Because that doesn't really matter to me, it's more about the way the work is done I think.”