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Master thesis

What's at Stake: Gains and Losses in Organizational Transformation

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Abstract

Purpose Organizational change is not always successful. To increase organizational change success, it is worthwhile to discover which factors influence organizational change success and how they can be manipulated. This study sets out to discover determinants of successful change. We do this within a framework of gains and losses caused by performed actions in a change process.

Method This research uses a qualitative approach and analyzes eight-teen semi-structured interviews conducted with employees and managers involved in an active organizational change process at a medium-sized IT company in The Netherlands. Through thematic analysis, we discover factors that significantly affect the (maximization of) gains and (minimization of) losses. Furthermore, we discuss the effects of gains and losses on organizational change success.

Findings Stakeholders in an organizational change process experience loss as a result of moving away from the status quo towards a new organizational state. We propose that this loss can be minimized or compensated by gains. We found that critical factors established in previous research can be found to have a significant effect in practice. In this case study, participants described the necessity for a clear definition of change, change agents that lead through engagement and effective and regular communication, aiming to proactively reduce stakeholder concerns, thereby increasing the opportunity for change buy-in.

Conclusion This research shows the importance of several determinants of change, most notably the definition of change, leadership & guidance, and involvement and engagement, on the minimization of losses and maximization of gains in organizational change processes. It confirms findings from earlier research regarding determinants of successful change, and it provides a contextualization for them. Despite these findings, we conclude that there is not one perfect approach to organizational change. We should not ignore the impact of the personal aspect in change processes and the ways in which personal relationships can be leveraged to create sustainable change.

Keywords: Organizational change, change management, change management success, success factors, resistance, loss, sensemaking

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1 Introduction

Organizational change is not always successful: it can be held back by a wide variety of factors. To increase organizational change success, it is worthwhile to discover which factors influence organizational change success and how they can be manipulated. What problems occur? Why do people not always cooperate in organizational change?

There are many factors influencing the success of an organizational change, greatly summarized in the comprehensive work of Errida and Lotfi (2021). Organizational change can hardly be executed by one individual. After all, the organization needs to change, and therefore its members too. The change agent, the one who initiates the changes, will need to gather support. Whether or not people support the change has to do with a variety of aspects. A clear idea of what the change is and how it is supposed to be executed, good leadership, and sufficient motivation are important too. A feeling of ownership and engagement can help in motivating stakeholders to contribute to the change. Effective and constant communication can help in taking away any resistance that stakeholders may have.

It is often said that people resist change inherently. However, Dent and Goldberg (1999), among other authors, provide a different explanation: people do not resist change, they resist loss. They resist losing whatever status quo they had established and were used to. If people are requested or required to accept certain losses for the benefit of change and the organization, a change agent will have to be convincing. A change agent will have to convince people that opposite to the possible losses, there are gains to be made, and not just for the organization, but for the people themselves too. These gains should make it clear that whatever losses are associated with the proposed changes, there are enough positive effects to warrant the need for change.

Gains and losses are a delicate balance. Therefore, it is evident that knowledge of which factors can result in a (perceived) gain or (perceived) loss is valuable. This research aims to establish these factors and their influence by means of a qualitative analysis of organizational change. It aims to understand how change agents can effectively manage their communication in a change environment to maximize gains and minimize losses. It aims to understand how successful organizational change is created. With those goals in mind, the main question of this research reads:

> **"Which factors affect (maximization of) gains and (minimization of) losses in organizational transformations, and how can they be leveraged to improve organizational change processes and change success?"**

In order to answer this question, this research observes a specific organizational change case at a software company to see what's at stake in an organizational transformation. The observed company is implementing a so-called *client-centric organization*. This is a strategic change initiated by management that intends on restructuring the client-facing side of the company. Within this software company, a product is developed and subsequently implemented for clients. During implementation, a team of consultants would be responsible for making sure the product meets the wishes and requirements of the client and is aligned with contractual obligations between parties. At a certain moment the implementation is finalized and the care for the customer is transferred to a different team consisting of support agents providing operational support for the customer during the run phase.

This approach previously consisted of different organizational silos, which were effectively isolated from each other: every phase had its own team and upon transferal to another phase, the responsibility for a customer's experience would move to another team. By means of documentation, knowledge and experience from the implementation phase would be carried over to the run phase. However, employees who worked on the implementation would start new projects and they would no longer be actively assigned to the customer they helped implement. In the implementation, clients would receive a fair amount of proactive attention, while the run phase relies on a more reactive approach in providing support to the customer, i.e. at their explicit request, by means of, for example, a bug report. Between phases: an invisible wall.

The client-centric organization changes this by removing the silos and recentering all employees within the client-facing side of the company on a common goal: keeping the customer satisfied. The client-centric organization is to be more structured, with responsibilities for both the short and longer-term divided. In doing so, it allows the company to better assist its clients with their strategic goals and with innovation. All in the hopes of customers' satisfaction resulting in eventual contract renewal.

Having now introduced the topic and goal of this research, chapter 2 will highlight relevant literature surrounding the topic of organizational change management. In chapter 3, you can read more about the client-centric organization and its background, the research methods and participants and my data gathering and analysis approach. Chapter 4 discusses the raw findings from the qualitative data gathered for this research, and chapter 5 and 6 subsequently seek to interpret the data and draw conclusions regarding my research question.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Change process

Change starts with initiation by a change agent. Although Heyden et al. (2017) suggests change initiation can be found at many levels in organizations and, as such, does not have to be top-down, change initiation and execution are usually considered key roles of top or middle managers in organizational change (Hales (1986); Pinto and Prescott (1990), in Heyden et al. (2017)). Nevertheless, change initiation can start with any individual or subset of like-minded individuals within a population. Think, for example, of participation councils, citizens' initiatives, or protests, which may often introduce change in a bottom-up fashion. In most business organizations, however, people may be used to a top-to-bottom approach, given the explicit hierarchy defined in these kinds of organizations.

Change management can be divided in steps. Although many different interpretations of steps in change management exist, Lewin's (1947) three-stage model is often part of the foundation of these approaches to change process modeling. Lewin coined the concept of unfreezing and refreezing. To initiate a change, a need for change needs to be created by showing that deviation from the status quo can result in a better organizational state, thereby destabilizing the status quo and creating readiness for change. This process is called unfreezing. In the more 'fluid' state that the organization finds itself then it can be molded into a desired *new* status quo. After this, refreezing takes place and a new culture, behaviors, and practices are embedded into the organization.

2.2 Conversations for change

The transmission model of communication (Shannon, 1948; Shannon & Weaver, 1949), arguably one of the most influential works in 20th century communication science, sees communication as a transmission of a message between sender and receiver. In contrast, Foreman-Wernet (2003) (in Naumer et al. (2008)) poses a broader view of communication in the form of sensemaking that I prefer to combine with the topic of conversations. The transmission model seems to imply communication is a rather simple and straightforward process, analogizing explanations of telecommunications in which one party is always waiting for the other's response before responding themselves. Instead, Foreman-Wernet describes communication as a more interactive process in which different participants do still exchange messages, but they are "tied to the specific times, places and perspectives of their creators", highlighting the importance of context for the sensemaking of all participants in the conversation. Instead of communication consisting of a single-stream unambiguous phenomenon, it consists of conversations, which are multi-modal, equivocal, and complex in nature.

Change, too, happens in conversations. Conversations have different goals, depending on which stage of the change process model is at hand. Ford and Ford (1995) describe in great detail the different stages of conversations for change. The initiative conversation is first and relates to the unfreezing phase of Lewin's model described earlier. This conversation specifies a need for change and clarifies why the status quo should be abandoned in favor of something new. It often follows from dissatisfaction with the status quo leading the change agent to initiate the change. Consequently, according to Ford and Ford, the conversation between change agent

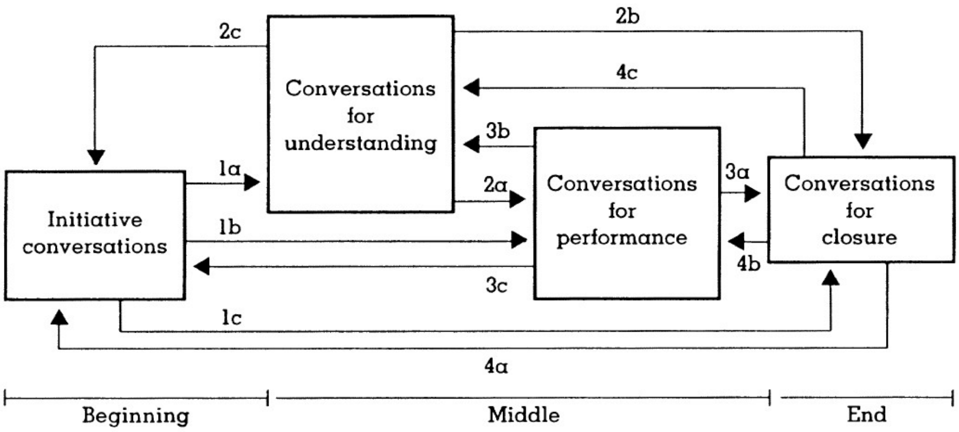

FIGURE 1: "The Dynamics of Communication in Change", adopted from Ford and Ford (1995)

and other actors can be used to establish a problem and/or opportunity and to discuss whether action should be taken. It is important to note that a possible outcome can also be that there is no problem, that there are fewer or no opportunities worth pursuing, and that no further action is necessary. In this case, we move to conversations for closing.

Following initiative conversations, Ford and Ford describe conversations for understanding. These are meant to establish a common understanding of the situation and a common language to be used in communicating about the change. One of the most substantive parts of conversations for understanding is, furthermore, specifying conditions for satisfaction. These define the end point of the change. Lastly, conversations for understanding are an important step for involvement, participation, and support. As stakeholders have room to ask questions, to express their concerns, and to spread their ideas, they can feel heard and involved in the change and may therefore be (more) motivated to bring it to a good end.

"Conversations for performance focus on producing the intended results", Ford and Ford say, and can be seen as what we usually describe as action items. What is to be done to go from where we are now to the a priori specified conditions for satisfaction? In this phase, it is a game of push and pull, in which one actor may file requests that are to be accepted, countered, or denied by others. Through dialogue, it will eventually become clear that the exit criteria are met, and we move on to conversations for closure, or that there are unforeseen circumstances that require going back to conversations for understanding or even initiation.

Finally, Ford and Ford argue, conversations for closure mark the end of a change process and take place in or right after the unfreezing described by Lewin. Conversations for closure include justification for termination and a moment of reflection. Conversations for closure are an essential component to change processes: they ensure that people are free to leave this change and move on to other projects.

Figure 1 shows the possible transitions between the different conversations for change. Some transitions are logical, particularly those advancing the change (from initiative to understanding, to performance, to closure, in that order). Others, however, even if they revert the process, are not necessarily problematic. Going back a few steps may be necessary to reach the goal, while only wanting to move forward may just obstruct any progress and result in an impasse. Still, there are situations that *are* problematic. For example: if the change agent believes they have arrived at conversations for performance, but the rest of the team still has questions and concerns and is still holding conversations for understanding. This just goes to show: moving out of sync or moving out of a phase that is yet to be completed may obstruct progress.

2.3 Resistance to change

Resistance is a common topic in organizational change. If you see the average organization as a peaceful pond, free of ripples, the water almost like a mirror, reflecting the sky above, then change is the pebble thrown into that pond: it creates movement, which can be exciting, but it also disrupts the carefully crafted environment in the way it has probably been for some time.

Resistance has often been described as if people are naturally against change, and as something invoked by change recipients in a hostile, unreasonable, and irrational way (Ford et al., 2008). Numerous authors claim this perspective is flawed and provide explanations for resistance being a perfectly normal phenomenon but for different reasons than simple human nature.

Ford et al. (2008) provide an examination of "the ways in which change agents contribute to the occurrence of the very reactions they label as resistance through their own actions and inactions", or in other words: could it be that those that throw the pebble are the exact thing causing the disruption in the pond?

Tsoukas and Chia (2002) believe that change in organizations happens through "actors constantly reweaving their webs of beliefs and actions to accommodate new experiences", meaning that change is constantly taking place and therefore, I theorize, resistance to change is merely a matter of this reweaving that is lacking behind, which would be solved with time and means for actors to engage in said reweaving of their beliefs.

Providing important context on what it is to be resistant, van Dijk and van Dick (2009) state resistance is often discussed in the context of "employees' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors", although the position of the change leader is equally important, after all, "it is the leaders' position that provides the basis from which to categorize an alternative stance as 'resistant'". Furthermore, van Dijk and van Dick discuss how resistance often stems from a personal and negative impact that stakeholders believe they will experience as a consequence of change. Similarly, Dent and Goldberg (1999) described how "the best way to challenge the conventional wisdom is to suggest that people do not resist change, per se". People do not resist change, they resist loss (of the status quo) and they may resist the unknown, they claim.

In more recent research on organizational change, a sensemaking approach has also been discussed. Peng (2018) argues that the process of "reweaving webs of beliefs and actions to accommodate new experiences", as Tsoukas and Chia wrote, is done through sensemaking when actors are unable to explain an organizational change within their usual understanding. According to Peng, it is also possible for actors to await 'sensegiving', in which another party (often the change agent) will provide 'sense' after which the sensemaking process becomes "an oriented-interpreting process by which actors try to understand and decide if they adhere to the given sense". In case of a discrepancy in sensemaking between the parties -

management and employee in this case - then you could speak of resistance.

Different views on resistance and its origins exist, but the concept of loss provided by Dent and Goldberg particularly interests me. If it is loss that stakeholders in a change are scared of and what is keeping them from buying into the change and supporting it, what gains would convince them of the necessity for change and result in their commitment to it? Would it be possible to minimize the perceived losses of stakeholders by balancing them with gains?

2.4 Determinants of change

As Dent and Goldberg (1999) describe an intrinsic relation between loss and resistance following from loss, one could take a step back and wonder what is then causing the feeling of loss. Earlier, Ford et al. (2008) described how resistance often is a logical consequence to the actions undertaken by stakeholders in a change process. The question remains: which factors lend themselves well for influencing loss or a lack thereof? After all, if we know which factors play a role in establishing gains and losses, we can leverage this knowledge to minimize losses and increase gains.

On the internet, you will find an infamous 70% failure rate for organizational change projects circulating. However, the opponents against this claim are as numerous as its proponents. In a valiant effort to settle this debate, Hughes (2011) wrote that "whilst the existence of a popular narrative of 70 percent organizational-change failure is acknowledged, there is no valid and reliable empirical evidence to support such a narrative".

Regardless of the exact success or failure rate of organizational change projects, much work has been done to identify ideal change management methodologies that prescribe an approach that will lead to a (more) successful change. In particular, Errida and Lotfi (2021) analyze no less than 37 organizational change models "providing an integrated understanding of factors affecting organizational change success". Their work is immensely helpful in getting a comprehensive overview of the field of organizational communication and change management. Based on their literature study, Errida and Lotfi identified 12 main categories of critical factors for successful organizational change, which in turn contain a total of 74 subfactors. The critical factors were examined in two different case studies, which brought forward that positive implementation of the critical factors was deemed important for change management success, while negative implementation or a lacking implementation of the critical factors was the main cause of failure. Errida and Lotfi also call the critical factors they identified 'determinants of change'. But how do they determine change?

2.5 Gains and losses

Although Dent and Goldberg did not necessarily intend to contrast loss with gain, I believe their view can quite naturally be extended to include this, as gains are the natural counterpart to losses.

The goal of organizational change is to improve an organization. For that to happen, a change should provide sufficient new value for the organization while minimizing potential negative outcomes. In other words, one should aim for a maximization of gains and a minimization of losses. Dent and Goldberg (1999) discussed potential losses that stakeholders in a change process may experience and said that "making changes effectively in organizations requires specific, targeted action". In other words: you need to find out what losses stakeholders may perceive and address those concerns directly. People may agree with the change itself, although the consequent losses may be a reason to express their resistance to the change in its current form. Through targeted action, certain losses could be minimized or compensated by gains, resulting in an agreed-upon definition of change, stakeholder buy-in, and commitment to change.

The importance of stakeholder buy-in and its effect on organizational change success is reiterated by Kotter and Whitehead (2010) (in Hubbart (2023)), explaining that properly addressing concerns with stakeholders may require more time investment from the change leader, but "often results in buy-in due to the trust developed". From this, we gather that proper stakeholder engagement can allow for the loss perceived by stakeholders to be minimized. There are many factors that determine organizational change success, as the previously discussed work of Errida and Lotfi (2021) has shown. Interestingly, their work also showed that not all factors are created equally: some have more impact than others. Or, in terms of gains and losses: actions taken regarding one factor can have a larger impact on gains and losses than those taken regarding another factor. The question is: which factors affect gains and losses the most so that we can focus efforts effectively?

3 Research methodology

As the focus of this study is on understanding the context of people's behavior in and perceptions of organizational change in a dedicated small-scale environment, this study lends itself well to a qualitative approach. Though the results of a quantitative study may be more generalizable and potentially more objective, the qualitative approach in this study allows for a more in-depth look at a smaller sample size and provides the ability to observe this case over time (Queirós et al., 2017). I also believe the more open qualitative approach allows for better observation of factors that are less easily expressed quantitatively, as well as those which may be harder to objectively identify or self-report on. Examples of this may include emotional behavior that, according to previous research, is prevalent among actors in a change process (Bovey & Hede, 2001).

3.1 Research setting

This research focuses on an organizational change process at a medium-sized IT company based in The Netherlands that provides a software solution to clients. Like many companies, a distinction can be made between the product development (PD) branch and the product management (PM) branch in the company. To place this in an IT context: the PD branch works on software development and consists mostly of software developers and testers. Meanwhile, the PM branch is concerned with topics such as sales, marketing, and customer relations and is staffed mostly by consultants or support agents. The PM branch is the main focus of this research, as the change process described entirely takes place within this branch. In fact, it does not only affect it, but it reforms this branch.

Client-centric organization

In short, the proposed reform makes the PM branch into a so-called 'client-centric organization'. As the name suggests, the customer is to become central in the efforts made by members of the organization, resulting in a better customer experience. To achieve a client-centric organization, employees with different roles will form a client-centric team (CCT). The goal is to bind clients to this CCT and make sure that the clients are supported by the same team throughout their customer journey: from sales to implementation (project phase) and from implementation to execution (run phase). As this research only commenced after the discussed change to the client-centric organization was already initiated, the following analysis of the pre-change situation is largely based on discussions with long-time staff members at the company.

In the former scenario, a client would be onboarded by a sales agent or sales team who would negotiate the terms of the contract with the client. As soon as an agreement was reached, an implementation team from the company would be formed to help set up the product at the client, integrate it into its existing systems, and make sure any additional requirements could be met. During the implementation phase, the assigned project manager is the first point of contact for the client and the client would naturally receive a lot of attention while the implementation team is deployed full-time. As the go-live date nears, the implementation team would prepare to transfer the handling of the client to the support team. Upon go-live, the implementation team would transfer the contact to the support team, would dissolve itself, and its members – a project manager and accompanying consultants – would move on to another (implementation) project. In essence, the 'ownership' of the client was transferred to a different silo.

This approach has several consequences. From the point support takes over care for a client, problems can no longer be raised with the implementation team in an accessible way. The client would now need to file support requests with a support agent they have presumably never met before. The support agent only knows about the setup of the client as far as the documentation created by the implementation team covered it, as they were not directly involved in the implementation project. Ins and outs known by consultants that worked for the client for months or even years that were not explicitly documented in writing are lost.

In addition to knowledge transfer, the relationship with the client is a matter of concern. During implementation, there is a lot of contact with the client, and at one point or another, the implementation team members have a very good understanding of their counterparts at the client, benefiting the collaboration. Furthermore, the implementation trajectory also allows for many face-to-face meetings and in-person discussions, whereas support agents would usually only communicate with the client through raised tickets or other forms of digital communication. It is not unreasonable to believe that this affects the quality of the collaboration.

In this (former) approach, two completely separated phases existed in which the client was dealing with different members of the organization. The separate silos would rarely interact due to the way the organization was structured. Once in the run phase support is provided on an operational level by support staff, whereas the implementation phase allowed for more proactive and in-depth strategic and tactical discussion between client and consultant.

Operational, strategic, tactical

The client-centric organization proposes a focus shift towards longer-term considerations of the client's wishes beyond the implementation phase. We can distinguish three different levels: operational, strategic, and tactical. These levels are not new and are applied regularly for strategic planning in organizations (*Strategic, Tactical and Operational Planning*, 2021). Operational refers to the daily operations of a client and their short-term goals, is driven by a support agent who acts as a service manager, and focuses on, for example, the configuration and deployment of certain new products in line with the client's wishes and contractual agreements made earlier. Tactical refers to the short to medium-term initiatives undertaken to help the client reach their goals and is driven by a lead consultant. Tactical decisions can be about deciding whether a certain new product or feature could be of use to the client and if so, how. Strategic refers to the long-term goals of the client and how the organization can take actions that will help the client achieve their goals in the longer-term. This is driven by an account lead and may concern discussions about whether or not to develop certain products or features because they may be of use to the client in achieving their goals. Within the client-centric organization, every client is assigned a service manager, lead consultant, and account lead.

Multi-disciplinary teams, roles & responsibilities

The proposed client-centric organization creates multi-disciplinary teams that include employees from all stages of the customer journey. In order to achieve a focus shift to longer-term customer satisfaction, different roles within the team will need to work together to provide the best customer care at any point in the customer journey, whether the customer has just been signed, is implementing, has (just) gone live or has been live for years. In order to do so, the client-centric teams are requested to use 20% of their time for client-centric tasks, i.e. longer-term customer care. For the different client-assigned leads on operational, strategic and tactical level, this mostly means fulfilling their role as lead. In general, focus is also put on documentation and knowledge sharing, mostly with the purpose of improving the information position of the team overall and allowing smooth intra-team collaboration.

The end goal is that a CCT is fully equipped to help a select group of clients and has all the information and means necessary without having to go on a search for the right contact person within the company. This does result in a shift in roles and responsibilities, as all members of a CCT are somewhat expected to act as an extension of their colleagues, having the same skills and knowledge available. However, this does not mean that the previous roles disappear. Support agents remain the first line of contact for operational issues and consultants will still work on implementations. However, it is requested that all CCT members prioritize *their* clients satisfaction and use their collective skills to keep service at an appropriate level across the customer journey.

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 Ethical approval

As is customary before executing academic research involving human participants in an indirect or direct manner, an ethical assessment of this research has taken place. A proposal was sent to the Ethics Committee for the domain Humanities and Social Sciences of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente. This research consequently received ethical approval on February 24th, 2023 (see Appendix C).

3.2.2 Participants

Over the course of this research, 18 semi-structured interviews have been conducted between March and May 2023. All interviewees are employees of the company and are part of the newly formed client-centric organization. Interviewees have been drawn from different client-centric teams as well as management and have varying backgrounds regarding age, gender, working experience, and role.

After a selection of interviewees was made, they were contacted by means of their company email address and provided with an explanation of the research and a summary of what would be expected from them should they participate. This information was shared with the prospective participants by means of an information sheet which also contained ethical implications and the informed consent form. The email also contained the request to participate by contacting the researcher. The email specifically included the option not to respond through their company email address, in case prospective participants were afraid participation would harm their position within the company or future career. In this case, participants could provide a private email address via a secure form to establish further contact. Of the 19 prospective participants, everyone indicated they would be willing to participate.

Eventually, 17 of the originally selected participants cooperated, one person was replaced and another did not partake in an interview due to planning constraints. In total, 18 interviews took place.

3.2.3 Interviews

With the 18 interviewees, semi-structured interviews of 60-90 minutes took place. Interviews took place face-to-face at an office location and were conducted in Dutch or, if a participant did not speak Dutch, English. The interviews discussed, in addition to some background information, four main topics: experience with organizational changes, the announcement of the change and the timeline of events since then, the participant's opinion on the change implementation, and the effects of the transition for the participant, their team, the company, and its customers. The interview manual with the semi-structured interview questions in English and Dutch can be found in Appendix A.

3.2.4 Focus groups

Focus groups were originally planned as part of the research methodology and took place in April and May 2023 with each of the three currently existing client-centric teams. The goal of these focus groups was mainly to discover significant differences in opinion and approach to the change between the different CCTs. Furthermore, it allowed for people who were not invited for a personal interview to come forward and share their opinion as well. In the end, the focus group sessions proved to be superfluous in achieving the aforementioned goals, as enough data was already available from the interviews. Therefore, the focus group data has not been included in this research.

3.3 Data analysis

3.3.1 Transcription

Audio recordings of the interviews were made, which were then transcribed using Whisper. Whisper is an automatic speech recognition (ASR) system developed by OpenAI, a non-profit company that conducts research into and creates products regarding Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). Based on many hours of training data, Whisper can transcribe audio in a variety of languages (*Introducing Whisper*, 2022) Whisper is entirely open source and has been released under the MIT license, and it can be run locally, without sending any audio or text data to the internet. It only downloads the language models OpenAI has made available online (*OpenAI-Whisper*, 2023).

The accuracy of Whisper is relatively high. Using the default 'small' model, the Word Error Rate (WER) for English is no larger than 14.5%. In Dutch, this is 14.2%. Another benefit is that, contrary to other ASR tools, Whisper seems to get jargon quite right, transcribing technical terms effortlessly. Should you use a larger model, the WER can decrease to only 9.4% for English and 5.8% for Dutch. However, the larger model is six times as slow as the default, as a result of which the user has to make a trade-off between correctness and efficiency (Radford et al., 2022) Still, the tool transcribes an interview of one hour in only a few hours with a high accuracy, for free.

3.3.2 Thematic analysis

For coding the interview transcripts, a form of constant comparison was used. However, before doing so, the amount of data was reduced to include only references made by participants regarding the implementation of the client-centric organization change, the gains and losses experienced, determinants of change and the (perceived) effects of the change on participants, their colleagues, teams and the company. By means of selective reading or *skimming* the interview transcripts were analyzed to find common topics and patterns in people's responses. For coding, an inductive (open) coding approach was mainly used, as it allows flexibility in interpreting data and starts at the precise data, moving out towards broader themes (Alhojailan, 2012). For the inductive coding, a framework based on the work of Errida & Lotfi (2021) was also used which was immensely helpful. The coding scheme can be found in Appendix B, which also shows the density of the different codes throughout the dataset.

Intercoder reliability

To guarantee the objectivity of the qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts, an intercoder agreement analysis was conducted using the metric of Cohen's Kappa (Cohen, 1960). A second coder received a subset of the interview transcripts in the form of quotes and the coding scheme and was asked to assign every quote one or multiple codes. The results were then compared to the coding of the first coder. Table 1 shows the similarities and differences found. In the top-left is the number of instances in which there was agreement. In the top-right are instances in which the first coder indicated multiple codes for which partial agreement was reached. In the bottom-left are instances in which the second coder indicated partial agreement with the first coder but also mentioned additional codes that they believed to be valid. Lastly, the bottom-right cell would usually contain instances in which neither coder shows agreement with the criterium. However, since the goal of this intercoder reliability analysis is to establish the objectiveness of the first coder, we take that as a baseline. Therefore, the first coder will always agree to their own codes and as such, no instances exist in the bottom-right quadrant. To still obtain a valid judgement of the intercoder reliability we have to slightly adapt the methodology of Cohen. The bottom-left quadrant - in this case - includes instances in which only one code was assigned by both first and second coder but no agreement was reached nonetheless.

TABLE 1: Agreement matrix (second coder)

	2nd coder	
1st coder	58 ✓/✓	5 ✓/✗
	32 ✗/✓	17 ✗/✗

Total: 112

$$P_{agreement} = \frac{(A+D)}{\sum A,B,C,D} = \frac{(58+17)}{112} = 0.670$$

$$P_{correct} = \frac{(A+B)(A+C)}{(\sum A,B,C,D)^2} = \frac{(58+5)(58+32)}{(112)^2} = 0.452$$

$$P_{incorrect} = \frac{(C+D)(B+D)}{(\sum A,B,C,D)^2} = \frac{(32+17)(5+17)}{112^2} = 0.086$$

$$P_{random} = P_{correct} + P_{incorrect} = 0.452 + 0.086 = 0.538$$

$$K = \frac{P_{agreement} - P_{random}}{1 - P_{random}} = \frac{0.670 - 0.538}{1 - 0.538} = 0.285$$

FIGURE 2: Calculation of Cohen's Kappa

Agreement	82	73%
Agreement with suggestions	26	23%
Disagreement	4	4%

TABLE 2: Agreement percentages (third coder)

To calculate our intercoder reliability score using Cohen's Kappa, we use the probabilities of agreement and random agreement, calculated using the matrix in table 1. Consequently, the calculation of Cohen's Kappa can be found in figure 2.

A Cohen's Kappa of 0.285, using the thresholds suggested by Cohen himself, results in a so-called 'fair agreement'. This score suggests improvements are possible. The agreement matrix also gives reason to believe so, as the second coder did suggest that a relatively high number of quotes could also be labeled with additional codes. After discussion with the second coder, several changes were made to the coding scheme and its definitions. A third coder was then given the same list of quotes but this time with the assigned codes and was asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement, resulting in an agreement percentage of 73%, with another

23% of the quotes receiving support and additional coding suggestions (see table 2). After discussion with the third coder, a last round of changes was made to the coding scheme and its definitions.

As stated earlier, the final coding scheme and the density statistics per code category can be found in Appendix B.

4 Findings

Analysis of the interviews revealed a comprehensive view of public opinion on the organizational change at hand at the company. As the interviews took place months after the change was initiated, this allowed the participants to easily take a helicopter view and reflect on their experiences over the past months and their current stance in the organizational change process. Nonetheless, the change process was still ongoing, which was noticeable as participants also regularly commented on recent developments, including those that occurred throughout the interviewing period.

The interviews focused on a number of topics surrounding the client-centric organization change with the goal of discovering perceived gains and losses as a result of this change, as well as the factors that participants believed to impact said gains and losses. In the following chapter, numerous of those factors are described, supported by (paraphrased) quotes from the interviews conducted.

4.1 Understanding for change

The image drawn from the interviews is that the change was wholeheartedly supported by employees at [company] (*"I really see the benefits, you can see that. This is something that I have wanted for a long time."*, *"I think very positively of the key points and framework that have been defined."*). Nevertheless, the immediate consequences and impact on employees their day to day jobs were left unclear resulting in uncertainty and insecurity, according to interviewees (*"Some people were scared, I guess, had a bit of unrest, uncertainty, that kind of stuff."*).

Some staff believed that their roles would change so significantly that it would result in reduced job satisfaction, with some apparently even stating that they may reconsider their employment at [company] if that were to be the case *"We don't want it to be part of our job description (...) it's not the job I've been, you know, they've been telling me I would be doing."*, *"[Colleagues] feel very insecure and it damages their potential retention in the company"*). In these situations, employees indicated that upon further discussion of the change it became more clear to them what the change entailed and they became more open to it. Interestingly, the participants were split: some indicated their first feelings upon the announcement of the change were those of uncertainty, while several others saw it as the creation of new opportunities. They believed they could further develop their skills in the new role and team, for example *"Many people did not see the opportunities that were laid out for them but maybe (...) everyone in our team seemed to be rather happy with these opportunities"*, *"It is also, naturally, an opportunity for younger people to show themselves."*). These participants sometimes also indicated that they believed the change to be a necessity (*"I see it as a given, a logical next step."*, *"The awareness and actively starting to work that way is a first step, a necessary step, and not one that comes from nowhere."*).

It is interesting to note that despite the overwhelming support for the change participants seem to indicate, resistance has still been an issue in this organizational change. It seems to me that a clear and accepted change vision is not the only necessity in enabling change. These findings give reason to believe that symbiosis between a change vision and consequential steps to achieve that vision is essential for stakeholders to properly make sense of the change and cooperate. The unsatisfying definition of how the change was to be executed and what its consequences would be, in this case, may have slowed down progress. Findings regarding implementation and guidance support this view.

4.2 Implementation & guidance

In spite of the support for the change with regard to its origin and its goals, over the course of the implementation, many employees experienced uncertainty over the strategy (*"In general, you did see a lot of unrest and almost panic", "(...) and I heard many people around me who were digging their heels in because they were scared"*). Participants described the "what" of the change to be clear but experienced issues with the "how". Feedback was given on the self-steering approach that management had chosen for this implementation. While management's idea behind allowing a lot of flexibility for the teams in implementation came from good intentions, team members found the freedom to be overwhelming. A majority of participants indicated that they would have rather received more concrete instructions from management that they could have then executed (*"I would have personally preferred it if [manager] had given more directions in the process", "There is a certain necessity for interaction and deliberation (...) to establish necessary guidelines or conditions [within which a team can operate]", "On the one hand you do need to take the wheel yourself, but on the other hand [the instructions] need to be clear"*). In the interviews, I happened to discuss an analogy of driving somewhere several times with different interviewees: you can either get in the car with a rough idea of where to go and drive for 45 minutes, eventually finding your destination, or you can get in the car and check the GPS for 5 minutes, resulting in a much shorter commute in the end. However, no GPS was provided by management at this time.

In this case study, we see very clearly how communication is a vital part of guidance and leadership. It seems that a miscommunication regarding the desired management strategy for this change - team members requesting more guidance, while management believes less guidance and more self-management is the way to go - had a great impact on the clarity of the change and the initiative taken by all stakeholders. In some way, the mismatch between expectations could perhaps also be related to a difference in the conversations of change (described by Ford and Ford (1995)): while one stakeholder may already have moved on to progress, others are still trying to understand the change.

The same effect might also be visible in the opinions on leadership that participants provided. Leadership was seen as absent by participants. Many participants recall that right after the announcement of the change, there were many questions, and staff members were experiencing a lot of uncertainty. In the weeks following the announcement, these questions were left unresolved and the concerns were minimally addressed (*"It was not very helpful to make an announcement after which there was complete radio silence", "People had many questions (...) and if you only gradually start acting on that, it is not beneficial", "If I were them, I would have made the expectations more clear"*). Participants usually did not seem angry with [manager], as they understood their position, which they had held only since only a few months prior, required a significant portion of their time. Nonetheless, staff members were disappointed that the uncertainty they were met with and the goal of taking away that uncertainty and providing them with the means to accomplish the change was not a higher priority for [manager] (*"I don't want to blame [manager],* *they haven't been here long and have taken on a job that could have been two jobs, which takes incredible amounts of time", "(...) However, there was no structure to it (...) and [manager] was too busy", "They were preoccupied with other things")*.

Team members felt that, as [manager] had initiated this change, there was some responsibility for them to guide it as well. If they were not able to spend time on making sure it went as planned, they should have either postponed the change or delegated responsibility over this change process to someone else (*"You're new in an organization, you initiate a change, and I understand you may not have the time, but you do need to solve it", "(...) and I would say, let an external someone guide this process. If it is important to you and has so much value, fly someone in, give them a proper assignment, and let them direct us"*). The absence of proper leadership and guidance caused many team members to have a lacking sense of motivation and urgency, in turn causing less progress (*"So right now we are in this very strange limb bug phase where everyone is waiting on each other", "You can do things, but I experienced them as a waste of time due to the impotence of the situation", "I must say, it faded to the background (...) and not much happens then"*).

The lacking guidance was a persisting problem with the teams. Some claimed that, if nobody was putting pressure on it and guiding the teams through this change, it was not about to proceed anytime soon (*"You need someone to pull the cart (...) only then it will move faster"*). About six months after the initiation of the change, [manager] did take steps to improve the guidance provided by creating what would later be called the "transition team" and appointing a transition lead that would, on their behalf, oversee the transition. In an internal message [manager] stated they wanted to speed things up and created a "lean working group" to work on a variety of templates that would "create consistency cross-team". The transition team consisted of one or more staff members from each of the involved teams and one of these members would function as a transition lead, monitoring progress and keeping oversight. Many participants believed the creation of the transition team could provide the necessary motivation and guidance to allow for progress to be made, but state that they never saw any proper results and therefore started doubting its usefulness *"I have not seen any purpose for the transition team yet (...) When I ask them questions, I only get a referral to [manager], which I find a rather lame response", "I think the transition team could be a lot more involved, actually", ""*). Other participants were entirely unaware of the transition team, even though one of their team members had been in the transition team for some time already (*"I wasn't aware of the transition team (...) but [due to my position] it may not be relevant right now?"*).

One of the main hiccups regarding the transition team seemed to be that the way in which the change was supposed to be executed was unclear to the team members, and they expected the transition team to provide clarity where [manager] did not. When it turned out that the transition team also did not have the means to provide answers and instead was functioning as an extension of [manager], still not providing the answers deemed important by the teams, team members either became annoyed or angry with the transition team or turned away in disinterest. One participant commented that once again making the teams themselves responsible through the transition team created a *"dilution of responsibility"*, because *"if everyone's responsible, nobody is"*.

There is a noticeable tendency to discuss initiative on this topic. Many interviewees clearly indicate that there seems to be nobody who is calling the shots here, but in doing so they completely ignore the opportunities for themselves to take initiative. As different stakeholders are awaiting each other's actions, the organizational change has reached a stalemate. At this point, it probably does not matter much *who* takes initiative, but it is clear that a breakthrough is needed to involve everyone once again.

4.3 Involving the client-centric teams

In addition to the absent guidance, the teams generally felt a lack of effective communication. Most communication by management was done through the digital medium Slack, which felt insufficiently personal (*"I don't think communication through Slack is the way to go", "(...) and you are still waiting for a [face-to-face] meeting in which you will go through the questions and concerns with everyone"*). The fact that the concerns of staff were not taken very seriously, or at least that it seemed that way because their questions remained unanswered, resulted in very little motivation. Over the months, the teams generally did not feel engaged in the change. There were several discussions on how the change was supposed to be organized, often resulting in paralysis, with the teams waiting for clarification from [manager] to complete the change with management's vision in mind (*"If there is very little time to talk to [manager] ... about what they want (...) then I am not surprised that nobody is making progress"*). On the contrary, management seemed to believe that the discussion was part of the process and that it was ideal if the teams themselves would define how the change would and should look to them (*"I cannot be the bulldozer that suddenly comes through the company, so I think it is ultimately important to make this change together with the people it affects (...) first and foremost because they know best how it works at [company]"*).

The mismatch between [manager]'s approach and the employees' expectations seems to also partially originate in a misunderstanding of wants and needs regarding company culture. The background for this was described by [manager] themselves: *"[In my previous work] I had very clear targets. Here, I see things differently. At this company, the human aspect and the company's history are way more important. (...) Therefore, it is important they really embrace the ideas and feel part of the change, instead of it feeling like it was laid out for them"*. Given this stance, it is not weird that [manager] opted for employees to actively participate in defining the change. However, this was not completely in line with the existing way of working. A long-time employee said that *"the culture that we have had has always been that a lot of decision-making comes from management. (...) explain what's needed and people will execute it. This change asks employees for more [participation]"*, and according to another employee: *"In larger generic consultancy companies the person with the 'hungriest' attitude takes a step forward because they want to lead. (...) [Company] is the least aggressive company I've ever met, you are not going to get a hungry person to come forward"*, implying that [company] employees need clear and direct instructions to get going.

In addition to this apparent mismatch in approach, a frequent explanation for the lack of involvement of team members is the workload and available resources. The company has been growing in recent years, attracting new customers which requires sufficient staff members and time. Employees that feel their capacity has already maxed out believe that this change comes at an unfortunate time, and they simply cannot allow themselves to be actively involved in the change and the discussion surrounding it (*We are in the middle of a project, where do we find the time, you know?", "The team has stated they are in the middle of an implementation, and that they will handle the change when they have time", "If you really want to do well, [making this change] can be a very large job", "We don't have the momentum, we don't have the time, we can't do it, we don't have the people..."*). In addition, some employees look beyond the current change and see problems on the horizon as a consequence of the shifted focus to client-centric. Not only is the company very busy working with new clients, interviewees say, but the client-centric organization means that additional resources will be needed to provide the level of care that is now also expected for customers that are already past the implementation phase (*"If this is successful, I would foresee that [the customers] will swamp us (...) and we do not have the capacity for that."*).

4.4 Team spirit and communication

One of the most impactful things participants described this change for them personally was their new team division. When the client-centric teams were announced, employees were placed in one of the three newly formed multi-disciplinary teams. In doing so, the former consultancy and support teams were dissolved. Although company-wise, many participants indicated that it has had positive effects on the knowledge sharing within teams and the service provided to the customer (see section 4.5), internally the team division was also heavily criticized. Some participants indicated that the new team divisions were, in their opinion, not necessary for the client-centric organization to work, as there is nothing that binds the new teams anyway except for their customers. Others understood the change, but still experienced the loss of (frequent) contact with former direct colleagues as a loss. Many team members indicated that, at the time of the interviews, their new team did not yet feel like a team, as they were either still getting to know each other (*"I really think it needs time, getting to know your colleagues and your customers"*), did not interact sufficiently in their daily operations (*"I feel more aligned with [implementation team] as I work with them regularly. Within my client-centric team, well, I do not work on a project with them"*), or had issues breaking free from the structure of the former teams and integrating with their new fellow team members (*"In the beginning, it did feel like we were intruders in someone else's team", "The client-centric teams kind of consist of existing implementation teams with some support agents sprinkled in"*.

Interestingly, the experiences varied between the different teams. With one team based abroad and two teams in The Netherlands, the Dutch teams found themselves to be relatively similar and therefore felt that splitting themselves up only contributed to a lack of team spirit and a loss of contact with former direct colleagues. The team abroad, however, did not experience problems with their team at all, as their team had already been working together more intensely among themselves, even despite their different roles, than with their Dutch counterparts, due to their location and mother tongue. The social cohesion in this team therefore preceded the client-centric organization, which in turn helped with the change (*"The concept is to be closer to the client (...) and to specialize on a subset of clients for a team which is close to those clients in terms of culture, language and physical proximity"*). The team abroad did find themselves in other difficulties due to a cultural aspect: *"For the client-centric team, in [this culture] there would always be a manager for that team, someone who is in charge. Currently, we don't have that, we just have [manager] [in the Netherlands]."* The team felt distanced from The Netherlands more often, with one participant saying *"I think the communication was quite bad at least from our perspective as we are always a bit remote so we don't hear the discussion at the coffee machines or at the bar (...) so sometimes we heard the announcements after everyone else"* and another stating *"We feel a bit less change because we're far away from HQ and we are in our own little bubble"*.

4.5 Perceived impact

Despite hiccups that participants describe throughout the change process, many do state that they believe the change has had positive effects on them, the company or its customers (*"I do think it is nice that you can ask for help within the team like, can someone help with this or with that, and that willingness is growing and people really want to help each other", "I think it is an absolute gain for [company] to be closer to the customer in this way, to have a positive relationship with your client, I think that has incredible value", "I notice that with customers who previously received less attention (...) consultants do work on that and feel more responsible to keep the client happy"*. According to various participants, the level of customer care had significantly increased since the start of the client-centric teams. The most frequently mentioned cause for this was the positive effect of knowledge sharing and more direct communication within teams, making optimal use of the newfound multidisciplinarity (*"It's a lot easier being in one room with your team, you are more informed", "With client-centric teams, we can focus a lot better on a subset of customers, to do well for them"*).

Although many positive effects were mentioned, employees also experienced losses pertaining to their ability to interact with and learn from their colleagues. Furthermore, although specialization was deemed important to providing good customer care through a great in-depth understanding of topics relevant to *their* customers, some participants theorized that the limited set of customers that each team would now serve could backfire with regards to the breadth of knowledge and workload of a client-centric team (*"A smaller set of customers and implementation projects could also result in losing knowledge", "Knowledge was central, but now it is split over the different teams (...) so workload increases as well because every smaller team now needs to do all tasks", "I would like to keep working with a variety of colleagues throughout the years so that the dynamics change every now and then, keeping you sharp, and so that you can learn from each other"*).

Despite almost all participants indicating that they believed the change to have an impact on them, several participants also said that the impact of the change had proven to be minimal for them. Interestingly, employees who previously only worked on the implementation explained that the client-centric organization did not affect them much because it mostly concerned the post-implementation phase, which was not their main focus. Despite the vision of the change being that the role of implementation workers in the post-implementation phase should grow, they did not (yet) experience this as such (*"From a very personal perspective, nothing has changed for me, because (...) I've kept the same relationships moving on [from the implementation]. The only thing was we've now named it [client-centric]", "I hear about as much from support as I did before, so I don't think much has changed. They* *said we would shuffle (...) for more information sharing, but I think the effect is rather limited so far"*). It should be noted, however, that most of these participants either were fully involved in ongoing implementation projects, which may explain their lacking involvement in post-implementation or they claimed to have already worked with a client-centric philosophy before the switch to client-centric, so they were already familiar.

4.6 Progress & completeness

Interestingly, participants that said they experienced significant effects that they believed originated in the change to the client-centric organization also said that they had a limited idea of what these effects meant for the progress and completeness of the change. It was often stated that this difficulty to see progress came from a lack of exit criteria, as no clear end point of the organizational change was provided by [manager] or the later appointed transition team (*"Why are we doing client-centric? To make the customer feel happy? No, that's rubbish, we can make the customer feel happy doing fifty other things. We've chosen this [approach] for a reason. What is the reason, and what are we measuring for success?", "[Manager] has not communicated often about what they feel are the exit criteria, at least not in a way that has reached me"*). Some of the participants that previously indicated that they experienced little impact also stated that they believed the change might already be completed, with one participant emphasizing the importance of awareness of the client-centric idea and goals: *"I think the creation of that awareness [of acting client-centric] and actively making steps towards that goal has been a large step already"* and another saying *"For me it is done, but it already was after a week or so. I am curious what [manager] believes to be the point of completion"*. Other participants mainly highlight the difficulty of measuring progress within an organizational change and also comment on the lack of exit criteria that make it hard to pinpoint, even with proper measurements, whether the measured progress meets expectations (*"It's hard to pinpoint, right, because how do you properly measure customer satisfaction?", "We don't actually have a KPI for measuring, so that's a really interesting point, what exactly can we measure?", "Not all benefits can be tracked, but you can notice them. That does make it hard"*).

Ford and Ford's Conversations for Change (1995) gives some clear advice regarding change finalization that I recall at this time. The last conversations to have are conversations for closure, and they are a necessary anchor point in organizational change: something people can work towards. Having a clear goal drives motivation, which becomes increasingly clear from these interviews. As described earlier when discussing the support for the change vision: it seems it is not that people do not want to cooperate, they simply need a reason to keep doing so.

5 Discussion

Earlier, I discussed the loss theory of Dent and Goldberg (1999) that explains resistance as the logical consequence of the experience of loss. I then claimed that we could expand this view to also include the concept of gains as gains are the positive equivalent of loss. Therefore, I believe gains could be used to mitigate or minimize losses, thereby eliminating significant resistance and boosting organizational change success. Making use of critical factors provided by the work of Errida and Lotfi (2021) as a framework, I set out to discover whether similar critical factors, also called determinants, were apparent in the performed case study. Based on the findings, I believe stakeholders do indeed mostly regret the losses of an organizational change. Their resistance is based on their perception that certain losses they experience are a direct or indirect consequence of the change that has been initiated. Based on the data gathered, I therefore also strongly believe that addressing these concerns (or factors, or determinants) directly from the position of the change agent to tip the balance in favor of gains provided will help in creating successful and more sustainable change. In the following paragraphs, I will describe the most notable findings regarding which factors influence (maximization of) gains and (minimization of) losses.

5.1 Change vision & definition of change

A change vision should be aligned with the organizational strategy. Moreover, acceptance of the change vision is critical for change success (Errida & Lotfi, 2021). The interview data demonstrated that within [company], there was no acceptance problem. Stakeholders understood the goal and necessity of this change rather quickly and, among stakeholders, you could make out a very clear shared change vision, with some interview participants providing almost identical answers to the question of what the change meant to them. However, accepting the change vision and having change readiness and capacity for change are different things. If people find themselves to be lacking the tools to actually achieve the change vision carried out by a change agent, people can act with caution or become resistant. Acting with caution is seemingly caused by the uncertainty of the situation and the lack of measurable objectives, especially if the change is introduced top-down. Change recipients have instructions 'from the top' that are, to them, seemingly incomplete, as a consequence of which the change cannot be executed. To advance in this situation means to go back to the change agent and inquire about the lack of tools, although that could be seen as 'reprimanding them' and 'rude', so the change recipients instead choose to wait. It is also possible the change recipients do comment on their lacking toolbox, but no adequate response is given. In this case, waiting is also a possible reaction, but instead of caution being the reason, people are being resistant: "If our means to make the change happen are not a priority, then the change is not a priority", so to speak.

5.2 Change readiness, engagement and motivation

In addition to the means provided by the change agent such as a clear definition of change and a change strategy for implementation, other means are of importance to change readiness. In the interviews, it became apparent that many employees had voiced concerns regarding the available resources and the expected workload, not just of the change, but also as a consequence of the change result. According to some interviewees, the required workload for their day-to-day tasks did not easily allow them to also actively manage and execute the change. However, as this change was initiated with self-steering teams in mind, that *is* what was asked for. The teams first had to think about the translation of the change vision to a clear definition of what had to be done in practice and then had to execute the defined steps. In people's clear unhappiness with the uncertainty that the change had caused, it is shown that there was an opportunity for the change agent here to provide more clarity, allowing the teams to manage their limited resources better.

Additional factors in the creation of change readiness are social cohesion and progress measuring. The data suggest that team members had issues with the newly created teams in the sense that there was no organic relationship with their fellow team members, possibly due to the variation in roles. If we look at the result of creating multi-disciplinary teams, we see that on a company level, it has definitely positively impacted knowledge sharing. However, the social integration of teams has not had a chance to take place so far. The speed at which social cohesion within a newly formed group forms does differ based on circumstances, findings suggest. Teams that are largely based on the already existing working situation and those in which there are other shared characteristics other than the organizational role of individuals have an easier time integrating. These findings confirm the results of a study conducted by DiBenigno and Kellogg (2014) which concludes that sharing other characteristics besides professional ones such as function, level, or status could allow individuals to better cooperate as a team.

Obstacles such as insufficient capacity and lacking social cohesion can be a reason for change recipients' lack of motivation to engage with the change. Another motivational problem could involve lacking progress measurements and exit criteria. Findings show that participants consistently indicated a degree of uncertainty regarding the current progress of the change and how far the change had progressed towards its goal state. Even interviewees who claimed that they believed the change was almost or already done only did so based on their own reference frame, and not on pre-defined exit criteria. As various change methodologies recommend "creating short-term wins" in change processes to motivate stakeholders (Errida & Lotfi, 2021), the lack of progress measuring again leaves stakeholders in a position of uncertainty. Stakeholders may feel their actions have very little impact on the progress made and could therefore remain motionless. Interestingly, there is no shortage of wins to celebrate with stakeholders, if the interviews are to be believed. Participants perceive a variety of positive impacts ranging from improved customer care, which customers have also explicitly expressed towards them, to increased knowledge sharing within and across teams, leading to a better understanding of long-term goals and plans regarding their customers. The change agent would have done well to use this perceived positive impact to their advantage to show that the change is working as intended, to motivate stakeholders to keep going and, possibly, to clarify future steps.

5.3 Leadership & effective communication

Effective and constant communication is always important, but even more so in organizational change. In this particular case study, it is clearly shown how communication can be perceived as lacking by, for example, not communicating in person but communicating through digital means instead. Furthermore, a large part of the criticism found in the data regards the frequency of communication and the availability of the change agent for said communication. As stated before, to minimize resistance, it is essential to be aware of the (potential) causes for resistance, so that they can be addressed properly and quickly. One must also understand that resistance has its origins, and is not an irrational action just to sabotage the plans of the change agent. It is understandable that due to other responsibilities, leadership is not always able to constantly communicate every step of a change process and address every potential point of resistance. Some sense of self-steering ability may be expected in a professional corporate environment. However, as stated earlier, stakeholders need to remain on board and need to remain engaged. Leading a change also means playing a "sponsorship role": you are in charge of "aligning stakeholders to support and own the change" (Errida & Lotfi, 2021).

According to Heyden et al. (2017), top-down change works based on the hierarchy provided by the organization. Therefore, it is not unexpected that change that is initiated in a top-down fashion creates expectations that the change will be managed in a top-down fashion. Findings suggest there may have been a mismatch between the change agent and the change recipients with regards to this coordinating structure. Whereas the change agent initiated the change top-down and then left the power of defining the change with the recipients, the recipients largely expected that instructions were to be received from the change agent. In this stalemate, I believe much time was lost in this particular case. Reiterating the importance of effective and constant communication, as well as leadership, it is important to discuss the used change management methods clearly with everyone involved. Misunderstandings and misattributions of power and responsibility are more easily avoided that way.

5.4 Interpreting the effects of change

The effects of the change were discussed earlier as a way to share short-term 'wins' that could help to motivate all involved to progress with the change. Based on the findings in this case study, there are two additional points of discussion regarding the effects of change. First, it should be noted that irrational or emotional effects resulting from change or resistance to change seem short-term. Participants first reactions to the change were overwhelmingly skeptical and possibly even angry or scared in nature because of the uncertainty change induces in an organization. However, as time went by and people's sensemaking ability kicked in, understanding of the change seems to have grown. The rational or even factual results of change have longer-term effects. Therefore, it is key to keep the effect of time in mind when observing organizational change effects.

Lastly, as many participants commented: an isolated effect of change is incredibly hard or possibly even impossible to measure. In a real-life environment, an organization, there are too many dependent factors that may influence each other. Any quantitative or qualitative measurement instrument could show positive effects after a change occurred that were not present beforehand. However, it is almost impossible to unequivocally prove that these effects are the result of a particular change initiative. The question is whether it matters. Based on my findings, I feel that many employees believe it suffices to see if the stakeholders, in this case meaning themselves, management and their customers, believe the change has resulted in positive effects. If the effects have actually come from this change is, then, not as important.

5.5 Qualitative criteria

Stenfors et al. (2020) describe four main criteria to discuss the credibility of academic research: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. I will discuss these topics individually and comment on my understanding of the application of these qualitative criteria on the research performed, and provide reflection and possible improvements.

Credibility

The idea for this research originally came to fruition during discussions with [company] on fitting thesis assignments. Having received some background information on the case, I performed literature discovery and found several interesting sources on organizational change, one of which particularly caught my eye. The work of Dent and Goldberg (1999) was the main inspiration for the title and main subject of this work: gains and losses. Subsequently, I began to formulate some kind of framework for gains and losses and the factors influencing them. Determinants of successful organizational change based on thorough literature research were found in the comprehensive work of Errida and Lotfi (2021). From there, the further context for potential issues arising in organizational change processes was found in other works related to resistance and organizational change management. Whereas Errida and Lotfi had compiled an overview of determinants of change based on many different studies, I wanted to see if the determinants they discovered could be retrofitted to the very specific case study I had at [company]. As described in chapter 3, the small-scale observation of this case and the delicate intra-personal and inter-personal sensemaking was the main reason to conduct a qualitative study.

Dependability

Regarding dependability, I believe this research has been very dependent on the timeframe within it was conducted. The organizational change discussed in this study started in late 2022 and has continued and evolved up until the publication of this research. Throughout this period, participants have also evolved, as have their experiences and opinions. The positive side of this is that the researcher was able to get very close to the organizational change that was being researched. Unfortunately, this also means that reproducing similar circumstances may be hard for a potential peer review. Nevertheless, the procedures at hand are straightforward and well-documented, and I believe that this would allow to conduct a similar investigation easily, albeit with a different outcome given the elapsed time.

Confirmability

Confirmability-wise, as the topic of discussion, the client-centric organization change, was rather concrete, and the participants also discussed this topic in such a way in the interviews, it was relatively easy to link participants' opinions to each other to form a comprehensive idea of public opinion within the company. The quotes shown in this research have shown as such, as many of them are unambiguous and relate directly to the research question. Participants were aware of the relationship between actions performed by other actors and their perceptions of them on the success of the organizational change implementation and regularly commented on this.

Transferability

Because this research was performed much like a case study, the results must be interpreted as specific to this case, with limited transferability. This does not necessarily mean they cannot be generalized, although I would suggest further research at a larger scale has already taken place and, as such, this work should rather be seen as a specific case study of the effectiveness of organizational change descriptions as provided by, for example, Errida and Lotfi. To further clarify one could look at Thorngate's postulate of commensurate complexity (Thorngate, 1976) as interpreted by Weick: research can be accurate and simple, but not generally applicable, general and simple, but not accurate, or general and accurate, but not simple (Weick, 1999). In this case, by opting for a case study, the aim of this research is to be accurate and simple, and thereby not (very) generalizable.

5.6 Limitations & Future work

Despite being a valuable case study within a small-scale change environment, contributing to the field of organizational change, and extending the view of loss in organizational change, there are limitations that should be mentioned.

First of all, this study did not observe the entire change process, as that had started in September/October 2022 and the data gathering for this research started only at the end of March 2023. This means that most of the findings depend on the recollection participants had of the past six to seven months, and it should be taken into account that in such a time span the sensemaking of participants may have changed. For example, one could imagine that especially emotions encountered during the initial phase of the change have subdued after several months have passed and more clarity surrounding the change has been provided. In order to gather as many experiences from participants as possible, the interview script specifically included a question asking the participant to try and remember and describe the events of the organizational change from the announcement up until the current day. Some participants did mention that they did not have a clear recollection of the announcement itself or even the months after that. When asked when the announcement was made, responses varied between estimates of June and late November 2022. Nevertheless, upon talking through the timeline, most participants eventually did recollect their experiences and opinions and were able to also describe changes to them that happened over time throughout the process. In addition to missing the first part of the transition, the organizational change is not finalized at the time of the publication of this research. For future similar research, I believe it to be worthwhile to observe an entire change process from start to finish using similar methods to this study, potentially even allowing to have multiple interviews at specific time intervals.

The limited time span of this study also had other consequences, namely regarding the volume of the data gathered and the limited time available to properly process this data. In hindsight, interviewing no less than 18 participants for an average of about an hour proved to be a lot of data to process, even with the help of artificial intelligence transcription tools. The interviews could have been significantly shorter as, in the end, only about half of every transcript contained useful information pertaining to the posed research question. I believe the reason for the prolonged interviews is mostly found in going off-topic and discussing other - surely interesting, but not very relevant to this research - topics surrounding working experiences and organizational change. For me, this has been a great learning experience in how to conduct efficient interviews and I would recommend for future research to stick more strictly to the interview script and possibly categorize the required talking points better beforehand so that an interviewee can be cut short if the conversation somewhat derails.

Regarding the employees interviewed some bias may exist in this study, as the selection of employees was not random. As the restructuring of teams and the combination of employees with wildly varying roles into multi-disciplinary teams was a main point of the organizational change, I felt it was important to make sure that some representation was present for all of the different disciplines. In addition, with the population of employees affected by this change not being incredibly large, there was very little room for selection. Another criterion for participants was that they had been working for [company] for some time already, or at least had experienced the company in the time before this change was announced. As the interviews only took place in March and April 2023, this meant that there were employees who had been working at the company for over six months already at that time that did not qualify for an interview. Although I believe these choices may introduce bias, I also believe they were necessary to create a fitting sample of the population that would be able to provide information that would help answer the posed research question. Future research may choose to go for random sampling, although I sincerely believe that the ability to do so is highly dependent on the size of the organization and the variety of potential participants.

This research took place, as described earlier, among a relatively small population of employees within a medium-sized company. As described in chapter 3.1, the company consists of two branches, only the (somewhat) smaller of which was affected by the organizational change and therefore part of the research population. Being a rather small group within a company in which I would describe the atmosphere and relationships as highly informal, I noticed that loyalty and interpersonal relationships played a role in some interviewees' participation in this research. Naturally, as the ongoing change was initiated by and formally overseen by [manager], the evaluation of the implementation of said change could just as well be seen as a performance review for said manager. In some cases, participants directly asked if they could speak freely in the interviews, which of course was possible as the interview contents have been treated entirely confidential and anonymous. For some, this reassurance was enough to provide their honest opinion. For others, I seemed to notice that there may have been more that they wanted to speak about but did not, possibly afraid of consequences for their career. Naturally, as is my duty as a researcher, I have not further inquired about this nor have I pushed participants to share more than they did.

Lastly, this research has been conducted at [company] as part of my Master's degree while I was simultaneously partaking in an internship at the same company. Throughout these months, I have therefore not only been a researcher but also a colleague to many of my research participants. Although in many cases I believe this relationship resulted in a level of trust in me that has helped motivate people to participate, it should be noted that I was in an inferior position to my research participants. Throughout the work on this research, I have not often felt inferior to my participants or had the idea that my position was actively working against the research goals, and as said, I think it has largely benefited the results of this study. For many interviewees, it seemed like my position as a known individual with whom they had built up a relationship throughout my stay at [company] combined with the fact that I was and would remain an outsider meant the ideal level of comfort to openly discuss their opinions on the matter of this organizational change, their job satisfaction and security and the leadership at [company].

6 Conclusion

Change is a difficult topic as it touches upon so much of our human psychology. On paper, change is a matter of moving from one state to another, almost administratively. In reality, change is influenced by many factors pertaining to our ability to communicate clearly with others, formulate a common understanding of our status quo, discuss our desires for a new situation, and structurally and gradually approach this movement, all while continuously taking into account rational and irrational views and emotions of and relationships between people.

People can experience change akin to loss: the status quo is no more, long live the new status quo. Between saying goodbye to the former and welcoming the latter, however, is a whole world of sensemaking in which we allow for, as Peng (2018) said "reweaving [our] webs of beliefs and actions". It is a matter of mental processing, which requires time and resources. As discussed in this study, loss and gain are logical counterparts and have a significant contribution to the success of organizational change. If loss is a reason for stakeholders to be resistant to change, then gains could provide a reason to get on board. Therefore, maximization of gains and minimization of losses is our goal, and based on my qualitative analysis, I found that in many cases the same factor can result in both gains and losses, dependent on the actions taken.

In the case study of this research, critical factors described by Errida and Lotfi (2021), are found to play a role. Specifically, stakeholders are first and foremost reliant on a clear definition of change. They want to know what steps need to be taken to complete the change successfully, what is expected of them and what role they should take within the change process, and how and when the organization finds itself in a new post-change state. Next, organizational change is not individual. Any change agent, whoever they may be, needs support within their organization, for which leadership is a key necessity. Change agents need to lead the change by getting people on board with a convincing plan and guiding them through change with effective and regular communication, proactively taking away worries that may result in resistance. That is not to say that there is no place for resistance in change processes. In fact, the opposite may apply. After all, a resistant stakeholder is an involved stakeholder, and with their worries taken away the path to a successful organizational change is largely clear.

Despite the way it is described, in this study or others, there is not one perfect approach to organizational change. Of course, taking into account the conclusions of academic research should help change agents achieve successful change. However, as described, change allows for some irrationality to occur. It is only human. In corporate communication, the personal aspect can be forgotten due to the organizational and possibly financial interests of the company. We should, however, never forget the impact personal relationships can have on organizations and how they can be leveraged to create sustainable change.

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In November of 2022, I approached dr. Mark van Vuuren, who I had come to know because of some brilliant courses he taught in my Master's programme. I told him about the case of the client-centric organization, which is analyzed thoroughly in the research paper you have just read. My intention was to ask Mark whether he would want to be my supervisor for this thesis at the end of the conversation. The conversation went incredibly well and we shared a common enthusiasm for this interesting case in organizational communication. What I remember vividly was Mark asking me halfway through the conversation whether I had already found a supervisor and stating that, if I had not, his email to the Master thesis coordinator was ready to be sent. From this moment on, I knew that Mark would support me and my work relentlessly.

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A Interview manual

Interviewhandleiding

Interviewscript & semi-structured vragen

Voorgesprek	
	Welkom, bedankt voor het meewerken aan dit interview. ➔ *Met jouw toestemming start ik nu de audio-opname.* ➔ *Dit interview wordt afgenomen door Niels de Groot. De geïnterviewde is <naam>. Dit gesprek vindt plaats op <datum> en begint om <tijd>.* ➔ *Voor we beginnen: heb je vragen of opmerkingen over je deelname aan dit onderzoek?* ➔ *Voor de goede orde: je hebt zowel het consent form als de information sheet gelezen en begrepen of het is aan je voorgelezen. Je hebt vragen kunnen stellen over het onderzoek en deze zijn naar tevredenheid beantwoord. Je hebt het toestemmingsformulier ook ondertekend of gaat dat nu doen. Klopt dat allemaal?* ➔ *Laten we beginnen met het interview. Als je in de tussentijd vragen hebt, even pauze wilt of helemaal wilt stoppen, laat het me dan weten. Houd er rekening mee dat je geen vragen hoeft te beantwoorden als je dat niet wilt.*
Introductie & achtergrond	
Q1	**Hoe ziet een gemiddelde werkdag er voor jou uit?** ➔ Let op **persoonlijke kenmerken / karaktereigenschappen** ➔ Welke **rol** heeft hij/zij [redacted] ➔ Welke **ervaring** heeft hij/zij [redacted] ➔ Hoe is hun **eerdere werkervaring** (bij andere werkgevers)?
Q2	**Heb je in je carrière al eerder organisatorische veranderingen meegemaakt? Zo ja, kun je deze dan kort omschrijven? Het zou fijn zijn als je kort kan samenvatten wat de verandering was, wat jouw rol erin was en, indien van toepassing, het resultaat van de wijziging.** ➔ Stel verduidelijkingsvragen ➔ Eerdere ervaring → note, kom hier op terug in Q8 ➔ Geen eerdere ervaring → Q8 overslaan
Klantgerichte organisatie & determinanten	
Q3	**Hoe interpreteer je de 'client-centric organization?** ➔ Moeilijk uit te leggen / weet niet → *Waarom?*
Q4	**Kun je me vertellen wat er ongeveer heeft plaatsgevonden vanaf de aankondiging van de client-centric organization tot aan nu?** ➔ Weet het niet meer → *Vertel me gewoon wat je je wel herinnert* ➔ *Hoe was je betrokkenheid bij dit proces tot nu toe?* ➔ Minder betrokken / zeer betrokken → *Waarom?*
Q5	**Als je deze verandering in perspectief zou moeten plaatsen, wat is volgens jou dan de impact van deze transitie?** ➔ *Waarom? Hoe ervaar jij dit?*
Q6	**Wat vind je van de implementatie van de client-centric organization? Let op: ik vraag specifiek naar de *implementatie*, niet naar het idee zelf.**

	➔ Mening over het concept → laat uitpraten, maar herhaal de vraag over de uitvoering ➔ *Welke factoren dragen bij aan deze mening?* → let op: determinanten ➔ Vraag om verduidelijking en stel vervolgvragen waar nodig
Q7	**Kun je deze organisatieverandering vergelijken met de veranderingen die je eerder hebt meegemaakt?** ➔ *Kun je eventueel één overeenkomst en één duidelijk verschil noemen?* ➔ *Met betrekking tot jouw <u>mening</u> over het succes van organisatieverandering, hoe verhouden je eerdere ervaringen zich tot deze verandering?*
Effecten van organisatieverandering	
Q8	**Weet je of er momenteel projecten lopen om het effect van de client-centric organization te meten?** Ja → *Wat wordt er gedaan en wat is je mening over deze meetmethode?*
Q9	**Hoe denk je dat het effect van een organisatieverandering het beste kan worden gemeten?** ➔ Kwantitatief → *Welke Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) zouden volgens jou kunnen worden gebruikt om de implementatie van een organisatieverandering te volgen?* ➔ Kwalitatief → *Welke methoden zouden volgens jou kunnen worden gebruikt om (het effect van organisatieverandering) te meten?*
Q10	**Welke effecten van de organisatieverandering heb je tot nu toe opgemerkt?** ➔ **Voor jezelf** ➔ **Voor je collega's/team** ➔ **Voor het bedrijf** ➔ **Voor de klant**
Q11	**Wat is volgens jou een geschikte indicator voor wanneer de organisatieverandering afgerond is?** ➔ *(Hoever in het proces is de verandering nu?)*
Q12	(Opmerking voor interviewer: zorg ervoor dat 'gains' en 'losses' goed uitgelegd worden aan de geïnterviewde) **Als je de transitie naar de client-centric organization zou moeten omschrijven in termen van 'winsten' en 'verliezen', zowel persoonlijk als voor de organisatie, zou je dan enkele voorbeelden kunnen noemen?**
Teams	
(Opmerking voor de interviewer: sla dit gedeelte over bij het interviewen van het management)	
Q13	**De transitie naar de client-centric organization is bij verschillende teams parallel ingevoerd. Hoe ging dit binnen jouw eigen team?**
Q14	**Wat heb je gemerkt van de ervaringen van andere teams met betrekking tot deze organisatieverandering? Hoe is hun houding ten opzichte van de verandering in vergelijking met je eigen team?** ➔ Soortgelijke houding → *Waarom? Samenwerking? Zo ja, in welke zin?* ➔ (Heel) andere houding? → *Waarom?*

Q15	**Wat is volgens jou de beste manier voor het management van een organisatie om een verandering aan te pakken waarbij meerdere parallelle teams betrokken zijn?** ➔ Geen idee → *Wat vond je van de aanpak van het management met betrekking tot de implementatie binnen jouw eigen team?* ➔ Uniform / op maat → *Waarom? Kun je voor- en nadelen van deze aanpak bedenken?*
Management	
(Opmerking voor interviewer: sla dit gedeelte over bij het interviewen van CCT-leden)	
Q16	**De transitie naar de client-centric organization is bij verschillende teams parallel ingevoerd. Heb je enig verschil in aanpak tussen de teams opgemerkt?**
Q17	**Merk je verschil in effect tussen de verschillende teams?** ➔ Nee → *Waarom denk je dat dat het geval is?* ➔ Ja → *Welke verschillen? Heb je een mogelijke verklaring voor hen?*
Q18	**Hoe kijk je terug op je aanpak om deze organisatieverandering door te voeren in de organisatie?** ➔ Negatief / verbetering mogelijk → *Wat precies, en waarom?* ➔ Positief / succesvol → *Waarom is dat?*
Q19	**Wat denk je dat de client-centric teams tot nu toe vinden van de transitie? Heb je enige feedback gekregen over de gekozen aanpak?**
Afsluitend	
Q20	**Is er iets dat je met me wilt delen waar ik niet naar heb gevraagd? Of is er iets dat je wil toevoegen aan je eerdere antwoorden?**
	➔ *Bedankt voor je tijd. Dit is het einde van het interview. Ik ga de audio-opname nu stoppen.* ➔ Vraag de geïnterviewde of ze even de tijd willen nemen voor debriefing.

Bijlage: Determinants of organizational change

Critical factors	Sub-factors
Change vision and strategy	Clear definition of change
	Clear and shared change vision
	Change strategy and objectives
	Alignment with mission and strategy
Change readiness and capacity for change	Sense of urgency
	Need for change
	Case for change
	Capacity for change
	Enabling structures
	Organizational competencies
	Individual skills and abilities
	Infrastructures and conditions to support change
	Sufficient resources
	Organizational and individual readiness
	Organizational culture/cultural fit
Change team performance	Change agents capacity
	Clear change agent's roles and responsibilities
	High performance team
	Skilled and experienced change team
	Organizational change competency
	Change team have the necessary training and expertise in change management
	Power and stamina of change agents
	Preparation of change management team
Effective and constant communication	Communication of the change vision and strategy to all people
	Constant communication to all stakeholders during change
	Assessment of communication Needs and channels
	Development and implementation of a communication strategy and plan
	Monitoring and evaluating communication effectiveness

Critical factors	Sub-factors
Motivation of employees and change agents	Motivation of change agents
	Creating short wins
	Motivation
	Rewards, celebration, and recognition
	Incentives
	Building a support system for change agents
	Consideration of individual needs and values
Stakeholder engagement	Engagement and commitment of supervisors, mid-level managers, and senior managers
	Stakeholder engagement
	Personal and employee commitment
	Organizational engagement
	Internal support
	External support
	Change agents' commitment
Training, coaching, and empowerment	Coaching of employees
	Mobilizing commitment
	Knowledge, ability, and learning development
	Training
	Employee empowerment
	Skill development
Resistance management	Transition management
	Resistance management
	Behavior management
Leaderships	Political support and external support
	Leadership; enabled leaders
	Champions and sponsors
	sponsorship
Structured approach for change	Continuous improvement
	Planning
	Action planning
	Develop a change plan
	Planning and road mapping
	Structure, systems (policies and procedures)
	Formal policies, procedures, and systems
	Management structure and processes
	Structured approach of change
	Governance and PMO
	Integration of project and change management
Monitoring, measurement	Tracking, measuring, reporting, and feedback
	Progress monitoring
Reinforcement and sustainment of change	Reinforce new behaviors
	Reinforce, maintain, and institutionalize change
	Anchor change in the corporate culture
	Consolidate gains and improvements, integrate lessons learned, establish best practices
	Develop reinforcement strategy and create cultural fit
	Pursue comprehensive and systemic change

Interview manual

Interview script & semi-structured questions

Pre-interview	
	Welcome to this interview. Thank you for participating. ➔ *With your permission, I will start the audio recording now.* ➔ *This interview is conducted by Niels de Groot. The interviewee is <name>. This interview takes place on <date> and starts at <time>.* ➔ *Before we start: do you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this research?* ➔ *For the record: you have read and understood the consent form as well as the information sheet or it has been read to you. You have been able to ask questions about the study and they have been answered to your satisfaction. You have also signed the consent form or will do so now, correct?* ➔ *Let's start the interview. If you have any questions in the meantime, need a break or would like to stop, please let me know. Keep in mind that you do not have to answer questions if you do not want to.*
Introduction & background	
Q1	**What is an average workday like for you?** ➔ Pay attention to **personal characteristics** ➔ What **role** do they have [redacted] ➔ What **experience** do they have [redacted] ➔ How is their **previous working experience**?
Q2	**Have you previously experienced organizational changes in your career? If so, can you describe them briefly. It would be great if you could include a short summary of what the change was about, what your role was and if applicable, the result of the change.** ➔ Ask clarification questions ➔ Previous experience → note, coming back to this at Q8 ➔ No previous experience → note, make sure to skip Q8
Client-centric organization & determinants	
Q3	**How do you interpret the 'client-centric organization'?** ➔ Hard to explain / does not know → *Why?*
Q4	**Can you take me through the timeline from the announcement of the client-centric organization to now?** ➔ Don't remember → *Just tell me what you remember* ➔ *How was your involvement in this process so far?* ➔ Less involved / very involved → *Why?*
Q5	**If you had to place this transition into perspective, what do you think is the impact of this transition?** ➔ *Why? How do you experience this?*
Q6	**What is your opinion on the implementation of the client-centric organization? Note: I am specifically asking about the implementation, not the concept itself.**

	➔ Opinion about the concept → let them talk, but repeat the question about the implementation ➔ *What contributes to this opinion?* → attention: determinants ➔ Ask clarification and follow-up questions where necessary
Q7	**Can you compare this organizational change to ones that you have experienced earlier?** ➔ *Can you name one particular similarity and one particular difference?* ➔ *With regard to your opinion on the success of organizational change, how do your previous experiences compare to this change?*
Effects of organizational change	
Q8	**Are you aware of any efforts to measure the effect of the client-centric organization change?** Yes → *What is being done and what is your opinion on this measuring method?*
Q9	**How do you think the effect of organizational change is best measured?** ➔ Quantitative → *What Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) do you think could be used to track the implementation of an organizational change?* ➔ Qualitative → *What methods do you think could be used to measure (the effect of organizational change)?*
Q10	**Up until now, what effects of the organizational change have you noticed?** ➔ **For yourself** ➔ **For your colleagues/team** ➔ **For the company** ➔ **For the client**
Q11	**What do think can be used as an indicator for when the organizational change is completed?** ➔ *(How far along do you think the change is right now?)*
Q12	(Note to interviewer: make sure to explain 'gains' and 'losses' well to the interviewee) **If you had to describe the client-centric organization change in terms of 'gains' and 'losses', both personal and to the organization, could you name a few examples?**
Teams	
(Note to interviewer: skip this section when interviewing management)	
Q13	**The client-centric organization change has been introduced in parallel to different teams. Can you describe your experience within your own team?**
Q14	**What have you noticed from other teams' experience of the organization change? How is their attitude towards the change in comparison to your team?** ➔ Similar attitude → *Why? Did teams collaborate? If so, in what sense?* ➔ (Very) different attitude? → *Why?*

Q15	**What do you think is the best way for the management of an organization to approach a change that addresses multiple parallel teams?** ➔ No idea → *What did you think of the approach management took with regards to your team?* ➔ Uniform / customized → *Why? Can you think of any advantages and disadvantages to this approach?*
Management	
(Note to interviewer: skip this section when interviewing team employees)	
Q16	**The client-centric organization change has been introduced in parallel to different teams. Have you noticed any difference in approach between them?**
Q17	**Have you noticed any difference in effect between the different teams?** ➔ No → *Why do you think that is the case?* ➔ Yes → *What differences? Do you have any possible explanation for them?*
Q18	**How do you look back on your approach to introducing this organizational change to the organization?** ➔ Negative / improvement possible → *What exactly, and why?* ➔ Positive / successful → *Why is that?*
Q19	**What do you think the client-centric teams think of the transition so far? Have you received any feedback on your approach?**
Concluding	
Q20	**Is there anything you would like to share with me that I have not asked about? Or is there anything that you want to add to your previous answers?**
	➔ *Thank you for your time. This is the end of the interview. I will now stop the audio recording.* ➔ Ask interviewee if they would like to take some time for debriefing.

Appendix: Determinants of organizational change

Critical factors	Sub-factors
Change vision and strategy	Clear definition of change Clear and shared change vision Change strategy and objectives Alignment with mission and strategy
Change readiness and capacity for change	Sense of urgency Need for change Case for change Capacity for change Enabling structures Organizational competencies Individual skills and abilities Infrastructures and conditions to support change Sufficient resources Organizational and individual readiness Organizational culture/cultural fit
Change team performance	Change agents capacity Clear change agent's roles and responsibilities High performance team Skilled and experienced change team Organizational change competency Change team have the necessary training and expertise in change management Power and stamina of change agents Preparation of change management team
Effective and constant communication	Communication of the change vision and strategy to all people Constant communication to all stakeholders during change Assessment of communication Needs and channels Development and implementation of a communication strategy and plan Monitoring and evaluating communication effectiveness
Motivation of employees and change agents	Motivation of change agents Creating short wins Motivation Rewards, celebration, and recognition Incentives Building a support system for change agents Consideration of individual needs and values
Stakeholder engagement	Engagement and commitment of supervisors, mid-level managers, and senior managers Stakeholder engagement Personal and employee commitment Organizational engagement Internal support External support Change agents' commitment
Training, coaching, and empowerment	Coaching of employees Mobilizing commitment Knowledge, ability, and learning development Training Employee empowerment Skill development Transition management
Resistance management	Resistance management Behavior management
Leaderships	Political support and external support Leadership; enabled leaders Champions and sponsors sponsorship
Structured approach for change	Continuous improvement Planning Action planning Develop a change plan Planning and road mapping Structure, systems (policies and procedures) Formal policies, procedures, and systems Management structure and processes Structured approach of change Governance and PMO Integration of project and change management
Monitoring, measurement	Tracking, measuring, reporting, and feedback Progress monitoring
Reinforcement and sustainment of change	Reinforce new behaviors Reinforce, maintain, and institutionalize change Anchor change in the corporate culture Consolidate gains and improvements, integrate lessons learned, establish best practices Develop reinforcement strategy and create cultural fit Pursue comprehensive and systemic change

B Coding scheme

Code	Name	Definition	Density[1]
Change readiness and capacity for change			71
1.1	Sufficient resources	Related to the resources such as personnel or time or a shortage thereof	40
1.2	Work pressure	Related to the amount of work that needs to be done and the (mental) strain it causes for employees	20
1.3	Company culture	Related to the established way of working and interpersonal relationships within the company	20
Change vision & strategy			141
2.1	Change vision & objectives	Related to the intended end / post-change state of the organization and the idea of the change itself	5
2.2	Definition of change	Related to the execution of the change itself and what it practically means for its stakeholders.	70
2.3	Shared change vision	Related to the common understanding of the reason for this change and the change objectives itself, or lack thereof	41
2.4	Timing	Related to the timing of actions pertaining to the organizational change vision and strategy	8
2.5	Uncertainty	Related to experiencing lacking information regarding or contextualization of the change vision and strategy and its consequences	24
Effective communication			41
3.1	Internal communication	Related to internal communication and the frequency and intensity of said communication	40
3.2	External communication	Related to external communication (outside the organization) and the frequency and intensity of said communication	1

[1] Please note that the total amount for a category does not need to match the sum of its subcodes as some quotations may be linked to multiple subcodes.

Leadership			100
4.1	Leadership & guidance	Related to the management of the change, persuasiveness of and guidance by a change agent or other persons	100
Monitoring and measurement			88
5.1	Exit criteria	Related to exit criteria that define the end state of the change has been reached	39
5.2	Progress monitoring	Related to (the ability of) monitoring the progress, effects and successfulness of change	57
Motivation			56
6.1	Initiative	Related to initiative undertaken independently or instigated by others by people within the change	31
6.2	Motivation	Related to inherent or extrinsic motivation of people within the change and factors influencing said motivation	17
6.3	Employee satisfaction	Related to the happiness of employees and their satisfaction within their current role and/or team	10
Resistance management			17
7.1	Resistance or ignorance	Related to internal communication on positive or negative aspects of the change and possibilities or impossibilities in the implementation	17
Stakeholder engagement			48
8.1	Stakeholder engagement	Related to the involvement of people within the change with its course and effects and their ability to express said involvement	19
8.2	Social cohesion & trust	Related to the social cohesion, the group feeling and identity of a team or group and the trust felt within or between groups	29
Structured change			13
9.1	Division of responsibilities	Related to the responsibilities (and potentially roles) both pre and post-change and how they have been / will be affected by the change.	13

Miscellaneous topics			36
10.1	Multi-disciplinary teams	Related to the concept of multi-disciplinary teams consisting of people with a variety of different roles cooperating together on a common goal	30
10.2	Opportunities	Related to opportunities that the change may or may not create for those involved in it	6
Results of change			151
11.1	Contract renewal	Related to the renewal of a contract or customer loyalty to the company	15
11.2	Customer care	Related to the care provided to the customer and the customer relationship involved in said care	63
11.3	Knowledge sharing	Related to the sharing of knowledge within teams or across teams and within or between different roles	50
11.4	Scalability	Related to the (potential for) scaling up the organization in terms of customers and staff	6
11.5	Uniformity	Related to (necessity of) uniform policy across the organization	27

C Approval Ethics committee

Approved BMS EC research project request

Ethics Committee HSS (BMS) <ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl>

Vr 24-02-23 15:20

Aan: Groot, N.E. de (Niels, Student M-COM) [redacted]

CC: [redacted]

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UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

APPROVED BMS EC RESEARCH PROJECT REQUEST

Dear researcher,

This is a notification from the BMS Ethics Committee concerning the web application form for the ethical review of research projects.

Requestnr. :	230018
Title :	What's at Stake: Gains and Losses in Organizational Transformation
Date of application :	2023-02-21
Researcher :	Groot, N.E. de
Supervisor :	Vuuren, H.A. van
Commission :	Zeeuw, A. van der
Usage of SONA :	N

Your research has been approved by the Ethics Committee.

The BMS ethical committee / Domain Humanities & Social Sciences has assessed the ethical aspects of your research project. On the basis of the information you provided, the committee does not have any ethical concerns regarding this research project.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the research is carried out in line with the information provided in the application you submitted for ethical review. If you make changes to the proposal that affect the approach to research on humans, you must resubmit the changed project or grant agreement to the ethical committee with these changes highlighted.

Moreover, novel ethical issues may emerge while carrying out your research. It is important that you re-consider and discuss the ethical aspects and implications of your research regularly, and that you proceed as a responsible scientist.

Finally, your research is subject to regulations such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Code of Conduct for the use of personal data in Scientific Research by VSNU (the Association of Universities in the Netherlands), further codes of conduct that are applicable in your field, and the obligation to report a security incident (data breach or otherwise) at the UT.

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