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How to Transform a Public Organisation

A Study of the Head Office of Region Västra Götaland

Master's thesis in Quality and Operations Management

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Abstract

Historically, different theories of public sector management have evolved. New Public Management has dominated but over the last decades new trends have emerged as a reaction to its shortcomings. The core of the new theories is to consider the user as a co-producer of value. In 2016 the Swedish Government assigned Tillitsdelegationen to investigate how the management of the public sector could be improved, and specifically to support the implementation of Trust Based Governance.

This thesis focuses on Region Västra Götaland, a public political organisation currently on the journey towards a cohesive organisation and a culture built on trust. In the upcoming years they will encounter challenges demanding a shift in organisation and governance. The Head Office is the link between the political decision makers and the citizens, supporting the political entities and the different organisations within the region. This thesis first explores the current state and identifies areas to focus on in the transformation. Subsequently, it immerses into transformation stories of other public organisations to give rise to ideas on how the transformation can proceed.

Through a qualitative approach, this thesis used a case study design mainly built on interviews with employees at the Head Office and representatives from a number of other public organisations. This was complemented with a literature review focused on public management theories and change management.

The study identified some aspects of New Public Management to still remain in the organisation, but also possibilities to embark on the journey towards Trust Based Governance. By studying other organisations, ideas of how to transform were developed. Prevalent in these findings was that culture is strongly intertwined with leadership, hence prioritisation of leaders makes up a big part of the conclusion. Also, to ensure alignment between different parts of the organisation was found important to guide behaviour and create the desired culture characterised by openness, collaboration and with the user in centre.

Keywords: New Public Management, Trust Based Governance, Organisational culture.

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1. Introduction

In this chapter an introduction to the study will be presented in three sections, starting with the background to the topic, followed by a formulation of the aim and the research questions. Lastly, some limitations and the disposition of the thesis are presented.

1.1 Background

Since the 1970's the use of New Public Management has been outspread around the world (Eriksson & Hellström, 2020). At this time, the public sector had gone through an expansion with more and greater commitments being added to the sector. As a consequence, its traditional management philosophy received two main critiques, inefficiency and a lack of democracy, resulting in the development of New Public Management (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). This management theory was inspired by techniques adopted in the private sector, with belief it would improve the public sector.

Some of the cornerstones of New Public Management emphasise the efficiency of the output of internal processes together with establishment of performance measurement systems, decentralisation of accountability, and a focus on creating competition among actors (Hood, 1991). These cornerstones have resulted in a strong intra-organisational focus and a product orientation towards public management, which have come to be accused as some of the main flaws of New Public Management (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). Since the public sector is about providing services to society and citizens, and not about producing products to customers, Osborne (2010) means this has implications for how the sector should be managed. Therefore, he proposed a service approach to public management, which takes another view on value creation, considering services as a process and not a product, and acknowledges the importance of collaboration.

Concurrently to this approach, other management theories have emerged. In Sweden, the most prominent one is Trust Based Governance. While New Public Management focuses on output and performance through detailed governance, Trust Based Governance aims to give more room for employees close to the users to affect and make decisions, meaning user focus is central in Trust Based Governance (Tillitdelegationen, 2021).

Collaboration is an important part of both these theories, and the need for collaboration is today greater than ever (Eriksson & Hellström, 2020). Society is facing a great number of complexities which require to look beyond individual boundaries. These complexities include environmental challenges, pandemics, and a growing and aging population (Eriksson & Hellström, 2020).

One of the organisations encountering these challenges is the political organisation Region Västra Götaland, which is one of the largest regions in Sweden based on both the area and the number of citizens (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2020b). The region is responsible for providing healthcare, transportation, culture, and regional development for the public (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021). One of the organisations of Region Västra Götaland is the Head Office, serving as an important link between the citizens and the decision makers, with two main purposes; to support politicians through political appointments, and to support the different organisations within the region (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2017a).

In order to deal with the challenges, Region Västra Götaland needs to change. To succeed with their transformation journey, they have a desire to get rid of the fragmented organisation and become a cohesive region (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2019). They believe more collaboration and holistic view will lead to improved resource utilisation and better possibilities to reach the vision focused on creating value for citizens (Lagersten, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

1.2 Aim & Research Questions

The aim of this study is twofold. First, the intention is to establish a picture of the current organisational governance and culture at the Head Office, i.e., create an understanding of the current state. Second, the aim is to generate ideas of *how* they can proceed with their transformation with their desired state in consideration.

Therefore, the study aims to answer the questions below.

- RQ1: How is the current governance and culture at the Head Office of Region Västra Götaland perceived, and what are the barriers to the desired state?
- RQ2: How can the Head Office of Region Västra Götaland transform to reach the desired state?

1.3 Limitations

Since Region Västra Götaland is large and consists of many organisations, the scope of the study had to be limited to include only the Head Office, to account for the time available for the study. In addition, the decision was made to interview only employees and not managers, since the managers were on a very busy schedule due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The

governance of Region Västra Götaland is managed from the Head Office, therefore this scope was found relevant. Consequently, this means the study captures the perspective of employees at the Head Office but lacks the perspective of representatives of other parts of the organisation.

1.4 Disposition

First the reader will be presented an introduction to the thesis including background to the topic, the aim of the study and the specific research questions it aims to answer. The introduction chapter ends by outlining some limitations of the study. Thereafter, the theoretical frame of reference is introduced. This chapter starts off by making the reader familiar with different public management theories. In the second part of the chapter the reader will get immersed into change management theory. This includes a definition of organisational culture, how culture can be changed, leadership, communication and public participation. The report continues with the Methodology chapter, in which the research strategy approach and design are presented and motivated. Next follow the methods chosen for data collection and analysis. The chapter ends with some elaboration on quality criteria and ethics of the study.

The fourth chapter of the thesis introduces the reader to the Region Västra Götaland and the fifth chapter specifically digs into their change initiative and the perception of the current state of employees at the Head Office. The subsequent chapter provides an introduction to the other six public organisations being a part of this study. The chapter focuses on painting the picture on how they deal with the four areas. Followed by the discussion chapter, their ways of dealing with the four areas are connected with the theoretical framework and perception of the employees at the Head Office. The report is finalised with a conclusion, where answers to the questions are provided along with some recommendations on how the Head Office can proceed with their transformation to reach their desired state.

2. Theoretical Frame of Reference

This chapter provides the theoretical frame for the thesis, consisting of two main areas: *Public Management Theories* and *Change Management*.

2.1 Public Management Theories

Different theories of how the public sector should be organised and managed are constantly evolving around the world. Until the end of the 1970s the traditional paradigm of Public Administration (PA) was prominent (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). In the post-war period the public sector expanded as a result of new and more extensive commitments were added to the sector (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). As a consequence of the expansion the sector experienced increased complexity, and inadequate resources to serve the population (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). At the same time, PA was criticised for being too bureaucratic where public officials were accused of putting their individual needs before the needs of the population, who wanted more influence. Another argument against PA was that it had become too extensive and ineffective hence too costly for the inhabitants (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). To this background, a need for new reforms started to emerge, of which some are presented below.

2.1.1 New Public Management

Towards the end of the 1970's new ideas started to spread globally, which became known as New Public Management (NPM) (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). The name was established by the political scientist Hood (1991) in the early 1990's when he collected the ideas by articulating seven doctrines. The overall aim of NPM was to make the public sector more like the private sector to reduce costs and increase efficiency (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). The first doctrine emphasises disaggregation of Public Service Organisations (PSO) into units for each "product", where each unit has its own cost structure and some autonomy to make decisions. The second doctrine aims to create competition in the public sector, both between PSOs and private firms in the belief that competition will lead to improved output at lower costs. The third doctrine is to use management practices common in private firms and the fourth doctrine outlines an increased focus on using resources in an effective manner; "doing more with less". The fifth doctrine is to implement a more "hands on management" meaning a more active and clear governance of PSOs by giving mandate to some people in the hierarchy. The sixth doctrine includes establishment of performance measurement systems to follow up performance by comparing measured performance with defined, often quantifiable goals. The seventh, and last, doctrine emphasises to focus on results rather than the process within the organisation, which means to establish output control (Hood, 1995). Therefore, the advantages of NPM were to leave the weakness of a too

bureaucratic public administration theory behind, and to provide cheaper and higher quality service for the public (Hood, 1991).

However, over time the critique towards NPM has evolved. The strong result orientation of NPM could at a first glance be seen as reasonable, making the public sector more transparent for politicians as well as for citizens, hence easier to control (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). However, the result focus has been exaggerated according to the British researcher Michael Power and has led to what he refers to as “the society of audits” (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). Implementation of quantifiable measurements have oftentimes been problematic as not all PSOs have goals that can be quantified (SOU 2018:47). Consequently, focus has been on things that can be measured, missing out on more important aspects (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). Moreover, employees have adapted their work to the way their performance gets measured, meaning they spend a lot of time on result reporting and other administrative work to the cost of the real value creating processes, making the customer needs suffer (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). Since the public sector also has a wide range of different goals, standardisation of performance measurements has been another weakness. To conclude, while the intention of NPM was to increase efficiency in the public sector it has often led to the opposite (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016).

2.1.2 Public Service Dominant Logic

To address the above mentioned critiques, which can be summarised as a strong intra-organisational focus of NPM, new theories of public management have emerged, referred to as *Post-NPM*. Among these is a service approach to public management, called Public Service Dominant Logic (PSDL) (Eriksson & Hellström, 2020). The theory of NPM is based on a Goods Dominant Logic (GDL), meaning public services are seen as products and not as services, resulting in weaknesses in its management. Osborne et al. (2013) mean that PSDL is based on a Service Dominant Logic (SDL), acknowledging the distinguishing characteristics of service and its implications on public service management.

According to Osborne et al. (2013) there are three key characteristics of service important for its management. First, services are intangible in contrast to products, which are physical objects. Therefore, services should be seen as processes and not as products. This brings more complexity about value in services as it is not just value in a physical product but depends on multiple factors (Osborne et al., 2013; Osborne, 2010). Additionally, PSOs create both private value (value for the customer/user) and public value (value for society), which contributes to more complexity in value creation than in private firms solely producing private value (Alford, 2016). Second, services are characterised by production and consumption taking place at the same time (Osborne et. al 2013; Osborne 2010). Third, and a

consequence of the previous characteristic, customers are part of the value creation process in services, acting as co-producers (Osborne et al., 2013; Osborne, 2010).

The implication on service management is that the customer plays an important role and not just a passive role as in the case for products. Therefore, the value is highly dependent on how the customer experiences the service, and consequently the interaction between customer and staff becomes pivotal (Eriksson & Hellström, 2020). For instance, cutting labour to achieve lower unit cost for a product might not as much affect the value of that product as is the risk if the same strategy is adopted for a service. A benefit of adopting a service approach to public service management, as in PSDL, is that PSDL emphasises engagement with all stakeholders since it perceives both users and citizens as contributors to value creation. On the contrary, NPM divided customers and citizens into different groups and failed to view users and other actors as part of the value creation (Osborne et al., 2013). To address the limitations of the Performance measurement system in NPM, Hodkinson et al. (2017) states that measurements of public service performance is in clear need of attention, in line with PSDL and “*will become increasingly important if public service businesses are to move towards a true service culture*” (Hodkinson et al., 2017, p. 1007).

Moreover, Alford (2016) highlights the difference in the definition of “client focus” between PSOs and private firms. The goal of private firms is to make profit and offer value to individuals. Client focus thus means to ask the question: *what do our customers want from us?* And make people want to pay for it. In contrast, the goal of PSOs is to make people want to contribute to the production of public services, thus client focus is, besides asking: *what do our customers want from us?* Also about asking: *what do we want from our clients?* The service approach thus requires public managers to distinguish the roles of different customers in the service system, what kind of co-production is needed from each customer and then what the PSO can do to stimulate this.

Furthermore, Osborne (2010) argues a service approach to public management is necessary in dealing with the large variety of complexities facing society today. According to Osborne (2010), these challenges go beyond what the individual PSO is capable of solving hence require a collaborative approach between different PSOs and sectors and not competition between actors as one of the doctrines of NPM emphasises (Osborne, 2010). However, Eriksson & Hellström (2020) clarify that NPM should not completely be scrapped in favour of the service approach rather different management theories should be used to deal with different challenges.

2.1.3 Trust Based Governance

Investigations have shown that there is unused potential in the public welfare sector in Sweden (SOU 2018:38). Citizens experience that the welfare sector does not reach the expectations in quality, and employees in this sector feel that there is too little support for them to meet all citizens' needs (SOU 2018:38). This dilemma is often explained as a consequence of detailed control from politics, requiring extensive administrative work for the employees. Other reasons for this dilemma are too much economic control, and lack of structures for cooperation among functions (SOU 2018:38). The issues with economic control are described by Zaremba (2013), who writes that the Swedish healthcare is making its priorities based on financial feasibility, and not necessarily what is best for the patients. With this knowledge at hand the government of Sweden decided, in 2016, to assign a delegation, Tillitsdelegationen, with the purpose to analyse the governance of PSOs in order for them to be of more use for the citizens (SOU 2018:38). In 2017 the delegation was handed an additional mission: to support PSOs with ambitions to move towards a more Trust Based Governance (Tillitdelegationen, 2021).

Bringselius (2017) makes a definition of Trust Based Governance which highlights the focus on the purpose of the organisation and the needs of the user, as well as working to see the big picture and managing cooperation. The definition of Trust Based Governance made by Tillitsdelegationen also includes building trustful relationships, and assurance that the employees want to help the user. The delegation means that there are three cornerstones which are interconnected and required in building Trust Based Governance. These are culture, organisation, and governance (Bringselius, 2017). If one cornerstone is overlooked, there will not be an optimal Trust Based Governance (Bringselius, 2017).

The first cornerstone, culture, is closely connected to leadership, and a Trust Based Governance also requires insight, understanding and inclusion of employees in the leadership (Bringselius, 2017). The second cornerstone, organisation, emphasises collaboration within teams and between departments and functions (Bringselius, 2017). Bringselius (2017) also stresses the importance of having structures for collaboration, as well as for knowledge development and holistic view. The third cornerstone, governance, includes such as quality governance, which Bringselius (2017) thinks too often is a weak link in the governance chain. Bringselius means there is often an extensive use of quantitative methods to evaluate performance, and instead it could be useful to use qualitative methods to a bigger extent, which requires a great collaboration with employees working close to the users (Bringselius, 2017). Other important aspects of governance are creating structures for user involvement and having shared norms and values (Funck & Karlsson, 2018).

Besides the above mentioned cornerstones, Bringselius (2017) also suggests seven principles, as shown in Table 1, to help organisations move towards trust based governance. These are; Trust, User focus, Openness, Support, Delegation, Collaboration, and Knowledge (Bringselius, 2017). The common goal for these principles is to create an environment where the meeting with the user can be defined by flexibility, quality and service (SOU 2018:38). Although all principles overlap each other, some are more connected to a certain cornerstone than others (Bringselius, 2017). For example, User focus is closely connected to culture, while Collaboration and Knowledge are tightly connected to organisation (Bringselius, 2017).

Table 1: The seven principles of Trust Based Governance (Bringselius, 2017).

Principle	Description
Trust	Applying trust to the counterpart rather than mistrust.
User focus	Focusing on meeting the users' needs.
Openness	Allowing different opinions and sharing information.
Support	Leaders and support functions focusing on support and creating great conditions to meet the user.
Delegation	Decision making close to the user and involving users in higher level decisions.
Collaboration	Taking holistic responsibility for the meeting of user needs, through cooperation over borders.
Knowledge	Rewarding knowledge development and sharing through the whole organisation.

In conclusion, the definition, the cornerstones, and the principles together show the importance of having focus on purpose and needs (Bringselius, 2017). The common goals should not be broken down to such an extent that they get unclear to the employees, eventually leading to a fragmented organisation without focus on the user (Bringselius, 2017).

Lastly, Bringselius (2017) points out the importance of building trust on all levels both internally and externally. Bringselius emphasises that trust is dependent on certain prerequisites, whereof one is to let employees have the possibility to leave their opinions and affect decisions, as well as to affect rules if they are not fulfilling their purpose (Bringselius, 2017). Another prerequisite for building trust is to hold people responsible for their actions, so changes can be made if serious mistakes are made (Bringselius, 2017). A third prerequisite for trust is governance, however, detailed governance is seldom necessary. Instead, it is important to listen and have dialogues with employees (Bringselius, 2017).

2.2 Change Management

This section includes different perspectives of change management, starting with presenting the basics of organisational culture, followed by theories on how to change culture. Further, different leadership styles and their corresponding communication structures are presented. Last is a section describing rationales, methods, and implications of public participation.

2.2.1 Organisational Culture

Defining culture offers a variety of approaches (Schein, 2010). The definition developed by Schein is; *“A pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems”* (Schein, 2010, p. 17). Thus, culture is the accumulated shared learning from shared history by its members (Schein, 2010).

Many researchers agree that large organisations do not have one corporate culture but rather are constituted by many different subcultures, and also one reason why culture is perceived to be so hard to change (Schein, 2010; Kim et al., 1995; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015; Newman, 1994). These subcultures, sometimes called culture heterogeneity, can be the result of the organisation structure built with a number of departments or hierarchical levels (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015). Kim et al. (1995) describe the corporate culture to be the sum of the subcultures within an organisation. Thus, to successfully drive change in an organisation, they mean, require an understanding of all the subcultures. As the subcultures can be very different from each other, multiple strategies in the subcultures can be required in a change process. In support of this, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2015) also report the importance of considering all the subcultures when changing the culture. Further, embarking on a culture change journey is seen as a lengthy project (Schraeder et al., 2015).

2.2.1.1 Galbraith's Star Model

To visualise what culture constitutes of, hence, to know what can be controlled to affect culture, one well known model is Galbraith's Star Model, see Figure 1 (Galbraith, 2011). According to this model culture is affected by five dimensions, which are strategy, structure, processes, rewards and people. Policies chosen by management within each dimension will lead to a certain behaviour in the organisation and thereby affect the culture. What the model aims to convey is that all dimensions must be compatible with the strategy and also in overall alignment. Subsequently, this will lead to an effective organisation and a clear understanding among employees. Therefore, strategy should guide what policies to choose in the other dimensions.

The first dimension in the model, strategy, is the direction of the organisation, including the goals and objectives, mission, vision, and values. Based on the strategy, appropriate policies have to be adopted in the following six dimensions. The second dimension, structure, is the position of the decision-making power. It decides the number and kind of job specialties, how many departments and number of people within each, and how power is distributed, e.g., decentralised or centralised departments. Galbraith (2011) means many change efforts put too much emphasis on the structural dimension while too little time is devoted to the other dimensions. This is also described as a common problem by Eriksson (2019), meaning it is common to focus on reorganisations in any change process, instead of improving ways of working and value creation. However, the model wants to highlight that structure is only one part of culture. The third dimension, processes, is the information and decision processes. It includes such as ways of organising work, flow of information and allocation of resources. The fourth dimension, reward, outlines how to motivate employees to work in the direction of the strategy. This can include financial incentives, e.g., policies controlling salaries, promotions and bonuses, as well as non-financial incentives, e.g., recognition and stimulating work tasks. To positively impact strategy, the reward system of an organisation has to align with the other dimensions. The last dimension is people, focused on the policies related to human resources. These policies, including recruiting, selection, rotation, training and development, aim to provide people with appropriate skills and capabilities for the strategy.

2.2.1.2 Schein's Three Levels of Culture

Further, Schein (2010) offers a way to analyse culture at three levels; artifacts, values, and basic assumptions, to understand what culture really is, see Figure 1. The first level, artifacts, represents the most visible aspects of culture that can also be seen and felt. Amongst others, it includes the physical environment of the organisation, its technology, languages, vision, mission and behaviour of employees. Stressed by Schein (2010), looking only at this level in order to understand an organisational culture is difficult since the artifacts are easily

observable however hard to grasp the meaning of. The second level of culture is the values of the organisation. These can be communicated between members and includes organisation philosophies, strategies, goals, rules and norms. Although the values can offer a deeper awareness of the culture, they do not necessarily reflect the culture. Sometimes they are only a reflection of ambitions of an organisation, meaning they reflect a desired behaviour rather than the true behaviour of the organisation. Values of the employees can also vary, which contrasts values to the last level: basic assumptions. These are taken for granted, unconscious beliefs, perceptions, feelings and thoughts so deeply rooted in every individual that they are shared and understood by all members without having to be discussed. Values become basic assumptions, i.e., shared consensus, when actions based on a given value repeatedly lead to successful results. According to Schein (2010), the basic assumptions are core of the culture, and when understanding them one can more easily make sense of the other levels and know how to manage them in a suitable manner.

2.2.2 How to Change Culture

While Schein's (2010) model depicts what culture is, Newman (1994) focuses on how culture can be changed. In agreement with Galbraith (2011), Newman means that culture is connected to other factors of change management and changing the culture will also affect other parts of the organisation.

2.2.2.1 Newman's Three Layers

Newman (1994) presents culture in three layers; symbols, practices, and values. Symbols are things that signal what is of importance in the culture, which for example can be done through a vision or a slogan. Practices put emphasis on behaviour and actions, and values concern attitudes. According to Newman (1994) all these layers need to be taken into consideration when dealing with cultural change, as it is important to not work only on the symbolic level, but to also operate on a deeper level. Further, when dealing with cultural change, Gellerbrant (Personal communication, February 23, 2021) recommends dividing the change into smaller steps, which according to her has three advantages. First, it will make the start simpler. Second, it will be easier to engage employees, since focusing on a small step at a time is easier than focusing on the whole journey. Third, it provides the organisation the opportunity to transfer experiences from departments that have already implemented a change.

Starting with the symbolic layer, Rainey (2003) means it is vital to create an understanding for the need of change and suggest starting with developing a compelling vision. This is agreed upon by Kim et al. (1995) saying successful change requires specific goals which are also challenging to the organisation. They mean, without specific goals problems can occur in

the implementation of the change, and that the benefit of having challenging goals is that it leads to greater effort. Besides having specific goals, Allas et al. (2018) mean the goals should not be too many, meaning less is more when it comes to successful efforts. Finally, Kim et al. (1995) also emphasise the importance of management talking about the goals, to make the way to success clear. Another important aspect is to continuously have discussions around who the organisation is working for, and how changes impact them (Eriksson, 2019). When having created an understanding for the change, you can achieve something referred to by Lord (Personal communication, February 23, 2021) as “pull”, which is to recommend before “push”. Instead of pushing decisions out to employees, they experience a desire to change, because the preparations have given inspiration and created a will and a need to change.

Proceeding to the second layer, practices, managers have a prominent role to not only talk about the goals, the vision, and the values, but to also practice them through their actions (Kim et al., 1995; Newman, 1994). In agreement, Lysell and Daun (Personal communication, February 12, 2021) have found that companies that focus on actions, and not on words and written documents are more likely to succeed with cultural changes. Kim et al. (1995) and Rainey (2003) explain that when managers become action oriented, they show that they are committed to the cultural changes, and that they support them. Schraeder et al. (2005) mean such actions can also trigger cultural change among employees; “[...] *actions speak louder than words*” (Schraeder et al., 2005, p. 497). Lysell and Daun (Personal communication, February 12, 2021) recommend managers to review the small things they do in everyday work to see if it reflects the desired culture, and if not, change. This has shown to be successful in their experience of working with cultural changes. For example, they emphasise the way organisations start meetings. If the organisation wants more collaboration and a holistic view, starting the meetings with employees talking about things they have accomplished together can make a big difference compared to starting the meeting with everyone talking about their own departmental achievements. Kim et al. (1995) also emphasise the importance of motivation, to change behaviour within the organisation. Changes in behaviour and communication are vital for cultural changes to occur, hence Kim et al. mean providing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to the employees is a very important task of a leader. Further, Rainey (2003) means it is also important to have a clear strategy for the implementation, and to encourage participation among the employees to reduce resistance to change.

The third and final layer is by Newman (1994) explained to be built on training. The importance of training is also mentioned by Harrison and Baird (2015), who mean training, recognition and reward are key aspects in cultural changes. This is further agreed on by Kim

et al. (1995) who describes training as an important tool for developing skills and behaviours connected to the new values. Brodin (Personal communication, February 23, 2021) means it is important to train both leaders and employees in change management to make it easier to talk about the change in the organisation. According to Brodin, it is common to train only the leaders, which can create communication barriers internally. This type of training could be included in already existing education forums. Besides the theoretical training, Lord (Personal communication, February 23, 2021) has experienced that leaders also need to be provided practical support when the actual implementation takes place. Further, Newman (1994) means it is very important that new values are supported, which Rainey (2003) explains can be done through adding new measures that help the organisation to practice the new values and behaviours. This is agreed on by Lysell and Daun (Personal communication, February 12, 2021), who mean another key to success when changing culture is to have Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) connected to the desired state to continuously be able to measure and follow up. The KPIs show which activities are effective and which are not, and without following up the KPIs regularly, they mean it is hard to know if the organisation is moving in the intended direction. In addition, Gellerbrant (Personal communication, February 23, 2021) means measuring is important in terms of showing employees results to make them motivated to keep working in a lengthy change process.

2.2.2.2 Denning's Organisational Tools for Changing Minds

Apart from the three layers presented by Newman (1994), Denning (2011) presents three types of tools to be used during cultural change, see Figure 1. The first type is *Leadership Tools* which consists of tools such as vision and role modelling and aims at giving inspiration for change to the organisation. The second type of tools is *Management Tools* with the purpose to share information about the change. Examples of these tools are role definitions and measurement and control systems. The final type of tools is *Power Tools* which could be used if nothing else has worked out. They focus on bringing intimidation and consists of threats and punishments. Denning (2011) means the tools should be used in this order and says that a common mistake during cultural change processes is to use too many power tools and put too little effort into the leadership tools. Another mistake is to be unable to institutionalise the behavioural changes because of a lack of management tools. Finally, he means it is important to not use the power tools if there is no clear vision communicated, which is also emphasised by Rainey (2003) who means it is important to avoid threats and criticism when trying to reduce resistance to change.

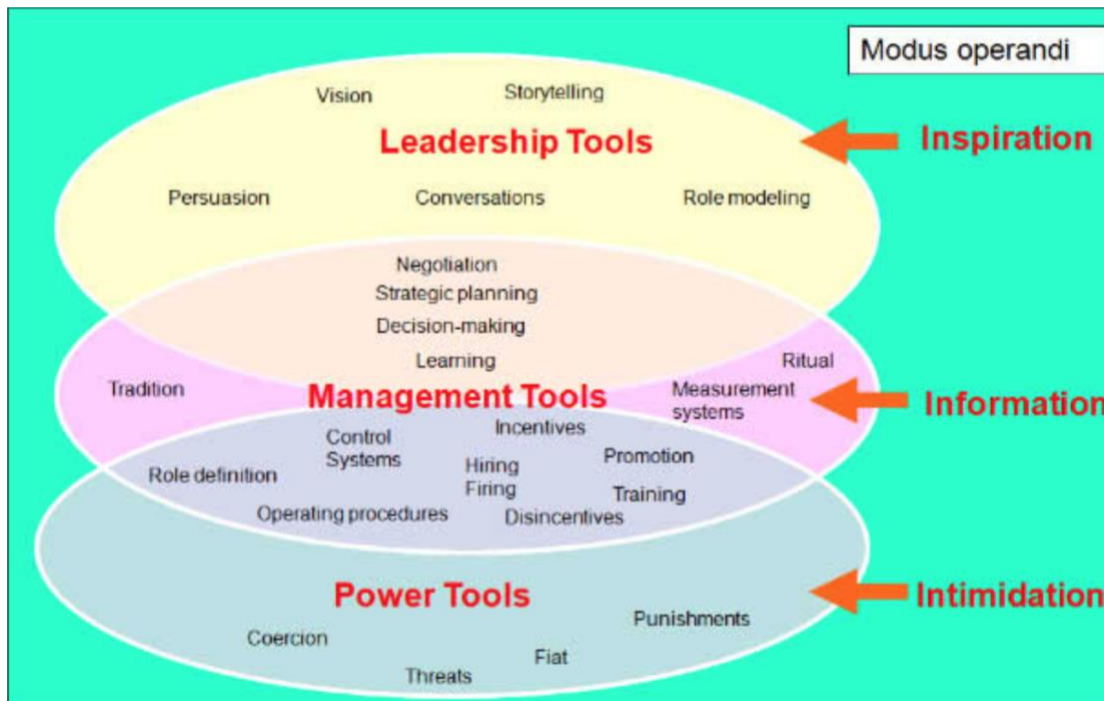


Figure 1: Three types of tools to be used during cultural change (Denning , 2011).

2.2.3 Leadership

Leadership as defined by Flynn (2013) refers to *“The process by which one individual works to influence other group members to work toward the achievement of group goals”* (Flynn, 2013, Overview). Further, leadership can both be formal or informal, where the former refers to leaders with a ranked position in management whereas the latter refers to leaders that can make an impact without being linked to the formal organisational structure (Flynn, 2013). Schein (2010) emphasises that culture is strongly related to leadership. According to Schein the most important role of leaders is to create and manage culture. Failing to understand the culture embedded in the organisation will lead to unsuccess in their leadership role. Lysell and Daun (Personal communication, February 12, 2021) say that key when changing culture, and a prerequisite, is to understand how employees experience the existing culture and to build the new culture based on that. If the ambitions of the desired culture are too far away from the way employees experience the existing culture, there is a risk it will lead to lack of engagement.

2.2.3.1 Transformational & Transactional Leadership

One of the important leadership models, developed by Bernard Bass in 1985, classifies leadership into transformational and transactional leadership (Flynn, 2013). A number of factors distinguish transformational from transactional leaders (Flynn, 2013). First of all, transformational leaders create a common and inspiring vision and are good at communicating this vision to their followers. This kind of leader is accessible to the

followers, thoughtful to their needs and shows more interest to them and the organisation than to personal interests. Moreover, transformational leaders have a positive impact on their followers; they empower employees to take part in the work, create motivation among the employees towards the goals, instil trust in them to make decisions and care about them individually, both their feelings and development, acting as mentors or coaches.

Hassan et al. (2019) show in their model how empowering leadership, as a characteristic of the transformational leader, has a positive impact on reducing employee silence through three mechanisms. First, they found empowering leaders infuse employees to feel more trust in their leaders, which decreases employee silence. Second, empowering leaders contribute to employees feeling more in control of their work, which also reduces the risk of not speaking up. The final mechanism through which empowering leaders reduce employee silence is by strengthening organisational identification. Employee silence, which they define as “*the intentional withholding of critical information about organisational problems and practices from others in the workplace*” (Hassan et al., 2019, p 117), is a serious organisational problem because it is a barrier to innovation, hinder detection of problems and cause the individual employee decreased job satisfaction, stress and fatigue. In addition, transformational leaders are more plausible to drive and facilitate change by encouraging employees to try new ideas and ways of working and showing support when mistakes are made. Also, they see feedback as important for development. The transformational leader is further ready to take risks, meaning daring to try and make tough decisions.

While the transformational leader focuses on creating intrinsic motivation of the followers, the transactional leader is more focused on external motivation (Flynn, 2013). Depending on the performance of the followers they get rewards or punishment. Rather than being a good change leader as the transformational leader, the transactional is more concerned with maintenance work and to get followers to reach current goals. Further, the transactional leader is passive in its leadership role, in contrast to the interactive and inspiring transformational leader. Another characteristic of a transactional leader is what Bass names management by exception, which can either be passive or active. Passive management by exception means the leader evaluates the performance of the followers first once a task is completed and makes corrective actions. Active management by exception means the leader constantly monitors the work of the followers and immediately corrects if performance deviates (Flynn, 2013).

There is a strong correlation between transformational leaders and organisational effectiveness and promoting this type of leadership can improve the performance at all levels of an organisation (Bass, 1990). Since the characteristics of transformational leaders can be

measured, these should be integrated in policies of recruitment, selection, promotion and training. The result from the assessment can also work as feedback in development of leaders (Bass, 1990). *“Transformational leadership can be learned, and it can - and should - be the subject of management training and development. Research has shown that leaders at all levels can be trained to be charismatic”* (Bass, 1990, p 27).

2.2.4 Communication of Leaders

Kitchen and Daly (2002) emphasise the importance of high-quality communication in order to be a successful organisation. They also mention the quality of communication to have an impact on employee absenteeism, and Men (2014) means that the communication competence of a leader has an influence on the behaviours and attitudes among employees. Not least is communication a key issue when dealing with change, as it can help to inform and prepare employees to the changes, which in turn will increase commitment and reduce resistance to change (Kitchen & Daly, 2002). This is further explained by Blomkvist (Personal communication, February 23, 2021) saying people are resistant to change by nature, and during a change people go through different phases which all require certain communication from leaders in order for people to commit to the change. She mentions the importance of having a plan for communication which includes who is communicating what information and how, when, and why it is communicated. Regarding who is communicating, Gellerbant (Personal communication, February 23, 2021) emphasises the importance of having the leaders being senders of the messages in a change process, in order to make the message credible to employees. She means organisations can have external parties helping with parts of the change, but the message has to be communicated by the leaders. Therefore, prioritising leaders and making them good and confident change leaders is crucial before starting a change journey.

Kitchen and Daly (2002) explain not all organisations can have the same approach to internal communication since factors such as the culture, the size of the business and the leadership style needs to be considered. This is confirmed by Men (2014) who means the leadership style also brings a style of communication, and for transformational leadership the internal communication often seems to be characterised by vision, interaction, and empowerment. Those leaders are people-oriented and seek to understand the needs of their followers through close interaction, and they often delegate authority to their followers (Men, 2014). In comparison to transactional leaders, which are more task-oriented, transformational leaders seem to be more communicative in general (Men, 2014).

Further, Men (2014) brings up two types of communication; symmetrical and asymmetrical. The symmetrical communication is closely connected to the transformational leadership style

since it is built on characteristics such as relationship, trust, feedback and openness, to name a few. This is a two-way communication style, with the aim to create dialogue with the employees (Men, 2014). The asymmetrical type of communication, on the other hand, is characterised by one-way, top-down communication, with the purpose to control the behaviour of the employees (Men, 2014). Kitchen and Daly (2002) say this type of one-sided, top-down communication is a problem to organisations, and further problems can occur when groups within the organisation use different types of languages. They mean these types of issues affect the organisation's internal communication efficacy. Furthermore, they mention communication policy guidelines within organisations can help to avoid communicative problems to a large extent (Kitchen & Daly, 2002).

Men (2014) mentions that there are connections between symmetrical internal communication and high levels of job-satisfaction and loyalty among employees. The transformational leadership style together with the symmetrical communication approach makes the employees involved in decision making, and the leaders are open to listen to the employees' opinions and feedback, and they care about their feelings (Men, 2014). These characteristics often mean that transformational leaders prefer rich communication channels such as face-to-face communication, making the communication more personalised (Men, 2014). Studies have also shown that employees in general, to a high degree, prefer face-to-face communication with their managers instead of communication by email or other less personalised communication channels, since they lack information richness (Men, 2014). It is also shown that social media can have a great impact on participation and sharing of ideas and knowledge within organisations, and therefore it can be a great addition to the symmetrical communication approach (Men, 2014). Lysell and Daun (Personal communication, February 12, 2021) express "*The medium is the message*", meaning the choice of communication channels to spread the message is just as important as the message itself. Different communication channels should be used in different steps of the change process. Lundhagen (Personal communication, February 23, 2021) says to make employees understand the motive behind the change, one-way communication channels such as email, articles and films can be used. In order to create involvement, and to make the employees engaged in the change, dialogues and meetings with people are required.

2.2.5 Public Participation

Two-way communication is important not only for internal communication, but also for external communication with customers or inhabitants. Creighton (2005) calls this communication public participation and means the aim is to ensure a dialogue between the decision makers and the public affected by the decisions, i.e., the public gets increased influence in important decisions. This aligns with one of Eriksson's (2019) important

principles for a great organisation, namely that the customer has to be the starting point in everything they do, and Innes and Booher (2004) also emphasise it is important that decision makers know what the public wants.

Creighton (2005) means public participation is going towards being viewed as a part of democracy, and has some benefits, for example the quality of decisions gets improved since the public can come up with crucial information affecting the decision, which is also mentioned by Innes and Booher (2004). Another benefit is that involving the public will decrease the risk of confrontations, since issues often can be handled before the decision is made (Creighton, 2005). Additionally, Innes and Booher (2004) mention that public participation increases legitimacy for decisions, meaning if everyone got the chance to participate and share their opinion, the decision should be seen as legitimate and democratic. Creighton (2005) mentions democracy first and foremost is about having the right to elect people to the government, who earn the right to make important decisions on behalf of the society. These decisions are implemented by agencies and bureaucracies, but nowadays technical experts at these organisations also make a lot of administrative decisions that affect many people's lives. He explains this is a result of the great expansion of all governmental levels in the last century, which has also widened the scope of decisions being made by the government and its bureaucracies. The drawback of leaving decisions to technical experts is that they are making decisions that affect the society, while not being elected to represent the society (Creighton, 2005). Therefore, Creighton (2005) means, it is important to connect the decision makers with the public, to make sure democracy is protected.

In order to participate, Creighton (2005) means the public needs to get information from the organisation about the decisions and how they can affect their lives. Similarly, Rowe and Frewer (2000) say one criterion for public participation is that the participants have access to relevant information to be able to build their opinion, and to be able to participate in a fair way. Creighton (2005) emphasises it is of great importance that this information is unbiased, since if the public finds out the information is biased, the trust to the organisation will likely decrease.

To fulfil the two-way communication, the organisation also needs to get information from the public (Creighton, 2005), and Rowe and Frewer (2000) mention it is vital to get the viewpoints of the broader public, especially emphasising making sure to not only bring on an unrepresentative elite of intelligent people with a lot of motivation and self-interests. Also, they find it important to have a good representation in terms of the relative distribution of different viewpoints, in order to know what viewpoints are in majority. In order to reach representativeness, different approaches can be used (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). One approach

is to find out what groups are affected by the decision and pick a random sample of participants from these groups. Another strategy is to find the relative proportions from using a questionnaire showing attitudes towards different issues, and from this information choose representative participants for further participation (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). There are challenges with getting a representative view from the general public. One of the most common is that it requires very large groups of participants, meaning it requires a lot of resources such as time and money (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). A more general challenge to public participation is to involve at the right time. Rowe and Frewer (2000) mean the public should be involved as early as possible, in order to avoid a situation where they can only choose between different alternatives, without having had the possibility to give input on whether the alternatives are relevant at all.

Creighton (2005) mentions there are a lot of different methods and techniques, both for bringing information to the public and for getting information from the public, where some of them are only informative while others are interactive. Different techniques should be applied to different situations depending on how much interaction is needed. For example, in a case where legislation makes a certain decision necessary, there is no reason to involve the public, but it is still important to inform the public about the decision (Creighton, 2005). Further, Innes and Booher (2004) explain an effective method for public participation should consist of both collaboration and dialogue, as well as interaction, and that it should be focusing on future actions rather than being reactive. Rowe and Frewer (2000) say combining different methods of participation can be an effective approach, for example using a survey in a first round to get an understanding of what disagreements there are, followed by a panel with citizens bringing depth and balance to the opinions.

Rowe and Frewer (2000) mean it is of great importance to have transparency in the public participation process, in order for the wider public to be able to follow the process and know how decisions are being made. Finally, to increase credibility, it can be beneficial to present to the public how the output influenced the decision afterwards, for example through media (Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

2.2.6 Summary of Change Management

This section has introduced many concepts of change management, and how these are connected to each other can be visualised in Figure 2. First, culture was defined and established as the sum of the strategy, structure, processes, rewards and people of an organisation. Moreover, an organisational culture is most likely the sum of a number of subcultures due to departmental differences. Culture also includes both physical and non-physical aspects as described in Schein's three levels, and the core of culture is really the

basic assumptions, shared by all the members of the culture. Further, leaders were pinpointed to be key to creating and maintaining culture. Connecting back to Schein's model, leaders can make values in the organisation turn into basic assumptions among its members by repeatedly showing how good results connect to the values.

Leaders being key in changing culture, which should occur in small steps, means they should consider all three levels of Newman's model by using the tools suggested by Denning. The first level emphasises leaders to focus on creating pull and not push, by using Denning's inspiration tools. The second level emphasises the importance of leaders' words to align with their actions by the use of Denning's inspiration tools such as role modelling. The third level is focused on training connected to the values and motivation, which leaders can do by using Denning's information tools.

Different leadership styles drive change with different effectiveness. The transformational leader, compared to the transactional leader, is more effective in this pursuit and corresponds to high performing organisations, the rationale for developing transformational leaders in organisations. Studies have shown transformational leaders, through their empowerment, reduce employee silence by three mechanisms; autonomy, trust, and identification with the organisation. The communication style of transformational leaders is symmetrical, whereas the asymmetrical style links to transactional leadership. Symmetrical communication is most effective and important for not only internal matters but also for communicating with the external environment, referred to as public participation.

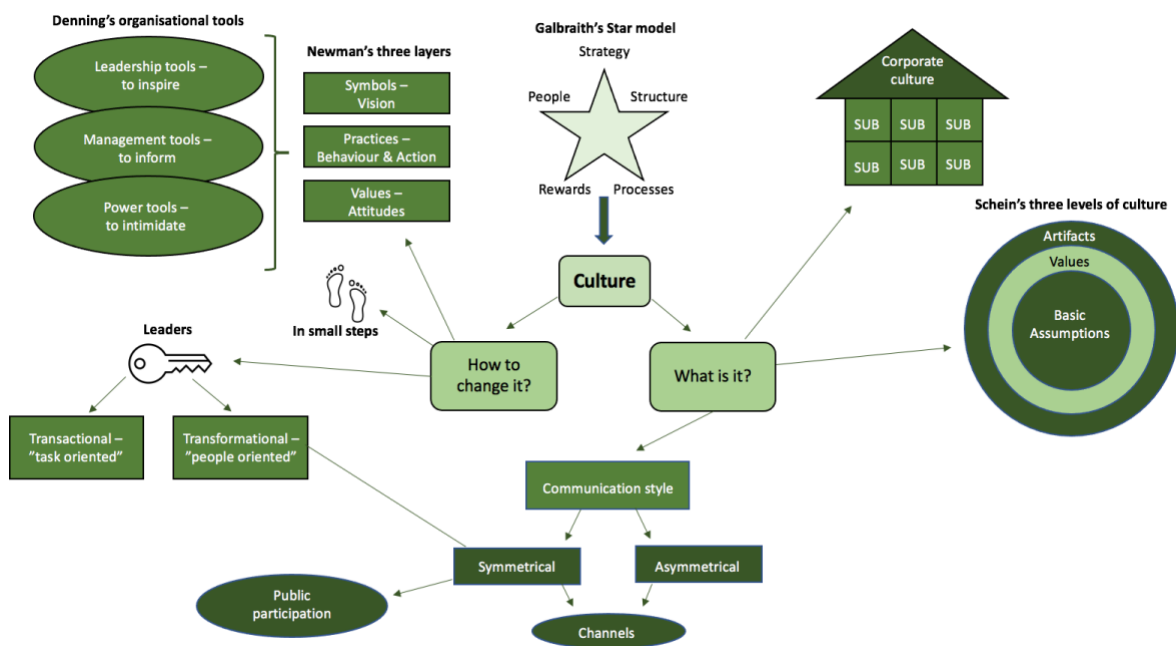


Figure 2: How the different models of the section link to each other (Authors' own).

3. Methodology

In this chapter a description of how the study has been conducted is provided. According to Bell et al. (2019) there are three central decisions when conducting research; research strategy, research design and research methods. These topics will be the subject for the first three sections. Thereafter follows a discussion of quality criteria, and the chapter is finalised with some ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Strategy

The topic of this thesis is organisational governance and culture in a public organisation. In this study, the people in the organisation are seen to be part of constantly creating the reality through their actions and behaviour, which according to Bell et al. (2019) corresponds to an ontological position of constructionism. Ontology refers to the way researchers view reality, while epistemology refers to the way to learn about that reality (Bell et al., 2019). Therefore, a certain ontological position implies a certain epistemological position (Bell et al., 2019). Since the researchers find the ontology of this study to be constructionism, this implies an epistemological position of interpretivism (Bell et al., 2019). The interpretivism stance will later on guide the choice of research methods: *“What we see in an interpretivist stance is a preference for research methods that elicit participants’ world views in relation to the topic of interest, and for analyses that ground concepts and connections between them in the words and elicited perspectives of participants”* (Bell et al., 2019, p. 33).

Given the philosophical position in this research the employed research strategy is of qualitative nature (Bell et al., 2019). In contrast to quantitative research, the other main research strategy mentioned by Bell et al. (2019), the qualitative strategy is mainly concerned with words rather than quantification in data collection and analysis. Tsai et al. (2016) also states that the value with qualitative studies lies in its ability to generate new theoretical ideas about phenomena on such a detailed and deep level that is impossible in quantitative research. Furthermore, one can talk about either deductive or inductive approaches in research (Bell et al., 2019), which describe the relation between theory and research. In the deductive approach, the starting point is theory, such as a hypothesis, which the research is aimed at proving or disproving. Whereas in the inductive approach theory is produced out of the research such as in the form of conclusions. In this study, the inductive approach is considered appropriate given the aim of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The qualitative research strategy is employed within a case study design. According to Bell et al. (2019) this is a design frequently adopted within a business research context. Bell et al. (2019) defines a case study as an “*detailed and intensive analysis of a single case*” (p. 63). To this background, the utility of the case study is determined to be appropriate since the goal of this study is to generate detailed insights into the particular organisation. Furthermore, Gerring (2004) presents many of the benefits with a case study design, whereof three is considered to be particularly applicable in this study. First, it is suited for research oriented towards description rather than finding causal relations. Second, it is useful when the in-depth study of a specific case is of more importance than providing findings with breadth. Third, because of its exploratory orientation it is advantageous for an inductive approach, when the focus is on exploring theories rather than proving/disproving their existence.

3.3 Research Methods

This section aims to describe what methods were used in this study, in terms of data collection and data analysis.

3.3.1 Data Collection

In this research, mainly primary data was collected, meaning the data has not yet been published, and thereby not changed or rewritten, which strengthens the reliability and objectivity of the data (Kabir, 2016).

3.3.1.1 Primary Data

In the beginning of the study, seven open interviews were conducted with the purpose to gain a broader understanding of the organisation and current culture at the Head Office. This purpose aligns with Kabir (2016) who also mentions the importance of conducting open interviews as a preparation for more deep interviews at a later stage in the research process. The interviews, which remained about 20-30 minutes each, were conducted with employees from different parts of the organisation in February and March 2021. They were conducted with a clear focus and a lot of freedom, looking more like a conversation than an interview, which Bryman and Bell (2011) mean is a common characteristic of open interviews. In order to remember the information from the conversations, all the interviews were recorded, with allowance from the respondents.

The next step was to conduct longer and more specific interviews, also called semi-structured interviews. An interview guide was prepared beforehand which included questions reflecting

the aim of the study, with most emphasis on RQ1. This interview guide can be found in Appendix 1. The creation of the guide was supported by the data collected from the open interviews and was developed with input from the supervisor. It is important to cover all the questions in the guide with a similar wording to all the different respondents, but still allow for great flexibility in the answers, in changing the order of the questions, and in adding follow up questions. (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Kabir, 2016). The interviews were recorded, as permitted by the respondents, and later on transcribed in order to prepare for the analysis. The preparation of the guide together with the transcription and analysis are very time-consuming activities, therefore no more interviews were conducted when a commonality was found in the answers and the researchers had a clear picture of the situation (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The data from the semi-structured interviews was analysed as will be presented in section 3.3.2, and four themes were identified. With this information at hand, other public organisations which have gone through similar transformations were contacted, and a new interview guide was developed, see Appendix 2. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with the purpose to collect data on how other organisations have managed transformation within our four themes, hence, to support in answering RQ2. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all the interviews were conducted in a digital form, using video communication tools. An advantage of interviewing through video is that it is time-efficient, while a drawback is that it is dependent on a good internet connection, as any disturbance might affect the understanding (Weller, 2017). There were only a few minor interruptions during these interviews, and they did not affect the outcome.

For the initial open interviews, a combination of purposive and convenience sampling was used in order to find the respondents. Purposive sampling is a strategy where each respondent is chosen on a specific criterion that is necessary for the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this case the aim was to interview employees from different departments in order to get data representing the whole Head Office. The researchers retrieved suggestions on employees from the supervisor at the Head Office, which were contacted by email. Interviews were conducted with the employees willing to participate within a specific time frame, which is one factor of a convenience sampling strategy (Robinson, 2014). For the semi-structured employee interviews, three of the employees interviewed in the first round were contacted again, as well as one new respondent who was unable to participate in the first round. These respondents were chosen upon relevance and their perceived interest in the subject. Regarding the interviews with other organisations, the researchers initially contacted a few persons, known by the supervisor, and thereafter used snowball sampling, meaning that new contacts were given from the first respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011). See Table 2 for all interviews.

Table 2: Interviews conducted in the study.

Respondent	Organisation	Date of interview
<i>Open interviews</i>		
Respondent 1	Head Office	February 5, 2021
Respondent 3	Head Office	March 3, 2021
Respondent 4	Head Office	February 25, 2021
Respondent 5	Head Office	February 16, 2021
Respondent 6	Head Office	February 22, 2021
Respondent 7	Head Office	February 5, 2021
Respondent 8	Head Office	February 10, 2021
<i>Semi-structured interviews (employees)</i>		
Respondent 1	Head Office	March 12, 2021
Respondent 2	Head Office	March 16, 2021
Respondent 3	Head Office	March 11, 2021
Respondent 4	Head Office	March 16, 2021
<i>Semi-structured interviews (organisations)</i>		
Anders Stridh Strategist	Swedish Tax Agency	April 8, 2021
Jakob Brandt Group Manager PROD X, Department of Production	Swedish Pensions Agency	April 14, 2021
Malin Aronsson Municipal Chief Executive	Kungsbacka Municipality	April 15, 2021
Ann Lundqvist Department of Property Formation	Lantmäteriet	April 20, 2021
Palle Lundberg Chief Executive	Helsingborg City	April 21, 2021
Kristina Sundin Jonsson Head of Administration	Skellefteå Municipality	April 27, 2021

Another source of primary data used in this study is participant observations, meaning the researchers attend meetings or other activities as participants, in order to get an inside view of the organisation, as well as to get to know people and become a part of the organisation (Kabir, 2016). Since this study was primarily conducted online due to Covid-19, participation in meetings is more accessible than in a physical meeting structure. Through these observations relevant information was gained, which mainly was contributing to RQ1.

In addition to interviews and observations, the researchers have attended webinars about change management, where many great examples and theories were provided. The researchers have also been given a crash course in the organisational and political structure of Region Västra Götaland (VGR), in order to get a better overall understanding of the organisation.

3.3.1.2 Literature Review

Literature review was performed to create the theoretical framework of the study, and to get an understanding for the topic. It is a very time efficient and easy way to find a lot of information on a specific subject (Kabir, 2016). The literature consisted to a large extent of scientific journals from Google Scholar and Chalmers Library. Since scientific journals are often peer reviewed before publication, they are regarded as reliable sources (Högskolan Dalarna, 2018; Hedin, 2013). Additionally, books were contributing as secondary data in this research. Except for using databases to find sources, reference lists in journals were also used in order to find more relevant literature on the same topic, a successful method according to Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (2008). Besides published literature on the Internet, documents from the internal database of the organisation were used. These documents mainly concerned the organisational structure, the vision of VGR, and political decisions.

Initially the focus was on the background of the organisation, to get a picture of the current structure and culture. Also, literature on New Public Management and Trust Based Governance were searched upon in the beginning. This is important in order to learn what is already known in the research area and to gain further knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Later on, the literature review was more focused on specific concepts found in the initial search, which were considered important to achieve the aim of the study. The search was mainly focused on finding literature concerning public organisations in relevant countries, such as the Nordic countries. This is important since there can be big cultural differences in other countries that make the findings irrelevant to this research. The literature review was conducted iteratively throughout the whole research process.

Key words used for the literature review were for example; New Public Management, Post New Public Management, Trust Based Governance, Service approach, How to change culture, Organisational culture, Change models leadership, Management models, Public participation, Public sector

3.3.2 Data Analysis

Bryman and Bell (2011) write that in the collection of qualitative data there is a tendency to gather very large volumes of information, which makes it hard to go through and analyse it. Further, they describe there are different techniques for analysing qualitative data, and most of them include some type of coding. The data analysis in this study was inspired by a technique which Graneheim and Lundman (2003) call Qualitative Content Analysis, see Figure 3.



Figure 3: Illustration of the Qualitative Content Analysis process inspired by Graneheim and Lundman (2003) (Authors' own).

This process started by condensing and reducing the transcribed data from the interviews into codes. The codes were further divided into categories, where each category consisted of data with high commonality, which Graneheim and Lundman (2003) calls a descriptive level of content. These categories were then linked together into themes representing the underlying meaning of the data. Graneheim and Lundman (2003) mention that categories can fall into more than one theme since data can have more than one meaning. However, the process of linking categories into the different themes, that will be presented in section 5.2, was done based on knowledge gained from the data collection.

Later on, the identified themes were used as an analysis framework for the data collected from the other public organisations. The transcriptions were coded and put into the theme perceived most suitable from the researchers' point of view.

3.4 Quality Criteria & Ethics

To assess the quality of a study, two commonly used criteria are reliability and validity (Bell et al., 2019). However, some argue that different criteria should be used in qualitative research since this research strategy is not concerned with quantification and measurements (Tsai et al., 2016; Stenbacka, 2001). Instead, four other criteria which the research should be

judged on are often suggested; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bell et al., 2019), whereof two are considered most prominent in this study, as described below.

Credibility regards how well the findings agree with the view of the people participating in the study (Bell et al., 2019). To ensure credibility the researchers used the approach of respondent validation in this study, meaning the findings were shared with the respondents in order for them to confirm its accuracy (Bell et al., 2019).

Transferability concerns whether the findings can be transferred to another context outside the specific case under investigation i.e., generalisability (Bell et al., 2019). Usually, it is the specific case that drives attention in qualitative research thus particularisation rather than generalisation constitutes the main strength of case studies (Lee et al., 2007). Despite not the main focus, some transferability can still be achieved in qualitative research (Bell et al., 2019). In this study, some insights generated out of the research can also be valuable for other public organisations.

In addition, some ethical aspects have been considered in this study, as deemed important by Halai (2006). All respondents have given their full consent to be recorded during interviews, and employees at the Head Office have also been ensured anonymity. Anonymity was achieved by naming the respondents *Respondent X*, to not reveal their identities and by not disclosing what department they work at. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), anonymisation of respondents has the purpose to not make it possible to track comments and jeopardise their employment, hence this was deemed important to adopt.

4. This is Region Västra Götaland

This chapter is divided into two sections describing the organisational background of VGR; *Organisational Structure* and *Organisational Governance*.

4.1 Organisational Structure

VGR was established in 1999, as a result of a merger of different county councils (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2017b). It consists of 49 counties, which makes it one of the largest regions in Sweden, with 1.7 million inhabitants. Vänersborg is the capital and the location of the Headquarters of the Regional Assembly and the Regional Executive Board. Additional offices can be found in Göteborg, Skövde, Borås, Uddevalla and Vänersborg. VGR has four main areas of responsibility. These are health care, regional development, public transportation, and culture. Through these areas the overall goal of VGR is to create sustainable development in the region, increase employment, and thereby secure access to care and welfare services. Welfare services is a collective term for regional development and culture (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021).

There are many different organisations within VGR. Within the health care area, the organisations consist of 19 hospitals, 200 health centers, 170 dental clinics and some other organisations, for example within habilitation and physical therapy. In the public transportation area, the organisation is Västtrafik, which is in charge of all public transportation in the region. Moreover, in the culture area, Göteborgs Opera and different museums can be found among other organisations. Lastly, in regional development, there are organisations driving different types of development projects to provide growth in the region like infrastructure. In addition, regional development is also much about providing support to firms and start-ups to promote innovation and new ideas (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021).

Another organisation of VGR is the Head Office with the two purposes to prepare and implement appointments for the regional executive committee and all the committees and boards, and to provide support to the other organisations (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2017a). The Head Office is divided into seven different departments, including a number of units. These departments are; Operational Controlling, Finance, and Corporate Purchasing, Human Resources, Communications and External Relations, Healthcare, Provider Governance and Coordination, Regional Development, and Digitalisation (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2020a). In addition, there is a Change unit with the mission to support the Regional Director in long term development work. Some of their work tasks are to create a cohesive VGR, become the best Swedish public organisation, work with the organisational culture decided by the

Regional Assembly, administrative simplification and to work with the organisational identity. The latter is their perception from a citizen perspective and entails to work with clarity, trust and citizen focus (Lagersten, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

4.2 Organisational Governance

VGR is governed by the Local Government Act. This law decides how the country is divided into regions and counties, what these are responsible for and that the decision-making power is exercised by democratically elected assemblies (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021). The assemblies are the Regional Assembly and the Municipal Assembly, representing the people in the elections every fourth year. There are 149 members of the Regional Assembly of VGR and it is the highest decision-making level with the responsibility of the overall goals, priorities and the distribution of the financial resources (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2021). Further, the Regional Assembly appoints the Regional Executive Committee, with the responsibility of executing the decisions made by the assembly through the different organisations. Besides the Regional Executive Committee, the assembly also decides the committees needed to accomplish the tasks of the regions, and in VGR there are totally 15 different committees for the four areas. Their tasks are decided by the assembly in what is called regulations (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021).

Moreover, the political entities are part of the democratic system. In the democratic system it is important to distinguish between the political role and the employee role (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021). All employees must adhere to the will of the politicians. The politicians represent the voice of the inhabitants and make decisions based on the inhabitants' needs hence can be regarded as people experts. In contrast, the employees are experts within their specific fields and are supposed to use this knowledge to support the politicians in making good decisions for the people, without involving their personal thoughts, beliefs and emotions.

The governance model of VGR consists of many components, see Figure 4 (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021). This is because when new governance models are introduced old ones tend to remain partly in the system resulting in a different mix of governance models. At this point, the trend is shifting from very detailed governance to a governance based on trust, the journey VGR is currently on. The first governance component is the regulations, which governs what the committees should do. The second component is governance through the different roles in the organisation, where one very essential role is Executive Director of the Head Office, Ann-Sofie Lodin, who is also the Regional Chief Executive, with the responsibility of providing appointments to the different employees of the

Head Office (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021). Third is the vision, which was decided in 2015, and provides the high-level direction of VGR. It is called *The Good Life* and has three cornerstones where the first one is Sustainable development (Västra Götalandsregionen, n.d.a.). The second cornerstone contains four perspectives to include in everything they do, which are; the common region, equality, integration, and internationalisation. The third and last cornerstone consists of five focus areas; a strong and sustainable business sector, leading in competence and knowledge development, infrastructure and communications of high standard, a leading cultural region, and good health (Västra Götalandsregionen, n.d.a.).

The fourth governance component is the four goal documents, one for each area of responsibility; health care, regional development, public transportation and culture (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021). These documents resemble the visions of the different areas, providing the high-level direction for each area. They are the base for more detailed documents in each area. The fifth governance component is the budget presented by the Regional Assembly on an annual basis, which besides cost- and revenue calculations also contains many qualitative goals. Last, are the political appointments assigned to the employees.

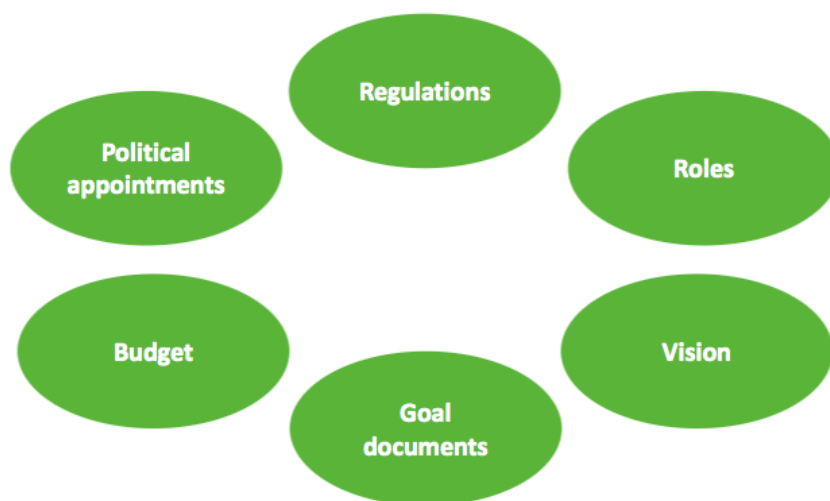


Figure 4: Governance components of VGR (Authors' own).

Besides the governance model, the Head Office also has their own values as a guide in their work (Västra Götalandsregionen, n.d.b.). It consists of three parts where the first is called *Together we make each other successful*, emphasising shared goals, collaboration, and new ideas as prerequisites to reach the vision. The second part is called *We listen*, which is about listening to the ever-changing society, and reflecting over ideas and opinions from others. The last part is called *Feedback contributes to our development* and is about working with

feedback in a systematic way as a part of the culture, and to evaluate the work and share experiences (Västra Götalandsregionen, n.d.b.).

In conclusion, the governance of VGR is very dynamic (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021). Decisions come from many different directions and are made on a frequent basis. Moreover, the hospitals within the healthcare area have their own health care board and committees (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021). The committees order the care based on the demand and the Healthcare board executes the care through the hospitals. Hence the Healthcare board controls the healthcare independently. In addition, VGR also has to fulfill appointments and implement rules from the Government and the European Union (Urbäck, personal communication, March 22, 2021). Conclusively, this contributes to a vast complexity in the governance of VGR.

5. The Change Initiative & the Perceived Current State

To start, this chapter describes the desired transformation and the motivation behind it.

Thereafter, the data retrieved from the interviews with employees at Head Office is presented in two sections; *The View of Employees*, and *Ideas of Employees*. Overall, this chapter aims to provide the base for answering RQ1; *How is the current governance and culture at the Head Office of VGR perceived, and what are the barriers to the desired state?*

5.1 Why a Transformation?

In 2019 the Regional Assembly decided on a common identity and trademark policy for VGR, as a tool to reach the vision (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2019). It describes the purpose with the organisation, together with the values and the direction.

The policy includes a focus on a cohesive region as a tool to build a strong trademark, which helps the citizen to know what VGR is (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2019). Lagersten (Personal communication, March 26, 2021) explains building a cohesive region includes connecting the work of the different organisations to a unity with common goals and directions, based on what is best for the citizens. Additionally, taking the holistic perspective instead of the detailed perspective is believed to create better conditions for reaching the vision. VGR wants to act as one employer, where organisations and employees feel that they are a part of a politically governed organisation called VGR, and that the organisations feel supported by the Head Office, rather than disturbed (Lagersten, personal communication, March 26, 2021). The policy also states they should start with the citizens when making decisions, in order to be relevant and create trust towards the system (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2019). Finally, the policy outlines a common organisational culture inspired by Trust Based Governance, which is characterised by a stronger *we* to build a good base for cooperation and less competition within VGR (Västra Götalandsregionen, 2019).

Further, Lagersten (Personal communication, March 26, 2021) describes the trust from the citizens towards VGR has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, but there is a belief this trust will decrease again after the pandemic. He also says trust is slowly decreasing in public organisations in general. Lagersten (Personal communication, March 26, 2021) emphasises a lot of challenges in the upcoming decade, not least because of a more polarised society, and lack of knowledge, which can challenge democracy. He means if there is not enough knowledge among the citizens about VGR, what it is doing and how it is governed, it is hard to make rational and democratic elections of political parties and politicians. Apart from the challenge with democracy, they also foresee economic challenges, as well as demands and requirements of digitalisation and sustainability (Lagersten, personal communication, March

26, 2021). There are a lot of good and useful political decisions on these challenges, but there is a lack of ability of implementation (Lagersten, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

According to Lagersten (Personal communication, March 26, 2021), public organisations traditionally have a strong organisational focus, i.e., focus on organisational borders and how the organisation is structured. However, he means the focus has to shift and the public sector has to reform to make it clearer everything they do is for the citizens. While being successful, VGR has been kind of a rampant organisation for the last 20 years. Because of this lack of unity, they now see that organisations within VGR talk about themselves and VGR as two different things. Many feel that VGR disturbs their organisation (Lagersten, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

To conclude, Lagersten (Personal communication, March 26, 2021) explains the overall purpose with the identity and trademark policy is to conquer the upcoming challenges, and most importantly to make life better for the citizens of Västra Götaland. VGR exists to help the citizens, and therefore the public sector has to change so that it is clearer that everything they do is for the citizens. In order to do that they need to better understand what the citizens think about VGR today, and about everything they do in terms of products and services (Lagersten, personal communication, March 26, 2021). Changing the perspective from organisational focus to citizen focus creates another view of what is needed to succeed. The citizens need to know that their taxes are used in a rational and purposive way, in order for the legitimacy of VGR to stay strong (Lagersten, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

5.2 The View of Employees

This section introduces and analyses the data gathered from open and semi-structured interviews with eight employees from different departments of the Head Office. This data led the researchers to identify four areas describing the current state and important to focus on to succeed with the desired transformation. By using the coding technique introduced in chapter 3.3.2, these themes are; *Goals, purpose, and follow-up processes*, *Leadership*, *Holistic view and collaboration*, and *Citizen involvement*, see Table 3. The data in this section is presented in an aggregated form and structured according to these themes.

Table 3: Coding of empirical data (Authors' own).

Code	Category	Theme	
Unclear direction	Direction	Goals, purpose & follow-up processes	
Imbalance between purposes			
Goals, purpose, vision unclear in daily work			
Lack of discussion around goals, purpose, vision			
Missing systematic work with value words			
Difficulties understanding who is the daily customer			
Different languages			Communication
Non-value creating activities			Value creation
Too many measures			Follow-up
Questions whether measuring quality			
Measures does not show if value is created			
Bad measures does seldom lead to action			
Insecurity of presenting opinions	Closed culture	Leadership	
Many are scared of making mistakes			
Hard to know what is allowed and not	Role modeling		
Managers do not always act according to their words			
Suggestions seldom lead to action	Uninterest of development		
Managers sometimes lack interest in employees' work			
Managers seem to be rewarded for administering rather than developing			
Education and training is dependent on individual initiatives			
Lack of collaboration between departments	Collaboration	Holistic view & collaboration	
Collaboration is dependent on own initiatives	Hinders to collaboration		
Collaboration is dependent on large networks			
Employees feel like a load for other when reaching out for collaboration			
Not everyone supports working across departments			
Lack of forums to naturally meet across departments	Holistic view		
Lacks the holistic view			
Process teams have too little time to report	Lack of input from citizens	Citizen involvement	
They get too little input from citizens	Problems of collecting input		
Hard to get a representative sample and let all voices be heard			
Concerns of opening up the dialogue with citizens	Problems sharing information		
Sources of information are too few and too complicated			
Head Office disturbs rather than supports organisations	Lack of support to organisations		
Head Office has meetings talking about organisations but not with them			

5.2.1 Goals, Purpose & Follow-up Processes

Most of the respondents explain they are aware of the vision and the common goals of VGR, although some think the direction of the organisation is not clear enough. Regarding the purpose of the Head Office, they all align in that the purpose is to support the politicians in making the right decisions for VGR, and also to support the organisations in implementations. One respondent experiences that the first purpose has lately been more prominently communicated by the management than the second purpose, which contradicts the respondent's opinion: *"I believe we should have most focus on developing the organisations, such as developing models to solve common problems, since we have many different expertise at the Head Office"*. Regarding supporting the politicians, this respondent

thinks many employees at the Head Office need to put too much time into non-value creating activities because some politicians lack competence and knowledge about the organisation.

Furthermore, the vision of The Good Life and the values are well known among the respondents. However, the general perception among the respondents is that the common goals, purpose and vision often become abstract and unclear in their daily work. One respondent says clear goals that are shared within the organisation is a prerequisite for trust within the organisation. Most respondents agree the managers communicate the goals, purpose and vision and try to break them down to lower levels, but one respondent experiences a lack of discussion around them, and another is expressing a desire to work with values in a more systematic way. According to one respondent, managers and employees speak different 'languages' at the Head Office. This is believed to be due to different knowledge and educational backgrounds creating barriers in the communication, which sometimes makes it difficult to understand the managers. The respondent further means these barriers are not contributing to creating a cohesive VGR. One consequence of unclear goals is according to another respondent the difficulty of understanding who the daily customer is. The respondent means the vision shows the customers of VGR are the citizens, however the respondent thinks his/her daily customers are the politicians and thinks all employees at the Head Office do not understand they actually work for the politicians in their daily job.

Another important aspect of working with goals is the follow-up processes. According to the respondents there seems to be different ways to do that at the Head Office. At the department of Healthcare, they use a lot of measurements, but some respondents mean too much is being measured, and they question whether quality is being measured. Consequently, the measures do not really show whether the work is creating value for the patient. Additionally, bad measures seldom lead to actions. At another department measurements are used to a lesser extent, instead a lot of work is evaluated through dialogues.

5.2.2 Leadership

One respondent describes a general insecurity among employees to present a strong opinion, a culture expressed as *loyal and hierarchical*, but he/she further explains there are cultural differences between departments and units. For example, at his/her unit the culture is described to be open with loud discussions and free opinions. Most respondents agree on cultural differences between departments, and one explains; "*Culture is linked to the people, culture is not deeply rooted in the company, but it is people that create culture*". Another respondent expresses the culture to generally be characterised by openness but also describes lack of time can hinder an open culture; "*When you are not open, inclusive, share knowledge, invite and listen is when you have too little time*". Further, it is generally described that many

people, both employees and managers, are scared of making mistakes and that it is hard to know what is allowed and not. This is not a good prerequisite for doing a good job, and it is hard to change if not daring to take any risks, leading to many people being passive in order not to be accused of doing wrong. The respondent thinks unclear goals are a reason for insecurity and passivity. In addition, another respondent says that leaders are good at saying the right things, but not always at following their own words. For example, some managers say that mistakes are allowed, but often in reality the contrary prevails.

Further, it is described to be somewhat easy to come up with improvement suggestions to the managers, but there is a general perception among the respondents that if the suggestions require a lot of work, they are not very likely to lead to action. Moreover, one respondent highlights the Change unit, meaning it provides the employees a possibility to leave suggestions in a more objective way, without leaving it directly to their managers.

Expressed by one respondent, managers of the specific unit do seem to neither be very much involved in the work of the employees nor always care about it. The respondent wishes that managers had more contact with their employees. In contrast to what is described above, this respondent thinks mistakes are allowed, and even thinks it is too loose at times. Since the managers are not very involved in the work of the employees, they neither know when their work effort is below the expected. Another respondent describes that managers seem to be more rewarded for administering rather than developing the organisation, even though development is a manager criterion of the region.

Finally, all respondents experience development in their work, mainly through their appointments. Some of them are taking their own initiatives to participate in classes and education, which they think is very developing and rewarding. However, they express these kinds of initiatives to be pulled by themselves and not pushed from management, consequently not everyone is part of trainings.

5.2.3 Holistic View & Collaboration

There is agreement among all respondents of lack of collaboration between departments at the Head Office. Sometimes it is stated in their appointments which functions should collaborate, but the respondents wish that it happened more often. When they collaborate, it seems the collaboration depends on people taking their own initiative to contact others. Because of the enormous organisation, as an employee it is hard to know about all colleagues, who they are and what they work with. Therefore, most employees seem to sometimes collaborate with people they know, or they have to use Google to try to find an employee matching their needs. However, making contact with colleagues for a collaboration

is time consuming, since it is required to go through management and the employee might have a deadline of 90 days to deliver the appointment; *“So sometimes I get the feeling everyone does what they are required to do, that is the appointments falling within your department, but you are not really open for the whole, and I think that is a shortcoming, something we have to work on”*. Besides, making their own contacts also makes the employees dependent on a large network, which gives employees different prerequisites in their work. One respondent says; *“The Head Office is enormous, regional development, public transport... I know nothing about them”*. Despite the challenges of making contacts with others, one respondent describes it to be a lot faster than sending back the appointment to the politicians and letting them decide who to collaborate with.

Moreover, some respondents point out it is common that they feel like a load for other employees when reaching out for collaboration, since everyone is busy with their own appointments. For this reason, one respondent suggests more work has to be done in developing a process orientation where everyone sees the whole process and what part of the process they are contributing to, instead of solely looking at their work in isolation. In agreement, another respondent states not everyone supports working across departments and there exist no forums where employees from different departments can meet naturally; *“Possibly our managers meet but then it gets on a very high level and you don’t see these small mechanisms where you could make faster solutions [...] can be that others already have the solution for a problem you are trying to solve in your appointment, but you are not aware of it... This transparency is something we at the Head Office should focus on improving”*. To conclude, all the respondents agree that more collaboration at the Head Office should make it easier to develop a more holistic view, a cohesive VGR, and to make life better for the citizens.

5.2.4 Citizen Involvement

In general, there seems to be ongoing work to increase citizen involvement in decisions, and to give them the opportunity to contribute to evaluation and improvement. To begin with, it is emphasised the Healthcare department has come a long way in citizen involvement, for example by making patients and their close relatives a part in developing healthcare. These people are part of process teams which are regularly in contact with the department at the Head Office to explain their ongoing work and challenges. However, a problem is the limited amount of time that the process teams get to report.

Moreover, one respondent continues to elaborate on the challenges with citizen involvement and describes the challenge of getting a representative sample and letting all voices be heard. Some respondents mention, oftentimes, there are people that are members of different patient

organisations who raise their voice, which has both benefits and drawbacks; patient organisations represent many patients, however, it is also crucial that patients who are not part of any organisation get to contribute.

In addition, one respondent points out the politicians also are citizens, elected to represent the citizens of the region, however he/she thinks citizen involvement has to be further improved. One reason it has to be further improved is the belief of too few and complicated contexts where citizens can find information. One respondent gives the example that published documents, reports and decisions require certain knowledge to be understandable for citizens. Considering the organisation is working for the citizens, the respondent thinks the Head Office gets too little input from them.

Furthermore, there seems to be concerns about opening up the dialogue with the citizens, for the reason of not knowing how it would be managed. One respondent thinks the Head Office needs to build relationships with the people in the organisations working close to the citizens, since these people already know the citizens' needs. It is clear these relationships have to be improved. One respondent says many organisations think the Head Office disturbs rather than supports them, and from the Head Office's point of view, it is about governing rather than supporting. In addition, one-way communication seems to be most common, which is expressed by one respondent saying;

My view of the Head Office is extremely competent theorists. However, we seem to not be as interested in whether things lead to action in the organisations. We talk about the organisations as 'executors' and have meetings at the Head Office talking about them but not with them. We should not be giving them orders but be talking with them about problems they encounter, what support they need, etc.

5.3 Ideas of Employees

In this section employee suggestions on how to deal with the four themes are presented. These suggestions were retrieved both from the employee interviews and discussion meetings arranged by the Change unit and are presented in an aggregated form.

Goals, Purpose & Follow-up processes

Most respondents mention the importance of having clear goals and demonstrate by the changes made in the whole organisation during the Covid-19 pandemic, when change was emergent and having a clear goal made the transformation fast.

There is an expression of a desire to rebalance the purposes of the Head Office; more resources should be put on helping the organisations with general problems, and less on supporting politicians. It is believed the Head Office has a lot of unused potential within the many expertise among employees, which could be leveraged through this change.

Another suggestion is to establish new performance measurements in terms of measures clearly showing whether value is created for the citizen. For example, *how many patients have an increased quality of life and participate more in society?* One step in this direction could be to cooperate with other public organisations.

Leadership

First, there is a suggestion to have more dialogue about the distribution in the managerial role; how much of managers' work should be operational versus leadership. Second, managers should be given more time to discuss leadership aspects with each other. Third, a system for feedback is suggested, where all employees are required to leave feedback to managers after meetings.

Working with culture seems necessary to improve leadership. One respondent expresses a desire to create a culture where they talk more about change management and particularly suggest dedicating time on workplace meetings for discussing improvement areas, mistakes and learnings. Another respondent wants a culture where employees dare to try new things, and this requires managers to have the courage themselves to try, take risks and accept mistakes and encourage employees; *"You are allowed to make mistakes, the most important is that you learn something and that we talk about what you learned"*. One respondent suggests how this can be achieved, and the benefits of it; *"If managers got together under a period and become yes-sayers and encourage employees to test new ideas, this would create a feeling that we can accomplish things"*.

Further, there is a general suggestion to focus on training in terms of mandatory courses in leadership and to combine theory with practice, for example by giving leaders an assignment to conduct at the next workplace meeting.

Lastly, a suggestion is to improve the structure of managers' meetings, meaning it has to be clear whether the focus is on information or discussion, who is in charge, and how the time will be distributed. To further improve the structure, assigning clear roles and delegating the word in a systematic way are suggested.

Holistic View & Collaboration

A statement was made emphasising the importance of making the collaboration at the Head Office work; “*Creating a cohesive VGR is the most important thing we will do in the coming years. [...] Creating one region has to start with collaboration at the Head Office, it has to start with us here at the Head Office, or it will not work*”.

In order for everyone to see each other as resources and not as burdens, and to see the whole picture, one respondent means working with the values to get everyone to live by them is necessary. Another suggests putting effort into developing a process orientation at the Head Office. Rather than being department oriented, the mindset should be focused on the process, i.e. what process and what part of it employees contribute to.

In addition, another respondent proposes to encourage more movement across departments to learn from each other and to share experiences and different competences. Further, the respondent thinks moving across departments could counteract the culture of silence, since it contributes to more knowledge.

Furthermore, one respondent suggests creating forums for the conversation about collaboration, and not only having it as a short point on a meeting agenda; “*Right now we are so agenda-driven so I really think we have to be better at having these kinds of agenda-free meetings*”. The suggestion is to dedicate time at workplace meetings for everyone to analyse potential collaborations. The next step should be to gather the involved parties in the collaboration for further discussion.

Citizen Involvement

To improve citizen involvement, a suggestion is to cooperate with the municipalities since they already are in contact with the citizens, for example through associations and schools. The already existing dialogue between the regional and municipal politicians is believed to be a possible communication channel to further build upon.

Further, another respondent suggests a simple way of getting short and quick information from citizens at the different organisations. This is to have a system where the citizens get the opportunity to leave a comment about their experience in connection to their visit, for example one good and one less good thing.

6. Transformation Stories from Other Public Organisations

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section introduces the organisations which have been part of the study, and the second section presents what these organisations have been doing, and are doing today, in terms of the four areas presented in Section 5.2. The chapter is finalised with a summary, and aims to provide a basis for the answer to RQ2; *How can the Head Office of Region Västra Götaland transform to reach the desired state?*

6.1 Introduction of Organisations

Swedish Tax Agency

The Swedish Tax Agency is located in hundreds of places in Sweden with about 10 500 employees in total (Skatteverket, n.d.a.). The main mission of the Swedish Tax Agency is to collect taxes, manage population registration and estate inventory registration in Sweden (Skatteverket, n.d.b.). The representative for the Swedish Tax Agency in this study is Anders Stridh, who is a strategist at the authority.

With the major changes, between 2006 and 2011, they wanted to move away from being reactive, i.e., to detect mistakes and cheats in hindsight, and instead work to provide prerequisites for individuals and companies to do things right from the beginning (Stridh, personal communication, April 8, 2021). To achieve this, they needed to increase their understanding of the desire to do right, how to make it easy to do right, and what to do to earn trust. Therefore, much focus was on treatment, attitudes, and justice. They experienced their resources could be better utilised, and the mission for the society could be better carried out by focusing on those aspects.

Swedish Pensions Agency

The Swedish Pensions Agency has about 1 400 employees, located in eight cities in Sweden (Pensionsmyndigheten, 2021). Their main mission is to administer and pay the national public pension, as well as inform about pensions to the inhabitants (Pensionsmyndigheten, n.d.). The respondent representing the Swedish Pensions Agency is Jakob Brandt who is Group Manager at the Department of Production at the authority.

The change journey at the Swedish Pensions Agency started a few years ago and is still ongoing. It is connected to a system approach, meaning they try to adapt their processes to make them align with the needs of the customers, with the purpose to create more value for the pensioners and for the society in general (Brandt, personal communication, April 14, 2021). They want to move away from assuming what the customers want, to moving towards asking the customers about the true needs (Ekonomistyrningsverket, 2020). The system

approach also includes changing the evaluation measures, from measuring productivity in terms of number of finished cases, to measuring quality and unnecessary demand (Ekonomistyrningsverket, 2020; Brandt, personal communication, April 14, 2021).

Kungsbacka Municipality

Kungsbacka Municipality is responsible for a wide range of organisations within the municipality, such as schools, elderly care, rescue service, traffic and water supply (Kungsbacka, n.d.a.). In total, the municipality has around 8 000 employees (Kungsbacka, n.d.b.). The interview was conducted with Malin Aronsson who is the Municipal Chief Executive of Kungsbacka Municipality.

For more than ten years they have been working to create structures making it possible to involve all levels in the organisation in development, and to build a culture that supports it (Aronsson, personal communication, April 15, 2021). This requires less detailed governance from the top and creating more space for employees to be co-creators. The reason this change was important for them is that employees working close to the inhabitant, customer, student etc., know best how resources should be used to create the most value for the ones they are working for.

Lantmäteriet

Lantmäteriet has about 2 200 employees (Lantmäteriet, n.d.a.), and they have a mission to “[...] map the country, demarcate boundaries and help guarantee secure ownership of Sweden’s real property” (Lantmäteriet, n.d.b.). They also handle property change applications and ensure that the property register is updated with the latest ownership registrations (Lantmäteriet, n.d.b.). The representative from Lantmäteriet in this study is Ann Lundqvist who works at the Department of Property Formation.

The biggest challenges for Lantmäteriet are that their processing time is too long, and the costs for the customers are too high (Lundqvist, personal communication, April 20, 2021). They want to become more effective and be able to explain the reasons for the high costs. During the last years they have been trying to implement more teamwork with other professions, and this is a challenge that is still up to date. The system needs to be changed in order to be able to succeed with teamwork and efficacy.

Helsingborg City

Helsingborg City is responsible for the services of the municipality, to create high life quality for the inhabitants (Helsingborg, 2020a), and has about 11 000 employees (Ekonomifakta,

2019a). Palle Lundberg is Chief Executive at Helsingborg City, and is representing them in this study.

In 2012 Helsingborg City adopted *Vision 2035*, which aims at making Helsingborg interesting, attractive, and durable (Helsingborg, 2020b). One goal is also to become one of the most innovative cities in Europe. The rationale behind the vision is to create great prerequisites for life quality for the inhabitants, and viability for the companies (Lundberg, personal communication, April 21, 2021).

Skellefteå Municipality

Like the other municipalities, Skellefteå Municipality is responsible for providing services to the inhabitants, of which some are regulated in laws, and others are free of choice (Skellefteå, 2021). The municipality has around 9 000 employees (Ekonomifakta, 2019b), and for this study Kristina Sundin Jonsson, the Head of Administration, was interviewed.

The change journey at Skellefteå Municipality is based on the knowledge that continuous improvements are vital for an organisation to stay relevant to its customers, since the society is ever changing (Jonsson, personal communication, April 27, 2021). Another reason to always improve is that demographic changes will be challenging economically for the municipalities, and to stay attractive as an employer.

6.2 Their Transformation Journeys

In this section, the empirical data from the six semi-structured interviews with the organisations is presented. The data concerns their ways of dealing with the four themes and is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of what the organisations have done to deal with the four themes (Authors' own).

	Goals, Purpose & Follow-up processes	Leadership	Holistic view & Collaboration	Citizen Involvement
Helsingborg City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicates goals through pictures and feelings - Gathers employees to motivate and update them - Gathered employees to a fair to show good examples - Discusses goals and vision with employees - Shows top management the overall picture, not the details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has training camps for all leaders - Sheds light on employees acting in alignment with the vision - "The Mistake of The Year" to highlight and spread learnings - Has innovation platform with improvement projects and learnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has leadership programs to share perspectives and practice collaboration - Creates relationships; check-ins & coaching, personal talks with managers - Has goals that require collaboration - Has collaboration as part of salary assessment - Highlights employees who collaborate, on social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has digital platform for inhabitant input - Inhabitants have possibility to apply for a meeting for further input
Municipality of Kungsbacka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lets employees set lower level goals supporting the overall goals - Shows top management the overall picture, not the details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses workplace meetings for discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has collaboration as part of salary assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appreciates small inputs such as comments on social media
Lantmäteriet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has few overall goals, since having many is confusing - Breaks down and translates goals to lower levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducts training based on business plan - Lets leaders own the dialogue with employees - Has continuous improvement structure to handle new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does follow-up collaboration - Highlights good examples of collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maps customer journeys - Simplifies language of information
Swedish Tax Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses qualitative measures as base for improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates confidence among leaders by giving them time to process - Includes cultural aspects in management contracts - Creates engagement within the strategic frame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Works with the rhetoric of the managers - Has internal treatment educations - Does not have many detailed goals on individual level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has qualitative studies as base for value words - Provides different sources of information to reach all people
Swedish Pensions Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uses measures to know what to improve 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides individual help to customers
Municipality of Skellefteå	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has clear goals and purpose - Focuses on who they work for - Focuses on the mission rather than having many goals - Discusses with employees how they can contribute to goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had a campaign called "You know best" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has goals that require collaboration - Highlights good examples to spread internally and externally 	

6.2.1 Goals, Purpose & Follow-up Processes

Many of the organisations mention it is of great importance to develop goals that are clear to everyone within the organisation. They further mean these goals have to define *what* they are supposed to do, but there should also be a very clear *why* behind every goal. A very general example of knowing the why comes from the Municipality of Skellefteå where they put much emphasis on the mindset of knowing who they are working for. They mean the focus must be on the organisations close to the inhabitants, since these organisations are the ones delivering value to the inhabitants. Therefore, other employees in the municipality have the purpose to

support these organisations in making life better for the inhabitants, which is the ultimate purpose of the municipality. Another example of how to work with goals comes from Helsingborg City, where they try to make the goals and the vision clear and motivating through feelings and pictures. Lundberg says; *“People are not thinking in words, they think in pictures and experience feelings, so you have to paint pictures that create emotions in order to engage employees”*. Therefore, when Helsingborg City developed new goals in terms of *Vision 2035*, they gathered all 10 000 employees to paint those pictures, in order to make sure to get everyone aboard. One year later all employees were gathered to a fair where the organisations could show concrete things they had done to work towards the vision and give inspiration to others. Parallel to these gatherings, they also gathered all managers annually, to give them inspiration and updates on the progression. After another seven years they were all gathered again to evaluate what they had done to come closer to the vision, and how far they had come, and the results were very inspiring for the employees to continue the work towards *Vision 2035*.

The interviews have shown there are different ways of working with goal setting in different levels of the organisations. Most of the organisations agree that having many goals can be confusing. At Lantmäteriet they have chosen to solely focus on four overall goals, which the departments break down and translate to their level and further to unit level to help the employees understand them. The Municipality of Skellefteå has chosen another way. They want to let everyone focus on their mission and find how they can contribute to the goals in their job, instead of breaking down overall goals to lower levels. They believe each profession knows best what they need to do in order to contribute to creating a good organisation. In order to focus on the mission, employees have opportunities for discussion around their mission with their managers in workplace meetings. On a similar note, Helsingborg City involves the employees in discussions about what the vision and goals mean for each unit. In the Municipality of Kungsbacka they mean it is important to develop lower-level goals that align with the overall goals and give meaning to the individual employee, instead of breaking down the overall goals. Lundqvist says;

Broad and common goals that apply to the whole organisation are not meant to be broken down to each department or unit but should be general enough to be relevant to all parts of the organisation to work with at a general level. These goals cannot be broken down and applied to a single unit and be meaningful to all its employees. Instead, these employees and their managers should formulate their own goals, which should align with the overall goals, but still give meaning to these employees in their job.

In order to know if the goals are fulfilled, it is important to follow up the work in some way. Both the Swedish Tax Agency and the Swedish Pensions Agency explain they have moved away from using quantitative measures connected to production goals, and instead use measures connected to their purpose and to learn how they can improve. For example, the Swedish Tax Agency has a goal of improving the customer's experience in the encounter with them, and therefore they measure that in a qualitative way, which gives them a clear picture of what is good and what can be improved. Measures are also important for the employees personally, since they can get energy from seeing they are doing well. Follow-ups can be done in different ways and on different levels in an organisation, and Helsingborg City and the Municipality of Kungsbacka mean the top management should not be given long detailed reports, they need to see only the overall picture of how the organisation is doing in terms of the overall goals, which can be accomplished through visiting the organisations and having a dialogue with the employees. The Municipality of Kungsbacka put focus on forwarding knowledge in terms of analysis, conclusions, and suggestions of governance to top management, instead of giving them a lot of indicators. Aronsson explains;

I believe it is common to measure on a very detailed level, high up in the organisation, and having the information presented without an analysis. This can lead to people making their own analysis and drawing their own conclusions. If they do not have knowledge about every detail, these conclusions might be wrong, which ultimately can lead to a governance that is not optimal.

6.2.2 Leadership

In agreement almost all respondents put emphasis on training the leaders in leadership and making them comfortable in their leadership role by giving them time to practice. In the Municipality of Skellefteå, their leadership development programs are much focused on perceiving criticism as a gift to improve the organisation, and ensuring leaders know business development is a very important part of their mission. In Helsingborg City, when the new vision *Vision 2035* was launched they simultaneously started to put a lot of effort into working with a new culture, which included a new leader and employee policy. Working with the new culture was important since they understood the new vision required a new type of behaviour among leaders and employees. They provided different training camps to train the leaders in the new culture, which all their 500 leaders have been part of. Since the new vision included Trust Based Governance this meant a shift in the leadership role from control and follow up to a more supportive role and Lundberg means it is important that the leaders get training in their new role. In the Municipality of Kungsbacka they agree as Aronsson says; "You don't become a change leader by yourself, we have trained all our managers in

developing leadership and continues to do it all the time, both with new leaders and to maintain the knowledge, it is nothing you can expect people to be able to do". Further, at Lantmäteriet they have started to put more consciousness behind their training of leaders. Before, they offered courses in leadership but more in the way that leaders could pick the courses they wanted. In contrast, they now have dedicated courses, based on their business plan, i.e., the goals and challenges they have and what they need to do. At the Swedish Tax Agency, they have also prioritised and invested in existing managers, rather than focused on replacement. An important part of their leadership training has been to make leaders feel comfortable to drive change. Stridh says *"Insecurity among leaders will shine through and make employees doubtful"*. To create confidence among leaders they have allowed time and space for discussions around the change initiatives in the management group before initiation to the employees, which have been successful. Stridh says; *"If employees know that managers really know this, and have been given time to process it, then it will be genuine, managers can answer questions, and this will create a drive forward"*.

Generally, there is a perception among most organisations that a cultural change starts at the top management level and that leaders have to constantly be representatives of the desired culture, in order to get employees' support. In addition, culture is pinpointed as something that constantly has to be worked on, developed and maintained. This is emphasised by the Municipality of Kungsbacka; *"One has to work very actively to create and constantly maintain the culture one wants to prevail in the organisation, and managers have to drive such a work, you always clean the stair from above"*. One example of how to work with culture is provided by Helsingborg City. They shed light on employees acting in alignment with the vision; *"What we shed light on is what will grow"*. He explains social media has been a great tool for doing this, and he has also seen another positive aspect connected to social media; *"I was not so familiar with working with social media, but it was a good way for me to partly show that I also have to dare trying new things"*. In other words, social media was also a way for him to show the culture concerns him. Another way to highlight the right behaviour is to get out on the floor where the employees are present. Lundberg means being too far away from the employees might risk leaders to lose their legitimacy if employees experience that leaders lack knowledge about their work, and neither listen nor show appreciation. The opposite, if leaders show their accessibility, employees will feel heard and understood resulting in them being willing to listen and follow. He says; *"Leadership presupposes followers, you have to make the employees want to follow you as a manager"*.

Another example of how to work with culture is provided by the Swedish Tax Agency. While they had consultants helping with part of their change, they have always had the leaders

taking the actual dialogue with the employees to make them believe in it. Stridh says; *“When I have meetings with section managers to convey the strategic direction, I usually say to the manager that I would like you to take over when I am done, you need to have the dialogue with the employees, but I will support you if you have any questions [...]. If I would talk directly to the employees, someone they do not meet often, it would not be trustworthy”*. A second example of how they work with culture at the Swedish Tax Agency is to make sure the cultural aspects are included in the manager contracts, so these are also the aspects the leaders get followed up on.

Many of the interviews emphasise the importance of engaging the employees in the change. One way to do this, suggested by Kungsbacka Municipality, is to use existing meeting forums, like the workplace meetings, for discussions. Aronsson thinks these forums are filled with wrong context, focused on information and not discussion. Another way to engage employees is exemplified by the Municipality of Skellefteå, where they run a campaign named *You know best*. This initiative was based on the belief that the organisations are the ones knowing best how to improve. The campaign entailed a system, where all employees throughout the municipality could file business ideas, which they later could have a vote on. Because of the success, this system has later been implemented in other contexts too. Sundin Jonsson says ensuring feedback to the ones sending in their suggestions is crucial or they will stop to engage. At the Swedish Tax Agency, they have created engagement by solely providing the strategic direction while letting the different offices choose their approach. Stridh believes using different approaches is good since different offices can inspire each other and offices can get credit for their way of working and thereby gain motivation.

Moreover, many of the organisations mentioned the importance of making sure improvement suggestions are taken care of. One way to do this is illustrated by Lantmäteriet, which has implemented a continuous improvement structure to be able to handle all good ideas in the organisation. When ideas emerge on team level, they get sent upwards through functional manager and unit management to a particular organisation that takes on the investigation. Another example is the previously mentioned *You know best* campaign initiated by the Municipality of Skellefteå. Connecting to this, the Municipality of Kungsbacka thinks it is important to make sure the leaders feel confident to bring suggestions forward in their structure or they will become a plug in the system and hinder development. Aronsson says; *“The absolute worst that can happen is that you have a scared organisation, then you have a big cultural challenge [...]. I believe in trying to have a culture where you feel that it is okay and expected to come up with ideas”*.

In Helsingborg City they also put a lot of effort into promoting a culture where making mistakes is a natural part and making sure learnings from mistakes are spread in the organisation. Lundberg says; *“All improvements, and then I really mean all improvements, are built on mistakes [...]. You have to create a culture where it is not only ok to fail but where employees are expected to try and fail”*. Therefore, he means, the biggest challenge to overcome is a scared organisation where employees do not dare to try because they are afraid of making mistakes. He continues; *“A scared organisation will not make improvements, rather you make improvements by trying small things, make mistakes, but it is not the mistakes being of interest but the learnings”*. Regarding spreading the learnings, they do it in different ways in Helsingborg City. One example is their yearly award named *The Mistake of The Year* where they highlight and reward a learning that has come out of a mistake. Another example is their innovation database where they have around 250 initiatives from employees on new ideas, which have turned into improvement projects. With each project there is included a description of the learnings gained in the project, which anyone in the organisation can take part of; *“Big organisations really have to create these structures/platforms in order to disseminate learnings”*.

6.2.3 Holistic View & Collaboration

Most organisations agree that if they want collaboration and holistic view to prevail in the organisation, the start is to get the leaders to think collaboration is important, be representatives of it and communicate to the employees why it is important. One respondent says; *“The employees cannot be expected to be better than the managers”*. One way to do this is exemplified by Helsingborg City, which has mixed managers from different departments in their leadership development programs. In this way, the leaders get to train leadership and collaboration together and also get to share perspectives with each other. Lundberg says; *“[...] you as a manager must create the arenas that facilitate collaboration”*. Another example is provided by the Swedish Tax Agency, where they work a lot with the rhetoric of the managers since they think this affects how the employees look at themselves and whether they feel they can contact other departments for help. Stridh demonstrates this by saying; *“If it takes a long time for people to get in contact with the Swedish Tax Agency by phone, are the managers then talking about ‘they [a certain unit] have a problem over there’ or is it more ‘we are having the problem’”*. To achieve this kind of rhetoric and a general feeling that everyone is contributing to the same goal, they work a lot with internal treatment education, i.e., how they see each other. Another example of how leaders work to create a holistic view at the Swedish Tax agency is that they do not have too many detailed goals on an individual level since they think that will lead to a behaviour where employees do not have a holistic view. Instead, the leaders work to get employees to see their role in the common mission.

Clearly emphasised by Helsingborg City, and also mentioned by Lantmäteriet, is their belief that collaboration is based on creating relationships; *"You have to like those you are to collaborate with and think that collaboration is fun, otherwise it will not work"*. Lundberg builds these relationships in many different ways and describes his management meetings where they use *Check in* and *Coaching*. The management group consists of twelve people and the meetings always begin with 45 minutes of check in where everyone sits in a semicircle and gets to tell something top of mind both personally and work related. This is followed by an hour of coaching when the managers are divided into groups of three where everyone has to figure out a dilemma. The coaching starts with one of the managers getting to explain his/her problem to the other two colleagues for five minutes. Then they talk about the problem while the manager is supposed to only listen. The colleagues talk about their own experiences of a similar situation, how they would have dealt with the manager's problem. For the next five minutes, the manager gets to tell them about what he/she has heard and what he/she will bring. Finally, they reflect together for another five minutes about the experience, and the learnings. This procedure is repeated for the other two managers. Lundberg says; *"The reason I have check in and coaching every time is that you build relationships, you open up, you get to know who I am, I share my problems and I take help from my colleagues from other departments to solve it"*. In addition, they also work with specific issues in smaller groups where they help each other and get to train to solve common challenges, something that requires that they already have relations and know each other. Another example of how he builds relations are his one-hour sessions when someone in his management group gets to talk about himself/herself and his/her life journey and also Lundberg himself. In other words, a very personal observation of one's life, sometimes leading to tears because of the many feelings involved; *"So building these relationships is about daring to open up and show who you are, and then I have to take the lead, which means I might be first out in these exercises"*.

Generally, almost all organisations emphasise the importance of having incentive structures in place to get more collaboration. From an authority's point of view the Swedish Pensions Agency thinks there is a pressure to work in the silos as Brandt says; *"When you have to report the result to the government, collaboration is not so interesting anymore, you do not get followed up on it but you are rewarded for your own little part"*. Both Helsingborg City and the Municipality of Skellefteå have goals requiring collaboration, so if they are to reach their goals, working across borders is a necessity, which both of them emphasise on their management meetings. One of them says; *"Employees and managers have to come to the realisation that they will not manage to reach the goal in their isolation. In order for us to solve our task, we have to collaborate"*.

Another type of incentive structure is visible both in Helsingborg City, the Municipality of Kungsbacka and at Lantmäteriet and this is to reward collaboration. They reward collaboration in terms of salary for both employees and leaders, one of them saying; *“They will always prioritise what they are paid for”*. In the Municipality of Kungsbacka not only collaboration is part of their salary assessment but all their four cultural cornerstones. Aronsson says; *“This is why culture and structure are so very important, what you decide to be very important has to be reflected in the structure”*. In contrast, the Municipality of Skellefteå has chosen not to implement monetary incentives for collaboration, Sundin Jonsson saying; *“We do not want to force collaboration, but rather show good examples to create intrinsic motivation”*. In agreement, Lantmäteriet also focuses on highlighting good examples to inspire and create insight among employees that collaboration can be useful. The Municipality of Skellefteå also thinks spreading good examples should not be done only internally but should also include to show good examples to other municipalities; *“We reach success by sharing things”*.

6.2.4 Citizen Involvement

Different organisations and authorities have different customers, and therefore citizen involvement is not the term used by everyone. Some call it customer involvement, others focus on inhabitants rather than citizens. Lundberg specifically points out that they are very consciously talking about inhabitants instead of citizens, since inhabitants also include people that live in Helsingborg City, but are not Swedish citizens. At the same time, Lundqvist says Lantmäteriet are working with the term customers, since they actually have customers paying for the services provided, and not funded by taxes. Regardless of what terms are being used, all organisations want the same thing – to include and get input from the people they are working for.

What has clearly been shown from the interviews with the organisations is that no one can expect the inhabitants or customers to come to the office and provide input. Even if they do, Helsingborg City means that information would not be representative since often it is the most critical inhabitants forwarding their opinions. Lundberg says; *“[...] we have to get closer to them [the inhabitants] and make it as easy as possible for them to engage”*. When Helsingborg City wants input in a certain project, they send postcards to the inhabitants, including a link to a digital platform where inhabitants can give their input to this project. In connection to this the inhabitants also have the possibility to apply for a meeting with representatives from the municipality. From these applications Helsingborg City chooses a representative sample, to get broader and deeper input through interviews. In the same way as no one can expect inhabitants to come to the organisations, Kungsbacka Municipality also

means no one can expect to receive an essay each time, why it is important to learn to appreciate and find ways to take care of small comments on social media for instance.

At Lantmäteriet they are doing interviews with the purpose to track some of the customer journeys, from start to finish, to be able to find what the customer experience looks like, what they do well, and what they can do better to make the customer more satisfied with them as an organisation. On the same topic, the Swedish Tax Agency has used qualitative investigations among their customers to get a clear picture of how the authority is perceived, and what the real needs are. From these investigations they found that *helpful* was a word of great importance for the customers, and therefore it is today one of their values. They think it is important to involve both employees and customers in developing values, but they mean the decision should be made top down.

One important aspect of citizen involvement is the citizens' possibility to get information from the organisations. Lantmäteriet is currently working on making their sources of information more available and easier to understand, Lundqvist says; *“We work with clarifying the language and increase the availability which all authorities do. There are a lot of laws nowadays that we as public actors have to fulfill. We are challenged to use another language and simplify the information”*. Another important factor in providing information to citizens, emphasised both by the Swedish Pensions Agency and the Swedish Tax Agency, is to care about people's uniqueness. At the Swedish Tax Agency, they work with providing a lot of different sources of information, such as texts, films etc., to make the information and the services available to more people. They emphasise there are all kinds of people, but everyone should have the same rights and possibilities to understand and take part, regardless of who they are. At the Swedish Pensions Agency, they address the uniqueness of people by providing individual help to customers in the processes requiring customer interaction, Brandt says; *“There is an enormous variation, people that cannot see or hear, and professors that already know everything. We work with the uniqueness of people through working with the individual customers”*.

To finalise citizen involvement, there is one valuable insight to share from the Swedish Tax Agency. They mean it is important to listen to the customers' wishes and suggestions, but it is also important to remember that their solution might not be the best to fulfill the underlying need. People in general do not have all the knowledge and information required to know the best solution. The task is to find what the real need is, and with the knowledge within the organisation find the best solution, which Stridh uses the Ford metaphor to describe; *“You know the citation of Henry Ford, that's what it's all about, if people say they want faster horses, maybe the car meets that underlying need”*.

6.3 Summary

To finalise this chapter, it can be concluded that most organisations emphasise the importance of working with clear goals that are well integrated among employees. A majority also suggest making sure the follow-up processes contribute to creating value and align with the goals and the vision, while trying to avoid detailed governance. Furthermore, leadership seems to be very important in transformation journeys in general, and not least when it regards changing culture. Some organisations mention training and education of leaders as a key, while others highlight making leaders confident and using incentives that align with the desired leadership. Incentives such as highlighting good examples and including cultural aspects in salary assessments are also suggested to be used among employees in general, for example to increase collaboration. To succeed with collaboration specifically, one organisation means building relationships are the necessary starting point. Further, involving citizens is mentioned as a challenge in most organisations, since it is hard to make sure everyone gets the chance to be heard. Some organisations work to provide different types of sources of information to make it available to as many as possible, and a few provide platforms where citizens have the possibility to leave their opinions. Lastly, although these organisations sometimes approach these challenges in different ways, they all agree on the four areas to be keys to become an efficient public organisation that creates value for the people they work for.

7. Discussion

This chapter serves to paint the picture to arrive at answers to the research questions by synthesising theory with empirical findings. First, to provide a picture of the current state of the Head Office, the starting point is to discuss the empirical data from *The Change Initiative & the Perceived Current State*, in terms of *The View of Employees*, in the light of the theory of *NPM* and *Post-NPM*. The purpose is to get insight where on the spectrum the Head Office is positioned, regarding these management theories. Then, to paint the picture of *How* the Head Office can proceed with their transformation, the second part of the discussion takes off in *Transformation Stories from Other Public Organisations* combined with *The Change Initiative & the Perceived Current State*, focused on *Ideas of Employees*, and *Change Management* theory.

7.1 Current State

One of the main critiques against NPM according to Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm (2016) is the detailed governance that forces employees to put much effort into administrative work, to the cost of missing out on real value creation for their customers. A similar problem seems to be present at the Head Office, where employees describe they put much time into reporting to politicians, documents they mean are sometimes not even read. Further, it is described that some politicians lack knowledge, which forces employees to spend time on non-value creating activities. None of these activities contribute to the vision of The Good Life. While the fourth doctrine of NPM intended to use resources more efficiently, a waste of resources has oftentimes been the result. Many examples in the interviews support the latter, one of them is the need of reinventing the wheel to solve problems apparent in many organisations, over and over again. This indicates a non-learning organisation, where employees do not get the opportunity to share learnings with each other. However, with knowledge sharing structures in place and the wide and deep knowledge the employees of the Head Office are expressed to possess, improving the resource utility towards the organisations has great potential to add a lot of value.

Moreover, some parts of the Head Office have fallen into the measurement trap. As explained by the interviewees, often too many measures are used that are not connected to real value creation. This connects to the sixth and seventh doctrines postulated by Hood (1991), which emphasise a strong focus on results by establishment of performance measurement systems, often through implementation of quantitative measures. However, this has been the case for another critique against NPM, contributing to inefficiency rather than efficiency, as was intended.

The first doctrine by Hood (1991) has put pressure on each unit of a public service organisation (PSO) to use its financial resources in the most efficient way. This structure creates incentives against work across borders and knowledge sharing. Altogether it creates a barrier to a holistic perspective, resulting in a fragmented organisation working in silos. Illustrated in the interviews with the employees, fragmentation in the organisation seems to exist. Employees in the organisation appear to be unfamiliar with each other's roles, responsibilities and appointments. Additionally, the different organisations experience separation from VGR as a unit, and a lack of support and two-way communication with the Head Office. With each unit focusing on their own mission and resources, collaboration across units and departments will not be rewarded (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016). At the Head Office this has been expressed through employees experiencing unwillingness to collaborate. However, a remedy for tackling this challenge with great potential is expressed to be to work on a process-orientation and create meeting forums for people to meet across departments. Promising and agreed on by all respondents is that making collaboration work would fulfil the purpose of making life better for citizens.

There are many aspects of NPM that still seem to be present at the Head Office, meaning Osborne's (2010) critique of NPM to be built on theories of production is valid in the case of the Head Office. According to Osborne (2010) the public sector is foremost concerned with providing services and not products, which requires another approach to public service management, with regard to the key characteristics contrasting services from products. The core of services is to see all stakeholders as value contributors (Osborne et al., 2013), hence developing strategies for involving stakeholders are paramount to a PSO. This aspect is central in both PSDL and Trust Based Governance. At the Head Office there is ongoing work to involve citizens in the organisations. Foremost, in the Healthcare department, it is expressed that some actions in the right direction have been taken. Still, this remains a challenge for the Head Office overall, both regarding providing information to the citizens and getting their input.

To get input from the citizens it is expressed that two-way communication with the employees working close to the citizens is vital. This further requires collaboration and holistic view in the organisation, where the former is emphasised by Bringselius (2017) as a principle of Trust Based Governance. Expressed by the employees, collaboration is a challenge at the Head Office, partly because of a lack of process orientation making the employees have a holistic view.

All aspects mentioned above are according to Galbraith (2011) contributing to the culture in an organisation, and leaders are deemed to be key to create and change culture (Schein,

2010). The interrelationship between leadership and culture is also emphasised by Bringselius (2017) in one of the cornerstones of Trust Based Governance. One principle closely connected to this cornerstone is *Openness*. As Alvesson et al. (2015) describe, an organisational culture consists of many subcultures. From the interviews it has been demonstrated to exist many subcultures at the different departments at the Head Office. Some of the subcultures are explained to be characterised by openness, with frequent discussions and free opinions, while others are expressed to be characterised by loyalty to superiors, hierarchy and silence. In respect of free opinions, the Change unit is appreciated and expressed as a step in the right direction towards an open culture.

Another principle connected to leadership is *Support*, with the essence of creating good prerequisites to fulfil user needs (Bringselius, 2017). An important part in creating prerequisites is that leaders act as role models. Role modelling is a vital first step in Denning's (2011) model about how to change culture. Creating good prerequisites to fulfil user needs is not fully achieved at the Head Office, since some employees express leaders' words to contrast their actions. Besides, creating good prerequisites also requires the leaders to be involved in the work of the employees, and by some of the respondents it is mentioned that leaders are sometimes too absent in their daily work.

Furthermore, some employees experience that they develop in their work, but the development is emphasised to be linked to their challenging appointments, and not to structures of knowledge development. On the contrary, Bringselius (2017) highlights the importance of having structures for knowledge development in one of the principles. Similarly, this is one part contributing to culture, in Galbraith's (2011) star model, which shows the importance of developing people with skills necessary for the strategy. This would mean both leaders and employees at the Head Office would benefit from training and education.

To be successful in working with all the aspects mentioned above, having clear goals and a clear purpose with the organisation is essential. The focus on purpose is also at the core of Trust Based Governance (Bringselius, 2017). Around the two purposes of the Head Office, there is expressed to be some lack of consensus regarding how resources should be distributed, further implying clarifying the purpose needs more attention. It is not clear to everyone in the organisation that they are working to make life better for the inhabitants. Eriksson (2019) and many of the employees mean everything an organisation does has to start with who they are working for, hence it should be clear that the work of every employee contributes to the ones the organisation works for. Bringselius (2017) means a reason for not seeing who the work is targeting can be breaking down the overall goals, making them

unclear to the employees and consequently leading to a fragmented organisation. One way to clarify the purpose and who the organisation is working for, is to follow up the work to see whether the work is creating value for them. At one of the departments, dialogues with employees working close to the citizens are used to get insight into the level of success of their work. This follow up approach is appreciated, and the particular respondent expressed it makes him/her easily see the work is purposed to make life better for the inhabitants. Dialogue is a method preferred by Bringselius (2017), before using detailed governance. At other departments, quantitative measures are used to a greater extent, which is seen as a problematic aspect of NPM (Ahlbäck-Öberg & Widmalm, 2016).

To finish the first part of the discussion, it can be concluded that some cultural and governing aspects at the Head Office align with NPM, but clearer is that many aspects contradict the management theories of Post-NPM. Many of the reasons the Head Office want to change address the flaws of NPM, and the ways they want to change aligns with the theories of Trust Based Governance to a great extent. Lagersten (2021) also means that the future will bring more complexity to the public sector, which is an argument to move towards a more service focused theory (Osborne, 2010). Therefore, Trust Based Governance should be seen as a relevant management theory for the desired transformation. For example, they want to utilise resources in a more efficient way through developing a holistic view and collaboration and having shared goals and directions. Lagersten (2021) also emphasises the importance of developing the public sector to make it clearer that all they do is for the citizens. The employees seem to be on the similar track, that Trust Based Governance is the way to go. For example, they are convinced that more collaboration would make it easier to reach the vision, which is also stated in theory. Although there is still a lot of work left to do, the study has given the insight that some efforts have already started, and there is a will among many employees to develop further.

7.2 How to Transform?

Both the employees at the Head Office and the representatives from other organisations express the need for having clear goals and purpose. In order to concretise the vision, the goals and the purpose, and to provide a clear direction to the employees, Newman (1994) suggests adhering to his three layers, showing how to create and maintain the desired culture. In agreement, Denning (2011) means it is important to start with the leadership tools, which are often neglected. In Helsingborg City there are clear examples how this can be managed. First, as the vision was launched, they gathered all employees to inspire them, and they have kept doing that regularly to keep the motivation alive. Second, they hosted a fair to show good initiatives connected to their vision. Both these approaches are good examples of how an organisation can create the by Lord (Personal communication, February 23, 2021)

preferred *pull* and not *push*, meaning to inspire employees to create a need rather than to push out decisions. In order to make this possible, Lysell and Daun (Personal communication, February 12, 2021) emphasise the importance of establishing KPIs connecting to the vision and the goals. These measures could then be the base for the results presented at these gatherings. Such an approach is plausible to give employees intrinsic motivation to their work, which is linked to increased productivity in organisations, according to Bass (1990).

Continuing on follow-up processes, both the Swedish Tax Agency and the Swedish Pensions Agency prioritise qualitative measures before an extensive use of quantitative measures. Similarly, Helsingborg City provides top management only the overall picture, and not the detailed reports. Bringselius (2017) means such a procedure of follow-ups increases autonomy among employees and gives them more time for value creating activities. When employees feel more autonomy in their work, they are also more prone to speak up, reducing the serious problem of employee silence according to Hassan et al. (2019). Potentially, this could mean the culture of silence present at some parts of the Head Office could develop in the right direction. Likewise top management should not have all the details, Kungsbacka Municipality means top management should neither push down overall goals on lower levels, which aligns with Trust Based Management (Bringselius, 2017). Instead, employees should be engaged in goal formulation together with their managers, to ensure they do not lose focus on their mission. Succeeding with this would mean to get closer to the service perspective of public management and take a step away from the product perspective. Since the value is much dependent on the user experience of the service (Osborne, 2010), it is of great importance to give the service providers the opportunity to adapt the service to unique users at the time of interaction. Doing so requires autonomy and flexibility for service providers, which detailed governance, for example through breaking down overall goals, might counteract.

Apart from engaging employees in goal setting, the Swedish Tax Agency also thinks it is important to engage them in ongoing discussions, where they have the opportunity to give their opinions and thoughts. In Kungsbacka Municipality they use existing forums for discussions, instead of only providing information. Similarly, Rainey (2003) means engaging employees is vital to create and maintain motivation. Regularly dedicating time for discussion could remove insecurity among employees to share their opinions and promote an open culture at the Head Office. This type of initiative, although on a regional level, has already shown to be appreciated among the employees, meaning it has great potential to also be successful at lower levels. The open culture would also, potentially, create an acceptance to make mistakes, which is important since they bring a lot of learnings to the organisation. Supporting this, Lundberg states that learning is a prerequisite for development, meaning this

can act as a driving force to deal with all the complexities the public sector is facing today (Eriksson & Hellström, 2020). In Helsingborg City they promote learning from mistakes by their annual reward *The mistake of the year*. In Galbraith's (2011) star model Reward is emphasised as part of culture, hence if the desire is a culture accepting mistakes, it has to be reflected in the reward systems. In addition, rewarding the desired behaviour also concerns the leaders, meaning their ability to facilitate the wanted culture should be reflected in their leader assessments.

Another important part of the star model (Galbraith, 2011) is People, which includes the importance of developing skills aligning with the desired culture. Bringselius (2017) further describes the essence of having knowledge development structures in place. When it comes to training in change management, employees and managers should be part of the same education, since it will help to improve internal communication (Brodin, Personal communication, February 23, 2021). This could therefore address the experienced communication challenge between leaders and employees at the Head Office. Specifically, training the leaders at the Head Office, and giving them time to process knowledge before forwarding it to the employees, would possibly give them more confidence. This confidence could further strengthen their role as role models, which Denning (2011), Newman (1994) and representatives from the organisations agree is paramount on a transformation journey. In today's complex society, where organisations are required to be flexible and adaptive towards the fast-changing society, knowledge development becomes pivotal in the service perspective to be able to fulfil both the needs of the users and the society.

Another reason for training leaders is to give them the possibility to share and practice leadership aspects with each other, which Helsingborg City has achieved through mixing leaders from different departments in their leadership training program. In this way, the leaders get a holistic view and create a base for collaboration in the organisation. Further, Helsingborg City means collaboration requires relationships, which they build by dedicating time for personal meetings where they get to know each other. Creating these kinds of forums which aim at building relationships, would potentially create more knowledge about each other's responsibilities and roles in the different departments at the Head Office. Moreover, it is likely to increase the willingness to collaborate among employees since the knowledge about each other would lead to a holistic view in terms of an increased insight that everyone is working towards the same goals. In addition, building relationships can be seen as congruent with building trust in the model by Hassan et al. (2019), which also then could be another step in the direction of reducing the culture of silence at the Head Office.

Many representatives from the organisations also mean willingness to collaborate requires incentives. Whereas some of these organisations use monetary incentives to promote collaboration, Skellefteå Municipality believes more in creating intrinsic motivation to collaboration, for example through highlighting inspiring results of collaboration. In the same manner as mentioned earlier, this connects to the Reward aspect of Galbraith's (2010) star model, and he means both of these approaches are useful when establishing reward policies for collaboration.

Building relationships to get collaboration to work is important not only within the Head Office, but also with the organisations working close to the citizens, since supporting them is one of the purposes of the Head Office. At the moment, the communication style towards the organisation seems to be of asymmetrical type as referred to by Men (2014), which can probably be a reason why the organisations experience the Head Office to bother them rather than support them. Therefore, building these relationships with the organisations should have the ultimate aim to establish a symmetrical communication style between the Head Office and the organisations. This would mean the Head Office becomes more sensitive to the problems of the organisations, and overall gets a more supportive role. To further increase the perception of all organisations as one region, since a goal is to create a cohesive VGR, addressing the rhetoric could be a key. At the Swedish Tax Agency, changing the rhetoric from *we and them* to solely focus on *we*, has contributed to unify the organisation.

Getting collaboration with the organisations working close to the citizens to work is also important in order to improve citizen involvement. These employees meet all kinds of citizens and therefore they see the real picture of what needs are present. If they do not get to describe that picture and share their knowledge, there is a risk only certain types of citizens will be heard. Rowe and Frewer (2000) describes this as a problem since it means the decision makers will get an unrepresentative picture of the needs. The challenge with reaching all citizens is described to be apparent at the Head Office, and since Rowe and Frewer (2000) mean it is very challenging to get input from a large group of people, the relationships with the organisations are vital.

Helsingborg City exemplifies what is to Rowe and Frewer (2000) an effective approach of public participation. This is to combine different methods of participation which Helsingborg City does by collecting broad input from citizens through a digital platform, followed by conducting interviews with a representative sample for deeper knowledge. This approach is also effective according to Innes and Booher (2004), who mean effective participation should include interaction as well as being proactive. In the case of Helsingborg City, the proactive aspect means they conduct the interviews as base for future decision making in certain

projects. Another approach with high probability of participation is according to Men (2014) to use social media. This approach is highlighted by Kungsbacka Municipality, which uses social media to collect small input which they mean is just as important to consider as more lengthy and formal input. Becoming better at taking care of the small inputs is also suggested by employees at the Head Office.

Going from a product to service perspective of public management (Osborne, 2013) citizen involvement becomes even more important. As Alford (2016) states the public sector produces both private and public value and not merely private value as is the case for private firms. Therefore, besides asking the question *what do our customers want from us?* addressing the private value, the public sector additionally has to ask *what do we want from our clients?* To address this latter question, which will contribute to public value, value for the society, it is crucial for PSOs to get information about the different actors in the society so they can develop strategies for how the different actors can become co-producers of public value. In conclusion, this means getting information from the public is crucial from a service perspective.

8. Conclusions & Recommendations for Further Research

The concluding chapter answers the research questions and finishes off with recommendations for further research.

8.1 Conclusions

With a case study approach, this thesis has investigated the current state, in terms of organisational governance and culture at the Head Office of Region Västra Götaland, through qualitative interviews with employees. Also, other public organisations have been explored, to develop ideas on how the Head Office can continue on their transformation journey towards a cohesive region.

Some cultural and governing aspects at the Head Office align with the theory of New Public Management. Lately this theory has received critique causing many public organisations to look for alternative management theories. Among the most prominent examples found at the Head Office are a heavy administrative burden on employees, and a remaining focus on results by the use of quantitative measures. Both these examples cause employees to miss out on value creation to make life better for the citizens. Also, there seems to be a pressure to work in silos, leading to a fragmented Head Office with collaboration challenges and lack of knowledge about other departments. Fragmentation also exists in terms of lack of support and two-way communication to the other organisations within VGR. Many of the reasons for their transformation journey align with the management theory of Trust Based Governance. First and foremost, they want to achieve a culture based on trust. This further means a desire to clarify their purpose is to make life better for the citizens, create an open culture, and increase resource efficiency by collaboration and holistic view, among others. The thesis has identified four areas to focus on to reach their desired state; *Goals, purpose and follow-up processes, Leadership, Holistic view and collaboration, and Citizen involvement*.

To address the first area, *Goals, purpose and follow-up processes*, this study has shown the importance of clarifying goals and purpose and creating inspiration around them. This way, pull is more likely to be created than push. As illustrated in the benchmarking study, having KPIs connected to the goals can serve the purpose to continuously steer direction and motivate employees. Also, detailed reports have in many cases been abandoned as the main follow-up approach in favor of dialogue to give top management the overall picture, which is considered adequate so employees can focus on their mission. In addition, the study has shown that overall goals should not be broken down, instead employees ultimately engage with their managers in goal formulation connecting to their mission. Further, the study has found that changing culture starts at leadership level. Therefore, to address the second area,

Leadership, investing in leaders has been emphasised as a prerequisite. This includes training leaders, both training them in the right skills and training them together with each other. This way, they are given time to process and discuss information with one another, making them confident change leaders. Some organisations have experienced that confident leaders will engage employees, in turn motivating employees, which contributes to an open culture where mistakes are accepted. From mistakes follows learnings, which are needed to develop an organisation. Therefore, the study has also found that finding strategies to promote and reward learnings from mistakes is important. To succeed, both literature and respondents agree that leaders need to be role models and shed light on behaviours aligning with the vision. Also, incentives are believed necessary for expecting both leaders and employees to live the vision.

Furthermore, the study has found *Holistic view and collaboration* requires to focus on building relations both internally at the Head Office and externally, to the different organisations. For this to happen, it is suggested to create forums focused on building relations, and to work on the rhetoric. When building internal relations are prioritised, it is believed employees will get more familiar with each other, in turn leading to increased process orientation and holistic view. Thereby collaboration is likely to be more appreciated among employees. The external relationships with the organisations are also found vital, since they are primary representatives of citizens' needs. In the findings, strategies for taking care of small inputs, like social media, are suggested to improve *Citizen involvement*. The study has revealed an effective approach to citizen involvement is to use multiple methods in combination, to first capture the broad audience followed by deep insights from a few citizens. Last, based on literature, involving citizens is seen as paramount when public management is seen from a service perspective.

8.2 Further Research

Further research focused on a broader sample of representatives from the organisation is encouraged to critically reflect upon the findings and provide a deeper insight into the themes discussed in this study. This could include both to capture the perspectives of more employees but also to focus on capturing perspectives of different roles in the organisations, for example employees at different departments and managers. Finally, further research can include other public organisations as well as deeper investigation of each with the rationale to increase the richness of how the issues can be dealt with.

9. Recommendations

In order to drive cultural change at the Head Office, the first step for leaders is to understand how the current subcultures are experienced, so the desired culture can be built on them because a too big gap between the current culture and the desired is most likely to lead to non-engaged employees. To reach the desired culture the leaders need to lead by example, and they need to be confident in order to be good change leaders. Train leaders in the required skills, create forums and allow time for leaders to discuss change management as well as leadership aspects with each other. Confident leaders are more likely to get followers. Employees are also more likely to be followers when good results connected to the values are shown continuously and when they are engaged. Workplace meetings are great forums for discussions about such as improvement areas, mistakes and learnings. These forums are suggested to not solely be focused on information. Last, leaders should find strategies for highlighting employees acting in alignment with the vision.

Workplace meetings can also be useful for discussions around how employees can contribute to the vision through their mission. Therefore, having few overall goals are suggested, which should not be broken down to lower levels, so employees can focus on their mission. The other way around, top management should need only the overall picture of how the organisation is doing with regards to the vision and the overall goals, they do not need all details. When goals and vision are launched, the Head Office should focus on creating pull and not push, by working with inspiration, e.g., through showing good results connected to the vision and goals. To show these good results, connecting KPIs to the desired culture is crucial, to motivate but also to steer direction.

The small things and details in everyday work can have a great impact on the culture, and therefore it is important that these reflect the desired culture, and also that the culture is reflected in the assessments of both employees and leaders. Want more collaboration? Make sure to create forums to meet across borders, make sure meetings start off with focus on collaborative achievements, and create incentives for collaboration. Want a culture of feedback? Establish a feedback system on every meeting where employees are expected to leave feedback to managers.

Focusing on the relationships between the departments and to the organisations can be valuable to improve collaboration. The relationships can be improved through internal treatment education and by working with the rhetoric. Also, to create forums for meeting across borders, such as getting out to the organisations, can be helpful. Enhanced

relationships with the organisations are also valuable to increase citizen involvement, which can be seen from as a two-step approach:

- 1) Change perspective, i.e., instead of looking from the inside out – *how can we get input from the citizens?* looking from the outside in – *what questions can be interesting for citizens to be involved in, and how can we as an organisation make them involved in these questions?*
- 2) Focus on finding appropriate channels and language to make it as easy as possible for the citizens to get involved.

These recommendations are believed to be a step in the direction towards a culture based on trust and a service perspective of public management where the core is the citizens, the start of value creation.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide semi-structured interviews with employees

Purpose, goals, and direction

How do you at the Head Office work with purpose and goals?

What do you believe could be done to become more purpose driven?

To your understanding, what are the purpose and goals of the Head Office?

Do you believe everyone has the same perception of the purpose and goals?

Do you think the purpose and goals are well communicated by leaders?

Do you feel that your work contributes to reaching the purpose and goals?

What are the most important changes to make the purpose clearer?

What are the values of the Head Office? Do you think these guides you in your work?

Follow-ups and measuring results

How do you at the Head Office follow up the work to know that you go in the direction of the shared purpose and goals?

What do you believe could be done to improve this?

How do you get to know the results of your finished appointments?

How is your work adapted out of the results from former appointments? (to increase efficiency)

How do you measure in connection to your goals? What KPI:s are being used?

What are the most important changes to increase quality in the organisation, and to make it more effective?

Committed leaders/managers

What do you believe is the general perception among the employees about the leadership and the possibility for employees to be involved in decisions? Do you have the same opinion?

How do you think the leadership could be developed?

Do you feel that you can bring up ideas and suggestions of improvement to the leaders, and do they listen and take action?

Do you experience that leaders have the competence to work with improvement and change?

What are the most important changes to increase commitment and involvement among leaders?

Citizen focus

What does citizen focus mean to you in your work?

How could you at the Head Office increase the citizen focus to ensure quality in the delivery to the citizens?

What are the challenges with increasing citizen focus?

Do you at the Head Office get any input from the citizens?

Are the citizens involved in the development of VGR?

What are the most important changes to increase the understanding of what creates value for the citizens?

Holistic view

How do you work across the departments at the Head Office?

Do you think more collaboration across departments at the Head Office would contribute to a better experience for the citizens?

What can be done to have more collaboration?

What do collaborations across departments look like? What could be better from collaborating more? What are the drawbacks?

What are the most important changes to have more collaboration and consequently focus more on the shared responsibility for the whole, instead of the individual tasks?

Knowledge

Do you feel that you develop knowledge and competency in your work?

Is knowledge development actively worked with at the Head Office?

Support to the organisations

What do you believe is the general perception at the Head Office about the relation to the organisations?

Do you have the same perception?

What could be done to increase the support to the organisations, and to avoid governance?

Openness

Do you think you have an open culture at the Head Office? For example, trying new ways of working, bringing up critique and suggestions of improvement, and letting everyone be heard.

Do you perceive you are allowed to make mistakes?

What are the most important changes to create more openness at the Head Office, and what are the challenges?

Appendix 2

Interview guide semi-structured interviews with other public organisations

Can you summarise the change work you have been doing in the organisation, and what parts you find most important to focus on?

Goals, purpose, and follow-up processes

How do you work with goals, purpose, and vision to make it concrete for employees at lower levels?

How do you follow up employees' performance?

Leadership

How do you work with leadership?

Has the change journey been driven by the managers, or have it been other employees or external parties driving it?

Did the managers have knowledge and competencies in change management from the start, or have you educated them along the way?

Holistic view and collaboration

How do you work to make the employees have the holistic view and see the greater mission, rather than working in silos and mostly focusing on their individual tasks?

Do you have any incentives for collaboration?

Customer focus

Have you been working to increase citizen involvement, and if so in what ways?

Other

What are your primary factors to success?

If you could start all over with the knowledge and experience you have now, what would you do differently?

How have the implementations been conducted? Top-down/bottom up? Step by step?

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