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# Organizing for Change in a Temporary Environment

Implications for Change Initiatives

Master's thesis in Quality and Operations Management

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## Organizing for Change in a Temporary Environment

- Implications for Change Initiatives

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## Abstract

Change management is becoming more important due to the changing environment of today's industries. Companies' need to adapt faster to trends has been increasing for the last decades. Research on organizational change management is extensive but is often from the perspective of the permanent organization. Temporary organizations, such as a project-based organization or an inter-organizational project, are being used more often to solve non-routine tasks with a high degree of complexity. The temporary organization allows for more flexibility and adaptation to the industries' changing environment. The increasing use of temporary organizations, as well as an increasing need for change management, propose a need for change management practices to be adopted for temporary organizations. There is a gap in the literature of how conventional Change Management practices are applicable in a temporary setting.

The construction industry is seen as the nursery of project-based organizations and project managers are often charged with the task of implementing changes within inter-organizational projects. To review how change management is influenced by the aspects of temporary organizations, and provide guidelines for project managers on how to improve implementation of change in this setting, the following research question was answered:

- ***How can project managers organize for change in temporary organizations?***

To help answer the research question three sub-questions were formulated.

- *In what way is change management affected by the environment of inter-organizational projects?*
- *In a temporary organization, which change agents can be identified and what role do they play?*
- *How can team members be motivated to adapt to change, in a temporary organization?*

Managers within the television and construction industry were interviewed. Their answers were analyzed in regards to current theory of temporary organizations, shadow of the future, shadow of the past, models of change, change agents, resistance to change, trust and communication. The findings were, by using contracts as an instrument for initiating change within temporary organizations, the project manager increases the likelihood of a successful implementation. However, team culture becomes a crucial component for the acceptance and utilization of the change.

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The project manager can affect the team culture by creating an environment with an open communication climate where the members have high levels of trust and collaboration. The implications for change initiatives within temporary organizations have been scarcely researched. Connecting the trend of projectification, in many industries, and the need to manage change for adaptation, makes this area relevant for further research. This Master's thesis provides insights gathered from the construction industry and analyzes the applicability of change management theory within this context.

Keywords: Change Management, Temporary Organizations, Inter-organizational projects, Implementation of Change, Organizational Culture, Change Agents, Shadow of the Future, Trust, Communication.

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Christian Ellsén and Petter Häggberg, Gothenburg, June 2021





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# 1

## Introduction

Is the world changing faster and faster? According to John Hayes (2002), there are a number of factors that support this notion. Technology is advancing and manufacturing costs are dropping. There is a higher rate of obsolescence and products are more often replaced than repaired. The future risk of being outdated, decreases the willingness for long lasting investments. Companies need to adapt faster to trends (Hayes, 2002) and this has led to an increase in the need for organizational change. Tushman and his colleagues also found in a large study, that in almost all industries the rate of change was increasing (Tushman et al., 1986). All these factors point to the fact that the world is actually changing faster and faster. As a result the need to manage change is becoming greater and greater (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997).

One way organizations can adapt to the faster changing environment and become more flexible and efficient is by adapting to project organizations, or more generally, temporary organizations (Lundin et al., 2015). Temporary organizations can take different forms, such as a project team created within an organization or it can also be through an inter-organizational collaboration where different organizations come together to form a team for a set task (Bakker et al., 2016). An increasing number of inter-organizational projects are being formed to solve non-routine tasks that have a high degree of complexity and partner interdependence (Meyerson et al., 1996; Weber et al., 2005). The trend of projectification of businesses and working life is both strong and ongoing, and this trend has now spread beyond traditional project-organized sectors such as construction, consultancy, media, and entertainment (Lundin et al., 2015). The management within temporary organizations differ from more traditional, permanent organizations. The management is more action based and focuses more on results and less on administration or personnel development. Blomquist et al. (2010) describes project management as a performance oriented practice aiming at the constitution, coordination and control of activities within a project. Project management experience has become a crucial resource in most industries today (Lundin et al., 2015).

Even though organizational change management is a widely researched topic (Bamford & Forrester, 2003), the focal organization is often permanent. The way projects are managed, influences the success of change within organizations and is critical for strategic development (Lundin et al., 2015). Boddy and Macbeth (2000) showed that when implementing collaborative working between organizations many conventional change management prescriptions did not affect the outcome. The different fundamental dimensions affecting temporary organizations calls for adaptations of the general change management practices. The interplay of interest within inter-

organizational projects often results in change initiatives taking unexpected turns. This creates a challenge for managers responsible for the implementation. Change can only be managed if the practices are adapted to the environment where it takes place (Boddy & Macbeth, 2000).

The construction industry can be seen as the nursery of project-based organizations (Lundin et al., 2015) and consists of many inter-organizational projects. Owner organizations who purchase services from the construction industry often play a role in improving project performance by pushing for the enhancement of project management practices (Rahman, 2014). The goals of these initiatives might be to improve internal efficiency of their management or of the hired firms (Sullivan, 2011) and these goals are often accomplished by implementing changes in the project delivery (Lines et al., 2015). Because of their leading role, the project manager is a natural choice for implementing these change initiatives even though they might lack necessary competencies for a successful change implementation (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). The behavioral aspects of inter-organizational relationships have been studied in the literature but rarely in the temporary form of inter-organizational projects (Bakker & Knobens, 2014). Management's lower focus on personnel development might affect these relationships further and also the motivation for change among the project members. There is a gap in the literature of cross-discipline research regarding the implementation practices of change initiatives within temporary organizations and this is where the Master's thesis aims to provide some guidance, and aid in narrowing the gap.

### 1.1 Aim and Purpose

The aim of this thesis is to review how change management is influenced by the aspects of temporary organizations with a focus on inter-organizational temporary teams. The purpose is to provide guidelines for project managers on how to improve implementation of change in this setting.

### 1.2 Research Questions

Based on the introduction, the problem identified and the purpose of the thesis the following research question will be answered:

- ***How can project managers organize for change in temporary organizations?***

To guide the work and follow a clear path, three sub-questions have been formulated to help answer the main question.

- *In what way is change management affected by the environment of inter-organizational projects?*
- *In a temporary organization, which change agents can be identified and what role do they play?*
- *How can team members be motivated to adapt to change in a temporary organization?*

### 1.3 Delimitations

The thesis will be limited to looking at interorganizational temporary teams mainly focused on the construction industry. Thus the focus will not be on temporary project teams that consist of people from one organization. Furthermore, the thesis will focus solely on the implementation of a change initiative, not the actual creation of the change. Meaning that the focus will not be on how the need for change is assessed, but instead on the moment when a change initiative is to be implemented. The change initiatives that are investigated in this thesis are focused on implementation of methods and ways of working rather than large organization wide change initiatives. Lastly, the focus will be from the view of the project manager implementing the change, not from the team members.

# 2

## Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides the theoretical basis for this thesis. The literature research covers subjects of temporary organizations and its fundamental concepts followed by change management, change agents and models of change and its relation to project management. Lastly, people related aspects of resistance to change, trust and communication are covered.

### 2.1 Temporary Organizations

The research of temporary organizations uses many different words for the same theories. The language used is not yet fully agreed upon and Simon von Danwits (2018) has found that during 26 years of research the following words have been used to describe temporary organizations: Inter-firm projects, inter-organizational projects, multi-partner projects, time-bound/-specific alliances and inter-organizational project ventures. For the purpose of this thesis, all these areas have been considered to describe important aspects of the realm of temporary organizations. This thesis uses the definition by Bakker et al. (2016) that a temporary organization is defined as two or more individual or corporate actors who pursue ex ante agreed-upon task objectives within a predetermined time frame. The definition of inter-firm projects by Jones and Lichtenstein (2008) as a structure in which two or more independent firms “work jointly on a shared activity for a limited period of time” (p. 231) shares similarities with Bakker, and supports von Danwits (2018) conclusion that many words describe the same concepts.

To further distinguish different types of temporary organizations Bakker et al. (2016), suggests that various forms of temporary organizing can be integrated in a typology based on actor or structure. See Table 2.1.

Structure/Actor	Temporary	Permanent
Temporary	(1) Temporary, short-lived or disposable organization	(2) Semi-temporary organization (PBO, PSO, PNW)
Permanent	(3) Semi-permanent organization with temporary employment	(4) Permanent organization

**Table 2.1:** A typology of temporary organizing forms.  
Adjusted from Bakker et al. (2016).

The first category has both a temporary structure as well as temporary actors. A common example is a crisis organization. The second category has a temporary structure, however with more permanent actors. This is the realm of project-based organizations (PBO) such as consultancy firms and construction companies, project-supported organizations (PSO), that use projects but have another main line of income, and project networks (PNW) that consist of different companies in a joint project. Temporary organizations such as PBO and PNW are the main focus of this thesis. The third category are permanent structures that mainly use temporary employment, such as the food-delivering services in the gig economy. The fourth category has both permanent actors and a permanent structure and is therefore also not a temporary organization but their counterpart, a permanent organization.

The word temporary should not be translated into a short duration or short period of time, it should rather be interpreted as a predetermined duration (Bakker et al., 2016). In contrast, the word permanent then should be interpreted as indeterminate or open-ended (Bakker et al., 2016). That is, the intention is that it should exist “forever” even if some permanent companies tend to be short lived nonetheless. Time is one of the important aspects of temporary organizations and will be explored further in the following section together with the aspects of task, team and context.

### **2.1.1 Concepts of Temporary Organizations**

In order to identify what may be considered as a temporary organization there is a need to understand the common concepts that define it. According to Lundin and Söderholm (1995) there are some basic concepts that help define a temporary organization. These are what is known as the four T’s, namely Time, Task, Team, and Transition (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). Similar to this idea, Bakker (2010) discussed four different themes that are common amongst research regarding temporary organizations; Time, Task, Team and context. The use of context rather than transition as a concept for temporary organizations stems from the fact that Bakker (2010) found little theory to support transition as described by Lundin and Söderholm (1995), and rather saw the need to describe the context that both the members and the team operate within when it comes to temporary organizations.

#### **2.1.1.1 Time**

Time is used to differentiate between permanent and temporary organizations. The reason for this being, as mentioned in the previous section, that the word temporary means that something will exist for a certain period of time (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995; Bakker, 2010). When discussing temporary organizations there is most often a set time in which it will exist, thus the resource of time becomes finite as compared to permanent organizations where time is considered infinite (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). In temporary organizations the concept of time should be considered as linear compared to cyclical in the permanent organizations. Reason being that temporary organizations are often task oriented with a set finish line and milestones along the way (Bakker, 2010).

### 2.1.1.2 Task

Somewhat intertwined with time, is a task. This is due to the fact that temporary organizations are created in order to solve a task. Thus by having this set task with a clear finish point it can be measured in a finite time frame (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995; Bakker, 2010). Lundin and Söderholm (1995) discuss how having a set task defines a temporary organization by its call for action as opposed to a permanent organization who instead uses goals as a way to provide grounds for decision-making (Bakker, 2010). It is argued that having a set task that needs to be accomplished motivates the creation of a temporary organization (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995; Meyerson et al., 1996; Weber et al., 2005). There are two different kinds of tasks, there are the unique tasks that are created for a unique situation that will never happen again, and there are the repetitive tasks that will be repeated in the future (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). Both types of tasks are used in the temporary organizations studied in this thesis. Where repetitive tasks form incentives of recurring collaborations as well as formation of informal rules (Dischner et al., 2013).

### 2.1.1.3 Team

Team is the third concept of temporary organizations (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995; Bakker 2010). Lundin and Söderholm (1995) discuss the fact that temporary organizations are generally designed around a set of individuals and their competences, and how the development of temporary organizations are often governed by these individuals' will, commitment and abilities. What differentiate the team in a temporary organization from that of other organizations is their connection to the task at hand (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995) and how the team members are governed by the context from which they come from and operate within (Bakker, 2010). What this means is that teams are often developed around the task at hand, or at least the aspect of it (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995) and that members often have different experiences, ways of working, cultures etc. that they bring with them (Bakker, 2010). Furthermore, since the task is finite in time, a specific set of expectations is created at an individual level (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). This is due to the fact that the members come into the organization with their own experiences and expectations that may be in conflict with that of others. However, due to the time-limited aspect of temporary organizations the members may be more open accepting these conflicting interests (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). Finally, these team members are in the organization temporarily, meaning that they often have obligations to other organizations, projects etc. that may have an impact on the current temporary organization and their role within it (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995; Scott & Meyer, 1991). Lundin and Söderholm (1995) state that there are mainly two recurring aspects to consider within the area of teams, the relation between the individual and the team, and the relation of the team and the team's environment. The first one focuses on how people come from different backgrounds with varying experiences and expectations which may affect the outcome of the task. The fact that the organization is limited on time and that people may enter or exit continuously throughout the project may also affect the expectations of the project throughout its life-span (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). The second aspect brings up the fact that



there is also a need to consider the team's environment and the possible competing structures that may exist due to team members coming from different backgrounds and organizational structures. Lundin and Söderholm (1995) discuss how there is a need to legitimize and support the temporary organization in order to improve the team interaction. Bakker (2010) brings up that previous research on the subject of teams within temporary organizations concerned with how to deal with the issues of vulnerability, uncertainty and risk suggest employing the concept of Swift trust. Swift trust is a form of trust that is presumptive instead of being developed slowly by experiences (Meyerson et al., 1996). This concept is developed further in the chapter regarding trust.

#### **2.1.1.4 Transition and Context**

The concept of transition refers to how temporary organizations often deal with situations where there is a transformation to be done and once this is completed the temporary organization is terminated (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). These temporary organizations allow for a "new" setting for action that traditional organizations may not, which may allow for easier achieved change (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). The term transition also refers to the internal transition that is done within the project and how the perception of causal relationships where there is a need to consider the views of people from different backgrounds and how they come together during the duration of the project (Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). Bakker (2010) differs at this fourth concept and instead refers to the contextual level of a temporary organization. That the context that the organization operates within will be different from that of a permanent organization. That one has to view a temporary organization from the context it is operating within, both at the firm-level and the wider social context of the temporary organization. The firm-level context refers to the fact that we have to consider the relations and dependencies between the temporary organizations and the firms that the members of the temporary organization come from (Bakker, 2010). These kinds of firms are often named project-based organizations (PBO). The focus here is how organizational learning can be ensured in these firms and how knowledge should be managed (Bakker, 2010). The wider social context refers to the industries and networks that the members of the temporary organization are embedded in and how that may influence the project (Bakker, 2010). Jacobsson et al. (2013) do however argue against Bakker (2010) that the amount of theory is not sufficient enough to support that transition should be a concept defining a temporary organization. They argue that since temporary organizations are more action based, every action taken can in some ways be seen as a transition. However, transition should not be seen as an alone concept, but instead something that happens when an action is taken within the three concepts of time, team and task (Jacobsson et al., 2013). This is not to say that the transitions will not be context dependent, because they are, but rather that the defining concept being action based and thus transitory (Jacobsson et al., 2013).

### 2.1.2 Project-based organizations (PBO) and project networks (PNW)

As previously mentioned, researchers have used actors and structure to combine different types of organizations (Bakker et al., 2016). The mix of permanent actors within temporary structured organizations has been divided into three archetypes, project-based organizations (PBO) which has its main income from projects, project-supported organizations (PSO) which use projects besides their main income to support their business and project networks (PNW) which are created between different organizations to pursue joint projects (Lundin et al., 2015).

For this thesis the temporary organizational forms of PBO and PNW are considered relevant, whereas project-supported organizations, PSO, are considered outside the scope because their main income is not in the temporary setting. PBO are seen as independent, permanent organizations in which most activities are run as projects providing income for the organization (Hobday, 2000; Lundin et al., 2015; Sydow et al., 2004) and PNW involves projects conducted in a network or inter-organizational context (Lundin et al., 2015). An advantage with project-based organizations according to Sydow et al. (2004) is that they "can circumvent traditional barriers to organizational change and innovation, since each project is presented as a temporary, relatively short-lived, phenomenon." (p.1475). Lundin et al. (2015) also describes that the driver for PBO to form comes from the need for specialization and increased outsourcing. Industries that normally organize in PBO are consultancy firms, law practitioners, construction companies, TV- or Film production companies to name a few. When not all competences are present in-house these PBO usually form PNW to acquire the necessary competencies for the intended project. Another driver to form PNW is also economic, because some competencies are not needed for each project or for the entire project time frame. Moreover, project networks are often part of a larger ecosystem of firms that recurrently collaborate on different projects. This might lead to project partners developing joint problem-solving routines (McEvily & Marcus, 2005), better abilities to exploit, and further develop existing capabilities (Manning & Sydow, 2011) as well as improved learning processes (Prencipe & Tell, 2001; Ryall & Sampson, 2009). When and why organizations choose to collaborate recurrently is often based on backward-looking experiences, known as the shadow of the past and forward-looking opportunity, known as shadow of the future (Ebers & Maurer, 2016).

### 2.1.3 Shadow of the Future and Shadow of the Past

With the definition of temporary organizations' predetermined time frame where there is a set starting point and a set ending point, the time before and after this time frame is also of relevance. Robert Axelrod wrote the book *The evolution of cooperation* (1984), and poetically describes the concept of the value of future earnings as the shadow of the future. This study was done using single rounds of the prisoner's dilemma and analysing the choices made by the participants. The prisoner's dilemma shows that isolated decisions based on personal benefit won't lead to the optimized solution. Only with cooperation and less opportunistic behavior can

the optimized benefit for all be achieved. Connected to temporary organizations, the shadow of the future, is the expectation of future collaboration (Bakker & Knoben, 2014). One implication for temporary organizations is when the set time-frame is short, there is an increased risk that the partners behave opportunistically (Bakker & Knoben, 2014). That is exploiting a situation to gain advantage or power with less consideration of principle or consequences. Bakker and Knoben (2014) also found that when there is a longer expectation of collaboration, that is a longer shadow of the future, this is likely to reduce the risk of opportunistic behavior, create more trust, and increase cooperative behavior. Swärd (2016) found that when the shadow of the future decreases, so does the level of trust among the partners. More about trust in chapter 2.2.4. The shadow of the past could translate to the experience of previous collaborations. One implication is that the shadow of the past strongly influences the formation of a temporary organization (Ebers & Maurer, 2016). Similar to this notion Engwall (2003) suggests that in order for project managers to succeed they cannot only consider what previous methods and tools that have worked, but also in what environments they were successful in. That when working within a project, the success or failure of that project is largely dependent on the context-specific circumstances in which the temporary organization is operating within. If firms, such as PBO, have had positive experiences and most importantly success with previous partners, the likeliness of working together again increases (Ebers & Maurer, 2016). Recurring collaborations also enables the formation of informal rules among the participants (Dischner et al., 2013).

## **2.2 Change Management**

Change management is about “modifying or transforming organisations in order to maintain or improve their effectiveness” (Hayes, 2002, p. 11). The ones responsible for doing this are the managers that must ensure effective performance for their respective part of the organization. Theorists often make two distinctions of change, continuous change or discontinuous change (Hayes, 2002). Continuous change is emergent and occurs in small incremental steps that over time adds to a substantial change (Weick & Quinn, 1999) whereas discontinuous change is about a large transformational transition, of strategic choice such as mergers or downsizing. Discontinuous change may also occur due to failed adaptation and environmental forces (Weick & Quinn, 1999; Kotter, 1990).

### **2.2.1 Models of Change**

The process of implementing change is described by numerous models in literature (e.g. Lewin, 1951; Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1995; Luecke, 2003; Worley & Mohrman, 2014). Within the area of change management various authors and researchers have developed different models and ways to manage change throughout the years. Some of these that will be relevant to the area of temporary organizations are described below. How one characterizes change can according to Senior (2002) be divided into three different categories; by the rate of occurrence, by how it comes about and by the scale of the change.

### 2.2.1.1 Rate of Occurrence

Rate of occurrence refers to how often change occurs and the timeline of it. The main categories in literature were discontinuous and incremental change but that different terminology can be used for the same approach (Hayes, 2002; Todnem By, 2005). Some choose to differentiate between incremental and continuous change, and some see it as the same thing (Todnem By, 2005). Discontinuous change is described by Grundy (1993) as a more rapid approach to change that focuses on the strategy, structure and/or culture of an organization. Luecke (2003) describes it as a larger change that takes place once in time that is often separated from other events and that supposedly will lead to longer periods of calm where there will be no change. Discontinuous change is considered a way to hold down cost since it does not promote further change in the future (Guimaraes & Armstrong, 1998), but the overall benefits of discontinuous change will not hold in the long term (Bond, 1999; Grundy, 1993; Holloway, 2002; Love et al., 1998; Taylor & Hirst, 2001). Continuous change is defined by Burnes (2004a) as a way for organizations to continuously change in a fundamental way at the same pace as the market is changing. Incremental change is defined as changes that are done separately by individual parts of an organization where the focus lies on one change with one goal at a time (Burnes, 2004a). What differentiates the continuous and incremental change according to Burnes (2004a) is that the continuous changes have more of a focus on departmental and organizational change whilst the incremental change focuses more on providing the ability to adapt to changing organizational strategies based on the internal and external needs of the environment. In the environment of temporary organizations of PBO and PNW a change initiative or need often originates from one of the leading partners or project leaders (Lines et al., 2015).

### 2.2.1.2 How the Change Comes About

The second category is by how the change comes about. According to Todnem By (2005) the most common areas within literature are planned and emergent change. The planned approach to change wants to provide an understanding of the process that leads up to a change (Burnes, 1996). This entails having an understanding of the different stages a change has to go through in order to move from an unsatisfied state to a planned satisfactory stage (Elrod & Tippet, 2002). Bamford and Forrester (2003) suggest that in order to succeed in change there is a need to discard old structures, behaviours, processes and culture. One such model is the unfreeze, change and refreeze model proposed by Kurt Lewin (1951). The model focuses on unfreezing the current level, moving to the aspired level and then refreezing that level. Schein (1999) further builds upon the unfreezing stage by explaining the mechanisms of survival anxiety and learning anxiety. To become motivated to change, some disconfirming information must create survival anxiety. That is, the feeling that if we do not change, we will not meet our own goals or needs (Schein, 1999). The main thing that prevents us from feeling survival anxiety is the learning anxiety, which is the defensive feeling that if we accept change, we accept that something was wrong and this might cause loss of self-esteem or even identity (Schein, 1999). To enable the change process to start and reduce the learning

anxiety, Schein (1999) proposes that sufficient psychological safety is created to enable the feeling of survival anxiety. The key for change managers is to balance the level of threat with a safe learning environment to enable motivation for change (Schein, 1999).

Bullock and Batten (1985) developed a model based upon the model by Lewin where the focus lies on the processes and what phases a change will have to go through in order to implement a successful change. The model divides the planned change into four different phases; exploration, planning, action and integration. There has however been some critique against the idea of having planned change. Firstly, the approach assumes a small scale and incremental change, thus not as applicable to changes that need to be transformational and fast (Burnes, 1996; 2004b; Senior, 2002; Worley & Mohrman, 2014). Secondly, it assumes that the organizations are operating within constant conditions and that there is a way to plan each step (Bamford & Forrester, 2003) which is contested by several researchers who argues that due to the fast changing environment of industry makes this hard to do (Burnes, 1996; Burnes, 2004b; Wilson, 1992). Furthermore it suggests that when laying down timetables and models to use in advance, it is assumed that senior managers have the best understanding of the process which is often not the case (Wilson, 1992). Thirdly, a planned approach does not consider the situations where a more rapid and flexible approach may be needed, for instance in situations of crisis (Burnes, 1996; Burnes, 2004b; Kanter et al., 1992). Finally, the planned approach assumes that all stakeholders are willing and able to adapt to the change proposed and that there is a common ground to be reached (Burnes, 1996; Burnes, 2004b).

The emergent approach on the other hand suggests that not all changes can be handled in a linear planned way within a set time frame, that they should instead be seen as an open ended process where changes in circumstances and conditions may be altered along the way (Burnes, 1996; Burnes, 2004b; Dawson, 1994). The emergent approach allows for taking both the internal and external environment into consideration and thus dealing with any uncertainty that may arise (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). Todnem By (2005) suggests that the emergent approach to change focuses more on creating a structure that promotes change readiness and facilitation rather than planning for set steps within the change initiatives. Three recurring models of emergent change are the ten commandments for Executing change proposed by Kanter et al. (1992), Kotter's Eight-Stage Process for Successful Organisational Transformation (Kotter, 1995) and Luecke's Seven Steps (Luecke, 2003). Even though these do not agree on all steps or what order they should be in there are some similarities that can be applied to temporary organizations and some that may not. First of all, there is a need to establish a common vision for the change that follows the strategy of the change and can aid in implementing and supporting the change (Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1995; Luecke, 2003). Furthermore, all agree that there is a need to anchor the changes implemented in the structures and culture of the organization in order to ensure the continued use of the change. Both Kanter et al. (1992) and Kotter (1995) view communication as an important step in gaining support in an emergent change. The importance of communication and its role in implementing change within temporary organizations will be developed further later

on in the communication chapter. Kanter et al. (1992) further connects the communication to being honest as well, which is something that Ford and Ford (2010) argue to be an important trait in managers when implementing change and avoiding resistance in the change initiatives. Kanter et al. (1992) and Luecke (2003) also discuss the importance of identifying leadership for implementing the change initiative and providing the support needed to shoulder that responsibility. As mentioned there are also some steps that may not always be as applicable to temporary teams due to the focus on previous experiences within the organization driving change. Examples being to mobilize energy and commitment from the organization by jointly identifying problems and solutions (Luecke, 2003) or the focus on analyzing the existing organization and its need to change (Kanter et al., 1992). Straying away from these concepts are Worley and Mohrman (2014) who argue that the "New Normal" does not allow for changes to happen in set steps. They argue that there are no periods of calm where incremental change is enough to handle the changes that are happening more frequently in organizations. As they state, "Organizations are being asked to: (1) drive performance today while changing their business models for tomorrow; (2) leverage their current advantaged capabilities and build whole new capability sets; (3) optimize their current product/service portfolios and offer customized solutions; and (4) minimize their current carbon footprint and adopt sustainable practices by making existing processes more efficient and by introducing disruptive innovations and fundamentally different ways of operating." (Worley & Mohrman, 2014, p.216). With all this said, the research done by Lewin (1951), Kanter et al. (1992), Kotter (1995), Luecke (2003) and Worley and Mohrman (2014) all include steps/parts that have a focus on the permanent organization and steps that are not considering temporary organizations.

### 2.2.1.3 The Scale of the Change

The last category is change characterized by scale. Dunphy and Stace (1993) divided scale into four different categories; fine-tuning, incremental adjustment, modular transformation and corporate transformation. Fine-tuning includes the work to continuously match the organization's strategy with the people, structure and processes existing both internally and externally (Senior, 2002). The fine-tuning exists to link all these areas together so that it is in line with the present strategy (Dunphy & Stace, 1993) and it is usually manifested at a departmental or divisional level of the organization (Todnem By, 2005). Incremental adjustment focuses more on distinct modifications to organizational strategies and the processes set for management but it does however not include radical change (Senior, 2002). Modular transformation can however include radical change, but the major difference here is that the focus often lies on major shifts within one or several departments/divisions and thus do not focus on changing the whole organization at the same time (Senior, 2002). The final category within change characterized by scale is corporate transformation. This one focuses on radical, corporate-wide changes to the business strategy of the organization (Dunphy & Stace, 1993).

It becomes harder to manage change if time is pressuring especially the human aspects of a change initiative (Hayes, 2002). The time pressure can lead to less time

to plan the change, less time to explore different alternatives and less time to involve others and increase their commitment and thereby reduce their resistance to change (Hayes, 2002). Depending on the time aspect a change initiative can thereby be reactive or anticipatory. Hayes (2002) defines a reactive change as “an organisation’s response to a clear and present requirement for change” (p.8). Anticipatory change is “initiated without a clear and present external demand” (Hayes, 2002, p.8) and “might be initiated to gain competitive advantage or to prepare for a destabilising event that might occur sometime in the future” (Hayes, 2002, p.8).

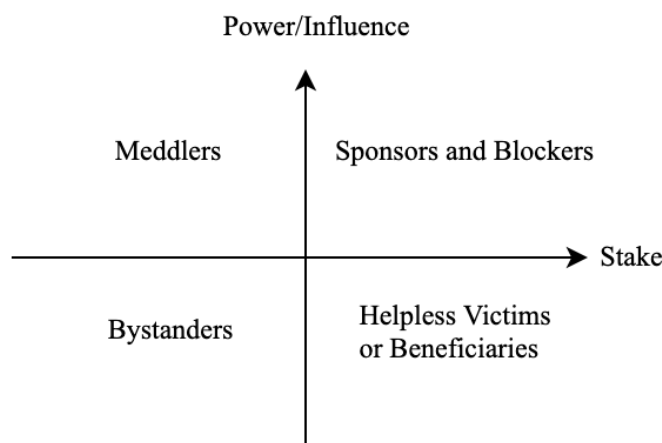
### **2.2.2 Change Agents**

Groups or individuals that either initiate or manage change are known as change agents (Conner, 1993; Harrington et al., 2000; Ford et al., 2008; Lunenburg, 2010; Stummer & Zuchi, 2010). Lunenburg (2010) defines change agents as “anyone who has the skill and power to stimulate, facilitate, and coordinate the change effort” (p.1). Hayes (2002) defines change agency as “the ability of a manager or other agent of change to affect the way an organisation responds to change” (p. 17). One approach of change management emphasizes that the actions of change managers, and other change agents, can affect the outcome of a change initiative (Wilson, 1992). Ford and Ford (1995) describes this as intentional management of change and that this occurs when a change agent “deliberately and consciously sets out to establish conditions and circumstances that are different from what they are now” (p.543). Conner (1993) has identified roles connected to change in the form of Sponsors, Agents, Targets and Advocates and these are considered a good reliable foundation by the literature even if different vocabulary is used (Pádár et al., 2017). Sponsors are the ones in power to make a change happen or enable it by providing resources. Within a temporary organization the sponsor might be a PBO or other organization that brought the temporary organization together. Agents are as stated above responsible for making the change happen. It is possible to be both sponsor and agent at the same time. The targets are individuals or groups affected by the change and often the focus for the change. An informal leader of a target group often has the possibility to sway others in the group as a result of trust or respect. Advocates want to initiate a change but need the power or “blessing” from the sponsor. Advocates might be technical or process experts, team members or even project leaders (Conner, 1993; Harrington et al., 2000; Pádár et al., 2017)

There can be many different actors that may inhibit a change agency. In temporary organizations the project manager often receives the official responsibility of driving the change. There are however other actors that can affect the outcome of the change, and can thereby be considered change agents. These can be employees, as in targets, or external consultants who are involved in the change, like advocates. External change agents are often brought in when the internal personnel either lacks the time or the competence for the proposed change initiative. There might also be a need for an outsider that can be neutral when the stakeholders involved in the change are in disagreement (Hayes, 2002; Pádár et al., 2017).

### 2.2.2.1 Stakeholders

Within the literature the role of stakeholders is an important aspect of project management. The impact of stakeholders on change initiatives is, however, less covered. Change management literature does not always differentiate between the roles within change and stakeholders (Pádár et al., 2017). Stakeholders are not change agents per se, they can however decide to either help or hinder the change agents impact. According to Hayes (2002), stakeholders may be individuals or groups not directly involved in the change but affected by the outcome. These key stakeholders need to be identified by the change manager and also evaluated by their ability to affect the outcome of the change initiative (Hayes, 2002). Research has suggested that stakeholders can be classified by their stake in the outcome of the change as well as their power to influence the outcome (Piercy, 1989; Grundy, 1993). Hayes (2002), uses these dimensions to create a typology with four different types of stakeholders displayed in figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1:** Classification of key stakeholders (Hayes, 2002).

Hayes (2002), defines bystanders as being aware of the change but not affected by it. They also do not have enough power to influence the outcome. Meddlers are also not directly affected by the change but might have their own motives and possess the power to influence the outcome. An example could be journalists that want to sell newspapers and therefore describe the change in a controversial way. If the change will have a greater effect on the stakeholder this effect might be positive or negative. The ones who lack power are therefore categorized as either beneficiaries (positive effect) or helpless victims (negative effect). This power is however not static and might change in the future. Therefore, change managers need to carefully choose how to treat this group. The ones with the highest stakes in the change and power to influence the outcome are sponsors (positive effect) or blockers (negative effect). Change managers should try to win the support of the powerful stakeholders and provide information, form relationships and address possible concerns (Hayes, 2002). However, sometimes it might not be possible to influence these stakeholders and the only way may be to try to reduce their power or remove them from the situation



completely (Hayes, 2002). Stakeholders have the similarity with change agents that their actions or influence will have an impact of the willingness or resistance to change.

#### **2.2.2.2 Network Position**

When implementing change there is also a need to consider what kind of network one is operating within and how the people are connected. Battilana and Casciaro (2013) argue that even though a formal authority is important when implementing change, one also has to acknowledge the importance of informal authority and how that may affect the outcome of change initiatives. Change agents who have a central role within the informal network have a clear advantage when it comes to implementing change (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013). However, worth noting is that the type of network that exists within an organization may also affect how well a certain type of change initiative is received. Battilana and Casciaro (2013) found that a cohesive network where all the parties involved are connected and have a previous relationship to one another, it will become easier to implement minor changes. However when it comes to implementing more dramatic changes, having a bridging network where people have no connection to one another, and where the change agent functions as the bridge connecting different groups will be better suited due to being able to control what is communicated and when (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013).

#### **2.2.2.3 Change Manager or Project Manager**

Most change initiatives take the form of projects which has led to the questions whether project managers or change managers are best suited to lead such a change initiative (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). Change managers originate from the field of organizational development (Burnes, 2004b) while project managers stem from the field of engineering (Pellegrinelli, 2011). This background suggests that change managers might lack technical or administrative discipline of project management and project managers lack understanding of organizational change or the behavioral aspects of change (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). The comparison done by Crawford and Nahmias (2010) show that regardless of title the following competencies are required to lead a change initiative: Leadership, Stakeholder Management, Planning, Team selection/team development, Communication, Decision-making and problem-solving, Cultural awareness / skills and Project management skills. Their conclusion is that a project manager without any change management skills will only be successful in change initiatives with low degree of behavioral change required combined with a supportive culture and strong leadership. With lower supportive culture or higher degree of behavior change required strong change management skills is needed to complement the project manager or even a combined leadership of both a change manager and project manager (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). The change activities identified to successfully manage change initiatives were: Changing behaviors and organizational culture to achieve goals, Preparation of users, Organizational structure, Political diffusion, Impact analysis, Selling the change, Champion schemes, Involvement in process analysis work and Training and education to affected staff (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). This is echoed by Lunenburg (2010), who posits that

one important role of change agents is the role of a trainer to provide organization members with new skills.

Furthermore, change agents may manage the change in different ways. Lunenburg's overview of literature identifies ten successful characteristics of change agents (Lunenburg, 2010):

1. Hemophily - Similarities between the change agent and the organization's members leads to acceptance and understanding. Thus increasing the likelihood of success.
2. Empathy - Understanding the feelings of others leads to improved communication and understanding.
3. Linkage - The change agent and the organization members can be linked by collaborative activities. Greater collaborative involvement increases the likelihood of success.
4. Proximity - Physical and psychological closeness makes it easier to develop collaborative linkages as well as empathy. Examples are open-door policy or the visibility of the change agent during work hours.
5. Structuring - The ability to clearly design, plan and organize the change effort together is more likely to lead to better understanding and implementation.
6. Capacity - An organization needs to have sufficient resources for a successful change effort.
7. Openness - The willingness to hear, respond to, or be influenced by one another. The earlier characteristics can improve openness and if missing decrease it.
8. Reward - The nature and variety of potential positive outcomes of the change effort. All change efforts should have rewards for changing.
9. Energy - The physical and psychological efforts that one is willing to spend on the change. If energy is drained elsewhere, the change effort might suffer.
10. Synergy - Positive reinforcement between the other nine characteristics. The variety of people, resources, energies and activities interact with each other to mutually support the success.

### 2.2.3 Resistance to change

Temporary organizations and specifically inter-organizational projects consist of people from different firms, with their own cultures, norms and policies. Combined with the previous experiences from the shadow of the past, introduced change initiatives may be met by either enthusiasm or resistance. There is an overall need to understand this resistance towards the change initiative and the cause of it in order to succeed (Ford & Ford, 2009; Ford & Ford, 2010; Simoes & Esposito, 2014). A good quote that symbolizes this importance is; "In stubbornly pushing things through without understanding the resistance, they [managers] sacrifice goodwill, put valuable relationships in jeopardy, and squander the opportunity to engage skeptics in service of a better plan." (Ford & Ford, 2009, p.99).

### **2.2.3.1 Using Resistance to Change**

One of the more common causes for failure for change initiatives is due to resistance to change and organizations failing to deal with this (Simoes & Esposito, 2014). Coetsee (1999) defines resistance to change as “opposed or blocking energies and powers directed at impeding, redirecting, rejecting or stopping change” (p.209). Hayes (2002) discusses how the experiences of past change can be a source for resistance and people’s willingness to support a change initiative. This is in line with how the shadow of the past in temporary organizations affects the team and thereby also its change initiatives. It does not only have to be people’s own experiences that affect willingness to change, but also how others have been treated within previous change initiatives may affect how people view future change (Hayes, 2002). Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) identified four different reasons why people generally resist change. The first one is due to the parochial self-interest of people, meaning that people will likely resist change when they stand to lose something they value, such as money, power or status, due to it. The second one focuses on resistance as a result of misunderstanding and lack of trust. What this implies is that when people do not understand the change and what implications it will have for them, they are more likely to resist it. It could for example be due to believing that a change will cost them more than what they will gain. The authors argue that these misunderstandings are often a product of lacking trust in the relationship between the change initiator and the relevant stakeholders. The third reason for resisting change is due to how both internal and external stakeholders may assess the change differently from the people initiating the change. That the change in their eyes may be more costly than beneficial and that the change initiators do not have the information relevant or necessary to make the right change. Furthermore, there is often a failure in accounting for people outside of the organization that will be affected by the change. These external stakeholders may be a strong source of resistance as well. The fourth and final reason for resistance to change comes in the form of a lower tolerance of change. Some people may be concerned that they will not be able to develop the skills or behavior that will be required of them in order to cope with the change (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). This feeling of inadequacy is similar to the concept of learning anxiety. There may also be an emotional adaptation needed as well to go through a transition. Stakeholders may understand the change on an intellectual level but are emotionally unable to make the transition (Hayes, 2002). The view that resistance to change should be considered as something negative is however not shared by everyone. Ford and Ford (2010) argues that resistance to change is not something negative, but should instead be seen as something positive. They argue that people “resisting” change can instead be seen as people caring enough about the processes to want to do the things right from the start (Ford & Ford, 2009). That resistance to change all comes down to how the managers choose to categorize the behaviour of the team members (Ford & Ford, 2010). What one manager may consider as resistance another may see as valuable feedback that will lead to a better change initiative.

### **2.2.3.2 Categorizing Resistance to Change**

Coetsee (1999) describes four different categories of resistance to change where the focus instead lies on different levels of reaction towards the change. There is the first level, apathy (indifference), meaning that there is an indifference towards the change and a general lack of interest towards the change, passive resistance where there are negative perceptions and attitudes towards the change and these are being voiced in negotiations. There is also active resistance where the negative opinions are strongly voiced that may lead to for example peaceful strikes or boycotts, and finally there is aggressive resistance where there is an overt blocking behavior (Coetsee, 1999). According to Ford and Ford (2010) there is, however, no set definition of resistance to change and that almost any kind of non-positive behavior or reaction from a change can be seen as a type of resistance to change. However, the difference comes from how managers decide to utilize it for something positive. By using the feedback and changing the initiative accordingly, the possibility to gain support and improve the change will increase (Ford & Ford, 2010; Gilley et al., 2009; Lines, 2004).

### **2.2.3.3 Resistance to Change as a Result of Managerial Missteps**

Resistance to change can also be seen as a product of managerial missteps. Some of the more common missteps that managers should avoid doing is, according to Ford and Ford (2010), not upholding agreements and then failing to restore the trust that is lost due to it. This may lead to resistance towards change in the future which is in line with what Hayes (2002) discussed regarding past experiences affecting future willingness to change. Further missteps can also appear in the form of overselling change and what it may bring in terms of benefits versus drawbacks (Ford & Ford, 2010). Managerial missteps can also appear when managers are not consistent in the support of the change. They may even have a more candid approach where they state that the proposed course of change is not possible and which in turn will lead to others not following the proposed change. This will damage the credibility of the manager, the change that is proposed and the effort that the team will put in, consequently increasing the resistance to said change (Ford & Ford, 2010). Van Dam et al. (2008) stated, similar to what is mentioned by Ford and Ford (2010), that trust in managers is one of the influencing variables in how we evaluate a change initiative. Trust in managers influences people's affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions towards change in a positive way. Furthermore, Van Dam et al. (2008) discuss the fact that providing information to stakeholders regarding a change does play a role in people's attitude towards change. However, simply providing more information will not automatically affect the stakeholders attitude towards change in a positive way. Both how it is communicated as well as the content of it will affect the outcome of the change initiative and how it is received. The impact of trust as well as the role of communication will be discussed in further detail in the following sections.

### 2.2.4 Trust

For the different members of a temporary organization literature often brings up the importance of trust when trying to understand different behaviors and predicting outcomes of success. Trust is defined as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action that is important to the party” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712). Trust can also be described as the positive belief in the intentions and competence of a specific partner (Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman et al., 2007). Rousseau et al. (1998) uses a similar definition of trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (p. 395).

According to Commitment-trust theory the level of trust increases the relationship commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Commitment is important both for the well-being of the members of temporary organizations as well as for the collaboration that affects the outcome and result. The level of trust also reduces the risk for opportunistic behavior in temporary organizations (Swärd, 2016). The benefits of high levels of trust are more researched in the literature than how actually trust is created. Simon von Danwitz (2018) suggests that trust among individuals can be developed by early formation of integrative work practices, shared work norms, informal interactions, stimulating open communication and clear role expectations. High levels of trust can also be found in teams with developed expectations of trustworthiness (Meyerson et al., 1996). These expectations can be related to information about the organizational setting such as prior experiences, reputation of members, or size, tenure or sector of the business, and might create trust before knowledge from direct experience is obtained (Schilke & Cook, 2013).

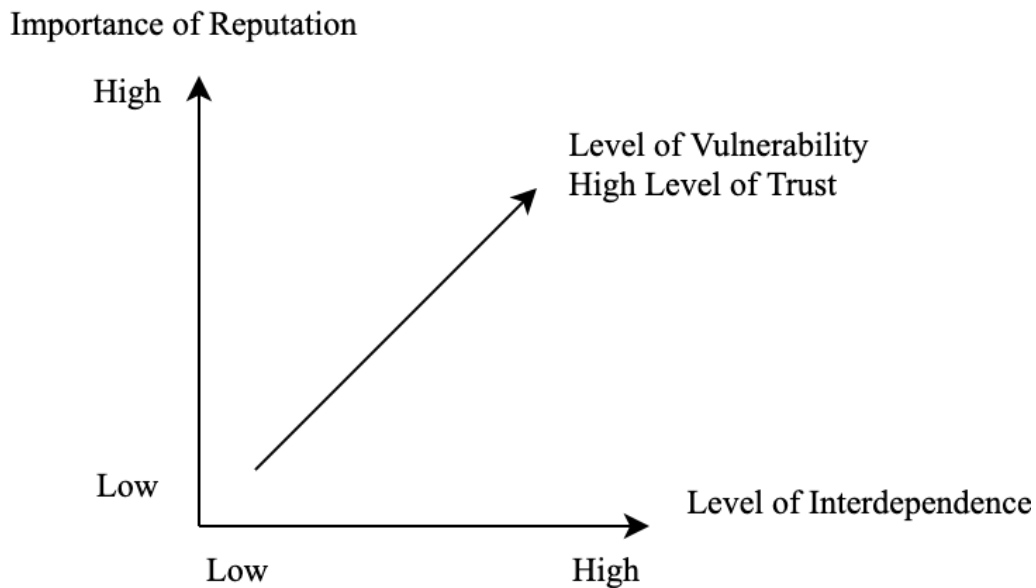
#### 2.2.4.1 Reciprocity and Trust

From social science as well as from inter-organizational research, reciprocity seems to play an important role for the creation of trust. Reciprocity is defined as “a social norm that dictates that an action performed by one party requires a repayment by the other” (Meeker, 1983, p. 227) and concerns both expectations and behavior. This repayment can occur directly or in a later stage, thus creating a social debt in the meantime. Reciprocity is also divided into two analytical categories: reciprocity based on a calculation of benefit and reciprocity based on a sense of obligation or duty (Göbel et al., 2013, 2013). It is important to demonstrate vulnerability by taking large partner risks to signal high trustworthiness (Murnighan et al., 2004). If there is only willingness for small risks this might signal a disinterest in the relationship and might lead to less reciprocity (Weber et al., 2005). In an industry, reciprocal norms will evolve and manifest over the years in the form of standard contracts, rules, procedures, and codes of proper behavior. These norms will guide reciprocity in early encounters (Hoppner & Griffith, 2011) and reciprocity norms will further develop between partners through their interactions (Larson, 1992). In temporary organizations or short-term relationships specific reciprocity is common (Swärd, 2016). Specific reciprocity is immediate and occurs in an exact order, so

that there is never any ‘debt’ or ‘credit’ (Bignoux, 2006). The specific reciprocity is strongest in the beginning or at the end of a temporary organization. However, if trust emerges through the project specific reciprocity might decrease and allow for a social debt. Swärd (2016) further explained that in temporary organizations with rigid structure, predefined meetings and well-known contracts, ways of creating trust could be loosening control, delegation, flexibility, less monitoring and open communication.

### 2.2.4.2 Swift Trust

Within temporary organizations the time for traditional confidence-building activities that will lead to trusting relationships does not always exist (Meyerson et al., 1996). Thus, there is a need to understand how to build the trust needed in order to succeed in temporary organizations. The term Swift trust is put forth by Meyerson et al. (1996) as a way to understand and build trust based on the prerequisites that exist within temporary organizations. Swift trust is fragile and not built upon interpersonal relationships, but rather on social structures and actions (Meyerson et al., 1996). Meyerson et al. (1996) has identified swift trust as a key competency for temporary teams and Crisp and Jarvenpaa (2013) notes that development of swift trust contributes to overall performance.



**Figure 2.2:** In an environment with high importance of reputation and high level of interdependence, the level of vulnerability will increase and also the level of trust

Meyerson et al. (1996) discuss three different areas that can be used to define trust and how understanding these may aid in creating swift trust within the temporary organizations. These are vulnerability, uncertainty and risk. Meyerson et al. (1996) argue that depending on the situation and industry context of the temporary organization there may be different levels of vulnerability. If reputation is important

in the industry, then the vulnerability of the individual becomes higher and the performance becomes dependent on the surrounding people. In a situation where interdependence is high and the contributions of others affect your own reputation and vice versa the swift trust is more likely to occur due to the need of others contributions. See figure 2.2. However, if the interdependence is low and thus also the vulnerability, the individual will be less inclined to trust others within the temporary organization due to the result not affecting one's reputation or possibilities for future employment (Meyerson et al., 1996). When it comes to vulnerability and trust, the authors argue that interdependence is crucial for swift trust to occur. The level of interdependence needs to be in line with the importance of what tasks are being entrusted to the individual and the probability that those individuals will care for what is entrusted with good will (Meyerson et al., 1996). Furthermore, having clarity when it comes to the roles that people have within groups will lead to increased trust since there is an understanding in the responsibilities of the role as compared to the individual themselves (Meyerson et al., 1996). Uncertainty may also be a factor that affects the swift trust in a temporary organization. People may be uncertain about the fact that relative strangers will become the caretaker of one's goods and the possibility to monitor their actions may be negligible (Meyerson et al., 1996). In order to reduce this uncertainty people will fall back on their categorical assumptions, predispositions and implicit theories. Thus to manage the swift trust one must consider these areas and provide background to reduce their uncertainties and gain trust (Meyerson et al., 1996). Trust is also connected to risk. That when choosing to trust something, people will try to understand the potential damage a certain decision may have, and from that decide if it is worth it or not (Meyerson et al., 1996). Meyerson et al. (1996) suggest that risk is intertwined with action. That swift trust may appear in temporary organizations as "a byproduct of a highly active, proactive, enthusiastic, generative style of action." (Meyerson et al., 1996, p.175). The article suggests that there is a circular relationship between action and risk, and that there is a need for trust in the action in order to take the risk. Meyerson et al. (1996) argue that by implementing more forceful actions, the understanding of the risks may become more clear, which will then lead to clarifying the actions needed even more. Eventually leading to people being willing to take the risk and thus give their trust (Meyerson et al., 1996).

Zakaria (2020) distinguishes differences between trust and swift trust. The formation of swift trust occurs faster and more easily. Swift trust is also more fragile (Crisp & Jarvenpaa, 2013; Meyerson et al., 1996). Over the lifespan of a project swift trust will be replaced by a more lasting and durable form of trust (Zakaria & Yusof, 2020). In her study of global virtual teams, Zakaria (2020) found that different people have different readiness to form trust where some easily display high trust, some moderate trust, some low trust and lastly no trust. In the case of high trusting people, the productive work can begin faster and the trust only reduces by actions that betray that trust. Compared to people showing behavior of no trust, they are less likely to engage and have a passive position of little or no trust until there is proof of trustworthiness. This behavior is often based on previous experiences, the shadow of the past, with teamwork with less positive outcomes. The conclusion is that some

people are more suited for teamwork in an environment with a shorter time frame such as temporary organizations (Zakaria & Yusof, 2020). Zakaria (2020) found that in addition to the formation of trust by interpersonal actions, cognitive trust is also present in temporary teams, where members prioritize task-completion above reciprocal values of caring and concern for the teams well-being. Costa, Fulmer, and Anderson (2017) posit that swift trust is easier established if the members communicate regularly and enthusiastically. Zakaria's (2020) study echoes this finding and stresses that ice-breaking sessions in the early stages of collaboration was vital in the building of trust as well as first impressions. This was extra important for people with low or no trust behaviors.

### 2.2.5 Communication

Within a temporary team, the success relies on effective and efficient collaboration (Pinto et al., 1993). Communication is one the substantial elements to achieve this collaboration with improved teamwork quality (Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001). According to Husain (2013) bad communication is one of the most common causes of failure in change initiatives. Communication enables the exchange of information among the team members to build trust as well as being crucial for project success (Husain, 2013; Pinto & Pinto, 1990). By having a clear and continuous communication throughout change, positive impacts such as organizational commitment, performance and job satisfaction may be achieved (Husain, 2013). Furthermore, Husain (2013) argues that having clear and informative communication not only helps with motivating the change, but also helps with reducing uncertainty that as mentioned earlier can affect the trust in temporary organizations. Communication influences the degree of which employees trust each other and can aid in building trust in relationships Husain (2013). Goetz (2021) states that the quality of communication in a team consists of the combination of frequency, spontaneity and open-mindedness. A team needs to be able to communicate both with its leader as well as members spontaneously (Goetz et al., 2021). Poor information flow in a team is often caused by lack of openness, and this stops available knowledge from being used to complete the task (Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001). Schulz-Knappe, Koch and Beckert (2019) argue that continuous and transparent communication of a change leads to being able to handle employees' opinions and attitudes towards the change. That by not being transparent in the communication of the change and not providing sufficient enough information will instead increase the extent of resistance towards the change (Schulz-Knappe et al., 2019). Simoes and Esposito (2014) conclude that in order to better succeed with change, there is a need to have a dialogic communication instead of monologic. Dialogic communication means that one includes the people in the change by having a two-way communication about the change, where people are able to provide valuable input. That by increasing the dialogic communication the resistance to change will decrease at the same time. Communication becomes a crucial part in influencing the outcome of change. As Simoes and Esposito (2014) state; "Communication has been recognized as a relevant dimension to the success of organizational change, and it is considered important in building change readiness, reducing uncertainty, and as a key factor in gaining commitment." (p. 325).



# 3

## Methods

In this chapter the focus is on how the Master's thesis was conducted, the reasoning behind the methods used and why they were chosen. Furthermore it aims to provide insight into how the trustworthiness of the results was established, what ethical issues may have appeared throughout the thesis and how these have been dealt with.

### 3.1 Research approach

The area that this thesis has focused on is how to best organize for change in temporary organizations that work within inter-organizational projects. The chosen area of focus was the construction industry because of its long and natural connection with temporary organizations and inter-organizational projects (Lundin et al., 2015). Dealing with change means dealing with people and their reactions towards change (Ford & Ford, 2010; Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). The area of change focuses more on softer values that are often not as quantifiable in numbers, thus the approach for this thesis has been qualitative rather than quantitative (Bell et al., 2019). As for the choice of using a deductive, inductive or abductive research approach, the inductive approach was deemed most valid due to not having enough data to develop possible hypothesis to prove and having the aim of providing guidelines to project managers on how to implement change rather than investigating the cause and effect relationship between a problem identified and how to best solve it (Bell et al., 2019). The empirical data gathered was aimed at understanding the social structures when managing change in temporary organizations by examining the social world and the interpretations by the ones being interviewed. Which further supports the choice of a qualitative study as proposed by Bell et al. (2019).

### 3.2 Empirical Data Collection

The main source of empirical data was gathered through interviews. Interviews are suitable to gain deeper knowledge of a subject (Blomkvist & Hallin, 2015). The goal of the interviews was to attain a certain level of generality and allow for the interviewees to provide their own perspectives. Thus, a semi-structured interview style was chosen. The reasoning for this was to attain rich answers where the structure of the interviews still allowed the interviewee to express themselves freely and get sidetracked, whilst still following a certain structure that allowed us to gain empirical data surrounding similar questions and areas (Bell et al., 2019). Furthermore,

the possibility to ask follow-up questions and clarify answers is provided by using a semi-structured interview style (Bell et al., 2019). The interviews were all performed in Swedish, online using Zoom, Teams and in one instance over the phone. The questions were divided into three areas; general information regarding the interviewee, current working methodology, and how they manage change. The interviews were recorded, and notes were taken. After each interview the notes were discussed to find misunderstandings or different interpretations from the interviewer and the note taker. Key findings were also summarized after each interview. Translations were made from Swedish to English for both quotes and key findings. These translations were carefully discussed to capture the essence and still remain true to the original meaning.

Purposive sampling was used to find the interview subjects needed for this master thesis. The reasoning behind choosing this sampling method was to find participants that had the knowledge and position needed to answer the research questions posed (Bell et al., 2019). Since the focus of the thesis was on inter-organizational temporary organizations, potential interview participants that were working as project managers within temporary organizations were contacted. These worked in industries where inter-organizational collaborations were common such as the television industry and the construction industry. These individuals were chosen based on the research questions where the focus was on gaining an understanding of how project managers can organize for change within just inter-organizational projects. From there Snowball sampling was used by utilizing the established people interviewed as a way to find new relevant parties for the data collection (Bell et al., 2019). There was no ethnographic sampling made based on gender, location or age but the group interviewed consisted of 70% female and 30% male participants spread across Sweden.

Since the scope of this thesis was to focus on project managers implementing change within inter-organizational temporary organizations the scope can be seen as narrow. This guided the sample size chosen (Bell et al., 2019). In total ten interviews were conducted. Seven of these were with project managers from the construction industry, two with project managers from the television and media industry and one change manager within the construction industry. All interviews were between one to an hour and a half long. For future reference the participants were named as follows:

- PM1 - Project Manager Construction Industry
- PM2 - Project Manager Construction Industry
- PM3 - Project Manager Construction Industry
- PM4 - Project Manager Construction Industry
- PM5 - Project Manager Construction Industry
- PM6 - Project Manager Construction Industry
- PM7 - Project Manager Construction Industry
- PMT1 - Project Manager Television and Media Industry
- PMT2 - Project Manager Television and Media Industry
- CM - Change Manager Construction Industry

Other sources of empirical data were two observations of digital project meetings, as well as internal documentation of processes and project methodology. These empirical sources were used for understanding the context and provide deeper knowledge of the environment described in the interviews. However, these have not been used to answer the research questions directly.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The empirical data gathered was analyzed with the aid of the theoretical framework to provide the grounds needed for a valuable discussion. Throughout the thesis there was a close relationship between the data collected, the analysis of that data and combining it with existing theory with the goal of generating new theory.

In order to identify and structure the different areas relevant for the thesis, coding (Bell et al., 2019; Elliott, 2018) with the support of the software NVivo12 was done. As stated by Elliott (2018) coding is a way to aid researchers in making sense of large amounts of disparate data and connecting it to the research questions posed. This coding was done by identifying different key areas within both literature and the empirical data, creating nodes based on these and coding the data/theory found accordingly. Throughout the interview phase the findings were analyzed continuously and key takeaways were written down. This process allowed for continuous reflection on the amount of data needed in order to provide trustworthiness to the thesis. These key takeaways acted as a guide for what results to include in the thesis and aided in the discussion later on. When all the interviews had been conducted, the results compiled and the theoretical framework completed, the time came for the discussion. This is where the results were combined with the theoretical framework in order to provide insights for analysis and aid in providing grounds for conclusions.

### 3.4 Limitations of the Method

There are a few different limitations within the method chosen that may affect the applicability of these findings to the general change management theory within temporary organizations. First of all, the sampling chosen has mainly focused on the experiences of project managers when implementing change, and not as much on how team members have received change. Thus, the results of the empirical data collection may be somewhat one-sided and there may have been some valuable information lost due to this decision. Furthermore, as stated by Bell et al. (2019) one of the main critiques of using a qualitative research method is that the results are reliant on the subjective interpretations of the researchers. However, as previously stated the subject of change cannot be seen as quantifiable and thus a qualitative approach is recommended. But that does not change the fact that subjectivity may have affected the interpretations of the empirical data. To translate from Swedish to English might also pose a risk of nuances being lost in translation.

As mentioned by Bell et al. (2019) one additional critique of the usage of a qualitative method is the fact that how the research is conducted and the results are found is based on the ingenuity of the researcher at hand. This leads to the results being harder to replicate since there are no set procedures for a step-by-step model of how to perform a qualitative study. Furthermore, even though the participants were chosen by the field that they are working within there may be a lack of transparency as to exactly how they were chosen. Since it was a snowball sampling where the previous interviewees guided us to further participants which further affects the replicability of the study.

Lastly, deciding to focus on a more narrow scope like change within inter-organizational temporary projects within the construction industry may lead to the results becoming harder to generalize for the overall change management theory within temporary organizations (Bell et al., 2019).

## 3.5 Ethical Issues

Sustainability is an important aspect to contribute in a way that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UNWCED, 1987, p.24). Sustainability can be divided into environmental, economic and social sustainability (United Nations, 2015). Researchers play an important part for social sustainability (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017), by providing the results and impact of their research back to the society but at the same time considering ethical issues during the research process to not compromise the reputation or ability for future researchers (Bird, 2014)

Bell et al. (2019) divide the main ethical principles that need to be taken into consideration within research as avoidance of harm to participants, providing informed consent, protecting the privacy of the research participants and preventing deception. Avoidance of harm has been provided by providing anonymity to the research participants and by ensuring that any data saved in terms of recordings, e-mails, and notes will be deleted when the master thesis is finished. This is also in compliance with general data protection regulation, GDPR, within the European Union (European Commission, 2018). Furthermore, throughout the thesis there has been no attributes described about the participants, i.e. age, gender, company etc.

Informed consent was provided by providing information regarding the study, what the purpose of it was and how the information gathered would be used and handled. By doing this the participants were allowed to make a decision of whether or not to participate in the interview and provide consent to the information gathered to be used for the described purpose. Furthermore, the participants were asked in the beginning of the interviews whether or not they were okay with the interview being recorded. Closely related to this is protecting the privacy of the participants. The participants were given the opportunity to not answer any questions if they felt that these were private. Finally, deception was prevented by informing the participants of what the true purpose of the master thesis was and disclosing how the information

gathered would be used. The thesis was also provided to the participants to see the final result.

## 3.6 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is used to ensure the quality of a study and refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods (Polit & Beck, 2014). The criteria from Lincoln and Guba (1985;1994) of Credibility, Dependability, Confirmability, Transferability, and Authenticity was chosen for this thesis. The aspects of trustworthiness have been considered throughout the work of this thesis. Concerning the interviews, the questions were prepared before the interviews were booked to provide the same questions to all interviewees. Clarification of the questions were made when necessary to give each interviewee the best understanding to answer in the best possible manner. The interviewee, in their role, could also be considered experts of the main focus of our study which increases the credibility of the results.

The interpretation of qualitative data is always subject to subjectivity from the researchers. However, by recording the interviews there was always possible to return to the source if confusion arose, or re-confirmation was necessary. The covid-19 pandemic might have affected the findings. However, since most of the interviews consider past events, it is likely the results are consistent even after the pandemic, it's hard to know for sure, however, which effects will remain permanent. This might decrease the dependability, which is related to the stability of the collected data over time.

The thesis work has been structured around weekly meetings with written notes of the findings and decisions for each week. Openness to the findings have been important to not be too judgemental. Consultation with the supervisors have helped in making these decisions to keep the confirmability with both the research field and practical field.

The level of transferability has been a challenge within this thesis and it is hard to say how applicable the findings are for other settings with different circumstances. The criteria of authenticity have been strengthened with the sampling of interviewees, however, due to anonymity the different personalities and backgrounds of these people is not fully transparent to the reader. However, due to this anonymity, the interviewees could easily disclose all details or personal reflections without any negative personal impact. All in all, the methodology and findings of this thesis has the highest trustworthiness in regards to credibility, confirmability and authenticity. Regarding transferability and dependability a lot has been done to strengthen these areas even though they are hard to evaluate within the scope of this study.

# 4

## Results

The interviews highlighted many important aspects of the temporary working environment and the practical experiences of change initiatives. These change initiatives were often exemplified as change of methodology, change of tools or structure, digitalization or more general changes in the working processes. The findings from the empirical data collection are presented in themes relating to the research questions. The key concepts identified in each theme are highlighted in bold. The results are later discussed in relation to the theoretical framework.

### 4.1 Factors Influencing Change from the Inter-organizational Context

One important aspect of the project based organizations, PBO, and inter-organizational projects is the use of **contracts** which was mentioned by all interviewees. Offering contracts for bidding is the basis for finding new partners and hiring the project members for the temporary organization. The contracts include the duration and scope of the project, defines the tools and team practices to be used as well as any additional requirements and skills needed. This was a very influential aspect reflected in all interviews. Two project managers specifically stated the importance of creating a common acceptance for a change by including it in the contract before the project even was formed (PM4; PM7). That serves both the purpose of clarity and a promise of commitment to the change at hand. Furthermore it provides the project manager with some grounds to refer back to if a change is not followed (PM1). However, the negative opposite described by another project manager is when something was not included in the contract it weakened the position of the manager trying to enforce it (PM2). Late changes in contracts might also generate additional costs not accounted for which lowers the incentive to include it for the project (CM; PM5; PM6; PM7).

Another important aspect of inter-organizational projects is the **selection of team members**. Two project managers estimated that 70-75% of the team members were recurring while 25-30% were new partners (PM4; PM5) to keep a healthy competition and a possibility for new actors to enter the market (PM4; PM5; PM7). Price was stated as one of the main factors for selection by all the interviewees, but competency and previous experiences, often played a larger part in the first selection to even be considered. The interviews also described that the recurring collaborations were with the individual regardless of the company the person worked

for (PM1). A negative aspect mentioned by several project managers was the risk of second or third hand consultants. Quite often inter-organizational actors hire consultants for specific projects. This weakens the forming partners control of the individual members (CM; PM1; PM4; PM5).

The size of the project often affects the duration of the project. Shorter duration projects often don't have enough time for the participants to get to know each other on a deeper level, the change manager explained (CM). When having a **relationship with team members** there is often a higher understanding of their actions. Professionalism was the substitute in short projects and was described as "accelerated friendship" even though it could be seen as a bit "artificial" (CM). When asked the questions of how to build trust within a temporary organization one project manager said "Honesty is definitely a keystone, I would never say that I know something if I don't. I would say let me find out and I will get back to you" (PM2). The project manager continues by stating that in temporary organizations "You have a shorter time-frame to build this [trust] which makes it even more important" (PM2). Towards the end of projects people are less willing to spend the necessary energy to uphold relationships and show less patience (PM2). Social barriers might hinder openness (PM2) and in a toxic environment people become afraid of speaking their mind in fear of losing their job (PMT1). When working in smaller projects it is possible to participate in multiple projects simultaneously. This creates an extra dimension for project managers to consider when implementing changes (PM1; PM4). As one project manager reflected "If the project is smaller, many will work on multiple projects simultaneously, and this project is not the only one. That is very important to know and be aware of." (PM4)

The different partners in the inter-organizational project are often based on their specific skills or area of expertise. This creates a **heterogeneity** with different backgrounds, cultures, level of education, experience and power (CM; PM1; PM3; PM5). Some roles are less involved in the project by default and this creates a demand for extra attention from the project manager when implementing changes (PM2; PM7). The change manager felt a moral obligation to create an environment for everyone to grow (CM). A project manager described that the team culture is a direct product of each member's culture and not something the project leader can control (PM1). However, bringing recurring members into a project was helpful in creating a positive culture (PM1). The heterogeneity of the team skills also created a sense of vulnerability and insecure environment. If a team member is the only one with a certain skill, then everyone depends on them alone, and this can put pressure on the individual and create a feeling of vulnerability. It felt more safe to work close to the own permanent organization where the responsibility is shared among many rather than in the temporary project organization (PM1).

### 4.2 Change Agents and their Roles in Temporary Organizations

From the interviews conducted there are a few different roles that have been identified as potential change agents.

#### 4.2.1 Project Managers

The most common one that was brought up in all interviews that played a significant role in implementing change was that of the project manager. All project managers within the construction industry described that it is the role of the project manager to aid in implementing a change initiative. In temporary organizations the responsibility of putting the group together falls on the project manager and their role is to **create the structures and rules** needed in order for the team to succeed which was also agreed upon by all the interviewees from the construction industry. For these structures and rules to be utilized to their best capacity, a majority of the interviewees said the project manager has to take the role of **implementing and enforcing** their use throughout the project. What this means is that there is a constant need for the project manager to review how the team is performing and if the team members are following the rules and guidelines that have been set up (PM1; PM6). This may sometimes mean that the project manager has to keep a stern hand on how to work in order to ensure the correct implementation of the changes (PM1; PM6). However, as one of the project managers discussed, there is also a need to know when to be **stern** and when to take on a more **coaching role** to make sure that no one is left behind (PM6).

It became clear during the empirical data collection that when implementing change in temporary organizations the possibility of signing contracts regarding the ways of working is helpful, as was mentioned in the previous chapter. All the interviewees from the construction industry said it becomes the role of the project manager to **identify these requirements** and ensure that they are written down when starting up the temporary organization. This was often a joint task with a middle-manager who was the superior of the project manager and also responsible for client communication, legal aspects and budget. This contract defining was said to aid in implementing change initiatives within temporary organizations and seen as crucial to defining the structure of the project. Without defining these requirements in the contract, the changes asked for may be harder to implement, something that a project manager had experienced. “We were not clear from the beginning when we contracted them. We missed them and then we had to face the music” (PM2).

According to some of the interviewees, the role of the project manager is to **provide the prerequisites** needed for the team members to be able to succeed in their work (PM2). Furthermore, they also have the responsibility to **provide a clear vision** of what is needed from the start of the project so that the team members can follow through on their commitments (CM; PM2). This **clear communication and transparency** can then aid in the creation of trust within the organization



(CM). Since the members within the temporary organization may be involved in multiple projects at the same time It also becomes the role of the project manager to **keep track of these commitments** and make sure that the deadlines of the project are not interfered with due to this (PM4).

Another important part of the project manager's role when creating a temporary organization is **developing a culture** where it is okay for the team members to ask questions, a culture where there are no stupid questions (PM2; PM5). As one of the project managers stated: "What is important in order to ensure that a project will work well is that speaking your mind should not only be seen as a possibility to do, but instead something that you should do" (PM3). The project manager needs to understand the **importance of feedback** from the team and be able to admit when something has not gone as planned and take a step back (PM4). Another project manager discussed how important honesty becomes in **creating trust** within a group, that managers when asked a question should never say that they know something they don't. They should instead admit to not knowing but instead make sure to find out and get back to them (PM2). It becomes the role of the project manager to open up the group and **build the sense of team** needed (PM7).

Furthermore, within teams there are often those with more informal and formal power. By identifying these before implementing a change and providing them with an understanding of the why and the **value of a change** initiative before there is a larger team meeting, project managers are able to avoid being questioned in the meeting and thus gain support for the change (PM6). One interviewee pointed out, one must **believe in the change** and the weight of it in order to be able to gain the support of others (PM6). This was further supported by another project manager who argued that "You have to believe in it [the change] yourself. Otherwise, it is easy to not follow through. There is a need for the one in charge of selling the change to believe in it themselves" (PM3). There were other roles identified by the interviewees that played a part in the success of a change initiative. When implementing change, it becomes crucial for project managers to **identify key stakeholders** and make them understand the why of the change, and the value that it will bring them (PM4; PM5; PM6). Some of these stakeholders could be **utilized as advocates** for the change (PM4).

#### 4.2.2 Stakeholders

These stakeholders could both be team members, clients or managers higher up in the hierarchy. The clients need to **support** the change initiative, or at least not block it, and also has the possibility to **provide resources** if they feel the change adds value. Change initiatives may not always be relevant to clients. Then it is important that the superior manager is **supportive** of the project manager. The superior manager **helps with the contracting** and can include costs related to the change initiative in the **budget**. The superior manager is also often involved when team members are not fulfilling their duties and **actions** are needed. The teams members can become **supporters** of the change. One of the interviewees discussed

how some of the strongest advocates for a change, and the ones that are responsible for **driving the change forward**, are often the members that you do not expect (PM5). These advocates are often members that become genuinely surprised by the advantages that a change provides, but that there is still a need for the project manager to “hold their hand” throughout the change until these benefits are realized (PM5). Some members could be very eager and positive about the change and was willingly helping **promoting** and **explaining** the benefits. These members could also **teach** others within the team that trust them, and the change may be received better by it not coming from a superior, but instead an equal (PM5). Other members could have long experience from the industry. Their knowledge could be used for **feedback** of the change. These members might also have high informal power and their **approval** would reflect positively on the attitudes of the rest of the team.

### 4.3 Contextual Factors for Motivating Change

The interviewees agreed on that for a project to work effectively the individuals have to become a team which motivates their effort in a change in order to conform with the group. When starting up a temporary organization some members may want to jump start with the task at hand but some of the interviewees emphasized the importance of letting everyone **feel seen, heard and able** to contribute before starting up. This creates an understanding for each other’s differences and capabilities and a more efficient collaboration throughout the project according to a majority of the interviewees. Examples of **team building activities** mentioned in the interviews were lunching together, kick-offs, presentation rounds, personal small talk before meetings, meetings for evaluation and feedback, group discussions on how to communicate and internal rules, do’s and don’ts, coffee breaks, ice-breaking activities, and celebrating achievement continuously. Facilitating does not always mean do it yourself. An external activity leader can be a good complement since the project manager also is a member of the group (CM; PM5; PM6; PM7). A project manager explained that if you are working together and promise to deliver, it becomes a strong motivation to fulfill that promise and as people do not want to be the one who lets the team down (PM1; PM6). To further motivate the team, a **clear message of expectation** and a **joint vision** should be formed, which was mentioned by a majority of the project managers.

To perform well is noticed in the industry and it will lead to receiving requests for future participation in projects (CM; PM1; PM2; PMT1; PMT2). As one project manager phrased it “We want these people, from these companies” (PM2). To receive relevant experience and show willingness for collaboration and embrace a change initiative is therefore motivation for team members who want to stay in the business (CM; PM1; PMT1).

For members to be motivated to change they need to feel safe (PM1; PM2; PM3; PM4) and feel confident breaking old habits and trying something new (PM4). Working in a temporary organization often leads to leaving the comfort and safety of the line organization and this may cause reluctance of participation (PM1). To

lower this reluctance there is a need to create a sense of safety in the project organization as well (PM1; PM7). The members also need to feel that they have the **prerequisites** needed for adapting to the change (PM2; PM7). One way to create this safety and empower the team members can be to create guides or manuals for the proposed change which was proposed by several project managers, even though they might not always be used (PM5). By emphasizing to the team members that the change is happening but at the same time providing them with the **possibility of support** or even conducting one-on-one sessions may aid in creating the safety and empowerment needed, which was suggested by the majority of the project managers. Some of the participants further discussed how a change initiative generated from the bottom-up may be more motivational than if the change came from the top (PM3; PM5).

The most emphasized motivational factor in the interviews was that in order for members to embrace the change initiative is to understand the gain and **benefit** of the change. The motivation was stronger if it was linked to personal gain a majority of the interviewees stated. If an individual shows prestige in their work they are probably already doing a good job and might not want to “jump on to the change train” (CM). Therefore the communication and presentation must be done in a way that does not change the present work but develop it further for these individuals, and when they realize the opportunity the change initiative provides they become more motivated and can even become advocates for the change (CM; PM2; PM4; PM5). The feeling of personal benefit also works two ways, if there is low feeling or understanding of the benefit this becomes an obstacle for the change (PM2; PM4; PM5; PM7), but when that barrier is overcome it accelerates the change (PM2; PM5; PM6).

# 5

## Discussion

As mentioned in the introduction the rate of change in industries is becoming faster (Tushman et al., 1986) and the need to manage change is becoming greater (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997). The projectification trend is spreading to all industries (Lundin et al., 2015), especially inter-organizational projects are being formed more often (Meyerson et al., 1996). The regular change management practices are not functioning the same in the inter-organizational context (Boddy & Macbeth, 2000) and the construction industry is one area where inter-organizational projects are common (Lundin et al., 2015). Project managers may need complementary skills to implement changes successfully within temporary organizations (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010) and the behavioral aspects of inter-organizational relationships within projects are scarcely researched. With these changes happening there is a growing importance to understand how change initiatives are affected by the temporary environment of projects and how project managers could behave in order to succeed in the implementation of change. The aim of this discussion is to connect the theoretical framework with the results gained from the interviews and provide a valid discussion that will aid in answering the research questions posed.

### 5.1 How Change is Affected by the Inter-organizational Environment

With the inter-organizational projects becoming more common there is a need to understand how to manage change within this type of environment. This section connects the empirical data found regarding aspects influencing change in the inter-organizational context with the theoretical concepts existing on the subject with the aim of providing insight to the research question: *In what way is change management affected by the environment of inter-organizational projects?*

From the empirical results it became evident that one large factor that affects the possibility of implementing change was the possibility of establishing the future ways of working through a contract. Both Lundin and Söderholm (1995) as well as Bakker (2010) discussed in their articles how the concepts of time, task, team and context or transition were the defining concepts of temporary organizations. Some of these concepts can also be argued to play a role in having the ability to state in the contract that a certain way of working will be decided beforehand. As stated by the authors, temporary teams are created surrounding a certain task during a set time span with team members allocated to that task. By having this structure the

project manager is able to define how to work in the contract and later on use it as a way to enforce the usage of a change initiative if needed. However, as pointed out by one of the project managers, this may also be a double edged sword where not defining a change in the contract may lead to difficulties of ensuring that a change initiative is used.

As noted in the interviews, because time is limited, initiating a change initiative in the middle of an on-going project requires more effort than change initiatives presented in the beginning. This could be connected to the effort needed of unfreezing the current state (Lewin, 1951), which increases over the project timeline, as norms and routines begin to settle. Thus, when the inter-organizational project is formed there is a need to be clear on what changes to implement before assembling the team members. It could also be argued that by providing information in the contract regarding the changes to be made, there may be the possibility of reducing the uncertainty of the change as discussed by Husain (2013) and thus aid in creating trust from the start within the team. However, this is also dependent on the time frame of the project. It is harder to predict all changes needed in a long term projects. By not providing sufficient information regarding a change can lead to resistance towards the change at hand (Schulz-Knappe et al., 2019) which was confirmed by the participants in the interviews. The process of deciding ways of working before the temporary organization is formed may be classified as communicating the information one way without the possibility of a more dialogic communication. Which, as stated by Simoes and Esposito (2014), may lead to increasing the resistance towards the change. However, it can be argued that this effect is less since you are not part of the change unless you choose to accept the contract.

To summarize and reflect on the discussion above, the fact that inter-organizational projects have a set starting and finish time where the team is formed surrounding a specific task provides the possibility to set up rules regarding a change initiative. However, worth reflecting on is that the monologic way of communicating a change through a contract may not be the best way to gain the support of a change as discussed by Simoes and Esposito (2014). When deciding whether or not to accept the terms of a contract there may not be sufficient information regarding what the change means to the parties signing it. Furthermore, the choice becomes either sign it and get the contract or not signing it, and potentially losing the business. When third party consultants are being used as described in the empirical data, they might not even be aware of all details in the contract. The fact that the contract is signed does not guarantee the utilization/implementation of the change to the full extent. Also, there may be different levels of resistance such as indifference towards the change or a passive resistance (Coetsee, 1999) that appear because of the negative perceptions about the change and how the change came about. As Ford and Ford (2010), Gilley et al. (2009) and Lines (2004) discussed, there is value in seeing resistance towards a change as something positive and by using it as feedback it may lead to improving the change initiative. This possibility may be lost by one way communication of change. However, the fact is that these temporary organizations may come from different contexts as described by Bakker (2010) and

thus finding common ground with all consultants may prove difficult. In this sense a contract may be seen as an effective way to get all the consultants on the same page with a common vision of how to work.

The applicability of change models is another area where the inter-organizational environment may affect. The emergent change model as discussed by Bamford and Forrester (2003) could be argued to fit the environment of temporary organizations due to the value it puts in understanding both the internal and external environment of the change initiative. As inter-organizational projects depend on team members whose allegiance may belong to several different organizations this is something that needs to be taken into consideration when motivating for change. As Kanter et al. (1992), Kotter (1995) and Luecke (2003) all described in their models for change there is an importance in creating a common vision for a change initiative that can aid in implementing and supporting the change initiative. Considering the prerequisites of members in temporary organizations it can be argued that a part of this becomes realizing the different backgrounds and commitments of its members. This needs to be included when creating the vision of the change. This is supported by the fact that the majority of the managers argued that there is a need to create a clear message of expectation and a joint vision in order to motivate the team. By realizing that people come from different organizations and have other commitments, and including this in the planning process, the team members may be motivated to adapt to the change.

Within emergent change Kanter et al. (1992), Kotter (1995) and Luecke (2003) all agree that there is a need to establish the change initiative in the culture of the organization. With that said there are also aspects of these emergent change models that may not be as applicable to the inter-organizational environment. Firstly, some of the steps assume that there is an organizational history to draw upon that will aid in the creation of the change initiative (Kanter et al., 1992; Luecke, 2003). Some of the steps in these models focus on the fact that there is historical data to draw upon (Kanter et al., 1992) or the fact that the joint collaboration to create a change initiative will aid in mobilizing energy and commitment (Luecke, 2003). For temporary organizations as the ones studied in the empirical data the organization will be newly created each time and the possibility to involve the members in the change may not be there since the change was defined before the organization was set up. So the fact that some steps of the emergent change models are applicable is not the same as stating that emergent change models should be used when designing and implementing change in temporary organizations. However, what can be argued for is the need to research what steps will be applicable in temporary organizations as well as what new steps needs to exist in order to succeed in implementing change. Worley and Mohrman (2014) argued that because of the way that the market is developing there is no longer the possibility to create and implement change in steps due to organizations being asked to continuously adapt to the changes needed for tomorrow whilst still having to perform well today. This is something that needs to be considered as well when researching potential new change models within temporary organizations. How the time aspect put forth by Lundin and Söderholm (1995) and Bakker (2010) will affect the notion of not having certain steps for

implementing change as well as the fact that the teams are new every time, meaning that one change may be implemented several times, will have to be researched further.

Other ways the inter-organizational context affects change initiatives is the heterogeneous nature of skills, networks and culture. The need to find common ground and acceptance becomes important for efficient collaborations (Pinto et al., 1993). This is not unique to the temporary environment but could be argued to occur more frequently with each new formation of a temporary organization. The network aspect and formations of temporary organizations within these networks described in the interviews highlight the importance of the shadow of the future and the shadow of the past for team members, project managers and their organizations. The notion of shadow of the future helps change initiatives by providing a sense of value that extends beyond the specific project (Bakker & Knoben, 2014). The shadow of the past is the direct link to realize those expected future values. Without recurring collaboration within the context, no shadow of the future nor shadow of the past would exist. The shadow of the past may also be a source of change initiatives in temporary organizations if the members or project managers want to sustain a change, previously implemented in another project. To implement changes over many projects may also be an incentive for project-based organizations to gain economies of scale and spread cost over several projects or promote standards. For project members, however, too many different standards and the need to adapt to every new project may cause change fatigue and this will make it harder to implement change in temporary organizations.

Moving on, the interviews showed that the shadow of the past is also something to both help and hinder the collaboration within the temporary organization. Good experiences help the formation of swift trust and make the team forming period shorter (Crisp & Jarvenpaa, 2013). Negative experiences might be the source of skepticism or distrust, either towards members or proposed changes. The possibility to control the formation of a temporary organization and thereby control the shadow of the past present in the team will be beneficial for the success of change initiatives. Also, it could be argued that within inter-organizational temporary teams the performance of the individual within a project will affect potential future collaborations. Therefore the shadow of the future hanging over the team members will lead to an increase in the collaborative behavior of team members, create more trust and lower the risk of opportunistic behavior (Bakker & Knoben, 2014).

## **5.2 Change Agents and their Roles in Temporary Organizations**

As Hayes (2002) said, change agents are “anyone who has the skill and power to stimulate, facilitate, and coordinate the change effort” (p.1). In order for project managers to succeed in a change, they first need to understand what change agents can be identified within their organization and what role they will play in implement-

ing the change. This section aims at connecting the empirical data found regarding change agents to the theoretical framework on the subject. The discussion will then lead to shedding a light on how to answer the research question *In a temporary organization, which change agents can be identified and what role do they play?*

It became clear in the interviews that the person with the most influence and expectation to drive and ensure a successful change initiative was the project manager. The line between change agents and stakeholders can sometimes be blurred (Pádár et al., 2017) which also was noticed in the empirical data when the interviewees discussed that team members could affect change in ways similar to both stakeholders and change agents. The change roles that Conner (1993) defined and the stakeholder classification from Hayes (2002) can aid in describing how other individuals besides the project managers can affect change initiatives.

The project manager often reported to a middle-manager that was not directly involved in the specific project but could supervise many projects or be responsible for the legal or financial aspects of the temporary organization, such as aid in formulating contracts or deciding the budget. From what was learned from the interviews these would in most cases be categorized as sponsors. Sponsors that needed to be convinced by the project manager of the benefits of a change initiative to provide financial support or the resources needed (Conner, 1993; Hayes, 2002). If the temporary organization was formed on the initiative of a client. The client could also be seen as a sponsor. The sponsor could also set conditions that may affect how the contracts will be defined later on. Failing to include either managers or clients could turn them into blockers and create an impossibility for the project manager to drive the change (Hayes, 2002).

The easiest way to motivate a proposed change, as suggested in the empirical data, is with the financial benefits. The interviewees, however, emphasize the difficulties in doing so. Often the reason for the change was based on non-financial values such as improved structure, increased collaboration or less administration that would in turn lead to better collaboration and providing financial benefits along the way. To be able to translate these benefits to financial figures would probably help many change initiatives in convincing stakeholders and thereby remove hesitance or resistance towards the change initiative. However, this may prove difficult to do since softer values may not always be possible to translate into quantifiable numbers without investing time and resources into proving it. Often time can be translated to financial figures in the connection to salaries. This also creates a specific implication for temporary organizations since the cost will not only be valued on the change implementation time but also in relation to temporary organizations predetermined time frame. Managers in short term projects will most likely then have more difficulties motivating change initiatives compared to managers in long term projects.

The other involved roles of change in temporary organization, as suggested by the empirical data, comes from within the project team. The team members can assume roles most similar to those of targets or advocates (Conner, 1993). The team mem-



bers can have different attitudes towards the change and four different roles could be identified to aid the project manager as change advocates. Firstly, there were the team members who might have felt that they were lacking the technical skills to utilize a change. If the project manager could convince them of the benefits and aid them in the learning process these could then become strong advocates showing both that the transition is possible as well as teaching others. Secondly, a team member could have had long experience in the business and already see their ways of working as well established and proven. To motivate the change for this member is important to avoid resistance towards changing and to use this person's experience and feedback for the benefit of the change initiative is an asset that could be utilized by the project manager. Thirdly, some team members did not even need to be persuaded. They were already engaging full on in the change. These could be used by the project manager as support and inspiration for the rest of the team. Fourthly, some team members with higher informal status should be convinced one-on-one before presenting the change to the rest of the team. This is to reduce uncertainty that may arise if these members show a negativity towards the change in front of the others.

These different roles may require the project manager spending a lot of time and having the right people skills in order to successfully turn them into advocates. The balance of forcing a change or persuading others to embrace it may not be easy for project managers. The team members who really believe in the change and have realized its benefits can help others to be convinced by explaining or demonstrating from their own perspective the values a change brings them. From the interviews the project managers emphasized that the trust and relationships between the members supports this process. This role would probably not be an outspoken task or included in the job description. It becomes a voluntary act and therefore hard to force or control by the project manager. As exemplified in some interviews these advocates for a change initiative is not always easy to predict who they will be. The least enthusiastic and the most eager can both assume this role which suggests that the project manager needs to keep an open mind and not be judgmental based on assumptions.

Some members have more informal power than others and therefore their opinions may affect the rest of the team's way of thinking. To take them aside and resolve their concerns before a meeting was an effective tactic described by a project manager and this is supported in the literature by Hayes (2002) who states that this is a way to gain the support of powerful stakeholders by providing them with information, forming relationships and addressing possible concerns.

Since the project manager is expected to both train the team and improve their collaboration by facilitating a change initiative the project manager needs to possess or acquire these skills. This is in line with what Crawford and Nahmias (2010) suggested regarding project managers needing to acquire skills from the field of change management to be successful change leaders. This can be achieved in two ways, either training of project managers or the use of experts. The training can be seen as a one time cost, since the project managers can utilize their skills in all

future projects as well, whereas experts will generate costs in every project, similar to consultants. This might create incentives for the project managers' organizations to provide this training to decrease costs by spreading them over many projects. This is however an area where contradictions may arise. It might not be possible for a project manager to take on the role as change manager at the same time as leading the project forward. The work load of the manager may be too high and not allow for the training needed to gain the necessary change management skills. Furthermore, there is a need to consider what happens when the the project manager is faced with a decision that may improve the change initiative but impact the progress of the project negatively. For example temporarily slowing down the project or increasing costs. These two areas might not always be possible to keep separate, leading to one area being prioritized over the other. The use of consultants or experts for these areas as suggested by Hayes (2002) and Pádár et al. (2017) could be a way to ensure that the skills needed are present for every project independently of the project manager.

Moving on, the project manager must establish credibility within the team to gain their support in the change initiative as was emphasized by the interviewees. The literature similarly suggests that if the manager's credibility is damaged it's likely to lead to increased resistance to change (Ford & Ford, 2010). The different perspective is likely a product of the temporary organization. In a temporary organization the credibility first has to be established before it can be damaged. One way the project manager could gain credibility was suggested in the interviews by studying already successfully implemented changes and utilizing this knowledge within the team. Other ways of showing credibility found in the empirical data was to lead by example and being honest, well structured, and prepared. Lack of honesty is also mentioned in the literature as a managerial misstep that might lead to resistance towards change initiatives (Ford & Ford, 2010). The impact of the project manager personality and leadership can have different effects. Similar to the discussion of conflicting project and change initiative goals, the project manager must choose a leadership style that might not be beneficial for both outcomes. The dependency of the project manager also suggest that change initiated from outside the project team can be undermined if not supported by the project manager.

When the project manager is acting in the role of change agent these are some of the things that become more important in order to succeed in implementing change within temporary organizations. According to Ford and Ford (2010), Gilley et al. (2009) and Lines (2004) the manager needs to listen to feedback and utilize it in order to both gain support and improve the change. The empirical findings suggested that managers need to understand the importance of feedback from the team and be able to admit when something has not gone as planned. As Lunenburg (2010) put it, one of the successful characteristics of managers is openness. Meaning a willingness to listen to people and be influenced by them.

Furthermore, it was argued that it becomes the role of the manager to create the opportunity and culture for the members to provide feedback. Van Dam et al. (2008) emphasized the importance of establishing trust within a group and how

trust is one of the influencing factors to how we evaluate change. This was seen as an important part of leadership within the empirical findings, where it was argued that honesty is a crucial part in building trust. That one should admit when not knowing the answer to something and instead commit to finding it out. This can be further connected to what Ford and Ford (2010) stated about upholding agreements, and how not upholding it can be detrimental for the relationship with the team.

As stated in the empirical results, explaining the benefits with a change was one of the best ways to motivate team members to adapt to the change. However, as Ford and Ford (2010) stated managers have to be careful not to overstate the advantages of a change and understating the possible drawbacks since this may lead to increasing the resistance towards the change. As suggested by the empirical findings the team members are not the only ones who need to be convinced by the benefits of a change initiative. It is equally important for the project manager implementing the change to actually believe in it. By not believing in a change there is a risk of not staying consistent in the support of the change which may lead to further resistance towards the change as well as lost credibility of the project manager within the temporary organization (Ford & Ford, 2010).

### 5.3 Motivating Change in Temporary Organizations

In order for a change initiative to succeed people need to be motivated enough to utilize it. To organize for change, project managers need to understand how the team members can be motivated to use a change and how that may be affected by operating within a temporary environment. This section aims at connecting the empirical data found regarding motivational factors for change with the theoretical framework on the subject. The discussion leads to insights that will aid in answering the research question *How can team members be motivated to adapt to change in a temporary organization?*

The motivational factors found in the empirical data were often connected to team development, culture and communication which are also seen as important for project managers that are implementing change. The skills to facilitate these areas are important for managers to have (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010; Lunenburg, 2010). This could also be connected to Todnem By's (2005) belief that instead of focusing on certain steps of implementation managers should promote change readiness. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) suggested that one of the reasons for change initiatives failing is due to lack of trust towards the change initiator, and as mentioned by Morgan and Hunt (1994) the commitment towards a relationship is governed by the level of trust developed. Thus, it could be argued that by focusing on team development and building trust, the possibility of a change initiative to succeed will increase. Van Dam et al. (2008) also builds upon this by arguing that the trust that members have for the manager guides how the change initiative is evaluated. The idea that team development leads to success in implementing change was fur-

ther supported by empirical data that suggested team building activities as being beneficial since it allowed for the team members to gain an understanding of each other's differences and capabilities. Furthermore, to create a sense of safety for the team members by providing them with the prerequisites needed in order to adapt to change may ease their transition and increase their motivation to change. The literature on project management supports a strong team culture for better project results. However, if this is true in all cases for change initiatives within projects as well, as suggested by these findings, would need further investigation. Even if the level of trust in the team is high, the success of a change is not guaranteed, and trust can therefore be seen as supportive in change initiatives, rather than a driver to change.

To create a strong culture is another factor that could be argued to have an effect on the change readiness of the organization. There is a need for project managers to understand the importance of creating a culture where the feedback of members is not only seen as something positive, but as something that is necessary. Ford and Ford (2010) argued that there is a need to see resistance to change as something positive, instead of something negative, and to actually utilize it as feedback for improving change initiatives. The empirical findings supported this notion by arguing that having a culture where people feel being seen, heard and able to contribute leads to motivation and better results. Thus, showing that in order to motivate team members there is a need for the project manager to realize the importance of culture within an organization, and by doing this and allowing for an open conversation where feedback is encouraged and utilized. The possibility of success of a change initiative in a team with a strong culture might however be dependent on the type of change proposed. The interviewees exemplified their initiatives as working methodology or digital tools. These changes are mostly independent of the team structure. If a proposed change suggest disruption of the team or threatening the team structure, the team culture might be a cause of greater resistance to maintain the current state. However, as noted in the empirical data, to make changes in the middle of a project is more difficult and changes should be proposed before or when the team is created for easier implementation. This may also reduce the risk of a strong team culture working against a change since the team has not had time to form the culture yet.

How the communication structures are set up could be argued to have an effect on the change readiness of an organization as well as the overall performance throughout the implementation of a change initiative (Simoes & Esposito, 2014). As stated by Hoegl and Gemündel (2001), good communication can be seen as a way to achieve improved team quality. Furthermore, there is a need for good communication in order to build trust within a group (Husain, 2013). By having the structure in place for spontaneous communication as mentioned by Goetz (2021) and a transparent, continuous communication there is a possibility to handle the opinions and attitudes of others towards a change (Schulz-Knappe et al., 2019). Furthermore, having a communication structure where members are motivated by the possibility to affect change leads to the idea that creating the right communication structure in a temporary team is key in order to implement change. Furthermore, having an open

and clear communication regarding the change whilst allowing the support needed to transition further supports the notion that communication structure plays a role in creating change readiness in an organization. How the change is communicated also plays a part in the acceptance of change. As mentioned in the interviews there is a need to present the gain and benefits of a change in order for people to embrace it. If this is done correctly, the people that were actively resisting the change may be motivated and become advocates instead when realizing the benefit of the change. This way of thinking may aid in lowering the resistance to change based on both parochial self-interest and misunderstanding as posed by Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) due to providing both understanding and benefits of a change.

Utilizing the prospect of future collaborations may aid the project manager in creating a trusting environment with better collaboration and results. By doing so the benefits of the change are not only for this one time project but may extend to other projects in future as well. This collaboration may trigger reciprocity by the potential benefits of future collaborations (Göbel et al., 2013), and reciprocity may aid in the creation of trust in groups (Meeker, 1983) and thus enable a faster implementation of change. This was also noted in the interviews that the team members felt an obligation to not be the weakest link of the team and let the others down. However, if the trust is betrayed or not mutual, future collaboration only becomes a burden. The shadow of the past with negative experiences may require extra effort from the project manager to break the pessimistic attitude. Furthermore, as discussed by Meyerson et al. (1996) the trust in temporary organizations could be hastened by the concept of swift trust. The vulnerability felt when the reputation of the individual guide potential future employment, can increase the willingness to trust in people at a faster rate. The empirical data also suggested that clear roles within the team could aid in the trust building before a relationship was formed. This is something that Simon von Danwitz (2018) mentions alongside shared work norms, informal interactions and open communication as trust developing. This further supports the notion that emphasizing on potential future collaborations may lead to building the trust that can support the implementation of a change within temporary organizations, and thus also act as a motivator for team members to adapt to change.

# 6

## Conclusion

This Master's thesis was aimed at studying how change initiatives can be improved within temporary organizations. This was done by interviewing managers within the construction industry and connecting these findings to change management theories. The purpose was to provide guidelines for project managers on how to improve implementation in this setting and answer the research question; *How can project managers organize for change in temporary organizations?*

The main influential factors identified for change initiatives within inter-organizational projects is the possibility of both choosing the team members as well as including the proposed change in contracts. This creates the opportunity for project managers to build a solid foundation for the change initiative. By taking an active role in the selection of team members and making sure that proposed changes are clearly defined in the contracts, the project manager is given a good starting-point when implementing change. This pre-agreement can be referred back to throughout the implementation and aid the project manager in establishing the change initiative within the culture of the team. Worth mentioning is that inter-organizational projects sometimes hire third party consultants who may not have received this information and thus needs to be informed early on in the project. Also, it may be difficult to fully understand the impact of a change when signing a contract. This needs to be addressed in the initial phase of the change implementation by the project manager to get everybody on the same level.

The main change agent identified within temporary organizations is the project manager. Team members can be seen as both change agents and stakeholders. Other stakeholders that are important to consider are managers above the project manager as well as clients. One important role of the project manager as a change agent is to promote the change and explain its benefits to both the stakeholders and the team members. By winning the support of the managers and clients can turn them into sponsors that have the power to provide the resources needed in order to implement the change. The individual benefits should be identified and communicated to ensure collaboration in the change implementation. This individual focus is important because of the heterogeneity and different context of each team member. The benefits of adapting to a change initiative can be further motivated in a temporary organization by emphasizing the shadow of the future. The team members play an important role by becoming advocates of the change that help the project manager with explaining benefits, training of others, and providing knowledge and feedback.

The role of the project manager as a change agent is also to provide the prerequisites needed for a successful implementation and motivate the team members to adapt to a change. The most emphasized motivators was the benefits that the change could provide. This study has also identified a strong team culture as one of the important prerequisites for change. To create this team culture a project manager should facilitate possibilities of creating relationships with the team members and promoting an open dialogic communication. These relationships will be built on trust among the team members, where clear roles and expectations are provided that can aid in building trust. The past experiences of collaboration, different cultures and working methods is something that the project manager should be aware of and utilize in order to establish a common ground within the new team. Another prerequisite needed for a successful change is providing enough knowledge and training to decrease the learning anxiety of team members. This should be done continuously by providing support and following up on the progress. The members may have different involvement within the team and other projects simultaneously which should be recognized by the project manager to give each member the best possibility to engage in the change initiative.

The final important conclusion of how to motivate for change within temporary organizations is connected to the project manager's leadership and personality. The importance of leading by example has been emphasized in the findings of this study. To avoid resistance towards the change initiative the project manager should be honest, not make false promises and uphold agreements. The project manager should listen to the team and admit when being wrong. Lastly, the project manager must believe in the change and its benefits or else all efforts of the change initiative will be fruitless. This is how project managers can organize for change in temporary organizations.

## **6.1 Limitations**

This study was conducted in Sweden and the work ethics and culture affecting the answers provided may differ from other countries with different working cultures. The analysis of the literature has helped in understanding the general concepts and dimensions affecting change initiatives within temporary organizations. Due to the Covid-19 situation that was roaming the world when this master thesis was written the empirical data gathered may be affected by this. Both by the way that the interviewees answer, but also by the way the interviews were able to be conducted. The aim with the thesis was to provide a generalizable result that can be utilized when this pandemic is over. As the answers are affected by the situation as well as that the construction industry has changed as a reaction to this it is hard to determine to which extent the results have changed. Moreover, the pandemic has led to not being able to perform physical observations which may have provided some further insights into how change is being implemented within temporary organizations. Interviews are a good way to obtain qualitative knowledge, but observations can provide answers the interviewees are not aware of.

### 6.2 Future Research

The empirical data gathered has been from the sole perspective of project managers and not from the perspective of team members. The perception of change initiatives in temporary organizations from the team members perspective may have been different. To assess the applicability and impact of the findings in this Master's thesis they would need to be further evaluated from the perspective of team members when implemented in practice. This could be done with case studies or action research to study the actual behaviors and reactions. This bottom-up focus could reveal further insights on how to help implement change in temporary organizations. Furthermore, as discussed previously there may be a contradiction where the project manager also need to take on the role of change manager when implementing change. Thus there could be value in researching further on the value of keeping the roles separate or not. Lastly, the inclusion and comparison of different industries and countries would also provide valuable insights in how different circumstances affect change initiatives and provide more evidence to this interesting field of research.



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