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Involvement of Employees in Change Processes

A case study of a change process in Statens vegvesen

Involvering av ansatte i endringsprosesser

Nesanthy Vageesan
Master of Business Administration
School of Economics and Business

Abstract

Today´s business environment requires almost continual changes from organizations if they want to stay competitive. Organizational changes are associated with challenges and opportunities. Therefore, it is important that the transformation process is carefully managed and implemented. By assuming that involving employees in the change process is necessary to implement a successful change, this study aimed to compare the change managers and employees' perception of employee involvement during the change process. The main purpose of this master thesis was to determine how the employees in Statens vegvesen actually perceived their involvement during the 2017 reorganization process and how their perception affected their motivation in the change process. Qualitative methods were conducted using semi structured interviews to collect relevant data. Three change managers and four employees affected by the reorganization process were interviewed. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicated that employees were motivated in the change process if their perceived involvement was positive. Furthermore, the results indicated that it is sometimes sufficient to share information with employees. These results can be used as groundwork for governmental organizations which aim to plan and implement a change process.

Sammendrag

Dagens forretningsmiljø krever nesten kontinuerlige endringer fra organisasjoner hvis de vil være konkurransedyktige. Organisasjonsendringer er assosiert med utfordringer og muligheter. Derfor er det viktig at endringsprosesser håndteres og implementeres nøye. Ved å anta at involvering av ansatte i endringsprosesser er nødvendig for å gjennomføre en vellykket endring, har denne studien til hensikt å sammenligne ledernes og ansattes oppfatning av ansattes involvering i endringsprosessen. Hovedformålet med masteroppgaven var å avgjøre hvordan ansatte i Statens vegvesen faktisk opplevde involvering under reorganiseringsprosessen i 2017, og hvordan deres opplevelse av involvering påvirket deres motivasjon i endringsprosessen. Kvalitative metoder ved hjelp av semistrukturert intervju ble brukt for å samle relevant data. Tre ledere og fire ansatte som ble berørt av endringsprosessen ble intervjuet. Dataene ble analysert ved bruk av tematisk analyse. Resultatene viste at ansatte var motivert i endringsprosessen dersom deres opplevelse av involvering var positiv i endringsprosessen. I tillegg, viste resultatene at det noen ganger er tilstrekkelig å dele informasjon med ansatte. Resultatene i oppgaven kan brukes som grunnlag for offentlige virksomheter som har som mål å planlegge og gjennomføre en endringsprosess.

Acknowledgement

This master thesis is the final part of my master's degree in Business Administration at the School of Economics and Business at NMBU – Norwegian University of Life Sciences. It has been a period of challenges and intense learning for me, not only scientifically, but also personally.

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Nesanthy Vageesan

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, organizations need to change constantly in order to increase their competitiveness and to survive in the market place. Currently, demographic trends, financial pressure to reduce costs, new technology, and increased demands on the service and quality of private/public organizations are central drivers of organizational change. Statens vegvesen is one Norwegian organization which continually implements change processes to improve.

It is important to recognize that a change process is not only about the process, but also about employees who are affected by the change. On one hand, there might be employees who welcome changes in an organization, while on the other hand, there might be employees who resist transformation processes. Engaging every employee in a change process is not easy, but doing so might encourage employees and motivate them to work towards the transformation goals. Moreover, employees could feel ownership over the change process if they are encouraged to participate. Therefore, the main goal of this thesis is to determine the impact of perceived involvement on the employees´ motivation towards change.

1.1 Statens vegvesen

Statens vegvesen is the Norwegian Public Road Administration. Statens vegvesen´s task is to plan, build, operate and maintain national and county roads in Norway. They are also responsible for inspecting vehicles and road users and for operating driver tests.
Statens vegvesen consists of the Directorate of Public Roads and five regional units, including the Northern Region, Central Region, Western Region, Southern Region and Eastern Region. Statens vegvesen has 72 driver and vehicle licensing offices and five traffic control centers distributed across Norway. The agency is managed by a road director while each region is managed by regional road managers. The Directorate of Public Roads is the top management level and is located in Oslo. [1]

[1] All information was obtained from Statens vegvesen (2017) https://www.vegvesen.no/en/the+npra/about-the-npra/about-the-npra

1.2 Reorganization of roads- and transport department [2]

The project to change the roads- and transport department in the Directorate of Public Roads in Oslo was established in January 2017. At the beginning of the change process the goal was to identify areas which required improvement. Therefore, the decision to reorganize the roads- and transport department was made during the change process. New departments arose as a result of the reorganization in September 2017. The roads- and transport department was split into two new separate departments, named roads department and transport department. Previous tasks and responsibilities of the roads- and transport department and the environment- and technology department were distributed among the new departments.

Some challenges in the community, such as digitalization, drove the reorganization process, perceived as both challenges to overcome and good opportunities to take. In addition, there was also a need for faster implementation and the aim that ambition levels and resource consumption must be consistent. The Directorate of Public Roads did not always deliver goods and services well enough to the regions. In addition, the quality was too low and inadequate processing time was observed.

The main goal of the reorganization was to establish a well-functioning organization of the roads- and transport area in the Directorate of Public Roads. The purpose of establishing the new departments was to obtain a more efficient workflow and clearer roles and responsibilities. In addition, establishing new departments identified and eliminated tasks which did not add value in the process. Another goal of the reorganization was to reduce resources in the Directorate of Public Roads and to create competence profiles according to priority tasks. Achieving these described goals should in turn improve the performance of the Directorate of Public Roads.

Roads Department

The Roads Department should be an effective and professional road owner. The main task of the department is comprehensive and efficient implementation of planning, construction, operation, and maintenance, including:

[2] All information about the case was obtained from intern documents of Statens vegvesen, which cannot be found in the reference list because I do not have the permission from Statens vegvesen to share these documents.

- Delivering at the right cost, time, and quality
- Efficiency and using technology that simplifies
- Better interactions with advisors and contractors
- Environmentally conscious choices of materials and transport solutions
- Contributing to Statens vegvesen´s responsibility for social security, preparedness, and safe and predictable accessibility.

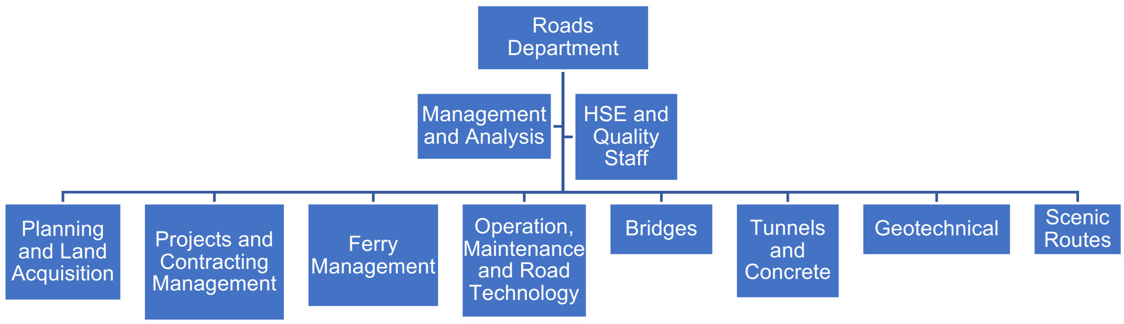

Figure 1: Roads Department sections and organization
Source: Intern document of Statens vegvesen

Transport Department

The Transport Department is responsible for traffic, transport solutions, transport systems, and interactions between transport and society, including:

- Providing a comprehensive and intelligent transport system
- Regulatory role and ownership of data generated from and in the transport system
- Promoting safe, predictable, efficient, and environmentally conscious transport solutions
- Promoting fast implementation of new technology
- Good management of traffic
- Increasing the focus on society´s benefits of transport system and infrastructure development.

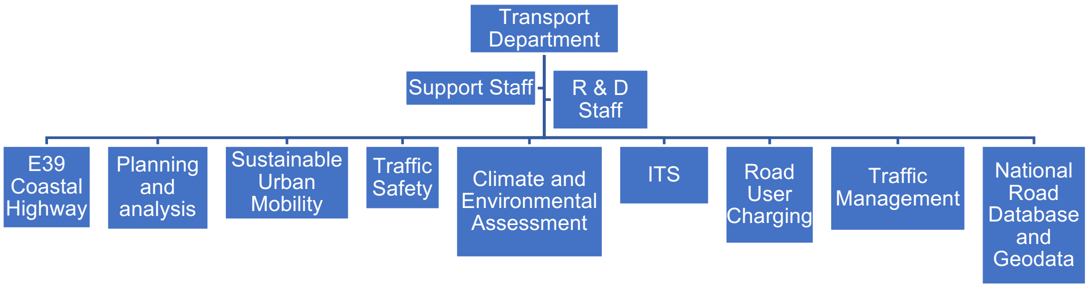

Figure 2: Transport Department sections and organization
Source: Intern document of Statens vegvesen

Statens vegvesen defined requirements and success criteria for the reorganization. One requirement for success in the project was involving the affected leaders and employees, as well as ensuring participation and information/communication. In addition, the project depended on having easy access to key stakeholders and contributors during the entire reorganization period. Moreover, the project had conducted a risk analysis of the preliminary situation, the implementation of the project, and not preparing the road- and transport area for future expectations and requirements for Statens vegvesen. Risk-reducing measures had been identified and implemented.

1.3 Problem formulation

Employee involvement is important in change management. Employees involved in the change process are more engaged and motivated to implement the change. A 2017 study of Fafo examined how the members of the LO-Stat who had been through a change process had perceived it. In this study, Fafo found that four out of ten employees did not feel involved by their employer during the change process. The employees experienced lower levels of involvement in the change process and wished for a higher degree of involvement in the transformation (Trygstad & Jordfald, 2017).

In the reorganization project, Statens vegvesen defined that they wanted to involve affected leaders and employees. Therefore, in this thesis I focused on the managers and employees` perspective of the change process. The main purpose of the problem formulation is to determine if and how the employees in Statens vegvesen were involved in the change process and if the employees´ perception of their involvement impacted their motivation. I constructed the following research questions for my thesis:

1. ***How did the managers involve the employees in the change process?***
   a. ***What kind of employee resistance did the change managers experience in the process?***

   The intention of this research question was to determine if the managers experienced any employee resistance during the change process. Moreover, I wanted to discover if employee involvement had any impact on the resistance to change.

   b. ***How did the managers facilitate employee involvement in the process?***

   The intention of this research question was to discover how the managers facilitated participation during different phases of the change process. Moreover, I wanted to find out how the managers communicated with the employees during the transformation process. Furthermore, I wanted to determine which communication channels the managers used to inform the employees throughout the change process.

2. ***How did the employees perceive their involvement and how did their perception impact their motivation to the change process?***

The intention of this research question was to find out how the employees perceived their involvement throughout the whole change process. Moreover, I wanted to explore if their perception of involvement had an impact on their motivation towards the change process.

1.4 Structure of thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter comprises the introduction of the thesis, the description of the case and the problem formulation. The second chapter includes the theory section. In the theory section I present relevant terms, definitions, and the theoretical background which is needed to interpret my results. The third chapter comprises the methodology section, where I describe and justify the choice of method and the analysis of the research data. The fourth chapter includes my analysis and discussions, where I present and discuss my results, relating them to the presented theory in chapter two. The last chapter is the conclusion, where I explain the limitations of this study and potential research areas.

2. THEORY

In this chapter I first define the term organizational change and then explain the four phases of a planned change process. Thereafter, I describe the challenges in a transformation process and explain how change management can help to overcome those challenges. Furthermore, I present Lewin´s three-step model of change and Kotter´s eight-step model of change, which are recognized models for guiding a change process. Lastly, I explain the importance of employee involvement and effective communication during a change process. The theory section will be the foundation for analyzing my research findings.

2.1 Organizational change

Organizational change can be defined as a transformation of an organization from one state to another between two points in time. Comparing the organization before and after the change reveals the change outcome. Moreover, this comparison demonstrates the actual difference in the organization after the change process (Barnett & Carrol, 1995). Another dimension of organizational change concerns the way the change takes place. Analyzing factors such as the speed of the process, decision making, communication tools, the sequence of activities, received resistance, etc., also focuses on the change process (Barnett & Carrol, 1995).

The goal of organizational change is to improve the overall performance by improving operations. Improving quality and service, reduces costs and creates more efficient time management. Those improvements require reengineering the business structure and redefining roles and responsibilities. Organizational changes often require employees to work in teams, playing a major part in identifying and resolving problems, while the manager develops coaching skills to rely less on monitoring and controlling (Blumenthal & Haspeslagh, 1994).

2.1.1 Planned change process

The planned change process is triggered by intentions to change the organization. This type of change happens when actors in the organization analyze problems and define a goal to find a solution. The organization has analyzed the current situation and found inadequacies or aspects which should be improved. Next, the organization defines solutions for the problems and takes action to solve the problems. Finally, the organization determines if the effects of the actions correspond to the effects which were expected (Jacobsen, 2004). The following figure illustrates the four phases of a planned change process (Fig. 3).

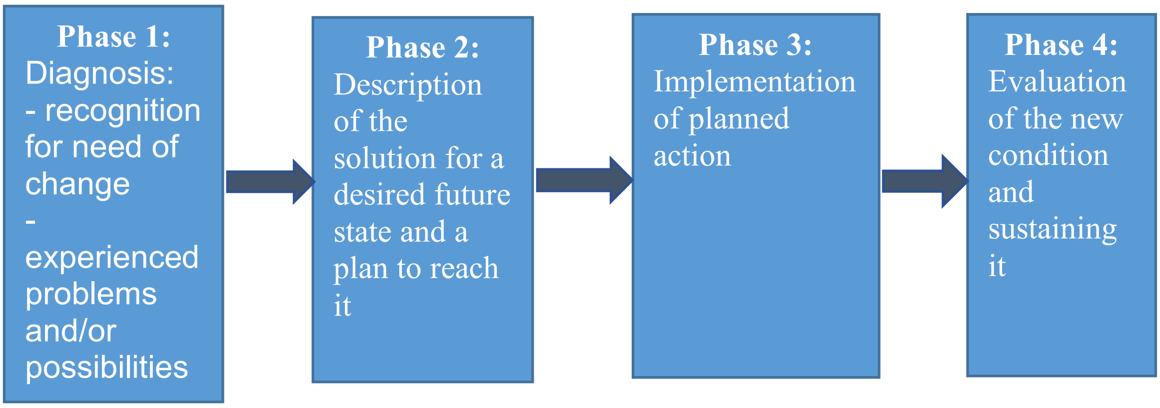

Figure 3: Central phases in a planned change process.
Source: (Jacobsen, 2004, p.38) modified: Personally translated and phases are shortened for simplicity.

In phase 1, actors in the organization recognize that "things do not work as they should work" (Jacobsen, 2004, p.38), such as sinking customer loyalty or decreasing sales. In this phase, the company analyzes potential reasons for the problem. For example, the organization finds specific reasons for sinking customer loyalty. The external consultants or researchers could analyze the problems using questionnaire surveys and interviews. Often, organizations use SWOT- analysis, to analyze opportunities and threats in the market, and strengths and weaknesses of the organization. Those analyses will show the urgency for a change (Jacobsen, 2004).

In phase 2, actors develop goals and solutions for the problems. Goals are formulated to deal with the problems. The goals describe how the organization can meet opportunities and threats and how it should use strengths to overcome weaknesses. In this phase, the organization will work with concrete solutions, or planned actions to solve the problems. In addition, different solutions can be developed during this phase. Before the organization can enter the next phase, it is important to choose the best solutions (Jacobsen, 2004).

In phase 3, the actors develop a plan for implementing the change. They define a timeline and describe which actions should be done and when these actions should be implemented. In addition, the actors determine which individuals will have the main responsibility to implement the tasks. Thereafter, the required activities are implemented by using working groups, specialists, or forms of employee training (Jacobsen, 2004).

In phase 4, the actors evaluate if the implemented activities solved the problems. For example, checking if customer loyalty is rising or sales increase. If the changes are considered successful, the changes will be sustained (Jacobsen, 2004).

Jacobsen (2004) explains that the planned change process is a good start to organize the change process, but he emphasizes that changes are connected with uncertainty. It is impossible to say with 100% certainty what will happen in the future. Furthermore, planned change processes do not always lead to the aimed results. Unforeseen problems can occur while the planned change process is implemented (Jacobsen, 2004). For example, employees' cynicism or resistance to change can create problems during the planned change process.

2.1.2 Cynicism and resistance to change

Employees´ cynicism and resistance to change could be unintended consequences of a transformation and can negatively influence organizational change (Brown, Kulik, Cregan & Metz, 2017). Often, managers experience employees´ resistance to change as the most challenging factor in the transformation process, especially when employees react with cynicism or try to inhibit the change process (Jacobsen, 2004). Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the factors which influence cynicism and resistance to change (Brown et al., 2017). The main factors which influence cynicism and resistance to change are as follows:

1) **Uncertainty**

   Resistance to change can be based on the fear of the unknown. The change process could frighten employees when they lack information. If employees do not understand the change process they might wonder if they are capable of managing new tasks. Moreover, it is rarely possible or impossible to answer all employee's questions clearly. This can lead to stress and employees could resist any changes, attempting to reduce their stress levels (Jacobsen, 2004).

Bordia et al. (2004) describe different types of uncertainties: strategic, structural, and job-related uncertainties (Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois & Callan, 2004). Strategic uncertainty refer to uncertainty regarding organization-level issues, such as the reason for the change, the planning, or the future of the company etc. Structural uncertainty is uncertainty about changes in the work methods of the organization, such as reporting structures and the functions of different working sections. Job related uncertainties refer to uncertainty about job security, promotions, and the new job role (Bordia et al., 2004).

2) Job security

If employees are frightened to lose their job due to change, they will tend to resist it. Based on their profession and position in the company, employees will have different levels of concern regarding job security. This kind of resistance is based on strong emotional factors. Therefore, perceived threats to job security can boost affective reactions to change such as cynicism or resistance (Oreg, 2006).

3) Power and prestige

An organization's transformation can change the allocation of power. The allocation of power within an organization at one particular time can be described as stable. A stable system of power determines who can decide over whom and who can decide over which decisions (Jacobsen, 2004). Changes in the allocation of power during a transformation means that some lose their power over people and resources, while some gain more influence (Oreg, 2006). Changes in the formal hierarchy may create new leaders, which could threaten some individuals who may lose their power of influence. Moreover, changes in the distribution of work assignments, working spaces, and rights to participate in different decisions can have a significant influence on the allocation of power. One could lose control over important tasks or one could be transferred to a new working space which is further away from the central information flow in the organization (Jacobsen, 2004). Therefore, employees' perceived threat of power and prestige could lead to cynicism or resistance to change (Oreg, 2006).

4) Intrinsic rewards

Changes in organizations can have a negative influence on the employees´ intrinsic satisfaction from their jobs. Organizational change often includes changes in positions and redefining tasks. Therefore, employees might dislike organizational change if they are transferred to a less interesting, less autonomous, and less challenging job (Oreg, 2006). Oreg (2006) explains that individuals' well-being involves the satisfaction of intrinsic needs, such as autonomy and self-determination. When those needs are not addressed in an organizational change, the employees could resist the change (Oreg, 2006).

5) Psychological contract

Long time employees often develop an unwritten personal contract with the organization, which is called a psychological contract (Jacobsen, 2004). The psychological contract is an individual's perception of mutual obligations between an employee and another employee. The psychological contract is breached when it is not fulfilled (Van den Heuvel & Schalk, 2009). The contract is unformal and developed through interactions between employees. Through interactions, employees learn how to handle one another, their expected responsibilities, and which decisions they can make. A transformation which requires new people to work together means that new psychological contracts have to be developed. This takes time and one could find it difficult to develop a new contract. Instead, one could maintain old psychological contracts, which leads to resistance to change (Jacobsen, 2004).

Each different factor which influences resistance or cynicism of employees to change reveals that employees react differently to change. However, employees' resistance/cynicism can be reduced by managing employees during the change process. The next chapter will describe the process of change management in detail.

2.2 Change management

"Change management is the process of continually renewing an organization´s direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers" (Moran & Brightman, 2000, p.66). Moran & Brightman (2000) emphasize that it is important in change management to shift the focus from changes to the employees who face the changes. When an organization announces their intention to change, they must recognize that change will affect every employee differently. Therefore, Moran & Brightman (2000) claim that managing change is all about managing employees.

However, managing employees in a change process is difficult and challenging. The change has to be carefully introduced and explained to the employees. Moreover, the employees have to be guided to ensure the success of the change process. The most popular and recognized successful models of change are Lewin´s three-step model of change and Kotter´s eight-step model of change, which will be described in the next chapters.

2.2.1 Lewin´s three-step model

Lewin contributed to organizational change with a three-step model of change. It is a change planning process which has been adapted and used by many organizations. The idea behind the planned and participative change process is to involve the employees in the change implementation by focusing on their needs (Myers, Hulks & Wiggins, 2012). According to Lewin, a successful change project involves three steps (Fig. 4): unfreezing, moving, and refreezing (Burns, 2004).

Unfreezing - The first step in the process to change behavior is to prepare the employees and explain the necessity of the change (Levasseur, 2001). The management should encourage employees to unlearn old behavior and to adapt new approaches (Burns, 2004). According to Lewin, this will enable the change (Levasseur, 2001). Armstrong (2006) emphasizes it is important in this step to acknowledge that some people might fear the change and it is necessary to motivate those individuals to accept the change (cited in Brisson-Banks, 2010).

Moving - According to Lewin, in the moving stage the new learned approaches might create some confusion. He emphasizes that any prediction of the outcome from planned change is difficult to make due to complexity. Therefore, he recommends the learning approach promoted by Action Research. This approach is characterized by the iterative approach of research, action, and more research. This will help the employees move towards more acceptable sets of behaviors (Burns, 2004).

Refreezing – The final step of the three-step model is to institutionalize the change in the organization. The idea in this stage is to remain involved until the new required behaviors replace past behaviors (Levasseur, 2001). The main point in refreezing is that the new behavior must be anchored in the organization’s culture. Changes will not be sustained until group norms and routines also change. Therefore, Lewin saw the need of group activities to achieve successful change in the organization (Burns, 2004).

In conclusion Lewin´s three-step model of change is recognized by many as the fundamental approach to manage change. Lewin does not explain in detail what change agents can do to effect the change, but he mentions the major steps which have to be taken to achieve a successful change. Although he is criticized for simplifying the change process in the model, his model can be used as a good tool for changing an organization (Levasseur, 2001).

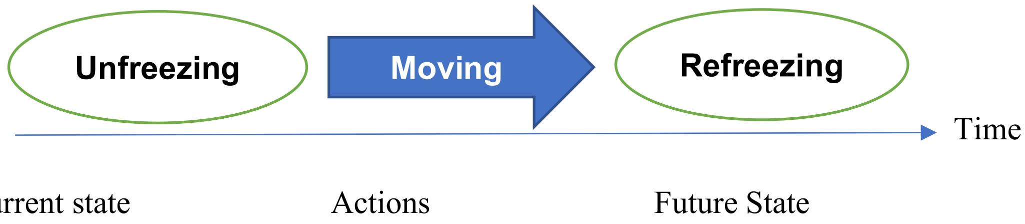

Figure 4: Lewin´s three-step-model of change.
Source: (Jacobsen 2012, p.184) Personal translation.

2.2.2 Kotter´s eight-step model

Another well known and recognized model to guide and instruct the implementation of change processes is Kotter´s (1995) eight-step model for transforming organizations. Kotter developed the model after studying 100 different organizations (Mento, Jones & Dirndorfer, 2002). Kotter identified eight "pitfalls" to avoid when an organization is about to start a change process. He defines those pitfalls as series of phases, which organizations go through in a change process. While those series of phases take time, skipping them will give an illusion of speed but not a good result. In addition, a mistake in any of the phases will have negative consequences and slow the change process down (Kotter, 1995).
Following are Kotter´s eight reasons why companies fail to implement change and eight stages of change a company has to succeed to sustain change and improve business (Kotter, 1995).

1) Establishing a sense of urgency

According to Kotter (1995) the risk in the first stage is to not communicate the need of the change process. If employees are not informed about the urgency of the change process they will not be motivated to work for the change. Therefore, it is necessary to create a sense of urgency for the change by giving an important reason for why the change must be done now. This could be done by identifying and discussing opportunities/crisis or potential opportunities/crisis (Kotter, 1995).

2) Forming a powerful guiding coalition

The risk in stage 2 is companies underestimating the implementation of the change process and failing to create a powerful guiding coalition. A change process is complex and requires equal participation of different experts. Companies mostly fail in getting these people together and encouraging them to work together as a team. Moreover, they fail to create a minimum level of trust and communication in the teams (Kotter, 1995).

3) Creating a vision

In failed transformations, the vision of the future is not clearly defined or communicated. A vision clarifies the aimed future direction of a company. Blurry definitions of visions can lead to confusion among employees and result in failure of the change process. A compelling and clear statement is necessary to inspire change (Kotter, 1995).

4) Communicating the vision

The risk in this stage is that the vision is under-communicated in the organization. Organizations can fail to communicate the vision by holding a single meeting or sending a single communication. This leads to only a few people understanding the change. Therefore, it is important that the vision is communicated regularly and clearly, and every possible communication channel is used to communicate the new version (Kotter, 1995).

5) Empowering others to act on the vision

Successful transformations involve employees in the change process. In this stage employees are encouraged to try new ideas and approaches. The risk in this stage is that the employees meet obstacles while they try to implement change. Therefore, the guiding coalition has to immediately remove the obstacles which hinder the change. This can be done by changing systems or structures which do not follow the new vision (Kotter, 1995).

6) Planning for and creating short-term wins

Organizational change takes time and the risk in this stage is that employees give up quickly or join individuals who are resistant to change. Hence, it is important to define an effective organizational improvement, which can be achieved in a short period of time and is visible. To motivate the employees who were involved in the improvements, it is necessary to recognize the employees (Kotter, 1995).

7) Consolidating improvements and producing more change

The risk in stage 7 is that managers declare victory too soon and do not continue to drive change. Thus, changes come to a halt. Therefore, managers must analyze what went well and what did not go well in the past organizational improvements. In addition, they have to reinvigorate the process with new ideas and goals. Moreover, managers have to hire, develop, and promote employees who can implement change (Kotter, 1995).

8) Institutionalizing new approaches

The risk in this stage is that the implemented changes are not anchored in the organization´s culture. When the pressure for change is not present anymore, the new learned approaches and behaviors will gradually diminish. Therefore, it is important to articulate the connection between the new learned approaches and the improved performance. Moreover, it is important to ensure leadership development (Kotter, 1995).

In conclusion, Kotter´s eight step model is effective to manage change. Several authors suggest using Kotter´s model as a simple set of linear steps and a good starting point for change management. However, he is criticized for his rigid approach and not acknowledging that some stages may have to be revisited. Moreover, it was found that the use of this model in praxis was more complex (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). Some transformations are not able to or do not require certain steps. Additionally, the model does not provide detailed information and therefore cannot help in all scenarios during change management. For example, resistance and commitment to change are important aspects in change management and not included in Kotter´s model (Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo & Shafiq, 2012). Resistance and commitment to change can be influenced by employee involvement and participation in the change process.

2.3 Employee involvement and participation

Strauss (2006) defines participation as a process where employees get the chance to influence their work and working conditions to a certain degree. In addition, he emphasizes that the actual influence and not the feeling of influence is important (Strauss, 2006). Morgan &

Zeffane (2003) refer to Lawler (1991, 1994) who states that involvement is equivalent to participation and he classifies four elements: power, information, knowledge and rewards. In contrast, Straus (2006) emphasizes the distinction between participation and involvement by differentiating “influence” and “involvement”. He describes influence as active while involvement is often passive. He uses the example that one could be involved in a good book but it does not mean that he influences it (Strauss, 2006).

There are two kinds of participation, direct participation and indirect participation. Direct participation means that every employee has the right to discuss the workplace conditions with the leader or in collective meetings. Indirect participation happens via a representative for a group of employees (Mikkelsen & Laudal, 2016).

Participation and involvement of employees promotes better decisions and higher levels of performance in the change process (Bruhn, Zajac & Al-Kazemi, 2001). In addition, employee participation is a successful technique to decrease resistance and increase commitment, because the employees become involved in the change process to a higher degree and understand the purpose of the change. Therefore, the employees will associate the change with positive views, diminishing resistance (Georgalis, Samaratunge & Kimberley, 2015).

In this work, I choose the definition of Lawler (1991, 1994) who says that participation is equivalent to involvement (cited in Zeffane, 2003); but I agree with Straus (2006) that being involved does not often mean that one is also empowered. I will explain the connection between the degree of involvement and empowerment in the next chapter.

2.3.1 Stages of involvement

Arnstein´s (1969) ladder of participation is a foundational work and an evaluation tool to analyze in which degree participatory mechanisms have been used. The ladder of participation is used by many in different fields and has been modified several times (Hurlbert & Gupta, 2015). Difi rapport (2014):1 [3] modified Arnstein´s ladder of participation to describe employees’ degree of involvement in a change process. Obviously, the ladder is a simplification, but it shows the significant graduations of employee’s participation. Figure 5

[3] Difi = Direktoratet for forvaltning og IKT

shows how the employees can be involved in the change process and to which degree (Difi rapport 2014:1). Next, I will describe the stages of the modified ladder from the Difi rapport 2014:1.

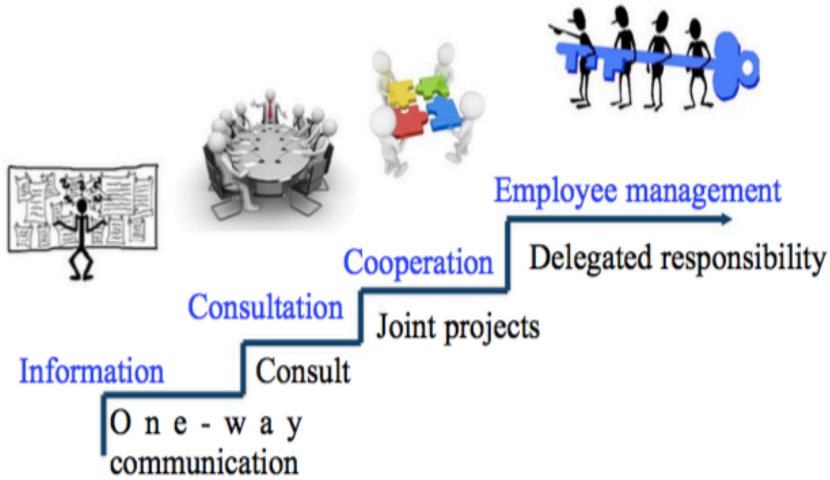

Figure 5: Arnstein, Sherry R. (1969): A ladder of citizen participation.
Source: (modified by Difi rapport 2014:1 p.14 (Erfaringer frå endringsprosessar generelt, og involvering av brukarar og tilsette spesielt)) Personal translation

The first stage of involvement is information and is the lowest degree of involving employees. The employees receive information about the change process and about their rights and responsibilities (Arnstein, 1969). The information given about the transformation should address the reasons for the change and the employees' worries about the change. The information given by the organization usually reaches the employee, as a receiver, from the manager, as a sender (Elving, 2005). Therefore, there is often emphasis on one-way communication and employees do not have the possibility to give feedback or to negotiate the change. In addition, when the information is given in a later stage of the planned change process, the employees have little opportunity to influence the transformation (Arnstein, 1969).

The second stage of involvement is consultation. In this stage the employees' opinions are heard, and this could be the first step toward their full participation. Employees could consult leaders about the way of working to implement a successful change (Arnstein, 1969). Consultation is an advisory process and the organization might accept or reject the suggestions of the employees in the two-way communication, but at least their ideas are addressed in this stage (Connor, 1988). By encouraging employees to share their suggestions in the change process, the organization might benefit from high employee task commitment. Leaders who actively discuss the change process with their employees will enhance the employees´ attitude and behavior in the change process (Sharif & Scandura, 2014).

The third stage of involvement is cooperation. In this stage the leaders and the employees agree to share the responsibilities to plan and make decisions in the change process via joint projects (Arnstein, 1969). The employees' input and point of view is used through exchange and participation to implement the change process. However, the cooperation with the employee could be regulated by law and agreements. Moreover, the cooperation could also be defined based on the task, case, and necessary competence (Difi rapport, 2014:1).

The last stage of involvement is employee management. It is the highest level of employee involvement (Difi rapport, 2014:1). In this stage leaders delegate the right to make decisions to employees with the intention to foster their knowledge and to motivate them. In particular knowledge-intensive organizations which operate in unstable environments, depend on the special knowledge of their employees. During organizational change, delegation can enhance efficient decision-making and can increase the autonomous motivation of the employee. This can lead to more creative ways to solve problems and higher levels of helping attitudes and commitment to change (Stea, Foss & Foss, 2015).

Every stage of involvement is characterized by the importance of communication between the manager and the employee. Cooperation between employee and manager during the change process requires that they both understand each other. If the employee does not understand the information which is given by the manager, the employees are not able to fulfill their tasks, even though they are involved.

2.3.2 Communication during change

The main reason organizations fail to implement a successful change, is not realizing that an effective employee communication is necessary (Barrett, 2002). The importance of communication goes beyond change and is a part of a company's everyday life. In many cases communication is difficult to maintain since management can forget the special importance of it, when confronted with the financial, technical, and operational demands of the transformation process (Christensen, 2014).

Good communication is the most important factor in achieving a successful change. For leaders, communication is a way to ensure that employees understand the change and support it (Myers, Hulks & Wiggins, 2012). As employees expect a clear and honest communication in times of uncertainty, management has to have a clear strategy to communicate with the employees. Even though the managers do not know the answer to all questions, their silence could be interpreted by the employees as evasiveness. Educating the staff about the known facts of the upcoming change and challenges, reassures employees that they got the available information (DuFrene & Lehman, 2014). If the communication is done well, the employees' job and strategy uncertainty could be reduced. In addition, quality change-communication has a positive impact on the employee´s readiness to change (Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia & Irmer, 2007).

However, it is necessary to have a well-planned communication and information strategy during the planned change process to avoid pitfalls, like employee resistance to change (Christensen, 2014). The goals of the strategic communication during the change process are as follows (Barrett, 2002):

1) to ensure clear and consistent messages to educate employees about the change, the strategic goals, and the vision in the future;
2) to motivate the employees to support the new change;
3) to encourage higher achievements and efforts;
4) to limit rumors and misunderstandings to enable productivity;
5) to align employees behind the company's strategies and goals to improve performance

2.3.3 Communication strategies

The organization´s adapted approach to change influences the communication strategy. The two broad approaches used for change communication are programmatic and participatory. Organizations with a top-down approach tend to choose the programmatic communication strategy while organizations with a facilitated approach tend to choose the participatory communication strategy. However, it is also possible to choose a fusion of those approaches by implementers (Russ, 2008).

The programmatic approach emphasizes one-way communication methods, where the employees will be informed about the changes and get facts and directives on how they should implement the new change and why they should be committed to the process. This communication happens in a top-down manner to generate compliance from the employees or to stimulate a desired positive attitude about the planned transformation. Everyone will get an identical message about the planned change process. Programmed implementation assumes that resistance can be minimized by careful planning of communication. The goal of this communication approach is that the employees understand the essence of the vision and perceive it as relevant (Russ, 2008).

The participatory approach emphasizes the two-way communication methods. There is a dialog communication about the change process between manager and employees. The goal of this approach is to involve employees and to get their input regarding the change and implementation process. It is a participatory approach where managers get insight from the employees' perspective and use it to shape the change and it is an ongoing communication (Russ, 2008).

2.3.4 Communication channels

There are different channels which can be used to communicate with employees during the organizational change. In this section the strength and limitations of the main different channels are explored.

Face-to-face communication

Face-to-face communication is an example of two-way communication. It may include one-on-one communication between a boss and a subordinate or a large-scale meeting with hundreds of employees present. The best way to communicate major change is through face-to-face communication (Myers et al., 2012). Advantages of using face-to-face communication are that the employees can build interpersonal relationships with their managers and managers are able to give clearer instructions to their employees. In addition, instant feedback is possible, and it is easier to solve problems and reduce misunderstandings during conversation. The disadvantages of face-to-face communication are the unavailability of subjects, and the lack of time for reflection when communicating or taking a decision (Lee, 2010).

E-mail and telephone communications

The most common electronic communication channel used to communicate with employees are e-mail and telephone. In particular, e-mail communication is integrated in daily work life. The communication quality of e-mail or telephone communication is less than in face-to-face communication, because the electronic communication can feel impersonal to the employees (Braun, Bark, Kirchner, Stegmann & Van Dick, 2015).

Compared with other channels e-mail interactions contains relative loss of information. Moreover, the employees and managers have time to reflect before responding. Furthermore, e-mail is practical; e-mail allows a fast response, one is able to attach data files, and is not time consuming (Braun et al., 2015).

Print, publications, and intranets

Print and publications are company newsletter and magazines, for example. They are good to show the progression of the change with pictures and stories of people. But they are not suitable for the communication of fast changes or for making announcements. This can be better handled by using e-mail or new sites on the company intranet. The company intranet is a private network which is only accessible for the company's employees. Some organizations try to avoid overloading employees with information by providing them a weekly summary of the changes. Major announcements and reports or podcasts of leader's speeches are often published on the company intranet, so that employees who did not attend speeches can be updated. In addition, employees could be updated regularly about the latest decisions which are made regarding the upcoming change (Myers et al., 2012).

2.4 Application of theory

In this chapter I present how the theory section above will help to answer the research questions which were formulated in chapter 1. The central phases in a planned change process (Jacobsen, 2004) demonstrate a timeline of the change process. This will be used to identify in which phases of the reorganization process the managers facilitated involvement/the employees felt they were involved.

1. ***How did the managers involve the employees in the change process?***
   a. ***What kind of employee resistance did the change managers experience in the process?***

   To answer this question, I will examine if the managers experienced the main factors (presented in chapter 2.1.2) which influence cynicism and resistance to the change process. Moreover, I will analyze if those factors led to employee cynicism or resistance towards the transformation process.

   b. ***How did the managers facilitate employee involvement in the process?***

   To answer this question, I will use Lewin´s and Kotter´s model of change to analyze if the managers followed their steps for the reorganization process. In addition, I will examine if the manager had a clear communication strategy for the change process. Moreover, I will examine if the managers used a variety of communication channels which are presented in chapter 2.3.4 and discuss their advantages and limitations. Furthermore, I will analyze if the managers used a programmatic or participatory approach (Russ, 2008) to communicate with the employees during the transformation process.

2. ***How did the employees perceive their involvement and how did their perception impact their motivation to the change process?***

   To answer this question, I will use the modified ladder of citizen participation (Difi rapport, 2014:1). Furthermore, I will use the elements of the participation leader, information, consultation, cooperation, and employee management in my interview guide. The ladder of citizen participation will help to analyze in which degree each employee felt that he/she was involved during the change process.

3. THE METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will describe the research method applied in my research. First, I explain the choice of the research design. Thereafter, I describe the choice of informants and the interview process. Then, I describe how I analyzed the collected data to answer my research questions. Thereafter, I explain the credibility of my research by analyzing validity and reliability. At last, I describe how I ethically implemented the research process.

3.1 Choice of research design

A research design ensures coherence between the collected data and the study´s conclusion. Research designs can also be seen as action plans moving from question to conclusions (Rowley, 2002). Case studies are an example of a research design, which is useful to answer "How" and "Why" questions. Therefore, I chose a case study as my research design to analyze how the employees perceived involvement in the change process (Yin, 1994). Furthermore, I wanted to compare the existing theories about involvement with the praxis and determine the complexity and the challenges in involving employees in praxis. Therefore, I choose to study the case in Statens vegvesen. This is the deductive approach which aims to test earlier theories based on a different situation (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). I read the theories before I started the research. The theory section was the background for the topics which were examined in the interview guide.

Hyett, Kenny & Dickson-Swift (2014) refer to Stake´s (1995) definition of case study: **"Case study research is an investigation and analysis of a single or collective case, intended to capture the complexity of the object of study"** (p.2).

I chose a single case from Statens vegvesen instead of a collective case, to capture the employees´ perceived involvement in the reorganization process and to compare their experiences with each other. The intention of the comparison was to discover how the employees´ perceived involvement in the change process affected their motivation for the change. The findings will be useful for Statens vegvesen in future change processes to improve the involvement of the employees. Furthermore, similar organizations can benefit from the findings of the case study.

Moreover, I used a phenomenological approach which is widespread in qualitative research. The phenomenological approach is described as an interest to understand social phenomena based on the actor's perspectives. Furthermore, the approach is based on an understanding that reality is only a human´s perceptions. Therefore, phenomenological approaches intend to describe the way informant´s perceive the world (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Based on my problem formulation, I am interested to understand and to describe the involvement in the change process based on the employees' perspective. Therefore, I chose the phenomenological approach in the thesis and choose the qualitative method to explore and understand the employees' perception of being involved.

3.1.1 Qualitative method

Qualitative research enables verbal descriptions of real-life situations which can be used to interpret processes or meanings. In addition, the qualitative method is used when one seeks to understand a process. Qualitative researchers can be interested in behavior and in people´s perspective (Silverman, 2014). The qualitative method was suitable to collect the relevant data because I sought to understand how Statens vegvesen involved employees during the change process. Moreover, I was interested in exploring both the managers' and the employees' perspectives about the transformation process.

There are four major methods in the qualitative research: observation, analyzing texts and documents, interviews and focus groups, and audio and video recording (Silverman, 2014). I chose interviews instead of surveys because I wanted to get a deeper insight into the perceived involvement of the employees. The deeper insight is very important in this study because the employees talk about their individual and different experiences in being involved. The interview enabled me to gain in-depth information around the topic and I was able to ask follow-up questions. Moreover, an interview is more personal than a survey and it is easier for the informants to describe their emotions, actions, and feelings, which they experienced during the transformation.

3.1.2 Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interview is neither an open conversation nor a close ended question conversation. The semi-structured interview is conducted with an interview guide which circles specific themes in a topic. Furthermore, the interview is focused on specific themes and focuses on the research topic with the help of open questions. Therefore, the informant reveals the dimensions which are important for the research. To sum up, the interviewer leads the informant to specific themes, but does not lead to opinions about the themes (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015).

Since change is a complex and sensitive issue, I selected a semi-structured interview in my research to collect the relevant data. Furthermore, it is well suited to find the opinion and perceptions of employees´ perceived involvement in the change process. In addition, it allowed me to probe for more information and ensure the clarity of answers by asking follow-up questions (Barriball & While, 1994).

I prepared for the semi-structured interview by creating separate interview guides for the change agents and the employees. The interview guide included predetermined open-ended questions which were based on specific themes of the topic: *communication, information, consultation and cooperation*. This enabled the informants to talk freely in a dialog about their experience and their view of the change process. I could find new interesting aspects by actively listening to the informants and I could ask questions by going back and forth in the interview guide.

3.2 Selecting informants

I was looking for an organization which had recently undergone a change and was interested in participating in my study. I discovered on the Statens vegvesen´s homepage that their organization offers students the opportunity to write a thesis about them and they have a cooperation agreement with NMBU. I contacted Eirik, the contact person for NMBU, in January. I wrote him an e-mail and informed him about the topic of my thesis. Moreover, I told him I am interested in interviewing change managers and employees about a specific change process with the purpose to analyze the perceived involvement of the employees. We exchanged e-mails and he offered me a specific case which I could analyze. He contacted the managers and employees who experienced the specific change process and arranged the interview. Due to time and resource restraints, three change managers and four employees were recruited by Eirik to participate in the interview.

The three change managers had different professions. One was a representative from the HR-management section who manages employees during change processes, but was not involved in this specific case. Instead, she explained how change managers involve the employees in general during a change process. I also interviewed the project manager of the specific change process. The last manager was a representative from the HR- developing section who was also involved in this specific change process. The different backgrounds of the change managers enabled me to reflect on different perspectives of the change process.
The four employees who were recruited for the interview have different professions and positions, from leader to employees, each working in different sections. This enabled me to analyze if the degree of involvement was different according to their profession and position. In addition, it provided insight about perceived involvement from different perspectives.

3.3 Interview process

The interviews for my study were conducted from 13th February to 7th March 2018. The interview duration was from 13 min to 35 min.
Before I started the interview, I introduced myself and received oral informed consent from the informants. I described the purpose of the thesis to them and ensured they are participating voluntary. In addition, I informed them about their right to withdraw from the interview at any time (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).
I used an audio recorder to record the interview. This enabled me to focus on the interview partner and prevented me from missing some details. I asked the interviewees permission for recording and assured them to use the audio files confidentially and to delete the recordings after the thesis is finished. Moreover, I affirmed anonymity so that the informants felt more comfortable to talk about the change process, which is a sensitive topic.
During the interview I was open minded and listened carefully to the informants, so that I could get new insights on the topic. I let them talk by leading them through the themes which I created in the interview guide. At the end, I asked them if they have additional thoughts or themes they want to discuss before I ended the interview.

3.4 Analysis of the research data

After conducting the interviews, I transcribed the recorded interviews as soon as possible. I did a word-for-word transcription. I avoided transcribing extraneous information which was not relevant to my study and selected information which was relevant for my research. The reason for avoiding extraneous information was to make my transcripts easier to read and to avoid additional information from obscuring the purpose of my study (Davidson, 2009).

I used the thematic content analysis method to analyze my transcriptions. The thematic content analysis involves analyzing transcripts and identifying themes and categories within those data (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). In order to do this, I first read each transcript and made notes to sum-up what is said in the text. I did it with the help of words or phrases which summarized what was said. This is called open coding. The purpose of open coding is to provide a summarization or to use a word to describe what is said in each element in the transcript (Burnard et al., 2008).

In the second stage, I separated the interviews of the change agents from those of the employees. In this stage, I collected all the words and phrases from all the interview transcriptions in one document. Then, I worked through the document and deleted repetitions, in order to have a shorter list of relevant categories. Furthermore, I looked for similar or overlapping categories. In addition, I refined and reduced those categories, based on the theory chapter in this study, by grouping them together (Burnard et al., 2008). Finally I had categories named: *communication, information, consultation and cooperation.*

In the last stage, I allocated different colors for each final category and worked through the transcripts. Data which fit under a particular category was marked with the allocated color. Thereafter, all of the sections of data were collected in a new document and arranged under each particular category with the same color. Finally, I achieved an organized dataset and used it to write the report of my findings (Burnard et al., 2008).

3.5 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are the two main concepts in evaluating the credibility of scientific research. Reliability refers to the extent to which the findings will be the same when they are repeated, while validity refers to the believability or credibility of the findings (Silverman, 2014). In this chapter I will discuss reliability and validity and describe how I achieved the credibility of this research.

3.5.1 Reliability

Reliability is about the consistency and credibility of the research result. Reliability is the extent to which results from a study can be repeated. This means that the credibility of the research is measured by if the informants will change their answers in an interview with another researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). I ensured the reliability of my study by describing the method I used in detail, so that another researcher is able to repeat the study the same way. However, the results could be slightly different, because I used semi-structured interviews and the interviewees could answer differently based on the interview atmosphere or their understanding, when they are interviewed by another researcher.

To ensure that each interviewee understood the question in the same way and the answers could be coded with certainty, I created an interview guide beforehand which contained certain themes I was interested in. In addition, I did not reveal too much about the purpose of my study and did not show the interviewee my interview guide. The interviewees could not prepare their answers and had to answer spontaneously during the interview (Silverman, 2014).

To obtain reliability in the study the criterion of using low-inference descriptors must also be satisfied. The term low-inference descriptors means that the study is not influenced by the researcher’s personal perspective. To ensure low-inference descriptors in reporting the interviews, I recorded the interviews with the permission of the interviewees and carefully transcribed those interviews (Silverman, 2014). Moreover, the informants who participated in the interviews read the report and ensured if I cited them correctly.

3.5.2 Validity

Validity is about the credibility of the findings and can be divided in internal and external validity. Internal validity is whether the chosen research method corresponds to the question defined in the research. In addition, it involves to which extent the researchers' chosen method and findings reflect the goal of the study and represents reality (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2017). I enhanced validity by taking the findings back to the respondents who could verify if the findings confirmed their statements. This method is called respondent validation. By getting the verification of the participants in the interview, I am more confident of their validity (Silverman, 2014).

External validity describes to which extent the study can be generalized to similar situations or other organizations (Johannessen et al., 2017). I cannot ensure that my findings can be generalized to other organizations, since a change process is very complex and depends on different aspects of the organization. Every organization is unique and therefore the change process might be different.

3.6 Research ethics

Ethical considerations are very important and significant in research. The ethics of social research regards the researcher's responsibility towards people who are being interviewed and written about (Silverman, 2014). Before I interviewed the subjects, I ensured informed consent. I asked them if they are participating voluntarily, informed them about the main purpose of the study, and the right to withdraw from the research at any time (Silverman, 2014). I also informed them that the interview will be recorded after consent was given and the recording will be deleted after the thesis is submitted on 15th May.

Since change processes are a sensitive topic, I ensured the interviewees anonymity, so that they would not hold back information. In addition, it enhanced the subjects' confidence in behavior and statements (Silverman, 2014). Therefore, I refer to interviewees as informants in my study and gave each a number.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings relevant to answer the research questions. Furthermore, I analyze and discuss the findings based on the theory section in chapter 2. Moreover, this chapter is divided into three categories: the management perspective, the employees' perspective, and the comparison of both perspectives.

4.1 The management perspective

In this chapter, I analyze and discuss the findings from the management perspective. The findings are based on the interviews with informant 1, informant 2 and informant 3 who were change managers. First, I describe if the managers experienced resistance or cynicism towards the change process. Thereafter, I analyze and discuss how the managers facilitated involvement of employees during the reorganization process.

4.1.1 More uncertainty than resistance

Employee resistance is a main challenge which occurs in most transformations and can have a negative influence on a change process. The purpose of this chapter is to identify if the managers experienced employee resistance during the reorganization. This is crucial to answer the first research question: *What kind of employee resistance did the change managers experience in the process?*

The main challenge in the change process was that employees involved in the change process were scared when introduced to the change process. Most employees wanted the managers to clear all their doubts before the managers started with the transformation process. Informant 2 said the employees had an incredible need to understand the challenges and outcome of the change process. In addition, she explained that the managers were not able to clear those doubts, since they did not fully understand the challenges or outcome of the change process at the beginning and had to figure it out. However, the interviewees emphasized that the change process was not as scary as past change processes in the organization, because all employees involved in the process were informed they were not going to lose their job in the reorganization. But according to informant 2, there were still some employees who felt the reorganization was uncomfortable and scary.

When the informants were asked if they experienced resistance during the reorganization, they answered that it was surprising that many employees were positive about the reorganization. Most of the employees believed that the change would lead to a well-functioning organization. They agreed that there was a need for a change in the organization. But informant 3 emphasized that there was more disagreement when it came to the relocation of each employee and distribution of the resources:

"… There were some discussions. We had many meetings with the two directors about the placement of each employee. If she should be placed here or there; if he should be placed here or there because he worked on this and that. I did not experience that there was any big resistance. In fact, I really think that the organizational change went well. According to the fact that we did not receive any complaints about the placement, very little… One always disagreed about how much resources one should have and things like that."
(informant 3)

Although there was not a large amount of resistance, some of the employees did not agree with the new distribution of power in the company. Informant 2 described it as follows:

"… In an organization, you have in a way a cake of power and when you share the pieces of the cake differently, consequently some get less power than they had before, and they generally do not think that it is a good solution."
(informant 2)

The employees did not understand that the new distribution of power was necessary to establish a well-functioning organization of the roads- and transport department. The employees who lost power or responsibility, wondered if they had not done a good job or if the managers meant they do not perform well.

My findings revealed that some of the involved employees experienced uncertainty during the reorganization process. While the change process can create strategical, structural, and job-related uncertainties (Bordia et al., 2004), the employees at Statens vegvesen mostly experienced strategic uncertainty. The employees lacked some information about the change process at the beginning of the reorganization, due to the fact that the managers were unsure about the challenges and outcomes of the transformation at first. Since the employees did not understand the purpose of the change process, they felt uncomfortable and were frightened by the reorganization. Additionally, structural uncertainty was experienced by the employees. The roads and transport department were separated, and the employees were unsure about the functions of the new different departments. On one hand, the employees were not frightened to lose their job since they were ensured job security by the managers. On the other hand, they still had job-related uncertainties (Bordia et al., 2004) referring to their new job role. They did not know where they would be placed, if it would be the roads department or the transport department. In addition, the employees were unsure if the replacement would have an impact on their job role.

According to Oreg (2006), changes in the allocation of power during a transformation means that some employees lose their power over other people and resources. In the reorganization process at Statens vegvesen, some employees lost power over people and resources. Some employees disagreed with the new allocation of resources. Furthermore, it is clear that some employees perceived that they did not perform well and therefore lost power over certain people and resources.

According to Brown et al. (2017), uncertainty and threat of power is one factors which can influence employee cynicism and resistance to change. Although some employees experienced uncertainties at the beginning of the change process and some employees perceived threats to their power, there was not a large amount of cynicism/resistance during the reorganization process. There was more uncertainty about the change process among the employees than resistance. Most employees were positive about the change process and believed that the change was necessary and would lead to a well-functioning roads department and transport department. The managers reduced resistance by involving the employees in the change process, which will be explained in the next chapters.

4.1.2 Employee involvement

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze how the managers facilitated employee involvement during each phase of the change process. First, I analyze if the managers were focused on the employees during transformations. Next, I explain how managers involved employees during the reorganization. In the following chapters, I examine how the managers facilitated employee involvement by analyzing the following factors: communication, information, consultation and cooperation.

Informant 1 described that a change process consists of two parts. According to her, the change process focuses on the organization and on the management of employees. The change managers are concerned that formal rules and regulations are respected to help the employees cope with the change. For example, labor representatives and safety personnel[4] are involved in change processes, to ensure that formal rules and regulations, such as safety and equality, are followed.

Moreover, the change managers ensure that leaders can cope with the change. Informant 1 emphasized that she was extremely concerned that the leaders could take care of their employees properly. It was important for her that leaders were emotionally prepared to meet the reactions from their employees. According to her, the leaders should handle employees' reactions so that employees would not be burdened even more than they already were.

My findings revealed that the managers recognized that a change will affect each employee differently and that employees are important to implement a change. Therefore, informant 1 claimed that a change process is about the organization and the management of employees. The managers involved affected employees during change processes by focusing on their needs and respecting formal rules and regulations. The managers involved some employees directly in change processes. While, other employees participated indirectly via a representative for groups of employees or leaders who represented them (Mikkelsen & Laudal, 2016).

4.1.3 Communication and information

In this chapter, I present how the managers enabled effective communication with the employees during the change process. Moreover, I analyze which communication channels were used during the change process. Furthermore, I will examine how the managers shared information about the change process in different phases of the transformation.

[4] Safety personnel refers to the norwegian word: verneombud

The decision to change the organization was taken the first week of January 2017. The employees were informed about the change process immediately in January. The labor representatives and safety personnel were informed about the need for the change one day before the other employees. At this time, the managers identified the need for a change in the organization but did not know they were going to reorganize the roads- and transport department.

In the first phase, the managers described the situation of the organization to the employees. They explained how they were performing as an organization and how everything was functioning. In addition, the managers described the challenges of the organization. After this phase, the managers identified strengths and weaknesses of the roads and transport department and tried to explain the necessity of the change. At this phase, the managers experienced that employees were uncertain about the change. The managers addressed the uncertainty of the employees by sharing all the information about the change process which they knew at that time. Informant 2 emphasized the importance of sharing information as follows:

" … To tell as much as possible to be perceived as honest. I think it is the most important element through such a change process. That you are available, that you share the information you know, and that you are open about what you do not know… also what you try to figure out … where we are now …"
(Informant 2)

Throughout the change process, the managers used different communication channels to inform the employees about the change process, such as meetings, e-mail, and intranet. In addition, the managers involved an employee from the communication department who supported them in creating an information strategy. The leaders were the primary sources of information about the change process for the employees. The directors informed the section leaders and the section leaders informed their employees. Moreover, the managers had meetings with labor representatives and safety personnel, who were also information sources for the employees.

There were staff meetings for the employees of each involved department. The employees were also informed about the change process in section and office meetings. Basic agreement

meetings[5] were held to inform the employees about the status of the reorganization. Labor representatives and leader representatives were also present in the basic agreement meetings. The employees were informed in the basic agreement meetings about how far they have come in the transformation process, deadlines etc. Moreover, the managers had meetings with labor representatives and safety personnel every time it was required.
The employees had also the possibility to have face-to-face meetings with their leaders and the change managers when they had any questions. Informant 2 described it as follows:

" … We tried really hard, that the employees felt safe, involved… and that if they felt that there was something, that they could contact us directly or indirectly via labor representatives or their leader."
(Informant 2)

Statens vegvesen have their own intranet which is only accessible to the staff in the organization. A separate page was created for the reorganization process in the roads and transport department. The page was used to make announcements about the current status of the change process. The managers used the intranet to inform the employees about their decisions concerning the change process regularly throughout the change process.

During the planning phase the managers experienced that some employees were not happy about the redistribution of power. The employees wondered if they were not doing a good job and therefore lost the power they had before. The managers spent a lot of time making sure the employees understood that the redistribution of power was not personal, to ensure the employees were not left with unnecessary negative feelings. Informant 2 explained it to the employees as follows:

"… It is not that you have done your work in a bad way. It is not because we do not think that you can do a good job, but it is another strategical choice: Distribute responsibility differently in the organization and that is all it is about. It is that somebody has to take the responsibility, so you have to actually let that go …"
(Informant 2)

[5] Basic agreement meeting refers to the norwegian word: hovedavtalemøte

During the implementation phase of the reorganization, the managers communicated mostly via e-mail with the employees from both departments around every week. Informant 3 emphasized that they sent e-mails about practical things, such as when the leaders and employees could expect to be deployed and when they should change the office etc. Moreover, the managers created power point presentations for the leaders and the employees.

The findings reveal that the managers were concerned with informing the employees about the change throughout the process. The managers recognized in phase 1 of the planned change process (Jacobsen, 2004) that a change is necessary to improve the roads and transport department. According to Kotter´s eight-step model, the first step is to establish a sense of urgency for a change in the organization. The managers informed the employees immediately after the decision for the change was taken and prepared them. They explained the urgency for the change to the employees by discussing the organization's situation and identifying opportunities and challenges. This is necessary to motivate the employees for the change process (Kotter, 1995). Lewin also emphasized the importance of explaining the need for the change to the employees and to prepare them for the planned change process in his first step, unfreezing (Levasseur, 2001). In this first step, the managers experienced that some employees were frightened by the changes and motivated them to accept the change (Brisson-Banks, 2010). The managers motivated the employees by addressing their uncertainty through good communication.

DuFrene & Lehman (2014) emphasized that employees expect an honest and clear communication during times of uncertainty. The managers ensured that the employees perceived them as honest about the change process. Although the managers did not know the answer for some questions, they informed the employees about the known facts of the coming changes. In addition, the managers were open about what they did not know and reassured the employees that they had the available information (DuFrene & Lehman, 2014). According to Allen et al. (2007), good communication with the employees has a positive impact on the employees' will to change. Therefore, good communication reduced the employees' job and strategy uncertainty and was the reason for the employees' positive attitude towards the transformation (Allen et al., 2007).

The managers ensured that the employees were well informed throughout the change process. They had a well-planned communication and information strategy to avoid employee resistance to change. According to Kotter (1995) creating and communicating a vision of the future are very important steps in a transformation. Kotter (1995) emphasizes that the vision has to be communicated clearly, regularly, and that every possible communication channel should be used to communicate the new vision. The managers communicated clearly and regularly about the vision of the future by using different communication channels. Moreover, the managers involved an employee from the communication department who supported them to communicate effectively with the employees.

The managers communicated face-to-face with the leader representatives, labor representatives, and safety personnel. The managers used basic agreement meetings to inform others about the change process' status. The representatives were able to require meetings with the managers and vice versa. The employees could participate indirectly in the change process via the labor representatives and their leader who were their main information sources. Except from the section and office meetings, employees also had the possibility to communicate directly one-on-one with their section leader or the managers. Informant 2 emphasized that they tried hard to ensure employees felt safe and involved and that the employees could contact them directly. This shows that the managers used face-to-face communication to build interpersonal relationships with their employees (Lee, 2010). Moreover, the managers used face-to-face communication to solve problems and reduce misunderstandings during the change process (Lee, 2010). For example, the managers reassured the employees who lost their power during the reorganization by explaining the need for it. These are the reasons there was not a large amount of resistance towards the reorganization.

The managers also used intranet to inform the employees about the status of the change process regularly. They shared announcements and decisions about the change process on the intranet. The advantage of using intranet is that the employees were able to update themselves about the reorganization process (Myers et al., 2012). In addition, the managers used e-mails to inform the employees. Especially during the implementation, the managers sent information mainly per mail. The e-mail communication during the implementation phase is practical according to Braun et al. (2015), since the employees are able to reread the important information.

4.1.4 Consultation and cooperation

In this chapter I analyze if the managers used one-way or two-way communication. In addition, I present if and how the managers facilitated employee participation in decision making about the reorganization. Particularly, I want to determine if the employees had a consultant role during the transformation process and/or if the managers implemented joint projects with the employees.

The individual employees did not have the right to reject decisions about the change, but they could share their opinion and argue why things should be done differently. The managers relied on the many skilled professionals around them and obtained advice, statements, and assessments from key persons. The managers encouraged the employees to express their views on the change process directly or indirectly via leaders, e-mails, and intranet. Informant 1 emphasized:

"We have especially the intranet where news about various things about the change process are posted. There are feedbacks from the employees there … But, of course one has to consider the relevance of the feedbacks …"
(Informant 1)

The employees could suggest good solutions for a problem, but were unsure if it would be accepted by the managers. However, informant 2 explained that at least the employees could find their input in the foundation of the managers´ decisions.

When the managers analyzed the situation of the organization and described it to the employees in the first phase of the change process, the employees were able to come with feedback. The employees gave feedback if the analysis described their work situation or not. Moreover, the employees gave input on both what worked well and what was perceived as challenging. The managers found that their description of the organization's actual situation was not completely accurate and corrected it according to the suggestions.

The managers also carried out a risk analysis of the implementation of the reorganization project and the situation if changes were not implemented. They made the risk analysis at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the change process. The risk analysis was to analyze if the reorganization could be implemented from the standpoint of the organization.

Safety personnel and labor representatives had contributed to the risk analysis and the managers had implemented risk-reducing measures.

The leader representatives contributed in the basic agreement meetings by discussing the proposal for the organization of the change process and giving input. The leaders contributed with presenting important facts and they helped describe different solutions. In addition, they participated in and influenced each step. When the final choice about the organization model was taken, the leaders were able to give input about things they liked and what they preferred. However, the final choice was made by the top management in collaboration with the labor representatives.

Kotter (1995) emphasized it is important to involve employees in the change process in his fifth stage which is “empowering others to act on the vision". Lewin emphasized the importance of involving employees in his second step “moving” (Burnes, 2004). The managers were conscious about the importance of involving employees in the change process. The employees were involved differently during the transformation and involvement was based on their position in the organization.

The managers presented the actual situation of the organization to the employees in the first phase of the planned change process (Jacobsen, 2004). In addition, the managers requested the employees to give feedback on the situation which was analyzed. The employees had a consultant role as they consulted the managers via leaders about the current situation of the organization (Arnstein, 1969). The managers accepted the suggestions and corrected the situation analysis which they had done. Moreover, the employees did not have the right to reject decisions but could argue and explain how things could have been done better. The employees had a consultant role and their ideas were addressed even though the managers accepted the advice based on relevance. The employees participated in decision making, but it was more as a source of information about the project rather than cooperation.

The leaders participated directly as consultants during the reorganization by advising the managers in every step of the process (Connor, 1988). In addition, they gave input for the proposal of the change organization and presented important facts and suggested solutions in the main agreement meetings. The final choice was made by the top management and the labor representatives.

When the managers were in phase 2 of the planned change process (Jacobsen, 2004), they cooperated with the safety personnel and labor representatives. The joint project was based on the task to analyze risks. The managers, the safety personnel, and labor representatives shared the responsibility to plan and make decisions (Arnstein, 1969). According to Kotter´s (1995) second stage, the managers created a powerful guiding coalition by cooperating with different experts during the risk analysis of the change. The safety personnel and labor representatives had the chance to cooperate in the reorganization process.

According to Russ (2008), the managers' adapted approach to change influences the communication strategy. The managers adapted a top-down approach, but they did not tend to choose the programmatic communication strategy. The managers chose a fusion of programmatic- and participatory communication strategy. They communicated one-way based on the programmatic approach. The managers informed every employee about the change process by giving them identical messages about the transformation through intranet, meetings, and e-mails. The goal of the programmatic approach was to minimize resistance and to ensure every employee understood the necessity of the change process. Furthermore, the employees were able to consult the managers directly or indirectly via leader and labor representatives, so they also used two-way communication methods. The managers were always open to dialogue about the reorganization. The managers used the participatory approach to gain input from the employees regarding the change process. The managers used the employees' insights to shape the change process (Russ, 2008).

4.2 The employees´ perspective

In this chapter I analyze and discuss the findings from the employees' perspectives. The findings are based on interviews with informant 4, informant 5, informant 6, and informant 7, who were all employees. I analyze and discuss how the employees experienced being involved in the transformation process by analyzing four factors: communication, information, consultation, and cooperation.

4.2.1 Communication and information

In this chapter I present how the employees experienced communication and information during the change process. I analyze if the employees felt that they were well informed about the reorganization during different transformation phases. In addition, I analyze the impact of the experienced communication and information on the employees' motivation in the change process.

The employees were informed about the change process immediately. The information about the change process was communicated via meetings, intranet, e-mail, and via leaders. Most of the employees emphasized the information on the intranet was comprehensive and good. In addition, most of the employees experienced satisfactory communication and information about the change process. Moreover, most of the employees experienced openness about the change process but had some questions regarding the change which were difficult to answer.

<u>Information before the change process</u>

The employees were informed quite early about the planned upcoming changes in the organization. All the employees were informed about the main purpose of the change process. The informants described that the purpose of the transformation was to meet the future of technology and digitalization and to ensure efficiency of the organization. They were informed that Statens Vegvesen wanted to improve cooperation with other agencies.

However, the employees emphasized there was limited information about the consequences of the transformation in this phase. At the beginning, the employees were informed that the organization was going to be adjusted, so the employees thought the organization will be adjusted within the departmental framework. The change was originally planned to start in January 2017 and should be completed around Easter in 2017. In practice, the project was finished in September 2017. Informant 4 explained that the process was both bigger and longer than many were prepared for. Informant 4 reasoned it as follows:

"The idea for the reorganization evolved during the change process. The business strategy, which they developed parallel with the change process, produced greater changes than originally thought. Ideally, I think they should have done the business strategy before defining the change process."
(Informant 4)

The employees emphasized that the managers did not foresee the change process ending in a reorganization of the roads and transport department and therefore could not provide detailed information at the beginning of this phase. Informant 4, who had a leader position, said that the purpose of the change process was not clear at the beginning and therefore, it was difficult for him to communicate it to his employees.

Informant 7 worked in a department which was already busy working with another reform during the change process. So, the focus of the department was on the reform and not on the reorganization of the road- and transport area. The department was told that they would be moved unchanged to the road- or transport department, since they were already in another change process. According to informant 7, their department received a new department head but otherwise remained unchanged inside the section. Informant 7 emphasized there was quite little information available at the beginning of the change process. She experienced that the information in e-mails was not detailed as well, so she did not completely understand the purpose of the reorganization at the beginning.

Information during the change process

Most of the employees experienced satisfactory information during the change process. But the experiences were different based on the employee´s position and department. Informant 4, who had a leader position, described the communicated information during the reorganization as open and good. In addition, he said that it was easy to communicate with the managers and that he was informed well in department and section meetings. Informant 6, who also has a position as a safety personnel, emphasized that she received information both through meetings with the project managers and reports about the current change process. Informant 5 described the received information as not detailed enough at the beginning. But he emphasized that the information was communicated better afterwards. They were informed about the status of change process daily on the intranet. Informant 7 experienced the received information as insufficient. She described it as follows:

"I would call the received information during the reorganization as insufficient. But, we got the information which was sent. But, overall, I think it was not good." (Informant 7)

In addition, informant 7 emphasized that she preferred to be informed in detail about the organizational change in the meeting and e-mails. Furthermore, she said it was possible to search for information on the intranet, but she was not looking for the information. She accepted the change process and was only focused on sticking to the plan.

<u>Information after the implemented change</u>

All the employees felt information about the implemented reorganization was absent. Informant 6 described the period when the project was finished as a “vacuum”. The employees explained that they were accustom to good communication from the managers side. But when the project was finished, the employees missed feedback about the reorganization process. Informant 6 said September first was the start of the changed organization, but the gathering for the whole department was in November. During the two months between those periods, the employees were wondering what was happening in the new organization. Informant 6 described it as follows:

“We got such an A4 sheet like this: The new director was welcomed … Now we will come again back… Now we will start … - and that was positive, but we did not see the director before November.”

(Informant 6)

Informant 6 and informant 7 emphasized that they missed the clear marking of the new organization.

The findings reveal that most of the employees experienced the received communication and information during the change process as good overall. According to Difi rapport (2014):1, The first stage of employees’ involvement includes information and is the lowest degree of participation. Therefore, I will analyze how the employees experienced the received information during the central phases in a planned change process, which are described by Jacobsen (2004).

The employees were informed about potential opportunities like technology and digitalization. Furthermore, they were told that the main goal of the change is to meet those opportunities by ensuring the efficiency of the organization. Although, the employees were informed well about the urgency of the change process, all of them experienced limited information about the consequences of the changes. Moreover, the findings reveal that the employees only expected an adjustment of the organization, as they were informed at the beginning, and therefore were surprised when a reorganization was decided afterwards. All the employees had unanswered questions about the change process and experienced that the purpose of the change was not clear enough. Informant 4 who was also a leader emphasized that it was difficult for him to communicate the purpose to his employees, since he was not informed in detail.

Although, according to Kotter (1995) the first stage “establishing a sense of urgency“ is important to overcome pitfalls during the change process. It is disputable if it works in practice. As my findings revealed, the employees wished for more details and the managers worked parallel on the business strategy at the first phase of the planned change process. Therefore, the managers could not foresee the reorganization at the beginning and the employees received limited information. The findings reveal that it would have been better to create a clearer vision before communicating it to the employees. Indeed, Kotter´s (1995) first stage “establishing a Sense of Urgency” is important during a change process. However, Kotter (1995) suggests keeping the sequences of his stages according to the planned change process and “creating a vision” is the third stage. However, my findings reveal that the employees wished for a more detailed purpose of the change process when they were informed about the urgency of the transformation.

Jacobsen (2004) describes that actors in the organization in phase 2 formulate goals to reach during the change process and state a plan to reach it. When the managers were finally done with developing the business strategy and recognized that a reorganization of the road-and transport department was necessary, they communicated the vision regularly and clearly to the employees. Kotter (1995) emphasizes the importance of creating and communicating the vision in his eight-step model. The blurry definition which confused the employees at the beginning of the transformation, developed later to a compelling and clear statement which inspired the employees (Kotter 1995). All the informants except informant 7 emphasized that communication and information was satisfactory during phase 2 and phase 3 (Jacobsen, 2004). Furthermore, most of the employees described the information at the meetings and intranet as useful and good. The informants except informant 7, understood the purpose of the reorganization, the plans to reach it, and were motivated to work for the change process. Informant 4, who had a leader position, had a good relation to the managers and felt it was easy to communicate with them. Informant 6, who had a position as a safety personnel, received information through meetings with the project managers and reports about the current status of the change process. The employees who had a leader position or were safety personnel received more detailed information about the reorganization via the managers.

Informant 7 is the only informant who felt that the communication and information was insufficient and not good during the change process. She said that she received information on meetings and e-mails but that it was not detailed enough. Moreover, she was clear that she could search for information at any time on the intranet, but she emphasized that she did not take the initiative. Instead, her department was busy working on another reform and since the reorganization did not affect them internally in the section, she may have only been focused on doing the required work. The other employees emphasized that the intranet was a good communication and information channel for them and that they were informed about the status of the reorganization throughout the project. If informant 7 would have looked for information on the intranet, maybe she would have a better understanding of the reorganization. In theory, there is more focus on how managers should provide information to the employees. This case shows that in practice the managers can only provide information and the employees have to take the initiative to look for the given information.

According to Jacobsen (2004), in phase 4 of the planned change process actors evaluate the implemented change and the change will be stabilized if it is considered successful. In this phase, the employees reported that feedback about the reorganization was absent. The reason for the absence of feedback might be that the change managers did not see the necessity for it, since the reorganization was successful.

The employees preferred also a clear marking of the organization after the implemented reorganization. According to Kotter (1995) and Lewin´s three-step model, it is important to institutionalize the new approaches. Kotter (1995) emphasizes the importance to articulate the connection between the changes and the improved performance. The employees were not involved that much in that process. However, they continued to do the work which was required from them.

4.2.2 Consultation and cooperation

In this chapter I present to which degree the employees experienced involvement. Moreover, I describe to which extent they felt they were heard and understood. Furthermore, I describe if the employees were only informed about the change process or if they could participate through consultation or cooperation. Finally, I analyze how the employees experienced involvement affecting their motivation towards the reorganization.

All the employees who were involved in the transformation had the possibility to ask questions and give feedback to their leader on the intranet throughout the whole process. Nevertheless, the employees had different experiences when it came to consultation and cooperation in the reorganization process. The experiences are different according to their department or position in Statens Vegvesen.

Informant 4, who had a leader position in the organization, emphasized that he had the possibility to converse with the project managers and give feedback. He said he was interviewed at the beginning of the transformation and could give his input but could not make decisions. In addition, he emphasized that he brought some of his employees to the interviews. The purpose of including the employees in the interviews was to provide the most comprehensive basis for the process in such an early phase. Moreover, informant 4 told that he wanted the employees to have more ownership over the change process. He described those meetings as follows:

"There were typically two/three from the project, we and departmental directors in the meetings, such that we were mostly around 15 people. We got some group assignments. So, there were good processes and opportunities to come up with a point of view and suggestions."

(Informant 4)

Moreover informant 4 emphasized that he likes changes and he thinks that they need change processes like this in the organization. In addition, he mentioned he was motivated by being a part of this reorganization. He emphasized that he tries to make changes within the given framework, if he can see that doing so would develop and improve things. In conclusion, he has a positive attitude towards change processes in general.

Informant 5 said that he had the possibility to give input and suggestions during the reorganization process indirectly via his leaders. In addition, he said he could come with arguments for special fields and a little on placement. Moreover, he had the possibility to ask questions or give feedback at the meetings and on the intranet. Informant 5 emphasized that the leaders asked for information from him and his colleagues at the section meetings. The employees worked together in the section by writing information and helped the leaders to clearly define the employees' tasks, which the leaders could use to inform the project managers in the meetings. Furthermore, informant 5 emphasized that they were encouraged to give input and suggestions in the reorganization process. Therefore, he was motivated by participating in the change process and by seeing the reorganization of the road and transport area would have a good effect.

Informant 6, who is also a safety personnel, experienced that she was more involved than others in the change process. As an employee, she was interviewed by the project manager about her subject area. In addition, she was able to give suggestions about where their department should be placed. She described the interview meetings as meetings with few people, so that everyone could say something. As a safety personnel, she participated in the meetings about the risk analysis. She described the risk analysis meetings as a good conversation where she felt that the input she came with was taken well. Informant 6 felt that she was heard and that the suggestions she gave were included in the assessment. She described the reorganization project as a "muster project" and explained that she was motivated by participating in the risk analysis. Informant 6 described it as follows:

"One must feel that they are heard. When I gave written input for the risk assessment and saw next time that it was taken, and was thanked for the input … I was motivated to receive such feedback … especially motivated by that I was taken into account and taken seriously."
(Informant 6)

Informant 7 experienced that she was not involved in the change process. She felt she could not consult or cooperate in the transformation process. Informant 7 emphasized that her leaders participated in the change process by discussing the new department and informed her about the decisions. She emphasized that there was an attempt for the section leader to have a "helper" who writes down the tasks of the employees, so that the change managers could assess whether the task belonged to the roads- or transport department. However, this was not implemented in their department, since they were moved unchanged. So only the leader group was working with the task. Informant 7 emphasized that the experienced involvement did not affect her motivation in the reorganization process. She explained it as follows:

"If I belong to the road- or transport department does not matter to my motivation. How I feel in my section that affects my motivation. So, it has not affected my motivation."
(Informant 7)

Kotter (1995) emphasizes the importance of empowering employees in the change process, in his eight-step model for transforming organizations. He explains that a successful transformation involves employees in the change process (Kotter, 1995). My findings reveal that the employees were involved in different degrees according to their position or department in the organization. I want to find out how the individual employees experienced involvement in the reorganization process and how it motivated them with the modified participation ladder of the Difi rapport 2014:1 as an evaluation tool.

The findings in the previous chapter reveal that all the employees were informed about the change process. Moreover, all the employees had the possibility to ask questions or give feedback about the transformation in the meetings and on the intranet. This means that all the employees had the possibility to consult the managers directly/indirectly about the reorganization process. Consultation is the second stage of involvement in the Difi rapport 2014:1. But did the employees take the initiative to give feedback or did some position themselves in the first stage of the participation ladder, which is information and the lowest degree of involving (Arnstein, 1969)?

Informant 4 has a leader position and was more involved in the change process than other employees. He emphasized that he was able to communicate with the managers directly and gave them feedback about the transformation process. In addition, he was interviewed to give input at the beginning of the transformation process and had group assignments but could not take decisions. According the Difi rapport 2014:1, this is the second stage of involvement, which is called consultation. In this stage the opinion of the employee is heard and informant 4 experienced that he had a consultant role (Arnstein, 1969). Although there was a two-way communication and informant 4 could give input, the managers decided if they accepted or rejected the suggestion (Connor, 1988). Sharif & Scandura (2014) emphasized that leaders who actively discuss the transformation with the employees enhance the employees' attitude. Informant 4 engaged his employees by including them in the meetings and ensured they felt an ownership over the reorganization project. Furthermore, his experienced involvement had a positive impact on his motivation. Informant 4 was very motivated, engaged, and had a positive attitude towards the reorganization process. He engaged and motivated his employees to participate in the transformation as well.

Informant 5 was able to consult indirectly in the reorganization process via his leader. Especially in the section meetings he could come with suggestions and input. He and his colleagues provided his leader with information according to their tasks, which the leader could use in the meetings with the managers. According to Difi rapport 2014:1, this is the second stage of involvement, consultation. But the difference between informant 4 and informant 5 is that informant 4 was able to participate directly, while informant 5 consulted indirectly through his leaders. However, the experienced involvement positively impacted informant 5's motivation as well. He was especially motivated by seeing that the reorganization would have a positive effect on the organization. This shows that he could see the vision of the reorganization which was communicated to him.

Informant 6 could consult the managers about her subject area and she gave suggestions about where their department should be placed. As a safety personnel she participated also in the risk analysis meetings, where she gave input and suggestions. She did not have the right to take decisions, but she emphasized that she felt she was heard. According to Difi rapport 2014:1, this is the second stage of involvement, consultation. The ideas from informant 6 were addressed and she had a consultant role (Connor, 1988). Furthermore, informant 6 emphasized that the experienced participation in the risk analysis had a positive impact on her motivation. When she saw that her suggestions were taken, and she was thanked for it, she felt very motivated that she was taken seriously.

Informant 7 said that she did not have the possibility to consult or cooperate in the reorganization process. In addition, she mentioned that her leaders were involved in the change process by consulting the managers. She was informed about the decisions which were taken by the leaders through one-way communication. According to Difi rapport 2014:1, this is the first stage of involvement, information. It is the lowest degree of involvement. The employees receive information about the organization and there is a focus on one-way communication. Moreover, the employees do not have the possibility to give feedback on the planned change process (Arnstein, 1969). It is clear that informant 7 could not participate as much as the others, but she could have taken the initiative to give feedback on the intranet or at meetings. Additionally, she mentioned that the experienced involvement in the reorganization process did not have an impact on her motivation, since their department was internally unchanged.

In conclusion, all the informants except informant 7 mentioned that they were motivated by participating in the change process. Informant 7 wished that she was informed about the change process. But since she felt that she was not affected by the change, she was not interested in a higher level of participation. The findings show that employees need intrinsic motivation before they are motivated by managers through involvement in the change process. Furthermore, this means managers have to wisely select the employees they involve in a transformation. Not all employees are interested in participating, therefore, selective involvement of employees would prevent wasting time and resources.

4.3 Comparison of the employee and management perspective

In this chapter I summarize and compare the employees and management perspective regarding involvement. In addition, I present if they have similar or different impressions about employee involvement during the reorganization process. The criteria which I compare are: communication, information, consultation, and cooperation.

The managers shared all the information they knew before the change process started. The managers emphasized that they nevertheless experienced that employees were uncertain and wanted more information. The employees said that the purpose of the change process was not clear at the beginning, but they emphasized that the managers did not hide information. The employees were clear over that the managers did not foresee the reorganization of the roads and transport department at the beginning and therefore could not provide that much information about the consequences of the change process. After the decision about the reorganization was taken, the employees felt that they were informed very well on the intranet, meetings and via their leader. The managers and most of the employees experienced that the communication and information was good during the change process. The managers emphasized that the employees could come any time and clear their doubts via their leaders or directly. The employees felt also that their leaders and the managers were anytime available to clear their doubts. But the employees did miss the good communication with the managers after the reorganization was implemented. They described that the information/feedback about the implemented reorganization was absent. Moreover, the employees wished a clear marking of the new organization.

When it comes to consultation and cooperation during the change process, the managers emphasized that the employees had the possibility to give feedback directly or via their leaders. In addition, the managers said that the employees did not have the rights to reject or decide changes, but they could give their opinion and suggest ideas. All the employees emphasized that they could give feedback about the transformation process via leader, intranet or directly. The safety personnel and leaders had also the possibility to share their expert knowledge with the managers. The leaders gave input about their working situation and defined the tasks in their department, while the safety personnel could contribute to the risk analysis which was done by the managers. The employees had the chance to participate via their leaders in their section. All in all, the change managers and the employees agreed that the reorganization of the roads and transport department was successful.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to determine how the managers and employees from Statens vegvesen perceived employee involvement during the reorganization process. The research questions and answers are presented as follows:

1. ***How did the managers involve the employees in the change process?***
    a. ***What kind of employee resistance did the change managers experience in the process?***

The managers did not experience a large amount of resistance in the reorganization process. Nevertheless, the managers emphasized that the employees experienced uncertainty at the beginning of the change process. Moreover, the employees were uncertain about the functions of the new departments. In fact, the employees did not have job-related uncertainties, since they were informed early on that nobody will lose their work. Although this may be true, the employees were uncertain if their role in the organization would change due to the new departments. Furthermore, some employees wondered if they had not performed well because they lost some power through the process.

Although there was a lot of uncertainty among the employees at the beginning of the change process, it did not develop to resistance. The managers reduced uncertainty by explaining to the employees that they do not know the answers yet. In addition, the managers explained that the distribution of power was necessary to establish a well-functioning organization.

b. ***How did the managers facilitate employee involvement in the process?***

The managers facilitated involvement by focusing on the employees' needs and respecting formal rules and regulations. The managers involved the employees directly or indirectly via representatives for groups of employees/leaders. The managers made certain to inform the employees about the transformation throughout the process. The managers used meetings, intranet, and e-mail as communication channels, where the employees were informed about the change process and encouraged to give feedback and suggestions. Furthermore, the managers communicated face-to-face with the employees in problem situations with the intention to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings. Although the employees could not take decisions, the managers ensured that safety personnel and labor representatives could contribute to the risk analysis of the project. Furthermore, leaders were encouraged to present important facts about their department and to give input which shaped the reorganization process. Nevertheless, the final choice was made by the managers.

2. ***How did the employees perceive their involvement and how did their perception impact their motivation to the change process?***

Most of the employees perceived that they were involved well during the change process. Most of the employees emphasized that they were informed well during the change process via leader, meetings, intranet, and e-mails. Nevertheless, the employees described the shared information at the beginning of the change process as insufficient. Since the managers developed the strategy parallel during the change process, they were not able to clearly define the purpose of the change process. The uncertainty among the employees according the change process could have been avoided, if the managers would have developed the strategy before they started the project. The employees emphasized that they could participate directly/indirectly via leader by giving input about their roles in the departments and giving feedback. In addition, the employees who were safety personnel had the possibility to contribute to the risk analysis of the project during the change process. Furthermore, most of the employees emphasized that they were motivated by participating in the change process. The employees were motivated by the given information and communication during the change process, since they could see that the reorganization will have a positive impact on the organization. Moreover, the employees were motivated when they saw that their suggestions and feedback about the transformation were heard and taken seriously. In general, this means that employees are motivated if their perceived involvement is positive in the change process.

One of the employees said that she did not receive sufficient information during the hole change process. She worked in a department, where they already were involved in another change process. The department was moved unchanged to the new road-/transport department. Since the reorganization did not affect the employee´s department, she was not interested in participating in the change process. Nevertheless, she wished that she was informed better about the reorganization. However, this shows that there is not always need for involvement during the change process. Good information is sometimes sufficient. It would have been challenging when the employee would have been involved in two change processes at the same time. All in all, the study provides a fundamental basis for further research on selectively involving employees during a change process.

Changing an organization also involves changing employees' behavior. The change managers in Statens vegvesen were focused on the change process but not in changing the employees´ behavior by explaining how, as a team, they can reach the goal of the reorganization process. After the reorganization process was implemented, the managers did not communicate with the employees. This might be because the managers had to implement the change before the due date. This time constraint caused the managers to focus more on the process than on the employees who were affected by the transformation. Although, the managers involved the employees to a certain degree during the reorganization process, it was with the intention to get more information rather than cooperation. In general, many organization are more process oriented due to time constraints. Giving feedback to the employees about the implemented change process is important. In particular, employees should receive feedback if the organization has actually changed, because knowing the outcome of the previous change processes will motivate employees for the next change processes in the organization. Furthermore, the managers could ask for the employees' feedback about the change process, so that the managers could improve facilitating involvement for example.

While this research was carefully prepared, I am conscious of some inherent limitations. My research was conducted with only four employees´ perception of involvement in the reorganization process, due to time and resource constraints. Therefore, this small group of employees might not represent the majority of the employees affected by the reorganization process. Nevertheless, the variety of the employees´ positions facilitated the comparison of different experiences. Furthermore, the reorganization process was implemented one year ago. Thus, the informants could have accidentally left out some details. However, this study provides practical implications for how organizations can benefit from involving employees during a transformation process and how the employees are motivated in the change process when their perceived involvement is positive.

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Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet
Noregs miljø- og biovitskapelege universitet
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Postboks 5003
NO-1432 Ås
Norway