Power and Collaboration
Methodologies for Working Together in Change

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Realizing major organizational change and innovation requires a complex process. Both research and experience indicate that many change processes lead to results other than were intended, take more time than was estimated, end prematurely, and sometimes fail altogether. In the Introduction to this book, Boonstra discusses why many change programmes fail. In Chapter 4, Buelens and Devos explain that low change effectiveness is often related to the chosen change strategy. Beer et al. (1990a) found that in one-third of the cases they studied, the intensive change initiatives actually worsened the situation instead of improving it. Porras and Robertson (1983) conclude from a meta-analysis that fewer than 40 per cent of change efforts produced positive effects on the relevant dependent variables. Kanter et al. put it like this, 'Change is extraordinarily difficult, and the fact that it occurs successfully at all is something of a miracle' (1992: 370).

This would not be a problem if only a few organizations initiated a change process every so often. However, change tends to be the stable state of the contemporary organization (French & Bell, 1995; Weick & Quinn, 1999). People have to deal continuously with changes like mergers, strategic change, privatization, and redesign of business processes. Such fundamental or second-order changes (Levy & Merry, 1986) take place on multiple levels in the organization, are multi-dimensional, and involve multiple stakeholders. Realizing this kind of change requires efforts from top managers, middle managers, and employees; from production departments, sales departments, finance departments, personnel departments, and other staff units. From a power point of view, these groups have different interests and usually fulfil different positions and roles in changing organizations (Mintzberg, 1983; Kanter et al., 1992; Pfeffer, 1992).

In this chapter, we present four methodologies that allow people to interact and cooperate in changing their organizations. To have multiple stakeholders working together in realizing change requires a process-oriented and interactive approach to change. Lack of attention to the processual character of change is an important reason for problematic change and contributes to resistance by stakeholders and interest groups (Buelens & Devos, Chapter 4). We start this chapter by sketching a theoretical background for our process orientation to change, for the view on resistance we advocate, and for our way of using organization-wide change methodologies. This background enables the reader to understand the principles of the four methodologies we describe.

In the second section of this chapter, we describe four explanations for the lack of effectiveness of many change processes. We argue that thoroughly understanding the dynamic nature and

complexity of change processes requires a focus on the interconnectedness of problems and the inclusion of different perspectives. At the end of this section, we introduce our focus on process-oriented change.

In the third section, we discuss resistance to change. A literature review results in a number of definitions of the phenomenon, its manifestations, and its causes. In psychological and management literature, resistance to change is usually described as a standard reaction resulting from a desire for stability. The general idea seems to be that organizational change causes resistance from change targets and that change agents need to overcome this resistance to change. We propose an alternative view on resistance. In this view, resistance is seen as a *response* to the change approach or to the actions of change managers that exclude relevant stakeholders. Thus, resistance can be prevented by making change a *collaborative effort* of all stakeholders.

In the fourth section, we present four methodologies that allow different stakeholders to interact and work together as *partners* in realizing change. In Wierdsma's terms (see Chapter 11), these methodologies are suitable for co-creating change. They can be used at the start of or during what he calls a journey (or 'trek') of stakeholders who fulfil an active role in shaping the future of their organization. Survey feedback, large group interventions, process management, and third-party intervention are quite well known among academics and practitioners. However, discussing these change methodologies in the context of power dynamics and organizational change is new. We introduce each methodology, show its relation to process-oriented changing, and explain why its use either prevents the build-up of resistance or how it may ameliorate conflict situations. Case studies are provided to show how the methodologies work in practice. In these examples, we focus on the collaborative nature of the change process and the way in which the methodologies stimulate interaction between and cooperation of different stakeholders. The examples illustrate the theory and can assist practitioners in making a deliberate choice of change methodology, designing it, and using it.

In the fifth section, we start with concluding remarks about the change methodologies, process-oriented changing and fundamental change, and the issue of resistance. Next, we discuss practical implications for change managers and consultants who face resistance and who plan to use the methodologies.

WHY CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONS PROGRESSES WITH DIFFICULTY

We distinguish four explanations for the lack of effectiveness of many change processes (see Figure 15.1). Each of these explanations is discussed in this section. The mirror image of the reasons points to an alternative way of realizing change in organizations. At the end of this section, we comment on our preference for process-oriented changing.

The first reason for the difficult progress of change processes in organizations is that both theorists and practitioners tend to focus on single issues when understanding or realizing change. In the past, many reasons have been identified that explain why change in organizations progresses with difficulty. However, these reasons are usually treated separately. Thus, people focus on either hierarchical relations, *or* organizational culture, *or* internal communication, *or* resistance from employees, thereby ignoring the complex nature of fundamental change processes. In the Introduction, Boonstra argues that obstacles during change can be understood by simultaneously addressing them as issues of policy-making and strategic management, existing organizational structures, power and politics in organizations, organizational cultures, and individual uncertainty and resistance to change. We rarely find such explanations, which focus on the interrelatedness of various aspects of an organization. In our view, paying attention to multiple causes of problems and the way they are connected helps to understand the complexity of change and offers a direction for solutions. In addition, it draws attention to the possibility that stakeholders can have different ideas about the reasons for problems (Bennebroek Gravenhorst & Boonstra, 1998).
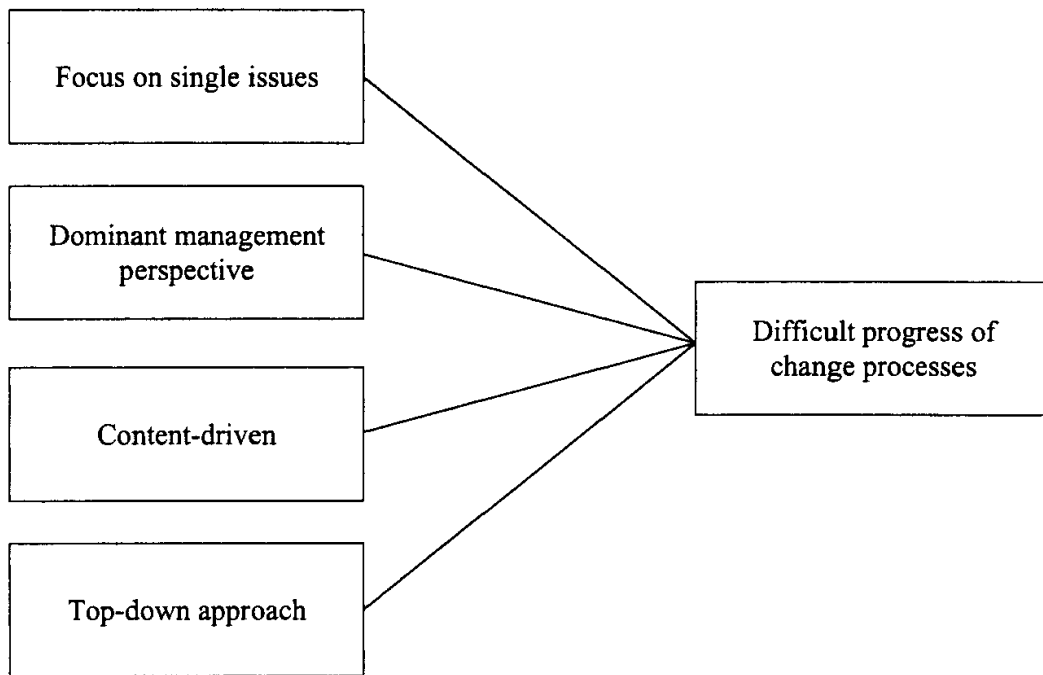
FIGURE 15.1 Reasons for the difficult progress of fundamental change

The second reason for difficulties in change programmes is that the perspective of top managers usually dominates change processes in organizations. As change strategists they identify the need for change, create a vision of the desired outcome, decide what change is feasible, and choose who should sponsor and defend it (Kanter et al., 1992). Often, top managers hire consultants to assist them to plan and implement the change. Thus, consultants are tempted to take a similar point of view regarding the diagnosis of the situation and the direction of the change.

The third reason is that the content of the change and the solutions for problems are the focal point in many change processes. Most popular change programme like Total Quality Management and Business Process Redesign are primarily content-driven. The process of changing itself gets little attention. However, it is the actions, reactions, and interactions of the various stakeholders that produce content. Not paying attention to shaping the process, guiding it, and monitoring it creates the risk of good ideas getting lost on the way (Beer, 1988), if they are produced at all. Pettigrew (1987: 6) proposes that we pay attention to the continuous interplay of the context, the process, and the content of the change. Then we integrate the 'why', 'how', and 'what' of the change. Since attention to the process is relatively rare, we may be tempted to concentrate solely on this aspect of change. Therefore, it is important that 'process devotees' also pay attention to the reasons for change and ensure that alternative solutions are developed.

The fourth reason is that in general a top-down approach is applied. Recent case study research shows that top-down change approaches result in many barriers to change (Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2002). Two major limitations of this approach are the dominant or central role of top managers and the strong focus on content. A change approach involving only one group has little chance of success (Kanter et al., 1992), especially if the change is complex and asks for a collaborative effort of top managers, middle managers, and employees. Beer et al. (1990b) point out that managing change requires an emphasis on process over specific content as well as the recognition that change means learning and development. The latter take time, and time is always limited in top-down quick fixes.

Process-oriented changing can deal with the four problems we outlined. Its primary focus is on the processual character of change, as the term suggests. This means that we pay specific attention to the 'how' of the change. Thus, at the outset of a change process, we ask such questions as 'How do we get from situation A to situation B?', 'How do we involve different stakeholders?', 'Which approach

is suitable?', 'Which stages can we distinguish?', 'What are appropriate change methodologies?', and 'How do we monitor its course?' We prefer to discuss questions like these with relevant stakeholders in order to make the plan for change a joint product. In addition, we need to make sure that 'content' is not neglected. Thus, we prefer a broad diagnosis focusing on many issues that may be addressed in the change. This adds to the content to be dealt with in the change process. Content is produced by involving all stakeholders in the diagnosis and subsequent stages of the change. There are many ways of doing this, as will be shown later.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Resistance to change is a well-known subject in psychology and management literature. Kurt Lewin introduced the term resistance in his field theory and later work on group dynamics (Lewin, 1947). In the classical study by Coch and French (1948), resistance is connected to change in organizations. Coch and French do not provide a clear definition of the term resistance. In the section where they present their preliminary theory of resistance to change, they introduce it as primarily a motivational problem, which obstructs learning new skills required by a change (1948: 516). After analysing their initial results, they refine their theory when they describe resistance as 'a combination of an individual reaction to frustration with strong group-induced forces' (1948: 521).

Watson (1969) defines resistance as all the forces that contribute to stability in personality or in social systems. He adds that from the perspective of a consultant, these forces may seem an obstruction. Yet he continues by stating that 'From a broader and more inclusive perspective the tendencies to achieve, preserve, and to return to equilibrium are the most salutary' (1969: 488). Thus, he sees resistance to change as a natural reaction of individuals and social systems, originating from the need for a relatively stable situation.

Kotter and Schlesinger do not define resistance to change. They just state that 'one major task of managers is ... to implement change and that entails overcoming resistance' (1979: 106). Elsewhere, they sketch a common scenario in change processes. In this scenario, a manager becomes aware of problems, initiates change, and finds that his or her initiative runs into resistance (Kotter et al., 1979: 379). For them, resistance seems to be an inevitable reaction to change.

The distinction between individual and organizational resistance is found in many contemporary management textbooks (Mullins, 1999). Mullins defines resistance as the forces against change in work organizations (1999: 824). He sees resistance as a common phenomenon, as people are naturally wary of change. After discussing sources of individual and organizational resistance, the section simply ends, as is the case in most textbooks.

We find a similar view in writings on change management (Conner, 1998). Conner states that resistance to change is a natural reaction of people to anything that significantly upsets their status quo (1998: 126). He explains that change disrupts our expectations and produces a loss of the psychological equilibrium we value. In his opinion, human inertia makes people cling to certainty and stability.

Resistance to change manifests itself in different ways. Coch and French (1948) mention grievances, turnover, low efficiency, restriction of output, and aggression against management. Watson (1969) discusses how expressions of resistance alter during a change process. In the early stage, almost everyone openly criticizes the change. In the second stage, innovators and opponents become identifiable. The third stage is marked by confrontation and conflict. In the fourth stage, innovators become powerful and opponents retreat to latent resistance. In the fifth stage, opponents become alienated from the organization. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) mention that negative responses to change from individuals and groups can vary from passive resistance to aggressive attempts to undermine it. Mullins (1999) only mentions that resistance can take many forms. Conner (1998) distinguishes between covert and overt resistance. He does not discuss examples, but explains that it is important for managers to encourage overt expressions of resistance.

Many causes of resistance are listed in the selected publications. At the individual level, we find psychological factors such as resentment, frustration, fear, feelings of failure, and low motivation (Coch & French, 1948). Watson (1969) discusses preference for stability, habit, persistence, selective perception and retention, conservatism, tradition, self-distrust, and insecurity. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) provide examples of what they see as the four most common reasons for resisting change: (a) people focus on their own interests and not on those of the organization as a whole; (b) misunderstanding of the change and its implications; (c) belief that the change does not make sense for the organization; and (d) low tolerance for change. Mullins (1999) discusses selective perception, habit, inconvenience or loss of freedom, economic implications, security in the past, and fear of the unknown. Conner (1998) mentions that loss of control is the most important cause of resistance.

A summary of this literature review of resistance results in the following sketch of the traditional view of the subject. Resistance is commonly considered to be the standard, and according to some authors, even a natural reaction of people to change in organizations. It is described as an almost inevitable psychological and organizational response that seems to apply to any kind of change, ranging from rather modest improvements to far-reaching change and organization transformation. Change and resistance seem to go hand in hand: change implies resistance and resistance means change is taking place. Expressions of resistance show that we are dealing with a serious issue. Aggression and turnover are reported as well as milder manifestations such as absenteeism and lower motivation. Resistance is caused by many different factors that are generally classified as individual psychological factors, on the one hand, and sometimes as organizational factors, on the other. A few authors also mention group factors. So we can distinguish between micro-, meso-, and macro-level causes of resistance. Recommendations for dealing with resistance are also provided, sometimes labelled as strategies or tactics. Before turning to these, we present an alternative way of looking at resistance.

In our view, a change approach that excludes relevant stakeholders is the major cause of resistance. This factor is not discussed in mainstream literature. In addition, the idea that resistance can be a purposeful action or reaction by change targets who require participation is not widespread either. Initially, we were surprised by the emphasis on, say, the limited change capacity of change targets. Since change management gets a lot of attention in the literature, one would expect to find more awareness of the importance of interaction between stakeholders. However, the dominance of the management perspective explains why this is not the case and that change is seen as a set of actions of change agents that lead to reactions by change targets. The standard view is that managers want to change and that employees do not. Hence, unsuccessful change is either the fault of employees, or the fault of the organizational system. We see resistance as resulting from a lack of interaction and cooperation between relevant stakeholders. More specifically, the main problem is the top-down and content-driven change approach that managers and consultants usually choose. Such an approach is logical if you believe you have to overcome resistance because other people do not want to change. We find this belief contestable and it does not match our experiences with change processes in which people cooperated successfully in realizing change.

Seeing management and employees as opposing parties is a negative effect of the dominant approach to resistance, as Dent and Goldberg (1999) explain. In addition, they argue that expecting resistance may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, we do not want to reverse the blame, and hold managers responsible for the resistance they encounter. Instead, we want to draw attention to change methodologies that aim to make change a collaborative and interactive effort instead of a struggle in which one party has to defeat another, for instance, by using power and coercion, or ineffective heavy influence tactics (Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Yukl, Chapter 14) such as pressure, legitimation, and coalition.

We encountered many instances where resistance was not a standard response to change. Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al. (2003) found that resistance to change only occurred in combination with badly designed and managed change processes. It is understandable that people do not want to put any effort into such processes. Still, in 60 of the 104 surveyed organizations involved in fundamental change processes, no resistance was found. Thus, we concluded that there was no support for the idea that

TABLE 15.1 Two views of resistance to change

	Basic idea	Main cause	Evaluation	Political perspective	Solution
Traditional view	Inevitable and natural reaction to any change	Employees' insecurity and need for stability	Illegitimate behaviour directed against management	Management and employees are opposing parties	Informing and exerting pressure to comply to changes
Alternative view	Reaction that varies per change and can be prevented	Change approach that excludes employees from change	Understandable behaviour expressing concern for the organization and commitment	Management and employees are parties that can work together in realizing change	Making change a collaborative effort of all stakeholders

resistance is a standard psychological reaction, or that it is caused by organizational factors such as bureaucracy, division of labour, and conservative culture. Bennebroek Gravenhorst (2002) concluded from six in-depth case studies that neither middle managers nor employees resisted change. Instead, their positive expectation of the outcome of the changes, together with their support for and commitment to the changes, were major success factors. The main focus of criticism in these cases was the top-down change approach that excludes everyone except the change agents.

In addition, if we encounter resistance, we prefer to specify the focus of this resistance. Change is too general a term. Dent and Goldberg (1999) argue that specifying the focus helps us abandon the mental model in which change implies resistance and managers must overcome it. People do not resist change *per se*. They may resist loss of their job as occurs in crises, and they may resist the negative influence of specific others as in conflict situations. Thus, in crises we need to speak of resistance to job losses, and in conflict situations we need to speak of resistance to person A or group B.

Fundamental change usually means doing things differently and better with the same people. Therefore, when we encounter resistance in such situations, we tend to believe we are dealing with resistance to a change approach that excludes relevant stakeholders. This leads to different actions from those that are logical if resistance is considered to be a result of individual conservatism or organizational inertia.

Table 15.1 summarizes the two opposing views on resistance. In the traditional view, resistance is a natural reaction to change resulting from individual and organizational forces directed at stability. At the same time resistance is seen as illegitimate behaviour, directed against management. Managers need to overcome resistance by informing people about the change and eventually pushing through what they want. An alternative view is to see resistance as a reaction to being excluded from the change process. Now, resistance is viewed as an expression of concern and an indication of bad change management. Managers can then prevent resistance by choosing a change approach that allows for cooperation and involvement of the relevant stakeholders. Such an approach contributes to commitment and true change of members of an organization instead of compliance with power (Munduate & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2003).

Finally, we present an overview of the recommended strategies for dealing with resistance and contrast them with process-oriented changing. Not surprisingly, most strategies are directed at managers since in the traditional view it is their job to overcome resistance. The general idea is that a sense of ownership, clear benefits, and participation reduce resistance. Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) discuss six strategies managers use for dealing with resistance (see Table 15.2). Conner (1998) proposes the following five-step strategy: (1) understand the basis mechanisms of human resistance; (2) view

TABLE 15.2 Strategies for dealing with resistance to change

Approach	Commonly used in situations	Advantages	Drawbacks
Education and communication	Where there is a lack of information or inaccurate information and analysis	Once persuaded, people will often help with the implementation of the change	Can be very time-consuming if lots of people are involved
Participation and involvement	Where the initiators do not have all the information they need to design the change, and where others have considerable power to resist	People who participate will be committed to implementing change, and any relevant information they have will be integrated into the change plan	Can be very time-consuming if participators design an inappropriate change
Facilitation and support	Where people are resisting because of adjustment problems	No other approach works with adjustment problems as well	Can be time-consuming, expensive, and still fail
Negotiation and agreement	Where someone or some group will clearly lose out in a change, and where that group has considerable power to resist	Sometimes it is a relatively easy way to avoid major resistance	Can be too expensive in many cases if it alters others to negotiate for compliance
Manipulation and co-optation	Where other tactics will not work, or are too expensive	It can be a relatively quick and inexpensive solution to resistance problems	Can lead to future problems if people feel manipulated
Explicit and implicit coercion	Where speed is essential, and the change initiators possess considerable power	It is speedy, and can overcome any kind of resistance	Can be risky if it leaves people mad at the initiators

Source: Reproduced, with permission, from Kotter, J.P. and Schlesinger, L.A. (1979) Choosing strategies for change. *Harvard Business Review*, **57**, 111. Harvard Business Publishing Corporation.

resistance as a natural and inevitable reaction to change; (3) view resistance as a lack of ability or willingness; (4) encourage overt expressions of resistance; and (5) anticipate, follow, and manage its sequence of events.

Table 15.2 shows that Kotter and Schlesinger's six strategies include most of the recommendations of the other authors. In addition, they propose two hard strategies, probably because they derived their list from what they see managers do in practice. The primary reason we include this table is that it nicely illustrates the first view of managers having to overcome or break resistance to change of employees by using strategies. Surprisingly, Kotter and Schlesinger qualify the time-consuming aspect of the two pseudo-developmental strategies they mention as an important drawback. We do not share this view. Quick fixes do not lead to change (Beer et al. 1990b). Change takes time, as do efforts to truly involve different stakeholders in the process. So if a change methodology is time-consuming, we tend to believe it may well be one of the few instances where real change is actually taking place.

We wonder why the common-sense notion of making change a collaborative and interactive effort from the start is only relatively rarely practised. This approach seems logical because it makes use of the available potential in an organization and people's wish to contribute to improvement. In various

situations, we experienced that such an approach prevents the build-up of resistance. Therefore, we value process-oriented changing because it allows for involvement of all the parties, facilitation of the exchange ideas and opinions, and people realizing change together. By involving all parties and having stakeholders work together, resistance is prevented because interest groups are not treated as adversaries but as partners in change. Thus, we have to design change processes in such a way that stakeholders work together, instead of against each other.

METHODOLOGIES FOR CO-CREATING CHANGE

In this section, we present four comprehensive change methodologies that facilitate interaction between different stakeholders or interest groups in organizations. Most of these methodologies are quite well covered in contemporary organizational psychology and management literature. Practitioners, especially in the field of organization development (OD), are familiar with them. Usually, these methodologies are treated as interventions that can be used by change agents to get change targets to change or to involve them in the change process. Discussing these methodologies in the context of power dynamics and change is new. Our aim here is to explain how the four methodologies can be used to expose the viewpoints of stakeholders, to stimulate exchange of these viewpoints, to deal with differences, to initiate learning processes, and to make the change process a collective effort of all the people involved.

SURVEY FEEDBACK

The two main elements of survey feedback are (1) systematically collecting data about the situation in an organization by using questionnaires; and (2) feeding back the data to individuals and groups at all levels of the organization (French & Bell, 1995). Contrary to the common use of surveys in organizations (Fowler, 1984), survey feedback is 'an active two-way process of information acquisition and knowledge dissemination, with the explicit purpose of serving as a basis for action by the surveyed population itself' (Kuhnert, 1993: 459). Thus, collected data form the basis of the change methodology. Then, all stakeholders work together in analysing and interpreting the meaning of these data, and they develop ideas for solutions of problems and improvement of the situation.

The degree to which survey feedback creates energy and motivates people to take action depends on the following conditions (Neff, 1965; Nadler, 1977, 1996):

- Stakeholders accept the data as valid. Although the stakeholders themselves produced the survey data, it usually takes some time before discussions focus on their meaning instead of on challenging the survey.
- They accept responsibility for the part they play in the problems that were identified. People sometimes contend that data do not apply to their team, especially when general data are reported. A sense of ownership and 'model' behaviour of team members helps to start working on interpretation and solutions.
- They commit themselves to solving the problems. When the first two conditions are met, people can focus their energy on determining the implications for their organization or team.
- The data collection itself is already a way of making change a collaborative effort. It stimulates people to think about the subjects that are addressed in the questionnaire.
- The survey is of good quality. People need to feel that the subjects it addresses are relevant and accurately measured.
- People need to know that action will be taken after the data collection. It is important that people know that powerful stakeholders take outcomes seriously and that answering the questions is not a waste of time.

Generally, the methodology consists of five steps that were initially developed by Mann (Mann, 1961; French & Bell, 1995; Cummings & Worley, 1997). In the first step, relevant stakeholders are involved in the preliminary planning of the survey feedback. In the second step, data are collected from all organization members. In the third step, data are analysed, tabulated, and prepared for feedback and client members are trained to lead the feedback meetings in the organization. In the fourth step, data are fed back to the top of the organization and then down through the hierarchy in functional teams. Mann calls this an 'interlocking chain of conferences' (1961: 609). In the fifth step, data are discussed in feedback meetings of teams where people interpret the data and make plans for improvement and change. Different steps and ways of structuring feedback meetings have been developed (Nadler, 1977). The main adaptation in the case we discuss below is that specific team results and differences between teams were not the primary focus. Instead, results were specified for the change strategists, implementers, and receivers (Kanter et al., 1992). Considerable differences were found between these groups and this was an important element during the interpretation of the findings.

CASE STUDY: SURVEY FEEDBACK IN A CARE ORGANIZATION

Survey feedback is used to monitor a change process that started two years ago with a merger of two care organizations. After the merger, the first year consisted of building a new structure for the former two organizations. In the second year, the two main topics were improving the quality of the care and developing the organization. At the end of the second year, the management team got the impression that the change process was stagnating. Until then, the team had done both the strategic work and tried to realize the implementation of the changes. The department heads did not really take up their role as implementers. The CEO asked us to conduct a survey feedback. After meeting with a number of stakeholders, it was decided that a survey feedback could help to gain insight in the state of affairs in the change process, and that the results could be used to develop ideas for improvement.

The way of using survey feedback in this case dealt with the difficulties we discussed in above as follows:

1. The survey we used focused on six aspects of the organization and 10 aspects of the change process. The first part evaluated what people thought about the goals of the organization, the structure, the culture, the technology, the work, and political relations. The second part addressed the goals of the change, the role of technology in the change process, tensions, timing, information supply, creating support, the role of the management team, the role of the middle managers, the outcome expectation, and support for change (Bennebroek Gravenhorst et al., 2003). Thus, we concentrated on multiple possible problem areas.
2. The survey was administered to all members of the organization, which provided the opportunity to specify results for different groups. In this case, we specified results for the management team, department heads, and employees, rather than for teams. Thus, insight was obtained in the perspectives of the three main interest groups, who had a different position and role in the change process.
3. The methodology was explicitly chosen to monitor the progress of the change process and everyone was asked to indicate what was going well and what was not. Thus, attention was given to the processual aspect of change.
4. The survey made it possible to evaluate the change approach. Eight of the 10 subjects in the second part of the questionnaire focused on elements of the approach. Thus, the results showed what people thought of the way the change process was being conducted.
5. The survey feedback involved everyone in the interpretation of the situation and in the development of actions to address problems. By using the methodology, the management team indicated

that it took everyone seriously and that improving the change process was something to be done by working together. In addition, the last two subjects in the questionnaire measured if there was resistance to change in the first place.

The outcomes of the survey were rather dramatic (Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2002: 289). The management team, department heads, and employees differed considerably in their evaluation of both the situation in the organization and the change process. In general, the management team thought most positively, the employees most negatively, and the department heads took an in-between view. A striking result was that more than 50 per cent of the employees negatively evaluated each aspect of the change approach. Interpretation of the general results, the differences between the groups, and the answers to the open questions in the survey led to the conclusion that the negative results were mainly an effect of the limited role that employees and, to a lesser extent, department heads had played in the change process. There was serious critique of the role of the management team and the top-down change approach. Thus, the management team concluded that its previous efforts to involve both department heads and employees in the change had failed. They used the feedback of the results as a first and immediate opportunity to do things differently.

A mixed preparation group designed a procedure for the feedback sessions in the teams. The group formulated several questions that were used to structure the sessions. One of the questions was what managers should or should not do to increase the commitment of employees. Another was how employees thought they could contribute to realizing the changes in the organization. The reports from all sessions were distributed in the organization, including a summary from the preparation group. The management team added a response. Among other things, it was explained how the team would improve communication of the change and how new ways of interaction would be sought. In addition, the CEO and other members of the management team visited all teams to discuss the situation and to exchange ideas for improvement.

A year later, the CEO answered demands for a second survey feedback. People felt that the situation had changed and that improvements had been made in the quality of the care, management, communication, working systematically, and working together. The second survey showed a substantial improvement in the situation in the care organization (cf. Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2002: 326). Now, all aspects of the organization were evaluated positively by more than 50 per cent of each group, as were most aspects of the change process. Most notable was the increase in the positive evaluations by the employees. In addition, the differences between the groups had become much smaller. We concluded that these improvements were mainly the effect of the combined efforts of the management team, the department heads, and the employees. In the last year, these three groups had put a lot of energy into the change process and into solving the problems that were found in the first survey.

We conclude that survey feedback is a useful methodology for bringing different stakeholders together and for stimulating interaction and collaboration in change. Using surveys offers the possibility of specifying results for each interest group, showing how each group perceives difficulties. Taking differences in perspective seriously and discussing them in the feedback sessions offers opportunities for improvement. The case study showed that working together on improvement led to real results in the period of a year. Thus, survey feedback became a powerful learning tool for the organization. It created momentum: (1) by systematically examining the situation in the changing organization with all stakeholders; (2) by focusing discussions about the questions of what went well and what did not through exchanging different perspectives and interaction between groups; (3) by forming a shared idea of problems and possible solutions in the changing organization; and (4) by committing the management team, middle managers, and employees to realize improvement.

Both surveys showed that around 75 per cent of the employees had a positive expectation of the outcomes of the change, supported the change, and were committed to realizing it. The results for

department heads were even more positive. Given the top-down change approach, this was a remarkable finding. One would have expected resistance to change. A closer look at the findings showed that people resisted something else. An important effect of the top-down approach was that they were excluded from the change process and that was precisely the focus of their criticism. People wanted to contribute to changes that affected the entire organization, including their work. Thus, this case study illustrates our previous point that resistance to change is not a natural reaction to any change. Instead, people are willing to change and want to be involved. This stresses the importance of choosing a change approach and methodologies that allow for this involvement.

LARGE GROUP METHODOLOGIES

The defining feature of large group methodologies is bringing together large numbers of organization members for a two- to four-day conference or meeting (Cummings & Worley, 1997). Often, more than one hundred people participate. Conferences are organized for all members of an organization or for a representative sample, sometimes including external stakeholders such as customers and suppliers. People work together to identify and resolve organizational problems, to design new structures and ways of management, or to develop new strategic directions. Large group methodologies appear to be 'a new type of social innovation' (Bunker & Alban, 1992b: 473) that is growing fast. In Chapter 3, Levin describes the differences between a few large group methodologies and discusses the role of the facilitator in them.

Getting whole systems in the same 'room' to work together on one or more issues means a rather fundamental shift in the practice of organizational change (Bunker & Alban, 1992a). In the more traditional models of organizational change, including OD, groups work separately on relevant issues. Even in organization-wide methodologies like survey feedback, interpretation of the outcomes usually starts at the top and then cascades down the hierarchy to the teams. With large group methodologies, all organization members analyse their situation together. This is the main reason for its effect. Effective large group methodologies induce a 'paradigm shift' in participants, making people leave a conference with a different view of their organizational world (Danemiller & Jacobs, 1992). The assumption is that such events will result in a shared view of the organization and its environment. Thus, a more solid 'common ground' (Weisbord, 1992) obtained through interaction and cooperation on some sort of diagnostic assignment leads to more effective change.

A number of other conditions influence the effectiveness of large group methodologies (Bunker & Alban, 1992a: 581–585; Danemiller & Jacobs, 1992: 488–498; Weisbord, 1992: 55–70):

- Explicit links are made between an organization's past, present, and future. Analysis of the past helps people to understand the here-and-now. Next, an image is created of the future. Ending a conference with first steps and future plans ensures that the event continues in the future.
- Structure is used to manage large group dynamics. Within the larger frame, people work in all kinds of small group structures and results are subsequently communicated to the whole group. The degree to which a conference or programme is structured varies. Both the degree of specification of the outcome and the kind of large group methodology seem to influence the amount and kind of structure that is preferred.
- New forms of organizational communication take place when people from all units and levels in the organization work in mixed groups. This renders the opportunity to see across internal boundaries and to understand other perspectives.
- Full and democratic dialogue makes participants real owners of a conference and its outcomes. Effectiveness increases when people address the issues themselves rather than when they feel they are taken on a guided tour.
- Conferences help to develop a shared goal. People achieve more by pursuing a shared goal than by pursuing parallel goals.

- Conferences stimulate creativity. More specifically, the system or design of a conference increases creativeness. Whole systems learn from assorted stakeholders talking with each other without attacking other points of view or defending their own.
- Status and hierarchy are temporarily absent or become less relevant. In this different reality, people can, for instance, express critique without being sanctioned and give feedback that normally is not heard.
- Successful conferences generate enthusiasm, commitment, and the wish to take action. Conferences empower people. They see what they can manage themselves and what they need to do with others. This reduces dependency, conflict, and task avoidance.
- Conferences are fast and large groups attain high productivity. When everyone is there and sees everything happen, communication of results is not a process that needs time, it is all done in real time.

Conducting a large group event generally involves three phases (Weisbord, 1992; Cummings & Worley, 1997). In the first phase, the conference or meeting is prepared. Usually, a design team consisting of members of the organization and consultants does this. During the preliminary planning, the team discusses issues as the theme of the conference, the programme, the appropriate members to participate, and the tasks of both the team and the participants. In the second phase, the conference takes place. What happens during the conference depends largely on its purpose and on the large group methodology that is chosen. Most methodologies include developing common ground, discussing the focal issues, creating a change agenda, making plans for action, and evaluating the event. In the third phase, a follow-up on the conference takes place to secure implementation of the action plans and to measure its outcomes.

When all members of the organization participate in the conference, implementation can start directly. When a representative group participates, the follow-up starts with communicating the results, broadening commitment to the changes, and monitoring when it is time to proceed. Sometimes, the third phase is divided into short-range follow-up (first six months after the conference) and long-term follow-up (one to three years after the conference). Thus, each phase embraces a number of steps. Weisbord (1987, 1992), for example, distinguishes about 10 steps for his future search conferences and Jacobs (1994) puts 19 items on the typical agenda of a three-day real-time strategic change event.

CASE STUDY: A CONFERENCE WITH AN INSURANCE COMPANY

We present a case of a conference that was attended by almost all members of an insurance company. The company was involved in a fundamental change process that simultaneously focused on a strategic repositioning to its parent company and improvement or change of almost every aspect of the organization. The general plan was to involve all members of the organization in the four stages of the change process: diagnosis, goal setting, implementation, and evaluation. Diagnosis was done with a survey feedback. Contrary to the common procedure, in this case the results were fed back to all 150 members of the organization at the same time. The CEO presented the outcomes. In addition, interpretation of the outcomes was not followed by ideas for improvement. Instead, people defined the themes that should be addressed in the goal-setting stage. This stage started with a two-day conference. During the conference, participants would set first directions for improvement. After the conference, theme groups would take up different issues and work out concrete action plans and implications.

Using a large group methodology in this case dealt with the difficulties we previously discussed in the following way:

1. It offered time for a thorough discussion of all six themes that were considered problematic in the diagnosis and to pay attention to their interrelatedness. For instance, analysing the key organization processes with mixed groups of people from all units provided insight into sources of delay and mistakes, interdependencies of teams, and inefficient procedures. Subsequently, directions for improvement were worked out for each theme.

2. Working with multiple perspectives was a central element of the conference. During the conference, people worked together in various settings with others they normally only saw in the company restaurant. Consequently, they learned about each other's work, about organizational dependencies, and about their colleagues as people.

3. The processual aspect of the change was marked by the reason for the conference. The conference formed the kick-off for the goal-setting stage in which the focus of the change process shifted from analysis to action.

4. The conference stressed the collaborative nature of the change process. Almost 90 per cent of the organization members chose to participate, even though the second day of the conference was a Saturday.

5. Resistance to change was not an issue. Everyone could contribute to the diagnosis and the conference, which resulted in a common ground for both the need for change and the direction of the changes.

The results of the conference can be described at the content and at the process levels. At the content level, the outcome of the conference was a general idea of the directions of the change for six themes: strategy, organization structure, management, technology, culture, and HRM. Organization structure was the most difficult issue, given the complicated nature of the key organization processes. Each of eight groups made flow-charts of one of the main processes, identified problems, and developed solutions. Reviewing these solutions subsequently led to three alternatives for a new organization structure. For the other five themes, the direction of change was more easily set. After the conference, a report was compiled that described the main outcomes. In addition, all flip-over sheets, wall charts, Post-its, and so on were collected. Subsequently, the report and the raw material were used by the theme groups to refine directions and to draw up action plans. Most of the theme groups needed two to four afternoon meetings to do their work.

The main process results were individual and organizational learning, a shared view of the directions of the change, and support for the directions. These directions reflected the knowledge and expertise of the entire organization. People learned about the functioning of the company by analysing processes and developing solutions to improve important issues. Furthermore, they experienced that sharing knowledge and working together lead to creative ideas. The design of the conference and the participation of almost all organization members led to a shared view of the directions for the change.

The processual aspect of the conference had been the prime focus of the preparation group. The 'why' question was answered at the outset of the change process. The answer to the 'what' question was given at the personnel meeting: during the conference, people would focus on six themes and develop directions for change. The answer to the 'who' question was simple: everyone was invited to attend. Therefore, the preparation group focused on the 'how'. It designed a programme that facilitated the exchange of ideas and learning through letting people from different teams work together in a special setting. Interestingly, carefully paying attention to process resulted in high-quality content. For instance, the mixed groups produced a detailed mapping of the main organization processes and a challenging but realistic profile for managers in the future organization. The conference integrated the knowledge of all organization members and elicited available creativity. The quality of the content and the success of the process were acknowledged by the management team. It declared that the conference report and other results formed the official directions for the change to be further worked out by the theme groups.

This case study demonstrates that large group methodology is a useful method for bringing different stakeholders together. Many authors stress that this is a core element of the methodology (Bunker & Alban, 1992a; Weisbord, 1992; Jacobs, 1994). In this case, people diagnosed their organization together and discussed the outcomes during a personnel meeting. The conference amplified the cooperation in the change process. The case study portrays one way of working with a conference. Here, almost every member of the organization participated. Thus, the focus was on internal stakeholders, developing together the direction for fundamental change of their organization. Important effects were: (1) a shared vision on the state of affairs; (2) strong support for the future organization; (3) individual and organizational learning; (4) enthusiasm for action; and (5) high-quality content. The authors cited in this subsection report similar effects.

People enthusiastically engaged in interacting on the directions for the change. This is illustrated by the participation of 90 per cent of the organization members at the conference and the positive remarks people made about the event. Four months later, when the new units and teams started, a survey showed that 100 per cent of the middle managers and over 80 per cent of the employees supported the change (Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 2002: 360). This is not to say that the change process progressed without any difficulty. The most important issue was the new organization structure. A number of people questioned the structure that was chosen by the management team. The team made its decision after reviewing three alternatives including their pros and cons, which were developed by the theme groups. We do not feel that the term resistance to change is suitable to describe the situation of a group of people who would have chosen another alternative. Still, people were involved in the development of the three alternatives and supported the procedure that the management team should make an informed choice in this matter. Other than this, no tension occurred during the process of collaborative development of the organization. We believe this was mainly due to the change approach that allowed all stakeholders to contribute in each of the phases of the process.

PROCESS MANAGEMENT

In general, process management refers to all kinds of interventions and activities that focus on structuring processes of change in organizations. De Bruijn et al. (1998, 2002) developed a form of process management that regulates decision-making processes in the case of (1) complex problems, which (2) need to be solved by a network of actors, and (3) are dynamic in nature. Their approach is based on available theories on decision-making in networks (Marin & Mayntz, 1991), the tension between individual and collective rationality (Wildavsky, 1980), and process design (in 't Veld et al., 1992). This methodology applies to situations where there is no objective solution available that will more or less spontaneously be accepted by all parties involved.

The different perspectives of the various stakeholders in a network make it difficult to set off with a shared vision of the problem. Different actors need each other to solve problems but at the same time they pursue their own interests (Boonstra & Bennebroek Gravenhorst, 1998). Thus, a shared vision needs to be developed along the way. The garbage can metaphor (Cohen et al., 1972; March, 1981) illustrates how stakeholders arbitrarily dump their problems and solutions during a decision-making process. Process management seeks to regulate the activities of stakeholders in such a way that they start to work on defining problems at the same time, then develop different options in interaction, and finally choose one or more solutions (De Bruijn et al., 1998, 2002).

The tension between individual preferences and collective rationality is demonstrated in the classical 'prisoners dilemma' (Luce & Raiffa, 1957). In this dilemma, cooperation between both prisoners would result in shared benefits for each party. Competition results in losses for both. However, if party A cooperates and party B competes, B maximizes his benefits and A obtains the worst outcome. The trick is that neither party knows what the other will do. Process management can aggregate and

weigh individual preferences, but not by making a single collective solution according to the majority rule. The application of a decision rule is not enough to guarantee the quality of a collective decision. In addition, the freedom of choice of the parties involved needs to be taken into account, as well as the equality of parties, equal chances for alternatives, mutual control over the decision, the majority of votes, and preferences of a minority (De Bruijn et al., 1998: 35). There is no general method of decision-making that satisfactorily deals with these issues (March, 1981). Individual and collective rationality cannot be brought together. Process management aims at organizing communication and argumentation in order to produce consensus or consent. It structures collective decision-making in such a way that the process itself is acceptable for the parties, as are the solutions.

Process design guides the decision-making process and creates a collective rationality through integrations of different perspectives and different preferences (De Bruijn et al., 1998). A process manager works in unique situations for which standard solutions are not available, as does Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner. He or she continuously monitors whether problem definitions, options, and solutions are attractive for the involved stakeholders. Process rationality also implies that the process manager acknowledges the rules of the game (Scott-Morgan, 1994). New decisions may interfere with the existing rules of the game in an organization. Therefore, it is important that stakeholders and other members of the organization investigate these rules together. Thus, while developing solutions it is possible to anticipate on interference with existing rules. Process design needs to create support among stakeholders and should involve organization members in the development of ideas for change. In short, process design focuses on the *process* of problem identification, decision-making, and change, instead of on the *content*. Thus, a process manager fulfils the role of a decision-shaper rather than a decision-maker (Galbraith, 1995: 157).

The general principle of process management is that an acceptable, authoritative decision can only be developed if all relevant stakeholders are involved in all phases of the process, from problem definition to choosing a solution. Both the process manager and the stakeholders should pay attention to the key elements of process design: openness, protection of core values, speed, and substance (De Bruijn et al., 2002: 45–56). Openness refers to the opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to the decision-making. Protection of core values refers to guarding parties to act against their own central interests. Speed refers to measures that are taken to move forward and come to a decision. Substance refers to close attention for the quality of the alternative proposals that are developed and for the final decision. For each of these key elements, De Bruijn et al. (1998) distinguish conditions for success:

- Openness of decision-making is achieved through the inclusion of all relevant parties in the decision-making process, agreements about the procedures for developing content during the process, and transparency of the process and the process management.
- The core values of stakeholders in the decision-making process are protected by the possibility of postponing commitments to a decision to a later moment in the process, the protection of the principal interests of each party, exit rules to prevent parties from feeling they are led into a trap, and loosely coupled partial decisions and final decisions in order to secure flexibility and to create several opportunities for exercising influence.
- Speed of the decision-making process is obtained through creating opportunities for profit and incentives for cooperative behaviour, participation of powerful representatives for the relevant parties, actively utilizing the field in which the stakeholders operate, developing the authority and reputation of the decision-making process to prevent external criticism, using the situation after the decision as an incentive for stakeholders to behave cooperatively, and preventing conflicts among key players.
- Substance or the quality of the content of the decision is guarded by distinguishing between the roles of content experts and stakeholders without separating them and developing a variety of options before selecting a final solution.

CASE STUDY: PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING IN THE AIR TRAFFIC SECTOR

In the case study we present, process management is used for the debate about the utility and necessity of expanding the Dutch air traffic sector. One of the five European main ports for air traffic is situated in the densely populated western part of the Netherlands. When an Israeli Boeing crashed a couple of years ago on an apartment building in Amsterdam, many voices arose to close down Schiphol airport or to move it to another location. At the same time, Schiphol demanded expansion to sustain its position as a main port. The environmental movement uttered bitter complaints about noise and safety. In 1998, the government initiated a large debate on the future infrastructure of air traffic in the Netherlands. Here, we see that the strategic opportunities of one organization, Schiphol airport, are strongly influenced by numerous other organizations and public bodies. Schiphol's desire to grow has significant effects on society and therefore it was subjected to public debate. After the opportunities for growth became clarified in this debate with external parties and through political decision-making, the airport could move on with the necessary internal changes. We focus on the way process management structured the public debate because it shows how the methodology brought very different parties, diverging interests, and opinions together. This setting involves a network of organizations.

Using process management in this case dealt with the difficulties we discussed before in the following way:

1. The debate started with investigating perspectives on the economic and societal importance of air traffic. Thus, multiple definitions of the problem were collected. In order to prevent polarization at the outset, the process did not start with focusing on solutions such as the fiercely debated options for airport locations.
2. Involving all relevant stakeholders is a central principle of the methodology. Here, this meant that the insights of, for instance, the environmental movement and related organizations were taken into account as seriously as those of the economic stakeholders.
3. Process management explicitly focuses on designing the decision-making process. It is required that the process design allows participants to develop the content by interaction, consultation, and negotiation.
4. All parties are involved in thinking about the process as well as in developing content. A process manager may propose a design, yet stakeholders need to agree with the procedures. Here, each subsequent phase was discussed quite intensely with all stakeholders as well as in parliament.
5. An important reason to involve all relevant stakeholders is that this helps to prevent resistance. In addition, a special committee was formed to overview the decision-making process from an independent point of view and to advise on further steps to be taken. The committee published its insights immediately after each meeting.

The results of the methodology become apparent in its three stages. At first, alternative options on the future development of air traffic and airports in the Netherlands were discussed by hundreds of organizations and public bodies. In this phase, relative consensus was reached on a target of moderate growth. During the second phase, the debate concentrated on the most adequate future size and place of Dutch airports. Again, various alternative options were developed. Expansion of Schiphol at its current location was considered. The idea of building a new airport in the North Sea and some locations in areas of reclaimed land were subjected to equally serious deliberation. The idea of an airport in the North Sea, for instance, was not developed by public authorities but by private consortia. Regional authorities brought forward other proposals for future airports. This process took care of the selection of feasible options. In the third phase, two years later,

moderate expansion of Schiphol was agreed upon. The study of an airport in the sea is continued as a potential long-term option. In the end, an issue that had divided Dutch society before the debate started was solved in a satisfactory manner after a well-managed communication and argumentation process. The environmental movement, the main economic actors, and the public bodies accepted the outcomes of the process. The final political decision was taken in a quiet atmosphere.

This case study shows that process management can effectively bring different stakeholders together in a decision-making process about an important societal issue involving representatives from organizations and public bodies with different perspectives and interests. Acceptance of the outcome is created by paying careful attention to the design of the decision-making process. At the outset, parties agree on the fairness of the process. Thus, their first focus lies on the process that will be used to investigate a problem and develop solutions. If they agree on this, stakeholders start producing content themselves. Alternatively, if the decision-making process were to start with presenting three solutions, it is unlikely that a choice would ever be made. Chances are high that conflict would arise over the content of these solutions.

Resistance to the decision for moderate growth of the airport was not a big issue. Naturally, given the large number of stakeholders, different interest, and perspectives, it was highly improbable that the parties would develop a solution to satisfy everyone. However, if we take two parties that strongly opposed each other in the beginning, we see the benefits of process management and its potential to prevent strong resistance and the exclusion of relevant stakeholders. At first, it seemed that the environmental movement and the economic actors could not be brought together. The former focused on issues as noise, nearby inhabitants, and pollution. The latter focused on issues as growth of the airport to keep its international position as a main port and employment. However, the design of the process stimulated interaction, and the exchange of viewpoints and arguments. In addition, both parties learned to appreciate the complexity of the situation and the fact that satisfying many stakeholders would be impossible by choosing an extreme position. Recognition of the fairness of the process and input of all parties resulted in support for the final output of the process.

THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION

Third-party intervention aims to resolve conflict and tension in organizations. The two defining characteristics of third-party intervention are that (1) an external party is asked to intervene in (2) a conflict situation or a potential conflict situation between two or more parties (Walton, 1987). The external party often is a consultant or a manager. It is important that this third party is external to the conflict, that it takes an objective position, and that it has no preference for a specific solution. The conflicting parties can be individuals, teams, and other kinds of groups within an organization.

In the previous subsections, we have discussed methodologies that prevent conflict and tension through interaction, exchange of ideas, and cooperation. However, conflict and tension are part of organizational reality. Since opposing interests of stakeholders is a main cause of conflict (Fisher & Ury, 1981; Bisno, 1988), we feel that it is relevant to pay attention to a family of methodologies that can help to bring them together. These methodologies are useful when we are confronted with disturbed relationships in the initial stages of a change process that need to be resolved before such methodologies as survey feedback, large group methodologies, and process management can start. Alternatively, conflicts can occur during change processes when the flow of events takes a negative turn. Thus, in this last subsection, we focus on methodologies that aim to change harmful situations. Besides, the scope of most interventions by a third party is smaller than the previously discussed organization-wide methodologies. Even though conflicts often affect an entire organization, dealing with conflicts generally starts at the interpersonal or intergroup level.

We need to assert that conflicts are not necessarily negative. Conflict can be functional and productive (Tjosvold, 1993) and enhance motivation and innovation (Cummings & Worley, 1997). Here, we focus on the negative and dysfunctional side of conflict. To understand conflict, we need to look at both content and process. If we look at content, we focus on the issue that the conflict is about. A major distinction is between substantive and emotional conflict (Walton, 1987). Substantive issues involve disagreement over, for instance, strategy, management systems, distribution of tasks, or work organization. Emotional conflict involves negative feelings between parties such as anger, distrust, or resentment. Mastenbroek (1993: 123) calls these two kinds of conflict instrumental and social-emotional conflicts. In addition, he distinguishes negotiation conflicts and power-dependency conflicts (1993: 124). Negotiation conflicts involve tensions arising from the allocation of scarce resources such as budget, personnel, and equipment. Power-dependency conflicts involve rivalries within the organization or within groups, which are aimed at safeguarding or strengthening one's strategic position.

If we look at process, we focus on how conflicts evolve. Walton states that conflicts are cyclical and that 'the cycles may be either escalating, de-escalating, or maintaining of the level of conflict' (1987: 65). Conflicts are only manifest part of the time. Certain events make the conflict salient, lead to conflict-relevant behaviour, and then the conflict disappears from the foreground before the cycle repeats itself. Thus, conflict consists of a sequence of events and 'conflict behavior is ... influenced by both preceding events and the anticipation of future events' (Prein, 1984: 86). A typical cycle of feelings that accompany conflicts is: disagreement, confusion, blaming, alienation, hostility, stronger misunderstanding, stronger disagreement, anger, and so on (Conner, 1998). Fisher states 'conflict appears inherently open to certain self-aggravating mechanisms which foster escalation' (1972: 89). If parties try to work out solutions in such a situation, we often see this: one party presents an idea, the other party attacks it, the presenters defend it, they launch a counter-attack, and the other party defends itself against the counter-attack.

A third party can help to break such cycles. Here, we focus on integrative solutions that ask for both parties to work together in solving their conflicts. Walton states that this is 'the most obvious and straightforward [approach], although it is often the most difficult to achieve' (1987: 81–82). Prein (1987) investigated to what extent internal and external consultants apply the main strategies presented in the literature. He concludes that consultation and mediation are the two main strategies used for conflict intervention. Third-party consultation (Fisher, 1983) means that the external party focuses on the process of conflict solving and is non-directive regarding content. For this, process expertise and referent power are used. The primary goal is to improve the relations between the parties in such a way that they can continue working on the conflict themselves. Third-party mediation (Moore, 1996) means that the external party focuses on the content of the conflict. For this, he uses content expertise and information power. The primary goal is to settle the issue, if necessary by exerting pressure and insisting on a compromise (see Table 15.3).

Many interventions are available to a third party. Prein (1984) argues that the appropriateness of an intervention depends on the type of conflict and the context in which it occurs. Some well-known methodologies for dealing with conflict and tension are: constructive dialogue for interpersonal conflict

TABLE 15.3   Main third-party intervention strategies

	Consultant's influence	Power base	Primary goal
Consultation	Directive about procedures	Process-expertise Referent power	Improved relations between conflict parties
Mediation	Directive about content	Content-expertise Information power	Settlement of issues

Note: Adapted from Prein, H. (1987). 'Strategies for third party intervention'. Human Relations, 40, 699–720.

(Walton, 1987), a 10-step procedure for resolving intergroup conflict (Blake et al., 1964), confrontation meetings for management (Beckhard, 1969), principled negotiations (Fisher, 1990), and coordinative behaviour or integrative agreements for negotiation (Pruitt, 1981). They follow a similar stepwise plan in the conflict-solving process. At the outset, the goal of the intervention is discussed with the conflicting parties and they are invited to clarify the situation. The search for a solution is characterized by interaction and communication between the parties, efforts to enhance understanding and exchange of perspectives, and the exploration of a higher goal or common goal. Recognition of the interests of the parties and their perspectives is a central element of the process. Most interventions end with action planning, implementation, and follow-up.

The following conditions influence the effectiveness of intervening in conflict situations by a third party (Walton, 1987: 83–99; Mastenbroek, 1993: 128–133):

- The conflict parties need to accept the third party and they need to express a positive motivation to solve the conflict.
- The network of conflicting parties needs to be structured.
- The conflicting parties need to be kept somewhat in equilibrium. When asymmetrical power relations develop during the intervention, this will probably lead to the defeat of one party.
- The third party needs to maintain an optimal level of conflict intensity. Low conflict intensity can lead to resignation. High conflict intensity can lead to escalation or parties exiting the process.
- The third party needs to align his or her interventions with the kind of conflict between the parties.
- The third party needs to secure synchronization of the efforts of the conflict parties. The initiatives to solve the conflict and investment in the process should be in concert between the conflict parties.
- The third party needs to stimulate synthesis by sequentially alternating between differentiation and integration of conflict issues.
- Conditions favouring openness in dialogue need to be created and communication needs to be reliable. The conflict parties should be able to express their ideas and feelings and the third party has to make certain that they understand each other well.
- The third party should be guided by the criteria of directivity, attainability, urgency, and movement when choosing interventions.
- Time, money, and energy need to be invested in dealing with a complex issue as conflicts.

CASE STUDY: THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION IN A DUTCH MINISTRY

The case study we present here is set in a directorate of a Dutch ministry. A new Directorate Head was recently appointed to lead the directorate to a situation where its four main departments would be more sensitive to developments in society and the demands of the public, would work more efficiently, and effectively carry out the ministry's policy. She felt this asked for a fundamental change process in which involvement of all civil servants of her directorate was needed. In one of the initial conversations about this process, she mentioned a conflict situation that involved the General Support Services and the Technical Support Services. When we asked for more detail, she explained that she had not yet met the teams herself but that everyone in the directorate knew about the conflict. It seemed that the conflict originated as an interpersonal conflict between two members of the teams, then it spread within the teams as other members developed hostile feelings towards the other team, next it became an intergroup conflict, and in the end it resulted in a nasty situation that affected the entire directorate. The conflict escalated frequently. When this happened, the team members barely did their job. Mail was neither delivered nor sent, reproduction work got delayed, meeting rooms were not equipped, and so on. Everyone in the directorate had an opinion about the situation, the causes, the effects, and why the previous Head did nothing about it.

We proposed investigating the situation to see if action could be taken. After interviewing five members of each team we reported our findings to the Head. In our opinion, the conflict situation did not directly threaten the change process that was going to be initiated because of the limited role the services teams would have in that process. Still, we felt that the teams and the directorate would benefit if the conflict could be settled. In addition, from a human perspective, the conflict was a tragedy. It started three years ago, it escalated at least once a month, people were tense, stressed, sickness absence was close to 20 per cent, and so on. The managers of both teams were incapable of doing something about it, as were the team members themselves. We discussed a few scenarios to approach the situation and then the Head asked us to make a plan and to discuss it with the teams.

In each team, we proposed third-party intervention and explained how it worked. Both teams recognized that the conflict existed and that they had been unable to solve it. In addition, each of the team members individually expressed his or her wish for a solution, a commitment to finding it, and a positive opinion about the procedure that we proposed. The intervention consisted of a number of steps. We started with bringing the teams together for a diagnosis of the situation. People wrote on Post-it notes what they felt was wrong and put those notes on either the 'feelings wall' or the 'work wall'. Thus, they distinguished between the emotional and work-related aspects of the conflict. We briefly worked on getting control over the emotional issues. This did not work because it made people re-experience the past. Thus, it was decided to focus on the substantive issues and on the future because that was where people expected to find a solution. During this process, the teams worked on assignments such as interdependency exercises, appreciation and concerns exercises, and responsibility chartings (French & Bell, 1995).

The way third-party intervention was used in this case dealt with the difficulties we discussed before in the following manner:

1. In diagnosing their situation people distinguished between the emotional and the substantial aspects of the conflict. This introduced a new point of view. Before, emotions reigned over the situation. Now, people found that their substantive differences were relatively easy to deal with, progress was made, the goals of the teams came into focus, and people started to see how their work was important for the directorate.
2. During the intervention, different perspectives on the conflict and possible solutions were discussed. Previously, only the perspectives of the people that most strongly influenced the conflict were seen. These 'instigators' were taken aback when they learned to what extent everyone was affected by the situation.
3. The intervention focused on the processual aspect of conflict resolution. Careful attention was paid to developing a procedure that gradually brought the teams together and helped them to define a shared goal.
4. We felt that imposing a solution would not have led to acceptance and could not have been defended, bearing in mind the neglect of the previous Head. Instead, we started by asserting that the new Head took the situation seriously, that she felt that a solution needed to be found, and that she offered the teams the assistance of a third party to improve the situation by working together.
5. Resistance to change was not an issue here. Instead, people felt that change was urgent but they were unable to realize it by themselves. The fact that everyone was involved in finding a solution was an important success factor. Imposing one would definitely have led to resistance to the new Head from both services teams. The departments may have perceived it as strong and effective leadership, but at the same time it would not have been consistent with the approach of the change process in the ministry.

The initial result was that the conflict came under control. Solving the conflict was not possible in the 12 sessions that took place. Later, we heard from members of both teams that the control over the conflict limited expressions of hostility and emotional responses. In addition, the way of

working together in the sessions had led to respect for each other, insight into the other's perspective, and a few cautious attempts at conciliation. A focus on the future and on the tasks of the teams stimulated a positive atmosphere. The turning point came when the managers of the teams launched the idea to do a survey about the quality of the services the teams provided. Somebody else proposed to make one survey for both teams. Next, the teams made an inventory of all their services and asked the departments to fill it in. Subsequently, they discussed the outcomes in a combined meeting of both teams, processed the sometimes strong criticism, and decided what they needed to do to improve. Unexpectedly, somebody sketched the hypothetical situation of merging the teams so that they could provide quicker and better services. Both teams thought about the idea for two weeks, a week later it was discussed with the Directorate Head, and the next month the new General and Technical Services started. It has recently done its third annual quality survey and found that results were again more positive than the year before.

We conclude that third-party intervention can help to bring different stakeholders together. This is not really surprising because that is exactly the purpose of this family of interventions. So let us turn to the question of how this was done. In the case study, we aimed for an integrative solution to the conflict. Our ambition was to make both teams satisfied with the result of the intervention. An alternative was to have the Secretary satisfied. As Head of the ministry, he was informed about the conflict and the intervention. He suggested outsourcing as a cheaper and more efficient option. In our option, the third party invested 75 hours and together the team members spent 861 hours of working time. The return on this investment is that 24 people did not lose their jobs and that the directorate has a highly committed services team that works very well.

In this case study, we encountered a form of resistance. We found that especially in the first weeks of the intervention, the teams progressed slowly and people were stuck in their situation. Still, this could not be called resistance to change. Instead, people showed resistance against members of the other team and sometimes even against members of their own team because they were in league with the 'enemy'. At the same time, our initial conversations showed that people longed for change, some even desperately, because of the strain the situation put on them. Sharing emotions between the teams did not work well. It refreshed old memories and contributed to the resistance against the other team. We also found resistance against the former Head. Here, the resistance did not focus on his actions, but on the lack thereof. He neglected signals and requests for help that were made in the past. There was mild resistance against the lack of action of the team manager. People also blamed him for not doing anything, but in discussions they recognized his efforts and saw that he could not stop their fights. Fortunately, they were able to do so themselves.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this chapter was to show how fundamental change can be realized when organization members work together in the change process. We discussed four methodologies that bring different stakeholders together and make change a collaborative effort of all parties involved. Each of these methodologies is primarily process-oriented. Instead of focusing on the content of change, they focus on structuring the change process in such a way that stakeholders can work together in producing their own content. As a result, the content is based on the expertise of the parties that combine their knowledge and skills. Due to participation in the process of creating solutions for the issues that are at stake, there is no need to create acceptance of new ideas, proposals, or directions of change. People produce solutions themselves, which contributes to the quality of the outcomes and to commitment to their implementation.

We showed that process-oriented changing can deal with some important limitations of programmatic top-down change approaches. However, process-oriented change does not lead to positive results

without effort. The discussion of the basics of the four change methodologies and the case studies demonstrated that these methodologies require an investment in process design, specialist skills of consultants and managers, and time and energy of relevant stakeholders. Thus, choosing to use these methodologies may seem more intense and expensive than the more common approaches in which a few experts design solutions that subsequently need to be implemented by others. For some situations this can be a cheaper, faster, and more efficient approach. In a context of fundamental change, it is not. Such changes require the involvement of all stakeholders, interaction, exchange of perspectives, learning, and development. In these kinds of situations, it is relevant and worthwhile to invest in organization-wide change methodologies that allow for co-creation of change. Results from our cases and from other research discussed in the previous section suggest that such an approach leads to support and enthusiasm for change processes that people consider themselves to be the owners of.

The idea of ownership is a central issue in our discussion of resistance to change. In the traditional view of resistance to change, managers need to overcome resistance to *their* change process. Employees presumably resist change because they have a natural preference for stability and fear the unknown. Thus, managers and employees are seen as opposing parties. In the alternative view we proposed, employees resist change because they are generally being excluded from change processes. Top-down and planned change efforts make change the exclusive domain of higher management. Employees that are merely recipients of change do not resist the change itself, they resist the way the change process is organized and managed. Thus, dealing with resistance does not ask for reducing uncertainty through information or using formal and coercive power to implement change. Instead, it asks for making change a collaborative effort of all stakeholders. Thus, resistance is prevented by choosing a change approach that allows managers, employees, and other stakeholders to work together as partners in a change process.

As a final thought, we would like to take this idea one step further and propose a more contemporary view on how people respond to change. We assume that people can enjoy changing and improving their organization, given the condition that they are involved. Resistance may be an old-fashioned concept that applied to stable organizations where change was unusual. Nowadays, people are used to the idea that change is the steady state of organizations. In addition, change is a constant factor of our non-working life. We adapt effortlessly to new situations, learn, grow, and develop as persons. We raise children, become older, and move to another city without much difficulty. We travel around the world, explore other cultures, and adapt to customs we are not familiar with. So why should we have difficulty with changing the organization where we work? As long as we can participate and contribute to improvement and change, it can be fun. We should leave the idea of opposing parties in organizations and focus on what is necessary for people to work together in realizing complex change in their organization.

A first implication of this line of thinking is that if we are confronted with resistance, we need to question the change approach or our conduct as change managers. The general tendency is to question the capabilities for change of the resisting party. We prefer to start looking at how the process is designed and if people are excluded from the change. In addition, we investigate our own behaviour and that of managers to see if this explains the resistance. As we argued before, it also helps to be specific about the focus of resistance. The term change is too broad. In fundamental change processes, people usually resist the change approach, or the conduct of change managers. In crises, resistance can be focused on loss of job, but that is not the kind of change we have been discussing here.

A second implication is that we have to think about the profile of change managers. Process-oriented change management requires specific skills and expertise. In design approaches, a manager or consultant needs content expertise to develop solutions for the problem he or she is asked to solve. Process-oriented changing requires expertise in working with groups, facilitating learning processes, process attention, social sensitivity, structuring meetings, structuring and facilitating data collection by organization members, helping them analyse and interpret outcomes, and stimulating taking action.

In addition, we pointed out that content should not be neglected. The manager or consultant does not produce content. Instead, he or she ensures that others provide high-quality content, by asking them to develop alternatives so that a conscious and deliberate choice can be made. Thus, if we consider both implications, a new way of dealing with resistance can emerge.

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