Change management within the Cultural Context

A qualitative study regarding change management in relation to Global Commerce and 8 Operating Companies in Western, Central and Eastern Europe

Date: April 5, 2011
University Utrecht

Master thesis: Organization, Change and Management
Utrecht University School of Governance (USG)
Faculty: Law, Economics and Governance
Supervisor: Ir. P.J. Linde
Second reader: Dr. J. Vermeulen

Author: Annelies Heinen
Student number: 0467111

Universiteit Utrecht

Preface

At first glance it does not seem an obvious choice for a student from the Utrecht University School of Governance to conduct cross-cultural research within Organization X International[1], department Global Commerce. After all, the study focuses mainly on Dutch, (semi) governmental organizations. However, through my masters Organization, Change and Management I have learned it does not matter what type of organization is studied. Instead, it is much more important through which sort of lens the researcher approaches the field of research. Since the University had an open view towards conducting my research within Organization X International I have had, besides developing on an academic level, the opportunity to gain practical experience within the field of change management as well. Here, I would therefore like to thank a few people without whom I would not have achieved this end result.

In the first place I want to thank the respondents, the Marketing Directors and MT-1 employees, for sharing their interesting experiences concerning the subject of change management. It was a special experience to talk one day with the manager from Italy and the other day with the MT-1 employee from Croatia, via two huge television screens. Furthermore, I want to thank Organization X International and in specific my supervisor Laura Trivulzio for being open to my at times 'deviating' ideas. She has offered me the opportunity to conduct the research within Organization X and made it possible to interview the respondents. Furthermore, with thanks to Laura I gained a lot of practical experience concerning change management, I have learned about the Italian culture and she has stimulated me, through her critical point of view, to bring about the best in me.

My supervisor from University Utrecht, Peter Linde, has made a significant contribution to the final outcome of the research, helping me to develop a critical and sharp view of my thesis which was not always easy for me. He took time to answer my questions, gave critical feedback and left me with thoroughly enjoyable experiences of our meetings. I also want to thank my fellow students, Eveline, Trude and in specific Dorien Huininga, for their substantive feedback. Furthermore, I would like to thank the second reader, Jeroen Vermeulen, for reading the thesis.

Since English is not my native language, I want to thank a few people who have checked my English grammar with great patient and care. Therefore, thanks to Igor Opdam, Cristina Calceanu, Charlotte Jongejan and my English love Grant McVittie. Lastly, I would like to thank my roommates, family and friends for their patience of saint. They have always given pep talks during moments where I could not see the wood for the trees. Thanks!

---

[1] The name of the studied organization has been anonymized. Organization X International represents the Head Office of Organization X. Global Commerce is one of the departments of Organization X International. More details regarding the characterization of Organization X and Organization X International is described in paragraph 1.4: characterization Organization X.

Summary

Various researches from among others Mc Kinsey & Company (2007) and Bain & Company (2006) found that external oriented organizations appear more profitable than internal oriented organizations. Organization X has therefore set the objective to change the organization within a couple of years, going from a (internal) product-oriented organization towards a (external) consumer-oriented organization, within Western, Central and Eastern Europe.

Within Organization X these extensive changes are implemented through change programs, which are developed by the departments of Organization X International (Head Office). Thereupon they are, depending on the size of the program, implemented into the Operating Companies (OpCo's) which are located in more than 90 different countries. I was told by employees of Global Commerce, a department of the Organization X International, they expect the managers in the Management Teams of the OpCo's to "translate" the change programs into the daily business of the OpCo, once the programs arrive at OpCo level. Every OpCo is, after all, located in another country and performs in another market. However it was not clear what it means for the managers of the OpCo's to "translate" the change programs into the daily business, and which implications this translation process has for the further course of the program. Considering the cultural change Organization X will go through the coming years, this provides an interesting and relevant angle for an interpretative qualitative research.

The research therefore examined how the Marketing Directors (part of the Management Team) of 8 different OpCo's have "translated" previous change programs developed by Global Commerce into the daily business of their OpCo. It also studied to what degree the managers' cultural background affects how they fulfil their management role during the process of change. Based on 16 interviews with 8 Marketing Directors and 8 of their employees within Western, Central and Eastern Europe is found that how the Marketing Directors "translate" the change programs into their daily business, is related to how they give meaning to the change programs. Through the process of sense making it seems to differ per Marketing Director and per change program how they "translate" the change programs into the daily business. Themes such as autonomy, implementation, ownership, endorsement and engagement seem to be central within this process and are therefore further explored in the study. The research also found that the management role of the Marketing Directors is not completely biased by their cultural background.

At last, it is important to note that within Global Commerce the dominant vision seems to be that change is manageable and can be predicted, this is for example reflected in the change programs they develop. Within the extensive field of change management literature there are strong supporters of this view (Kotter, 1996). However, the idea of manageable and predictable change has been frequently contested (Homan, 2008). Literature regarding the influence of cultural background on management reflects this contradiction as well. Where the one approach proceeds from the idea a Dutch manager will behave differently than a French managers, based upon their different cultural background (GLOBE, House et 2004), the other approach states that behaviour of a managers is only partly influenced by its cultural background (Jepson, 2009). One objective of the research is to provide Global Commerce with insight, and in specific with different insight, into the process of change. Therefore, the more dynamic approaches of Homan (2008) and Jepson (2009) are used to interpret the data of the research.

Index

Chapter 1 The beginning of a journey

> (..)"We strongly believe the local General Managers and Management Teams are playing a significant and central role in implementing the consumer-focused culture within the organization". *Developer's cultural program- Organization X International*

Organization X is embarking on a journey to become a more consumer-centric organization. Over the past decades, the company has seen strong performances. Nevertheless, in the current fast-changing world and economy, Organization X acknowledges a need to get closer to the consumers, in order to create the most appealing value propositions, and sustain growth for the company. To achieve these goals and change the culture of the organization from a product oriented culture towards a more consumer focused culture, Organization X has developed a cultural change program. This cultural change program is geared towards the creation of a mindset-shift, embedding the consumers more fundamentally into the daily business of Organization X's employees. Like several other change programs within Organization X, the cultural change program is created and developed on a corporate level and will be implemented on a local level in the Operating Companies.

In these change programs developed on a corporate level, the General Managers and the Management Teams of the local OpCo's play a critical role. There are several reasons why the General Managers and the Management Teams play a critical role in the implementation of change programs. First of all, since every Operating Company functions in a different environment (different country), the General Managers and the Management Teams need to "translate" the program into local specifications, so the Operating Company can adopt it. On the one hand this implicates that they must adapt the programs to the structure and the market of the Operating Company. On the other hand, they must engage the employees to cooperate with the program in order for it to work effectively.

Secondly, given the fact that the implementation of a program will take several years and its aim is to change "the way of doing business", the GMs and MTs need to act as if they are owner of the program. The managers of the Operating Companies must truly endorse the program, not only in the start-up phase but also in the years which follow. Without the cooperation and true endorsement of the local GMs and MTs, the change programs developed on a corporate level will most likely not succeed or be implemented in the manner in which Global Commerce initially intended. Figure 1.1 illustrates the construction in which change programs are approached by Organization X.
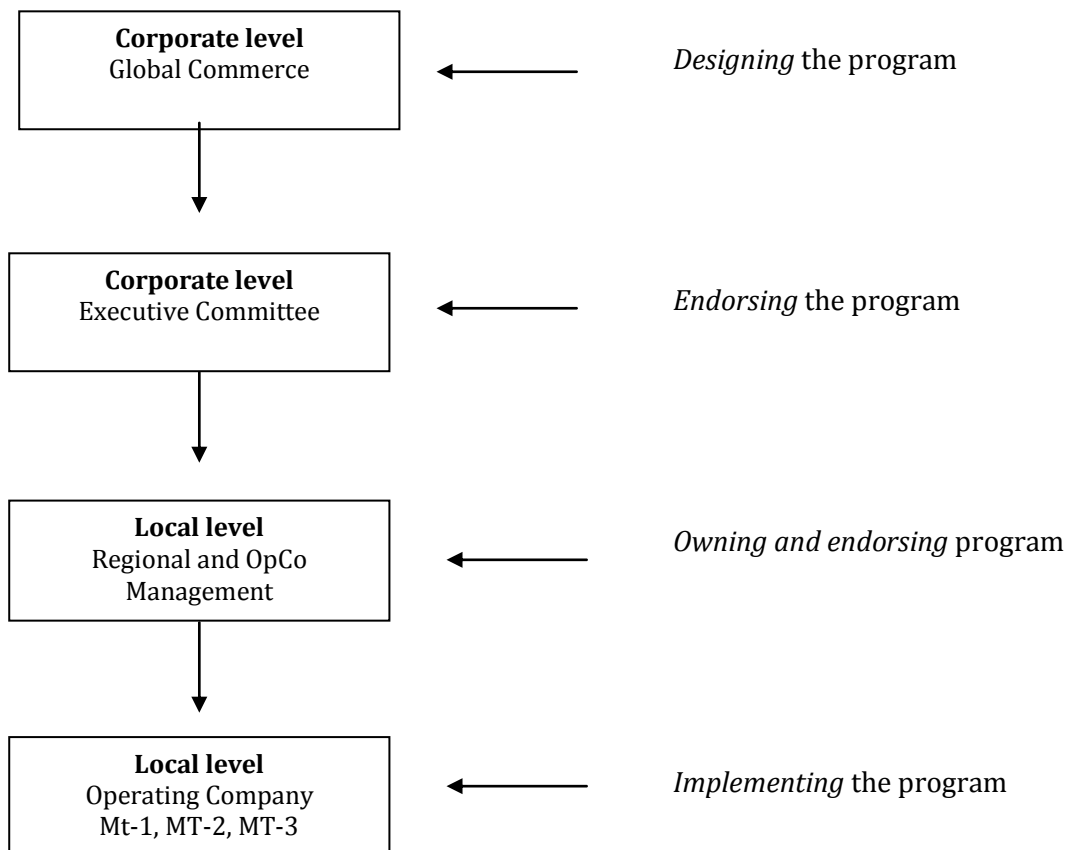
```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│      Corporate level    │  ◄─────────────  *Designing* the program
│      Global Commerce    │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│      Corporate level    │  ◄─────────────  *Endorsing* the program
│   Executive Committee   │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│       Local level       │  ◄─────────────  *Owning and endorsing* program
│     Regional and OpCo   │
│        Management        │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│       Local level       │  ◄─────────────  *Implementing* the program
│    Operating Company    │
│      Mt-1, MT-2, MT-3    │
└─────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 1.1 Construction process change programs Organization X

1.1   Research question

The cultural change program is divided into several smaller change programs, which all aim to embed the consumer into the daily business of the organization. Global Commerce is responsible for the development and implementation of one of these cultural change programs. The Marketing Directors, which are part of the Management Team, have contributed to several change programs developed in the past by Global Commerce. Therefore, they are first in line to implement the cultural program developed by Global Commerce into the Operating Company. We have seen in the previous section that the Marketing Directors have a very important role in implementing the programs into the organization. As a result and based upon the previous statement, key to this research will be how the Marketing Directors of the Operating Company "translate" the programs which have been developed on a corporate level into their daily business. The word 'translate' implicates several themes, such as endorsement, ownership and implementation. An important implication of this research is learning to understand how the Marketing Directors give meaning to the process of change within Organization X.

Since the Marketing Directors operate in different countries, one of the focus elements of this research is tracing differences in management back to their cultural background. Literature on cross- cultural management will serve as a basis for this. Global Commerce has developed several change programs for the regions Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe, therefore, these regions outline the scope of this research. Based on this scope and focus areas, the following research question was formulated:

- *How do the Marketing Directors "translate"[2] the change programs developed by Global Commerce into their daily business, and how does their cultural background influence their managerial role in this process?*

In order to answer the research question we need to understand how they experience several aspects within the process of change. Therefore, the following sub questions need to be addressed:

1. To what extent do Marketing Directors enjoy autonomy during the implementation of a change program?

2. What does it mean for the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 to own and to endorse the change program developed on a corporate level?

3. How do Marketing Directors implement the change program developed on a corporate level into the Operating Company?

4. Are there differences in the way the Marketing Directors fulfill their managerial role, and if so, are these differences culturally determined, based upon cross-cultural literature?

The research can be qualified as an interpretative qualitative research. In order to answer the main questions and sub questions I have interviewed 8 Marketing Directors and 8 MT-1 employees working in 8 countries in Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe.[3] The MT-1 employees are the persons first in line to report to the Marketing Directors. Hence, per country I have interviewed one Marketing Director and one MT-1 employee. For more information regarding the used methodology I refer to chapter 3, the methodological justification.

1.2   Research objectives

The practical objective of the research is to provide Global Commerce with insight concerning the way the Marketing Directors and their reporting layer, the MT-1, give meaning to the process of change within Organization X. These insights can be useful for the development of Global Commerce' cultural change program and other change programs in the future. However, it is not the intention of this research to provide Global Commerce with answers regarding the 'best' way to develop a change program. That would be inappropriate since I am using aspects of research literature in interpreting the data which underline the downfalls of similar 'instructive' change programs. The objective of this research is therefore to provide Global Commerce, Organization X International with an in-depth understanding of the dynamics involved in implementing their change programs into the OpCo's. Secondly, the Human Resource department of Organization X International conducts extensive research into the 'Organization X Way of Change'. The focus of this research is to develop a structured modus operandi within change programs such as the cultural program. Therefore, this research can be used as input for this other program as well.

Literature regarding organizational change aligns two separate movements. Kotter (1996) approaches organizational change as a process that can be managed. Homan (2005) however, approaches organizational change as an ongoing, dynamic process, a process that is almost impossible to manage. According to Homan there is no linear relation between change programs on the one side and changes within the organization on the other side. The way Organization X approaches organizational change is mostly in line with Kotter's (1996) view; this can be seen

---

[2] Operationalization "translate": owning, endorsing and implementing the change programs developed by Global Commerce into the Operating Company.

[3] Included countries Western Europe: France, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands
  Included countries Central and Eastern Europe: Austria, Croatia, Greece, Serbia, *Poland*

in the planned change programs developed by Organization X throughout the years. Literature regarding the influence of cultural background on management reflects this contradiction as well. Where the one approach proceeds from the idea a Dutch manager will behave differently than a French managers, based upon their different cultural background (GLOBE, 2008), the other approach states that behaviour of a managers is only partly influenced by its cultural background (Jepson, 2009). For this research the scientific objective is to view the field of research from both perspectives; the static vision of Kotter (1996) and the GLOBE-project (House et al, 2004)) and the more dynamic vision of Homan (2008) and Jepson (2009, in which the dynamic approach is leading.

Personal objective

In conjunction to above mentioned practical and scientific objective, I have also set a personal objective. The first half year of my masters Organizational, Change and Management provided me with the opportunity to learn about change management theories. However, the research and my internship at Organization X International will also give me the opportunity to experience how the change management theories relate to what actually happens within the organization. My personal objective of the research is therefore to learn as much as possible about change management in practice and to talk to managers with lots of experience in the field of change management. By doing so, I believe I have a created an ideal combination within my masters, namely the theoretical and the practical combination.

1.3   Relevance of the research

Several respondents have addressed seeing benefits in sharing and discussing the results of research since they are eager to learn from each other's experiences. In this respect, it can be interesting to share this particular research with the respondents. Secondly, the Human Resources department of Organization X International regularly conducts research into the Organization X Way of Change in order to learn how managers of Organization X deal with change programs within their local company. Since these researches show similarities and the author has been in contact with Organization X concerning the progression of the research, this research can be supplementary to the Organization X Way of Change research.

The two different movements in change management as described above will serve as two different perspectives upon which the results of this research can be reflected. The Organization X change programs are never analyzed before tested upon change management literature. Consequently, the research will add to the field of change management literature and since cultural differences play a role in management style, this aspect is also addressed in the research. As a result, the research will contribute to expanding knowledge with regard to the theme cross-cultural management.

Conducting this research has presented me with the opportunity to interview top managers working in countries in Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe and all have sufficient experiences within the field of change management. Additionally, in the first three months of my time in Global Commerce I fulfilled a supportive role in the development of the cultural program. I had contact with the Human Resources department of Organization X International regarding the Organization X Way of Change research. In this respect, this research provides personal relevance to learn as much as possible about change management within Organization X in order to be more prepared for a future career as a manager.

1.4   Characterization Organization X

Organization X's aim is to gain a leading position on each market-segment in which they operate and to posses the world's most valuable brand portfolio. This aim is reflected in the strategy as formulated in 2010 on their website:

> *"Organization X has been able to remain one of the world's leading consumer and corporate brands for over 145 years. It confronts directly the challenges in many of our markets to deliver organic profit growth, but also focuses on building the long-term future of our brands and business. Key focus is on driving the growth of our brands, on improving our financial performance and on ensuring that acquisitions, partnerships and distribution strategies create value. The focus is also on enabling our employees to use their potential and building a true performance based culture."*

The goal of Organization X is to grow in a sustainable and consistent manner, while constantly improving profitability. Their four priorities for action include:

1. accelerating sustainable top-line growth.
2. accelerating efficiency and cost reduction.
3. speeding up implementation: we commit to faster decision making and execution.
4. focusing on those markets where we believe we can prevail.

Based upon the strategy, goals and structure of the company, Organization X can be characterized as multinational. In this study, we define a multinational as; "a commercial organization operating on international level, where accelerating sustainable top line growth and financial performance can be seen as one of the drivers of the company. The strategy, the goals and the organization charts are enormously useful in characterizing the organization but convey only a small part of what an "organization" actually is. Other characterizing elements are for example the organizations' environment and the organizational culture" (Scott and Davis, 2007: P19). These 'other' elements characterizing the organization are central and will therefore be manifested in this study.

1.4.1 Organization X organizational charts
Organization X has been designed with a decentralized matrix structure, organized into:

Group Departments
Organization X Groups are separate entities within Organization X which support and provide guidance to the Organization X Operating Companies (OpCo's) around the world. It is structured into several functions, from Global Commerce (GC) to Group Supply Chain. The department Commercial Strategy & Insights is part of Global Commerce. The general goal of Global Commerce is to provide support and guidance to the Commercial and Marketing function within Organization X around the world.

Regions and Operating Companies
Organization X is geographically organized in five regions headed by a regional president. Country Operating Companies report to one of those Regions. Regional and Operating Company management is responsible for the end performances, supported and supervised by the different group departments. Figure 1.2 shows the organization chart of Organization X N.V.
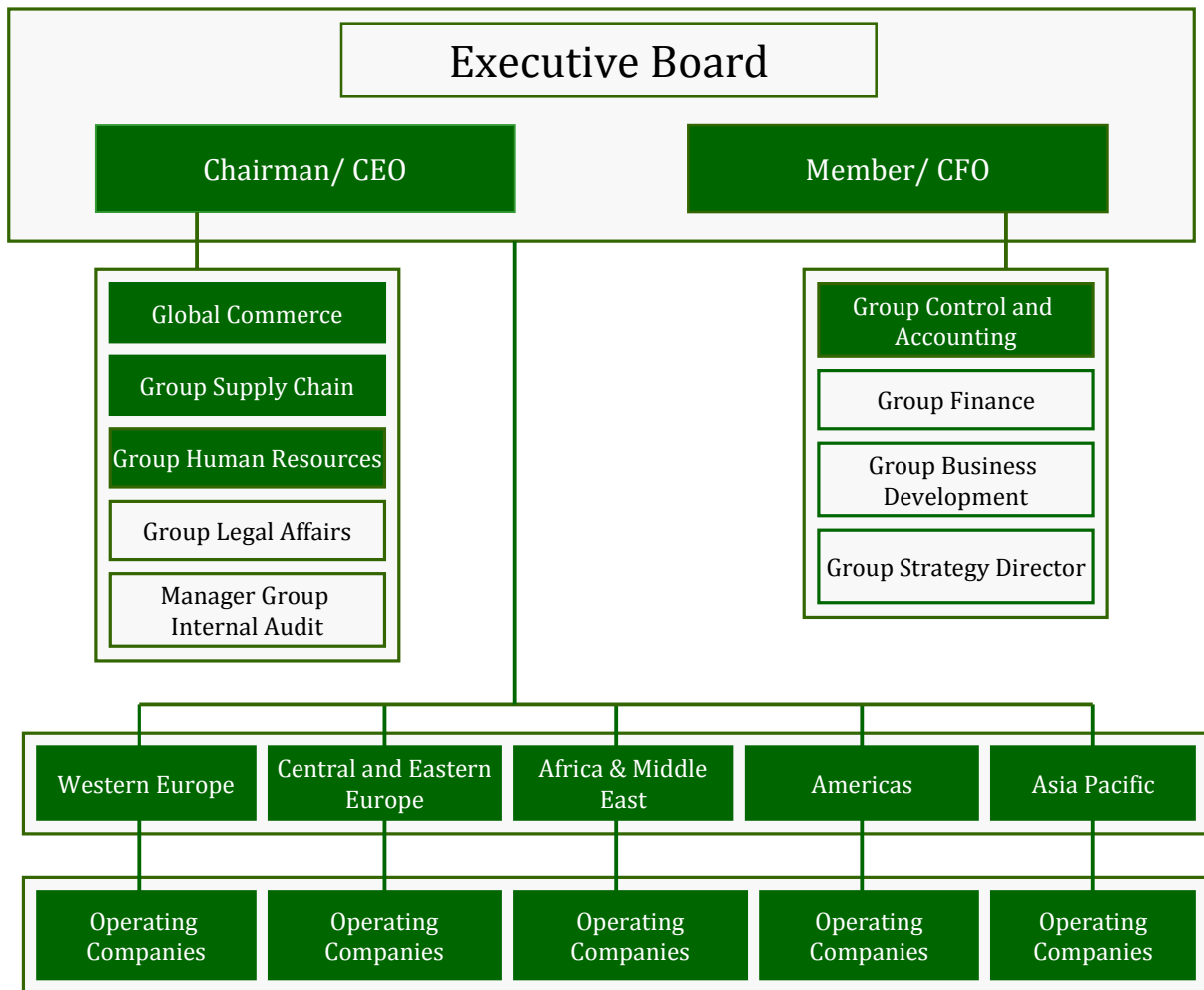
Figure 1.2 Organization chart Organization X N.V.

The Operating Company Structure
The General Manager (GM) leads the Operating Company (OpCo) and he/she is part of the Management Team (MT).The Management Team consists on average of seven people. The functions represented by the Management Team differ per OpCo. However, a few functions are always represented to know; Finance, Production and Supply Chain, HR- and Marketing or Commerce. The Management Team (MT) gives direction to the reporting layers. The first layer is called Management Team -1 (MT-1), the second layer is called Management Team -2 (MT-2)) etc. The Marketing Directors are part of the Management team, and give direction to the commercial and marketing functions within the OpCo's.

1.5   Structure of the thesis

The study is structured in four chapters, a conclusion and a discussion and reflection. In this first chapter the content of the study and the company object of the study are introduced. In the next chapter (chapter 2, theoretical framework) a theoretical framework is presented which form the lens through which to view the field of research. Two themes are leading in chapter 2: organizational change and the cultural context. The methodological justification is described in chapter 3 (methodological justification). In this chapter is demonstrated how the study is structured and executed. In chapter 4 (the data) theory and data are congregated in order to conduct an analyses of the gathered data. In the conclusion I have formulated an answer to the main question of this study. And finally I have reflected my role as researcher in the discussion and reflection.

Chapter 2 Change in perspective

In this chapter, a theoretical framework is presented, which will provide a use full perspective to reflect the data of the study. In the first paragraph, the traditional approach of Kotter (1996) is presented, who claims change is a manageable process. In the second paragraph, a more dynamic perspective to change management is introduced based upon the theory of Homan (2005). He approaches change as a self- organizing process which cannot be planned or forced and which outcomes cannot be predicted in advance. In order to understand how change management is approached within Organization X, the Organization X Change Model is visualized. The change model is created by the Human Resource department of Organization X International.

In the following two paragraphs, paragraph 2.3 and 2.4 two theories are described to answer the question how cultural background influences the management role in change processes. Similar to the previous two paragraphs, at first a more instrumental approach is presented. This cross-cultural perspective, derived from the GLOBE-project (House et al, 2004), claims; "cultural background is primarily driving one's leadership style". In paragraph 2.4, a more dynamic vision is presented by Jepson (2009). She calls into question the view national culture is primarily driving leadership behaviour and one can identify universal leadership styles, which could work for everyone. Jepson claims the behaviour of a manager is influenced by multiple factors and contexts, in which cultural background is only one. The two dynamic perspectives (Homan and Jepson) show similarities since both of them claim the way individuals give 'sense of meaning' to processes within the organization is essential in understanding ones behaviour. Therefore, in the last paragraph of this chapter the two perspectives in the field of cross- cultural management literature are congregated in order to place the cultural background of the manager in context.

2.1 The traditional approach to change management

Kotter (1995) argues in his article 'Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail' that the amount of significant, often traumatic changes in organizations have grown tremendously over the past few decades. Organizations try to improve with the help of change efforts, such as change programs, change champions, workshops etc. However, in too many situations the improvements are disappointing and the changes do not work out as intended. Kotter (1995) recognizes the downside of change: 'whenever human communities are forced to adjust to shifting conditions, pain is ever presented', but Kotter is also in the opinion that managers and organizations make mistakes in developing and implementing the change efforts. He implicates that a significant amount of the mistakes are avoidable. Therefore he generated a list with the eight most common 'errors' organizations and managers make in working with change efforts. The eight errors are based upon Kotter's own experiences and analysis in more than 100 successful and unsuccessful organizational changes.

In addition to his article 'Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail' Kotter (1996) has written the book 'Leading Change', in which he provides organizations and managers an eight step detailed roadmap to transform the organization. This roadmap is based upon the eight most common errors managers and organizations make in working with change efforts. Change managers need to complete all steps in a sequential way to improve the process of an organizational performance improvement. In figure 2.1 Kotter's model; 'Eight Steps to Transforming Your Organization' is presented.

EIGHT STEPS TO TRANSFORMING YOUR ORGANIZATION

1 Establishing a Sense of Urgency
- Examining market and competitive realities
- Identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities

2 Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition
- Assembling a group with enough power to lead the change effort
- Encouraging the group to work together as a team

3 Creating a Vision
- Creating a vision to help direct the change effort
- Developing strategies for achieving that vision

4 Communicating the Vision
- Using every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies
- Teaching new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition

5 Empowering Others to Act on the Vision
- Getting rid of obstacles to change
- Changing systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision
- Encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions

6 Planning for and Creating Short-Term Wins
- Planning for visible performance improvements
- Creating those improvements
- Recognizing and rewarding employees involved in the improvements

7 Consolidating Improvements and Producing Still More Change
- Using increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies that don't fit the vision
- Hiring, promoting, and developing employees who can implement the vision
- Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents

8 Institutionalizing New Approaches
- Articulating the connections between the new behaviors and corporate success
- Developing the means to ensure leadership development and succession

Figure 2.1 'Eight Steps To Transforming Your Organization' (Kotter, 1996)

Kotter feels change efforts take a long time, some as much as 6 to 8 years to be fully implemented. One important reason for this is that people within organizations can be resistant to organizational changes. According to Kotter and Schlesinger (2008), managers are generally aware of the factor of human resistance. But, surprisingly few take time before a change to assess systematically who might resist the change initiative and for what reason. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) acknowledge that individuals and groups can react to change in many different ways- 'from passively resisting it, to aggressively trying to undermine it, to sincerely embracing it' (Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008, p4). In order to predict what form of resistance there might take, managers need to be aware of the four most common reason people resist change. These are:

- a desire not to lose something of value,

- a misunderstanding of the change and its implications,

- a belief that the change does not make sense for the organization, and

- a low tolerance for change (Kotter and Schlesinger, 2008, p4).

In their article 'Choosing Strategies for Change', which is written from the point of view of a manager, they go further into the details of the 'four most common reasons of Human Resistance to change'.

2.1.1 Common Way of Change Approach

With the approach of Kotter (1996) in mind, it is interesting to have a closer look at a figure deriving from the Organization X Way of Change Approach, which is developed by the Human Resource department of Organization X International. The figure visualizes the preferred way of working in change processes within the Company. In figure 2.2, the Organization X change model is presented, which seems to derive from the 'Eight Steps To Transforming Your Organization' model of Kotter (1996)
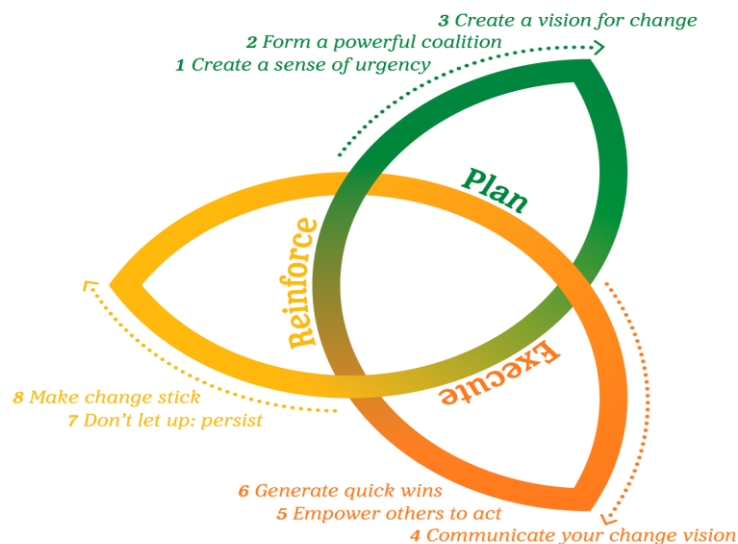
Figure 2.2 The Organization X Change Model

In line with Kotter's (1996) theory, the Organization X Way of Change Model derives from the idea changes within the organization are manageable and controllable. The organization and managers need to complete all steps and to do so, this then leads to organizational performance improvement. Another similarity with Kotter's approach is the importance of the factor 'management' in making the change program or the change effort a success, since both Kotter (1995) as Organization X International assume the manager is crucial in implementing the change effort successfully. The above figure is the preferred way to approach change management within Organization X and the approach is still under construction.

2.2   The dynamic approach to change management

The vision of Kotter (1996) is one out of many perspectives in the field of change management and can be clustered within the traditional approaches to organizational change (Graetz & Smith, 2010). According to Greatz & Smith (2010), traditional approaches to organizational change generally follow a linear, rational model in which the focus is on the degree of control under the strong leader or 'guiding coalition'. Other visions within this general field of Change Management are for example Grundy's (1992) 'Power tools for change', Kanter et al. (1992) 'Ten commandments' and Champy's (1993) 'Business of re-engineering'. The underlying assumption of the traditional approach is that organizational change involves a series of predictable, reducible steps that can be planned and managed, which enables senior managers to establish new work routines (Collins, 1998 in Greatz & Smith, 2010 P1).

The basic assumptions of the traditional approach are in line with the basic assumptions of the managerial perspective as described by van Paauwe (2004) in his book 'HRM and Performance'. He designate the managerial perspective as an instrumental- rational goal driven approach, based on the point of view of the manager and the operational interest of the organization (e.g accelerate efficiency and cost reduction, accelerate top line growth). From field research and

interviews with experts in the current change consultancy market it became clear that this traditional approach is ever popular among change consultants

Greatz & Smith (2010) argued in their article; 'Managing Organizational Change: A Philosophies of Change Approach', the evidence from case studies of failed change implementations indicates that this 'uni-dimensional, traditional and rational focus is limited, because it treats change as a single, momentary disturbance that must be stabilized and controlled'. Organizations are approached as 'amenable to control as blocks of ice' (Grey, 2003 in Greatz & Smith 2010). Furthermore, an important implication in the rational approach is the importance of the strong, charismatic leader (or management team) who can influence the change process and to whom the employees enthusiastically and uniformly will respond too. According to Greatz & Smith (2010), this classical approach goes beyond the human factor; individuals are automatons rather than active agents in the change process (Giddens, 1981:224 in Greatz & Smith 2010). As a result, only one singular, partial story is told by the manager or the management team, where upon other narratives within the organization, for example the narratives from the employees are ignored. 'The principal response is not to listen to, but to silence, dissident voices' (Greatz & Smith, 2010 P3).

2.2.1 The theory of Homan
Greatz & Smith (2010) do not stand alone in their vision regarding the traditional approach to organizational change. Many other change management authors have argued the traditional approach is too uni-dimensional and therefore too limited. One of these change management authors is the Dutch change management professor Thijs Homan, who wrote in 2005 a book called 'Organisatiedynamica: theorie en praktijk van organisatieverandering' in which he presents a renewed approach to view the field of organizational change. Change, according to Homan, is in fact a 'self- organizing process which cannot be planned or forced and which outcomes cannot be predicted in advance' (Homan, 2005). Rather than a manager or a management team initiating change, organizations are self-changing. Hence, in some cases formal change programs even impede change rather than facilitate it (Homan, 2005). Central to Homan's theory is the interaction between members of the organization (and between them and the outside world). Therefore, his perspective is known as 'inside of the organizational change'. The details of Homan's vision are described in the following section. He has further outlined his approach in the article: de binnenkant van organisatieverandering (2008).

Clouds of meaning
According to Homan (2008), a great amount of change management theories are mainly focused on two aspects, the objectives of the change: in which direction do we have to move the organization? And second, the change management portfolio: what do we need in order to change the organization, for example change management programs, tools, workshops, speeches etc. When the change does not evolve in line with the vision of the organization, extra attention needs to be paid to the change management portfolio. Therefore, more speeches, more tools and more explanation are provided in order to show the subjects of change and the need for change. According to Homan (2008), these change management theories ignore a third, crucial aspect of organizational change: the cloud's of meaning. Clouds of meaning are shared ideas, thoughts, and feelings, apparently shared by a large number of people, created in an informal environment in the organization. They relate to how the change process is really perceived and what the peoples` real perception is, with respect to the management team. Hence, instead of unrolled change programs influencing people, the people are primarily influenced through the clouds of meaning, 'hanging' above the organization (2008).

Homan (2008) claims keeping the focus on the first two aspects leads to a 'layered' organization. This creates a situation, in which the management on the one hand (mostly assisted by numerous consultants) is pulling very hard to change the organization. On the other employees pretend as if they are changed (as if change). Homan addresses in this context to the "on stage

behaviour": showing our willingness to change and behaving properly in line with the expectations of the manager, for example during trainings and workshops. However, when we go off stage –off stage behaviour- we go back to our daily job to continue what we were doing. The dominant thoughts deriving from this "off stage" form the clouds of meaning of the organization. Homan has developed a figure in order to visualize his vision:
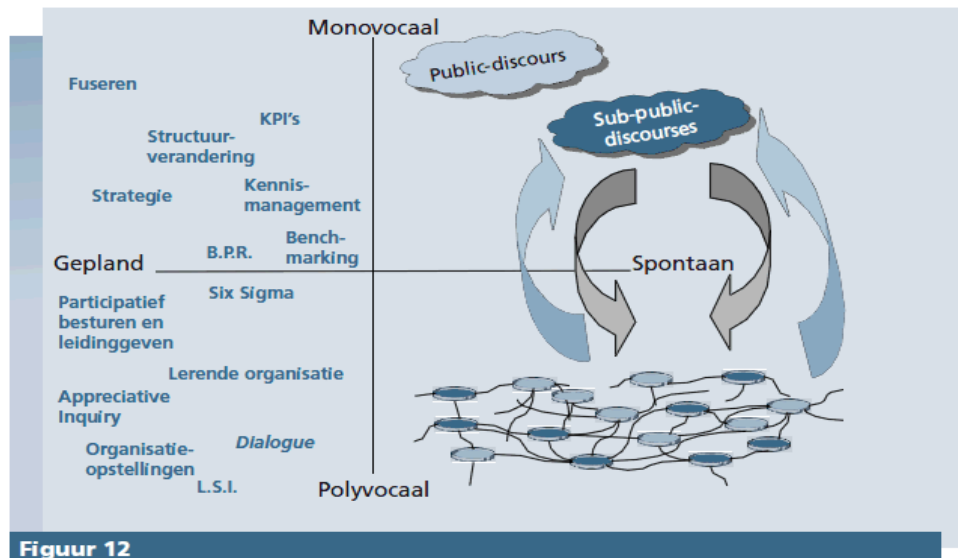

Figure 2.3: Clouds of Meaning

In the axis in figure 2.3 two dimensions can be defined. The first dimension relates to the axis planned versus spontaneous change. Almost all change management theories derive from the planned change side of the axis, in which the process of change mostly starts with a small group of people (mostly managers) who desire to change an enormous group of people. Homan claims on the other side, spontaneous changes are present in the organization as well. People are changing on a continuous base in practice, they try for example to improve the relationship with their client; they find their own way in working in the most efficient way etc. These spontaneous changes are not planned since they are created on a personal level. The second dimension is represented by the axis polyvocal versus monovocal. In a monovocal change process, only one voice and one vision is dominant and the complete change process is controlled by one dominant set of objectives. A change process is called poyvocal when multiple viewpoints can be heard. The Clouds of meaning are placed within the right side of the figure. The left side of the figure demonstrates the outside of organizational change, where the right side of the figure demonstrates the changes within the organization.

Homan (2008) has researched that the 'small chats' in an informal setting, for example during a coffee or cigarette break, can be placed bottom right in the figure. A converge movement derives from the so-called 'local' interactions, in which polyvocalism reduces and people are constructing shared meanings about the reality (what is really going on in the organization, what do we really think about the change process). The clouds of meaning are constructed during such a process. Homan makes a distinction between the 'public discourse' and the 'sub-discourse' cloud of meaning. The first one is introduced by the 'senders', which are the official visions of the organization, hence, what we tell each other when we are on stage. The 'sub-discourse cloud of meaning' arises from the off stage situation, in which the employees exchange thoughts and express how they really feel about the change process. This is illustrated by the arrow point to the top and the bottom of the figure and vice versa. This means that clouds of meanings are created during small local conversations at the coffee machine, but when the

clouds of meanings are eventually formed, they will influence the small local conversations as well.

Two interpretations to change management

Based upon figure 2.3, Homan illustrates the concept of change management by two approaches. Taking in consideration the left side of the figure, organizational change can be seen as a manageable process, in which 'they' have the desire to change 'them'. However, on the right side of the figure, organizational change is something that arises spontaneously, something that apparently arises *despite* change management on the left side of the axis. The way in which clouds of meaning are changed, according to Homan, is a spontaneous, dynamic and self- organizing process, which outcomes cannot be predicted in advance. In addition, on the right side other regularities are into play, then in the planned change processes (the left side). Consequently, Homan states the assumed linear connection between the left side of the axis and the right side of the axis, *does not* exist. Between 'left' and 'right' is at most a non-linear connection, in which 'left' *possibly* will influence 'right'. Because of the dissimilar in regularity between the 'left side and the 'right side' Homan claims clouds of meanings are not manageable in the classic way, thus through motivation, influence, and seduction. Instead, to really change the organization, the clouds of meaning have to change (Homan, 2008)

Petri dishes and idea sex

Then, how do clouds of meaning change? According to Homan, clouds of meaning are born through informal chats within 'Petri dishes' (see right bottom figure 2.3). Petri dishes are an analogy for a micro-communities within the organization. It refers to a more or less stable condensation within the informal network. Almost everyone in the organization, from manager to factory worker has at least one, two or three people with whom he discusses his real perception of the change. The people within these small communities have strong ties and talk with each other during the lunch break, at the coffee machine or on a birthday. During these informal chats, they decide and discuss what is important to them and what is not. As a result, together they give meaning to what is going on within the organization and construct a shared idea about their reality of the organization. Homan makes a distinction between game- dishes and play-dishes. The game-dishes have a strong and stable idea about their reality, while the play-dishes are much more dynamic and are far more open for new ideas. Hence, they are much more willing to discuss their construction of reality. According to Homan, the organization can be considered as a collection of Petri dishes. The clouds of meaning arise through a complex process of interaction between the Petri dishes within the informal network (social fabric), the network in which people are interwoven and give meaning to what is going on in the organization at that moment.

According to Homan, the clouds of meaning can change through interaction between the Petri dishes. Homan calls this interaction idea sex. When people meet who have dissimilar ideas about the reality of the organization, what is really going on within the organization, one will discover there are more ways to look at the change process. In this way, it is much more likely new sets of meanings will arise. Via this mental process of transmission is it possible to stimulate the evolvement of shared, new meanings about the change process, which goes beyond the meanings of reality within the Petri dishes. By doing so, a 50-50 situation can arise where new and old clouds of meaning flourish side by side creating an edge of chaos. Generally, an apparently insignificant incident (for example the client who walks away, the manager who quits; a focal event) is enough to turn the existing cloud of meaning. Consequently new clouds of meaning will arise, in which new constructions of reality are present. Condition for stimulating this transmission process is, the amount of variety (as many play dishes as game dishes), and second a holding environment where people can talk without having the feeling to be on-stage. The organization has to anticipate when new 'clouds of meanings' arise; they have to reward the good prevailing ideas and reward and support the people who brought up these good ideas. In

this way, change is not: 'How do I make sure the employees are doing things they do not want to do', but 'How do I support the change that is already going on in the organization'?

To conclude, Homan illustrates the great effect classical change tools unconsciously can have on the 'changes within the organization' are assumed good. However, in changing an organization one have to be concerned about the actual dynamics going on inside the organization. Since it is only possible to efficiently adapt using the tools and making the most of one's opportunities for the 'actual change'. As a result, the 'sender' and the subjects of change are equivalent and they can cooperate in constructing the way they give meaning to a change process.

2.3   Cultural background and managerial behaviour

The respondents of the study operate in different countries in Western, Central and Eastern Europe, and consequently have a different cultural background. This is an important implication since it is generally assumed managerial behaviour is reflective of societal culture. Cross-cultural leadership has been largely investigated in management studies looking at national culture and managerial practices. However, cross-cultural management research creates methodological issues that extend beyond other types of management research. One issue is how to decide when managerial behaviour is reflective of societal culture and when it is not (Fischer, 2009). In order to provide an answer to the question how cultural background influences one's managerial role in the change process, it is interesting to compare two movements within this field of cross-cultural management research. First, a more instrumental vision (House et al, 2004) which demonstrates using a huge research within 62 countries, national culture (cultural background) is primarily driving one's leadership style. The research shows that '"the attributes and entities that distinguish a given culture from other cultures are predictive of the practices of organizations of that culture, and predictive of leader attributes and behaviours that are most frequently enacted, acceptable, and effective in that culture" (House et al, 2004).

Second, the dynamic vision (Jepson, 2009) calls into question the view that national culture primarily drives leadership behaviour and that one can identify universal leadership styles that will work for everyone. Instead, in understanding the process of the influence of national culture on management behaviour the concept of 'leadership' has to be approached as a social process where other factors such as history, institutions and language are of value, whilst also being open to other contexts that may affect leadership and interact with the national context. Firstly, the instrumental vision and its limitations are explained, while in section 2.4 a more dynamic perspective is presented to view this field of research.

2.3.1 The instrumental vision: the GLOBE- project

GLOBE (Global, Leadership and Organizational Behaviour and Effectiveness) is a multi-phase, multi-method 10-year long project involving a global network of 170 cross-cultural researchers in 61 countries across the world (House et al. 2004). According to House et al. the main contribution that the project makes to the body of knowledge on leadership is in terms of its ability to 'fill a substantial knowledge gap concerning the cross-cultural forces relevant to effective leadership (and) provide substantial enlightenment concerning the processes by which cultural influences leadership and organizational practices' (House et al. 2004). This was to be accomplished through an examination of relationships between societal culture, organizational culture, and organizational leadership.

The first major question addressed by the GLOBE researchers was which measurement standards to use so they could be precise about the similarities and differences among various societal and 11 organizational cultures. After a literature review as well as two pilot studies, the team identified nine "cultural dimensions" that would serve as their units of measurement

(Grove, 2005), These dimensions laid between the culture dimension of Power Distance4 and the cultural dimension of Performance Orientation5 (House et al. 2004). These dimensions were strongly influenced by Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions, since four of the nine dimensions from the GLOBE-project arose from Hofstede's theory. Hofstede's (1980) seminal work has provided the foundation for many cross-cultural studies, most often seeking to determine how differences on national cultural dimensions (i.e., power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity) impacts work related outcomes. The theoretical model of the GLOBE- project is founded on implicit leadership theory, which dictates that individuals have implicit theories about those attributes that differentiate an effective leader from an ineffective leader (House et al., 1999). GLOBE defines leadership as "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members" (House et al, 2004).

Based upon the nine cultural dimensions, the GLOBE-project demonstrates in detail per country which leader attributes and behaviour characteristics are most frequently enacted, accepted and effective in that specific culture. There were significant inter-relationships among factors that lead to a description of six dimensions of leadership. Two of these dimensions were found to be universally applied across cultures while the remaining four varied among cultures (Trevor-Roberts, 2003).6 As a result, the project provides managers who are working or planning to work in cross- cultural environments with practical insights in how to deal with managers and situations in different countries (Chhokar, 2004). Consequently, the GLOBE-project implicates the cultural background of managers as a major influence on leadership style, since the project explains leadership behaviour in terms of one's cultural background.7

Limitations of the GLOBE-project
According to Jepson (2009), the contribution of GLOBE-project has provided practical guidance for global managers and the results have advanced the understandings of universally endorsed and culturally specific leadership attributes. However, she argues, the GLOBE study falls short in 'oversimplifying culture, failing to capture the interactional nature of culture and leadership and being shaped by the cultural and linguistic context of its researchers whilst neutralizing the voice of individuals other languages' (Jepson, 2009, p 62). In addition, she argues the GLOBE-Project has methodological shortcomings as it simplifies the conceptualization of the national context and uses one common language within the questionnaire (Jepson, 2009).

The standardized questionnaire is a tool for studying leadership and was evaluated by Conger (1998), who raised concerns regarding this kind of tools and models. According to Conger, the standard questionnaire provides an 'abstract generalization of reality'; since it fails to take into account the 'contextual complexity of and continuous changes in the nature of work, organizational structures, interpersonal interactions and leadership' (Conger, 1998 in Jepson, 2009, p 64). Furthermore, Jepson (2009) argues that the fixed approach of the GLOBE-project does not take into consideration the dynamic and continuously changing processes between

---

4 Power distance is the degree to which members of an organization and society encourage and reward unequal distributions of power with greater power at higher levels (House et al, p4)

5 Performance Orientation refers to the extent to which high level members of organizations and societies encourage and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence (House et al, p4)

6*Charismatic Leadership*. Universally endorsed as contributing to a leader's effectiveness, in that Charismatic/Value-based leaders endorse a vision congruent with the values of followers, which are also generally congruent with the values based on national cultural norms (Trevor-Roberts, 2003, p 521)
Self-Protective Leadership. This dimension was found universally to impede leadership effectiveness. These behaviours represent a bossy, yet self-interested and evasive leader, who relies on formalities and procedures (Trevor- Roberts,2003, p 521).

7 The reader is referred to the GLOBE-study of House et al. (2004) for a complete and full description of the countries that are part of this research (France, Netherlands, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Poland, Croatia, Serbia and Austria).

leadership on the one hand and the societal culture and other contextual factors on the other hand. For that reason, she doubts whether the GLOBE Project can draw conclusions regarding the processes of cultural influences on leadership (Jepson, 2009).

According to Jepson (2009), a second concern of the questionnaire tool of the GLOBE-project is its simplified conceptualization of the national context. In the GLOBE Project, culture is presumed as implicit, core, systematically causal, territorially unique and shared (Jepson, 2009 p 65). Approaching the national context in such a way implicates that every person in a specific country has the same set of values which guide his behaviour. As a result, many researchers argue this approach is too minimalistic because of the lack of relevant details given on the cultures studied and the lack of consideration of non-cultural factors influencing the contexts of individuals (Tayeb, 2001). By relying on a few dimensions, many cross-cultural studies neglect the contexts of the cultures within which their studies have been conducted, and they treat a small number of dimensions as the only determinants of cultural differences (Tayeb, 2001).

Epistemological issues
The article of Yeganeh et al (2004) is in line with the above outlined criticism. In their article 'A critical review of epistemological and methodological issues in cross-cultural research' Yeganeh et al. (2004) emphasize the shortcomings of cross-cultural management research. They explain that most of cross-cultural research is based on a realistic perspective, both on an ontological and epistemological level. Ontological realism implies that there is an external reality which does not depend upon human researchers. On the other hand, epistemological realism assumes that the external reality is accessible to the researcher. The realism ontology considers cultures as existing, stable and real systems of beliefs and practices. Therefore, culture as an independent and objective phenomenon can be measured, observed and investigated. This perspective of culture leads to a positivistic research strategy approach (Yeganeh et al. 2004).

The GLOBE- study is based upon a realist perspective and adopts a positivistic approach, because the concept of culture is measured and analyzed through questionnaires. Positivists argue that it possible, for one to follows the so-called 'scientific method' to attain fully warranted, objective knowledge. This approach emphasizes the importance of generalizations and universal laws. Although cross-cultural research based on this approach has established quite a few generalizations, these generalizations are neither very general nor exact as those in natural sciences (Yeganeh et al. 2004). In addition, Yeganeh et al. explain the main criticism regarding these types of researches; "people and their culture are historical concepts that should be understood in social context and they cannot be studied in vacuum".

Since culture is a very complicated concept, the researchers adopting a positivistic approach attempt to opt for structured models, utilizing a limited number of objective variables. This approach implies that the researchers try to solidify complex concepts such as culture into concrete indicators. Yeganeh et al. argue that the highly operationalized models may facilitate the research design, but at the same time they may distort the concepts and reliability of results. However, by trying to increase the internal validity of the study (whether or not what has been identified as the cause produces the effect), they may sacrifice the external validity (the extent to which the research findings can be extrapolated to other cases).

At last, Yeganeh et al (2004) are of the opinion that since much of this research looks for a supposed narrow causal relationship, it focuses only on very limited aspects of phenomena under investigation and fails to provide an in-depth understanding of cultural phenomena. In that way, the objectives of researchers are to make a priori predictions and test hypotheses rather than understanding and explaining the nature of cultural phenomena (Earley and Singh, 1995). Therefore, in order to have an in-depth understanding of the concept of culture, a more dynamic approach to researching culture is necessary. As a result, more details regarding this dynamic

approach within the field of cross-cultural management are elucidated in the following paragraph using the research of Jepson (2009).

2.4   Dynamic approach to cultural background and managerial behaviour

Jepson (2009) argues the methodological problems with studies, such as the GLOBE-study and Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions, demonstrates an approach which is too uni-dimensional. In order to understand how cultural background influences one's leadership style a new approach to studying leadership across countries is needed. Based upon the implications of the social constructivism and the study of Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) concerning the social construction of national identity, Jepson has studied the relationship between cultural context and leadership in the German and the UK chemical industry (Jepson, 2009) from a more dynamic perspective. Based upon the theories of Jepson, Ailon-Souday and Kunda, and the theory of Homan, the cultural background of the manager is placed in context.

2.4.1 Social Constructionism

According to Jepson, leadership has to be seen in the context of more broadly focused national factors such as history, institutions and language that influence and reflects culture, whilst also being open to other contexts that may affect leadership and interact with the national context (Jepson, 2009 p 66). The idea of viewing leadership as a social process, instead of viewing leadership as 'static and individual' often derives from the basic assumptions of social constructionism. Social constructionism challenges the convectional perspective on knowledge as an unbiased and objective view of the world and instead assumes knowledge to be a product of culture and history. Applied to leadership research this approach challenges the assumption that leadership is 'out there' and can be observed as a real and stable phenomenon.

In this approach, what constitutes a leader is hence a social construct of all actors involved, with an infinite number of contextual factors impacting on the construct 'leadership'. Such an approach embraces the idea that leadership as an abstract concept of a social process is embedded in some form in most languages and societies' 'shared knowledge' and understanding. Its' essential meaning has been constructed over time through the interaction, interpretation and sense making of individuals and groups. Researchers with a social constructionist approach towards leadership have looked at specific processes such as the role of the follower, leadership as collective phenomenon, and leadership discourse etc (Jepson, 2009).

2.4.2 National Identity

In her article, Jepson builds on these fundamental assumptions by using the theory which is outlined by Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) in their study concerning the dynamic process of construction of national identity and organizational identity. According to Jepson (2009), this perspective may aid the understanding of variation in leadership behaviour within a country, and in doing so 'avoiding the pitfalls of minimalism and overly objective assumptions on leadership'. The perspective is interesting for this study as well, since culture background is reflected in national identity. Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) have studied how employees construct their national identity and organizational identity during a merger between an Israeli High Tech organization and its American competitor. They propose 'national identity' is a social construct that takes on 'variable and fluctuating meanings' of individual actors (Ailon-Souday and Kunda, 2003). Furthermore, the article claims national identity constitutes a symbolic resource that is actively and creatively constructed by organizational members to serve social struggles, which are triggered by globalization (the international merger). Communality, for example, was socially constructed through language, which is a reflection of national identity.

The main implication of the study of Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) is that national identity, as a broader notion of national culture and origin, is not imposed upon individuals (Ailon- Souday & Kunda in Jepson, 2009, p 69). Instead, individual actors are free to decide when and in which

specific context they express communalities of language and behaviour with other individual actors from the same country. The international merger, for example, is a context where individual actors will draw on their national identity as 'symbolic resource' in order to re-establish informal boundaries. However, the national identity is only one 'symbolic resource that helps individual actors to make sense of their global reality and in other contexts and moments in time, they will draw on to other 'symbolic resources'. As a result, Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) suggest that cross cultural studies should 'take into account the freedom that organizational members have in defining what national belongings mean, in shaping this (national) identity' (p1074).

The above-mentioned approaches form the lens through which Jepson has viewed her study field. She adopted a mixed method approach to interview managers and their subordinates in the German and the UK chemical industry over the course of 12 months. Each interview consisted of a dominant qualitative interviewing part8 and the complementation part of the data set via three short questionnaires9 around the topics of leadership, national culture and education (Jepson, 2009 p 69). In her article, Jepson has created a figure (figure 2.4) in which the 'dynamic nature of different contexts and their possible influence on an individual's understanding of leadership is tentatively visualized' (Jepson, 2009 P 67). She used this model to analyze the empirical results of her study in order to understand what the relationship is between the cultural context and leadership style;
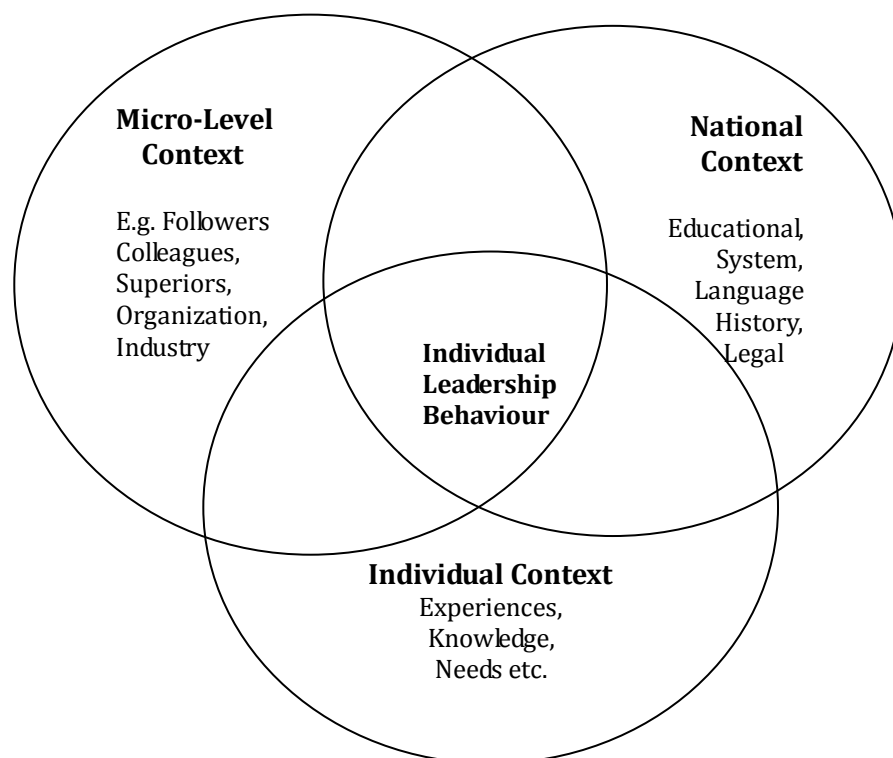

Figure 2.4 An interactional approach to the cross-country study of leadership

---

[8] The first qualitative section is made up of a set of open-ended questions asking participants to elaborate on their own opinion regarding what constitutes as leader in the organization, what impacts on the behaviour of a leader and what kind of leadership is displayed by their superiors and generally within the company. The interviewees are also encouraged to talk about their daily interaction with superiors, subordinates and colleagues as well as their own leadership style (Jepson, 2009 P69).

[9] Path- Goal questionnaire, Hofstede's Cultural Questionnaire, and Handout on Educational Background (Jepson, 2009 P69)

Jepson (2009) claims her empirical analyses have supported the theoretical arguments, that are mentioned above, and have offered two tenets. First, analysis of the qualitative data, as a result from the interviews, showed the importance and role of different contextual factors, other than national culture. Jepson states; 'indeed, national origin was found to be just one of many contextual factors influencing an individual's understanding of leadership'. She also states; "the analyses found similarities within the definitions and description of leadership'. This reflects the importance of 'national, organizational, hierarchical and departmental contexts on participants understanding of leadership' (Jepson, 2009; P76). Jepson's research demonstrated that the importance of these results vary from one individual to the next which can be explained by the approach of Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003). Because they take into account the freedom individual actors have in creating their (national) identity. Second, the findings of the research stresses the importance of qualitative research methods instead of quantitative research methods in understanding the process of the influence of cultural context on leadership style, since personally influenced interpretations of leadership style, for instance one's earlier experiences, are crucial to an individual's understanding of leadership (Jepson, 2009).

2.4.3 Combining perspectives
Because the theories of Homan (2005), Jepson (2009) and Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) can be considered as a dynamic approach in the field of research it is interesting to compare the theories and to demonstrate how they relate to each other. By doing so, the cultural background of the manager can be place in a certain context. All three theories agree on the way in which individuals give 'meaning' to processes within the organization is essential for understanding specific behaviour of individual actors. In the theory of Homan, the individual actors give meaning to the processes of change within the organization. And, in the theories of Jepson and Ailon-Souday and Kunda, individual leadership behaviour across countries is explained by individuals' understanding of leadership behaviour and by the construction of national identity.

Homan (2008) describes the way in which people give meaning to what is really going on in the organization, these processes are constructed off stage within micro-communities (petri-dishes is metaphor). Furthermore, Jepson (2009) claims national origin was found to be just one of many contextual factors influencing an individual's understanding of leadership. The study of Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) demonstrates cultural background, which is reflected in national identity constitutes a symbolic resource that is actively and creatively constructed by organizational members to serve social struggles, which are triggered by globalization.

How individuals give meaning to processes within the organization is partly influenced by their cultural background. Furthermore, individuals decide for themselves when and in which situation they refer to their cultural background as a 'symbolic resource' to overcome social struggles. In the process of change, employees for example can refer to their cultural background to create informal boundaries, while managers can refer to their cultural background to create communality and in this way deal with resistance. However, the national identity is only one 'symbolic resource' that helps individual actors to make sense of their global reality. In other contexts and moments in time, they will draw on other 'symbolic resources' to make sense of the global reality. As a result, cultural background is not fully driving leadership behaviour, but influences one's leadership style at certain moments in time within specific contexts. Furthermore, the study of Homan (2005) instructs us in the way that people give meaning to leadership behaviour which is constructed within informal networks of the organization, in which the construction of their reality is just partially influenced by ones cultural background.

It is important to note the GLOBE-study is valuable in understanding general differences between countries and leadership style. The researches of Jepson (2009), and Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) complement the contribution of previous researches such as the GLOBE-project. However, in the perspective of the research, it is important to be aware of the different contexts that are influencing managerial behaviour, since even within an international organization, it

may be the immediate, group-level context rather than the national context that drives leadership behaviour.

2.5   To conclude

In the previous paragraphs several theories are described, in which two theories focus on the process of change (Kotter (1996) and Homan (2008)), while the other two theories provided an answer to the question of how cultural background influences one's managerial role in the change process (GLOBE-project (House et al, 2004) and Jepson (2009)). Furthermore, the Organization X Way of Change Approach is visualized in figure 2.2 in section 2.1 of this chapter in order to understand how change management is approached within Organization X International. The figure demonstrates that the foundations of this approach is for the greater part corresponding to Kotter's (1996) traditional change management perspective.

The theory of both Kotter and the GLOBE-project derive from a more instrumental perspective, whereas the theories of Homan, Jepson and Ailon-Souday and Kunda represent a more dynamic perspective in which behaviour is explained by the way individuals give 'sense of meaning' to processes within the organization. In the theory of Homan (2008), the individual actors give meaning to the processes of change. In the theories of Jepson and Ailon-Souday and Kunda, individual leadership behaviour across countries is explained through individuals' understanding of leadership behaviour and through the way in which individuals construct national identity. Within this process the interaction between members of the organization is of major importance.

It is important to note that it is not my intention to analyze the data from the interviews based upon one's cultural background. However, Jepson (2009) and Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) contributed to previous researches such as the GLOBE-project, by providing the opportunity to place the manager's cultural background in context. Hence, they suggested the need to consider national origin in a more in-depth way via historical, educational and discourse-related factors. As a result, the dynamic perspective will be the basis for my research, in which the theory of Homan (2008) will be key. This implicates that the actual dynamics going on in the organization during the implementation of a change program are more important than the outcomes of the change program. Hence, the 'changes within the organization' will be substantially more relevant than the 'exterior features' of organizational change. Lastly, the concept of leadership needs to be seen as a social construct of all actors involved with an infinite number of contextual factors impacting on the construct 'leadership'. In the following chapter, methodological justification, this will explained in more detail.

Chapter 3 Methodological justification

This research can be defined as qualitative research. In general, two streams can be identified within qualitative research, the structural approach and the interpretative approach. The first focuses on characterizations regarding linguistic- and communication processes. Within this approach, ethno methodology and the discourse- and conversation analysis play an important role (Boeije, 2005). This research originates from the second stream, the interpretative approach.

The interpretive approach assumes that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them (Boeije, 2005). Interpretive researchers, hence attempt to understand phenomena by accessing the meanings participants have assigned to them. Interpretive methods of research start from the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and therefore applies equally to researchers. Hence, there is no objective reality, which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science (Boeije, 2005). Positivistly seen, scientists could rid themselves of their bias if they could grasp directly the facts about reality and objectively test various theories to determine which best explained these facts. Empirical observations and testing free from preconceptions are the means by which factors are ascertained and explained. Instead, interpretive research derives from the idea that researchers can never assume a value-neutral stance, and are always implicated in the phenomena under research.

For this study, this implicates that a person's perspective on reality can differ even though they are part of the same organization. Because I would like to research the variations in personal interpretations on a social phenomenon, I had to get in touch with the respondents in order to have access to the appropriate knowledge (Boeije (2005)). The interpretative approach can therefore be described as a subjective approach since the researchers` personal understanding of the entities as part of the research is necessary. Furthermore, this implicates that I am not value-neutral as a researcher. Knowledge claims and their assessment always take place within a framework, which provides the conceptual resources in and through which the world is described and explained. Therefore, I will never view reality directly as it in itself; rather I approach it from my own slant and with my own assumptions and preconceptions (Fay, 2006).

In order to have access to appropriate knowledge, qualitative researchers need to translate them to the world respondents are living and working in (Boeije, 2005). Since I will interview 16 individuals in Western- Central and Eastern Europe, it is not possible for me to physically step into their living environment. This can be seen as a limitation of the study. Since I am aware of this limitation I can try to minimize it as much as possible in advance. At least three days a week I was present at Organization X International and therefore I had access to (and was part of) the 'world of Organization X'. During this period, the department Global Commerce gave me insights regarding the 'Organization X way of working' in order to understand the relationship between Organization X International and the Operating Companies. This is valuable information since I am attempting to understand phenomena by accessing the meanings participants assign to me (Boeije, 2005). I have tried whenever possible to talk with the respondents face to face, in real life or using video conference. When this was not possible, I phoned them. Furthermore, I have spent a day within Organization X Netherlands to understand more about the daily business within an Operating Company. I have also utilized my own experiences within Global Commerce to analyze the results of the research. As such, I expect to minimize the limitation of the research.

3.1   Research instrument

One of the most common research instruments within qualitative research is *the interview.* It provides the researcher the possibility to interpret how 'senses of meaning' of individual actors are socially constructed. As a result, to collect data from the respondents, *semi- structured interviews* are held. Boeije (2005) provides the following characterization: "The structure of the semi-structured interviews is flexible. The interviewer can start with a defined questioning plan, but will shift in order to follow the natural flow of conversation. This structure allows the interviewer to deviate from the plan to pursue interesting tangents as well. The advantage here is being able to come away with all data you intended but also interesting and unexpected data that emerge".

Consequently, I developed two topic lists, which served as guidelines for the interviews; one for the Marketing Directors and one for the MT-1 employees. The Management team -1 employees are first in line to report to the Marketing Director. By interviewing this lower level provides insights in how the implementation of the program is experienced. Although the structure of the topic list is similar, the content of the questions are different. In the interviews with MT-1, both their earlier experiences with change programs and the Marketing Director's role within the change process were at issue. For example when asking the Marketing Director this question,

> (..) "How do you make sure the program will stick in the organization for the next few years?

 It was translated to a corresponding question for the MT-1 employees;

> (..) "What does your Marketing Director do in order to make a program stick in the daily business, even after three years? "

In the first part of the interview I have asked questions regarding a program called Sky. Sky is a financial program created by Global Commerce, which aims to gain a mind shift. Firstly, I have asked whether they consider Sky as change program, and if not, if they could give an example of other change programs developed by Global Commerce that they have worked on in the past. By doing so, only the programs *they* marked as 'change program' were discussed. Consequently, we have discussed several other change programs as well. The content of these other programs are shortly described in the next chapter. Together we decided the route of the interview in which the natural flow of the conversation was more important than the defined questioning plan. This way of interviewing is in line with the vision of Boeije (2005) on semi-structured interviews as described above. For a detailed understanding of the discussed topics, I refer to enclose 1 & 2 where both topic lists are represented.

How
The interviews were conducted via videoconference, phone and when possible, face to face at Organization X International in Amsterdam. The spoken language in the interviews is English and the duration of the interviews is about 1 hour.

When
The interviews took place within a period of three weeks, from the 25th of May till the 9th of June.

3.2   Research population

The total amount of respondents included 16 respondents, 8 respondents from Western Europe and 8 respondents from Central and Eastern Europe. The cultural program Global Commerce is developing will first be implemented in these two Regions, and therefore I included these Regions in the research as well. The research population consists of two groups in the OpCo, based on their managerial level. The first group consists out of Marketing Directors. The second

group consisted of people in the Marketing Department reporting to the Marketing Director (MT-1). The Marketing Directors are part of the research population because they are closely concerned with the implementation of the change programs developed by Global Commerce. Furthermore, within the field of Marketing and Commerce they hold the highest position within the OpCo. Since the MT-1 employees report to the marketing Director, interviewing the MT-1 employees provides insights into the way the implementation of the program is received. In selecting the respondents, I took into account whether the respondents have been working on other change programs developed by Global Commerce in the past (e.g.: Sky). As mentioned above, this program served as one of the examples the respondents could refer to during the interviews. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the respondents, the Region and Country they work in.

Function	Region	Country
Marketing Director	Central and Eastern Europe	Austria
MT-1 employee	Central and Eastern Europe	Austria
Marketing Director	Central and Eastern Europe	Croatia
MT-1 employee	Central and Eastern Europe	Croatia
Marketing Director	Western Europe	France
MT-1 employee	Western Europe	France
Marketing Director	Central and Eastern Europe	Greece
MT-1 employee	Central and Eastern Europe	Greece
Marketing Director	Western Europe	Ireland
MT-1 employee	Western Europe	Ireland
Marketing Director	Western Europe	Italy
MT-1 employee	Western Europe	Italy
Marketing Director	Western Europe	Netherlands
MT-1 employee	Western Europe	Netherlands
Marketing Director	Central and Eastern Europe	Serbia
MT-1 employee	Central and Eastern Europe	Serbia
Marketing Director	*Central and Eastern Europe*	*Poland*

Figure 3.1 Overview respondents

How

A person from Global Commerce introduced me to the Marketing Directors. Via email she explained the content of the interviews and underlined the importance to cooperate with the research. Since I was also interested in interviewing a key person reporting to the Marketing Directors, we asked them for a related reference from MT-1. As a result, all the Marketing Directors cooperated and referred to a key person reporting to them. Based upon this first email contact, I was responsible for scheduling the interviews with the respondents. A few days before the interviews took place, I sent an email to inform them about the content of the interviews.

3.3   Analysis of data

Boeije (2005) defines the process of analysis as; "Qualitative analysis is the segmenting of data into relevant categories and the naming of these categories with codes while simultaneously generating the categories from the data. In the reassembling phase the categories are related to one another to generate theoretical understanding of the social phenomenon under study in terms of the research question". The qualitative research process is characterized by altering between data collection, data analysis and sampling. According to Boeije (2005) these activities cannot be strictly separated, as the researcher jumps backwards and forwards between them. Therefore, the procedure of data collection and analysis is referred to as a cyclical, spiral-shaped, iterative or recursive research processes. This is contradictive to a linear quantitative research. The approach being used during this research is based upon the principle of constant comparison. Many researchers regard constant comparison to be the researcher's most important mental activity and it is inevitably linked to an approach in which data collection and data analysis are alternated (Boeije, 2005). One of the most important tools in analyzing data is coding, which is important as a way to explore and interpret the data and is seen as the most important aid in conducting an analysis (Boeije, 2005).

In analyzing the data I started with open coding and axial coding methods to break up the data into smaller parts. In this first phase I formulated up to around 30 different codes. Then I have proceeded by using selective coding methods, which facilitates reassembly of the data. During the open coding process, all data I had collected up to that point were divided into fragments. These fragments were compared among each other, grouped into categories, and labeled with a unique code. By means of axial coding I have related categories to subcategories, specify the properties and dimensions of a category, and reassembling the data I have classified during the initial coding process, to give coherence to the emerging analysis.

However, I had difficulty in the process of coding described above. In order to reduce all the sub codes back to 4 central themes, I had to revise some of the subcategories I had formulated before. For this reason I had to follow the process of open coding and axial more than once. Finally, in the last phase of coding, selecting coding, I formulated several themes (e.g. change management, engagement, implementation and cultural context) which are used as a guideline in order to write the next chapter in which the data of the research are represented. The theory of Boeije (2005) is used in the coding process through the program MAXQDA 2010, a program which is helpful in analyzing data.

3.4.1 Use of literature

A fundamental research dilemma arises in deciding how to use literature in qualitative research (Karsten & Tummers, 2008). Using literature in the first stage of the research can be risky, because the researcher's focus could be limited to exclusively using the issues presented in literature. However, literature can provide direction to the research as well by offering conceptual clarity and serving as guideline in developing the research question (Karsten & Tummers, 2008). According to the authors, the motives for using literature in qualitative research must be clear. The theoretical framework was constructed after the interviews were conducted. By doing so, I have tried not to be limited by theoretical viewpoints when conducting the interviews. However, in the process of coding and analyzing the data I have jumped backwards and forwards between theory and data. As such, theory has fulfilled an important role in analyzing the data of the research. In chapter 4 (data chapter) the literature is used in order to clarify the statements made by the respondents. As a result, the two theoretical perspectives, the static and the dynamic perspective serve as a thread throughout chapter 4: The road to change.

3.5   Reliability and validity

I have undertaken several actions in order to estimate reliability. Firstly, in order to develop the topic lists I read several documents regarding the different programs developed by Global Commerce. This provided me insight into the structure and the content of the programs. I have read Organization X's annual rapport 2009 to gain an impression about what is going on within Organization X in that specific year. I have participated in a workshop regarding Sky as well. By doing so, I have tried to get a better understanding about the 'Organization X language' as spoken by the respondents.

Secondly, I tested the questionnaire on a person working in Global Commerce. She used to work as a Marketing Director in the Operating Company Australia where she had to implement Sky into her original work activities. Because she could review the questionnaire from both a corporate and a Marketing Director perspective, and because she was familiar with Sky, this made her the perfect person to test- interview. After the test- interview I have changed some of the questions according to the received feedback. Due to a time limit of one hour to interview the respondents, I decided to send an information email regarding the content of the interview beforehand. In this email, I underlined the importance of talking about the soft side of change management instead of talking about the content of the change programs;

> *The questions in the interview are about change programs developed on corporate level and in specific ownership, endorsement and implementation requirements for the local team. Examples of a change programs may be Star or Commercial Competencies. Objective of the interview is to learn more about how Marketing Directors implement the change program into the daily business and how they manage this process, (this is called change management). Therefore, the questions in the interview are about the soft side of management and not about the content of the different programs.*

The topics in the topic lists were checked by several figures within Organization X International as well. They also helped me to operationalize the main question. For this reason "translation process" is operationalized in endorsement, ownership and implementation. These three terms are 'generally known' within Organization X and therefore form the bases within all change programs of Organization X. This is emphasized as well from the side of Organization X International as from the side of the respondents. Furthermore, the interviews were taped and all the interviews were fully typed up. Then they were analyzed, as described in section 3.4, with help from the program MAXQDA 2010, a program that is helpful in analyzing qualitative data.

3.5.1 Validity

I have taken several steps in order to estimate validity as well. Firstly, I have experienced the limitations on time and scale of the research in relation to answer the second part of the main question based upon empirical analyses: how is the cultural background of the managers influencing their managerial role in the change process? A lot of cross cultural management research has been done regarding the influence of cultural background on the way the managerial role is fulfilled in different countries. These researches are far more complete and informative than I can ever achieve in 16, one-hour video- interviews, in which I also have to focus on the "translation process of change programs". In order to reach the best result, I have decided to focus the interviews mainly on the "translation process of change programs". Hence, to research the influence of the cultural background of Marketing Directors on the way they fulfill their managerial role cross-cultural management literature is used.

It could be that the discussed topics are politically sensitive within Organization X. As such, it can happen that the respondents provide socially desirable answers. To estimate the validity of the research I have chosen to interview both the Marketing Directors and the people, who work in a more decentralized level in the marketing chain. Since MT-1 is reporting to the marketing Director, interviewing this level provided me with the ability to cross reference the data to check

whether their answers were in line with each other. In address to the external validity it is not my intention to generalize the results to other situations and persons within the organization. However, it is my intention to find communalities in the results, which can lead to interesting and relevant insights for Global Commerce. Since I was also an employee at Organization X International it is possible that I was influenced in my role as researcher. As a result, I decided not to write the actual thesis during my internship.

3.6   Role as researcher

't Hart & Boeije (2005) argue that a researcher is not able to observe neutrally, since every researcher approaches a research through his own lens. By this they mean that a researcher interprets statements and results from his own perspective, his own conceptual framework (Fay, 1996). Particularly in qualitative research, the conceptual framework of the researcher holds an important position. Qualitative research is, after all, imbued with sense making and interpretation and beside, the researcher collects data through direct contact with respondents and observation. Although the researcher is not able to be value-free, he can try, in favour of the validity of the research, not to be judgemental and leave minimal room for his preferences (t Hart et al. (2005). When the researcher does not do this the risk of prejudice arises, by Cambridge Dictionary (2011) explained as: '*an unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge'.* It is therefore important that the researcher is aware of his cognitive framework and perspective, which he 'uses' during the research. This is not easy since the researcher is influenced by unconscious processes, such as environmental factors or associations with previous experiences. When the researcher is aware of his own perspective, the risk of prejudice reduces, and this adds to the quality of the research (t Hart et al, 2005).

I have also pursued the research with certain understandings about the respondents and had certain ideas concerning the outcomes. For example, I assumed without asking explicitly, that clear differences between how the Marketing Directors fulfil their management role, based upon their cultural background would emerge from the interviews. Furthermore, from the theories which are used to analyse the data, I believe the traditional view to change management is too static. I have therefore utilized a more dynamic approach to give meaning to the data of the research (theories of Homan (2005& 2008), Jepson (2009) and Ailon Souday & Kunda (2003). This example and on the whole the use of certain theoretical approaches, show that scientific research (theoretical framework, structure of the topic list, interpretations of the research data) always originates from a certain perspective, in this case a theoretical point of view. This perspective is formed through the content and the formulation of the theoretical framework and the from there following theoretical approaches as bases for the analyses. In other words, how I have approached the research and how this is displayed in the research, forms the perspective of me as researcher, and is therefore part of my reflection as researcher.

It is also important to indicate that I experienced difficulties during the research with regard to remaining aware of my own perspective and not being influenced by environmental factors. This is probably connected to my double role in the organization, namely as an intern and researcher. Instead of approaching this as a negative aspect of the research, I have tried to add these experiences to the data. I will elaborate on this subject in the discussion and reflection.

Chapter 4 The road to change

In this chapter, the data of the research is presented. The data of the research is derived from the interviews with the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees, and my own experiences within Global Commerce. Furthermore, the data is interpreted using the divergent theories as described in chapter 2, Change in perspective. The chapter is structured in how the change programs normally are developed. Therefore, in the first paragraph a more general level is described, while the second and third paragraph will go from outlines into details; we descend to the level of the OpCo's. Finally, in the last paragraph is explained how the cultural context influences the managerial role within the process of change.

4.1   A traditional view to change management

According to the majority of the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees, change management is needed in order to successfully adapt to changes coming either from the market and society, as to the change programs developed by Organization X International. These changes will affect the organization, and more important, the people working in the organization. In order to succeed in implementing the changes in the organization, both Marketing Directors and MT-1 employees believe the employees have to accept the change and tailor their behaviour to the requirements of the change. Furthermore, almost all respondents seem to make a distinction between a change in behaviour on the one side, and a change in mindset on the other side, in which mindset is explained as a change in mentality. In general the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees seem to believe the behaviour of the employees will change automatically when the mindset of the employees change. And it is the change manager's job to accomplish this mindset change. One of the Marketing Directors explains for example;

> (..)"I definitely believe it is possible to change one's mindset. I really think you can give people eye-openers. That they truly gain better and new insights.. Which actually make them switch their mindset permanently." *Marketing Director*

Several respondents believe it to be an extremely difficult and challenging task implementing change into the organization. They have experienced that people are all too often refractory to changes and can offer resistance to the changes. In several interviews it was found that coping with resistance and dispelling resistance, are regarded as the most important tasks of the change manager. One of the MT-1 employees explains in this respect;

> (..)"People are reluctant to change and therefore you have to manage expectation, manage people, involve them and inform them. That has to be part of the change, because when people are not involved and do not understand and feel the need to change, then we have no change. Actually we might have some small or major disaster." *MT-1*

It is noticeable that the respondents define the concept of change management as what is called by Homan (2008), planned change. The manager is responsible for the implementation and the success of the change and the change programs are one of the tools to implement the changes into the organization. This prevailing thought of the respondents seems to be strongly in line with the traditional view as described by, among others Kotter (1996). One of the main features in the traditional view is the dominant role of the change manager within the process of change. Every single person in the organization will react to the manager in the same way, under the condition that the manager will follow a certain amount of preconceived steps (Greatz & Smithz, 2009). Hence, the traditional view implicates that changes within the organization are manageable and can be predicted. Based upon the interviews, the Organization X Way of Change model and my own experiences within Global Commerce, Organization X International, I would venture to state that this thought deriving from the traditional approach is dominant in Organization X; changes are manageable and can be predicted. And it is the task of the manager to implement the changes into the organization. One of the Marketing Directors expresses this aptly when he explains what change management means;

(..)"Change management is to align the local organization, the people for an organization to a new vision or to a new program. In my case it is to be sure that people of my department understand why we have to change something, so why we decide we make this decision and how these decisions will have impact on their daily business. Then align all their daily business to get the program implemented as soon as possible, but most of all in the most efficient way." *Marketing Director*

In this respect it is interesting to amplify on why I believe this vision to be dominant within Organization X, based on my own experiences within Global Commerce. I have experienced it was hard for me to distance myself from the idea that changes are implemented step by step through a preconceived plan and not to be biased by it after my half year internship at Global Commerce. I was mainly confronted with this when analyzing and writing the data- chapter of the research. During this period I met with difficulties in approaching the data of the research through a divergent vision to change management, oppose to the vision of Global Commerce. The first data-chapter was therefore more of a blueprint for Organization X, in which was described how the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees implemented the change programs of Global Commerce step by step into the OpCo's. Although this chapter was probably very useful for Organization X, my professor of the University Utrecht made me aware that I might be biased by the vision of Global Commerce concerning change management when I had written this data chapter. Only when I became aware of my own behaviour and the role Organization X had played in it, it was possible to write a new data chapter based upon divergent vision to change management. Thus, founded on my own behaviour and the difficulties I have run into, I have experienced this vision to be dominant within Global Commerce.

It is interesting to position the dynamic vision of Homan (2008) against the planned change perspective as represented above. Homan (2008) states it almost impossible to manage, plan or predicted changes in advance. This thought derives from the conception that besides the planned organizational changes occurring on the outside of the organization, at the same time spontaneous changes are taking place within the organization. The employees in the organization give in interaction with each other meaning to processes around them. By doing so, they construct their own perception of reality. Through this process of interaction certain 'clouds of meaning' may arise in the organization and be gathered over the organization. These clouds constitute and determine how people really perceive the changes in the organization. Consequently, nothing will change in the organization if anything the 'clouds of meaning' do not change, Homan (2008) argues. Through this dynamic process of reality construction changes within the organization could therefore not be planned or predicted in advance. The planned changes will only have a possible influence on the process of meaning construction.

4.1.1 Global Commerce' change programs

Changes within Organization X are implemented on a broad scale with the help of change programs. These change programs are developed at the Head Office, Organization X International in order to bring about an identical change in the various Operating Companies (OpCo's). At one time, the programs cover specific Regions in the world (e.g. Western-Europe, Central and Eastern Europe), the other time they cover the entire world. This implicates that the change programs can have a reach of more than 170 countries around the world (annual rapport, Organization X International). Several respondents explain the change programs contribute to the creation of a common and shared Language and a Common Way of Working. By this they refer to a common language, which can be spoken and is understood in all OpCo's, regardless of the market in which the OpCo operates or the country where the OpCo is established. Since Organization X can be characterized as international organization and the OpCo's mainly operate from a local level, the respondents underline the importance of certain change programs developed at a global level. One of the Marketing Directors explains why it is important to speak the same Language;

(..)" I believe we develop a Common Language through these kinds of programs. Because several countries participate in these programs, we create a Common Way of Working. Of course you always have a certain degree of local interpretation and local responsibility. But I think it is more important when the organization grows at international level and we have international meetings as well.... that we all speak the same language. And that we do these programs together". *Marketing Director*

Remarkable about this statement is that on the one side several Marketing Directors indicate they find it important to create a Common Way of Working and to speak the same Language. However, on the other side several interviews show they aren't always willing to cooperate with the change programs. One of the Marketing Directors explains, for one, it is hard for Global Commerce to implement the change programs in a structured way into the OpCo's since the OpCo's are not always willing to cooperate;

(..)"But rarely have we been able....it is also the countries....to implement things in a real regimented way...The OpCo's aren't always willing to cooperate in, this is a good program and this is something we are going to do". *Marketing Director*

In addition, another situation seems to arise concerning the creation of this 'Common Language' and 'Common Way of Working'. One of the Marketing Directors explains he met with difficulties in retaining the global nature of the program once the program is rolled out in his OpCo. It turns out the adaptation from the OpCo to the change programs is normally so strong, that at the end of the day only few of the original program remains. As a consequence, the 'Common Language' and the 'Common Way of Working' have not taken shape as planned. According to the Marketing Directors the cause and effect for this problem can be found in the role Global Commerce adopts in such like change programs. In his opinion they should adopt a more leading role, whereby the global nature of the program remain. What precedes is reflected in the following quote;

(..)"The system we have always used in Organization X was a system in which we were looking for a common background and we tried to be very flexible in applying global programs to the local needs. Every time a Global initiative arrives at the local level, you support some fine- tuning and customize this global initiatives. I think we miss a little bit of global vision and especially global input in a very strong way. To say, hey from this point, we can discuss and we can find an alignment, and this program we want to develop it exactly like this. You have to implement it the best way possible, yes. But you cannot change the program itself because otherwise you do not have anything that is global anymore. Because sometimes the adaptation, it was so strong that from the original program by the end of the process remain very, very few." *Marketing Director*

In this respect it is interesting to view the above outlined discrepancy concerning the 'Common Language' and the 'Common Way of Working', through the perspectives of Kotter (1996) and Homan (2008). Taking Kotter's departure from the idea that change is manageable, it is quite understandable the Marketing Director find their explanation in the role Global Commerce adopts in the change program. Making adjustments in certain aspects of the program (in this case a more leading role for Global Commerce), will affect the outcomes of the program. However, proceeding from Homans perspective it is understandable that the program does not "land" in the organization as intended by the designers of the program. The way people give meaning to the change program form the basis of their actions, instead of the program determining how people will act and behave. In this case it could mean the employees have assigned their own meaning to the change programs, whereby the global nature of the program vanished after the program was incorporated in their own organization. Homan (2008) suggest, after all, when people give meaning to something they are naturally inclined to consider their own meaning as the best and most true version.

4.1.2 Program vs. Change program

At the beginning of this study I was under the impression that all the programs Global Commerce develop could be considered as change programs. However, during my test-interview with a representative of Global Commerce, also former Marketing Director in the Operating Company Australia, I found he distinguished a program on the one side from a change program on the other side. The interviews also found both Marketing Directors and MT-1 employees designate one program as a change program and the other as a normal program. In this respect it is important to explain which aspects make a normal program a change program according to the respondents. With regard to the characterization of the programs as change programs the two principles appear to be: the more the respondents are personally affected by the program, the more they designate the program as a change program. And, the longer ago the program was implemented in the organization, the less they characterized the program as a change program. Corresponding are the characterizations they apply to define a change program, for example "changing the way we do business", "a new direction", "a new involvement" and "changing mentality". The following quotes show the same program is characterized differently by two persons. Remarkable are the similar characterizations they attribute to describe to a change program;

> (..)" I do not really consider Sky as change program. This was an example of changing hard things without having to change the soft scales. It was: okay, it comes as fact that we need to concentrate the efforts on Sky. Our OpCo has always performed very well in terms of EBIT and therefore it was not a dramatic change in our organizational culture. Changes are more difficult when they are related to your personal habits on the job and the way you do things." *MT-1*

> (..)" Sky is a typical change program, yes. Because it changes the attitude and the angle in which we view the business. It helps you think differently. For me who has experience working for P&G and Johnson and Johnson it is not a radical change, but for the OpCo I now work in it is." *Marketing Director*

Since I only wanted to discuss those programs the respondents would characterize as change program, I asked them what program they would typify as a change program. Thereby, a total amount of 5 different change programs has passed in review, namely: Sky (financial program), Moon (program which influences how brands are developed and measured), Ocean (program oriented only towards Eastern Europe), Sun (HR-program focused on function development), and Star (cultural change program). In the manner in which the respondents define the various change programs, a distinction seems to arise between Sky, Moon, Ocean and Sun, and the cultural change program Star. Several respondents have indicated that the four programs mentioned first relate to a smaller group in the OpCo, primarily the employees working in the marketing department. They maintain that these change programs affect a small part of the organizational culture. However, the cultural change program is aimed towards changing the entire organizational culture of the organization. Based upon this it can be inferred that the cultural change program will probably affect the greater part of the organizational culture, compared to the other 4 programs. Interesting about the above findings is the present dominant view that a cultural change program can affect and change the culture of the organization. These statements also underline that changes within Organization X are approached as static and manageable. It also seems to differentiate per program whether the Management Team (MT) is involved in the development of the change programs. Several Marketing Directors argue they have been involved in the development of the cultural change program, while they have only had limited involvement in other programs. One of the Marketing Directors explains he has been frequently involved in the designing phase of the cultural program;

> (..)"In our OpCo, we have a large team of people so we can dedicate to resources to these programs. If I look to the involvement of our OpCo in Star...There are 10 groups in Star, we are involved in 9 groups. Our organization allows us to have the decade resources and involvement of people within projects." *Marketing Director.*

The change programs developed by Global Commerce can be placed within the axis- figure of Homan, as shown in figure 2.3, at the top left-hand corner. The explanation can be found by taking a closer look at the two different axes within the axis figure, starting with the axis planned vs. spontaneous change. The programs developed by Global Commerce have a powerful planned nature since every program is aiming to change something in the strategy or the structure of the OpCo. In addition, within every change program a time line is charted which subscribes when and how to take what steps within the process of change. Moreover, within each change programs KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) are incorporated for both the employees of Global Commerce who develop the program, as the managers and employees working in the OpCo. By means of achieving or not achieving the KPI's will be decided whether the program can be considered as successful. The axis monovocal vs. polyvocal is the other axis Homan (2008) has included in his figure. It is typical with references to the change programs of Global Commerce that they are developed by a small group of people and have the aim to change a very large group of people. Therefore, in the early stages of the change process, the change programs have a strong monovocal nature. One of the most striking features of the change programs is the allotted role of the Marketing Director when implementing the change programs in his OpCo. In the following paragraph we therefore descend to the level of the OpCo in order to analyse what happens when it descends into the OpCo.

4.2   The meaning and the change

In the interviews the Marketing Directors and MT-1 employees were frequently asked about what they consider as important aspects of the change programs. It seems the Marketing Directors and MT-1 employees assign certain meaning to various aspects of the change programs. Homan (2008) explains the process of meaning (sense making) as a conscious and unconscious process of selecting (to what do we give attention, to what do we focus and to what not) and appreciation (what do we find important and what not) of the dozens of stimuli which take their course to people every day. This conscious and unconscious process of selection and appreciation leads to a construction of reality: in interaction with each other, people develop certain ideas about reality and they consider this reality to be the only reality, the truest reality. And specifically because of this process of reality construction, it is impossible to predict the outcomes of a change program, Homan states (2008). How people behave is based upon the process of meaning (sense making), this is most of the time an unconscious process, and therefore it is almost impossible to manage or control someone's behaviour. Based upon this theory it is interesting to have a closer look at the meanings the respondents have assigned to two frequently mentioned themes in the interviews, namely: autonomy and engagement. According to the majority of the respondents exactly these factors determine how much they are willing to cooperate with the change program.

4.2.1 Autonomy

Owing to the fact that the change programs are not developed by the OpCo's, several Marketing Directors explain they find it important to have a certain extent of autonomy in the change programs. One of the Marketing Directors elucidates autonomy means the OpCo's having the freedom to adopt the program to the markets in which they operate. He also argues autonomy is important in order to oppose the dominant feeling of 'again something on top of our daily work'. If the program is fully fixed and there's no room for changes (thus when there's no autonomy) the employees feel they have no influence on the change program. When the employees have the feeling they cannot influence the change program, the feeling the change is imposed will be dominant, rather than the change being something they want to do;

> (..)"Therefore is it always very important that you have a certain freedom for the OpCo to incorporate the OpCo needs. Otherwise if 100% of the program is given...okay they will fill in the tables and they will follow and literate the program but in the end they will only think, we have to do this. They do not see the benefit, but they will only feel...we have to do it." *Marketing Director*

The MT-1 employees endorse this statement as well. The vast majority of the MT-1 employees stress the importance of wanting to work with the change program because they have chosen to do so of their own accord rather than being forced to do. They also have a desire to have influence in the change process. One of the MT-1 employees explains the worst reason to implement a change into the OpCo; *the worst reason to implement a change is because corporate says so."MT-1.* Deriving from the view of Homan (2008) it can be understood why the MT-1 employees do not want the program to be imposed from above. After all, their behaviour results from how they give meaning to processes around them. And, within this process they consider their meaning as the best, the truest. However, what is remarkable is that half of the MT-1 employees do not seem to know to what extent their OpCo has autonomy within the change programs developed by Global Commerce. Evidently, they do not directly relate the feeling of engagement to the degree of autonomy the OpCo has in implementing the change program. This indicates to ambiguity. The construction of meaning is enlarged in times of ambiguity. By strengthening meanings people indeed try to handle the situation. Furthermore, it can be noticed that several Marketing Directors assign different meanings to the concept of autonomy. It seems that some of them 'take' autonomy, whilst others much prefer to follow the preconceived change program of Global Commerce. One of the Marketing Directors explains he has implemented a change program in his OpCo, while he did not actually see the benefits for change. He therefore interprets the concept of autonomy as the headroom Global Commerce 'gives' him to implement the program in the way he desires;

> (..)" Yes, it happened that I had to implement a change in the organization where I did not really believe in. It was not that I could not necessarily see the benefits of embarking on the change and embedding it in the organization. But I felt the way it was almost mandated to be embedded was over-engineered and not suitable to the resourcing of my particular OpCo. What this means is...yes, I lead it through...yes I was forced to change, but I put a lot of water in my wine when it came to the full process, steps and templates to be used." *Marketing Director*

On the other hand, another Marketing Director explains he will never implement a change program which he doesn't fully approve of. He only picks out those aspects of a change program which will benefit to his OpCo. He knows Global Commerce probably doesn't like this, but he doesn't seem to care. In this situation the Marketing Director 'takes' the autonomy to implement only those aspects of change program suitable for his own policy; *"They give you this freedom? You take this freedom"*. The two quotes demonstrate that both Marketing Directors assign divergent meanings to the concept of autonomy. Autonomy implies for the first Marketing Director, getting the freedom from Global Commerce to implement the change program in one's own way. The fact that the program is developed by Global Commerce is an important reason for him to implement the full change program into the organization. Autonomy for the second Marketing Directors means, however, he imbibes the change program and subsequently picks out what he considers important for his OpCo. It is more important to him that the program meets the policy requirements of the OpCo, rather than fulfilling the obligation towards Global Commerce to implement the complete change program into his organization. The founder of their choice is not the program itself, but the meaning they assign to the program. Through this difference in sense making diversity exist in how they implement the program into their organization. After all, the first Marketing Director will try to implement the full program owing to how he constructs meanings, while the second Marketing Director will just implement certain aspects of the program. This is an important finding since the way they give meaning to the concept of autonomy will determine the further course of the change program. One of the questions occurring while interpreting this finding is also whether change can be planned, because of this process of sense making? After all, through the divergence meanings that are given to certain aspects of the change program, the planned character of the program seems to 'change' and cannot be predicted.

4.2.2 Engagement

To actually get going with the change program and to accept the change, the respondents explain, it is of great importance that they feel engaged with the change program. All employees, with no exceptions, meaning all the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees, believe they must feel engaged to the change program in order to accept the change. This is an important finding since one of the Marketing Directors and several MT-1 employees explain they can manipulate the change program in such a way that it will look like the change is implemented in the OpCo, but in reality nothing has changed. Without a certain degree of engagement to the change program it is more likely this will happen;

> (..)"What I meant before... I could be sending a report four times a year to the Regions and to Amsterdam saying... look this is the Sky report, and look these are the KPI's... but if I do not believe in the process, I will stick with our original procedures. Whereas, if I believe in the change and feel engaged to the change, I will undertake all the necessary measures to embed the changes, making them operational and a part of everyday life of the OpCo." *Marketing Director*

It is not surprising that engagement is important to bring about a successful change in the organization. Both Homan (2008) and Kotter (1996) emphasize the importance of employees being engaged to a change program. It is therefore interesting to see what different meanings the respondents award to the concept of engagement. The respondents have assigned divergent meanings to 'engagement', however, three aspects are mentioned in almost every interview, namely: acceptance, endorsement and ownership. I will briefly outline what different meanings the respondents have assigned to these three concepts, beginning with acceptance. One of the main conditions to accept a change, several respondents state, is that they have to see the benefits for change. On the one hand this means the change has to serve a useful purpose for the organization, but more often they mean they have to see the personal benefit for change: *"I need to see what's in for me" MT-1.* This seems to indicate that the majority of the respondents find it important to personally benefit from the change. One of the Marketing Directors explains in this connection that he has to see the need for change in order to get going with the change program;

> (..)"It is very important to understand where it comes from, why it is developed, what is the objective for the group and for the OpCo, how it could be useful not just for the group but for every member of the group. Otherwise, you can implement the program, but it will not last. It is important in this respect that people see what's personally in it for them". *Marketing Director*

Almost all respondents emphasize that besides acceptance, endorsement contributes to a feeling of engagement. According to the respondents, endorsement can be explained as the approval and involvement of the top management of Organization X working with the change program. For the Marketing Directors this means essentially the Board of Government and the CEO support the change. For the MT-1 employees this just mean their Management Team (Marketing Director is part of the MT), need to collectively support and stimulate the change. One of the Marketing Directors expresses this aptly;

> (..)"Yes, and not only the Marketing Director, but the whole Management Team. In order for change management programs to be implemented successfully the whole team needs to be involved from a top down orientation. I need the feeling that the whole company are thinking and working in the same direction. For me it is very important that first of all the MT is on board and then they can really pass this down to their employees and then on to their whole team." *Marketing Director*

Especially the MT-1 employees seem to value importance to how their managers deal with the change. Several MT-1 employees explain they find it important for the Marketing Director and the Marketing Team to set a good example within the change program. The Marketing Director therefore seems to fulfil an exemplary role in the change programs. One of the MT-1 employees

explains it would not be fair if the Marketing Director does not engage in the change process even though the employees do have to;

> (..)"I really believe that exemplarity is the key in these kinds of programs. Imagine that my manager says to me, you have to fill in the Ocean- form for all the members of my team and he doesn't do it for me, I would think it is unfair. I would think that I have to spend many hours on this program and I try to make it interesting for my team. I would really appreciate if he did the same for me. I think…. if they really want to implement such changes, they (MT) have to be the first to implement the changes in their life and in their way of working…" *MT-1*

Lastly, one of the Marketing Directors explains that he increasingly considers endorsement from above as important. The past has shown that several change programs were endorsed by the entire organization at the beginning of the change process but in the course of the change process this was no longer the case. The Marketing Director was not aware of this fact. It seems to be that this experience with a lack of endorsement makes him more sceptical to the change programs coming from the Head Office;

> (..)"Yes, absolutely. In addition, endorsement becomes even more important, because we had to many Pipo de Clown programs in the past. Bad experiences make people obviously more cautious. When you have jumped three times in a row enthusiastically on top of the program as first early adopter, and put a lot of time and energy into it, but halfway through the project actually seems to be no longer supported by the rest of the organization…. Then the next time you think… hoho." *Marketing Director*

The issue of autonomy has been described that the feeling of "an extra weight on top of our daily tasks and activities" is prevalent. This statement is confirmed by the MT-1 employees. It seems they find it important not to be forced into change and to have a certain extent of influence on the course of change. This prevailing thought can be linked to the concept of ownership. Here a distinction can be made between being an owner of change program and feeling like an owner of a change program. One of the Marketing Directors explains that the CEO of the organization is the official owner of all change programs since he is the one who has final responsibility for the change programs;

> (..)"Everyone in this company owns the brand of Organization X, because everyone loves the brand. But in the end of the day the Kaiser in charge and responsible for the brand is the Global Commerce Director and on top of that is the CEO." *Marketing Director*

However, several respondents explain they are all in favour of achieving a sense of ownership of the change program. And, it appears several of them have felt owner of a change program. This goes for the Marketing Directors as for the MT-1 employees. The feeling of ownership is explained by several respondents as: *"it is our program, our change, and it is not something we have to do because someone else tells us." MT-1*. One of the MT-1 employees explains the feeling of ownership is one of the main conditions to feel engaged to the change program;

> (..)"I would say that we were deeply engaged to the program rather than the feeling we have to do it. Obviously, we have to do it; there was no question about it. The feeling was that we are doing it in a way that it really does make a difference. Not that somebody ordered us to do something. We really took the whole program as something that we have developed and were a part of." *MT-1*

The feeling of ownership seems to refer to the relation between the OpCo and Global Commerce. Global Commerce is after all in this respect the one who 'enforces' the OpCo's to work with the change programs. This topic will be examined further in the paragraph 'experiences from the past'. Furthermore, several quotes from both the Marketing Directors as the MT-1 employees prove the degree in which they feel owner of a change program is declined by the various consultancy agency visiting the OpCo. One of the MT-1 employees explains he felt engaged to a

change program since his OpCo had the freedom to work on one's own with the change program. These experiences are key when determining what changes should be made in the OpCo, as opposed to a consultancy agency determines;

> (..)"Why this program worked and what is very important in this program; we presented and trained people to that program. Not some consultants from the UK or what so ever, come here and spend one day, listen what we have to tell and then go away...There was more interaction and engagement, because we were the ones presenting the program. So it felt like our program. It looked as though the program was developed in our local OpCo." *MT-1*

4.2.3 Experiences from the past
It is noteworthy that most of the statements and meanings given by the respondents are found in previous experiences with change programs developed by Organization X International. Deriving from a research Homan (2008) has done in an international operating consultancy agency, it turned out that employees in about three-quarters of the duration of the change process do not respond to the actual change process itself. Almost immediately after the change was announced people associate the change program with a previous change program, 5 years before. One concluded swiftly: 'the last time was not a huge success, this will probably be the same this time'. Besides the above statement, the following quote seems to subscribe the vision of Homan (2008) that how people give meaning is biased by experiences from the past. One of the Marketing Directors established a felicitous expression for this;

> (..)"In an operation a lot of things are happening at once....this one I found great....but then it is so difficult to make this really concrete...and even before you have started it you are afraid: is this worth the energy or will I be surprised this is not the model we are going to work with and it is a new one the day after tomorrow. I think this has happened to many times in the past in order to have faith in it." *Marketing Director*

It has struck me that the respondents frequently refer to negative situations from previous change programs. This is an important finding for Global Commerce since they play the leading roll. In this respect it is interesting to single out a quote, all the more I became aware of my own role and the way I obliging myself to the policy of Global Commerce. On numerous occasions respondents saying they felt they give a lot to Global Commerce concerning the change programs. However, they do not get enough back in return from Global Commerce, for example in the form of feedback. This stimulates the sense of: *'again something on top of our daily job'* and cut across the feeling of ownership and therefore the feeling of engagement. One of the Marketing Directors explains;

> (..)"I think that some other colleagues may consider this as one more thing from corporate that we have to do. I see it as an improvement of my daily work. All this templates and formats from corporate that we have to deliver is something that came from corporate in order to be used for them...Because I think....we got templates we have to fill in, we do recommendations, and we spend a lot of time on the programs...But we are not getting maybe enough feedback. Yes, we did it. It is presented somewhere. Yes, we should continue doing that... but all the comments that we made, all the little things that we did should be received as read and that someone react to that. That happens not in all the programs. Why do people think in this way...again something on top? Because we are not getting enough feedback and learning's back from corporate." *MT-1*

In one of the interviews I was asked whether I would be willing to share the results of the study with the respondents. The MT-1 employee stated he had devoted one hour of his time to Global Commerce and thought he would probably get nothing back in return, for example in the form of feedback. Although I knew the results of this research would most likely not be shared with the respondents by Global Commerce, I nevertheless told him I did not know what would happen with the results. Evidently, at that moment I was part of the organizational culture of Global Commerce since I adapted myself to how Global Commerce interacts with the OpCo's. Deriving from my own behaviour it appears that moments of feedback and openness towards the OpCo's

is not integrated much into the culture of Global Commerce. The following quotes stem from the end of the conversation with the MT-1 employee and me and underline the above statement;

> MT-1: (..)"After the interviews do we receive a report or does it just end up in corporate?"

> Annelies: (..)"I do not know. I am doing this interview for corporate but I do not know whether they have decided yet to share the results with the OpCo's."

> MT-1: (..)"This is exactly my point. I talk to you in this interview. What will be the next steps of our interview here, of our organization?"

> Annelies: (..)"I cannot give you an answer. I am doing this interview for corporate and I cannot make the decision what they are going to do with it in the end."

> MT-1: (..)"Okay, it was very nice talking to you and we hope that we receive something about this interview."

4.2.4 Double meaning engagement

It is interesting to view the statements from the respondents concerning the theme engagement through the visions of Kotter (1996) and Homan (2008). At first glance, the way the respondents assign meanings to engagement seem to refer to the vision of Kotter (1996). After all, three out of his eight steps relate to generating engagement. Moreover, the change programs need to be implemented step by step, proceeding from the idea change can planned by following several preconceived steps. However, precisely the word "generating" proves the difference between the vision of Kotter (1996) and the vision of Homan (2008). According to Kotter (1996) engagement is something that needs to be managed and generated. He approaches engagement as something statically, as something that is not there yet, but need to be managed by the manager. However, the vision of Homan (2008) just assumes engagement is something that is there or not, depending on how employees give meaning to the various processes within the organization. The process of sense making determines whether they find the program useful and if they feel engaged to a change program. The employees will therefore only work with a change program when realising it entails a personal benefit, instead of the manager forcing them or telling them to participate in the change program.

A quote from one of the MT-1 employees is interesting in this respect since it strikingly convey the double meaning of the concept of engagement. Moreover, the quote implicates that besides the planned changes in the OpCo, spontaneous changes take place at the same time. The MT-1 employee believes self-starting engagement is the strongest form of engagement; *"I did not have to be engaged. I was already engaged since the initiative to bring about a change was taken by ourselves."* How the respondents give meaning to the concept of engagement seems to subscribe to the vision of Homan (2008). The planned nature of the change programs seems to 'change' through the different meanings that are given to various elements of the change program by the respondents. However, although Homan (2008) considers change as something that is almost impossible to manage, I find it interesting to examine how the Marketing Directors implement the change programs into the organization. Due to the above statement, beside the planned changes will be examine further how the spontaneous changes take shape within the OpCo's.

4.3   The planned change and the spontaneous change

The first part of the section is dedicated to describing how Marketing Directors implement the change programs into the organization. Homan (2008) argues that besides this planned changes, spontaneous changes take place simultaneously within the organization. These spontaneous changes are not forced, but proceed from the employees. The last quote of the previous paragraph seems to subscribe this thought. Since Homan (2008) claims this form of engagement is the strongest, I will pursue this matter after I have described how the Marketing Directors implement the change programs into the organization.

4.3.1 Managing change programs

The majority of the Marketing Directors believe they have to bring about the change together with the employees. They indicate they only have a supporting role in the change process and a top down approach to implement the changes in the organization is therefore in their opinion not always appropriate. One of the Marketing Directors explains in this respect he can have in his role as manager only a limited impact on the change process. For this reason, he argues, it is imperative for the employees to experiences what the change means for them;

> (..)"In my role as manager, I can only say to the employees, this is a great training, why you have to follow it, why it is important for us... but I think that people really feel it and see it and have to go through it, otherwise they cannot imagine and understand it. This helps in the motivation of people. This is my personal experience... people are much more motivated if they go through the process their self." *Marketing Director*

Another Marketing Director explains it is important to make the employees feel that they are the ones who bring about the change. He tries to show them change is not something which is forced by the manager, but that the employees will genuinely experience personal benefits from the change; *"What you need to say is: "Guys this is in your hands now. This is not in the Marketing Directors hands. This is your life. This is what you are learning in Organization X, what you are learning outside. I am just here telling you we should go in this direction, together, let's do it, these are the tools, let's make it happen."* The Marketing Directors seem to implement changes in the organization via trying to commit the employees to the change program by approaching them on a personal level. One of the Marketing Directors elucidate for example he tries to attune the change programs to the reality of the employees. In order to achieve this he believes it is important for the employees to have a certain degree of influence and input in the change program;

> (..)"We have to ensure that people are engaged in the shaping of the change. Not the what or the vision or the directions.... that, the people need from us, from the MT, from the Mother Company and the Region... but when it comes to how to implement changes in a specific OpCo, then allowing people the option to look at the best practice, but tailor it to their own reality and feel that they have contributed to the way of implementing it in our OpCo. This adds a lot to the changes of success." *Marketing Director*

It is interesting in this perspective to represent how the Marketing Directors try to create a feeling of engagement with their employees in order to implement the change programs into the organization. It is not surprising that all the Marketing Directors have their own management style. Furthermore, one of the Marketing Directors explains every change program needs a different approach; "*However, it really takes time to show people it helps both sides to build a better commercial calendar in the end. Different people require alternative approaches. Sometimes we send them materials upfront to discuss, whereas at other times we neglect to send materials to provoke bigger discussion on certain issues.* I do not believe this to be the correct place to examine in detail, differences in management style. Therefore, only the most salient features in how the Marketing Directors implement the change programs into the organization are clarified, namely: the train the trainer tool, using symbols, and communication during the implementation of the change program.

4.3.2 Train the trainer tool, symbolism and communication

The train the trainer tool means that around three employees of the OpCo attend a training of Global Commerce regarding the content of the change program. Thereupon they give trainings regarding this change programs to the employees of their own OpCo. The majority of the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees are enthusiastic about this change tool. They believe this change tool contributes to a feeling of ownership because not someone from outside the OpCo, but their own employees who are in charge of the change process. One of the Marketing Directors explains his enthusiasm about this tool because the employees are closer to

the employees on the shop floor then he is. Therefore, they are more informed concerning the activities on the shop floor: "*I think this is the best, because you have a kind of internal consultancy regarding Sky. They are closed to the people who have to work with Sky*". One of the MT-1 employees who acted as trainer in the change program Sky, explains he felt more involved in this specific change program, since he felt a strong connection to the program. One of the reasons for this was that his manager had 'selected' him to lead this change program;

> (..)"Not to praise myself or my two colleagues. Our Marketing Director selected us; because it was felt we were credible enough to transfer the knowledge to our colleagues. Three of my colleagues now have the knowledge and we are really eager to listen what they have to say to us. Everything happened in the right way". *MT-1*

Together with using the train the trainer program it also appears that several Marketing Directors utilize symbols in order to implement the change program into the OpCo. In the previous paragraph it describes that most of the respondents believe endorsement from the top management contributes to a feeling of engagement. For the majority of the MT-1 employees this means they find it important the change program to be fully supported by the Management Team of the OpCo. In the way the Marketing Directors are dealing with the change programs it appears they are aware of this. One of the Marketing Directors explains for example that at the beginning of each change program he get around the table with his Management Team to inform them of the upcoming change;

> (..) "The first thing that I do, alone or with the MT-member also involved… we sit together with the people who initiated the program and we understand first of all for ourselves how to handle the particular program." *Marketing Director*

Several MT-1 employees have also explained that their Marketing Director is present during the workshops. However, he does not take a prominent position or active role. He is merely present to answer the questions of the employees; "*Although the Marketing Director was not presenting the workshop, he was there to support and answering the questions I could not answer.*"*MT-1.* The presence of the Marketing Director during the workshops indicates to a certain symbolic strategy. In this respect, one of the Marketing Directors explains he can show the employees the change program is important to him and the organization via his presence during the workshops. One Marketing Director also tells he is aware that he has to set a good example to the employees. They therefore seem to be aware of the symbolic value of their actions;

> (..) "You have to set an example to the employees. I told my employees to go to a bar to search for the consumer. For this reason I have lately been to an outlet myself. *Marketing Director*

According to the majority of the Marketing Directors, the mode of communication during a change program is one of the most important means to generate engagement. They explain in this relation how important it is to keep communicating about the change program when implementing the change into the organization. "*You communicate in every discussion; let us make Sky analysis. You make sure that it is part of everyday life and then you need to practice what you preach. For me this is about everyday communication, everyday life.*" They say it is of interest to communicate about the change program during official moments (e.g. meetings, workshops), but more importantly the need to chat with the employees about the change programs in the corridor or during the lunch break, during similar informal moments within the organization. Several MT-1 employees indicate that this mode of communication contributes to a feeling of engagement since they do not feel they are forced by the Marketing Director to work with the change program. Instead, they say they felt challenged to get going with the change program.

Furthermore, most of the Marketing Directors find it important that the change program remains on the agenda of the OpCo to the increase the chance the change will stick in the organization for the next couple of years. This implicates that the developments in the change program need to be

discussed with the employees in almost all meetings. By doing so, so they explain, the employees will see the importance of the change program for the organization. However, the majority of the Marketing Directors declare that it is often impossible for them to keep the change program on the agenda of the OpCo. They say the Head Office (Organization X International) forces them to implement so many change programs per year, it becomes almost impossible to give full attention to all these change programs. This is an important finding since the degree of attention to a change program influences the success of a change program. Almost all Marketing Directors state it is not possible to implement more than two change programs per year;

> (..)"They have to make some choices, to decide what programs are really important.. Because we cannot implement 20 programs into the OpCo. That is a key point, if you want to implement big change management programs. Ideally one, and a maximum of two. *Marketing Director*

Within the classic planned change processes there is often rumour of a dominant manager who 'comes, sees and conquers', Homan (2008) argues. He identifies this mode of management as *power over*, in which the manager seems to adhere to the following statement: "my ideas need to be carried out by you people". However, the management styles of the Marketing Directors as appeared in the interviews, seems not to subscribe this *power over* thought. Moreover, their management style seems much more in line with what Homan (2008) calls *power to*. Instead of 'sitting and reigning at the top' the majority of the Marketing Directors just appear to apply the management style 'moving and travelling in between'. Besides the above description regarding the mode of communication during the change program, one of the quotes of the MT-1 employees emphasizes this thought as well;

> (..)"It is definitely not that some top-manager says: okay this is the way we are doing it right now and then everybody has to do it in this way. But, it is always the explanation behind, the reasoning so people understand why we are going to do this, what the change will bring in the end. How it is going to contribute to the daily business, but also how it is going to contribute to the people itself. I believe it is the right approach." *MT-1*

However, the solid character of the change programs is shown through one of the most important resources to implement the changes in the organization. All Marketing Directors say, as such, that KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) are one of the most important resources to implement changes into the organization. One of the Marketing Directors explain each meeting they discuss whether the employees have achieved their KPI's; *"Every month basically we are having a team meeting where we go through our KPI's, than we monitor on a the monthly bases how we are going, how, when and where we with the gabs".* Precisely by incorporating these KPI's, Homan (2008) argues, the room for employees to give substance to the construction of their meanings is denied. In this respect, I wonder to what degree the Marketing Directors can take into account all the different meanings the employees assign to the change program. Constructions of meaning are, after all, continue and changeable. Anticipating to meanings would implicate that this process of meaning construction is manageable and this doesn't seem to be the case. Proceeding from this point of view I find it interesting to show what can happen within an organization when one gives room to initiatives deriving from the employees.

4.3.3 Spontaneous changes
Generating the engagement of employees to the change program seems to be one of the most important tasks of a Marketing Director during the process of change. The end of the last paragraph briefly mentioned that one of the MT-1 employees feels highly engaged to a change when this change derives from his initiative. It is interesting to view this quote through the theory of Homan (2008). In the introduction of the research is described that Organization X is embarking on a journey to become a more consumer oriented organization. It therefore seems that Organization X adopts the view the organization is product oriented at the moment. However, proceeding from four interviews it appears both the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees are already strongly geared towards the consumer. It is remarkable that this surfaced

in moments where I did not directly ask them questions, thus not during the 'official interview'. Instead, this finding emerged when we were just talking informally about what they were doing in the OpCo. I find it interesting to further examine two of these conversations. Because precisely from these conversations it follows that engagement sometimes is not something that has to be generated by the manager. Moreover, these MT-1 employees seem to be already engaged to their own initiatives. Next to this, I also find it interesting to describe how the Marketing Directors have fulfilled their management role within this situation. It seems they gave the employees the room and supported them to get going with the initiatives to which they felt engaged, rather than managing and directing the initiatives. Within these situations, as so, it looks like the changes derive from inside out, instead of 'imposing' them from the outside, as Homan (2008) would argue. As such, both situations are illustrated below. One of the MT-1 employees told me he was planning an initiative which he and a few others in the OpCo had devised. He explains what the initiative is in the following quote;

> (..)"There was some agitation in the marketing department. We as group indicated...we are fed up about the particular arbitrariness to approvals...thus, only when you are friends with the boss your project will proceed.. Sorry, but that just cannot be happening in such a large organization? The four of us have reported this and thereupon our Marketing Director allowed us to getting to the bottom of the problem." *MT-1*

Since the initiative was generated internally by fellow employees, he explains, this sends a powerful signal to the other employees;

> (..)"The source is actually even more beautiful and simple. I believe the essence was the start...when we discussed this with the department, with the four people who stood up with, we believe we can do this totally different. I think this gives a powerful signal to the others since this initiative derives from our own team. Furthermore, this initiative was endorsed by the Marketing Director. Thus yes, it does have a flywheel effect". *MT-1*

The situation described in the quotes above seems to reflect where Homan (2008) refers to in his theory regarding micro-communities (petri-dishes). The group of four people of which the Marketing Director is part of represents a micro-community. Within a micro- community the interaction of people continues and conscious and unconscious meanings to processes in the organization are developed. In this instance the group of four people believe that nepotism pursue a bad policy. In particular the sentence 'there was agitation in the marketing department' indicates they have probably spoken about this to other people in the department as well. Through the fact that the four employees stood up in the organization and adapted to the different notes in the organization, the opportunity arises the prevailing cloud of meaning will turn. Precisely because of this strong movement, so the MT-1 employee explains, a flywheel effect comes into existence. It is interesting in this situation to view the concept of engagement alongside the concept of acceptance. In this case, the MT-1 employees do not have to be engaged to the change by the manager since the MT-1 employee is the one who initiated the change. Moreover, he doesn't have to be convinced about the usefulness of the initiative because he knows it adapts to what 'lives' in the marketing department at that moment.

It is also interesting to further examine the role of the Marketing Director in this situation. The MT-1 employee explains his Marketing Director gave him room to actually get started with the initiative. In the second paragraph is described that the respondents find it highly important the change is endorsed from above. According to the MT-1 employees, this combination of elements made it possible to implement the change successfully into the marketing department. How the Marketing Director executes the management role in this situation seems to be in line with Homan's description of the power to management role. The Marketing Directors contributes the success to the infrastructure in which suchlike local self-organizing processes can easily evolve. Also in the other situation it seems that how the Marketing Director performs his management role, adapts to the power to idea as described by Homan (2008). The following example is

illustrative in this regard. One of the Marketing Directors explains he tries to bring the consumer into the business in a playful way. The Marketing Director said that one of the employees suggested to put the consumer under hypnosis and to ask to them about the consumer insight. The Marketing Director supported this initiative. By doing so, he contributes on an equivalence basis to the emergence of new ideas and activities;

> (..)"A short and simple answer. We bring the consumer inside the organization, literally. We accompany with the consumer. We bring the consumer alive by inviting the consumer here and through talking to the consumer. We have hypnotized a few groups of people to discover the consumer insight. By doing such things... Everyone talks about it of course...if this ethical...then it lives!

I would like to add something to this based on my own experiences within Global Commerce. During my internship I have noticed that the managers under who I was working seem to be open to the initiatives of the employees. Much seems to be possible within Global Commerce, on condition that the employee undertake action themselves and demonstrate assertiveness. I have experienced this myself when setting up the research proposal. The moment I started to take the initiative, they gave me room to conduct the research as I desired. I have also seen this around me with my colleagues that the managers will be open to initiatives if he sees the benefits and when the employee undertakes action.

In this paragraph I have approached changes in the organization through two different visions, namely: the planned change approach and the spontaneous change approach. Within Organization X the planned change approach is dominant which is reflected in their change programs. However, in this paragraph is illustrated that besides these planned changes, spontaneous changes take place in the organization at the same time. What I have tried to show is that it can be a profit for the organization to also be aware of the spontaneous changes in the organization. After all, a large extent of engagement derives from this process and engagement is one of the most important aspects to bring about a change. Moreover, I have described above that managers of Organization X seems to be open to initiatives of the employees. A lot is possible, on condition they are assertive. These are interesting findings taking in consideration the cultural change Organization X has to go through in the coming years.

In this chapter I have frequently explained that Homan (2008) believes it to be almost impossible to plan and manage changes. In this respect, I subscribe his opinion that changes cannot evolve as planned because of the process of meaning-construction (sense making) by the different actors in the change process. Therefore, changes cannot be predicted. This is demonstrated in paragraph 4.2. However, I am not fully convinced the planned changes, as reflected in the change programs, will never be successful. Proceeding from the findings of the research I believe the manager indeed can have influence on the change program consequently being a major contributor to the success of a change program. However, this diverges per change program and is subjected to the process of sense making of the individual actors in the process of change. Furthermore, Homan (2008) states both approaches imply a different role of the manager. Within the planned change process Homan states, the manager tries to impose his construction of reality to the employees. With regards to this, I disagree with Homan (2008). Deriving from the analysis of the interviews it seems the Marketing Directors try to anticipate the meaning the employees assign to the process of change. It seems they prefer to adopt a 'moving and travelling in between' management role, instead of a 'sitting and reigning on top' management role in the change programs. In this respect, I wonder to what extent it is possible for a manager to adopt a power to management role within a planned change process. But also, is the 'sitting and reigning at the top' management role always the wrong one? In the following paragraph, these and other question will be answered in more detail.

4.4 The cultural context

The Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees are part of the same organization, but they are working in different countries in Western, Central and Eastern Europe. Proceeding from this I pursued the research with the thought the Marketing Director in France would probably fulfil his management role differently than the manager in Croatia, based upon the fact they are born and raised in different countries. The GLOBE-project, which is conducted worldwide to identify differences in management styles between managers with divergent cultural backgrounds, sustains this thought. However, after analysing the data I have found it is almost impossible to say something about the influence of cultural background on how the Marketing Directors fulfil their management role, founded upon the interviews. Merely 5 out of 16 interviews explicitly refer to typical characteristics of the manager based on his cultural background. In this paragraph, a few explanations for this finding will therefore pass in review. Finally, this chapter will be closed with a few quotes in which cultural differences did manifest. The statements of the Marketing Directors who have been working abroad show that national culture does have influence on how they have fulfilled their management role in the concerned countries.

4.4.1 International organization

The OpCo's are not isolated, but form a part of a worldwide international organization. Both the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees say they have contact and collaborate with their colleagues from other OpCo's on regular bases. One of the MT-1 employees explains he phones his colleagues from other OpCo's to discuss for example how they deal with the change program; *"If I want to know something, I simply call them. I tried to profit as much from this international network. I really call them."* Furthermore, it also appears that half of the Marketing Directors have been working abroad for an extended period of time. As such, the Marketing Director from Ireland turned out to be Dutch. The Marketing Director from France told me he has studied, worked and lived in many different countries. When I asked him what he considered typical French characteristics he remained silent. He explains regarding this;

> (..)"Of course there is a French way of working. However, if you ask me to give a definition of it, I wouldn't be able to do it. I studied in US, I worked in the Netherlands, I worked in Latin America and now I am back in France, so I doubt if I am a good example of having typical French behaviour." *Marketing Director France*

In addition, several Marketing Directors explain they have contact with the Marketing Directors and Management Team from their Region on regular bases. One of the Marketing Directors from Western Europe explains he frequently uses his Western-European network in his daily work;

> (..)"We worked with an employee from Global Commerce; I talked with the Marketing Director in the UK what the benefits of the segmentation are. I talked to the Marketing Director from Italy, who had just started the process. Now I get an understanding of what is going on and from the Marketing Director from the UK I you get to see both the input as the output. From the employee in Global Commerce I get the benefit of the methodology. That is the benefit of doing so through the network of Marketing Directors that we have in Western Europe. Since we have meetings on a quarterly basis we change ideas on these types of things." *Marketing Director*

Proceeding from the above statements it appears both Marketing Directors and MT-1 employees are accustomed to interact and collaborate with people from divergent cultural backgrounds. Moreover, a majority of the Marketing Directors have been working abroad for an extended period of time. The role of the Marketing Director could therefore be biased by the international nature of the organization. This could explain why the influence of cultural background on the managerial role has only minimally been addressed in the interviews. Another explanation can be found by viewing the findings through the theory of Jepson (2009) and Ailon Souday & Kunda (2003). Jepson (2009) states the contexts in which a manager operates affect how the manager and the people around him give meaning to his management role. In certain situations, his behaviour is influenced by the cultural context (or national context), while in other cases his

behaviour will be influenced by other contexts, for example the micro-level context (e.g. colleagues, work environment). Moreover, Jepson' (2009) theory contains the belief deriving from the GLOBE-project that behaviour of a manager is completely determined by his cultural background or national identity. Obviously there are recognizable differences between cultures. However, within these cultures individual actors assign meaning to processes around them. For this reason, particular cultural properties cannot be attributed to an entire group (you are Dutch and therefore you behave in a certain way). The manager has nevertheless the freedom and the choice to decide when and how he will deploy his national identity as symbolic resource in order to manage his employees. Ailon Souday and Kunda (2003) explain in their research for example that national identity is deployed (by both manager and employees) in circumstances where they desire to offer resistance against the organization. Hence, within these moments they rely on their national identity. National identity is therefore a social construct instead of a fixed concept (based on the vision of social constructivism).

It also emerged that the different contexts as described by Jepson, influence how the Marketing Directors manage the change program. Whereas in the one situation the mode to fulfil the management role appears to be mainly influenced by the national context, in the other situation it seems the multi-level context primarily affects how the Marketing Directors fulfil the management role. One of the Marketing Directors explains for example he set up a workshop based on what he overheard in the corridors. In this situation, it seems the multi-level context has the upper hand, instead of the national context. The Marketing Director seems in this situation not to invoke to his national identity;

> (..)"I constantly hear from my salespeople….we want free things… And then I said okay. Let's make a workshop altogether, marketing and sales. I want to make sure that they understand that everything we do has a price. If you want something for free, you need to sell more. Everything has a price." *Marketing Director*

Furthermore, in paragraph 4.2.2 it is explained that how people give meaning to processes around them is biased through experiences from the past. The theory of Jepson (2009), which is founded on the social constructionism approach, subscribes this thought. Considering the fact that half of the Marketing Directors have previously lived and collaborated abroad, perhaps it can be argued that how the Marketing Directors fulfil their management role is also biased through their foreign experiences. How they interpret their management role can also be influenced by other national cultures they were part of for some time. The quote from the Marketing Director from France as presented above seems to subscribe to this thought. Although the national context is not dominant in all situations, it is interesting to view when the Marketing Directors do give meaning to their management role based on the national context. The following section endeavours to describe what kind of cultural differences exist between the OpCo's, according to the respondents.

4.4.2 Cultural differences
Various Marketing Directors who have been working abroad argue it is extremely important to take the national culture in account of the country where you are currently employed. The Marketing Director from France, who also lived and worked in the Netherlands, explains that how he fulfils his management role is momentarily influenced by the specific culture of country. He explains for example that he has acknowledged that the process of decision making in the Netherlands diverse from the process of decision making in France. At those moments he adopts his management style to the national culture of the country where he is employed. The national context therefore seems to have the upper hand in this situation;

> (..)"There is always a difference. Would you be able to explain to me what is the Polder model? No. In French in the end of the day… it is democratic, participative… but in the end of the day the people expect the boss to make the final decision. In the Netherlands, it is not always clear that

the boss has made the final decision, but you make a decision, more specific as being a group decision. At the end of the day I am convinced that the boss made the decision, but the process is totally different. The time management in France is completely different then in the Netherlands. You really have to adapt and understand what the difference in changes is. If you go into a market and try to implement changes, have to take in consideration the behaviour within the local organization and within the local culture. Do not try to implement the Dutch way of working everywhere in the world, that doesn't work." *Marketing Director*

Another Marketing Director who has been working in both Western Europe as Eastern Europe explains what he believes as the differences between these two Regions. He says the employees in Croatia are more open to learn and consequently more open for changes, as opposed to employees in Italy, the Netherlands and France;

> (..)"Look at the history. This is not a very nice story, but these countries. Here in Croatia, we had a war. You know, we want to live better. People are very optimistic. For a young country like us, people are eager to learn. They are eager to learn and if you show then that they are part of this change and you show them the way...you need to explain what and why you are doing this...I think people will follow. This is my experience in this first year that they are not resistant to change." *Marketing Director*

Finally, I would like to address to the last question as described in the previous section (4.3.2). I was wondering whether the 'sitting and reigning at the top' always is the wrong approach of the management role. This question crosses my mind because of the interview with the MT-1 employee from Italy. He explained it is important that his manager (or in his words, the leader), actually behaves as a leader at specific moments. He believes this might be related to the Italian culture. The manager who performs the management role as 'sitting and reigning at the top' may therefore be the right one at certain moments. In this respect an interesting question crossed my mind: could the theory of Homan (2008) also be biased by his national culture? People from the Netherlands normally seem to disapprove the 'sitting and reigning at the top manager', while people from other countries do not have problems with this role since it gives the manager a kind of status. The MT-1 employee from Italy explains;

> (..)"Maybe it is related to the Italian cultural. My Marketing Director has the characteristics of a natural leader. So you combine the expertise of the Marketing Director and the firmness that he has in general. It makes you believe that things are important, effective... it is the... "yes we can do it! This has not to be the case in every program, you need to choose once a year, the perfect program for that year. It is more that the leading role is important. " *MT-1 Italia*

In this paragraph I have tried to display how the cultural context influences the way the Marketing Directors fulfil their managerial role, based on the findings from the interviews. In the methodological justification is described that it is almost impossible to give a valid conclusion, based on 16, 1 hour interviews. In chapter 2, I have therefore contextualized the influence of the cultural context on the managerial role, with the help of literature. However, I still find it interesting to give a short conclusion based on the findings concerning this subject. My findings seem to be in line with the vision of Jepson (2008). She considers the GLOBE-project of great value in order to form a general image regarding the influence of national culture on leadership. She therefore doesn't deny the existence of cultural differences between countries. The statements of the Marketing Directors who have been working, or are working abroad seem to confirm this thought. However, Jepson (2008) also believes that how the individual actors assign meaning to the management role differ within the countries. This implicates that the French manager will not behave the same, considering the fact they have the same national background and are working in the same country. In this paragraph I have showed that behaviour of the Marketing Director in the one situation seems to be influenced by one context and in the other situation by the other context. Furthermore, how they fulfil their managerial role seems to be biased through previous experiences. It is remarkable that all the Marketing Directors who have been working abroad argue that the national culture of the country where they are employed partly influences

how they perform their managerial role. Through the international nature of the organization the national identity of the Marketing Director seems to be influenced by other national cultures then his own.

Conclusion

Organization X is embarking on a journey to become a more consumer centric organization within Western, Central and Eastern Europe in the coming years. What this change exactly is going to mean for the organization and how the change will take shape, is barely known at the moment of writing. However, it is known that it concerns a planned change here. In brief this means Global Commerce develops a (change) program, whereupon the (change) program is rolled out and implemented within the involved OpCo's. In order to gather more knowledge concerning this change process I have attempted to answer the following main question in this interpretative qualitative study;

- *How do the Marketing Directors "translate"[10] the change programs developed by Global Commerce into their daily business, and how does their cultural background influence their managerial role in this process?*

The main question is answered on the basis of the interviews with the 8 Marketing Directors and the 8 MT-1 employees, the literature and my own experiences within Global Commerce, Organization X International. The respondents were asked about previous change programs developed by Global Commerce which they have been working on in the past. It soon became apparent that they distinguished a difference between a program and a change program. The more the respondents were personally affected by the program, the more they designate the program as a change program. And the longer ago the program was implemented in the organization, the less they characterized the program as change program. Emerging from the interviews and the way the change programs of Global Commerce are set up, the dominant vision within Organization X seems to be that changes can be managed and predicted in advance This traditional approach to change management is in line with how Kotter (1996) amongst others, approaches organizational changes. The vision of Homan (2008) regarding organizational changes is in contrast to the theoretical legacy of Kotter (1996). He approaches changes as ongoing dynamic process which is, due to the process of sense making, almost impossible to plan, manage or predict in advance. The data of the research is analysed via these two approaches, where the process of sense making is central. In the conclusion, the 4 sub questions are addressed in the introduction of the research are related to the main themes of the research.

Creating Common Language & Common Way of Working
The majority of the respondents indicate the change programs contribute to the creation of a Common Language and a Common Way of Working. In this they refer to a common language or standard method, which is understood in all OpCo's. Remarkable about this statement is that all the respondents stress the importance of a Common Language and Common Way of Working. However, not all OpCo's are always willing to cooperate. It also turns out the adaptation from the OpCo's can be so strong, that at the end of the day only parts of the original program as developed by Global Commerce remains. The respondents find their solution mainly in the role Global Commerce occupies during the process of change, this one could be more directive. However, considered from the approach of Homan (2008) it is understandable a change program does not 'land' in the organization as planned. How the employees assign meanings to the change program forms the foundation of their behaviour, rather than the change program determining how they will behave. In this case it could mean the employees have given their own meaning to the change program, by which the global nature of the program fades away once it is adopted in the OpCo. This approach provides an explanation for the fact that certain changes do not evolve the way they were intended by Global Commerce.

---

[10] Operationalization "translate": owning, endorsing and implementing the change programs developed by Global Commerce into the Operating Company.

Autonomy

Since the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees assign divergent meaning to the change process, the planned change character of the change program seems to be 'changing' once it is implemented into the OpCo. Due to the process of sense making it therefore seems to differ how the Marketing Directors "translate' the change programs towards their own OpCo. One of the explanations can be found by elaborating upon the process of autonomy. Autonomy is explained as the freedom the OpCo has or gets to implement the change program in one's own way in the OpCo. Where the one Marketing Directors seems to 'take' autonomy and only picks out those aspects of a change program he finds important for his OpCo, the other Marketing Director much more follows the preconceived line of Global Commerce. How the Marketing Directors give meaning to autonomy therefore has major consequences for the further course of the change program. And, elaborating on the theory of Homan (2008), the planned changes will probably turn out differently from what was accepted by Global Commerce, due to the process of sense making. The founder of their choice is not the program itself, but the meaning they assign to the program. Because of the process of sense making I therefore believe it is almost impossible to predict the outcomes of a change program. From this it can also be concluded that the Marketing Directors fulfil an important role in the change process. After all, the meaning they assign to the change program has major consequences for the further course of the change process.

Engagement: acceptance, endorsement, ownership

The most frequently heard objection concerning the change programs is that the respondents are afraid of 'again something on top of our daily work'. In order to implement the change into the OpCo, it is therefore important for them to feel engaged with the change program. Several MT-1 employees also explain they can manipulate the change programs and KPI's in such way it will look like the change has succeeded, but in reality nothing has changed. And, the Marketing Director who doesn't feel engaged to the change program will not take much trouble to implement it into the OpCo. The study therefore endeavoured to examine which aspects of a change program contribute to a feeling of engagement, according to the respondents. Although the respondents assign divergent meanings, the majority of them explain that certain aspects of a change program, such as acceptance, endorsement, ownership and autonomy add greatly to the feeling of engagement and therefore contribute to the success of a change program. The degree of engagement is highly biased by experiences with previous change programs, which subscribes to the idea of the social constructionism. It is remarkable both Marketing Directors and MT-1 employees approach engagement as something that is not there yet, as something that needs to be generated. However, the research has shown that in conjunction of this form of engagement, another form of engagement exists. This form of engagement proceeds from the employee himself and therefore doesn't have to be generated. Since this kind of engagement is strongest, according to Homan (2008), it will be briefly expanded on later.

Role Marketing Director

The planned change process is subject to the manner in which employees give meaning to it, and for this reason it is almost impossible to predict the outcomes of a change program. However, the Marketing Director seems to have a major influence on how the change program will succeed. Moreover, the manner in which the Marketing Director fulfils his management role seems to be inextricably linked to his degree of engagement to the change program. When the Marketing Director feels more engaged, the program will receive more attention, stand higher on the agenda of the OpCo and consequently has more chance to succeed. In addition, the MT-1 explain they find a change program more important when their Marketing Director and the Management Team pay special attention to it. The Marketing Director therefore seems to serve as an example and tries to interpret this through symbolism. Homan's (2008) assumption the manager has almost no influence on the process of change seems therefore not to hold in this case. Furthermore, the majority of the Marketing Directors seem to adopt a more *power to* management role within the change programs, rather than a *power over* management role. This emerges from how they try to communicate on a equivalent bases with the employees during the process of change and the

responsibility the employees seem to have through, for example, the train the trainer tool. Interesting is that not all MT-1 employees expect their Marketing Director to adopt the *power to* management role in all circumstances. Instead, they explain that in some cases its better their manager adopts the *power over* management role. How the MT-1 employees perceive the management role, seems therefore to be culturally determined. In addition, the question can be asked whether the vision of Homan (2008) is culturally biased as well.

The cultural context
The study also strived to examine whether the Marketing Directors fulfil their management role is culturally determined. All Marketing Directors argue that a manager has to be aware of the cultural differences between countries and they have to adapt their management style to the national culture when collaborating in another country. As described above, it seems how the MT-1 employees perceive the management role can be biased by their cultural background. However, merely 5 out of 16 interviews explicitly refer to typical characteristics of the manager based on his cultural background. One explanation for this can be found in the international nature of the organization. Most of the Marketing Directors worked abroad or are used to work with colleagues from other countries. How they give meaning to their management role can therefore be biased by other cultures than their own national culture. Another explanation can be found by viewing the findings through the theory of Jepson (2009) and Ailon Souday & Kunda (2003). They state that within a national culture individual actors assign meaning to processes around them. Behaviour of managers is therefore never fully culturally determined. Jepson (2009) also argues the behaviour of a manager is influenced by the different contexts in which he operates. Whereas in the one situation the mode to fulfil the management role appears to be mainly influenced by the national context, in the other situation it seems the multilevel context primarily affects how the manager fulfil his management role.

In sum
The process of sense making affects how the Marketing Directors "translate" the change programs towards their OpCo. Through the process of sense making, a change program seems to be 'changing' once it is rolled out into the OpCo's. How the Marketing Directors give meaning to change program determines the further course of the program. And, due to how the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees give meaning it almost seems impossible to predict the outcomes of a change or to plan a change by following eight preconceived steps. However, it appears that the Marketing Directors have a major influence on how the change program will succeed. Because of the position he held in the organization, he seems to serve as example for the employees. It therefore seems to be of high importance he feels engaged to the change program and that he beams this out to the employees as well. After all, this study showed that engagement is one of the key words within a successful change.

Cultural change

> (..)"Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand."
> *Chinese proverb*

In the objective of the study I indicate that it is not the intention of the study to make recommendations to Global Commerce concerning how they have to design their change programs in the 'best' way. This would run counter to the dynamic theories which are used to interpret the data of the research. The aim of the research however, is to provide Global Commerce insights into what happens to the change programs, once they are descended into the OpCo. Based upon the findings in this study, I would like to add something regarding the cultural change Organization X has in prospect.

This study reveals that engagement within Organization X is approached as something that is not yet present, as something that needs to be generated by the manager. It also demonstrates that people attach meaning to a process through interaction with each other. Homan (2008) states that by setting KPI's the room for the employees to construct meanings is restricted. Moreover, he believes that just by providing the employees the room to construct meanings together, the strongest kind of engagement can come into existence. And, this is important since the degree of engagement of the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees influence how the change program will succeed. Although I actually see the benefits of setting KPI's and change programs, I believe it can be valuable for Global Commerce to also be aware of the other change processes which take place in the organization at the same time. All the more since I have experienced that in some situation the employees are already engaged, rather than the manager having to engage them. We have seen that this form of engagement occurs in situations where the employees were granted the space to set up their own initiatives.

This study demonstrated that certain OpCo's already have eye for the consumer and are developing initiatives to bring the consumer into the organization. These initiatives do not proceed from planned changes, but they arise from employees and managers who have noticed the importance for the organization to be aware of the consumer. The role of the manager in this process is to give room to the consumer- initiatives of the employees deriving from spontaneous changes within the organization, rather than managing the process. Considering the cultural change Organization X has in prospect, I believe it can be valuable to orient on *both* change processes, the planned changes and the employee- initiative which proceeds from spontaneous changes in the organization. It is therefore worthwhile to switch the gaze to OpCo's which are already trying in a creative way to make everyone in the organization aware of the consumer.

Discussion and reflection

>(..)'If we knew what we were doing, it wouldn't be called research.'
>*Albert Einstein (1879-1955)*

In the last part of the research all that remains is to reflectively look back upon the study by answering a few questions. These questions concern my role as researcher, what I perhaps could have done differently and what continuation research would be interesting. Furthermore, in the introduction of the research I have formulated, in conjunction with a scientific and a practical objective, a personal objective also. Since I have tried to achieve the personal objective, I would also like to elaborate on this point.

The methodological justification explained that half the week I worked as intern in Global Commerce and the other days I conducted the research during 6 months. At the beginning of the internship I have participated in the development of a component of the cultural change program, which unfortunately did not make it. Furthermore, in the last paragraph of the methodological justification (role as researcher) I explain that I experienced difficulties in defining my role in the organization in comparison to my role as researcher. Especially due to surrounding factors, for example, my involvement in the development of the cultural change program and my presence in Global Commerce, which at times have influenced my 'own perspective'. Here my supervisor at University Utrecht was of great help. In all our meetings, he made me aware of my role in the organization and especially how to cope with the two divergent roles. In this respect, I sensed it was at times important to distant myself from the organization in order to avoid being biased when conducting the research. I therefore have not been to Organization X for two weeks when setting up the research proposal, I have written the thesis after my 6 months of internship and I have re-written the data-chapter of the research.

Furthermore, my supervisor at Organization X International and my supervisor at the University Utrecht both had divergent ideas about how to conduct the study in the best possible way. For me it was sometimes hard to deal with the situation, since I both wanted to meet the wishes of my supervisor at the University and my supervisor at Organization X. However, and I believe this is one of the most valuable lessons in the whole process, I have experienced that the moment I took the leading role in the process and not think about pleasing both parties, it was much easier to handle the situation. I experienced both parties wanted me to take this leading role and I felt much more comfortable by doing so. I have therefore not only learned to conduct a research from a theoretical and scientific perspective, but the research and the internship have also provided me the opportunity to develop myself on a personal level.

Despite of the at times laborious process in coping with my two roles and the two different parties, I am proud of the conducted research. During the interviews I was fully comfortable of my role as researcher and I was critical towards the answers of the respondents. In addition, in spite of the dominant vision within Global Commerce, that change is manageable and can be predicted, I hold on to my own ideas and tried to show Global Commerce and the University Utrecht the benefits of this study. Furthermore, I have tried to interpret my own behaviour and added my findings to the data. Answering the question of what I would have done differently when conducting the research for the second time, I would definitely state that it is important to be conscious about how to fulfil the role of researcher from the beginning of the research. In spite of the fact that I have learned a lot from the whole process, it would have saved me a lot of time and energy to have incorporated this knowledge earlier.

And, of course it would have been a major enrichment of the research if I actually could have visited the Marketing Directors and the MT-1 employees in the Operating Companies in Western, Eastern and Central Europe. Eventually, face to face communication and experiencing the dynamics in a surrounding would provide me a more in depth understanding of the organization.

Personal objective and continuation research

In the introduction I have posed a personal objective. My objective was to learn as much as possible about the subject of change management during my time at Organization X. After the research and my internship at Organization X International I believe this goal has been achieved. Organization X International gave me the opportunity to talk to more than 10 different consultancy agencies specialized in change management, to discuss with professor Larréché from INSEAD University in Paris (an expert in the field of change management and author of the book The Momentum Effect: How to Ignite Exceptional Growth) and to participate in the development of a component of a cultural change program. More importantly, the research gave me the opportunity to talk with 8 Marketing Directors and 8 MT-1 employees from various countries with broad experiences in managing changes in organizations. All these practical learning's gave me the opportunity to achieve my personal objective: the combination of theoretical learning's in relation to practical learning's.

The research showed that several OpCo's are already trying to involve the consumer into the organization. It therefore can be advantageous as continuation research to focus mainly on those OpCo's which seems to be further developed in their consumer orientation than other OpCo's. In this respect it may be relevant to research whether the employees of these OpCo's feel more associated with the consumer and if so to find out what determines why they feel more concerned about the consumer. This research can potentially serve as best practice for other OpCo's. It could also be interesting to further research the relation between head office and OpCo. Finally, it could also be interesting to return to Organization X within a couple of years and to evaluate, together with the respondents, how the cultural change has turned out. Since I have been a part of the process, I am curious how the cultural change from a product oriented culture towards a more consumer focused culture will evolve in the coming years and to what degree the cultural change program will succeed.

References

Ailon-Souday, G. Kunda, G. (2003). *The Local Selves of Global Workers: The Social Construction of National Identity in the face of Organizational Globalization.* Organization Studies. Vol 24, 7.

Alvesson, M., & Sveningsson, S. (2003). *Good Visions, Bad Micro-Management and Ugly Ambiguitiy: Contradictions of (Non-) Leadership in Knowledge-Intensive Organization.* Organization Studies, 24. 61–88.

Boeije, H.R. (2005). *Analyseren in kwalitatief onderzoek: denken en doen.* Amsterdam. Boom. Chockar, J.S. Brodbeck, F.C. House, R.J. (2007). *Culture and Leadership Across the World. The GLOBE-book of In Depth studies of 25 societies.* New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Asssociates, Inc.

Chokar. (2004). *Culture and Leadership across the globe. The GLOBE book of in depth studies around the globe.* New York. Tailor & Francis Group.

Collins, D. (1998). *Organizational Change: Sociological perspective.* London. Routledge.

Conger, J. A. (1998). *Qualitative research as the cornerstone methodology for understanding leadership.* Leadership Quarterly. Vol 9.

Fischer, R (2009). *Where Is Culture in Cross Cultural Research? : An Outline of a Multilevel Research Process for Measuring Culture as a Shared Meaning System.* International Journey of Cross Cultural Management. Vol, 9. No 25.

Giddens, A. (1981). *A Contempary Critique of Historical Materialism.* London. Macmillan.

Greatz, F. Smith, A. (2010). *Managing Organizational Change: A Philosophies of Change Approach.* Journal of Change Management. Vol, 10. No 2, 135-154.

Grey, C. (2003). *The fetish of change.* Journal of critical postmodern Organization Science, Vol,2.

Grove, C. (2005*). Introduction to the GLOBE Research Project on Leadership Worldwide.* Aivalable: http://www.grovewell.com/pub-GLOBE-intro.html

Grundy, T. (1992). *Implementing Strategic Change*. London. Kogan Page.

Hart, H. 't, Boeije, H.R. & Hox, J.J. (2005). *Onderzoeksmethoden* (7e geheel herziene druk). Amsterdam. Boom.

Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture's *Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Homan, T. (2005). *Organisatiedynamica. Theorie en praktijk van organisatieverandering.* Den Haag. Academic Service.

Homan, T. (2008). *De binnenkant van organisatieverandering*. Alphen aan den Rijn. Kluwer.

House, R.J., P.J. Hanges, S.A. Ruiz-Quintanilla, P.W. Dorfman, M. Javidan, M.W. Dickson, V.

Gupta, and Associates. (1999). "Cultural Influences on Leadership and Organizations: Project GLOBE." In W.H. Mobley, M.J. Gessner, and V. Arnold (eds.), *Advances in Global Leadership*. Stamford, CN: JAI Press, vol. 1, pp. 171– 233.

House, R.J. Hanges, P. J. Javidan, M. Dorfman, J.W. Gupta, V. (2004). *Culture, Leadership and Organizations. The GLOBE- study of 62 Societies*. London. Sage.

Jepson, D. (2009). *Studying Leadership at Cross-Country Level: A Critical Analysis.* Leadership Sage, Vol, 5, 61-80.

Kanter, R.M., Stein, B.A., Jick, T.D. (1992). *The Challenges of Organizational Change.* New York. The Free Press.

Karsten, N., & Tummers, L.G. (2008). *To read or not to read: Over de waarde van vakliteratuur in kwalitatief onderzoek*. Kwalon

Kotter, J.P. (1995). *Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail*. Harvard Business Review, vol 73, pp 59.

Kotter, J.P. (1996). *Leading Change.* United States of America. Library Cataloging-in-data-Publication Data.

Kotter, J.P., Schlesinger, A. (2008). *Choosing Strategies for Change.* Harvard Business Review, P4

Meehan, P. Gadiesh, O. Hori, S. (2006). Culture as Competitative Advantage. Bain & Company. Executive Forum.

O'leary, Z (2010). *The essential guide to doing your research project.* London. Sage Publications Ltd.

Paauwe, J. (2004). *HRM and Performance: Achieving Long-Term Viability*. Oxford University Press.

Smet, de A. Loch, M. Schaninger, B. (2007). The link between profits and organizational performance. The Mckinsey Quarterly. Number 3.

Tayeb, M. (2001). *Conducting Research Across Countries: Overcoming Drawback and Obstacles.* International Journey of Cross Cultural Management. Vol 1 (1).

't Hart, H., Boeije, H. (2005). *Onderzoeksmethoden*. Uitgeverij Boom. 2005.

Trevor-Roberts, E. Ashkanasy, N. (2003). *The Egalitarian Leader: A Comparison of Leadership in Australia and New Zealand*. Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 20, 517– 540, 2003.

Westerbeek, J. (2008). *Goed geschreven, goed begrepen. Schrijfinstructie voor studenten Algemene Sociale Wetenschappen.* Universiteit Utrecht.

Yeganeh,M. Su, Z. Chrysostome, E. (2004). *A Critical Review of Epistemological and Methodological Issues in Cross-Cultural Research*. Journal of comparative International Management. Vol. 7, no.2

Enclosure 1 Topic list Marketing Directors

Prior to the interview, I would like to share some information regarding the content. The questions in the interview are about change programs developed on corporate level and in specific ownership, endorsement and implementation requirements for the local team. Examples of a change program may be Sky or Moon. Objective of the interview is to learn more about how Marketing Directors implement the change program into the daily business and how they manage this process, (this is called change management). Therefore, the questions in the interview are about the soft side of management and not about the content of the different programs.

Specifications interview/ background
- o   How many years have you been working for Organization X?
- o   Have you been working in different countries for Organization X?
  - ▪   Yes, which countries?

Background change programs
- What is a change management in your opinion?
- Have you been working with Sky management program?
  - o   Yes, is Sky a typical change program in your opinion?
  - o   No, can you give an example of another change program where you have been working on
- What was your role in this project**?**
- What was Global Commerce role in this project?
- How would you describe the relationship between Global Commerce and your OpCo in this kind of programs?
- Is there a common way of working in change projects in your opinion?
  - o   Yes, what is 'Organization X' about it?
  - o   No, why not?

Endorsement, ownership and advocacy
- Which factors contribute to the success of a change program?
- Do you think endorsement and ownership are important aspects of the change program?
- What does it mean to 'endorse a change program' in your opinion?
  - o   Did you endorse (Sky)?
    - ▪   Yes, which factors contribute to this?
    - ▪   What was Global Commerce role in it?
- What does it mean to be 'owner of a change program' in your opinion?
  - • Did you feel owner of (Sky)**?**
    - ▪   Yes, which factors contribute to this?
    - ▪   What was Global Commerce role in it?
    - ▪   No, why not? Did you have other programs where you felt owner?
- Were there change programs where you were the owner, but did not feel like the owner?
  - o   Yes, what was it about those?
- What are factors that engage you to a change program?
  - o   What can Global Commerce do to engage you to a change program?
- What should Global Commerce do differently in order to make you feel owner and endorser of the change program?

Implementation/ embedding the program in the organization
- How did you implement the change program into your daily business?
    - What was your personal input and what was Global Commerce input?
        - Information workshop
- What kind of role does Global Commerce have in the implementation phase?
    - What do you think of Global Commerce role in the implementation phase?
- Did you have autonomy during the implementation phase?
    - What does it mean to have autonomy?
    - Is it important for you to have autonomy?
- How do you make sure the program will stick in the organization for the next few years?
- Did you have contact with other Marketing Directors during the implementation of Star?
    - Yes, what did you discuss?
    - No, why not and would you like to have more contact with other OpCo's?
- Have you been involved in change programs, which were less successful?
    - What was it about those?
- Do you believe the way Organization X is implementing change programs is effective/leads to change?
    - Yes, why?
    - No, why not?

Managerial role
- How did the employees react to the change program?
- Were there differences in their reaction and how did you respond to this?
- Was there resistance?
    - Yes, how did you deal with this resistance?
    - Did you consult others to deal with resistance (e.g. Global Commerce, Management Team)?
- Did you ask feedback during the implementation phase of the change program?
    - Yes, whom did you ask for feedback?
    - No, why not?
- How did you measure and track performance regarding the change program?
- Do you think that the changing the mind of people can be managed, or do you only change the behaviour of people?

Only for those who have been working abroad
- Do you think you would embed the change program differently if you were working for another country?
    - Yes, why? What are the biggest differences in your opinion due to cultural differences?

Enclosure 2 Topic list MT-1 employees

Prior to the interview, I would like to share some information regarding the content. The questions in the interview are about change programs developed on corporate level and in specific ownership, endorsement and implementation requirements for the local team. Examples of a change program may be Star or Moon. Objective of the interview is to learn more about how Marketing Directors implement the change program into the daily business and how they manage this process, (this is called change management). Therefore, the questions in the interview are about the soft side of management and not about the content of the different programs.

Specifications interview/ background
- How many years have you been working for Organization X?
- Have you been working in different countries for Organization X?
    - Yes, which countries?

Background change programs
- What is a change management in your opinion?
- Have you been working on Sky?
    - Yes, is Sky a typical change program in your opinion?
    - No, can you give an example of another change program, which is developed on corporate level, where you have been working on together with your Marketing Director?
- What is your role in this project?
- What is Global Commerce role in it?
    - What do you think of this role?
- What was the role of the Marketing Director in this program?
- Is there a common way of working in change projects in your opinion?
    - Yes, what is 'Organization X' about it?
    - No, why not?
- How would you describe the relationship between Global Commerce and your OpCo in this kind of programs?

Endorsement and ownership
- Which factors contribute to the success of a change program?
    - Wat is de rol van de Marketing Director hierin?
    - Wat is de rol van Global Commerce hierin?
- Do you think endorsement and ownership are important aspects for the success of a change program?
- What does it mean to 'endorse a change program' in your opinion?
    - How does your Marketing Director create endorsement?
    - How does Global Commerce create endorsement?
- What does it mean to be 'owner of a change program' in your opinion?
    - What did your Marketing Director do in his role as owner in Star?
- What can your Marketing Director do in order to engage you to a change program?
    - How did he do that in Sky?
- What can Global Commerce do to engage you to a change program?

- Were there ever change programs where you have to work with, but which you were not engaged to?

Implementation/ embedding the program in the organization
- You followed the workshop, how did your manager implement Sky into your daily business?
- What does your Marketing Director do in order to make a program stick in the daily business, even after three years?
- What kind of role does Global Commerce have in the implementation phase?
  - What do you think of this role?
- Were there differences in the way your Marketing Director implemented Sky into the daily business compared to other change programs?
- Did you as an OpCo have autonomy during the implementation phase?
  - What does it mean to have autonomy?
  - Is it important for you to have autonomy?
- Did you have contact with other OpCo's during the implementation of Sky?
  - Yes, what did you discuss?
  - No, why not and would you like to have more contact with other OpCo's?
- Have you been involved in change programs, which were less successful?
  - What was it about those?
- Do you believe the way Organization X is implementing change programs is effective/leads to change?
  - Yes, why?
  - No, why not?

Managerial role
- Were there different reactions to Sky?
  - How did people respond to it?
- Have you ever been working on a change program that you did not found important or resist?
  - What was it about this program?
  - How does your Marketing Director handle with resistance?
- Do you think that the changing the mind of people can be managed, or do you only change the behaviour of people?